

PAPER

## A Pioneering Experiment: *Dialoghi di Archeologia* between Marxism and Political Activism

Francesco Iacono\*

The post-war politics of Italy had an impact on its archaeology and archaeological community. Some attempts at radicalisation were made via the journal *Dialoghi di Archeologia*, founded in 1967, with the aim of discussing problems and achieving changes within both academic and public archaeology. This paper traces the history of the journal and its legacy.

### Introduction

In Italy, the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s was a period full of enthusiasms and contradictions. The journal *Dialoghi di Archeologia* was born in those days of youth protest and a growing middle class, of social modernization and political stagnation. This innovative editorial project, which merged historical and archaeological research with civil protest and political activism, was a social experiment openly inspired by Marxism. Its founders were the *Amici*, a group of progressive established academics and younger scholars. This paper explores the social and political context from which *Dialoghi di Archeologia* emerged, and traces the history of the journal, as well as that of the *Amici* from 1967, when the journal was established, until the 1980s, when the *Dialoghi* had abandoned its radical politics, and reinvented itself as one of many academic archaeological journals.

### Archaeology of a Miracle

During the aftermath of the Second World War the peculiarity of a Europe divided into two political blocks exacerbated the strategic importance of countries constituting the boundaries between the East and the West (Harper 2002). Among these countries, Italy became one of the easternmost frontiers of the Western world in the Mediterranean. And yet despite (or perhaps because of) these apparently claustrophobic geopolitical conditions, during the second half of the twentieth century, Italy's cultural life experienced, in many respects, considerable levels of independence. However, this 'independence' had little impact on cultural institutions, and in particular, very little impact on academia. Most noticeably, disciplines that had been considerably ideologically 'laden' by Fascist propaganda, such as archaeology, experienced little growth or

renewed interest or patronage during the post-war new republican era (Barbanera 1998; Guidi 1988, 2010).

In this paper I will discuss the development of two contradictory elements within the field of archaeology, namely: the new cultural climate, inspired by Marxism, which experienced its apex of popularity during the second half of the 1960s; and the generally reactionary academic milieu, which was unable to tolerate and incorporate this new trend. In particular I will also describe how this 'conflict' within archaeology, resulted in a pioneering editorial experiment, the inaugural publication of the journal *Dialoghi di Archeologia* in 1967, by a relatively small group of scholars and field archaeologists, who called themselves the *Amici*. Marxism profoundly influenced both the journal's politics and its founding group of intellectuals. This paper will trace them through this complex era of Italian history, exploring the aspects of Marxist thought which most affected the *Dialoghi di Archeologia* at political and theoretical levels. In doing so, the first step will be that of reconstructing the historical context in which *Dialoghi* began, and briefly describing Italian politics at the time, and the peculiar position of archaeology within Italian society.

During the 1960s, the two most influential institutions in Italian society were essentially the same as they had been during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. These two were: the Catholic Church, with its political 'branch' the Christian Democratic Party, who essentially endorsed the American hegemony of the Western block, and controlled the overwhelming majority of the political and cultural institutions of Italy; and the Communist Party, who was institutionally and politically largely marginal, at least until the second half of the 1970s (Guiat 2003; Warner 2000). Although the Communist Party was undoubtedly crucial in popularizing Marxist ideology among the masses, the influence of Marxism on Italian culture was not the only the result of the party's propaganda. However, as a philosophical movement, Marxism was indeed extremely important, enjoying popular support, and being endorsed by a number of key intel-

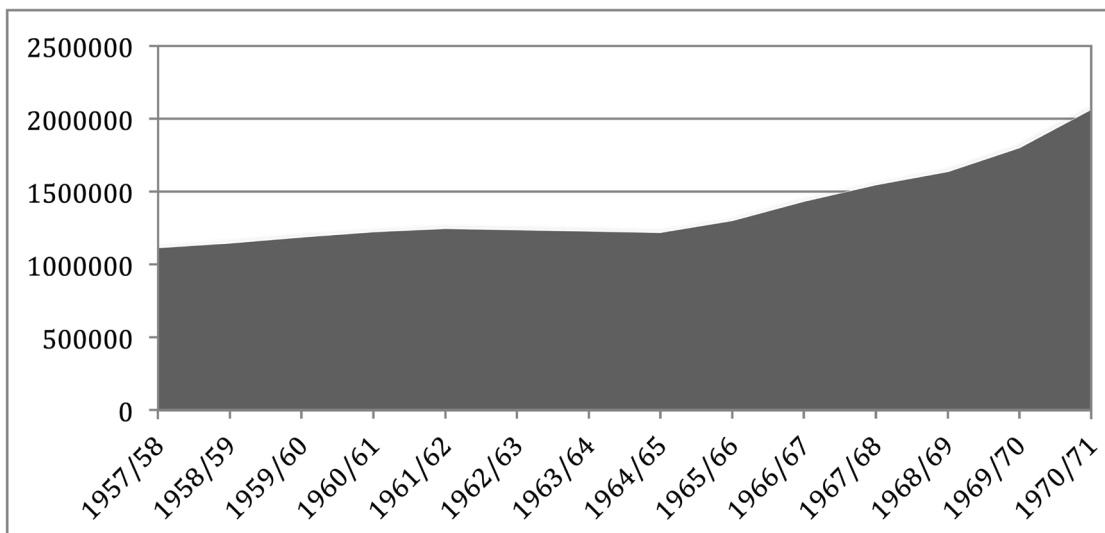
\* Ph.D. Candidate, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31–34 Gordon Square, WC1H 0PY, London, UK  
<http://ucl.academia.edu/Francescolacono>  
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/people/research/iacono>

lectuals in philosophy as well as in the arts (such as Antonio Gramsci; Guiat 2003; Gundle 2000).

