

Colin Renfrew

2004 Balzan Prize for Prehistoric Archaeology

Andrew Colin Renfrew, Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn, is one of the most eminent personalities in the world of archaeology today. He is among the promoters of outstanding innovations in processual archaeology, author of a series of brilliant works on central themes in European and world prehistory that are marked by great interpretative acumen and have had a revolutionary impact. He has had and has, through his great intellectual depth and balanced critical vision, an almost unequalled influence in the world of Western archaeology, displaying an extraordinary capacity in organizing studies, promoting theoretical debate and raising awareness of the ethical aspects of the profession of archaeologist.

Two Lines of Research in Prehistoric Archaeology

The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge

Adviser for the General Balzan Committee: Paolo Matthiae

Colin Renfrew's project consists of two lines of research which he has actively been involved in. Both are in the field of prehistoric archaeology and involve young researchers in different ways.

The first line of research is 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.

1. *Development of "Material Engagement Theory"*. In April 2005, Dr. Lambros Malafouris was appointed Balzan Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Cognitive Archaeology at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in Cambridge to work on the first part of the project. Professor Renfrew and Dr. Malafouris organized two major symposia:

- The first symposium, "The Cognitive Life of Things. Recasting the Boundaries of the Mind" was held at the McDonald Institute on 7-9 April 2006. The papers presented at this symposium, after peer review, were published as a McDonald Institute Monograph in 2010.

- The second symposium, “The Sapiant Mind: Archaeology meets Neuroscience”, was held at the McDonald Institute on 14-17 September 2007. It was co-organized with Professor Colin Renfrew and Professor Chris Frith (Department of Cognitive Neuroscience, UCL). The papers presented in this symposium have been 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 Sapiant Mind: Archaeology Meets Neuroscience*. The publication of “The Sapiant Mind” has also received extensive coverage in “New Scientist” (14 May 2008).

In addition, the links between archaeology and neuroscience formed the basis for a seminar co-organized by Lambros Malafouris and Colin Renfrew, entitled “Steps to a Neuroarchaeology of Mind” (Exeter, 15-17 December 2006). Selected papers from this session were published in a special section of the “Cambridge Archaeological Journal”, 18(3) October 2008.

The quality of Dr. Malafouris’ research and the scientific impact of his work as Balzan Fellow were reflected in his frequent invitations to speak at conferences and institutions in the UK and overseas. For instance, from 2005 to 2008 he has been invited to present papers at Edinburgh, UK (Interactive Mind AHRC workshop 2005), San Juan, Puerto Rico (SAA 2006), Berlin, Germany (European Platform 2006), Exeter, UK (lecture at the University of Exeter 2007), Southampton, UK (Innovation and Evolution workshop 2007) and Oxford, UK (Classical Archaeology Seminar 2007) and the Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld, Germany (The Enculturated Body workshop 2008). Additionally, he has refereed articles for “Cambridge Archaeology Journal”, the “Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series B”, and “Science”. For his innovative cross-disciplinary work in the area of “neuroarchaeology” and the extended mind, Dr. Malafouris was featured in “Seed Magazine’s Revolutionary Minds Series” (August 2008 issue).

2. *Archaeological fieldwork in the Early Bronze Age cultures of the Cycladic Islands of Greece*. 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 has been then published in Monograph form by the McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research (*Keros, Dhaskalio Kavos: The Investigations of 1987-88*, 2007).

Thanks to the award of the second half of the Balzan Prize to Colin Renfrew, it has been possible to conduct the excavation of the site of Dhaskalio and Dhaskalio Kavos during the excavation seasons of 2006, 2007 and 2008. A preliminary report

on the 2006-2007 excavations has been published in “The Annual of the British School of Athens”, 102, 2007. A further preliminary report appears in volume 104. No more fieldwork is planned prior to the final publication of the 2006 to 2008 results. The excavations involved the participation of a number of young graduate archaeologists, a number of whom will be contributors to the final report, now in preparation.

Publications:

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- Malafouris, L., *The Sacred Engagement: Outline of a hypothesis about the origin of human ‘religious intelligence’*; in D.A. Barrowclough and C. Malone (Eds.), *Cult in Context, Reconsidering Ritual in Archaeology*, Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2007.
- Malafouris, L., *Is it ‘me’ or is it ‘mine’? The Mycenaean sword as a body-part*; in J. Robb and D. Boric (Eds.), *Past Bodies*, Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2008.
- Knappett, C., and Malafouris, L. (Eds.), *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*, New York, Springer, 2008.
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- Malafouris, L., *Between brains, bodies and things: tectonoetic awareness and the extended self*; in *The Sapient Mind*, 2008, 2009.
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- Malafouris, L., and Renfrew, C. (Eds.), *The Cognitive Life of Things: Recasting the Boundaries of the Mind*, Cambridge, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2010.
- Malafouris, L., *The Cognitive Life of Things: Archaeology, Material Engagement, and the Extended Mind*; in *The Cognitive Life of Things*, 2010.
- Malafouris, L., *Engaging the ‘missing mass’*; in *The Cognitive Life of Things*, 2010.
- Malafouris, L., *Grasping the concept of number: How did the sapient mind move beyond approximation?*; in C. Renfrew and I. Morley (Eds.), *The Archaeology of Measurement. Comprehending Heaven, Earth and Time in Ancient Societies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Knappett, C., Malafouris, L., and Tomkins, P., *Ceramics (as Containers)*; in D. Hicks and M.C. Beaudry (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Malafouris, L., *Prosthetic Bodies and Material Signs: Connections across the skin barrier and the scales of time*; in S. Jordan, J. Streeck, and I. Wachsmuth (Eds.), *The Enculturated Body. Time Scales of Embodied Meaning in Communication*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Malafouris L., *Sharing intentions with things and not simply about things: rethinking the “we” in “we” intentionality*; in N. Uomini and K. McDonald (Eds.), *Innovation and Evolution*, (forthcoming).
- Malafouris L., *Linear B as distributed cognition: Excavating a mind not limited by the skin*; in M. Jessen, N. Johanssen and H. J. Jensen (Eds.), *Excavating the Mind: Cross-sections Through Culture, Cognition and Materiality*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, (forthcoming).

Statement by the Prizewinner: *It is a great encouragement to the study of Pre-historic Archaeology and so, I hope, to furthering our shared understanding of the human condition.* Colin Renfrew (Rome, 18.11.2004)