Print: ISBN 978-1-78969-894-7
Online: ISSN 2531-8810
Published Online: Dec 2021

Foreword

Ex Novo Editorial Board

Making Archaeology Public. A View from the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and Beyond

The concept of Public Archaeology has profoundly changed since Mc Grimsey's first formulation in the early 1970s, as it developed a solid conceptual and practical framework along the years that makes it now an independent branch of archaeology. However, in English-speaking and Northern European countries, the perception of archaeology as a common good was widely spread even before the actual formalization of Public Archaeology as a specific curriculum offered by several universities. Not surprisingly, such an earlier interest led to the development of a markedly North Europe-centric perspective on the topic, which keeps steering much of the current reflection on Public Archaeology despite the emergence of multiple and alternative standpoints on the matter, further deepening the great divide between the archaeologies of Northern and Southern European countries.

When it comes to make archaeology public the European Union fails to act cohesively, as the European Framework Convention on the value of Cultural Heritage for the society (Faro Convention) may well illustrate. Drafted in 2005, the document did not enter into force until the 1st of June 2011. Unlike other European framework agreements on culture - including the 1992 Malta Convention- the Faro Convention has been signed and ratified by a rather limited number of countries, mainly gravitating around very specific geopolitical areas, with Italy as the last one to adhere in September 2020. Being too ambitious and demanding for European governments and not very innovative when compared to the Paris Convention (Keane - Kirwan 2016; 158), the Faro treaty and the long delay in its ratification reveal the long-standing issues lying at the core of the political and cultural divide running across Europe. It is worthwhile noting that the 17 countries that have signed and ratified the Convention so far belong for the most part to the former Soviet bloc and to the former Yugoslav Balkans. The strong allegiance to the chart manifested by these countries has been often connected to their interest in joining the European Union, hence being granted access to its funding system with the same rights as the historical members of the European treaty (Filipović 2009; Brianso 2015). In this sense, some of them see in the adhesion to the chart an additional opportunity to build their own identity. In both north-eastern and south-eastern Europe Public Archaeology has indeed made great strides in challenging the way in which archaeologists can involve a wider audience by illustrating their research, but also triggering controversies due to the lack of self-reflection on national identity issues connected to cultural heritage (Carlà-Uhink & Gori 2019). On the other hand, in the southern Mediterranean area (including northern Africa and part of the Near East) Public Archaeology faces enormous challenges deriving from the colonial background that pervades the discipline, and the lack of interest often showed by local authorities in making the archaeological heritage more inclusive and

publicly accessible (see for instance Badran 2011 on Jordan). In addition, armed conflicts and consequent humanitarian crises have led countries such as Libya and, above all, Syria to understandably overlook issues related to public engagement and the role played by archaeologists, museum professionals, and local authorities in bridging the gap between society and cultural heritage.

Unlike Northern and Central Europe, Southern European countries such as e.g. Italy, Spain and Greece, fully acknowledged the relevance of Public Archaeology only in the 2010s, as the organization of the first national conferences on the subject and the establishment of dedicated journals testify. Even though delayed, the interest sparked in the South for Public Archaeology is related to the higher mobility of scholars and archaeologists: in fact, some of the researchers and professionals who first addressed consistently the subject in Mediterranean Europe were mostly trained in northern countries.

Today, Public Archaeology features more prominently in the archaeological agenda of Southern European countries not only due to the formation of its professionals but also due to the increasing attention devoted to themes such as inclusivity and sustainability in connection to heritage. Following the global economic collapse of the late 2000s, especially the countries that suffered major consequences invested much of their entrepreneurial energies into international cultural and religious tourism, which have now become a fundamental source of income for relaunching their national economies.

The choice to turn to valorisation and dissemination has thus been embraced by heritage professionals and archaeological companies working in the commercial sector. The economic crisis mentioned above affected building contractors, drastically reducing the need for archaeological supervision on construction sites. As a consequence, archaeologists had to reinvent themselves as professionals and the career opportunities offered within the framework of Public Archaeology were certainly attractive. Such a sudden career shift raised heavy criticism about the ways in which cultural heritage – and especially the archaeological one – has been utilized often instrumentally, leading to the allegation of exploiting Cultural Heritage only as a nice background for activities that have nothing to do with the context in which they are staged.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has showed brutally how fragile and unsustainable this use – and concept – of Cultural Heritage is, forcing both archaeologists working in the touristic and commercial sectors as well as those working in academia to rethink the relationship between archaeology, tourism, and public engagement (Holtorf 2020).

