

ARCHEOSTORIE™  
JOURNAL *of* PUBLIC  
ARCHAEOLOGY

**VOLUME 1 / 2017**

*Topic of the Year: Small but Kind of Mighty*

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## Cite this volume:

Please use AJPA as abbreviation and '*Archeostorie. Journal of Public Archaeology*' as full title.

## Published by:

Center for Public Archaeology Studies 'Archeostorie' - cultural association  
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*First published 2017.*

*Archeostorie. Journal of Public Archaeology* is registered with the Court of Livorno no. 2/2017 of January 24, 2017.

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*[www.archeostoriejpa.eu/2017](http://www.archeostoriejpa.eu/2017)*

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Cinzia Dal Maso

## VOLUME 1

February 2017

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#### Cite this:

Dal Maso, C. 2017. Editorial. *Archeostorie. Journal of Public Archaeology*. 1: pp. 7-14. Available at: [www.archeostoriejpa.eu/2017\\_1](http://www.archeostoriejpa.eu/2017_1)

Here we are. At last. Now our *Archeostorie. Journal of Public Archaeology* is a reality and we are proud to present the first issue. The whole Editorial Board worked hard to reach this goal, overcoming difficulties, obstacles, and incidental delays. It was by no means an easy job, but our motivation was too strong to give up: we hold the deep conviction that this Journal is an undeniable necessity.

Public archaeology has become increasingly popular in Italy: the word is on everyone's lips both in archaeology seminars and university courses, and many archaeologists are starting to share their results with the wider public and actively collaborate with non-archaeologists. New and innovative public outreach activities - both on excavations and in museums - are thriving. However, this trend has not yet become part of an accurate and scientific established practice. Rather, it is mainly the result of improvisation and good will. We believe, however, that public outreach skills are necessary to the profession and - as already established in other parts of the world - they should be formally articulated into a set of methods, rules and specific professional profiles.

### Our primary goals

The first point is non-negotiable: fostering involvement of the general public is a specific duty for all archaeologists, as well as for whomever studies our past. The past belongs to all of us, and history is the *curriculum vitae* of any social body, from small communities to societies and humankind at large. Those who study the past - historians, philologists, philosophers, art historians, archaeologists and the like - do it on behalf of the community. It is their duty to share the results of their research with the citizens. Scholars are cultural mediators between the past and the present, and they have the power to influence the way society looks at its past and, consequently, the way it looks at itself. This is an incredibly fascinating task but a very delicate one, and it bears great responsibility as well.

Today, sharing knowledge with the citizens means even more than that. Ultimately, it means to provide tools so that people can engage with and make sense of the past themselves. It means to develop a reciprocal relationship between popular and scientific knowledge. Scholars are more and more envisaged as 'community cultural managers' who have the competencies and sensibility to encourage and promote the public understanding of art and culture. This is the very essence of democracy: to grant the right to knowledge to everybody, so that everybody can participate in decision-making processes involving the whole community - to build, in sum a true knowledge-based society. It



is a highly political task.

In this perspective, archaeologists are on the front line: they work on the field and, while digging, they alter the landscape influencing directly the lives of the community. It is a right of everyone to be informed of the work of the archaeologists, and take part into the decision-making process around the remains unveiled in the area. In urban areas, above all, where archaeological remains often collide with modern needs for infrastructures, archaeologists should be able to encourage solutions that respect both the past and modernity. Whereas when it comes to the 'cultural landscape,' the work of archaeologists – especially their accurate reconstruction of the modifications of landscape through history – is key and fundamental to its conservation and overall management.

All these activities require that clear norms and a specific methodology are put in place; hence, our second point: scholars should deal with the public in the same way as they do research, and with a similar approach. Public archaeology is by no means second-class, as opposed to pure research: it is as scientific as pure research, and it equally requires accurate planning (negotiated with all stakeholders), specific strategies, and precise evaluation of the work done. Museum professionals have been aware of this necessity for a long time, but in Italian archaeological museums this method is not common practice yet, and it is almost totally ignored on fieldwork.

