**ThinkSpatial**

The UCSB brown-bag forum on spatial thinking

*Presents*

**Keith Clarke**  
Geography, UCSB

**What is the World’s Oldest Map?**

Ellison 5824  
12:00 p.m. Tuesday, 19 March 2013

**Abstract.** I approach this question in two ways, noting that most existing histories imply that maps and writing co-evolved about 5K years ago. First, I discuss two old maps, the Catalhoyuk mural from Turkey, and the sandstone blocks from Abauntz cave, Spain. Both maps have their doubters, but clearly imply that maps predate writing by millennia. Secondly, I ask what functions a map performs, set against some ideas about why so few ancient maps survive. I raise the conjecture that maps are so integral to the dispersal of Homo sapiens after leaving Africa 60K years ago that not only did ancient humans use and understand maps, their brains were hardwired for their production and memorization. If really ancient maps still exist, where are they likely to be and how can we find them? I conclude by linking spatial thinking to this ancient cartography, and demonstrating why it is important to reactivate this part of the human brain today.

**Keith C. Clarke,** Professor of Geography at UCSB, is a research cartographer with an M.A. and Ph. D. from the University of Michigan. His research focuses on applications of analytical cartography in environmental simulation modeling, modeling urban growth using cellular automata, terrain mapping and analysis, and real-time visualization. He is the author of three textbooks, including *Getting Started with Geographic Information Systems, 5th edition*, and over 175 book chapters, journal articles, and papers in the fields of cartography, remote sensing, and geographic information systems. Clarke served as Chair of the National Academy of Science's Mapping Sciences Committee and of the National Research Council's studies on the National Map and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency. For his role as a member of the USGS Geography Discipline long-term science planning team, he received the USGS John Wesley Powell Award.

The objectives of the ThinkSpatial brown-bag presentations are to exchange ideas about spatial perspectives in research and teaching, to broaden communication and cooperation across disciplines among faculty and graduate students, and to encourage the sharing of tools and concepts.

Please contact Don Janelle (ext 5267, janelle@spatial.ucsb.edu) to review and schedule possible discussion topics or presentations that share your disciplinary interest in spatial thinking.