

New Advances in the History of Archaeology

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edited by

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Sophie A. de Beaune, Alessandro Guidi, Oscar Moro Abadía, Massimo Tarantini

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Foreword to the XVII Uispp Congress Proceedings Series Edition

The UISPP commission 'History of Archaeology' has always been active in promoting scientific research relating to the history of pre- and protohistoric archaeology; over the years of activities, it has encouraged scientific research in the field providing a transversal and international perspective. This impressive volume represents only one of the numerous scientific publications edited by the commission from its institution to today.

The volume 'New Advances in the History of Archeology' is the result of the organization of three highly successful sessions within the XVIII World UISPP Congress held in Paris in 2018. This publication, structured in three parts, ranges from the history of the first stratigraphic excavations, to the interdisciplinary aspects of research and constitutes a valuable analysis of how modern archeology has reached this point today.

Published by some of the most important researchers on the international scene in this area (Sophie A. de Beaune, Alessandro Guidi, Oscar Moro Abadía, Massimo Tarantini), the volume undoubtedly contributes to increasing the prestige of the UISPP, demonstrating how it is a catalyst for researchers and ideas.

As secretary-general of the International Union of Prehistoric and Prot-historic Sciences, it was a great honor for me to write these few introductory lines, as this work underlines the success of the Paris congress and well demonstrates how the 'History of Archeology' commission constitutes a precious resource for the UISPP.

L'UISPP a une longue histoire, à partir de 1865, avec le Congrès International d'Anthropologie et d'Archéologie Préhistorique (C.I.A.A.P.), jusqu'en 1931, date de la Fondation à Berne de l'UISPP. En 1955, l'UISPP est devenu membre du Conseil International de philosophie et de Sciences humaines, associée à l'UNESCO. L'UISPP repose sur plus de trente commissions scientifiques qui représentent un réseau représentatif des spécialistes mondiaux de la préhistoire et de la protohistoire, couvrant toutes les spécialités de l'archéologie : historiographie, théorie et méthodes de l'archéologie ; Culture matérielle par période (Paléolithique, néolithique, âge du bronze, âge du fer) et par continents (Europe, Asie, Afrique, Pacifique, Amérique), paléoenvironnement et paléoclimatologie ; Archéologie dans des environnements spécifiques (montagne, désert, steppes, zone tropicale), archéométrie ; Art et culture ; Technologie et économie ; anthropologie biologique ; archéologie funéraire ; archéologie et sociétés.

Le XVIII^e Congrès mondial de l'UISPP en 2018, accueilli à Paris en France par l'université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne et avec le soutien de toutes les institutions françaises liées à l'archéologie, comportait 122 sessions, plus de 1800 communications de scientifiques venus de près de 60 pays et de tous les continents.

Les actes du congrès, édités par l'UISPP comme dans des numéros spéciaux de revues scientifiques spécialisées, constitueront un des résultats les plus importants du Congrès.

Marta Azarello
Secretary-General /
Secrétaire général UISPP

Foreword to the volume

Following the volume edited for the 2014 Burgos Congress (G. Delley, M. Díaz-Andreu, F. Djindjian, V.M. Fernandez, A. Guidi, M.-A. Kaeser eds., *History of Archaeology: International Perspectives*, Oxford 2016), this book collects the papers presented at the 2018 Paris Congress in the three sessions devoted to the history of archaeology.

The title (*New Advances in the History of Archaeology*) reflects our intention to explore new topics in this field of study and, at the same time, to enlarge the yet fundamental results of the Burgos sessions.

The first session, *From stratigraphy to stratigraphic excavation in pre- and protohistoric archaeology* organized by Alessandro Guidi and Massimo Tarantini, focused on the development of stratigraphical methods in the archaeology in many European countries.

The second session, *Epistemology, History and Philosophy of Science: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the History of Archaeology*, organized by Sophie A. de Beaune and Oscar Moro Abadía examined the intersections between archaeology and other disciplines like history and philosophy of science.

Most of the papers presented in the third session, *Archaeology and interdisciplinarity, from the 19th century to present-day research*, organized by Laura Coltofean, Géraldine Delley, Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Marc-Antoine Kaeser will be published somewhere else; we succeeded anyway to collect four papers dedicated to the development of different types of interdisciplinarity in Europe and South America.

Marcelo J. Toledo summarizes a long and interesting debate about ‘fossil man’ in Argentina involving fossil traders and reputed scientists (a strange but not unusual ‘mix’ in that period) in the second half of XIX century.

Aurora Pețan tells us the peculiar history of the first excavations in Sarmizegetusa in the early XIX century characterized by an interesting and innovative collaboration between archaeologists and specialists trained in geology, mineralogy and metallurgy.

Marzena Woźny explores the history of the first excavations in the caves of Galicia carried on by the Academy of Arts and Sciences founded in Krakow in 1872. Also in this research archaeologists, geologists, anthropologists, botanists and historians were involved.

Massimo Tarantini’s paper deals with the relationships, in Italian prehistoric archaeology, between the institutionalization processes and the slow and contrasted progresses of interdisciplinarity between 1875 and 1954.