While collaboration with other disciplines is an established practice in archaeological pure research, however, this is not yet true for public archaeology. The range of disciplines with which public archeology interacts evidently differs from the one associated with pure research, but it is equally essential. Public archaeology projects should foster a closer and more structured involvement of experts in anthropology, ethnography, sociology, communication, education, management, tourism, economics, statistics, law etc. Furthermore, specific – and much needed – professional profiles are currently developing in the fields of communication and management

of archaeological areas and museums. Their areas of competence involve a combination of archaeological and communication/management skills. Such profiles need all our support and encouragement.

Through the publication of a peer-reviewed academic Journal, we aim at promoting debate on these issues in order to bring the practice of public archaeology in Italy up to international scientific standards. We also hope that, when a fair number of qualitative and quantitative analyses of Italian public archaeology projects are available, it will be possible to compare them, identify some national trends, and outline the specific impact of archaeology on Italian society.

### **Citizen archaeology**

Being convinced that popular knowledge can actively contribute to archaeological research, we are in favour of a regulated employment of volunteers in archaeological activities and of a wider dissemination of 'citizen archaeology' (intended as a specific sector within the broader 'citizen science' practice).

A harsh debate is currently going on in Italy on this matter. Professional archaeologists strongly combat volunteer involvement and defend professionalization in all activities related to cultural heritage. They have good reasons to do so. Over the last years, in fact, they have faced serious difficulties: from the 1980s on, the main occupation for most of them has been preventive archaeology, and the current crisis in the construction industry has expelled many of them from the job market. As a first answer to their fair demands – and as a belated application of the Council of Europe's Valletta Convention on the protection of the archaeological heritage (1992) – in February 2016, the Ministry of cultural heritage mandated that all archaeological fieldwork should be carried out by qualified people only. However, in a context of lack of public funds the Ministry itself, as well as many other public administrators, are increasingly welcoming the volunteers' contribution as the only way to keep things going, especially when it comes to museum activities.

However, financial constraints are not the only reason to look favourably at volunteers. In the current dynamic situation, some cultural heritage professionals propose viable solutions that respects professionalism as well as the increasing (and commendable) demand for public participation in cultural activities. Namely, they think that it could be more profitable for professional archaeologists to align with the citizens rather than view them as enemies, and experiment new types of archaeological activity that include rather than exclude them.

Needless to say, we pursue this third way. We are convinced that, at this time, the only way to revitalize archaeology as a discipline is to bring back – in a more modern way – the sort of public participation that characterized the 1960s and 1970s and that, in the recent past, has been increasingly marginalized by professionals. Crowdfunding and crowdsourcing are not just modern key words: in the field of cultural heritage they could make a real difference and develop activities that wouldn't be possible otherwise. Archaeologists can be coordinators of projects carried out by large groups of people, rather than the sole and isolated agents. Clear and precise rules need to be established so that everybody's role is respected, but we are convinced that only a wide public engagement can bring more money (and consequently more employment) to a now suffering sector.

This Journal aims to promote debate on the future of the profession and welcomes any contribution on the issue. We will also monitor the situation so that, whatever kind of archaeology we will experience in the future, the 'new' professions arising from the new scenario receive prompt public recognition and do not remain precarious for years to come.

### **Know whom you are dealing with**

The focus we have chosen - the Italian scenario - will not prevent this Journal to engage with the main public archaeology themes debated worldwide. In a broad sense, public archeology examines, in both theoretical and practical terms, any kind of relationship between archaeology and contemporary

society, in the attempt to highlight how much the discipline is relevant to society itself.

So far, the most debated themes have been: the antiquities trade; the fight against looting and the international illicit trade in antiquities; the restitution of archaeological artifacts to their home countries; human rights and archaeology; the use of archaeology in order to shape contemporary identities as well as ideologies (and any kind of contemporary interpretation of the past); the intersection of archaeology and politics (as well as policies); the economic importance of archaeology and its role for social and economic development; the management of archaeological sites and museums; archaeology and the tourism industry; the contribution of archaeology to environmental issues; the role of archaeology in the context of war; the public presentation of archaeology on sites and in museums; the role of historical theme parks and re-enactment of the past; archaeology in popular literature and the media. And on and on. The list cannot be comprehensive, as issues continuously evolve according to the needs and trends of society itself.

