



The concept of Public Archaeology has profoundly changed since Mc Gimsey's first formulation in the early 1970s, as it developed a solid conceptual and practical framework along the years that makes it now an independent branch of archaeology. However, in English-speaking and Northern European countries, the perception of archaeology as a common good was widely spread even before the actual formalization of Public Archaeology as a specific curriculum offered by several universities. Not surprisingly, such an earlier interest led to the development of a markedly Central and Northern European perspective on the topic, which keeps steering much of the current reflection on Public Archaeology despite the emergence of multiple and alternative standpoints on the matter, further deepening the "Great Divide" between the archaeologies of Northern and Southern European countries.

When it comes to make archaeology public the European Union fails to act cohesively, as the European Framework Convention on the value of Cultural Heritage for the society (Faro Convention) may well illustrate. Drafted in 2005, the document did not enter into force until 1 June 2011. Unlike other European framework agreements on culture (including the 1992 Malta Convention), the Faro Convention has been signed and ratified by a rather limited number of countries mainly gravitating around very specific geopolitical areas, with Italy as the last one to adhere in September 2020. Being too ambitious and demanding for European governments and not very innovative when compared to the Paris Convention (Keane - Kirwan 2016; 158), the Faro treaty and the long delay in its ratification reveal the long-standing issues lying at the core of the political and cultural divide running across Europe. It is worthwhile noting that the 17 countries that have signed and ratified the Convention so far belong for the most part to the former Soviet bloc and to the former Yugoslav Balkans. The strong allegiance to the chart manifested by these countries has been often connected to their interest in joining the European Union thus being granted access to its funding system with the same rights as the historical members of the European treaty (Filipović 2009; Brianso 2015), and an opportunity for some of them to build their own identity. In both north-eastern and south-eastern Europe Public Archaeology has indeed made great strides in challenging the way in which archaeologists can involve a wider audience by illustrating their research, but also triggering controversies due to the lack of self-reflection on national identity issues connected to cultural heritage (Carlà-Uhink & Gori 2019). On the other hand, in the southern Mediterranean area (including northern Africa and part of the Near East) Public Archaeology faces enormous challenges deriving from the Colonial background that pervades the discipline, and the lack of interest often showed by local authorities in making the archaeological heritage more inclusive and publicly accessible (e.g. Badran 2011 for Jordan). In addition, armed conflicts and consequent humanitarian crises have led countries such as Libya and, above all, Syria to understandably overlook issues related

to public engagement and the role played by archaeologists, museum professionals, and local authorities in bridging the gap between society and cultural heritage.

Unlike Northern and Central Europe, Southern European countries such as e.g. Italy, Spain and Greece fully acknowledged the relevance of Public Archaeology only in the 2010s, as the organization of the first national conferences on the subject and the establishment of dedicated journals testify. Even though delayed, the interest sparked in the South for Public Archaeology is related to the higher mobility of scholars and archaeologists: in fact, some of the researchers and professionals who first addressed consistently the subject in Mediterranean Europe were mostly trained in the northern countries.

Today, Public Archaeology features more prominently in the archaeological agenda of Southern European countries not only due to the formation of its professionals but also due to the increasing attention devoted to themes such as inclusivity and sustainability in connection to heritage. Following the global economic collapse of the late 2000s, especially the countries that suffered major consequences invested much of their entrepreneurial energies into international cultural and religious tourism, which have now become a fundamental source of income for relaunching their national economies.

The choice to turn to valorisation and dissemination has thus been embraced by heritage professionals and archaeological companies working in the commercial sector. The economic crisis mentioned above affected building contractor, drastically reducing the need for archaeological supervision on construction sites. As a consequence, archaeologists had to reinvent themselves as professionals and the career opportunities offered within the framework of Public Archaeology were certainly attractive. Such a sudden career shift raised heavy criticism about the ways in which cultural heritage – and especially the archaeological one – has been utilized often instrumentally, leading to the allegation of exploiting Cultural Heritage only as a nice background for activities that have nothing to do with the context in which they are staged.

