



Rewriting the Past for the Changing Present: The Need for New and Pluriversal Histories of Archaeology

OSCAR MORO ABADÍA 

RESEARCH NOTE

 ubiquity press

ABSTRACT

Since the publication of the second edition of Bruce G. Trigger's *A History of Archaeological Thought* in 2006, scholars have produced a negligible number of histories of archaeology. This scarcity contrasts with the considerable amount of historical works on more regionally- and temporally-restricted contexts. With reference to the English-speaking literature, I suggest in this paper that there is a pressing need for new and pluriversal histories of archaeology that connect past and present. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, archaeology has gone through an intense transformation. For instance, during the past twenty years, archaeologists have been concerned with a number of ethical issues, have extensively collaborated with different kind of communities (especially Indigenous), and have reformulated the relationship between theory and practice. It is not only that historians need to incorporate these (and other) developments into our disciplinary history, they also need to rewrite that history with reference to our changing present.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Oscar Moro Abadía

Memorial University of
Newfoundland, Canada

omoro@mun.ca

KEYWORDS:

History of Archaeology;
Pluriversal Histories; History
of Science; Bruce G. Trigger;
Archaeological Theory

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Moro Abadía, Oscar. 2023.
Rewriting the Past for the
Changing Present: The Need for
New and Pluriversal Histories
of Archaeology. *Bulletin of the
History of Archaeology*, 33(1):
3, pp. 1–12. DOI: [https://doi.
org/10.5334/bha-675](https://doi.org/10.5334/bha-675)

Most archaeologists think of the history of our discipline in terms of three big transformations. We are told of culture historic archaeology, processual archaeology (or the ‘New Archaeology’) and post-processual archaeology [...] All histories of archaeological thought rely on this tripartite structure, including the fold standard in our discipline, Bruce Trigger’s *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Harris and Cipolla 2017: 3).

This paragraph from Harris’ and Cipolla’s *Archaeological Theory in the New Millenium* summarizes two ideas that are relevant to understand the current situation with the ‘histories’ of archaeology in some parts of the world. In the first place, as they rightly point out, Bruce G. Trigger’s book remains *the* synthesis of reference in the field in North America and some European countries. This is relevant since the book was originally published in 1989 (i.e. more than thirty years ago) and the second edition appeared in 2006 (i.e. more than fifteen years ago). In the second place, Harris and Cipolla argue that the history of archaeology is typically interpreted in terms of three consecutive ‘paradigms’: Culture-historical archaeology (i.e. the theoretical approach that was prevalent during the first half of the twentieth century and focused on the establishment of typologies), processual archaeology (i.e. the framework that emerged in the 1950s–1960s and focused on the concept of ‘explanation’) and post-processual archaeology (i.e. the movement that emerged in the 1980s as a radical critique of positivist archaeology). While this tripartite structure is more accurate in some places than others, it is enough to take a glance at some books on the history of archaeology (Fagan and Durrani 2016), archaeological theory (Urban and Schortman 2019), and popular textbooks (e.g. Renfrew & Bahn 2016, 2018; Feder 2019) to illustrate the popularity of this way of understanding the history of archaeology. This interpretation (which is mainly a North-American one) was established in the aftermath of the processual/post-processual debate. However, as many authors have pointed out, archaeology has gone through an intense transformation during the past twenty years (Lucas 2015; Johnson 2019; Harris and Cipolla 2017; Crellin et al. 2021). This means that standard histories of archaeology such as Trigger’s promote an interpretation of our history that may be outdated.

In this paper, I propose that there is a need for new historiographical narratives that connect recent developments in the field of archaeology with our disciplinary past. I begin by examining how one-volume histories have played an important role for archaeologists since the end of the nineteenth century. For instance, early archaeologists typically introduced their books with a historical narrative seeking to legitimize the new science. Similarly, processual and post-processual archaeologists used the history of archaeology to promote their views on archaeological theory and practice. Then I shall deal with the current disconnection between the available histories of archaeology and the disciplinary present. I argue that, despite the fact that the history of archaeology has greatly expanded in the past two decades, customary one-volume narratives failed to connect current developments with our disciplinary memory. In particular, I seek to demonstrate how the standard narrative in our field, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, is mainly grounded on the 1990s. However, as I shall to show in the second part of this paper, archaeology has greatly changed in the past twenty years. Questions such as globalization, multivocality and the increasing impact of indigenous knowledges in archaeological research are now at the center of the theoretical debate. I shall conclude that historians of archaeology have to rewrite the history of archaeology in the light of these recent developments. I argue, however, that the time that one coherent volume written by one single author may have passed and new historiographical accounts need to be polyphonic and pluriverse.