Every age, as well as every nation and every community looks at its past in a different and peculiar way. They 'use' the past by selecting what they deem more convenient, out of their immense repository of events and ideas, and interpreting it according to the needs of the time. We could even say that a community's relationship with its past is a mirror of the community itself in that specific time. Investigating this relationship is, thus, a crucial task for journalists as well as scholars, and archaeologists can significantly contribute to it. At the same time, whatever issue archaeologists deal with, they cannot do without an accurate analysis of the specific role of the past within the specific community. 'Know whom you are dealing with' is a definite starting point for any public archaeology activity. Even the most generic issue refers, ultimately, to a specific community.

This Journal aims to address any topic related to the role of archaeology in contemporary society and thus become a forum for debate, provided that analyses are tangibly rooted in specific contexts.

## Dialogue

At the moment, one of the most debated issue worldwide is the reconstruction of historic monuments targeted by extremists. The issue is not new. In 1964, the Venice Charter had called for authenticity, accepting the “reassembling of existing but dismembered parts” (*anastylosis*) of ancient monuments, while rejecting their total reconstruction as fakery. Since then, experts have gradually become more possibilist – especially in exceptional cases like the reconstruction of the Mostar Bridge – but they never switched sides so drastically as they are doing now, in response to the recurrent deliberate destruction of Syrian and Iraqi monuments by Daesh. Today, the call for reconstruction is a political move against Daesh’s claim that the physical proofs of the existence of other civilizations and beliefs should be dismantled.

Since the war in the Middle East is still ongoing and the situation is increasingly critical and confused, the call for reconstruction is sensibly subject to distorted political as well as economic exploitation. Furthermore, in the Middle East the majority perceive such projects as a product of a persistent colonial mentality and yet another imposition of Western will (and Western interests) on their culture and sovereignty.

Daesh carried to the extreme an attitude that, in the past, led to the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the mud shrines of Timbuctu, or the historical buildings in ex-Yugoslavia. All these monuments were demolished because they had become symbols of cultural and/or religious identity, and very powerful ones at that. Fundamentally, however, they were symbols of an international narrative that declared them ‘of outstanding value to humanity,’ granting them a special status that progressively detached them from the everyday lives of those around them.

The more monuments were rhetorically heralded as the carriers of tradition, the more they were ecstatically admired but at the same time ignored by the living bearers of that tradition. In modern societies, monuments are both worshipped and downplayed, our awe being balanced by the persuasion that they are a hindrance to modern development. In the context of war, this popular reaction against the rhetoric of cultural heritage turned, ultimately, into its deliberate destruction.

Now, the call for the reconstruction of demolished monuments is, again, a way to highlight their special status and detachment from real life. Ultimately, several citizens in the Middle Eastern repeatedly reacted to this call and expressed their feeling that the international community appears to value monuments more than human lives. It seems to them that saving the monuments – and, specifically, only a few selected ones - has become a higher priority for the international community, one more urgent than saving the people. It cannot be like that.

We think that reconstruction can be more advisably discussed when the war is over (hopefully soon, even if the current situation gives little hope) and with the utmost care, so that reconstructed monuments do not risk to prolong violence rather than favour reconciliation. This happened, for instance, in Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) where its famous Bridge that acts as the connection point between the muslim and the christian community, located on opposite sides of the Narenta river, was hastily reconstructed and promptly included in the Unesco World Heritage List. It was never considered by local people as the symbol of peace, as the international community had envisaged. On the contrary, it became the very place where still unappeased resentments and violence were unveiled.

