

Preface

This volume is the result of an interdisciplinary symposium organized by the research center “The Role of Culture in Early Expansions of Humans” (ROCEEH) of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities held at Hohentübingen Castle at Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen from June 15–18, 2011. Our goal for the conference was to produce a unified model of cultural evolution integrating ethological accounts of culture in great apes, sea mammals, and birds, as well as to debate the nature of culture as viewed from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences. The resulting model of the expansion of cultural capacities consists of two parts: a theoretical framework tracing the developmental dimensions of cultural performances and a model of the expansion of cultural capacities drawn from ethological and archeological data on information transmission. This volume presents many of the ideas that the participants at the meeting presented and reflects an up-to-date assessment of the state of international research on the evolution of cultural behavior.

We sincerely thank our colleagues who supported this publication with their reviews and many constructive comments. Other than the authors and editors, these include: Nick Ashton (University College London), Anne Delagnes (Université de Bordeaux), Robin Dennell (University of Sheffield), Anna Belfer-Cohen (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Natalie Uomini (University of Liverpool), Christoph Antweiler (Universität Bonn), Gerald Hartung (Universität Wuppertal), Erella Hovers (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Isabelle Parsons (University of South Africa), Martin Porr (University of Western Australia), Felix Riede (Aarhus Universitet), Rachel Kendal (Durham University), Luke Premo (Washington State University), Robert Boyd (Arizona State University), Paola Villa (University of Colorado Museum), Gerd-Christian Weniger (Neanderthal Museum Mettmann), Thomas Wynn (University of Colorado), Bennett G. Galef (McMaster University), Jürgen Richter (Universität Köln), and Thiemo Breyer (Universität Köln).

We would like to extend our thanks to the series editors Eric Delson and Eric Sargis, and Fermine Shaly and Jeffrey Taub at Springer, for their support, encouragement, and patience in producing this volume. We are grateful to the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities for funding ROCEEH, the University of Tübingen for hosting the symposium, and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for providing financial support.

Finally, we hope that the lively discussions, debate, and good cheer that accompanied the meeting in Tübingen will be captured in these papers.

Tübingen
March 2015

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The Nature of Culture

Based on an Interdisciplinary Symposium 'The Nature of Culture', Tübingen, Germany

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2016, X, 151 p. 38 illus., 11 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-94-017-7424-6