Before entering into details, a number of clarifications are in order. First, I distinguish between the current situation with traditional ‘histories of archaeology’ (as a historiographical genre) and the present moment of the history of archaeology (as a subdiscipline within archaeology). In fact, the history of archaeology is enjoying “something of a vogue” (Murray and Spriggs 2017). For instance, since the end of the twentieth century, historians of archaeology have promoted research clusters and intellectual networks, such as the AREA project (Archives of European Archaeology, 1998–2008), the HARN network (Histories of Archaeology Research Network, 2008 to present), and, more recently, the ARC laureate project ‘Collective Biography of Archaeology in the Pacific’ and the ‘Pacific Matildas: Finding the women in the history of Pacific archaeology’. Scholars working in these networks have promoted international conferences

(such as ‘Histories of Archaeology: Archives, Ancestors, Practices’ held in Göteborg in 2004 and the ‘History of Archaeology Conference’ hosted by the Australian National University in 2021) and have edited special issues in mainstream journals (such as the volume edited by Tim Murray and Matthew Spriggs for *World Archaeology* in 2017, and the special issue edited by Carruthers on inequality and race for the *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* in 2021). Moreover, during the past two decades, historians of archaeology have produced some of the most innovative research in archaeology, including an impressive number of studies, some of which meet the highest standards of academic quality (e.g. Marchand 1996; Daly 2005; Rowley-Conwy 2007; Moser 2012; Meltzer 2015; Rojas & Anderson 2017; Sasse 2017–2018; Snead 2018; Maloigne 2020). This fertility contrasts with the aridity of traditional ‘histories of archaeology’, i.e. one-volume books that review the history of archaeology from its beginnings to the present day. These historiographical accounts tend to replicate the same plots and narratives that have been prevalent in archaeology since the twentieth century.

Second, I focus in this paper on the ‘histories’ of archaeology written in English. To be more specific, my conclusions are restricted to North America and they do not necessarily apply to other places. As I have abovementioned, the history of archaeology has greatly diversified since the end of the twentieth century. This has resulted in a number of local and national traditions that are different from each other. In France, for instance, many specialists in the history of archaeology are historians or historians of science (e.g. Schnapp 1993, 2020; Stoczkowski 1994; Coye 1997; Hurel 2007; Richard 2008) and have made important contributions to Science and Technology Studies (e.g. Schlanger 2006, 2023). In Italy, there is a rich historiographical tradition mainly focused on art history that can be traced back to the works of Arnaldo Momigliano (1950) and Ranuccio Bianchi-Bandinelli (1953) who founded the journal *Dialoghi di Archeologia* in 1967. In Scandinavia, historians of archaeology have made important contributions to the field since the pioneering works of Carl Axel Moberg (Moberg and Arbman 1969). It is hard to imagine how such a variety of traditions can be fruitfully examined by one author in one paper. For this reason, I prefer to focus on the history of archaeology in North America. As I seek to demonstrate in this paper, in this part of the world, *A History of Archaeological Thought* has remained the canonical history of archaeology. This is explained by the fact that Trigger’s book remains one of most important books on archaeology ever published. However, time passes and, as Bruce Trigger himself recognized in the last edition of the book, the number of works on the history of archaeology has increased so much in the past years that his encyclopedic knowledge would soon become dated (Trigger 2006: 549).

THE USES OF THE HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

In a recent paper provocatively entitled ‘Who cares about the history of science?’, Hasok Chang examines the many uses of the history of science (Chang 2017). According to him, these functions can be divided into external and internal. To begin, historians of science need to convince non-practitioners (i.e. those who are no scientists) about the benefits of scientific research for society. This ‘external function’ is essential, for instance, to promote the education of non-specialists and to guarantee public support to scientific institutions. Moreover, the history of science also “serve[s] the aims of science itself” (Chang 2017: 103). This internal function can be divided into orthodox and complementary. On the orthodox side, the history of science helps scientists to better understand their day-to-day research and “the scientific knowledge that we accept at present” (Chang 2017: 93). On the complementary side, the history of science “seeks to generate and improve scientific knowledge where current science itself fails to do so” (Chang 2017: 93). I will examine this function with some detail in the conclusion.

