

HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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Edited by

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| List of Figures and Tables..... | iii |
| Foreword to the XVII UISPP Congress Proceedings Series Edition | v |
| Luiz OOSTERBEEK | |
| Foreword to the Volume | vi |
| Marc-Antoine KAESER | |

Part I

International relations in the history of archaeology

Session organised by Margarita DÍAZ-ANDREU and Víctor M. FERNÁNDEZ

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction: International relations in the history of archaeology | 3 |
| Margarita DÍAZ-ANDREU and Víctor M. FERNÁNDEZ | |
| British ideas in a French World. Victorian anthropologists and the creation of the concept of Palaeolithic Art (1890-1906) | 9 |
| Eduardo PALACIO-PÉREZ | |
| From far away: museums, collections and scientific research | 17 |
| Karina Vanesa CHICKOYAN | |
| Funding international study trips in early twentieth century Europe: the JAE grants and the presence of Spanish archaeologists in Italy (1907-1936) | 25 |
| Francisco SÁNCHEZ SALAS | |
| Romanità in Spain? The contacts between Spanish and Italian classical archaeologists during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930) | 35 |
| Margarita DÍAZ-ANDREU | |
| Archaeological connections: tracking and tracing international relations throughout Portuguese colonialism | 51 |
| Patrícia CONDE, João Carlos SENNA-MARTÍNEZ and Ana Cristina MARTINS | |
| Africanism and international relations in Spanish prehistoric archaeology (1939-1956) | 63 |
| Enrique GOZALBES-CRAVIOTO | |
| Internationalism and lake-dwelling research after the Second World War | 71 |
| Géraldine DELLEY | |
| An Influential Outsider. Georges Laplace between French institutions and Italian prehistory | 79 |
| Sébastien PLUTNIAK and Massimo TARANTINI | |
| The ‘Tagus Generation’ in Portuguese archaeology: transition, innovation or ‘revolution’? (A first analysis) | 91 |
| Ana Cristina MARTINS | |
| Learning to be scientific. The introduction of ‘New Archaeology’ in Spain, 1975-1990 | 99 |
| Víctor M. FERNÁNDEZ | |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Chicago Connection in Spanish Paleolithic Prehistory | 111 |
| Lawrence Guy STRAUS | |

Part II

The Revolution of the Sixties in Prehistory and Protohistory Session organised by François DJINDJIAN and Alessandro GUIDI

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction: The Revolution of the Sixties in Prehistory and Protohistory | 123 |
| François DJINDJIAN and Alessandro GUIDI | |
| The Revolution of the Sixties in Prehistory and Protohistory | 125 |
| François DJINDJIAN | |
| La préhistoire en Union Soviétique des années 1950 aux années 1960 | 145 |
| Lioudmila IAKOVLEVA | |
| Marxism in the European archaeology of the sixties: the case studies of Italy and France | 161 |
| Alessandro GUIDI | |
| Les relevés de Léon Pales et ses lectures de l'art mobilier sur les pierres gravées de La Marche (Vienne) | 169 |
| Anne-Catherine WELTÉ | |
| 'Mission': <i>modernize!</i> Portuguese archaeology in the 1960s (a preamble) | 179 |
| Ana Cristina MARTINS | |
| The New Archaeology and the Archaeology of Australia | 187 |
| Tim MURRAY | |

Part III

Lobbying for Archaeology Session organised by Géraldine DELLEY and Marc-Antoine KAESER

| | |
|---|-----|
| Innovative alliances in the history of archaeology: introduction to a new field of inquiry | 197 |
| Marc-Antoine KAESER | |
| Radiocarbon and archaeology: an innovative alliance in the post-WWII scientific field | 207 |
| Géraldine DELLEY | |
| Lobbying for archaeology in the Italian 'First Republic' | 213 |
| Alessandro GUIDI | |
| Interests on the margins of the disciplines: computing, engineers and archaeologists in France (1950–2000) | 221 |
| Sébastien PLUTNIAK | |
| The Australian Research Council and the archaeology of the modern city in Australia | 233 |
| Tim MURRAY | |