To sum up, the papers that we present in this volume clearly demonstrate the importance of the history of archaeology to think more critically about our methods and aims of research.

Alessandro Guidi
President of the Commission ‘History of Archaeology’
Executive Committee of the UISPP

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Part I

From Stratigraphy to Stratigraphic Excavation in Pre- and Protohistoric Archaeology

Session organized by Alessandro Guidi
and Massimo Tarantini

Introduction

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Stratigraphic excavation is practically the foundation of archaeology; yet scholars have not yet attempted a detailed and comparative historical examination of its effective achievements.

We are not referring to the acknowledgment of an effective need to place archaeological material in a stratigraphic framework (accomplished in prehistory in the mid-19th century), but rather to the effective establishment of stratigraphy as a key factor in archaeological excavation, an innovation that we can date to the beginning of the 20th century.

The transition from a mere recognition of stratigraphy to the practice of stratigraphic excavation can be analyzed from various points of view:

- A practical dimension, concerning how an archaeological excavation is conducted. A stratigraphic excavation requires the presence of an archaeologist in the field, and it is well known that for many years this presence lacked continuity and mostly concerned the supervision of specialized workers. When can we say that archaeologists effectively began to excavate in person? Was the process favored by new administrative conditions, or was it the consequence of a new methodological awareness?
- A theoretical dimension. From the beginning the attribution of archaeological finds to a stratum was a method of relative chronology and, at the same time, the main way to reconstruct the connections between artifacts. Today we know that archaeological strata can provide information of their own, and that the horizontal distribution of the archaeological materials is just as important as their vertical distribution. To what extent did the progressive awareness of these (or other) factors determine the definitive affirmation of an effectively stratigraphic method of excavation?
- The context of the effective realization of the stratigraphic practice. Can different methods of excavation and recording of stratigraphy be detected in settlements, caves, and burials? If so, are there relationships between these different methods?
- Last but not least, the relationship between different fields of study. Normally we think of a sort of linear evolution from geology to prehistory, and from prehistory to other archaeologies. As a matter of fact, the process was not so linear. If geology is considered the ‘cradle’ of stratigraphy, what kind of excavation practice did it inspire? And to what extent was it involved in the subsequent development of archaeological excavation? Were other disciplines, starting with the other archaeologies, involved in the definitive affirmation of the stratigraphic excavation in prehistory?

We invited all interested scholars to debate these themes, without geographical limitations; we are interested in developments all over the world. The focus is on a chronological range between the mid-19th and mid-20th century.

The paper by *Elena Rossoni-Notter and colleagues* focuses on old collections of Balzi Rossi sites (Liguria, Italy) and the Observatoire cave (Monaco), excavated between the end of the 19th and the early 20th-century by the Canon Léonce de Villeneuve, first director of the Museum of Prehistoric Anthropology of Monaco. The authors argue that the study of old collections requires an epistemological and historiographical approach. The reconstruction of the context of these discoveries as well as excavation methods and techniques allows the authors to discuss the multiple and inherent biases of this type of collections.

T. Rowan McLaughlin and colleagues examine the long history of stratigraphic excavation methods used at prehistoric megalithic monuments in Malta, comparing the results of excavations carried out in 1911, 1961 and 2015 on a single site, Santa Verna. In this way they focus first on the introduction by Thomas Ashby of the concepts of archaeological stratigraphy in Malta. The new tools for the definition of a relative and absolute chronology are then analysed through the work of David Trump. Finally, the legacy of these stratigraphic excavations and the chronological sequences then established are reconsidered in the light of recent research based on scientific dating and Bayesian approaches.

Massimo Tarantini examines the research carried out by G.A. Blanc at the Romanelli Cave (Italy) in the early 20th century. This excavation stands out for various reasons: the distinction of materials by their layer of provenience; the use of the Cartesian coordinate system; the pedogenetic and paleoenvironmental analysis; and the continuous presence of Blanc himself on the site. The Romanelli excavation is considered as a case study to evaluate the multiplicity of factors at the origin of specific methodological innovations, involving international relations, institutional features, specific scientific questions and the development of ideas on ecology, as well as Blanc's own scientific education and social position.

Gianna Reginelli Servais compares the field practice of the Swiss archaeologist Paul Vouga at two different sites. She thus highlights a profound difference: at the Auvernier/La Saunerie site Vouga applied a rigorous stratigraphic method, and on this basis he laid the foundations of Swiss Neolithic chronology, while on the contrary at the La Tène site any stratigraphic contribution was deliberately excluded. Analysing this only apparent paradox, Reginelli Servais addresses the question of the relationship between stratigraphy and typology in the first half of the 20th century and the difficulty of fully integrating the stratigraphic method into the archaeologist's toolbox.

Federico Nomi, Massimo Cultraro, Alessandro Guidi and Sebastiano Tusa try to reconstruct the intellectual history of two pioneers of the modern Italian prehistoric archaeology, Luigi Bernabò Brea and Giorgio Buchner, highlighting the parallel stages of their career, in Italy (at the Arene Candide, in Sicily and at Lipari Bernabò Brea, in the lower Tyrrhenian islands Buchner) and abroad (Bernabò Brea excavated the important Aegean site of Poliochni) and, at the same time, the different approaches to the archaeological record.