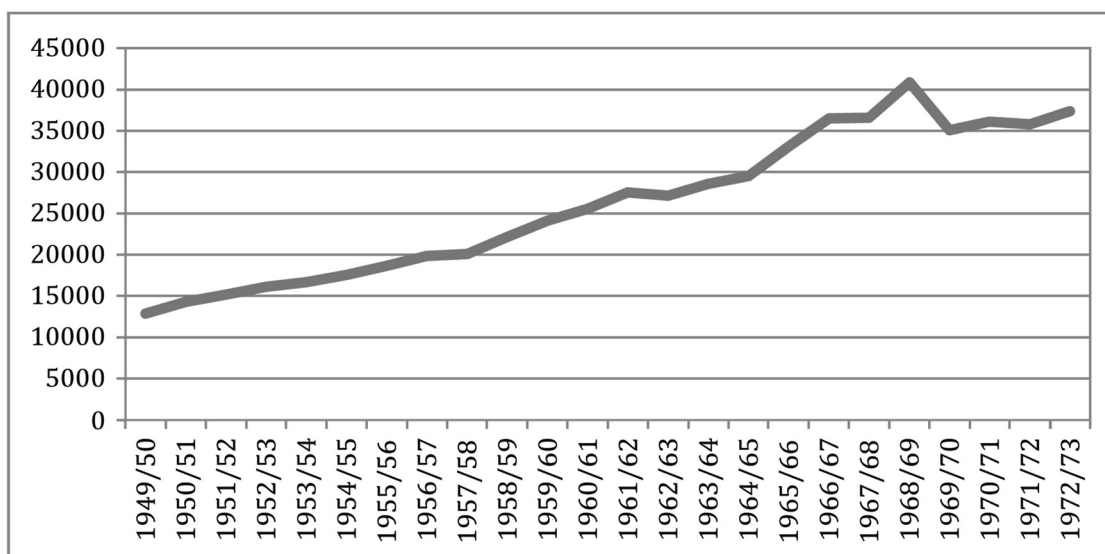
For Italy the 1960s were primarily a period of great economic development, of the ‘economic miracle’, as it has been called sometimes. Due to the long-term effects of the Marshall Plan, as well as to the favourable conditions peculiar to post-war Italy, that is, the availability of a large and a cheap labour force, the country’s economy grew at an impressive average pace of 5.3% per year, a rate very similar to the contemporary one enjoyed by the pre-crisis People’s Republic of China. This process consequently brought about considerable social transformation, as in relatively few years, the rural country of pre-war times was effectively transformed into a modern industrial ‘power’, with a radical shift of population from countryside to cities, and a slow but constant increase of numbers of consumers (Crafts and Toniolo 1996; Graziani 2000; Harper 2002).

The higher level of wealth produced a considerable increase in population in line with what was happening in other Western European countries such as France and Great Britain. Putting together these two elements, there was also a noteworthy increase in the demand for university-level education across the country (Crafts and Toniolo 1996). As it can be seen from **Figure 1** below, this growth was substantial, with the number of enrolled students in humanities faculties doubling between 1957 and 1971.

Growth in the access of students to higher education meant the expansion of the staff at universities (see **Figure 2**), with academic positions available even for those with different political orientations and, to a more limited extent, with different social backgrounds from the bulk of those in the post-war academic establishment.



**Fig. 1:** Number of students enrolled in Lettere (Humanities) at Italian universities from 1957 to 1971 (data from Italian National Institute of Statistics ISTAT).



**Fig. 2:** Number of academic positions in Italy from 1950 to 1973 (data from Italian National Institute of Statistics ISTAT).

## Archaeology in Italy after the Second World War

Archaeology was no exception to this general trend and the growth in numbers of students and academics would eventually cause considerable changes to the discipline. However, in order to appreciate the scope of these changes, it is necessary to briefly sketch the state of Italian archaeology before the 1960s.

Overall, there was a considerable degree of continuity from the pre-war Fascist period. The major division within the studies of past material culture was that between classical archaeology and prehistoric archaeology. At an institutional level classical archaeology was dominant, absorbing the overwhelming majority of funding. This was partly due to the historical importance that the classical world had in general on Italian culture, and partly due to the legacy of the cult of Rome, inherited by the republican state via the Gentile government's reform of public education (Barbanera 1998; Guidi 1988). At that time, of course, classical archaeology meant the history of classical art or 'Winckelmannian archaeology', to use an effective neologism coined by Bianchi Bandinelli (one of the most important Italian archaeologists of the last century and a key figure in *Dialoghi*, see Bianchi Bandinelli 1976). Italian prehistoric archaeology was the result of the convergence of two different branches of study, one strongly linked with the natural sciences and aimed at the investigation of the earliest phases of prehistory, and another one more 'archaeological', interested primarily in later prehistory (Guidi 2010). Given the relatively negligible institutional support of palaeoethnology (the Italian name for prehistory), it comes as no surprise that the first attempts at discipline renovation originated in classical archaeology. Within its wide cosmos, the study of the material culture of the past was fragmented in various areas of specialization that were very often self-referential and, overall, provided few opportunities for interdisciplinary discussions.

As a result, in the 1950s and 1960s there was no professional co-ordination between archaeologists operating across Italy. After an initial attempt to create this linkage between archaeologists at an institutional level, and one that failed, the Etruscologist, Massimo Pallottino tried to revolutionise the current strategy. In 1962, in the journal *Archeologia Classica*, he published a sort of manifesto in which he proposed the creation, from the bottom up, of the first professional association of Italian archaeologists, the *Società degli Archeologi Italiani* or SAI (Pallottino 1962; Peroni 2005). Its main intention was to create 'co-operative' awareness among archaeologists that would, ideally, lead to the greater integration and greater effectiveness of archaeologists' activities whatever their context, whether field-research or the preservation of archaeological heritage. At first the idea was enthusiastically endorsed by many archaeologists, especially the youngest ones. But the SAI had two different kinds of members: one younger, more in tune with the above mentioned new cultural climate of renovation, and another, more connected with the academic establishment (see for instance the fierce

debate reported in Amici 1967a: 341–343; Pallottino himself was surely part of this last group of people, being already part of the archaeological establishment since the Fascist period).