List of Figures and Tables

E. PALACIO-PÉREZ: British ideas in a French World. Victorian anthropologists and the creation of the concept of Palaeolithic Art (1890-1906)

| | |
|--|----|
| FIGURE 1. LETTER SENT BY J. FRAZER TO S. REINACH IN JUNE 1903 ABOUT THE MEANING OF PREHISTORIC ART | 12 |
| FIGURE 2. THE TECHNICAL AND STYLISTIC EVOLUTION OF ZOOMORPHIC PARIETAL PAINTINGS..... | 13 |
| FIGURE 3. DEGENERATION OF ANIMAL FIGURES IN SCHEMATIC AND ABSTRACT MOTIFS IN PALEOLITHIC ART | 14 |

F. SÁNCHEZ SALAS: Funding international study trips in early twentieth century Europe: the JAE grants and the presence of Spanish archaeologists in Italy (1907-1936)

| | |
|---|----|
| TABLE 1. THE JAE GRANTEES IN ITALY..... | 28 |
|---|----|

S. PLUTNIAK and M. TARANTINI: An Influential Outsider. Georges Laplace between French institutions and Italian prehistory

| | |
|---|----|
| FIGURE 1. BIPARTITE NETWORK SHOWING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SITES AND THE PREHISTORIANS | 84 |
| FIGURE 2. SITES STUDIED BY LAPLACE IN HIS 1966 PHD THESIS..... | 85 |

V. M. FERNÁNDEZ: Learning to be scientific. The introduction of 'New Archaeology' in Spain, 1975-1990

| | |
|--|-----|
| FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE BAR DIAGRAMS OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARTICLES | 104 |
| FIGURE 2. FREQUENCY BAR DIAGRAMS OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARTICLES..... | 105 |
| FIGURE 3. FREQUENCY OF ARTICLES CITING NA (BLACK) AND POST-PROCESSUAL (GREY) | 106 |
| FIGURE 4. FREQUENCY BAR DIAGRAMS OF THE DIFFERENT ARTICLE CLASSES..... | 107 |
| FIGURE 5. FREQUENCY BAR DIAGRAMS OF THE DIFFERENT ARTICLE CLASSES..... | 107 |

F. DJINDJIAN: The Revolution of the Sixties in Prehistory and Protohistory

| | |
|--|-----|
| FIGURE 1. ANDRÉ LEROI-GOURHAN | 126 |
| FIGURE 2. FRANÇOIS BORDES | 129 |
| FIGURE 3. GEORGES LAPLACE | 129 |
| FIGURE 4. JEAN-CLAUDE GARDIN | 130 |
| FIGURE 5. PIERRE ROLAND GIOT, JACQUES BRIARD, JEAN L'HELGOUACH | 131 |

L. IAKOVLEVA: La préhistoire en Union Soviétique des années 1950 aux années 1960

| | |
|--|-----|
| FIGURE 1. LE MUSÉE D'ETHNOGRAPHIE ET D'ARCHÉOLOGIE OU KUNSTKAMERA À SAINT-PÉTERSBOURG..... | 146 |
| FIGURE 2. L'INSTITUT D'HISTOIRE DE LA CULTURE MATÉRIELLE À SAINT-PÉTERSBOURG..... | 146 |
| FIGURE 3. P. P. EFIMENKO | 147 |
| FIGURE 4. PLAN DE LA STRUCTURE D'HABITAT DE KOSTIENKI 1 COUCHE 1 (FOUILLES EFIMENKO) | 149 |
| FIGURE 5. STATUETTE FÉMININE EN IVOIRE DE MAMMOUTH DU GRAVETTIEN ORIENTAL À KOSTIENKI 1 COUCHE 1...149 | |
| FIGURE 6. P. I. BORISKOVSKI | 150 |
| FIGURE 7. A. ROGATCHEV | 151 |
| FIGURE 8. I. PIDOPLICHKO | 151 |
| FIGURE 9. LA CABANE N°1 À MÉZINE (FOUILLES CHOVKOPLASS, 1955)..... | 151 |
| FIGURE 10. I. CHOVKOPLASS ET SON ÉQUIPE PENDANT LES FOUILLES DE MÉZINE..... | 152 |
| FIGURE 11. RECONSTITUTION DE LA CABANE DE DOBRANICHKA PAR I. CHOVKOPLASS..... | 152 |
| FIGURE 12. P. DOLUKHANOV | 153 |
| FIGURE 13. A. VELICHKO PRÉSENTANT LA COUCHE DE KOSTIENKI 14 (MARKINA GORA)..... | 153 |
| FIGURE 14. S. A. SEMENOV (1898-1978)..... | 154 |
| FIGURE 15. L. KLEJN..... | 155 |
| FIGURE 16. N. D. PRASLOV | 156 |
| FIGURE 17. Y. G. KOLOSSOV..... | 156 |
| FIGURE 18. V. N. GLADILIN | 156 |
| FIGURE 19. DÉDICACE DE P. BORISKOVSKI À H. DELPORTE | 157 |

