

IX. Upcoming conferences

Don McVicker advises that he and Robert Oppenheim (U. Texas, Austin) have put together a major symposium for the AAA in Washington, November 2005, titled “**Frederick Starr: (Re)Contextualizing the Works of a Disciplinary Ancestor**”. Alice Kehoe will be among the discussants.

Daniel Schavelzon advises that the Gordon R. Willey Symposium in the History of Archaeology will take place at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology to be held in San Juan de Puerto Rico (April 26–30, 2006) under the title:

Archaeology in the Americas during the 20th Century: Several Different Histories

This event, which customarily takes place during the Society for American Archaeology’s meetings dedicated to Gordon R. Willey, for his paramount contribution to the history of archaeology. The purpose, this year, is to discuss, reflect and rethink the development of this discipline throughout the 20th century in the Americas. The subject to be addressed at this time will refer to “Several different histories”. The attendance of Latin American experts is particularly encouraged. Chair: Dr. Daniel Schavelzon (University of Buenos Aires, Argentina) *dschav@fadu.uba.ar; dschavelzon@fibertel.co.ar; cau@fibertel.com.ar*

On Some Major Issues Concerning History of Archaeology in the Americas Today

Archaeology, as opposed to many other disciplines in the world of science, needs to constantly source from the knowledge generated in the past. Its interest is not only focused on the very last breakthroughs – an excavation, a theoretical reflection – but rather, due to its own destructive nature and to the fact that sites change or are transformed, the need arises to work with what others have done before, and at times, way back in the past. As a result, it has become customary for archaeologists to work with earlier texts, photographs or plans, something that a medic, a chemist or a biologist would never do. Even historians source from already published documents, though they rarely use past interpretations and descriptions, even if these were originated in the past century. For an archaeologist, on the contrary, it is indispensable to explore every previous progress made on his subject of study, and to provide a description and a discussion, as well as a detail which should be presented at the beginning of his publication. Clearly, it is valid to use such documents, as whatever other researchers had the chance to witness so long ago, now no longer exists, or does not exist in the same way.

As a consequence of destruction or restoration, changes have been so sudden that each subsequent generation, in fact, has seen different things in one and the same place. No one will ever see again Structure E7 from Uaxactún, no one will see again the surface of La Venta, or Pachacamac as Max Hule saw it when he worked at the site, or the countless structures that covered other earlier ones and that had to be removed. How many sites have vanished, devoured by cities? Kaminaljuyú is one such example. Several books have explored the different approaches throughout time to a similar object such as a prehispanic city, a building, a territory, or a mere ceramic ware. The development of epigraphy shows how a single glyph has been interpreted in many different ways along the 20th century.

This phenomenon of proximity with the pioneers has represented one of the gateways to history of archaeology in the Americas, followed shortly after by a second, different one: the

first generation of scholars who elaborated great histories on the subject, presenting a vision which from the very beginning, and following Glyn Daniel, caused a strong impact by endowing it with a venerable genealogy. By the 1970's, and with one hundred years upon its shoulders, Americanistic archaeology already had a history of its own. Shortly after, however, criticism gradually appeared, based on the fact that those histories were not only inserted in a debatable institutionalistic vision, but were also reinforcing what was deemed as a typical Anglo-Saxon, North American, mechanical manner to see the past: the history of archaeology was being presented as the development of new paradigms (both theoretical and methodological) and the dispersion thereof throughout the continent, always in a north-south direction, where those who more readily accepted them would very quickly become the champions of a struggle against the obscure minds of those who favored the notions of earlier stages. A history which, in extreme, some would consider both diffusionistic and Darwinistic in nature.

This history began to be gradually confronted by a different one, originated in territories where publishing and diffusion faced serious difficulties, and where chances were scarce as far as translations and publications was concerned. The claim was that together with a pure research archaeology, such as the one funded by U. S. museums and universities, one that allowed travels to other countries and the collection of relevant information – and much too often the collection of the archaeological objects themselves – there was another archaeology engaged in a tremendous effort in the field of preservation, restoration, tourist attention, and diffusion. Thus, archaeology had switched from being simple, pure science, to become a heritage that was to be protected. René Millon represented the best possible example of this stand, with his remarkable mapping effort in Teotihuacan, while simultaneously México chose to invest a much larger amount in the restoration and touristic adequation of the site, which was already receiving about one million visitors per year. When comparing scientific results, the difference is overwhelming; the issue here is that the past was being used – and recreated – in two different ways. The comparison was not valid.