## Archaeological Dialogues

The SAI association did not survive the clash between these two different kinds of members, and lost its unity and thus its effectiveness as both a pressure and reference group even in the 1960s. The younger members, comprising the left wing of SAI, formed the core group that established *Dialoghi di Archeologia*, naming themselves neutrally: *Amici*, that is, 'friends' of *Dialoghi di Archeologia* (Archaeological Dialogues). The only senior scholar among them was Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli (Barbanera 2003), a Marxist, classical art historian, whose innovative approach to the analysis of Italic art purged it of the rhetoric of classicism and *romanitas*, and who was perceived by the young *Amici* as a member of their group. Bianchi Bandinelli was asked to act as the director and main institutional reference for the journal. *Amici* were a democratic organisation and were joined by some archaeologists, who would become, over the following decades, the most influential scholars in Italian academia. They comprised Bruno D'Agostino, Andrea Carandini (on whom I shall say more later), Mario Torelli, Pier Giovanni Guzzo, Renato Peroni, Lucia Vagnetti, and Anna Maria Bietti Sestieri, to mention but a few.

Since its earliest years *Dialoghi di Archeologia* had two principal sets of objectives: one theoretical and methodological, and the other, political. As a consequence, the journal was structured into two independent parts: the first, more traditional, comprising research papers and reviews of books and conferences; and the second, dedicated to political discussion, named *Documenti e Discussioni* (Documents and Discussion) and authored collectively by the *Amici*, where every proposal and decision were collegially taken.

From the theoretical and methodological points of view, the basic principle inspiring *Dialoghi* was that of a universal history of everything 'ancient' (intended here in a rather broad sense, inclusive from prehistory to medieval times). Archaeology was thus perceived in the broadest possible way to encompass all the disciplines aimed at the study of the past. This was an important point, as it implicitly demolished the traditional hierarchy between literate and non-literate disciplines, at the time firmly rooted in Italian humanist culture, as well as it explicitly opposed claims against 'universal histories' by Croce (1921: 51–63).

In the journal's first editorial, the *Amici* identified an alternative to traditional narrow disciplinary partitions by creating broader areas of specialization based on historical periods (i.e. prehistoric, Greek, Roman). Furthermore, they emphasised the interdisciplinary nature of the journal by using the editorial format of *Current Anthropology*, i.e. main research papers followed by a series of comments by scholars whose fields of expertise were not the same as that of the main contributor, so as to offer the widest

panorama of possible different views on the archaeological problem discussed. Excluding some thematic issues dedicated to peculiar periods, there was no favouring of certain historical phases, and the journal managed to maintain a good balance between articles dealing with prehistory and protohistory (broadly corresponding to Bronze and Iron Ages in the Italian use of the term; see Bietti Sestieri 2010: 5–8 CD) and contributions dedicated to the classical world.

Although research papers published in the journal occasionally used historical materialistic jargon, *Dialoghi di Archeologia* never completely adopted an organic Marxist approach to the study of the past. More importantly, at least for the first few years of the journal, contributions were rather traditional, although some research themes, particularly in Roman archaeology and to a more limited extent, in prehistory, were more Marxist in interpretations. Important exceptions comprised some papers published by ancient historians, that in general terms proved to be more daring in their social interpretations of the past. For example, this was the case of an article authored by Carmine Ampolo in which, analysing a variety of archaeological and textual sources, he tried to interpret the social modifications occurring in Rome between the 8th and the 5th centuries BC in terms of the creation of a class society (Ampolo 1970). Although the kind of Marxist approach he adopted was quite dogmatic, and which borrowed the unilinear notion of social evolution directly from *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (Engels 1972) it was an attempt at problematizing Marx and Engels' assertions (particularly in Peroni's comments to the paper, see Ampolo 1970: 70–79) in light of the increased ethnographical and archaeological knowledge of the time. Additionally, during the same years and in other journals, archaeologists that were members of the *Amici* published articles that adopted Marxist perspectives on the study of material culture. For example, in 1969, the journal *La Parola del Passato* published an important article by Renato Peroni that was an early example of this trend, even though it cannot be considered a coherent and purposeful application of a Marxist approach. Peroni's paper, which was also one of the earliest attempts at a general 'historical' interpretation of the Italian Bronze Age, described the large scale processes that occurred at the end of the second millennium BC in Europe using categories derived from Marx's ideology (see Peroni 1969). However, the rarity of such work suggests the obvious conclusion that, at least from a theoretical and methodological point of view, *Dialoghi di Archeologia* was never intended as a solely Marxist journal, nor as a niche publication devoted to the promotion of a Marxist interpretation of the past. Rather Marx's ideas, whose importance in Italian society of the 1960s I have previously highlighted, occasionally surfaced as the obvious theoretical tool used to investigate some specific issues, in particular those concerning the social implications of the material phenomena studied.

### Doing Politics in Archaeology

As far as the political side of *Dialoghi di Archeologia* is concerned, the aim of the journal was to 'do politics in archaeology', meaning that, according to the *Amici*, the discussion and advancement of the field of cultural policy and the administration of cultural heritage were integral parts of the duties of archaeologists. In the section of the journal 'Documents and Discussion', the *Amici* encouraged the examination of more disparate topics. The main area for debate was the management of cultural heritage and the political issues of research and education related to this field. However comments about the political situation and criticisms, mainly aimed at the majority government party, that is, the *Democrazia Cristiana*, (see Amici 1972a: 155–160) were also included. With respect to research policy, the *Amici* closely scrutinized the activities of the National Council of Research (CNR) publishing, from time to time, their budget, questioning the way it was allocated and spent, and suggesting feasible reforms (Amici 1967b, 1973a:126–169, 1974a: 165–171).

