

## PREFACE

The chronology, place of origin and number of dispersals events of the earliest Americans remain highly debated topics when discussing the peopling of the New World. In these discussions, disparate, and sometimes conflicting, conclusions are reached by researchers working from different perspectives, be they archaeological, linguistic, paleoanthropological or genetic. Reconciling these points of view requires not only a common occasion for dialogue, but also an understanding of the methodology and limitations of each approach, and an effort to address the underlying reasons for disparities. Promoting such understanding is a central goal of the DFG Center for Advanced Studies “Words, Bones, Genes, Tools.” The Center’s second annual symposium, titled “New Perspectives on the Peopling of the Americas” and held in Tübingen on November 4-6, 2016, focused on the interdisciplinary study of the settlement of the Americas and the subsequent evolution and adaptation of human populations on that continent. This conference, organized by Katerina Harvati, Gerhard Jäger, and Hugo Reyes-Centeno, brought together scholars representing various institutions from Argentina, Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands, Peru, and the United States, and gathered at the imposing medieval setting of the historical Tübingen city center, for two days of talks and lively discussion. Most of the papers presented at the conference, as well as some additions to the original program, are collected here as chapter contributions.

This volume focuses on linguistic and archaeological evidence from Latin America and the Caribbean. It is organized by the primary lines of evidence used in making critical inferences on the peopling of the continent. The first three chapters harness linguistic data to assess the antiquity and affinities of languages, starting at a world-wide scale, then within the Pacific coast of Latin America, and finally into the interior of South America. The following two chapters use the chronometric data of archaeological sites to understand the mode and timing of the first human settlements in South America, with a review of the earliest radiocarbon dates for the Southern Cone and a case study from the Peruvian Andes. Two subsequent chapters provide reports on human skeletal assemblages



**Fig. 1.** Symposium participants in front of the *Alte Aula* historical building of the University of Tübingen on November 5, 2016.

from archaeological sites in Peru and Brazil, while another surveys cranial variation of recent populations in Argentina. The volume concludes with a review of the peopling of the Caribbean.

Chapter 1 (Nichols and Bentz, this volume) presents a quantitative investigation of the influence of geographic factors (especially altitude and longitude) on grammatical complexity. The latter is operationalized in three different ways, and all three measures positively correlate with altitude and longitude. The authors suggest that these correlations are driven by socio-linguistic factors, such as the intensity of language contact and the impact of second language acquisition. Regarding the settlement of the Americas, this give further confirmation for their origin in Eastern Asia, and it points to a considerable time depth, sufficient for the correlation between complexity and altitude to evolve.

Chapter 2 (Urban, this volume) explores possible linguistic evidence for pre-Columbian language contact between speakers of indigenous languages along the Pacific coast from Middle America to South America. The article especially focuses on maritime vocabulary. Against an interdisciplinary background regarding possible population contacts, relevant lexical forms are systematically compared in search for possible shared items. The author reports substantial evidence for several distinct coastal interaction spheres. Also, he finds tantalizing initial evidence for long-distance contact between Central and South America, which might spark further research.

In Chapter 3 (Muysken, this volume), what information can be gleaned about the settlement history of South America is probed from the distribution of grammatical features across the languages of that conti-

ment. The author finds little evidence for shared innovations that would support deep language families. He does provide evidence, though, for a broad east-west division, with a larger degree of cohesion in the western part. The author argues that the shared features constitute joint retentions, reflecting a generally slower pace of language change in higher population density areas.

In Chapter 4 (Politis and Prates, this volume), the authors present an overview of the evidence for the earliest settlement of the Southern Cone of South America. They analyze a database of radiocarbon dates from several hundred archaeological sites and conclude that, although an early signal of human presence can be detected at around 14.5 ka, human occupation becomes much more evident some thousand years later at 13 ka.

Chapter 5 (Rademaker and Hodgins, this volume) is a case study of radiocarbon dating at the Cuncaicha rockshelter site in the Peruvian high Andes, where human occupation is documented since the terminal Pleistocene, ~12.5 ka. The authors present new dating results and employ a Bayesian framework on human skeletal dates in order to relate how human burials might represent discrete episodes of occupation at the rockshelter.

Also from Cuncaicha, Chapter 6 (Francken et al., this volume) reports on the human skeletal remains. The authors conduct initial osteological analyses, presenting their findings on the demographic profiles of the Cuncaicha individuals, including age and sex. In addition, they discuss possible pathologies and etiologies, as well as how funerary practices conform or differ to other contemporaneous samples from the region. The authors explore how study of the human skeletons may contribute toward understanding population continuity and biological change or replacement.

Westward in South America, Chapter 7 (Strauss, this volume), concentrates on the possible Pleistocene human burials from the region of Serra da Capivara, Brazil. This area has provided a wealth of archaeological and human skeletal remains, which, however, has not always been investigated thoroughly. Strauss critically reviews the results of previous research in this region, as well as presents new findings from recent excavations.

Chapter 8 (Menéndez and Giusti, this volume) provides original results from a study of the cranial shape of twelve prehistoric populations from Argentina. Applying a set of spatial statistics, the authors report a latitudinal pattern of robust individuals along the southern Atlantic coast compared to more gracile individuals in the Argentinian Andes. They attribute this pattern to ecological factors and infer that the basicranial variation of these populations was shaped through directional selection.

In Chapter 9, Roksandic and Roksandic (this volume) present a synthesis of the known archaeological, paleogenetic and linguistic evidence from the Caribbean islands. They critically discuss hypotheses of the settlement of this region in light of both existing and new results of their interdisciplinary project in the region.

We are grateful to all the participants of the “New Perspectives on the Peopling of the Americas” symposium and all the contributors to this volume for their outstanding presentations, critical discussions, and excellent chapters. We also thank Johannes Krause and Igor Yanovich for chairing some of the symposium sessions, as well as Lumila Menéndez for facilitating introductory and finalizing discussion with us; Monika Doll, whose administration and organizational skills enabled the success of the conference; the University of Tübingen students and members of the DFG Center for Advanced Studies who were instrumental in its organization: Judith Beier, Abel Bosman, Michael Francken, Domenico Giusti, Melania Ioannidou, Alessio Maiello, Franziska Mandt, Tommaso Mori, Hannes Rathmann, Sebastian Scheiffele, Pavel Sofroniev, and Mei-Shin Wu; the colleagues who kindly gave their time and effort to provide reviews of the manuscripts; and María López Sosa translating the chapter abstract into Spanish. We are deeply grateful to the University of Tübingen President, Dr. Bernd Engler, and Dr. Peter Grathwohl, Vice President for Research, University of Tübingen, for their continuing support. Funding for the conference was provided by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, in the framework of the *DFG Kollegforschergruppe* “Words, Bones, Genes, Tools” (DFG FOR 2237). Last but not least, we thank our families, spouses, and partners for their patience and support.

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