In order to avoid false steps as were taken in the case of the Mostar Bridge, what is urgently needed is a radical change in perspective on cultural heritage. We have to promote a view that makes the material traces of the past part of our everyday lives again. This is by no means

a sort of ‘downgrading,’ but rather an important upgrading that fully includes cultural heritage in the landscape we live in and in all decisions related to it. As a matter of fact, there is already international consensus on ‘heritage’ as not a granitic but a fluid and culturally determined concept. Declarations to such an effect were made, for instance, in the Council of Europe’s Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, 2005. But theory hasn’t fully turned into practice yet.

It is not easy to overturn deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours and it will take time to do so, but the current situation requires concrete and important actions in this direction. For instance, international organizations could, for now, seek to include cultural heritage in transitional justice programmes in order to provide redress for its destruction, in the same way as it does for victims of other war atrocities. In the future, then, they could closely monitor postwar reconstruction so that the natural and cultural landscape are not devastated as it happened in Lebanon after the civil war.

In the long run, the ultimate solution is education through dialogue, as pope Francis repeatedly asserted (in the encyclical *Laudato si’*, 2015, and in several other occasions). He called for a true cultural revolution that will enable people of different nations to communicate rather than erect walls between each other. In this way, they will unite and build a new and cohesive society. The world is irreversibly cosmopolite, multicultural and multireligious, and protectionism, nationalism and xenophobia will not get us too far. Those were our ancestors’ conceptual tools but nowadays - according to pope Francis - we cannot evade the challenge of living together. Solidarity, social policies, the fight against poverty and, above all, education are the keywords of the new scenario, and they all require precise long-term investments. Dialogue is at the very root of all of them: it helps people overcome stereotypes, appreciate the others and respect them. Moreover, while interfacing with others, people also discover much about themselves. Dialogue creates better people and better citizens.

Archaeologists can play an important role in this new vision. If they keep interacting and dialoguing with the communities they work with, they can succeed in rerooting cultural heritage among the people, and engage them in a more mature and uninhibited attitude towards it, one which combines respect and familiarity. They can attempt to bridge the gap between the past and the present in a very concrete way. At the same time, they can effectively counter the narratives of uniqueness and exclusion with the historical realities of complexity and connection among people and places. This Journal is honored to provide an arena for discussion about the many issues related to this gigantic but essential effort.

### The Journal

The core of *Archeostorie. Journal of Public Archaeology* consists of a *Topic of the year* section with papers that analyze a specific subject from several points of view, and a *Satura Lanx* section with papers beyond the main theme.

A *News and Reviews* section following the scientific papers provides readers with first-hand reportages and analyses of important events of the year. We also collect selected archaeological works of fiction in the *Archaeotales* section, as we are convinced that storytelling is a powerful way of involving people in the love and appreciation of our past. But let’s examine each section in depth.

Our choice for our first *Topic of the year* was *Small but kind of mighty*. Needless to say, we hope it to be auspicious for the Journal’s future. In fact, successful projects generally ‘start small,’ but are conceived by people who ‘think big.’ Even if they are actually ‘small,’ they can have an enormous impact on the community they grow in, or even on society at large. They may choose either to stay small or to grow, but in both cases they prove to be influential and powerful.

We looked for good small public archaeology projects whose powerful impact on society was clearly described and analyzed but, above all, measured. In short, we challenged archaeologists to evaluate their public outreach

activities in depth. We are proud of the result and we consider it a first significant step towards the establishment in Italy of public archaeology as an accurate and stringent practice.

Louise Zarmati's paper is the instructive story of a precisely programmed success. In the Australian state of New South Wales, high schools experienced the crisis of humanities decades before us. However, university professors took the lead in redesigning the Ancient History curriculum according to the new needs, and they were so farsighted that now the subject is incredibly popular - especially its compulsory topic *Pompeii and Herculaneum* - and universities are witnessing increased enrollment in Ancient History classes. On the other hand, archaeologists working at the 'terramaras' of Pilastris (a bronze age site in the Po Valley) analyze how they are currently evolving from an initial successful but offhanded involvement of the community in their research, to a structured planning of both research and outreach activities.