Histories of archaeology have fulfilled the same functions and purposes than other histories of science. To begin, since the end of the nineteenth century, the history of archaeology has served to promote archaeology and secure its institutional position. Early archaeologists created an historiography that played “an edifying role in securing disciplinary identity and institutional cohesion, and indeed in auditing achievements and estimating the pace of archaeological evidence” (Schlanger 2002: 128). This historiography sought to contrast the new science’s achievements with previous myths and legends about the past (Murray 2002). For this reason, early histories of archaeology were conceived as the chronicle of the inexorable progress made by archaeologists in the knowledge of the remote past. These accounts introduced the first textbooks of the discipline, including Cartailhac’s (1889), de Mortillet’s (1883), Evans’ (1872) and others.

The use of history to legitimate archaeological research remained a common practice during the first half of the twentieth century. The case of Glyn Daniel can illustrate this point. Daniel wrote several books and papers in which he reflected about the many functions of the history of archaeology (1950, 1962, 1981a, 1981b). First and foremost, he conceived the history of archaeology as a way to illustrate the progress of this science. According to him, this story is

...full of excitement and of exciting personalities, a story based on the determination of individuals such as Schliemann at Troy and Howard Carter in the Valley of the Kings, a story of the purpose in excavation and fieldwork but a story also of the strange way in which discoveries of great importance made by chance (Daniel 1981a: 212).

Additionally, Daniel conceived the history of archaeology as a pedagogical tool to teach archaeologists about past mistakes. He argued that “without an historical perspective, we can at the present day forget, at our peril, or even repeat, past errors” (Daniel 1981b: 13). In this sense, the history of archaeology served to combat ‘false archaeology’, i.e. fakes and forgeries about the past, archaeological theories created for political ends (such as Nazi archaeology) and sensationalistic theories promoting irrational views (such as von Däniken’s pseudoarchaeology).

In a context of concurrence between different theoretical frameworks, the history of archaeology has also served to promote specific theories and viewpoints. The case of North American Archaeology can illustrate this point. For instance, since the 1940s, processual archaeologists produced a number of historical accounts to legitimize their views (Taylor 1948; Willey 1968), including the first professional history of American archaeology (Willey & Sabloff 1974). Similarly, starting in the 1980s, post-processual archaeologists used the history of archaeology to demonstrate that archaeological knowledge was socially conditioned. Under the influence of Trigger’s works (1980, 1984, 1989), historians of archaeology examined the impact of nationalism (Arnold 1990, 1999; Atkinson et al. 1996; Díaz-Andreu & Champion, 1996), colonialism (Bray and Glover 1987; Díaz-Andreu, 2007), gender biases (Díaz-Andreu and Sørensen 1998; Gero 1985; Gero & Conkey 1991), and social classes’ interests (Kehoe, 1998, 1999; Patterson, 1995) in the history of archaeology.

In short, the history of archaeology has served a variety of purposes including popularizing archaeology, inculcating norms and patterns of research among professional archaeologists, and legitimating specific theories and views. Besides this diversity, we can safely say that the history of archaeology has always served archaeologists in the present. However, as I examine in the following section, histories of archaeology (or, at least, one-volume historical accounts) are becoming increasingly disconnected from the disciplinary present.

CURRENT VIEWS ON THE HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY: THE INFLUENCE OF A HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL THOUGHT

According to Hasok Chang, the orthodox function of the history of science consists in “assist[ing] with the understanding of the content and methods of science as it is now practised” (Chang 2017: 91). This function is relevant both for practitioners and non-practitioners. For professional scientists, the history of science is useful because it helps them to understand the story of the particular set of methods, theories and questions orienting their research. Similarly, for non-specialists is “very useful to be able to learn about scientific methods by going back to the history, without having to master the formidable technical details of contemporary science” (Chang 2017: 94). While this orthodox function may be fulfilled by different kind of historical texts (from journal articles to specialized monographies), one-volume histories of archaeology (as well as introductory chapters of archaeology textbooks) have greatly contributed to promote comprehensible views of the discipline that have become canonical for different generations of scholars. For instance, just as Willey’s and Sabloff’s book contributed to model the disciplinary identity of processual archaeologists, Trigger’s book became a landmark for post-processual archaeologists. This connection with the present implies that histories of science are necessarily provisional and they must be regularly updated.