**A.-C. WELTÉ: Les relevés de Léon Pales et ses lectures de l'art mobilier
sur les pierres gravées de La Marche (Vienne)**

| | |
|--|-----|
| FIGURE 1. LA MARCHE, COMMUNE DE LUSSAC-LES-CHÂTEAUX (VIENNE) | 170 |
| FIGURE 2. LA MARCHE, COMMUNE DE LUSSAC-LES-CHÂTEAUX (VIENNE) | 170 |
| FIGURE 3. MUSÉE DE L'HOMME. DE GAUCHE À DROITE: L. PALES; CH. LAMBERT ET J. OSTER | 173 |
| FIGURE 4. RELEVÉ D'UNE PLAQUETTE. MUSÉE DE L'HOMME | 174 |
| FIGURE 5. 'LES DALLES – PAROIS MOBILES- FIRENT L'OBJET DE PHOTOGRAPHIES À GRANDEUR NATURELLE | 174 |
| FIGURE 6. LA MARCHE, COMMUNE DE LUSSAC-LES-CHÂTEAUX (VIENNE) | 175 |

**M.-A. KAESER: Innovative alliances in the history of archaeology:
introduction to a new field of inquiry**

| | |
|--|-----|
| FIGURE 1. SVEN HEDIN SIGNING THE 1927 AGREEMENT | 200 |
| FIGURE 2. AVENCHES, SUMMER 1940: FRENCH MILITARY INTERNEES | 201 |
| FIGURE 3. LARGE-SCALE MOTORWAY EXCAVATIONS IN SWITZERLAND | 203 |

A. GUIDI: Lobbying for archaeology in the Italian 'First Republic'

| | |
|---|-----|
| TABLE A. SUMS ALLOCATED FOR ARCHAEOLOGY BETWEEN 1951 AND 1965 | 216 |
| TABLE B. SUMS EFFECTIVELY SPENT FOR ARCHAEOLOGY BETWEEN 1951 AND 1965 | 216 |

**S. PLUTNIAK: Interests on the margins of the disciplines: computing, engineers
and archaeologists in France (1950–2000)**

| | |
|--|-----|
| FIGURE 1. PATTERNS OF FOUR ENGINEERS' TRAJECTORIES IN ARCHAEOLOGY | 224 |
| FIGURE 2. RELATIONS BETWEEN ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS CITED | 226 |
| FIGURE 3. INTERPRETATION THROUGH MULLINS' 1972 MODEL | 227 |
| FIGURE 4. BIBLIOGRAPHIC COUPLING GRAPH OF THE PAPERS FROM THE <i>BULLETIN DE LA SOCIÉTÉ PRÉHISTORIQUE FRANÇAISE</i> DEALING WITH MULTIVARIATE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS | 229 |

Foreword to the XVII UISPP Congress Proceedings Series Edition

Luiz OOSTERBEEK
Secretary-General

UISPP has a long history, starting with the old International Association of Anthropology and Archaeology, back in 1865, until the foundation of UISPP itself in Bern, in 1931, and its growing relevance after WWII, from the 1950's. We also became members of the International Council of Philosophy and Human Sciences, associate of UNESCO, in 1955.

