



BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIUM
Monday, May 11th, 4:15 p.m.

**HOW EARLY IS THE MODERN HUMAN SETTLEMENT OF EUROPE?
ISSUES OF SAMPLE ACCURACY, SAMPLE ASSOCIATION
AND SAMPLE CONTEXT**

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The evidence from Human Paleontology and Paleogenetics now concurs in placing Neandertals among the ancestors of extant humans. Archaeology, in turn, shows that the cultural indicators of behavioural modernity used to assess the African evidence are also found among European Neanderthals many millennia before anatomically modern human groups first began to disperse into the continent. Yet, of late, the uniting motto of much dating research has been to claim that modern humans were present in Europe earlier than previously thought, and to infer from such a revised chronology that (a) modern humans were the authors of the transitional technocomplexes of the Early Upper Paleolithic, and (b) the Middle Paleolithic archaeology Neanderthals are associated with is pre-symbolic. The evidence to that effect is derived from a number of sites, namely Kebara, Manot, Grotte du Renne, Kent's Cavern, Grotta del Cavallo, Geissenklösterle or Willendorf. Due consideration of site formation processes, of the nature of the samples, and of their stratigraphic association with the contexts they are supposed to date shows that such claims are empirically untenable. The earliest European modern human are those from Oase, in Romania, dated no earlier than 41,400 years ago and, other than paradigmatic prejudice rooted in 19th-century views of evolution as progress, no reason exists to question the Neanderthal authorship of the Uluzzian or the Châtelperronian.

Venue: Leibnizstraße 1, Seminar Room 204