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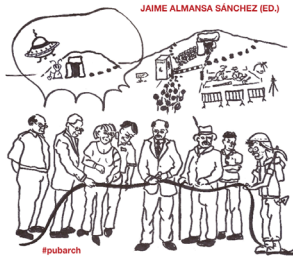
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REVIEWS

ARQUEOLOGÍA PÚBLICA EN ESPAÑA



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Arqueología Pública en España [J. Almansa (Ed.)]

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530 pages, 2013

I remember perfectly when I bought this book at the Archaeological Museum of The Community of Madrid's bookshop in April 2014. At that same time, I was working in the Museum and immersed in my MA Thesis about urban archaeology and community in Barcelona and found the book to be a really helpful publication for my research. In this review, I will outline some of the main ideas of each part but also provide all the links to the projects, according to *Archaeology 2.0*, inviting the reader to check their evolution, maintenance and results.

The book was published at the very end of 2013, an important period for the archaeological sector due to the global crisis that affected it as well as the political changes that took place in Spain at that time. Jaime Almansa Sánchez, the editor and publisher for this book, has written and edited many pieces of work focusing on public archaeology in Spain and globally including a previous book (Almansa Sánchez, 2011) and other publications (Almansa Sánchez 2014; Richardson & Almansa-Sánchez, 2015). Taking into

consideration that most of the work done in public archaeology comes from Anglo-Saxon countries, one of the main virtues of this edited book is that it delineates the state of public archaeology in Spain while making this literature available to Spanish speakers around the world. Until recently, public archaeology was hardly taught in Spain—the exceptional case was the University of Santiago de Compostela (Galicia). We can now find it in the University of Cantabria as well. Both courses are situated in the MA curricula and emphasize an approach to administrative and management strategies.

It is not to be missed that the term “fashion” in his dedication points out that the book is published in a concrete moment, and is not a happenstance that the aim of a new Erasmus+ project called Innovarch¹ -led by the Autonomous University of Barcelona- focuses on the development of new tools for the dissemination and learning on public archaeology. What I suggest is that this book, apart from being a compendium of different examples of what we could call Spanish Public Archaeology, is also clearly a manifesto that intends to frame and change not only Spanish perception about the subject overall but also reach the interest of people around the globe and, hopefully, change global perceptions of public archaeology.

Divided in three sections, the book starts with a short but useful introduction to the history of the discipline, with special attention to Spain, and ends with an epilogue addressing political issues from a critical perspective. The first section presents the theoretical frame, starting with Antonio Vizcaíno who describes the figure of the archaeologist in the collective imagery, highlighting the importance that the archaeologist places on understanding the *public* needs as well as the scientific community. J.M. Peque follows with an analysis about the presence of archaeology in the internet and the media using the term “alternative archaeology” appealing to the

¹ Website: <http://pagines.uab.cat/innovarch/> [Accessed 12/3/2015].

apocalyptic meaning some journalists give to it. When the author says that we have lost so many battles in this field he is right— in mid-November 2015 a peak-viewing TV show about mystery revealed the presence of a “pyramid” in a small village of La Mancha, Spain², *found* by a local discoverer. Reactions appeared on social media immediately, mentioning its real chronology and cultural ascription, as the site was placed on the Community’s Archaeological Chart long time ago, or describing this action as a despoiling with a call for the administration’s disapproval (Aparicio Resco, 2015). Israel Viana -journalist- and Beatriz Comendador explain their reflections on the Mass Media and consumerism in further sections. Both have addressed the subject with a critical eye, focusing on the cultural industry crisis and claiming for rigorous studies and an *object-ness* of the past (Appadurai, 1986; Olsen & Pétursdóttir, 2014; Olsen, Shanks, Webmoor & Witmore, 2012). The paper from Silvia Marín and Walter Alegría explain their association, Terra Feudal, and the way they do experimental archaeology for the people. Perhaps this chapter should have been placed in the second section of the book due to its descriptive format. Manuel de la Calle and María García present their in-depth research on archaeological tourism and heritage by collecting data from several sites and institutions and make a distinction from the urban to the local areas by targeting that the World Heritage sites are the ones where we find more tensions between development, tourism and conservation. The commercial sector is covered in the following chapters, starting with a diachronic introduction by David González and followed by a study, developed by Eva Parga-Dans, Carlos Martín-Ríos and Felipe Criado-Boado, about how we could innovate the organization of the commercial sector through an analysis of its dynamics in the past years (Parga-Dans, Martín-Ríos, & Criado-Boado, 2013). Then, introducing us to the role of archaeology in nationalism in

² Link to the video: http://www.cuatro.com/cuarto-milenio/programas/temporada-11/programa-10/primera-piramide-Espana-corazon-Cuenca_2_2083755069.html [Accessed 12/3/2015]

terms of transmissibility Abraham Herrero points out some of the recent cases of fraud on archaeological sites like Zubialde (Basque Country, Spain) or Iruña-Veleia (Navarra, Spain) both related with Basque culture. Both chapters are complementary and configure an excellent summary of a *precariat* generation that has not changed since the book was published (González Álvarez, 2013; Standing, 2011). The crowning touch of the section is a deep theoretical chapter written by an archaeologist, Ignacio Rodríguez Temiño, and an affiliated metal detector hobbyist, F.J Matas, which represents itself a dialogue between institutional archaeology and society. The authors highlight the concept of public interest, *ordinariness* and durability on the archaeological record, adding that administration must relegate its role as a culture promoter based in an *event-cratic* way.

