

## **ISHE MEETS IN AN ANTIQUE WORLD: A BRIEF REPORT ON THE VISHE SUMMER INSTITUTE IN ATHENS, GREECE**

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The Hellenic Human Ethology Group located in the city of Athens in Greece in cooperation with the National Technical University of Athens were the fantastic hosts of the V Biennial Summer Institute of the International Society for Human Ethology from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2015. Hosting and organizing an ISHE meeting in Greece for the first time was of great significance for the Hellenic Human Ethology Group to strengthen this discipline in the country.

On the one hand ISHE Summer Institutes intend to offer students an opportunity to present their current research, exchange acquired knowledge and learn from experienced researchers, on the other hand experienced researchers have an unique chance to broaden their horizon by coming across new or hitherto unfamiliar approaches. Continuing this

tradition, the ISHE crowd enjoyed three and a half days full of interesting talks, posters and workshops that fostered cooperation as well as fruitful and productive exchange of experiences and research initiatives.

The plenary talk by Christopher Henshilwood and Karen van Niekerk on behavioral evolution in southern Africa on the one hand and the historical survey on the human condition from classic Greek thinkers to present day human ethology given by Wulf Schiefenhövel on the other reflected on the importance of a holistic approach and interdisciplinarity when it comes to the investigation respectively interpretation of our human nature. The latter talk took place in the impressive halls of the neoclassical old parliament building of Athens and convinced not only with its historical content, but also the atmosphere was incredibly immersive and fascinating.

Another wonderful plenary talk by Peter K. Smith scrutinized the history of play and the evidence of developmental functions especially as regards to humans but also animals. The topic of play was further addressed by Glenn Weisfeld and Carol Cronin Weisfeld in their talk about the legacy and work of Owen Aldis. A paper reviewing the role of play as an emotion can be found as a theoretical review in this issue (Weisfeld & Cronin Weisfeld, 2016).

Further oral presentations and posters covered a broad variety of novel investigations and research ideas ranging from sex differences in caffeine and calorie consumption (Sloan Kruger, Castor & Kruger, 2016) to the recognition of disgust and facial expressions across the menstrual cycle (Mikolić, 2016). In the symposium on ethology and art the ambiguous gestural accentuation of the female genital in apotropaic figures (Sütterlin, 2016) was examined. Eveline Seghers' (2016) talk on ultimate and proximate factors in evolutionary thinking on art completes the selection of ISHE research topics displayed on its 2015 Summer Institute which can be retraced in this bulletin.

Besides a great conference program, our hosts also organized an unforgettable social program offering several culinary and cultural events. Among the cultural highlights, the instructive visit of the Acropolis museum and the Acropolis itself as well as the visit of the old parliament combined with a bus trip around the city center have to be emphasized. Finally, the exciting research and the impressive historical excursions were rounded up by the conference dinner held at a marvelous restaurant on the Lycabetus hill, which offered the most impressive view across Athens with all its ancient flair.

To put it in a nutshell, the 2015 ISHE summer institute was, as always, very stimulating and instructive for students who just started dealing with human behavior and evolution, and experienced researchers alike.

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