In this Volume

The sixth issue of Ex Novo explores how 'peripheral' regions currently approach both the practice and theory of public archaeology placing particular emphasis on Eastern and Southern Europe and extending the analysis to usually underrepresented regions of the Mediterranean. A thorough overview on the developments of public archaeology in such a broad area is provided by Jaime Almansa Sánchez, who discusses the preliminary results of the project #pubarchMED where over 30 countries have been surveyed to assess the impact that current practices in public archaeology have on both archaeology as a profession and the communities living in the surroundings of an archaeological site. We move then to Italy with the contribution by Donati, Gusberti, Magliaro & Riva illustrating

the communication strategies implemented by the Italian Confederation of Archaeologists (CIA - Confederazione Italiana Archeologi) in the weeks following the strict lockdown imposed by the Government at the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020. Keeping the focus on Southern Europe, two papers address current developments in public archeology in Greece: first, Anastasia Sakellariadi reviews several initiatives geared toward public engagement and their political impact on conventional narratives in both academic and non-academic realms. The contribution by Paraskevi Elefanti on the other hand explores the ways in which human origins (in particular Palaeolithic and Mesolithic) are showcased to the public, analysing the multifaceted reasons underlining the underrepresentation of early prehistory in Greek museums.

The first section of this issue ends by bringing forward two different experiences matured in other regions than those mentioned above - yet equally underrepresented in the discourse about public archaeology. The interdisciplinary work presented by Montalvo, Mosquera, Dyrdhal, Rivera, Solines, Riofrío & Granja discusses the challenges faced by all parties involved in the protection of archaeological heritage in Ecuador, with particular reference to urban contexts, more specifically the municipality of Quito. The final contribution by Wang Bo-Chiao, Chung Kuo-Feng & Nicolas Zorzin introduces us to the development of cultural heritage and public archaeology in Taiwan: using as a case study the Old City of Zuoying (Southern Taiwan), the authors analyse both the positive and challenging aspects emerged when addressing public engagement through a community-based and experimental approach.

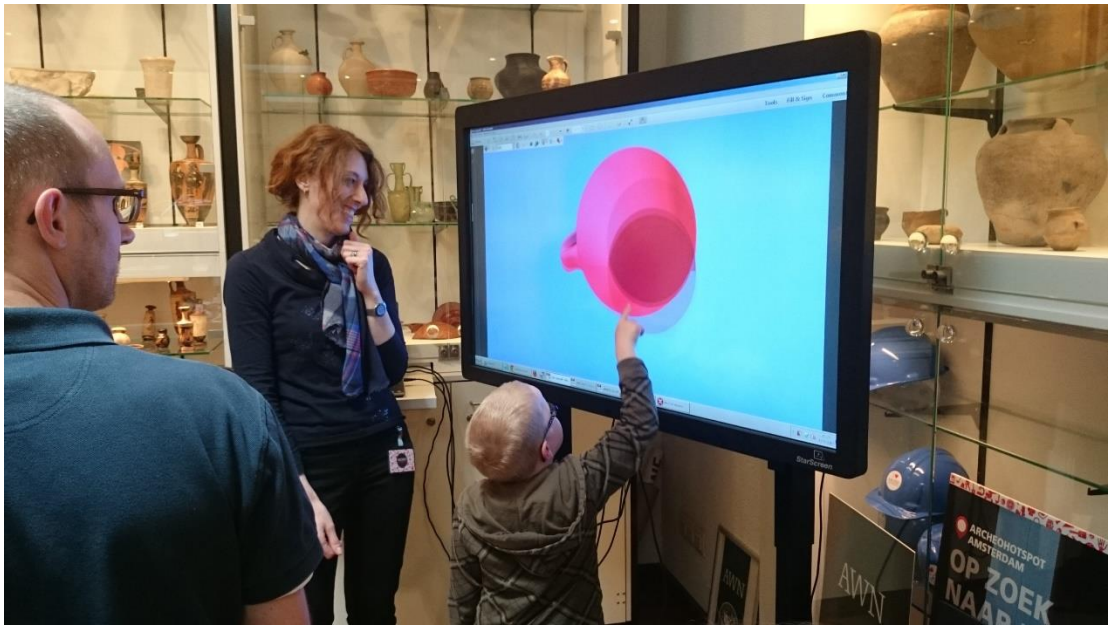

Figure 1. Engaging with the public at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam (after Revello Lami et al. 2018).

