

Two Lines of Research in Prehistoric Archaeology

Colin Renfrew

2004 Balzan Prize for Prehistoric Archaeology

Balzan GPC Adviser: Paolo Matthiae

Researchers: Lambros Malafouris (Balzan Fellow); Michael Boyd, Giorgos Gavalas, Myrto Georgakopoulou, Thomas Loughlin, Evi Margaritis, Barry Molloy, Ioanna Moutafi, Dimitris Tambakopoulos (2006-2008 Excavation Participants)

Affiliated Institution: The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge

Period: 2005-2008

Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn is a Senior Fellow at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, and former Disney Professor of Archaeology and Director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

The first line of research was devoted to the development of “Material Engagement Theory”, the study of past ways of thinking through the material culture that has survived, a research area which Colin Renfrew has been trying to develop since his 1982 Cambridge Inaugural Lecture, *Towards an Archaeology of Mind*. The second line of research involves the development and expansion of archaeological fieldwork in the Early Bronze Age cultures of the Cycladic Islands of Greece, the subject of Renfrew’s 1965 doctoral dissertation and subsequent work.

As for the first line of research, Lambros Malafouris held the position of Balzan Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Cognitive Archaeology at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in Cambridge, and organized one symposium together with Colin Renfrew (The Cognitive Life of Things. Recasting the Boundaries of the Mind, McDonald Institute, April 2006, with papers published as a McDonald Institute Monograph in 2010) and co-organized another with Colin Renfrew and Chris Frith of the Department of Cognitive Neuroscience, UCL (The Sapient Mind: Archaeology Meets Neuroscience, McDonald Institute, September 2007), with papers published as a special theme issue by the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in 2008

and in 2009 by Oxford University Press under the title *The Sapient Mind: Archaeology Meets Neuroscience*. Lambros Malafouris and Colin Renfrew also organized a seminar on the links between archaeology and neuroscience (Steps to a Neuroarchaeology of Mind, Exeter, December 2006), with selected papers published in a special section of the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*. Malafouris is now Johnson Research Fellow and Teaching Fellow in Creativity, Cognition and Material Culture at Keble College, Oxford. His major monograph *How Things Shape the Mind* was published by MIT Press in 2013, with a foreword by Colin Renfrew.

Archaeological fieldwork in the Early Bronze Age Cultures of the Cycladic Islands of Greece was the subject of the second line of research. A junior colleague of Colin Renfrew, Giorgos Gavalas, was involved in completing the publication of an earlier phase of the work on the site of Dhaskalio, on the island of Keros, which was then published in monograph form by the McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research. Thanks to the second half of the Balzan Prize to Colin Renfrew, it was possible to conduct the excavation of the site of Dhaskalio and Dhaskalio Kavos during the excavation seasons of 2006, 2007 and 2008. Preliminary reports on the 2006-2007 and 2008 excavations were published in *The Annual of the British School of Athens*. The excavations involved the participation of a number of the project's young graduate archaeologists, several of whom are contributors to the final report, the publication of which was completed in 2018.

Publications

Knappett, C. and L. Malafouris, eds. *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*. New York: Springer, 2008.

[Including the following chapters by members of the research group: C. Knappett and L. Malafouris, Material and Non-Human Agency: An Introduction; L. Malafouris, At the Potter's Wheel: An Argument for Material Agency]

Knappett, C., L. Malafouris and P. Tomkins. "Ceramics (as Containers)." In *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, edited by D. Hicks and M.C. Beaudry. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Malafouris, L. "Beads for a Plastic Mind: The 'Blind Man's Stick' (BMS) Hypothesis and the Active Nature of Material Culture." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 18, 3 (2008).

Malafouris, L. "Is it 'Me' or Is It 'Mine'? The Mycenaean Sword as a Body-Part." In *Past Bodies*, edited by J. Robb and D. Boric. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2008.

- Malafouris, L. "Linear B as Distributed Cognition: Excavating a Mind not Limited by the Skin." In *Excavating the Mind: Cross-Sections Through Culture, Cognition and Materiality*, edited by M. Jessen, N. Johanssen and H. J. Jensen. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011.
- Malafouris, L. "'Neuroarchaeology': Exploring the Links between Neural and Cultural Plasticity." *Progress in Brain Research* 178 (2009).
- Malafouris, L. "Prosthetic Bodies and Material Signs: Connections across the Skin Barrier and the Scales of Time." In *The Enculturated Body. Time Scales of Embodied Meaning in Communication*, edited by S. Jordan, J. Streeck and I. Wachsmuth. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
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- Malafouris, L. and C. Renfrew, eds. *The Cognitive Life of Things: Recasting the Boundaries of the Mind*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2010.
- [Including the following chapters by members of the research group: L. Malafouris, *The Cognitive Life of Things: Archaeology, Material Engagement, and the Extended Mind*; Ibid., *Engaging the 'Missing Mass'*]
- Renfrew, C., M.J. Boyd and C. Bronk Ramsey. "The Oldest Maritime Sanctuary? Dating the Sanctuary at Keros and the Cycladic Early Bronze Age." *Antiquity* (2012): 144-160.
- Renfrew, C., C. Doumas, L. Marangou and G. Gavalas, eds. *Keros, Dhaskalio Kavos: The Investigations of 1987-88*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2007.
- Renfrew, C., C. Frith and L. Malafouris, eds. *The Sapient Mind: Archaeology Meets Neuroscience*. First published as a theme issue in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series B: Biological Sciences*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2009.
- [Including the following chapters by members of the research group: C. Renfrew, C. Frith and L. Malafouris, Introduction; L. Malafouris, *Between Brains, Bodies and Things: Tectonoetic Awareness and the Extended Self*]
- Renfrew, C. and I. Morley, eds. *The Archaeology of Measurement. Comprehending Heaven, Earth and Time in Ancient Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

- [Including the following chapter by members of the research group: L. Malafouris, Grasping the Concept of Number: How Did the Sapient Mind Move Beyond Approximation?]
- Renfrew, C. and L. Morley, eds. *Image and Imagination: a Global History of Figurative Representation*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2007.
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- Renfrew, C. *Cognitive Archaeology from Theory to Practice* (The Annual Balzan Lecture 3). Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2012.
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