

## **IS (STILL) HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY USEFUL?**

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### **ABSTRACTS**

#### **THE STATUS OF THE HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN ROMANIA AND HUNGARY**

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This paper offers a comparative overview of the status of the history of archaeology in Romania and Hungary in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It aims to examine the reasons why the history of archaeology is not officially recognized as a discipline in these countries by the local archaeological communities. It critically discusses the emergence and subsequent development of the interest in the history of archaeology in both countries in the context of the previously mentioned situation. It also presents and analyses the main themes that Romanian and Hungarian scholars have dealt with when writing on the history of archaeology, the way they have approached the selected topics, and the methods and methodologies that they have used in their research. Finally, the paper reflects on the past and current trends in pursuing the history of archaeology in the discussed countries.

## **NEW BRANCH OF SCIENCE OR JUST SUBSIDIARY DISCIPLINE? – HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN POLAND**

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The history of archaeology in Poland dates back to the first decades of the 20th century. Initially, it did not deal with a consideration of the methodology of archaeology, the development of terminology or changes in the formulation of questions and research problems. The first works in its scope were memoirs, often biographical. Studies focused on presenting the history of research in the selected area were also conducted. It was only in the middle of the 20th century that synthetic works on the history of the development of archaeology as a scientific discipline (both in terms of creating organizational and legal structures, as well as the activities of various scientific centers and the achievements of individual researchers) began to appear in Poland. Later on, works discussing the development of scientific literature in the field of archaeology appeared. The end of the 20th century was an opportunity to create monumental collective works summarizing the achievements of Polish archaeology in the second half of the 20th century.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, a new quality was brought to the work that highlighted the impact of politics and ideology on the methodology and interpretation of the results of archaeological research. The topics discussed included the development of archaeological ideas, the understanding of particular issues and terms within the framework of various currents and trends in archaeology. An important achievement was the initiative of joint works with archaeologists and historians of science from the neighboring countries of Poland (Germany, Czech Republic, Ukraine) on mutual relations and common history. During this time, biographies of the most important Polish archaeologists were also created.

Nowadays, more and more often, the history of archaeology is no longer perceived as a mere help in identifying monuments from old collections or in searching for information about historical excavations. It is certainly no longer considered a collection of stories about the history of own discipline, which help to create a professional myth and a common identity. It is, however, a reflection on the methodology and development of archaeological thought and the complex processes and conditions that influenced its development. However, the history of archaeology in

Poland is perceived as a subsidiary discipline for archaeology. There are only a few researchers who deal with this professionally (i.e. for whom it is the main subject of scientific interest) in Poland. At universities the history of archaeology is mentioned only incidentally, as a part of a broad introduction to archaeology.

Attempts to officially acknowledge it as a separate scientific discipline, which were undertaken at least twice, ended in failure. However, these efforts have recently been relaunched. Doctoral theses on archaeology, which are currently being prepared in the main scientific centers in Poland, also offer a good perspective for the development of the history of archaeology. The group of professional historians of archaeology will therefore grow in the coming years.

## **FOR AN HISTORY OF ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY**

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In 1911 Luigi Pigorini gave an extremely detailed description of the first 50 years of prehistoric archaeology in Italy.

Unfortunately, Pigorini's attempt remained isolated till the Seventies, when Vittorio Bracco and Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli wrote histories of Italian Classical archaeology (over all history of ancient art); in the meanwhile the main tradition was the history of archaeological collections and collectors or the role of ancient art in medieval and Renaissance periods, a field of studies often linked with the history of antiquarianism.

Only from the late Eighties Italian archaeology began to reflect seriously on his history. As a matter of fact a national congress on the history of prehistoric archaeology was held only in 2011 leading today to a re-evaluation of these studies.

After this general panorama, our paper deals with a specific case-study, the history of prehistoric researches in western Lucania,

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## **HISTORIAN OF ARCHAEOLOGY EMBEDDED: REFLEXIONS FROM TWO RECENT RESEARCH PROJECTS INTEGRATING ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY**

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In this paper I will propose a reflection on how science historians can participate in archaeological research projects. Including a research history at the beginning of archaeological publications is not new. However, the development of the history of archaeology as a field of research since the 1990s has redefined the role of historians of archaeology in this discipline. Several examples of archaeological research where archaeological historians have been integrated will be mentioned, such as the excavation of the Niah cave in Malaysia, or the Moulin Quignon excavation in France. The latter case has been used as an example for two prehistoric archaeological projects in the French Pyrenees: the re-excavation of the Gatzarria cave, and the PAVO project ("Ancient prehistory of the Ossau Valley"). These two projects have in common that they deal with sites formerly studied by archaeologist Georges Laplace (1914-2004). I will present my participation in

these projects as a specialist in the history of archaeology and the of Georges Laplace's case in particular.