However, this does not seem to be the case of recent histories of archaeology. As I mentioned in the introduction, no relevant one-single scholarly volume on the history of archaeology has been published since the publication of the second edition of *A History of Archaeological Thought*

almost fifteen years ago (Trigger 2006). This is related to a number of factors. First, as Robert Preucel has recently commented to me, there has been a shift from single authored texts to handbooks and encyclopedias with multi-authored contributions on specific topics (Preucel personal communication). Second, it is important to keep in mind that “few books [have] had such [a] profound impact on the development of contemporary archaeology” (Schlanger 2007: 799). My recent informal survey among 32 full-time faculty archaeologists working in North America exemplifies this point. I asked them to list which were, in their opinion, the three most influential books on the history of archaeology published in the twenty-first century. The three top choices were Trigger’s *A History of Archaeological Thought* (the book was mentioned by 24 scholars and it was the top-choice of 17), Johnson’s *Archaeological theory: An Introduction* (mentioned by 12 scholars and the top-choice of 3) and Harris and Cipolla’s *Archaeological Theory in the New Millennium* (mentioned by 5 scholars). As these numbers illustrate, in North America, *A History of Archaeological Thought* remains the most influential text on the history of archaeology. And for the good reason: Trigger’s book remains an excellent, exhaustive and comprehensive history of archaeology. That said, it is legitimate to wonder whether the book is up-to-date.

To answer this question, we need to situate Trigger’s work in the context of the history of science and archaeology. In terms of the history of science, the first edition appeared at the peak of the so-called ‘externalism-internalism debate’. To sum up, during the first half of the twentieth century, the history of science was written from an ‘internalist’ viewpoint that focused on the contributions of older science to modern one. Starting in the 1960s, ‘internalism’ was challenged by ‘externalism’. This term refers to those approaches that “claim that social, political and economic circumstances have affected the rate and the direction of some scientific work” (Morrell 1981: 145). Under the influence of Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1962), externalist approaches became popular in the historiography of science in the 1970s and 1980s. In archaeology, *A History of Archaeological Thought* inaugurated an externalist approach that became very popular at the end of the twentieth century. Moreover, Trigger’s book was also the product of archaeology’s historical context. During the 1980s, archaeology (especially in the English-speaking world) went through the so-called ‘processual/post-processual debate’. This controversy opposed the positivist paradigm and the so-called ‘post-processual archaeologies’. Post-processual archaeologists insisted that positivism was fatally flawed because archaeological interpretations were necessarily grounded on a number of social, political and economic issues. In this context, *A History of Archaeological Thought* provided the new generation of archaeologists with a powerful historical synthesis. In particular, Trigger’s approach fitted well with the post-processual focus on the social influences of science. This explains why his book connected with many archaeologists in the 1990s and became relevant in archaeological theory.

Trigger’s *A History of Archaeological Thought* promoted an understanding of the history of archaeology that can be summarized in terms of three main propositions. First, Trigger looked at the history of archaeology through the lenses of epistemology and the theory of knowledge. In other words, epistemological questions (especially whether archaeology has progressed throughout time) were at the core of the book. Even if Trigger argued that “there is no evidence that archaeologists at any one period are less influenced by subjective beliefs and social circumstances than they are at any other” (Trigger 2006: 39), he suggested that our

...general understandings of human history and behavior have been irreversible altered as a result of archaeological activity. There is evidence of linearity in the development of archaeology (Trigger 2006: 38).

Second, as the title indicates, Trigger’s book is an intellectual history of archaeology. In other words, he focused on those ideas that had shaped the understanding of the archaeological record, especially the different definitions of ‘culture’ prevalent in North American archaeology and anthropology during the twentieth century. Trigger’s approach exemplifies what Gavin Lucas has called “top-down theorizing”, i.e. a style of theorizing that “starts not from the evidence of archaeological material itself, but from abstract concepts and ideas” (Lucas 2015: 17). Third, Trigger’s book is a historical account *about* archaeologists and *for* archaeologists. As it was customary during the twentieth century, *A History of Archaeological Thought* is a specialized synthesis written for practitioners who are familiar with the methods and techniques of archaeological research. Moreover, the book focuses on the life and works of those Western scholars who have contributed to the progress of archaeological science.

