

The ancient mind: elements of cognitive archaeology

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Abstrak

One of the most troubling problems in archaeology is to determine the manner and content of prehistoric thought. A fundamental challenge is to develop the theory, methodology and tools to understand human cognition. Cognitive archaeology as a subject is still in its infancy, and archaeologists are adopting a variety of approaches. One direction has been to develop an 'interpretationist', anti-scientific, literary approach. Another has been to use a linguistic framework and develop a hermeneutic, semiotic approach. A third approach develops a new direction in prehistoric cognitive research which is rooted in the scientific tradition and in an empirical methodology. It draws upon the cognitive, the mathematical and the computer sciences in an attempt to understand what techniques can be used appropriately on archaeological data, and how to implement them efficiently. This is the approach adopted by the contributors to *The Ancient Mind*. Together, they begin to develop a science of cognitive archaeology.