



25th NEOLITHIC SEMINAR

Evolution and Cultural Changes in Prehistory

8 November to 9 November 2019

Department of Archaeology
Faculty of Arts
University of Ljubljana

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are delighted to announce that the 25th Neolithic Seminar will be held on Friday, 8 November through Saturday, 9 November 2019.

The conference aims to discuss perceptions, conceptions and (verbal and mathematical) modelling of evolution and cultural changes in prehistory as well as the ways in which culture extends biology, and how biology extends through culture. The development of the theory in evolutionary biology is older than in archaeology, and while Spencer's versions of evolution became an integral part of 'new archaeology' with Binford, in parallel studies, Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman and Boyd & Richerson introduced mathematically modelled cultural processes in prehistory that were based on Darwin's principles. They suggested that humans have a second inheritance system (i.e. culture) in addition to their genes. In this postulate, knowledge, skills and values residing in human brains constitute the cultural genotype, while artefacts and behaviours constitute the phenotype. The two systems may interact in complex processes, and while genetic inheritance is transmitted only vertically (from parents to child), cultural traits transmissions work through social learning and can be transmitted vertically (between unrelated individuals) as well.

Since then several interpretative models (e.g., gene-culture coevolution, dual-inheritance, human niche construction, punctuated equilibrium, punctuated accumulation of cultural innovations, cumulative culture, optimal foraging theory, diet breadth or prey-choice model) have been introduced in cultural evolution, population genetics, human ecology and human behavioural ecology but only a few were adopted in archaeology. Several concepts of culture have also been proposed, suggesting that culture can act as information acquired by social learning or as a system of behaviour and its products. Classic examples of interactions between cultural and genetic evolution are the Neolithic transition to agriculture and lactase persistence in adulthood.

On the other hand, the evolution of material culture is studied in environmental, demographic and social contexts, which focus on within- and between-group variability (e.g., sets of artefact assemblages, sites distributions), long-run effects of distinct cultural transmission mechanisms on material cultural evolution, on identification of phylogenetic relationships in artefacts assemblages, on long-term cultural stability and dynamics of change and diffusions

of innovations, and on cultural extinctions and instances of convergent and divergent cultural evolution.

The conference is an international event, organized continuously by the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. It remains a *locus eventi* that connects people and institutions globally. The Neolithic Seminar proceedings are published in the *Documenta Praehistorica* international journal (numbers XXI-XLIV are available at <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/DocumentaPraehistorica/issue/archive>).

CALL FOR PAPERS

This is the call for papers for the 25th Neolithic Seminar '*Evolution and Cultural Changes in Prehistory*'. Participation is in the form of a presentation followed by a discussion.

ABSTRACTS

Participants are invited to submit an abstract of 300 to 400 words, including name, institution and title of the paper. The deadline for the abstracts is 1 June 2019. Please send your abstracts to: mihael.budja@ff.uni-lj.si

