

Colin Renfrew

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

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 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.

Institution Administering Research Funds:

The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge

Adviser for the Balzan General Prize Committee: Paolo Matthiae

Two Lines of Research in Prehistoric Archaeology

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.

1. Development of “Material Engagement Theory”

From 2005 until 2008, Dr. Lambros Malafouris held the position of Balzan Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Cognitive Archaeology at the McDonald Institute for

Archaeological Research in Cambridge. 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 from 7-9 April 2006. The papers presented at this symposium, after peer review, were published as a McDonald Institute Monograph in 2010 (Malafouris and Renfrew 2010).
- The second symposium, “The Sapient Mind: Archaeology meets Neuroscience”, was held at the McDonald Institute from 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 were 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*. (Renfrew, Frith and Malafouris 2008; 2009). The publication of *The Sapient 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).

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 was then published in monograph form by the McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research (Renfrew *et al.*, 2007).

Thanks to the award of 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* (Renfrew *et al.*, 2007; 2009). No further excavation is planned. The excavations involved the participation of a number of young graduate archaeologists, several of whom are contributors to the final report.

Researchers:

Lambros Malafouris

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 was 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), Oxford, UK (Classical Archaeology Seminar 2007), and the Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung (ZiF), Bielefeld, Germany (The Enculturated Body workshop 2008). Additionally, he has refereed articles for the *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).

Participants in the Excavation Project of 2006-2008:

Michael Boyd

Giorgos Gavalas

Myrto Georgakopoulou

Thomas Loughlin

Evi Margaritis

Barry Molloy

Ioanna Moutafi

Dimitris Tambakopoulos

Publications:

Malafouris, L. "Before and Beyond Representation: Towards an Enactive Conception of the Palaeolithic Image", in C. Renfrew and L. Morley, eds. *Image and Imagination: a Global History of Figurative Representation*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2007.

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.

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- Malafouris, L. "Engaging the 'Missing Mass'", in *The Cognitive Life of Things* (2010).
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- 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, 2011.

- Renfrew C. and I. Morley, eds. *The Archaeology of Measurement. Comprehending Heaven, Earth and Time in Ancient Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
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