

Re: The Dawn of Art

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- *From:* Tom McDonald <kiltmac@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 08 Oct 2007 13:57:42 -0000
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On Oct 7, 8:38 pm, David <pchristain...@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Oct 7, 8:19 pm, Tom McDonald <kilt...@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

<snip>

Is this going to be your summary of Conard's arguments in the Archaeology article with which you started the thread?

No – I was answering Digger to give Conard's conclusions in more general terms than just the Archaeology article but you assumed a more narrow approach on my part.

IOW, I started the thread narrow but branched off to Zilhão, Rudgley, Bolus, and more general Conard.

Does this mean that you do not intend to summarize Conard's conclusions as given in the Curry article in Archaeology? As you said you would?

Alternatively, what do you want to talk about out of the mish-mash above?

Back up to –

Ancient Figurines Found–From First Modern Humans?
National Geographic News – John
Roachhttp://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/12/1217_031217_modernhum...

Cultural Significance SECTION –

Do the diving waterfowl and lion-man show shamanism?

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First tell me what you think, and why.

Cultural Modernity SECTION

"The ability to create figurines, which requires manipulation of complex tools, together with the fashioning and use of musical instruments and ornaments, is considered a sign of having reached a stage of fully developed cultural modernity."

"Evidence for refined artistry at such an early date in humans goes against the belief that artistic skills evolved over thousands of years, said Anthony Sinclair, an archaeologist at the University of Liverpool in England.

Sinclair, who wrote an accompanying commentary in *Nature* on the figurines, said they are 'beautifully produced,' suggesting that humans evolved their artistic skill rather quickly.

If the evolution of artistic skill occurred over longer time scales, crude relics ought to be present in the archaeological record. 'But when you look at the first bits of evidence, they seem to be of very good quality right away,' said Sinclair."

"Archaeologists are exploring several lines of evidence that suggest something occurred in the course of human evolution around 40,000 years ago that allowed humans to cross the threshold towards cultural modernity."

Compare to Zilhão's abstract –

"Abstract The earliest known personal ornaments come from the Middle Stone Age of southern Africa, c. 75,000 years ago, and are associated with anatomically modern humans. In Europe, such items are not recorded until after 45,000 radiocarbon years ago, in Neandertal-associated contexts that significantly predate the earliest evidence, archaeological or paleontological, for the immigration of modern humans; thus, they represent either independent invention or acquisition of the concept by long-distance diffusion, implying in both cases comparable levels of cognitive capability and performance. The emergence of figurative art postdates c. 32,000 radiocarbon years ago, several millennia after the time of Neandertal/modern human contact. These temporal patterns suggest that the emergence of 'behavioral modernity' was triggered by demographic and social processes and is not a species-specific phenomenon"

I would like the 2 of us to discuss specifically what the demographic

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and social processes MIGHT have been based on all archaeological evidence available. Hopefully, other sci.archers would be interested in what we say and would join in.

Clearly the archaeological evidence available is inadequate to do more than suggest what the 'demographic and social processes [might] have been'.

What do you think the evidence you have presented says about those issues? And what do you think would be needed to improve the grain of the evidence, to allow a better-grounded view of those issues?

<snip>

Just tossing a bunch of stuff against the barn and expecting other folks to dig into it, with no original effort on your part, will result in the rope bringing you, after a short drop, to a sudden stop, and a 'snap' of your neck.

That is not what was going on. Instead, I gave comprehensive background for sci.archers on what Conard thinks... a sign of a good teacher to get everybody onto the same page.

Don't imagine that you come here as a teacher. Try, instead, to be a useful participant, treating others here with the respect due those who, for the most part, have more to teach you than you them.

<snip>

I strongly suspect that my background as a teacher is totally unknown to you.

On the contrary. You have been at overly-great pains to tell us this. However, this is not a classroom; we are not your students; and you have, as noted, far more to learn from others here than you have to teach us.

Try sticking to the subject, and giving us some indication that you understand the issues involved. Just quoting folks at us won't cut it. Anyone here could do what you have done with little effort.

What no one here but you *can* do is give us your analysis of, for a start, Conard's conclusions in the Curry article in Archaeology.

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