

Ex Novo Journal of Archaeology

Volume 7, December 2022

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Foreword

Martina Revello Lami, Jesus Garcia Sánchez & Maja Gori

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)

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“Gm.gen.math” released on the Tribute to Herbert W. Franke ©Aleksandra Jovanic

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Balkan Archaeology as a laboratory: Challenging old paradigms and experimenting with new ones.

Maja Gori, Daniela Heilmann & Kristina Penezić

CNR Italian National Research Council
Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
University of Novi Sad

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The present issue of Ex Novo originates from the session *Balkan Archaeology as A Laboratory: Challenging Old Paradigms and Experimenting with New Ones* that the editors (Maja Gori, Daniela Heilmann and Kristina Penezić) organized at the 28th European Association of Archaeologists meeting in Budapest (2022), within the theme “A Decade after the Third Science Revolution in Archaeology”.

In archaeology, paradigms not only shape our understanding of the past but also reflect the socio-political contexts in which they are developed and applied. Paradigms in archaeology are dynamic entities, shaped and reshaped by socio-cultural, political, and intellectual contexts. We felt however the need to discuss such issue from a specific Balkan and not a generalist perspective. Indeed, the two main shifts that European (and world) archaeology has experienced and that have challenged traditional explanatory models – the emergence of processual versus traditional archaeology starting from late 1960s, and the emergence of postprocessual archaeology from the early 1980s – have not significantly influenced research in Balkan Late Prehistory. Consequently, a significant portion of Balkan archaeology continued to align with traditional perspectives, leading to the persistence of conventional interpretations of archaeological patterns. This is reflected in the enduring cultural-historical approach to the study of material culture, with a strong focus on typological sequences and relative chronologies to explain ethnogenies. The advent of the so-called third scientific revolution has brought forth a wide array of new methods and techniques to Balkan Prehistory, gaining increasing interest and evolving into a new standard in the discipline. However, relying solely on this approach is inadequate to address the stagnation in the current theoretical debate.

As mentioned, this issue of Ex Novo gathers papers stemming from some of the contributions presented at the EAA (Babić, Milosavljević, Giamakis), which have been complemented with an additional paper (Matić), and two thematically-related book reviews (Heilmann, Gori). A standout article in this collection is Staša Babić's *Plus ça*

change? Balkan archaeology in search of identity, which offers crucial insights into the paradigm shifts within Balkan archaeology. Babić's work challenges the notion of a linear progression in archaeological thought, arguing against the conventional view that Balkan archaeology is perpetually lagging behind more 'developed' archaeological traditions.

Monika Milosavljević's paper, *Kuhn Fleck and Archaeological Evidence: An Omnivorous Strategy to Study the History of Archaeology*, critically examines the history of archaeology through the lens of Kuhn's concept of paradigm shifts. Her work highlights the post-World War II transformation of Yugoslav archaeology from a collection of individual efforts into a robust, collaborative field driven by a culture-historical approach.

Christos Giamakis's study, *Bridging the Gap(s) between 'European', 'Balkan' and 'Greek' Archaeologies*, offers a profound reflection on the changing paradigms. He critically examines the relationship between 'European' and 'Balkan' archaeology, emphasizing the perceived 'backwardness' of the latter. His analysis reveals which factors contribute to maintaining certain stereotypes and power dynamics within the archaeological community. An emblematic example of how archaeological paradigms are evolving is provided by Uroš Matic's *Queering Serbian Archaeology: Androcentrism, Heteronormativity, Gender and the Writing of (Pre)history*, especially in relation to gender and sexuality studies. Their work challenges the traditional androcentric and heteronormative perspectives that have long dominated archaeological interpretations in the Balkans. The author advocates for a more inclusive, critically informed approach to gender, contrasting this with stereotypical, often biased views that have previously shaped archaeological narratives.

The articles and reviews presented in this issue of *Ex Novo* represent a vibrant cross-section of innovative thought and scholarship in Balkan Archaeology. By challenging entrenched paradigms and experimenting with new perspectives, these works collectively highlight the dynamic nature of our field. They emphasise the need for a constant reassessment of our methodologies and theoretical frameworks, encouraging a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the past. With this thematic issue we hope to contribute to the debate on theoretical development of Balkan Archaeology, with the ultimate goal of deconstructing the entrenched paradigms that are still widespread in archaeological interpretations. We firmly believe that Balkan archaeology and its rich material record provide a unique platform for discussion and can act as a laboratory to build new models, question old paradigms, and test innovative approaches.

Acknowledgements

The present volume would not have been released without the fundamental effort of all reviewers involved in the process, here listed in alphabetical order: Vasiliki Saripanidi, Robert Schumann, James Symonds, Adriana Zaharijević and one anonymous reviewer. In addition, we are deeply grateful to Aleksandra Jovanić, who let us use one of her works as cover of the present issue of *Ex Novo*.