## **THE HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN MUSEUMS**

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Museums were important in the foundation of archaeology, while collecting and organising archaeological objects has shaped archaeological narratives. However, history of archaeology remains hardly represented in museums. This contribution aims at showing how displaying objects in museums has enabled, implicitly and explicitly, to demonstrate the pertinence of the scientific discourse in archaeology and how archaeological assemblages and ancient collections tell histories, which can be mobilised in the museums discourse.

## **THE LOWER PALAEOLITHIC SITE OF CIMITERO DI ATELLA: BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT**

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The Lower Palaeolithic site of Cimitero di Atella was discovered and excavated for 20 years by E. Borzatti and his team. During these years, the research group tried to link scientific research and popular education. Indeed, if they published many papers in international review, they also pay attention to the valorisation as the site was protected and open to visit for the public. After the end of the Borzatti mission in 2010, the site was abandoned, endangering the archaeological find.

The resumption of activities at Atella in 2015 is part of a new project of the French School of Rome on the settlement dynamic during the Palaeolithic in Italy (quinquennial program PALEO). The research at Atella focus on fieldwork, lithic and faunal remains study but also on protection and enhancement of the site. The aim of this project is hence to join a high scientific standard, but also to promote the scientific valorisation of the site for the local community.

In this presentation, we will focus on the history of research at Atella and in Basilicata since the 1970 and try to point out the consequence on the scientific research and local activity. Then, we will present to new valorisation project proposed in collaboration with Atella municipality. This brings up questions about the role of archaeology in the city in the current context.

## **NEW PERSPECTIVES IN THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES: OLD WORLD/NEW WORLD COMPARATIVE ANALYSES THEN AND NOW**

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Transformative technological advances in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including steam power, electricity, the telephone and the automobile, made possible an active exchange of ideas between Old and New World scholars about the interpretation of the human past. What would eventually emerge as the discipline of professional archaeology was influenced by developments in the natural sciences, especially evolutionary biology, as well as the comparative analysis of cultures that emerged as one of the legacies of colonialism. A corollary of this expansion of geographic scope was the

recognition that past human responses to the environment and cultural adaptation could be viewed as universal rather than particular. Intellectual cross-fertilization across the Atlantic divide in the 19th century was the result of several factors, including migration to the US following the failed revolution of 1848, the increasing professionalization of the historical disciplines, and the establishment of institutions whose members exchanged publications as well as correspondence on a regular basis. In the aftermaths of WW I and II, however, many of the conduits that had facilitated intellectual exchanges between the scholarly communities on either side of the Atlantic were closed off, especially in areas of the US dominated by German-born populations. Natural history museums like the Smithsonian, the Chicago Field Museum and the Milwaukee Public Museum gradually removed prehistoric European material from permanent exhibitions and extensive collections were permanently mothballed. Archaeology in the US became increasingly inward-turned, focusing on indigenous cultures viewed through an anthropological lens rather than using the direct historical approach characteristic of European prehistory. The ethnic and cultural disconnect between Euro-American archaeologists and native cultures both past and present made the analytical distance that characterized the New Archaeology possible and resulted in more scientific and less humanistic approaches to the study of the past. The post-processual counter-Reformation that began in the 1980s stressed contextual rather than comparative analysis in an attempt to re-humanize the interpretation of the past but in the process the commonalities of human responses to similar conditions was deemphasized. In the past decade, as this paper will demonstrate, prehistoric archaeology in the US appears to be experiencing a return to a more comparative approach to understanding human cultural evolution after almost a hundred years of relatively isolationist scholarship and Old World archaeology, including the prehistory of Europe, has become theoretically and methodologically relevant again.

## **HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: HERITAGE, MEMORY, TERRITORY**

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Trying to answer to the provocative question «Is (still) history of archaeology useful?», we will explore the useful links that may and must be established between the history of archaeology and local development, especially if we take in account some of the U.N. Millennium Goals. Having the city of Évora as an exploratory example of this exercise we will demonstrate how the history of archaeology can contribute to the knowledge of a local territory and communities when they all become more closely involved in the intricate process of gathering information, of getting aware of the strength of archaeology in the construction of identity narratives, and in the renovation of their own economies through the recuperation and reinvention of traditions. A complex process which demands the participation of various local actors: university researchers, museum directors, local dealers, touristic technicians, etc. But... does this mean that without these links, without this awareness, history of archaeology is no longer "useful"?