In its XIVth world congress in 2001, in Liège, UISPP started a reorganization process that was deepened in the congresses of Lisbon (2006) and Florianópolis (2011), leading to its current structure, solidly anchored in more than twenty-five international scientific commissions, each coordinating a major cluster of research within six major chapters: Historiography, methods and theories; Culture, economy and environments; Archaeology of specific environments; Art and culture; Technology and economy; Archaeology and societies.

The XVIIth world congress of 2014, in Burgos, with the strong support of Fundación Atapuerca and other institutions, involved over 1700 papers from almost 60 countries of all continents. The proceedings, edited in this series but also as special issues of specialized scientific journals, will remain as the most important outcome of the congress.

Research faces growing threats all over the planet, due to lack of funding, repressive behavior and other constraints. UISPP moves ahead in this context with a strictly scientific programme, focused on the origins and evolution of humans, without conceding any room to short term agendas that are not root in the interest of knowledge.

In the long run, which is the terrain of knowledge and science, not much will remain from the contextual political constraints, as severe or dramatic as they may be, but the new advances into understanding the human past and its cultural diversity will last, this being a relevant contribution for contemporary and future societies.

This is what UISPP is for, and this is also why we are currently engaged in contributing for the relaunching of Human Sciences in their relations with social and natural sciences, namely collaborating with the International Year of Global Understanding, in 2016, and with the World Conference of the Humanities, in 2017.

The next two congresses of UISPP, in Melbourne (2017) and in Geneva (2020), will confirm this route.

Foreword to the Volume

Marc-Antoine KAESER
President of the Commission “History of Archaeology”,
Executive Committee of the UISPP

The present volume gathers the communications of the three sessions organized under the auspices of the Commission ‘History of Archaeology’ at the XVII UISPP World Congress Burgos 2014.

In the UISPP, our commission is traditionally labelled as ‘*Commission I*’, a wording which testifies to the importance conferred to historiography for a long time now within the official bodies of the UISPP. After a stage of relative standby since the 2006 World Congress in Lisbon, this commission was the object of a thorough renewal in 2012. In its present composition, it brings together 23 scholars from 16 different countries, on three continents (Australia, Europe, Northern and Southern Americas). On the basis of this broad representativity, the commission endeavours to develop historiographic scholarship for the benefit of reflexive archaeological perspectives, while emphasizing transversal and international perspectives.

These concerns substantiate the general title of the volume: ‘*History of Archaeology: International Perspectives*’. On each of the three thematics under scrutiny, the contributors have actually been invited to take into account and to advocate approaches likely to illustrate the richness and the diversity of archaeological research traditions, as well as to shed light on the intellectual and cultural exchanges which have been implemented throughout the history of our discipline.

In a programmatic manner, the first part of this volume deals precisely with ‘*International relations in the history of archaeology*’. The eleven contributions collected for the session organised by Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Víctor M. Fernández tackle a particularly productive topic in the field today. In actual fact, this seminal research field currently echoes in a way the strong trend of scholarship about the influence of nationalism on our discipline, which since the end of the 1980s, has greatly contributed to the takeoff and overall recognition of the history of archaeology.

The second part, entitled ‘*The Revolution of the Sixties in prehistory and protohistory*’, is the outcome of a partnership with the Commission ‘Archaeological Methods and Theory’. The seven contributions collected by François Djindjian and Alessandro Guidi strive to document and analyse a recent past, which is still often burdened with the weight of teleological and presentist appraisals. The inclusion in this volume of this session significantly dedicated to the genealogy of schools of thought and to the study of complex methodological and technical issues illustrates our commitment to tackling historical issues as well, which are closely linked to current theoretical debates in our discipline.

Such is also the aim of the third part, which addresses ‘*Lobbying for Archaeology*’. As shown by the five contributions of this session organised by Géraldine Delley and the undersigned, archaeology has not only been instrumentalized by political powers and ideological interests. It has also found fruitful alliances with economic agents or bodies, where mutual advantages were gained on practical, technical bases. In our opinion, a reflexive, critical approach to these various forms of lobbying should ensure a useful awareness regarding the structural problems our discipline faces today, regarding its funding methods.

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