In this section, I have focused on *A History of Archeological Thought* because, as the brief survey above demonstrates, this remains the canonical interpretation in our discipline (at least in North America). That said, most histories of archaeology share Trigger's main traits. For instance, historical chapters in textbooks typically describe the history of archaeology in terms of three consecutive paradigms (culture-historical archaeology, processual archaeology and post-processual archaeology). Like Trigger's book, these accounts typically focus on those pioneers and methods that have contributed to the progress of archaeological research. At the same time, they recognize that archaeology has been influenced by a number of social and economic factors and they tend to neglect non-Western contributions. In the next section, I examine a number of recent developments in archaeology to determine how up-to-date this interpretation is.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Since the beginnings of the twenty-first century, we have witnessed a great diversification in archaeology. In this section, I focus on three developments that are relevant to understand the current state of knowledge in archaeology: the decline of traditional epistemology, the emergence of new ways of thinking about practice and theory, and the reformulation of the role of archaeologists (and scientists) in the post-colonial world. These developments are especially relevant in North America, but they are also significant in other parts of the world.

As we have examined in a recent paper, the past twenty years have been marked by an increasing discontent with traditional epistemology (Moro Abadía and Lewis-Sing 2021). For instance, in the field of anthropology, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2015), Martin Holbraad (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017) and others (Henare et al. 2007) have theorized a shifting from epistemology to ontology. Moreover, a number of voices have argued that traditional epistemologies have justified the hegemony of the West and have promoted 'epistemic colonialism' (Schneider and Hayes 2020), 'epistemic violence' (Marker 2003), 'epistemic injustice' (Kidd, Medina and Pohlhaus 2017), and 'epistemicide' (Sousa Santos 2016). In archaeology, the decline of epistemology is illustrated by the displacement of the processual/post-processual debate from the center of the theoretical debate. This controversy (which was mainly epistemological, i.e. about what we can know and how we can know it) was the result of the positivist/relativist argument that ended the twentieth century. However, after two decades of discussion, archaeologists have become tired of this argument. As Sonia Atalay and others have pointed out, archaeologists "have grown weary of the jousts between the champions of reflexivity and the defenders of positivism [...] Increasingly, archaeologists just want to get on with it and do archaeology" (Atalay et al. 2014: 7). Furthermore, archaeological theory is no longer conceived of in terms of 'big theories' or paradigms. Today, "there are no great theoretical divides, just a plurality of positions [...] a community of discourses" (Lucas 2015: 13). In this setting, the positivist framework that played a central role in archaeological theory during the twentieth century has been replaced by a myriad of approaches (including agential realism, new materialism, symmetrical archaeology, etc.) some of which are openly anti-epistemological (e.g. ontology, speculative realism). This has entailed the replacement of epistemological questions by a variety of new interpretative issues (Johnson 2019, Harris and Cipolla 2017).

The decline of traditional epistemology is related to the emergence of new ways of understanding archaeological theory and practice. Twenty-first century archaeologists are increasingly suspicious of traditional theoretical approaches, perceived as disconnected from archaeological practice (see, for instance, Rathje et al. 2013; Chapman and Wylie 2015; Furrholt et al. 2020). In particular, they tend to reject top-down approaches in which archaeologists accommodate material evidence to abstract theories (such as functionalism, positivism and relativism). As Robert Chapman and Alison Wylie have recently argued, "the epistemic status of archaeological evidence has been conducted at a level of abstraction that provides little useful guidance for practice" (Chapman and Wylie 2015: 7). For this reason, archaeologists are now urged "to develop bottom-up approaches to archaeology where the archaeological stuff itself is supposed to lead the way" (Lucas 2015: 18). The suspicion of highly-theoretical approaches is also related to the increasing expectation that science opens its doors to society. Scientists are increasingly committed to

enhance the public's understanding of science. [They must make] new advances in science visible and accessible to the public in order to allow people to make informed decisions about scientific issues concerning their own lives (Weingart and Joubert 2019: 1).