Such alternative history was impressive, both in terms of achievements and handicaps, and exposed one of the reasons why there wouldn't be a coincidence in the way archaeological developments were considered. What was being written, for the most part, were books on the research efforts accomplished by U. S. and several European archaeologists and institutions in Latin America, together with the acceptance and collaboration of local archaeologists in front of that way of doing science, and disregarding any effort directed to prevent lootings, to preserve and restore, to build museums, and to make people aware of the significance of their heritage. Perhaps the example of Eduard Thompson, hailed as a pioneer in international bibliography, and simultaneously considered a looter and a contractor who exploited his laborers, and an individual who enjoyed diplomatic immunity may be valid, in spite of the time elapsed.

History of archaeology in the Americas, once the study of the most important pioneers was completed, led the way to an additional broad issue. This consisted in the search of "second-liners", in the pursuit of new interesting histories. Potentially, they were outstanding individuals who due to the momentary situation, or their social ascription, or for working out of the large cities, were not allowed to interact and compete with those who were a part of the institutional front. Such fronts were extremely rigid and shut any different line of thinking, while their political stand, at times – exacerbated Nationalism in México, or Nazism and Fascism in Argentina – represented the only valid alternatives. Thus, many scholars with the capability to produce important contributions in their fields of expertise were left aside, whenever reality prevented them to occupy a position of privilege. The formation of institutional "corporations" at the core of each country remains a subject to be debated, and

has just begun to be studied. There are already a few gender histories that allow us to catch a glimpse on the feminine interpretation of the past. We face as well challenges concerning the first non-Catholic archaeologists in countries where religion is dominant, and concerning the first scholars of an indigenous or Afro-American origin. There is still plenty to elaborate about the history of the long-existing controversy between archaeologists from different countries and with different ideologies.

An additional subject of interest has to do with archaeologists working in large cities and museums from Latin America, and with those who lived and worked more modestly in smaller cities within the hinterlands, who usually suffered a scarcity of literature and resources. We have observed with interest how science in each country has enhanced the image of those who acted in large cities, while in each state or province, on the contrary, those who chose to stay are considered local champions and even the museums carry their names, disregarding the fact that the work produced probably was not considered a leading effort at the time.

Finally, we have come to understand the role archaeology has played in the construction of the national identity in different territories. In countries with a strong indigenous tradition this is quite easy to understand, and was a reality since earlier times (Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia, and others), but in built countries, with artificial boundaries defined by the prevailing politics of the 19th and 20th centuries (Panama, Belize, Uruguay), the most sophisticated maneuvers were put in practice so that they could exhibit some sort of national cohesion. Archaeology, in many ways, has played a crucial role in these definitions, undoubtedly related to the collective imaginary, the constructed memory and a newly-fabricated identity.

The Present Symposium at the Dawn of the 21st Century

This Symposium, which hold the name of a pioneering personality for the history of archaeology in the Americas, will be held for the first time out of the United States' mainland. This is an important advancement towards honest discussion, held at a scientific level, between experts of the entire continent and elsewhere, who have plenty to say in this regard. Notions will be compared, as also different lines of thinking, and progress will be made in the knowledge of our field of expertise. The 21st century has brought about the possibility, following the collapse of grand paradigms and absolute truths, to produce knowledge of a rather more open, flexible and critical nature, the chance to set foot on some blurry territories which were perhaps considered as "politically incorrect".

Marxist-originated notions produced in Latin America an opening in the archaeological thinking of the 1960's and 1970's, and have been properly interpreted as a highly social line of thought strongly committed with the unjust situation of marginality and underdevelopment in which a large part of the continent is submerged. That is why it has referred – and still has plenty to say – to the insertion of archaeology in a social and political reality of its own: excavations are not carried out in a void, but on the contrary, in specific countries. It has referred as well to the relevance of those factors we all acknowledge nowadays: economy, production, social asymmetry and the oppression some individuals inflict on others.

More than ever, here, today, archaeologists from an entire continent have a forum to discuss how we have come to create ourselves.

Nathalie Richard advises:

Human Sciences and Religion

Conference of the Société Française pour l'Histoire des Sciences de l'Homme (S. F. H. S. H.). Paris, 21st – 23rd September 2005.

With the support of Centre Alexandre Koyré (EHESS, CNRS, MNHN), Centre d'anthropologie religieuse européenne (EHESS), Centre d'études interdisciplinaires des faits religieux (EHESS, CNRS), and Maison d'Auguste Comte.

Mercredi 21 septembre (Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, auditorium de la Grande Galerie de l'Évolution, 36, rue Geoffroy Saint Hilaire 75005 Paris); jeudi 22 et vendredi 23 septembre 2005 (EHESS, 105 bd Raspail, salles 4, 5 et 7).