As far as education was concerned, the *Amici* closely followed the reformation of university degrees that occurred at the end of the 1960s. They argued for the reformation of the National School of Archaeology, for an embryonic form of a school of specialization, the structure of which would finally be concluded and put into place only in the 1980s (Amici 1967b: 135–138; D'Andria 1997). Following their attempt at implementing 'universal' history (previously described) one of the *Amici*'s main concerns, and part of their proposal for a National School, was the necessity of a deeper integration of various technical sub-fields (e.g. art history, economic history, epigraphy, numismatics and so on) into broader chronological disciplinary areas (Amici 1968a: 112–118). Such a position, which highlighted the historical specificity of each period, constituted an implicit criticism of the 'idealist' notions of history, which were ubiquitous in official Italian culture (thanks to the influence of the thought of the philosopher Benedetto Croce, see Gramsci 1996b).

The protection of cultural heritage, the *Amici*'s second main focus for political discussions, provides a vivid picture of how fervid the debate between archaeologists could get. This is substantiated by the number of detailed proposals for new laws presented, through the years, on the pages of *Dialoghi* (Amici 1967a: 341–362, 1969a: 235–239). The *Amici* were extremely critical of the Franceschini Commission, the first comprehensive attempt, after the Second World War, by the republican state, at surveying the conditions of Italian cultural and historical heritage that was accused of 'selling out' the cultural heritage of Italy, (Amici 1969a: 246–251). They were also critical of any attempt to privatize the management of cultural heritage (Amici 1974a: 171–174), and critical as well of the liberalization of the circulation of archaeological material and works of art (Amici 1970a: 563–575). This last point might seem rather illiberal but, of course, it is necessary to take into consideration the enormous volume that characterised (and unfortunately to some extent still characterizes) the illicit trade of antiquities in Italy (particularly

that dealing with portable objects such as figured vessels; i.e. Nørskov 2002). From the 1970s onwards, the *Amici* also tried to influence regional laws on cultural heritage (Amici 1973a: 169–172, 1973b: 440–480, 1976: 690–711) advancing alternative proposals for this level of cultural management. As part of this, their consultation with people already involved in the management of cultural heritage, took the form of a roundtable discussion with three superintendents (see Amici 1967a: 363–383), and was seen as a useful means for exploring issues related to this field. Participation in discussions with members of political parties representing the Italian political left (Amici 1969a: 239–278) was part of the *modus operandi* of the *Amici*, although their input was not always taken into due consideration by politicians in the Italian parliament who seemed deaf to some of the *Amici*'s requests (Amici 1969a: 247–248). The most important part of the *Amici*'s cultural heritage agenda was the reform of the position of superintendence in the Italian state's archaeological service. The *Amici* strongly emphasised the need for employees that were politically independent, and who had high research-oriented profiles, at the same time expressing their opposition towards the creation of a non-qualified class of cultural workers (Amici 1968b: 119–127, 1969b: 417–419, 1970b: 575–609, 1972b: 126–155).

Political debate in *Dialoghi* was not only directed at internal matters but also, occasionally, involved the discussion of international politics. For example, during the dramatic issue of censoring cultural management in the Colonels' Greece (Amici 1968b: 128–134; Kokkinidou and Nikolaidou 2004) the *Amici* openly criticised the Italian government for not speaking out against the Greek junta's regime. The *Amici* also criticised the repressive measures enacted by the governments of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany to control and prevent student protests (Amici 1969b: 427–434; specifically the Scranton Commission; and the Law Proposal for the defence of freedom of teaching and research presented by the German Ministry of Education; see also Klimke 2008; Witcover 1997). Despite these episodes the *Amici* were not unbiased with regard to international politics and events. They never criticised politicians in Eastern block countries for their repression of students or democratic movements, e.g., the invasion of Czechoslovakia (Kenez 2006: 240; Pauer 2008).

### A Pioneering Experiment

Notwithstanding the specific positions of the *Amici* on all of those issues outlined above, I believe their importance lies in their determination to 'enter' the political arena. This determination was probably the result of two profound inspirations whose origins can be found in the cultural milieu of Italian Marxism from which the *Amici* originated. One of them was partly inherited from the experience of SAI and was aimed at promoting of the role of archaeologists as a professional/social block in Italian society, that is, the creation of a sort of 'class awareness' among archaeologists. As with SAI, this promotion was based on similar and shared interests among archaeolo-

gists working in apparently unrelated fields, either institutionally (i.e. those working with universities, and those employed by local archaeological services) or scientifically (archaeologists from numismatics, epigraphists and other specialities). However, different to the SAI, these shared interests were accompanied by criticisms of the way archaeological heritage was treated and organised by Italian politics and government. In other words, the archaeologists' political engagement was necessary not only to protect the interests of their profession but also as a way to improve the quality of the management of Italy's rich monumental heritage, thus introducing a notion of public usefulness that was completely absent in the neo-cooperative claims of Pallottino's SAI.

Another broader theme that inspired the *Amici*'s political commitment was their concept of intellectuals and their role in relation to society. This topic was first elucidated in Italian Marxist tradition by Antonio Gramsci, who was an extremely popular ideologue in post-war Italy, particularly from 1960s onwards (the comprehensive critical edition of Gramsci's 'Prison Notebooks' was not finalised at exactly the same time as the publication of *Dialoghi di Archeologia*, it was not finished until 1975, see Gramsci 2001). For Gramsci, every citizen had the right to be an intellectual and intellectual activity was an integral part of active citizenship (Gramsci 1996a). Intellectuals had to move away from their ivory towers and engage with the masses, creating 'mutually pedagogical' relationships that eventually lead 'to (the) build(ing of) an intellectual-moral bloc which can make politically possible and intellectual progress of the masses and not only of small groups of intellectuals' (Gramsci 1971: 332–333). Thus political engagement was, for the *Amici*, a way to end the isolation of a remote branch of Italian academia that was dictated by the very structure of university education. Also, it was a way to establish a dialogue with the vast world of what Gramsci called the 'civil society', that is the overall network of private organisations that have the power to influence and orient the consent of the masses (as opposed to the political society that was expression of the oppressive state, see Gramsci 1971: 12, 1996a; Santucci 2010). Although Gramsci was not frequently mentioned in *Dialoghi*, the influence of his ideas on the *Amici* is quite clear. This became particularly apparent on the occasion of the student (and workers) protest in 1968 that spread across the main cities of Italy. During this time, the *Amici* provided lucid analyses of what was happening in the country; they identified contradictory elements within Italian society and emphasized (perhaps a little too optimistically) that the best potential for social change lay in the alliance between university students and workers. They then 'reflexively' considered the marginal role played by archaeologists in Italian society and, closely echoing Gramsci, asserted that:

'the monopoly of knowledge, its exclusivity, its being concentrated in the hands of the few, is a nonsense, the very negation of the concept of culture'. (Amici 1968a: 242)

Or again, that:

‘The intellectual needs to abandon his role of absolute owner of knowledge which is also mediator of the consent and mere witness of political power’. (Amici 1968a: 243)

The political nature of intellectual activity and in particular of archaeology was an element that was therefore well known to the *Amici*:

‘Research activity becomes political action when it is aimed, as it is, to assign to past facts their meaning and to identify the specific difference with present ones’. (Amici 1968a: 243)

The organisation of consent was believed to play an important role within historical and archaeological disciplines, although the inability to face the new challenges posed by student protests, and their radical criticism of the way schools created/transmitted knowledge, was merely regarded as the result of the conservatism of the institution, rather than being connected with specific material interests (Amici 1968a: 244).

The main issue for archaeological education was identified as being inherent in its roots, that is, in the organization of high school subjects that aligned the study of the past only with linguistic and art-historical studies. Contextualization and multidisciplinary integration were indicated as a possible solution to this problem:

‘When the archaeologist digs, he discovers the ancient world in its unity; then he immediately destroys it throwing away the remains of material life and saving only the products of super-structural life only to share them in an approximate fashion between the museums and the store rooms, between the various specialists’. (Amici 1968a: 247)

Teaching, the way it was practiced in Italian universities at the time, was seen as a one-way activity devoid of dialogic exchange, and as a ‘Foucaultian tool’ through which the repressive state shaped young minds (Amici 1968a: 252–253, 1969b: 419–420). Teaching, according to the *Amici*, instead, had to be the arena in which the meaning of cultural heritage was created, an heritage which was ‘approachable open to criticism and always re-interpretable’ (Amici 1968a: 252).

Overall, from a political point of view, *Dialoghi di Archeologia* predated many aspects of the Anglo-American critical archaeology of the 1980s (Leone *et al.* 1987; Leone 2005, 2010; Potter 1992). Indeed, some of the sources of inspiration of the two cultural movements (i.e. Gramsci’s ideology, see Leone *et al.* 1987) were the same. Nevertheless, there were some substantial differences. Since the journal was chronologically placed in a pre-post-modern cultural climate, the reflection on the role of the archaeologists in contemporary society presented in *Dialoghi* never questioned the epistemological status of archaeol-

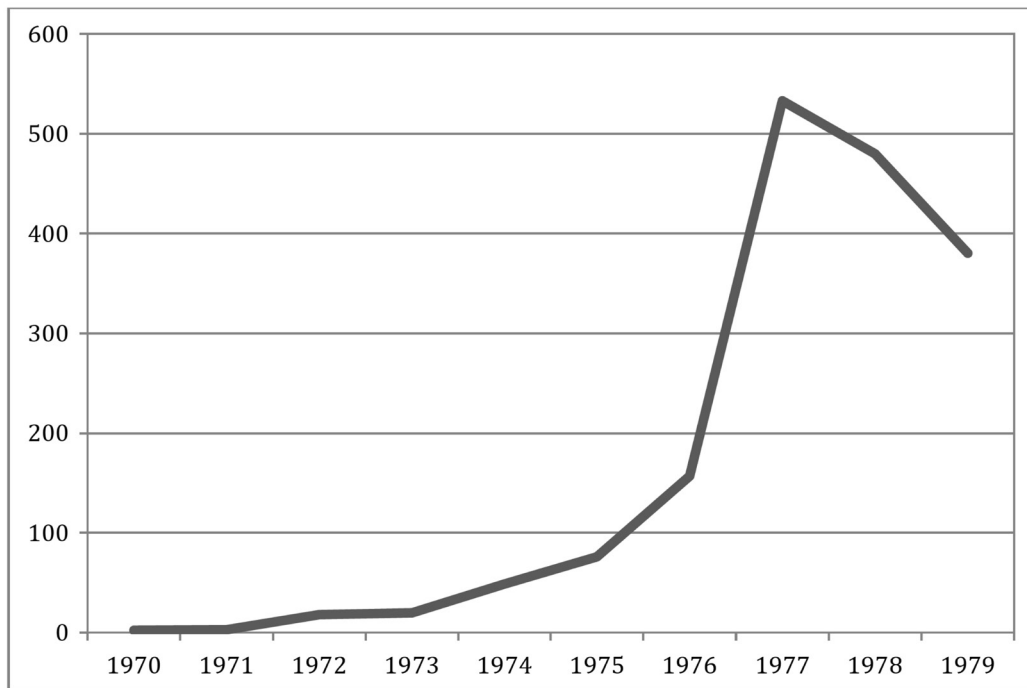
ogy as a discipline. The *Amici* never embraced the relativistic stance that was adopted by the critical archaeologists of the 1980s. Although the *Amici* argued for ‘multivocality’, they never really tried to establish a truly mutual pedagogical relationship with the public in the same way that was more coherently attempted by Mark Leone and associates.

To this extent the *Amici* seem to have remained anchored, throughout all their history, to a ‘deficitarian’ model of heritage, i.e. a model where those in charge offered the public the ‘right’ interpretation of the past (Merriman 2004: 5–6). This position was made explicit in a few articles that early on attempted to start a discussion of the role of non-professionals and amateurs in archaeology. These archaeological groups were associations of amateurs that were (and to some extent still are) active in Italy organizing research projects and field trips. Similar phenomena were present also in other countries such as in the UK where voluntary archaeological work experienced a decline through the 1990s (Brownen and Davill 2002: 65; Manley 1999). In the Italian case, the *Amici* stigmatized the ‘privatist’ nature of these groups and saw them as a sort of *longa manus* of large economic actors (Amici 1970a: 153–156; although admittedly this position was to some extent softened later on, see Amici 1974b: 527–533).