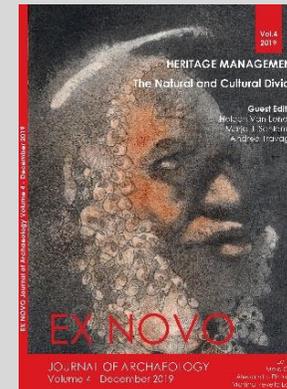
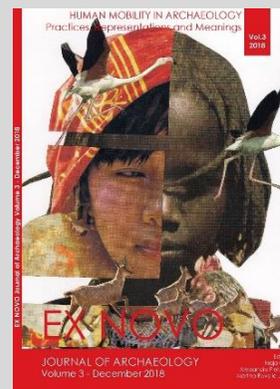
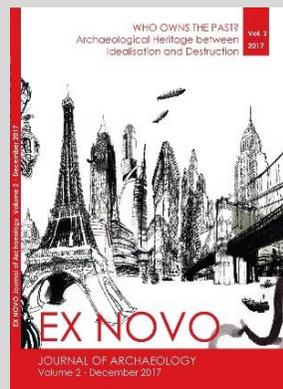
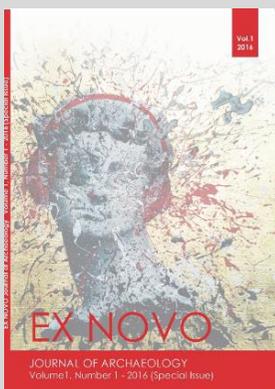
Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has showed brutally how fragile and unsustainable this use – and concept – of Cultural Heritage is, forcing archaeologists working in the tourist and commercial sectors as well as the ones working in academia to rethink the relationship between archaeology, tourism, and public engagement (Holtorf 2020).

The sixth issue of Ex Novo seeks to explore how **“peripheral”** regions currently approach both the practice and theory of public archaeology placing particular emphasis on **Eastern and Southern Europe**, extending the analysis to **the whole Mediterranean area** including northern Africa and the Near East. However, contributions bringing forward experiences matured in **other regions than those mentioned above** - yet equally underrepresented in the discourse about public archaeology - will be considered for inclusion in the dedicated section **“Making Archaeology Public - Off the Map”**.

We invite contributions focused on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- The state of the debate on Public Archaeology in those countries where issues related to make archaeology public are usually under-represented in the archaeological discipline;
- The different political strategies, economic policies, and administrative procedures connected to the practice of Public Archaeology put in place in the Mediterranean area, and in Southern and Eastern Europe. Contribution focusing on Northern/Central Europe will be accepted only if confronted with the areas focus of the call.
- Theoretically informed papers concerning the on-going global debate on Public Archaeology;

- The different roles played by Public Archaeology in shaping the relationship between the general public and the past, including the so-called pseudoarchaeology phenomenon and its political underpinnings.



## SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

The sixth issue of Ex Novo is open to traditional journal articles, short essays, book reviews, interviews, and other genres of contributions including visual artworks, graphic novels, and photographic reports.

If you wish to contribute to this issue please contact Maja Gori at Maja. Gori@cnr.it by the 15 of December 2020 enclosing an abstract of max. 300 words. If you wish to submit a review or send a book to be reviewed please contact Maurizio Crudo at mauriziocrudo@gmail.com. Please note that book review proposals do not need to be preceded by an abstract.

Proposals for visual artworks should be sent at an earlier stage of preparation to Martina Revello Lami at m.revello.lami@arch.leidenuniv.nl.

Upon acceptance, all papers and reviews shall be submitted by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 through the OJS platform of Archaeopress Publishing Ltd that will be launched shortly <http://www.archaeopress.com>, you will receive information on this in due time.

## References:

BADRAN A. 2015. The Excluded Past in Jordanian Formal Primary Education: The Introduction of Archaeology, in K. OKAMURA & A. MATSUDA (eds.) *New Perspectives in Global Public Archaeology*, Springer 2011: 197-215; BRIANSO I. 2015. La Convention de Faro en perspective: analyse éthique du patrimoine culturel pour la société au Kosovo. *Alterstice: revue internationale de la recherche interculturelle/ Alterstice: International Journal of Intercultural Research/ Alterstice: Revista Internacional de la Investigación Intercultural* 5.2: 21-32 ; CARLA-UHINK F. & GORI M. 2019. Modern Identities and Classical Antiquity, *Thersites. Journal for Transcultural Presences & Diachronic Identities from Antiquity to Date* Vol. 10; FILIPOVIĆ M. 2009, Why do countries ratify conventions? The case of Montenegro, in *Heritage and Beyond, Council of Europe* 47-52; HOLTORF C. 2020, An archaeology for the future: from developing contract archaeology to imagining post-corona archaeology, *PCA - European Journal of Postclassical Archaeologies* vol. 10/2020, 57-72; KEANE M. & KIRWAN S. 2016. *From Valletta to Faro – avoiding a false dichotomy and working towards implementing Faro in regard to archaeological heritage (reflections from an Irish perspective)* in Florjanowicz P. (ed.) *When Valletta meets Faro The reality of European archaeology in the 21st century*, *EAC Occasional Paper* 11, 157-165; MC GIMSEY C.R. 1972, *Public archeology*, New York.