This process has been particularly relevant in the case of archaeology, a discipline that works with material culture that is considered of great public value. Today archaeologists are expected to consult with representatives of Indigenous communities, to obtain their consent for undertaking research, and “to give something back to the communities whose heritage they study” (Wylie 2015: 194). Moreover, it is also expected that archaeologists avoid technical jargon and communicate their findings in a language accessible to all.

The demand for clarity connects with the reconfiguration of the role of archaeologists in the post-colonial world. During most part of the twentieth century, archaeologists defined their tasks as reconstructing the past as ‘it happened’ and, therefore, they paid little attention to ethical questions. However, starting in the 1990s, post-processual archaeologists claimed that “the past is never safe, never divorced from the present” (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 28). For this reason, they suggested that archaeologists should “transform the void of the past/present to a productive present-past and create an archaeology which has social and political relevance to the society in which it operates” (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 28). During the past two decades, archaeologists have been increasingly expected to be “aligned with ‘the People’, to understand their needs and advocate their cause” (González-Ruibal et al. 2018: 508). For instance, in North America, as well as in Australia, archaeologists have actively supported the claims of Indigenous and subaltern communities (McNiven and Russell 2005; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010; McNiven 2016; Wylie 2019). In Europe, archaeological interests for the present have crystallized in a number of theoretically-related proposals, including the archaeology of the contemporary world (Harrison and Breithoff 2017), the archaeology of the super-modernity (González Ruibal 2008) and the archaeology of the present (Harrison 2011). Generally speaking, archaeologists are expected to collaborate with communities and people that had been historically excluded from the creation of archaeological knowledge and the management of cultural heritage.

As this brief overview illustrates, the view of the history of archaeology promoted by Trigger's book (as well as others) is not the most updated one. To begin, for obvious reasons, Trigger's interpretation does not incorporate the latest developments in archaeology. In fact, many things have happened in archaeology and other social sciences since Trigger published the second edition of *A History of Archaeology*. Besides, the epistemological, theoretical and technical style of the book does not fit too well with the spirit of the times. Old questions have been replaced by new ones and both archaeologists and the public have different interests and concerns. Lastly, the traditional historiographical focus on Western archaeologists (especially male) needs to be revised. While nobody denies the importance of the so-called pioneers, in a multicultural world the history of archaeology needs to incorporate other views and perspectives.

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As we have seen in the previous section, there is an increasing disconnection between archaeology and the one-volume ‘histories of archaeology’ currently available. On the one hand, archaeology has greatly evolved during the past two decades. On the other hand, historical syntheses are somewhat grounded on twentieth century issues and problems. This disconnection generates a number of problems. In particular, the new generation of archaeologists does not dispose of comprehensive historical overviews articulating past and present. Moreover, standard histories of archaeology, increasingly disconnected from current controversies, are becoming less and less relevant. For these reasons, I have argued in this paper that we need new and pluriversal histories of archaeology to understand our changing present. Given the plural and fractious nature of archaeology in the past years, it is reasonable to suggest that new narratives would need to adopt the form of a polyphony including different voices and experiences. While it is beyond the scope of this article to develop the contents and themes of these future histories, it may be useful to conclude with a quick review of the main challenges that historians of archaeology are currently facing. To do so, I return now to Hasok Chang's discussion on the uses of the history of science.

As I explained in the second section, Chang divides the ‘internal’ functions of the history of science into orthodox and complementary. The orthodox function “assist[s] with the understanding of the contents and methods of science as it is now practised” (Chang 2017: 93). This function is important because it allows practitioners to understand the history of those methods and ideas that are at the core of orthodox science. Without denying that books such as *A History of Archaeological Thought* are certainly useful to understand the foundations of archaeological research, the fact remains that they promote a view of archaeology that is anchored in the twentieth century. The first task would be therefore to incorporate the past twenty years into our new historiographical narratives. In order to fulfill the orthodox function, we need new pluralist stories that consider a number of recent transformations in archaeological research, including the shift from an ethnocentric to a multicultural perspective, the transformation from an academic to a public-oriented discipline, and the move from an epistemological to an ethical viewpoint.

