

Foreword

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Ex Novo Editorial Board

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Unravelling threads of time: Intersections of archaeology, myth, and identity

Welcome to the seventh volume of the Ex Novo-Journal of Archaeology, which presents a tapestry woven from diverse scholarly threads, offering insights into the intricate relationships between history, myth, contemporary identity, and activism.

The contributions within this edition converge at the crossroads of time, where the echoes of ancient civilizations reverberate through the narratives shaping our present reality. They encapsulate the spirit of archaeology as a multifaceted discipline, intertwining past narratives with contemporary reflections on nationalism and societal constructs.

Jagoba Hidalgo's exploration in "*Crossed presents. Iron Age as a driving force in the construction of the current Basque political reality*" delves deep into the interconnectedness of historical epochs, revealing how the Basque present is woven from diverse historical threads. This paper illuminates the complexities of constructing modern Basque identity upon archaeological foundations, despite the scarcity of material evidence from the Iron Age.

Stavros Oikonomidis guides us through the enduring echoes of ancient myths in "*Dido's foundation legend, archetypes of foundation myths in Eurasia and Neomythology in the nineteenth century Balkans*." The persistence of the Didonian archetype across diverse geographies and its re-emergence in the foundation of Naoussa in nineteenth-century Greece offers a captivating exploration of how ancient legends continue to shape contemporary narratives.

Over the past two years, Ex Novo has undergone several changes, the first being the migration from our website to Archaeopress' OJS platform for the early edition of papers in digital format. The transition was not uneventful, but we believe that this is the right choice. All issues published so far have therefore been transferred to the new website and given a DOI. The original Ex Novo site, which hosts not just our volumes but additional, more interactive content, will remain online for the moment. Over the years, we have published on our website several short essays in the form of blog posts and in order not to lose the memory of our own past, we have decided to include in the present issue also those think-pieces, which focus particularly on the relationship between the past and

present society.

Claudio Cavazzuti's blog entry on Brexit (2018) and the future of archaeology, along with Alessandro Pintucci's critical analysis of monument removals (2020), interjected timely discussions into the socio-political realm of archaeology. These entries provoke contemplation on the intersection of heritage, politics, and public discourse, and underline the transformative nature of Archaeological thought two of the most relevant events in Europe in recent years.

For the first time this issue hosts a less traditional output, photo-narrative authored by Francesca Dell'Era. This poignant contribution transports us to the Collatino neighbourhood of Rome, where an archaeological excavation becomes a lens through which societal disparities and the coexistence of ancient remnants and contemporary settlements are starkly juxtaposed. Dell'Era's reflection goes beyond mental and physical boundaries of a mere technical excavation, inviting readers to contemplate the social dynamics intertwined with archaeological endeavors.

The volume culminates with Emiliano Barletta & Alessio Lo Manto's innovative approach in "Archaeology & Comics" (2018) presenting archaeology in the form of a graphic novel. This creative endeavour aims to bridge academic knowledge with public engagement, inviting a wider audience into the world of archaeological exploration without surrounding its scientific and critical side or as the authors said explicitly "As in the equation comic book/kids, confining archaeology to a non-science on the edge of improvisation is evidently wrong". As for the contributions by Pintucci and Cavazzuti, the graphic novel by Barletta and Lo Manto is still available online on our original website.

As editors, we extend our deepest gratitude to the authors for their invaluable contributions, which enrich our understanding of the intricate layers comprising the human story. We invite readers to immerse themselves in this diverse array of scholarly insights, each offering a unique glimpse into the interwoven fabric of our shared past and present through very different styles, from more traditional scientific papers to powerful image-driven narratives.

Acknowledgments

The present volume would not have been released without the fundamental effort of all reviewers involved in the process. In addition, we are indebted to Francesca Dell'Era, who shared an evocative photo for the cover of the online version of this issue that captures a dramatic moment during the dismantling of a Roma camp at the periphery of Rome.



Figure 1. Italianità acquisita – Becoming Italian (photo credits @ Francesca Dell’Era)