

# Preface

The first four papers in this volume were delivered at an open meeting held at the Academy's premises on 28 April 2000. The second four were delivered at a meeting limited to invited discussants which was held on the following day at the premises of the Novartis Foundation. My own concluding paper was added subsequently when I found that I had more to say than could be accommodated within an editorial introduction; it presents no original findings of any kind, but I hope that if nothing else it may help other sociologists to recognize the relevance to their own theoretical concerns of the issues raised in the volume as a whole.

The speakers and discussants were all chosen with a view to promoting discussion between archaeologists and other behavioural scientists sharing a common evolutionary perspective. My impression is that a number of them found it easier and more rewarding to communicate across disciplinary boundaries than they had initially expected. But at all events, the meetings confirmed the extent to which a thorough understanding of the critical early stages of human sociocultural evolution requires the collaboration of a range of disciplines, each of which has its own distinctive contribution to make.

My thanks are due to Rosemary Lambeth at the Academy and Gregory Bock at the Foundation for their support, to Hilary Edwards for secretarial and editorial assistance, and to James Rivington for his help and guidance in relation to publication.

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