The *Arlès Rhône 3 Project* described by Caterina De Vivo is not precisely 'small,' as removing the ancient boat from the riverbed and exhibiting it in the local museum required a significant economic investment. However, what made for the popularity of the project was mainly the narrative that sustained it and the peculiar and innovative way archaeologists involved the local community in it. The last two papers are about a virtual museum made of 3D models of artifacts from the Etruscan Museum of Populonia *Gasparri Collection*, and video games produced by the *Brettii* and *Enotri* Museum in Cosenza: two extremely low cost products that proved engaging and capable of enhancing the experience of both real and virtual visitors.

In the *Satura Lanx* section we publish two papers that provide a - much needed - introductory framework for a future development of public archaeology in our country. Francesco Ripanti offers us a preliminary overview of Italian public archaeology projects on fieldwork, and attempts to draw a first overall classification

and evaluation of them. Massimiliano Secci, on the other hand, demonstrates how the principles of public archaeology trace back to a line of thinking that unites several European intellectuals of the past century, and provides a strong theoretical framework for a reflection on the role of public archaeology, as well as of scholarly research in general, in the XXI century. Lastly, Chiara Zuanni analyzes the participation of Italian cultural institutions in the *Twitter Museum Week 2016* and questions the - otherwise celebrated - reach and breadth of engagement achieved.

As a matter of fact, this first issue of *Archeostorie. Journal of Public Archaeology* begins with two extremely engaging readings that we received as goodwill presents by two distinguished members of our Advisory Board. We were so grateful to them that we created a specific and very evocative temporary section for them: *Memories*. In a dense conversation with Carolina Megale, Daniele Manacorda recalls his most significant experiences as an archaeologist and analyzes how they contributed to shape his vision of the discipline's role in society.

On the other hand, Richard Hodges' memoir describes his first encounter with the Albanian World Heritage site of Butrint in 1993. In a country that was still experiencing transition from communism to a democratic republic, and where everybody was envisioning development in the form of skyscrapers, huge luxury hotels and mass tourism, he convinced both the authorities and the population that the true value of Butrint lies in its unique natural environment. So the Butrint National Park was born. We do hope Richard continues to write his most exciting and instructive Butrint story.

In this year's *Postscript* another member of our Advisory Board, Akira Matsuda, foresees some crucial questions that lie ahead for this Journal. His words bode well for our future. We really appreciate them.

## News and reviews

We intended to devote a *Childrens' Corner* to the presentation of public archaeology projects specifically designed for the kids, but unfortunately this year we didn't receive any publishable paper on this issue. On the contrary, we do have a wonderful *Childrens' Corner* in the *News* section already. Thanks to a close collaboration with the *Archeokids* blog, we propose a lively reportage of a sleepover experience at the Archaeological museum of Bitonto, and an innovative idea on how to familiarize children with the method of historical research.

In general, our *News* section offers a selection of the first-hand reportages and analyses of important events of the year published in our online *Archeostorie Magazine*. A significant part of our publishing project, the Magazine – in Italian, for now - targets a wide audience of scholars and students as well as whoever is interested and involved in cultural heritage themes. By offering readers up-to-date and timely information, it is public archaeology 'in action,' whereas the Journal is the place for analysis and reflection. The two are closely intertwined, and neither would exist without the other. The Journal *News* section includes those events and trends that - *a posteriori* – have proven to be the most relevant ones.

Place of honor has gone this year to the Poggibonsi Archaeodrome: a successful example of historically accurate reconstruction (a replica of a Carolingian settlement) and living history, in 2016 it hit the news and is becoming increasingly popular. Among the trends, wedding at the museum is currently front line in Italy, but here we propose a slightly different and very interesting version. The international hit of the year were the Millennials, and we analyze how to attract them to our museums. As for the devastating Middle Eastern civil war, even if the Magazine repeatedly dealt with Daesh's theatrical destruction of historical monuments, we preferred the Journal to focus on more overlooked but equally significant events in Libya and Kurdistan.

