

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Exploring the Origins of Today's Humans
Friday, February 21, 2020



Jean-Jacques Hublin began his career at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), before being hired as Professor of Anthropology at the University of Bordeaux. Since 2004, he has been Director at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig (Germany), where he founded the Department of Human Evolution. He has been a pioneer in the development of virtual paleoanthropology. His main research interests address the processes associated with hominin diversification and replacement during the last half million years. He has conducted extensive fieldwork in Europe and North Africa. Professor Hublin is the President of the European Society for the Study of Human Evolution (ESHE), founded in 2011.



Katerina Harvati is Professor of Paleoanthropology and Director of the Cross-Faculty Center of Advanced Studies 'Words, Bones, Genes, Tools' at the University of Tübingen, Germany. Her work focuses on the evolution and paleobiology of Pleistocene Neanderthals, on modern human origins and dispersal, and on the interplay between the genotype, skeletal phenotype and environment, with the use of the cutting edge methodologies of 3-D geometric morphometric and virtual anthropology. She is the recipient of two highly prestigious European Research Council grants, and was awarded the Research Award of the state of Baden-Württemberg for basic research in 2014. She has conducted fieldwork in Europe and Africa, most recently in Greece.



Tim Weaver is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Davis. He studies human evolution, with a focus on the origins, evolution, and disappearance of Neandertals, and the related topic of the appearance of humans who were anatomically and behaviorally modern. While his emphasis is on the later phases of human evolution, he has also worked on earlier periods, mostly in the context of the evolution of human bipedal walking and running and childbirth. In his work, he strives to integrate approaches and datasets from population and molecular genetics with traditional studies of the fossil and archaeological records.



John Hawks is the Vilas-Borghesi Distinguished Achievement Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His work focuses on human evolution combining perspectives from fossil evidence and genetics. He is a core member of the team that discovered the new species *Homo naledi*, from the Rising Star cave system of South Africa. He is known internationally for his work in public engagement with science and advocacy for open access.



Sriram Sankararaman is an Assistant Professor of Computer Science and Human Genetics at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research interests lie at the interface of computer science, statistics and biology. He is interested in developing statistical machine learning algorithms to understand evolutionary processes and the genetics of complex phenotypes.

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Paola Villa received a doctorate in Classical Archaeology from the University of Rome and a Ph.D. in Prehistoric Archaeology from the University of California at Berkeley. She was full professor at the University of Bordeaux in France for five years. She is currently based at the Museum of the University of Colorado in Boulder. Her research interests are on the early phases of European prehistory, bone taphonomy, the Middle Stone Age of South Africa, and the behavior and lithic technology of Neandertals. Her work has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, the Leakey Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation and grants from South Africa and France.



Teresa Steele is a Professor of Anthropology at UC Davis and a paleoanthropologist who studies the later phases of human evolution – the emergence of people who were behaviorally and morphologically like recent humans. Her research focuses on why some of these human populations spread out of Africa about 50,000 years ago and were able to replace the Neandertals. She is particularly interested in the origins of recent human cultural abilities and the relationship between changes in technology, subsistence, and demography. She studies the mode and tempo of human behavioral evolution during this time through zooarchaeology – reconstructing human subsistence and ecology through the patterns of variation found in animal bones and mollusks preserved in archaeological sites. She conducts research in South Africa, Morocco and France.



Joshua Akey is Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the Princeton University Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics. He received a B.S. degree in Molecular Biology from the University of Pittsburgh and a Ph.D. in Human Genetics from the University of Texas-Houston. His research focuses on understanding the evolutionary forces that have shaped patterns of human genomic diversity and the genetic architecture of complex phenotypes.



Iain Mathieson is an Assistant Professor of Genetics at the University of Pennsylvania. Trained in mathematics and population genetics, his work focuses on the genetic basis, distribution and evolution of complex traits in humans. He uses ancient DNA to record and understand the evolution of complex traits as humans migrated throughout the world, developed agriculture, and created and experienced new environments. These histories contribute to the diversity of our species today and his work describes how present-day humans emerged as a product of these evolutionary forces.

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