In his paper, Chang also examines the ‘complementary function’ of the history of science. This function seeks to improve current scientific research and generate new knowledge. Scientists tend to focus on their everyday practice and this prevents them from considering other questions and perspectives that could improve their research. According to Chang, the history of science has three main complementary functions: (a) To enhance critical awareness, (b) to recover lost knowledge, and (c) to extend scientific knowledge. These complementary functions could also serve archaeologists in a number of ways. First, we should open “our mind to new possibilities” (Chang 2017: 95). With a couple of exceptions (see, for instance, Patterson’s and Kehoe’s social histories of American archaeology references needed), histories of archaeology have been generally written from an epistemological viewpoint. Without denying the importance of epistemological approaches, histories of archaeology could also adopt other forms. For instance, instead of describing archaeology as an intellectual activity, recent historical accounts have examined the history of archaeology as a cluster of *practices*, that is as a set of activities in which people engage. This focus on archaeological practices could be extended to new historiographical narratives.

Moreover, the main complementary function of history is “improving scientific knowledge itself, especially through the complementary recovery and extension of the knowledge that orthodox science has lost track of” (Chang 2017: 104). This is particularly relevant for us because histories of archaeology have traditionally focused on the contributions of Western male archaeologists and have failed to stay aware of the importance of other peoples. However, this is starting to change. The examples of women and Indigenous peoples illustrate this point. During the past decade, numerous projects have examined the many contributions of women to the history of archaeology. For instance, Emilie Dotte-Sarout’s ARC funding project ‘*Pacific Matildas: Finding the women in the history of Pacific archaeology*’ explores more inclusive narratives to better understand the role of women in the history of Pacific archaeology (Dotte-Sarout 2021). Margarita Diaz-Andreu’s project ‘*ArquéologAs*’ is currently publishing many biographies of female archaeologists in Spain (citation). In the same vein, the ‘*TrowelBlazers project*’ run by Brenna Hassett, Tori Herridge, Suzanne Pilaar Birch and Rebecca Wragg Sykes has published the biographies of more than 200 women working in ‘digging sciences’ such as geology, paleontology and, especially, archaeology (citation, main web page).

Similarly, an increasing number of authors are examining the impact of Indigenous peoples in the history of sciences such as anthropology and archaeology. For instance, Margaret M. Bruchach (2018) has recently re-evaluated the contribution of a number of Indigenous informants (such as Gladys Tantaquidgeon, Jesse Cornplanter, and George Hunt) to the work of early pioneers in the history of American anthropology (such as Franz Boas, Arthur C. Parker and Frank Speck). Bruchach not only highlights the contribution of people traditionally excluded from the history of anthropology, but questions a number of divides that are at the core of traditional historiographies (such as the distinction between ‘anthropologists’ and ‘informants’). Similarly, Matthew Spriggs’ project *The Collective Biography of Archaeology in the Pacific* incorporates Indigenous voices into the history of Pacific archaeology (Spriggs 2019). Using archival materials, he has examined the role of Indigenous agency in archaeological expeditions (Likewise, he has also called into question the traditional narrative according to which ‘modern professional archaeology’ emerged in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s after a long phase of amateur scholarship. According to Spriggs, this narrative

remains very much the ‘official’ view today, [but] it is a modernist fantasy [...] done by forgetting the real history of archaeology, something that we need now to redress. We require critical histories of Australian archaeology that examine the entire period from 1788 to the present (Spriggs 2020: 91–0).

As these examples illustrate, historians of archaeology are already considering the contribution of peoples other than Western males to the history of archaeology. What we need now is for these voices to be incorporated into the new and pluriversal narratives of the history of archaeology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Matthew Spriggs and Emilie Dotte-Sarout for their invitation to participate in the History of Archaeology Conference. My paper has greatly benefitted from the comments and questions of those who attended the conference, including Nathan Schlanger, Claire Smith, Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Lynette Russell. I am grateful to Eve Haddow and two anonymous referees for their detailed comments on the first version of the paper. Finally, special thanks to the 32 colleagues who replied to my survey about the situation of the history of archaeology in North America.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

Oscar Moro Abadía  orcid.org/0000-0002-3992-7933
Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada

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TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Moro Abadía, Oscar. 2023. Rewriting the Past for the Changing Present: The Need for New and Pluriversal Histories of Archaeology. *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*, 33(1): 3, pp. 1-12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/bha-675>

Submitted: 03 October 2022

Accepted: 11 May 2023

Published: 02 October 2023

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