The second section is based on case-studies that drive the reader into many different dialogues within the Iberian Peninsula (Andalusia, Aragon, Castile-La Mancha, Galicia or Valencia). Desiderio Vaquerizo and Ana B. Ruiz discussed their main goals and funding problems during the different phases of the *Arqueología Somos Todos*³ project situated in Cordoba, a city with poor industrial development and a high service sector based on tourism. On the rural dimension, the team of Torre dos Mouros (Galicia) elaborately describes the development of different activities on a cultural site as an entity, avoiding the separation between the excavation process and outreach activities, converting the scientific methodology into the centerpiece of the descriptions with a live dissemination of work and results. In this project, they conducted an excellent analysis of social media revealing the handicaps that we can find targeting our audiences. This subject will be also the axis of the chapter written by Pau Sureda and others describing the aims of *Arqueobarbaria*⁴, a team of researchers who wanted to develop a

³ Website: <http://www.arqueologiasomostodos.com/> [Accessed 12/3/2015]

⁴ Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Arqueobarbaria-347482041964923/> [Accessed 12/3/2015]

socialization of knowledge for the archaeological environment of the island of Formentera (Balearic Islands). For this case, the authors recognize their limitations in the use of social media platforms like twitter—a notable example of humility in the academic world. They also discuss and denounce the lack of interest and help from authorities for their project and goals. From the Canary Islands, we find a descriptive chapter that brings us to the rural dimension of public archaeology and the strategies of communication and dissemination that the team of Cueva Pintada⁵ followed (Gáldar, Gran Canaria). The next article written by Uncastillo/Los Bañales Foundation⁶ follows a schema based on management and heritage where, although it is full of deep explanations, lacks a conclusive section encompassing the actions carried on. Additionally, the chapter written by *Espiera*, an association with an aim of knowledge expansion in archaeology placed at Valencia⁷, describes not only its recent actions but also its underlying layers, scopes, and a dynamic sense of change mentioning the centrality of a gender analysis in archaeological and heritage studies, a topic that is missing in the rest of the book (Montón Subias, 2014:245). I believe these authors introduce a basic concept around how the *social construction* mutates and changes over the years. Closing this second section, Pedro R. Moya-Maleno's chapter is a reflective exercise of a long-term community archaeology project –one of the pioneers in our country– *Proyecto Jamila*⁸. What I see here is a well-conducted exercise of self-evaluation. He has had the courage to analyse the different workers and volunteers that had participated over several years, pointing out the difficulties between academic and social participative research.

5 Website: <http://www.cuevapintada.com/> [Accessed 12/3/2015]

6 Website: <http://www.losbanales.es/> [Accessed 12/3/2015]

7 Website: <https://espiera.wordpress.com/> [Accessed 12/3/2015]

8 Website: <http://www.entornojamila.es/> [Accessed 12/3/2015]

The third part of the book is dedicated to new –and not so new– technologies applied to archaeology and its dissemination. It starts with the chapter of César Martínez, a general introduction to the benefits of dissemination and the problems of maintenance and continuity that come with them. I have especially enjoyed the paper from Sergio Segura that deals with the subject of historical illustration, disaggregating the different steps and dialogues he has with stakeholders and the public feedback. The next review about cloud computing and free access from the enterprise *Patrimonio Inteligente*⁹, is related with the proposals from projects CATA¹⁰ and CARARE¹¹. The organization of the archaeological record, in the second case related to a European level, has been one of the challenges derived from the development of a number of projects in the past years that were focused on the humanities. Sadly, sometimes the best intentions come unheeded; the high number of unconnected projects and the lack of funding for maintenance reveal a similar dissemination of other projects (Cimadomo, 2013; Sánchez, Gómez, Martínez, Ruiz, & Molinos, 2014). In the case of the blog *Arqueología de la Guerra Civil*¹² led by Alfredo González Ruibal, we find an example of good practices in blogging. The team explains how the project was developed, how it is evolving and how they evaluated their impact. This section is closed with an essay of anthropologic brushstrokes, written by members of DIDPATRI (University of Barcelona) that focused on the use of cell phones applied to the didactics of heritage.

Jaime Almansa closes his publication, as previously mentioned, with a critical epilogue that reflects our role in society as pro-active researchers that deal with social capital and society's wellness. We will need to analyze in the future years if some of the new projects

9 Website: <http://www.patrimoniointeligente.com/> [Accessed 12/3/2015]

10 Website: <http://cata.cica.es/> [Accessed 12/4/2015]

11 Website: <http://www.carare.eu/eng> [Accessed 12/4/2015]

12 Website: <http://guerraenlauniversidad.blogspot.com.es/> [Accessed 12/4/2015]

that will appear will be related with these wellness aims or will be adapted to calls for funding whereby archaeologists are obligated to include socially inclusive proposals – as a matter to arrive to an old *post-processual* way of building science.

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