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More information on the web site of the SFHSH (*www.bium.univ-paris5.fr/sfsh/*).

According to Auguste Comte's famous law, mankind was supposed to have gone through three stages: theological, metaphysical, and positive. The reign of sciences (the 'positive' age) was supposed to take its origin at the very moment when men abandoned the religious stage of their existence after the transitional stage of 'metaphysics'. The founder of positivism considered that the law did not apply only to natural sciences but also to the science of Humanity, which was the highest point of the positive knowledge, 'Sociology'. The same Auguste Comte nevertheless founded with his disciples a Church, whose dogmas and rites were carefully written down under an openly admitted fascination with Catholicism.

This oversimplified summary shows the complexity of the relationship between the sciences of man and religious thought. The object of this conference is to organize different questions, to assess the current research on the topic, or even to question accepted ideas. By crossing epistemological questions and an original rigorous historiographic approach, different levels of discussion can be distinguished.

Science and religion. Confrontation and Imitation

According to Comte's scheme, it is generally admitted that the human sciences take their flight in Western societies when beliefs and religious frames become less important, not only in individual consciousness but also among institutions. The development of the human sciences implies a rationalization of knowledge which entails the development of our modern academic institutions. Within these, religion became one of the privileged objects of the young human sciences. A 'science of religions' proper developed, whereas psychiatry, psychology, history and sociology aimed at turning religion into something 'religious' but human and only human, submitted to neutral or would-be neutral approaches. These were logically considered as hostile to official religions, and so they were under the eyes of the scientists themselves.

But such general considerations raise new questions and deserve mere subtle answers. As an example we can more openly question what has been often described, perhaps too hastily, as the warfare between the sciences of man and the limits to which religion tried to confine them. One of the most typical examples is probably the polygenist or evolutionary theories concerning the origins of man, and the consequences they had on the sciences of anthropology, ethnology, and prehistoric archaeology, problems which we know are not yet

solved. But, if we may sometimes legitimately speak of struggle, we can also speak of borrowings, since the human sciences made use of and are still making use of some concepts and religious practices. Psychologists in the nineteenth century offered psychotherapies which were very similar to confessions, direction of conscience or cure of the soul.

Academic institutions can also be studied themselves as the heirs of religious institutions, with their dogmas, rites, and hierarchy. Educational institutions, especially in France, inherited from a long clerical tradition. The actors on the academic stage, scholars or intellectuals, are bound together by common creeds which take sometimes the form of lay religions, so that scientism as well as free thinking were able to take the same form as the one which was adopted by their ideological opponents.

Religion and Positive Knowledge versus the Sciences of Man as Messianism

Religious discourses, which also aim at the knowledge of the world, can both rest upon elements borrowed from data produced by the sciences of man and contribute to their development. It will be probably necessary to re-estimate the contribution of religious scholars to the development of human sciences in many fields. Famous cases exist concerning prehistoric archaeology and human palaeontology or, in a more distant time, ethnology and geography which rest upon the knowledge of missionaries. More recently, other missionaries contributed to the development of urban socio-ethnology or the sociology of labour. And if psychologists inherited practices from the priests, the latter, in their relationship to their congregations, may have drawn inversely part of their experience from psychologists or psychoanalysts, or may have become themselves psychologists and psychoanalysts. The border line between the apologetic and the political dimensions of scientific discourses is porous and calls for more detailed studies.

But the actors of human sciences may have themselves been inspired by apologetic ends. The sciences of man, as well as religions, aimed sometimes at reforming man and society. One of the openly admitted objectives of the founders of sociology was to present theoretically to the understanding and render practically possible a society where religion and the ethical prescriptions it conveyed had disappeared. One should not be surprised by their propensity in the course of the nineteenth century to found churches or chapels and publish catechisms. Marxism could be considered as the last messianist movement of the Western world, and in the same way psychoanalysis may have been viewed as a movement which offered a new faith and a new form of spirituality. Such questions have been carefully studied, but they still deserve to be discussed.

The Theological Foundations of the Sciences of Man and the Practical Limits of Rationality

In the last instance, the very status of the discourse of the sciences of man could be questioned from the standpoint of religious thought. The most relevant examples can paradoxically be found in the most advanced fields of knowledge from an analytical standpoint: could we not assert polemically that political economy and psychology have both become in a way contemporary theological forms? Is not pedagogy, in its very attempts to become scientific, still resting on religious conceptions, in spite of the proclamations of neutrality of most of its exponents? A careful reading of authors and trends of thought in these disciplines often reveals the religious foundations of their thought, sometimes implicit, sometimes quite explicit.