Finally, as far as political practice was concerned, the agenda of *Dialoghi* seems to have been more pragmatically oriented at legislation, bypassing the role of the public and their activities, although programmatically aimed at reaching civil society, and developed all within the boundaries of state institutions.

### Intensification of Violent Political Struggle in Italy and End of *Dialoghi*

For Italy the events of 1968 were only the beginning of a period in which political conflict was exacerbated. During the 1970s growth in the influence of extreme political positions such as Maoism, created the polarization of Italian political debate, leading ultimately to the tragic activities of red terrorism (*terrorismo rosso*). The graph (**Figure 3**) demonstrates the sudden escalation of political violence in Italy and helps to understand how quickly the whole climate of political optimism and participation changed, due to terrorism, during the 1970s. The attitudes of left leaning Italian intellectuals towards violent struggle (*lotta armata*) became ambivalent. Some opted for rebuttals of any ideological contiguity with extremists, while others were more tolerant, even if not sympathetic, to the actions of ‘armed vanguards’ (Rosa 2009). All in all, sadly, there was a general climate, that was considered at the very least, to be indulgent towards those that were often defined as ‘the comrades that make mistakes’ (*i compagni che sbagliano*). Most of the extreme left of Italy refused mediation and consequently were unable to participate in civil society as a means of gradually changing the country, or contribute to any critical debates about organisational changes within the overall framework of the state’s structure. This situation was also accompanied by the worsen-



**Fig. 3:** Terrorist acts committed by Red Terrorists in Italy, from 1970 to 1979 (data from De Lutlis *et al.* 1992).

ing of general socio-economic conditions and the end of the Italian 'miracle' (Crafts and Toniolo 1996: 442–449).

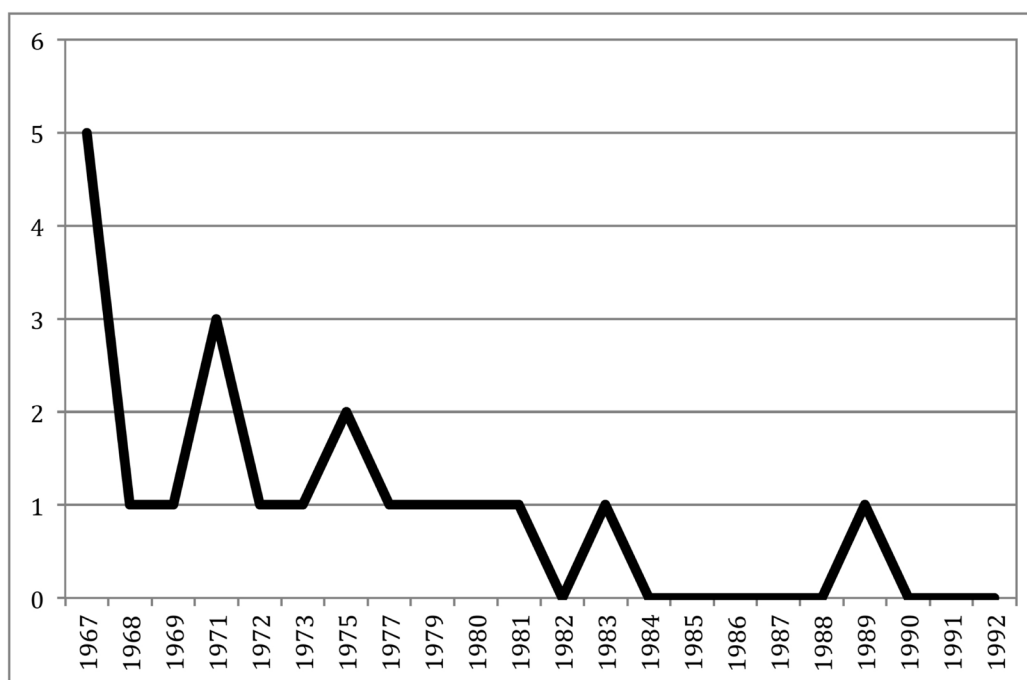
In this new political context the genuinely democratic political commitment expressed by *Dialoghi* was definitely out of place. Within the journal, direct political engagement disappeared rapidly. The death in 1975 of Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli had an impact on the process of the journal's disenfranchisement from the political arena, as well as causing organisational problems. Bianchi Bandinelli was the owner of *Dialoghi di Archeologia*, but after his death the journal was inherited by the *Amici* and co-managed by at least two of the founding members of the group. This produced a certain amount of tension within the group, and some historians of Italian archaeology describe the journal during this period, as becoming more and more focused on prehistory (Barbanera 1998), even though this claim is not substantiated by the number of articles published on prehistory. In fact, the number of articles on prehistory and the ancient world remained about the same.

Four years after Bianchi Bandinelli's death, *Dialoghi di Archeologia* returned to the bookshelves of international libraries in a new editorial format. The 1979 editorial, the first of the new series of the journal, while still formally endorsing the inspiring principles of its first issues, acknowledged the fundamental changes that occurred within Italian cultural politics over the previous decade. In the new series political discussions gradually received less and less space, and disappeared almost completely with the third series of the journal that started in 1983 (see **Figure 4**). From the theoretical perspective, the journals' research themes were noticeably influenced by the New Archaeology, and very little influenced by Marxist themes (although these continued to be formally acknowledged

as one of the main research directives). Curiously enough this happened during a period when the New Archaeologists of the British and American world were openly flirting with Marxism (i.e. Spriggs 1984).

