

Editorial

This dossier addresses the relevance archaeology and material culture have gained over the last decade, reinforced by the complex legislation for the defence of heritage, established and in effect in South American countries. As a consequence, the demand for professionals for the many areas of the study and preservation of material and non-material heritage has increased. As a consequence of this new reality, the University of Passo Fundo started offering a Specialisation Course on Material Culture and Archaeology, granting places for graduate students – masters and doctors – on those themes, opened the Laboratory of Material Culture and Archaeology (Lacuma), linked to the Nucleus of Pre-History and Archaeology (NuPHA) of the Program of Post-Graduation in History (PPGH), and is also running a number of educational and professionalising programs.

This publishing addresses specific legislations, analyses changes as defined by UNESCO with regard to temporal, socio-political, philosophical and cultural contexts. In general, when it comes to public policies, professionals always face a dilemma: socially, the construction and generation of needs to create cultural heritage come from hegemonic groups, thus, its use is enforced upon society, often with the intent of asserting some comfortable memoir.

In accord with this line of thought, the dossier draws theories on archaeology and material culture, which are the formative foundations for professional work and the presentation of case studies.

Material culture and archaeology, from the perspective of their contributions to the construction of historical and cultural heritage, are relevant themes to the modern world. Some of their specialities and themes include the understanding of historical processes, the reading of remaining collections, the aesthetic, functional and symbolic meanings of human societies, and the diverse ways of living of peoples. Material documents, embedded with social and individual work, are testimonials of such processes. Studying, reading, understanding and finding the meanings of such acts are the irreplaceable methodological attributes of archaeology and the subjects of analysis of cultural material. They are the very grounds of heritage policies.

Following its editorial methodology, this dossier has three parts, made of chapters with specific themes on material culture and archaeology, free papers and a review about transversal issues of historiography and memoir.

The awareness of the place material culture and archaeology hold in society have led us to bring together, along the chapters, archaeologists and historians, authors of field work and

scientific production acknowledged in Latin America. Readers will find reflections on the relevance of such knowledge, theoretical challenges and the need to train professionals who are prepared to carry out investigations. The extraordinary uniqueness of man can be noticed; a dialectical being in his existence through time, one who questions his origins, builds discourses about his past, excavates files in the soil in search for vestiges of his ancestors. Scholars of material culture and archaeologists, using scientifically acknowledged techniques, are responsible for thousands of vestiges and their respective interpretations. Within this theoretical challenge, special attention is given to epistemology and the social role of archaeology, the relevance of studying, understanding and protecting documental testimonies, to ensure, thus, the survival of heritage in the future.

Those reflections are gathered in a broad spectrum article by archaeologist and historian Arno Alvarez Kern, motivated by the question *Our past will have a future?*, in the introductory chapter of this dossier.

In this sense, the authors have taken archaeology itself as a theme for reflection and debate. They also assess its potential and interpretative scope. They conceive it as related to the opening of thought in human and social sciences, the synergy shared by its *corpus*.

The conceptual basis and practices of Archaeology, particularly due to its methodological “authority”, have taken it to areas of conflict, particularly forensic archaeology, when studying crimes against humanity. Obviously, archaeologists usually face great pressure in such political contexts of confrontation, violation of Human Rights, etc. That is the example of the significant experience of archaeologist Jose Lopez Mazz both in the academy and in prosecution. His work includes the exhumation of victims of the military dictatorship in Uruguay, as well as similar contributions in other countries. It shows the precarious relation between archaeology, human rights and politics in Uruguay.

However, there is no comfort between Archaeology and market interest. Conservation often antagonises enterprises, or the wish for the exclusivity of private property, which invariably considers cultural heritage as a problem, whether when finding shipwrecking or missionary statues, witnesses of villages and farms of rural indigenous population.

Taking those aspects into account, Marcelo Weissel Álvarez studies two polemical issues of urban archaeology in Buenos Aires while outlining *The abstraction of Tango and Zencity wreck, two controversies for the urban archeology of Buenos Aires*, in movements for the spatial definition of the emblematic music of Buenos Aires and about the wrecking of a ship and the urban growth of the Argentinean capital. Another relevant issue of patrimonialism is the re-utilisation of spaces of memoir, invariably faced by professionals and the need of establishing rules for public policies. While highlighting the particularities of heritage buildings in Uruguay, Mexico and Venezuela, Jenny González Muñoz, doctor in Culture and Art for Latin America and the Caribbean, draws considerations on interventions in the original architecture of those places of memoir, where other perspectives of use not always linked to cultural vocations are established. In addition to the aspect of material culture, as a cons-

tituent of spaces, the missionary statuary of rural areas, belonging to doctrines funded by Jesuits and indigenous populations in South America, is studied in the chapter written by historians Jacqueline Ahlert and Luiz Carlos Tau Golin. The complexity of drawing such outlines in their relational significance and reminiscence is addressed in that chapter.

The recognition and maintenance of places of memoir is a recurrent activity that establishes an interdependent relation with the social, cultural and historic importance of spaces. The studies gathered here show the importance of Material Culture and Archaeology to understand human societies and the complexity of civilisation.

Free articles are included into the transversal scope of specific themes of the dossier. Historian Igor Luis Andreo, in *Latin America and the transnational history, connected history and crossed history: the comparison still relevant for the field of history?*, addresses the similarities, differences and limits of methods of transnationality and compared History, and also highlights the always necessary adequacy of methods, theories and concepts to the aims and objects to be studied. Luis Fernando Tosta Barbato, in *The Portuguese and the colonization of Brazil in the Revue des Deux Mondes: messengers of civilization or evils of our land?*, studies publications of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in the 19th century, with the aim of understanding the representations of the Portuguese and the colonization they carried out in Brazil. He identifies the views of French travellers upon the Portuguese and analyses the relations between climate and the formation of peoples.

Daniel Afonso da Silva, in *In the shadow of General: consolidation of contemporary Franco-Brazilian relationship – 1997-1999*, shows the implications of president Jacques Chirac's visit to Brazil on March 1997, following president Fernando Henrique Cardoso's visit to France on May 1996, consolidating the French-Brazilian relations. Hernán Ramírez, in *Intellectual and political trajectory of Roberto Campos from narrative of self*, draws considerations on an important personage of the Brazilian economical politics in the late 20th century, showing the theoretical flexibility between juvenile structuralism and neoliberal orthodoxy, resulting, through militancy, into governmental programs.

As a conclusion to the free articles section, Fabiano Quadros Rückert presents *The water supply from the perspective of European and Spanish-American historiography*, in which the author describes a panorama of studies on the history of water supply in Europe and Latin America, outlining aspects such as the relations between the offer of water and private capital, the conflicting interests involved in the managing of water resources and the role of the public authorities in the establishment and administration of modern supply systems.

The dossier ends with a review by Eduardo Roberto Jordão Knack on *Battles for memory: dictatorships, revolutions and democracies*, a book organised by Manuel Loff, Filipe Piedade and Luciana Castro Soutelo. The articles collected in the work address societies that were submitted to fascist or "fascist-like" regimes, under fierce social and police repression, particularly from 1970 to 1980. The reading discusses elements shown in remembrances of groups and individuals, their relation with history and the public policies concerning the past.

Along the compound of reflections provided by the authors, the dossier *Archaeology and Material Culture* reflects contemporary topics, providing the academy and readers with discussions that can help understand the present times with the required historiographic erudition.

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