Practices stemming from the human sciences and claimed to be rational are still today competing with other practices which are avowedly magical or religious. The confrontation is obvious in the sphere of psychology, where there often exists a direct competition between

the practitioner and the priest, the marabout and the clairvoyant, provided the former does not himself build up some form of theoretical syncretism, such as the one which is proposed by ethno-psychiatry. But recent sociological studies on the Stock Exchange show that magical practices are also here competing against rational religious practices. What should we think of the new forms of management inspired by 'new age' forms of religiosity? On such issues many fields remain to be explored.

Space and Time

The themes concern every human science, in various and often intertwined modes. They rest mostly on the history of the Western Christian world, but comparative investigations in other cultural and religious spheres are welcome. As far as time is concerned, the Conference intends to treat such themes on a wide temporal scope, from the Renaissance – or even before – to our present days. Treating this temporal scheme, as is often done, as a linear western movement of secularisation of knowledge, here again according to Comte's scheme, calls for new shades of meaning and new questions.

Seminar "History of Human and Social Sciences"

Organized by Claude Blanckaert, Jacqueline Carroy, and Nathalie Richard

Centre Alexandre Koyré, Paris

The first session of this year seminar will be held on November 18th 2005.

For more information on the programme : Web site of the Société Française pour l'Histoire des Sciences de l'Homme (www.bium.univ-paris5.fr/sfhsh/)

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Nathan Schlanger advises:

Breuil in Africa. On the Making of African Prehistoric Archaeology in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

International conference at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, August 2006. Organised by François-Xavier Fauvelle (CNRS-Institut Français d'Afrique du sud), Nathan Schlanger (AREA-Archives of European Archaeology), Benjamin Smith (Rock Art Research Institute).

• First announcement and call for papers •

The Abbé Henri Breuil (b. 1877 – d. 1961) was without doubt the first and boldest practitioner of 'world prehistory'. From his powerbase at the Institut de Paléontologie Humaine in Paris, Breuil launched a series of groundbreaking studies – on prehistoric rock art, on lithic industries and their successions, and on coastal and alluvial stratigraphic sequences – which secured him unprecedented scientific recognition and authority at a global scale. All through the first half of the twentieth century, Breuil tirelessly travelled through Western and Eastern Europe, as well as the Far East, but from early on his interests clearly focussed on the African continent. The nearly six years of his life he spent there (in 1929, 1942–1945, 1947–1949,

1950–1951), mainly in South Africa and neighbouring countries, but also in Central and East Africa, were dedicated to visiting, studying and promoting the rich archaeological record of the continent. Breuil's contribution to African archaeology includes several dozen scientific publications, and also some crucial institutional inputs bearing on the organisation of research, legislation, surveys, international conferences, etc. These contributions were in turn facilitated and magnified by his ability – through his extensive travelling, assiduous correspondence and sheer force of personality – to forge a truly global network of personal contacts, embracing both the meekest local amateur and the highest scientific and political authorities in the land.

Today, almost half a century after his death, Breuil's contribution to African Archaeology is long overdue for a thorough assessment – a reassessment which would follow rigorous methods of historical research, draw on all relevant sources of information (and notably on archival material in France, Africa and elsewhere), and deliberately avoid any hagiographic inclinations. Such a critical appraisal should not simply result in a thoroughly documented appreciation of Breuil's own multifaceted activities, but also lead us to a broader and far reaching understanding of the making of African prehistoric archaeology as a whole.

Contributions are hereby invited from scholars interested in Breuil's African activities and legacy – inclusive of all geographical zones, all archaeological time-periods and all research areas (e.g. Prehistoric art, Stone Age typology and technology, stratigraphy, etc.). These contributions are encouraged to take on board some of the following guiding themes:

- Colonial contexts: archaeology between colonies and metropolises
- Colonial contexts: archaeology, settlers and natives
- Ideological dimensions of interpretation and theory (e.g. with regards to prehistoric art)
- History and sociology of science – the coming about and maintenance of expertise
- Networks of knowledge and authority
- Skills and institutions in the creation and consolidation of the archaeological discipline
- Field practices and methods; transfers and applications across the globe.

For any further information on the 'Breuil in Africa' conference, please contact area@inha.fr

A further announcement on the conference, including precise date, programme and venue, will be made in early 2006. Those interested in participating should send personal and professional details, as well as the title of the proposed paper and a page-long abstract, to area@inha.fr by the 1 January 2006.