The first series of *Dialoghi di Archeologia* was important for Italian archaeology, although initially its focus was limited to theory and methodology. Public or political issues in archaeology were less conspicuous in later years. From the point of view of theory, *Dialoghi* had a germinal role, especially when subsequent work of some of the *Amici* is taken into consideration. For example, Andrea Carandini, a founding member of the *Amici*, became one of the earliest 'archaeological' theorists in Italy, writing a number of very influential books whose scope ranged from excavation techniques, to reflections on the nature of archaeology, and discussions about the functioning of ancient economies. Carandini was the most popular (but not the only) classical archaeologist and member of the *Amici* who developed a coherent Marxist theoretical approach (see Carandini 1979a, 1979b, 1988; Carandini and Settis 1979). He rejected this theoretical perspective in the 1980s.

However Bruno D'Agostino used his theoretical ideas in the analyses of funerary rituals. He was mainly inspired by the work of Frankfurt School and Western Marxists, as well as by the work of French historians such as Jean-Pierre Vernant (D'Agostino 1982, 2005; Vernant 1990). As for prehistory, the Marxist approach of Renato Peroni (a member of the *Amici*) and his school, dominated Italian academia for many decades. Although perhaps present as early as in the 1970s, Peroni's ideas became more mainstream and were institutionalised only in the 1990s (Peroni 1996). Another theoretical strand, comprising primarily prehistorians, such as Alberto Cazzella and Anna



**Fig. 4:** Number of articles dealing with political themes published in *Dialoghi di Archeologia*.

Maria Bietti Sestieri, was strongly influenced by the New Archaeology, and contributed to the opening up of Italian archaeology to the anthropological interpretation of material culture (Bietti Sestieri 1992; Cazzella 1989). Some of the articles published by *Dialoghi di Archeologia* were the loci of important methodological innovations (e.g. Bietti and Cazzella 1976–1977 on quantitative methods) although, unfortunately, they took some years to have an impact on the subsequent development of Italian archaeology.

Unfortunately, from a political perspective, some of the issues discussed by the *Amici* are still largely relevant today. Even the most basic one, that is, the public recognition of the important role of archaeologists, has experienced relatively little improvement. Over the years there have been a number of attempts to raise the public's awareness of the professionalisation of archaeologists (An.Co.S.T. 1988; D'Agata and Alaura 2009; Parolini 2007). However, despite these efforts, in Italy there is still no professional association institutionally acknowledged, and recent regulations imposed by the Eurozone crisis risk jeopardising the possibility of achieving this. Recently there were a few positive signals, such as the mobilisation of various associations of archaeologists, that seem to indicate that this situation may change, although undoubtedly much on this front remains to be done.

## References

- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1967a Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 1 (2): 341–387.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1967b Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 1 (1): 130–152.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1968a Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 2 (2): 238–256.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1968b Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 2 (3): 369–382.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1969a Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 3 (1–2): 235–278.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1969b Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 3 (3): 415–434.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1970a Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 4–5 (1): 153–156.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1970b Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 4–5 (2–3): 563–609.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1972a Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 6 (2–3): 438–452.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1972b Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 6 (1): 126–160.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1973a Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 7 (1): 126–174.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1973b Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 7 (2–3): 440–480.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1974a Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 8 (1): 165–174.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1974b Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 8 (2): 527–544.
- Amici di Dialoghi di Archeologia** 1976 Documenti e Discussioni. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 9–10 (1–2): 690–713.
- Ampolo, C** 1970 Su alcuni mutamenti sociali nel Lazio tra l'VIII e il V secolo. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 4: 37–68.
- An.Co.S.T.** 1988 *Verso una Professione: Seminario per l'elaborazione di una proposta di Ordine Professionale per gli Archeologi, 23–24 Febbraio 1988, Museo Della Civiltà Romana, Rome*. Rome: Museo della Civiltà Romana.
- Barbanera, M** 1998 *L'archeologia degli italiani: Storia, metodi e orientamenti dell'archeologia classica in Italia*. Rome: Editori riuniti.