Aleksandra Jovanić is an artist and programmer from Belgrade (Serbia), who holds a Doctorate in Digital Arts and a BSc in Computer Science. In her research and artistic practice, she combines various media, mainly in the field of interactive art, art games, and generative art. Jovanić's recent works focus on the aesthetic of data visualisation and optical illusions, as well as explorations of accepted concepts of truth and reality.

Her work has been exhibited internationally, and she has been included in exhibitions at Unit London, VerticalCrypto Art, FeralFile, Vellum LA / Artsy and ArtBasel with Tezos.

As an assistant professor, she currently teaches at all three levels of study, at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade, at master studies of the Faculty of Applied Arts and at art doctoral studies at the University of Arts in Belgrade.

You can find Aleksandra Jovanić's work following this link:

<https://aleksandrajovanic.com/>

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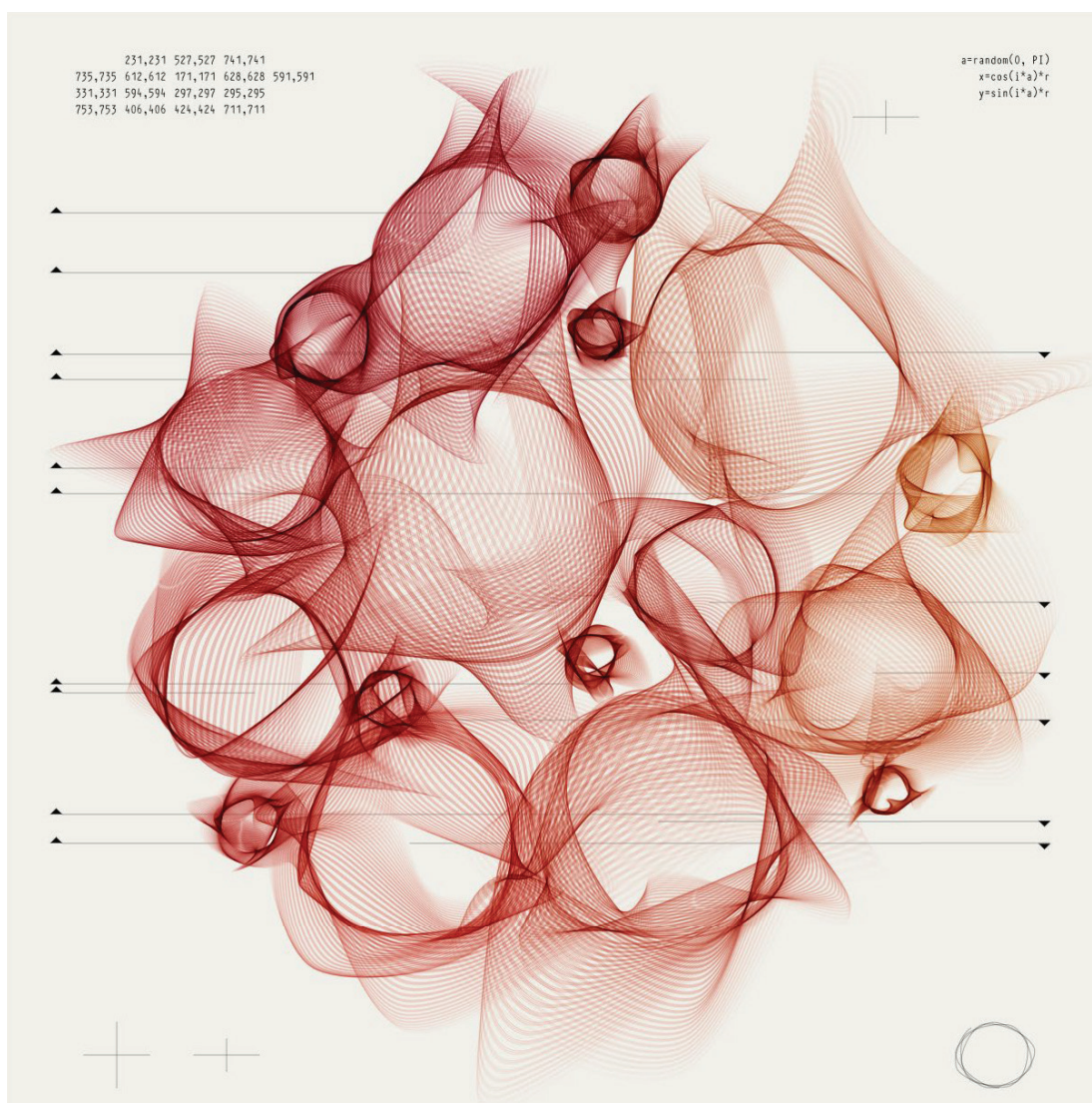


Figure 1. Gm.gen.math, released on the occasion of the Tribute to Herbert W. Franke (by Aleksandra Jovanić, author of this issue's cover).