The second part of the issue hosts a two works unrelated to the theme of this volume, followed by the traditional section dedicated to reviews and interviews. We set off with the insightful research conducted by Valeria Acconcia on the emergence of social inequality and segregation. Starting from a reflection on modern examples, the author then outlines a detailed account of the representation of self in ancient communities

based on funerary evidence recorded in both the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian regions. On a completely different note, Lago & Di Renzoni shed light on the mechanisms underlying the European Research Council funding system with reference to the Archaeology and Heritage panel. The authors reflect upon the eligibility and evaluation criteria involved in the selection process by carrying out a systematic study of the most successful countries, research subjects and researchers as well as the different profiles of the committee members.
Manuel Gago Mariño & Jesús Gárcia Sánchez open up the section dedicated to Reviews and Interviews by revisiting two hit series - *Barbarians* (Netflix) and *Britannia* (Amazon Prime Video, Sky) – which lend themselves to a broader discussion on how video-on-demand industry has challenged the conventional narrative of the conflict between imperial powers and indigenous communities by voicing the perspective of the latter. The following interviews keeps in with the theme of archaeological heritage, conventional narratives and public engagement by sharing the very different experiences of Dario Siddi - teacher, theatre director, actor and archaeologist – at S. Antioco in Sardinia (Marie Usadel & Francesco Corgiolu); Silvia Costa, European Commissioner and one of the parties involved in the restoration and valorisation project of the dismissed penitentiary on Santo Stefano island (Flaminia Bartolini); Agostino Sotgia, researcher, archaeologist and also the author of the original cover of this issue (Martina Revello Lami).

The third and final part of this issue features a series of conversations held in March 2021 within the framework of the Italian Confederation of Archaeologists (CIA) Annual Meeting. Being Ex Novo deeply rooted in the aims and scopes of the confederation, we decided to join efforts and devote part of the meeting to explore key issues faced by contemporary archaeologists both in academia, private sector, and institutional settings. To do so, we posed several pressing questions to scholars who inspired and still steer the editorial choices of this journal, namely: Felipe Criado-Boado, Yannis Hamilakis, Cornelius Holtorf, Lynn Meskell and Elisabeth Nicklasson.

Acknowledgments
The present volume, content-wise the richest published so far, would not have been timely released without the great addition to the editorial board of two new members, Marianna Fusco and Jesús García Sánchez. We are all very grateful for their enthusiasm and the energy poured in the realisation of this issue and we hope the many more to come. Equally fundamental has been the effort of all reviewers involved in the process: we owe much to (Yoshihisa Amae, Veysel Apaydin, María Cruz Berrocal, Tristan Carter, Christina Papoulia, Elisa Perego, Dimitris Plantzos and Alejandra Sanchez Polo), from whose input all contributions greatly benefitted. Lastly, we are indebted to Agostino Sotgia, who created an original and catchy image for the cover of this issue also revealing the inherent potential of comics to bridge the gap between archaeology and a wider audience.

References

BADRAN A. 2015. The Excluded Past in Jordanian Formal Primary Education: The Introduction of Archaeology, in K. OKAMURA & A. MATSUDA (eds.) *New Perspectives in Global Public Archaeology*, Springer 2011: 197-215

BRIANSO I. 2015. La Convention de Faro en perspective: analyse éthique du patrimoine culturel pour la société au Kosovo. *Alterstice: revue internationale de la recherche interculturelle/Alterstice: International Journal of Intercultural Research/Alterstice: Revista International de la Investigacion Intercultural* 5.2: 21-32

CARLA-UHINK F. & GORI M. 2019. Modern Identities and Classical Antiquity, *Thersites. Journal for Transcultural Presences & Diachronic Identities from Antiquity to Date* Vol. 10

FILIPOVIĆ M. 2009, Why do countries ratify conventions? The case of Montenegro, in Heritage and Beyond, *Council of Europe* 47-52

HOLTORF C. 2020. An archaeology for the future: from developing contract archaeology to imagining post-corona archaeology, *PCA - European Journal of Postclassical Archaeologies* vol. 10/2020, 57-72

KEANE M. & KIRWAN S. 2016. *From Valletta to Faro – avoiding a false dichotomy and working towards implementing Faro in regard to archaeological heritage (reflections from an Irish perspective)* in Florjanowicz P. (ed.) *When Valletta meets Faro The reality of European archaeology in the 21st century, EAC Occasional Paper* 11, 157-165

MC GIMSEY C.R. 1972, *Public archeology,* New York

REVELLO LAMI M., OPGENHAFFEN L. & KISJES I. 2016. Pottery goes digital: 3D laser scanning technology and the study of archaeological ceramics. In S. CAMPANA R., SCOPIGNO G., CARPENTIERO & M. CIRILLO (eds.), CAA2015: *Keep the Revolution Going: proceedings of the 43rd Annual Conference on Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology* vol. 1, Oxford, 421-431.