Our *Reviews* section consists of selected articles from the Magazine, too, but in the future we intend to add academic reviews as well. As in the Magazine, we offer insightful analyses of any product designed to share the archaeological knowledge with the wider public. We review books, then, but also important conferences and exhibitions, new museums and archaeological parks, movies, videos, video games, websites, mobile apps, relevant marketing campaigns. The communication of cultural heritage is such a dynamic field that new ideas and tools are springing up at an incredibly high pace. The real question is, then, to discern what is not going to last from what can leave a concrete mark and significantly influence the way we experience the past. This is a very difficult task that requires competence as well as a vision: we are determined to do our best.

## Telling history

Finally, we turn to the *Archeotales* section. It is the section we love the most because it best represents who we really are: we – the whole Editorial Board – are storytellers, each of us through his or her specific technique, from writing to illustration to videomaking, photography, gaming and so on. We called ourselves *Archeostorie* (Italian for archaeotales) and it is no coincidence: we believe storytelling has the power to bring the past back to life in a peculiar and irreplaceable way. Nowadays the term is often misused and abused, but for archaeologists it is the very key to the communication of the past. And not only that.

Ancient artifacts enchant our eyes because they are concrete proofs of our ancestor's existence. Especially when we can touch them, we immediately think about who similarly created and touched them hundreds or thousands of years ago. As sir Mortimer Wheeler affirmed "the archaeologist is digging up not things, but people." However, it is even more than that: we feel such a strong bond with our ancestors, that we would like to know more about them, and even interact with them. Dialogue is what all human beings look for, and through dialogue they get to know the others

better, and appreciate and respect them. This is the core of Pope Francis' invitation to build bridges rather than walls with people around us today. It can apply to our past as well: distance in time is not much different, in its effects, from distance in space. When we are able to 'talk' to our ancestors, albeit through imagination, we can also appreciate them much more. Storytelling has the power to make all this true. It doesn't just bring the past back to life, but by telling the peculiar stories of individuals, it connects us with the people of the past one-by-one.

In addition, storytelling has a second non-negligible benefit. To create a story is extremely hard work, which combines imagination with accurate historical research. While narrating events in the past, we are presented with questions that wouldn't even have been dreamed of otherwise, and the need to investigate arises. In order to produce a consistent story, any aspect about everyday life in the past is sifted through. Storytelling is not just the absolutely best way to communicate the past; it also has the power to promote research, generating a most virtuous circle.

We hope you enjoy reading the three tales we published in this Journal: a disenchanted portrait of the Lombards, a most personal account of the decisive attack on Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, and a compelling time-travelling experience at the Florence Archaeological Museum. Many more will come in the future. However, if you are so enchanted you cannot wait, you can always check the *Archeotales* section in our Magazine for a lot more. And if you feel inspired, why don't you submit your tales (or

videos, photographs, illustrations, graphic novels etc.) for publication?

This online Journal is open access and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 international license. Therefore, anybody can copy and adapt any part of the work for personal and commercial use, as long as appropriate credit is clearly given. Each author conserves rights to her or his own paper. Since we are convinced that research about the past should be shared with everyone, embracing a full open access policy was for us the only possible choice.

The idea for this Journal arose within the *Archeostorie* laboratory, and I am proud to affirm that it was the group as a whole, rather than individuals, that accomplished the result. A group is much more than the mere sum of individuals, and *Archeostorie* is a fantastic group where fresh and innovative ideas constantly flourish. A truly special thanks to the whole Editorial Board for its continued commitment, to Ilaria and Simone Marchesi for their invaluable language expertise, and to all the Advisory Board members and colleagues who generously took part in the reviewing process of the papers. I recently asked Luca Peyronel to share with me the burden of this Journal's editorship. He accepted without hesitation and, with no fear of getting his hands dirty, actively participated in the last frantic phases of the publication work. His advice has been of invaluable help, and I would like to express my deepest gratitude to him for his efforts. We also found time to discuss the Journal's future, and fantastic new projects are already on their way. There is much more to come. Stay tuned!