- Barbanera, M** 2003 *Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli biografia ed epistolario di un grande archeologo*. Milan: Skira.
- Bianchi Bandinelli, R** 1976 *Introduzione All'archeologia Classica Come Storia Dell'arte Antica*. Universale Laterza. Rome and Bari: Laterza.
- Bietti Sestieri, A M** 1992 *The Iron Age Community of Osteria dell'Osa: A Study of Socio-Political Development in Central Tyrrhenian Italy*. New Studies in Archaeology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bietti Sestieri, A M** 2010 *L'Italia nell'Eta Del Bronzo E Del Ferro: Dalle Palafitte a Romolo (2200–700 A.C.)*. Rome: Carocci.
- Bietti Sestieri, A and Cazzella, A** 1976–1977 Uso e limiti di metodi quantitativi e statistici nelle applicazioni archeologiche. *Dialoghi di Archeologia* 9–10: 41–74.
- Brownen, R and Darvill, T** 2002 *Archaeology After PPG16: Archaeological Investigations in England 1990–1999*. Bournemouth; London: Bournemouth University, School of Conservation Sciences; English Heritage.
- Carandini, A** 1979a *Archeologia e cultura materiale dai lavori senza gloria nell'antichità a una politica dei beni culturali*. Bari: De Donato.
- Carandini, A** 1979b *L'anatomia della scimmia la formazione economica della società prima del capitale : con un commento alle Forme che precedono la produzione capitalistica dai Grundrisse di Marx*. Turin: G. Einaudi.
- Carandini, A** 1988 *Schiavi in Italia gli strumenti pensanti dei Romani fra tarda Repubblica e medio Impero*. Rome: Nuova Italia Scientifica.
- Carandini, A and Settis, S** 1979 *Schiavi e padroni nell'Etruria romana la Villa di Settefinestre dallo scavo alla mostra*. Bari: De Donato.
- Cazzella, A** 1989 *Manuale di archeologia: le società della preistoria*. Bari: Laterza.
- Crafts, N and Toniolo, G** (eds.) 1996 *Economic Growth in Europe Since 1945*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511758683>.
- Croce, B** 1921 *Theory and History of Historiography*. London: Harrap & Co. Ltd.
- D'Agata, A and Alaura, S** (eds.) 2009 *Quale Futuro Per L'archeologia?: Workshop Internazionale, Roma, 4–5 Dicembre 2008: Atti*. Rome: Gangemi.
- D'Agostino, B** 1982 L'ideologia funeraria nell'età del ferro in Campania. Pontecagnano, nascita di un potere di funzione stabile. In G. Gnoli (ed.) *La Mort, Les Morts Dans Les Sociétés Anciennes*, pp. 203–221. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- D'Agostino, B** 2005 Funerary Ritual and Social Representation: Models and Perspectives. In N. M. Kennell and J. E. Tomlinson (eds.) *Ancient Greece at the Turn of the Millennium: Recent Work and Future Perspectives; Proceedings of the Athens Symposium, 18–20 May 2001*, pp. 187–197. Athens: Canadian Archaeological Institute at Athens.
- D'Andria, F** 1997 *Le Scuole di Specializzazione in Archeologia in Italia*. [online] Available at: [http://siba2.unile.it/scuola\\_archo/reldandria01.html](http://siba2.unile.it/scuola_archo/reldandria01.html) [Accessed 30 January 2012].
- De Lutlis, G, Schaerf, C and Silj, A** (eds.) 1992 *Venti anni di violenza politica in Italia (1969–1988)*. Rome: Università degli studi La Sapienza.
- Engels, F** 1972 *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. New York and London: Pathfinder Press.
- Gramsci, A** 1971 *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, translators. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Gramsci, A** 1996a *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura*. Rome: Editori riuniti.
- Gramsci, A** 1996b *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce*. Rome: Editori riuniti.
- Gramsci, A** 2001 *Quaderni del carcere*. Turin: G. Einaudi.
- Graziani, A** 2000 *Lo sviluppo dell'economia italiana. Dalla ricostruzione alla moneta europea*. Turin: Bollati Boringhieri.
- Guiat, C** 2003 *The French and Italian Communist Parties Comrades and Culture*. London: Frank Cass.
- Guidi, A** 1988 *Storia Della Paletnologia*. Biblioteca universale Laterza. Rome: Laterza.
- Guidi, A** 2010 The Historical Development of Italian Prehistoric Archaeology: A Brief Outline. *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*, [online] 20 (2). Available at: <http://www.archaeologybulletin.org/article/view/bha.20203/19> [Accessed 24 September 2012].
- Gundle, S** 2000 *Between Hollywood and Moscow: The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture (1943–1991)*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822380344>.
- Harper, J L** 2002 *America and the Reconstruction of Italy, 1945–1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kenez, P** 2006 *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803741>.
- Klimke, M** 2008 West Germany. In M. Klimke and J. Scharloth (eds.) *1968 In Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977*, pp. 97–110. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kokkinidou, D and Nikolaidou, M** 2004 On the Stage and Behind the Scenes: Greek Archaeology in Times of Dictatorship. In M. L. Galaty and C. Watkinson (eds.) *Archaeology Under Dictatorship*, pp. 155–190. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/0-387-36214-2\\_8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/0-387-36214-2_8).
- Leone, M P** 2005 *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Leone, M P** 2010 *Critical Historical Archaeology*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Leone, M P et al.** 1987 Toward a Critical Archaeology [and Comments and Reply]. *Current Anthropology* 28 (3): 283–302. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/203531>.
- Manley, J** 1999 Old Stones, New Fires: The Local Societies. In J. Beavis and A. Hunt (eds.) *Communicating Archaeology*, pp. 105–112. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Merriman, N** (ed.) 2004 *Public Archaeology*. London: Routledge.

- Nørskov, V** 2002 Greek Vases For Sale: Some Statistical Evidence. In N. Brodie and K. Walker Tubb (eds.) *Illicit Antiquities: The Theft of Culture and the Extinction of Archaeology*, pp. 23–37. London and New York: Routledge.
- Pallottino, M** 1962 Il Convegno Di Venezia E I Problemi Della Ricerca Archeologica in Italia. *Archeologia Classica* 14: 108–114.
- Parolini, C** (ed.) 2007 *La laurea deve fare l'archeologo*. Rome: Confederazione Italiana Archeologi.
- Pauer, J** 2008 Czechoslovakia. In M. Klimke and J. Scharloth (eds.) *1968 In Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977*, pp. 163–178. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Peroni, R** 1969 Per uno studio dell'economia di scambio in Italia nel quadro dell'ambiente culturale dei secoli intorno al mille A.C. *La parola del passato* 24: 134–160.
- Peroni, R** 1996 *L'Italia alle soglie della storia*. Roma: Laterza.
- Peroni, R** 2005 Dalla 'Società degli Archeologi Italiani' alla 'Confederazione': motivi e no per un 'unità' politica. *Ex-Novo (Internet Journal)*. [online] Available at: <[http://www.archeologi-italiani.it/varia/Contributo\\_prof\\_Peroni.pdf](http://www.archeologi-italiani.it/varia/Contributo_prof_Peroni.pdf)>.
- Potter, P B** 1992 Critical Archaeology: In the Ground and on the Street. *Historical Archaeology* 26 (3): 117–129.
- Rosa, A A** 2009 *Il grande silenzio. Intervista sugli intellettuali*. Rome and Bari: Laterza.
- Santucci, A A** 2010 *Antonio Gramsci*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Spriggs, M** (ed.) 1984 *Marxist Perspectives in Archaeology*. New Directions in Archaeology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vernant, J P** 1990 *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*. New York: Zone Books.
- Warner, C M** 2000 *Confessions of an Interest Group: The Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Witcover, J** 1997 *The Year the Dream Died: Revisiting 1968 in America*. New York: Warner Books.

**How to cite this article:** Iacono, F 2014 A Pioneering Experiment: Dialoghi di Archeologia between Marxism and Political Activism. *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*, 24: 5, pp. 1–10, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/bha.245>

**Published:** 5 February 2014

**Copyright:** © 2014 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License (CC-BY 3.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>.



*Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press.

**OPEN ACCESS**