Sébastien Plutniak deals with Georges Laplace's innovative use of the three-dimensional metric Cartesian coordinate system to record the positions of archaeological objects. Laplace's abstraction and formalisation of archaeological stratigraphy is largely described in its historical and geographical context and is followed in its long development. It is also discussed as a case study about methodological innovations in disciplinary histories. Plutniak argues that in some cases the quest for authorship of methodological innovations is of little historical interest and that the eponymisation of innovations is accompanied by their conceptual oversimplification.

The publication of this session allows us to pay tribute to the memory of our dear friend Gianna Reginelli Servais, who tragically passed away in January 2021.

Employed at the archaeological service of the State of Neuchâtel and a doctoral student at the University of Neuchâtel, Gianna was closely involved in the scientific networks of European Iron Age studies. Appreciated by all her colleagues for her generosity and great sensitivity, Gianna has played a central role in the resumption of studies on the eponymous site of La Tène, originally excavated between 1857 and 1917. Following the new surveys that she had directed on the site, she was entrusted with the general coordination of the ambitious 'La Tène project' initiated and lead by Professor Gilbert Kaenel (1949-2020), in which a large number of institutions and researchers, in Europe and the United States, are involved.

With her great attention to the often neglected contribution of the documentary archives, Gianna was able to convince the community of protohistorians of the enormous benefits that mainstream research can draw from the lessons of the history of archaeology. Thanks to her work, a major site in European prehistory could be completely re-excavated, as it were, by combining the study of collections, archival sources, and field results.

Marc-Antoine Kaeser, director of the Laténium, professor at the University of Neuchâtel, and former president of the UISPP commission 'history of archaeology'

Part II

Epistemology, History and Philosophy of Science: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the History of Archaeology

Session organized by Sophie A. de Beaune
and Oscar Moro Abadía

Introduction

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Over the past 25 years, archaeologists have shifted from rejecting and trivializing the history of archaeology (traditionally considered as a harmless amusement for their leisure hours) to considering that this discipline plays a central role in the understanding of archaeological research. This resurgence has been spurred by the emergence of a new generation of scholars who have met modern historiographical standards and practices. In this setting, historians of archaeology have benefited a great deal from a growing dialogue with historians, philosophers and sociologists of science. It is not by chance, for instance, that most of the French-speaking historians who have played a role in the reinvigoration of the history of archaeology in the last two decades are historians and epistemologists of science. However, there are still few studies on the many epistemological, philosophical and sociological facets of archaeological knowledge. In this setting, this session seeks to explore the relationships between the history of archaeology and other disciplines, include history, epistemology and sociology of science. In the first place, we invited historians of archaeology and historians of other sciences to think about the relationships between their disciplines. This dialogue sought to explore how historians of archaeology can enrich their work with a better understanding of the *methods*, *techniques* and *concepts* used in the history of science. In the second place, we seek to promote an interdisciplinary dialogue beyond the limits of historiographical studies. To do so, we invited specialists in the epistemology and philosophy of science to consider how recent debates on their disciplines may intersect with the study of the history of archaeological knowledge.

Sophie A. de Beaune explores the many links that can be established between technology and prehistoric archaeology through the work of three major figures that have largely marked French archaeology from the second half of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century, Augustus Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, André Leroi-Gourhan and François Sigaut. All three developed an interdisciplinary approach to material culture. However, no matter how close their interests were, the three of them were marked by their different historical contexts.

Oscar Moro Abadía examines the tragic fate of heroic precursors in the history of archaeology with reference to the case of Boucher de Perthes. As it is well-known, Jacques Boucher de Perthes is often celebrated for being the first to establish the prehistoric antiquity of humankind. However, as Moro Abadía examines in his paper, these hagiographical approaches are problematic. Without denying that Boucher de Perthes made significant contributions to the history of archaeology, an entirely different picture of this ‘heroic discoverer’ emerges when we put him in his historical context.

Rémi Labrusse wonders about the reasons that led the first prehistorians (Lartet and Christy, Mortillet, Piette, etc.) to put forward the question of art, alongside technique, to characterize the Palaeolithic. In so doing, he explores the encounter between art history and prehistory in the second half of the 19th century.

Giorgos Vavouranakis and *Georgia Kourtessi-Philippakis*’ paper focuses on the early Prehistory, which is here taken to include the whole Stone Age, from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic. In the 1960s’,

Greece became the place of a lively fermentation of the various currents that forged the identity of research in ancient Prehistory by making it independent from the stereotypes of Archeology, as it had been practiced since the end of the 19th century, and by freeing it from this heavy heritage. More generally, the authors examine the impact of new (or processual archaeology) upon European archaeology in the same years.

Shumon T. Hussain uses the French-Anglophone divide in Palaeolithic stone artefact analysis as an example to show that identified differences in approach and conceptualization between the two involved communities of practice can be recovered by comparing the 'image worlds' they promulgate. Examining the pictorial structure of these worlds and the frequency of certain image types therein sheds new light on the distinctive nature of French and Anglophone styles of reasoning in lithic research.