



ARCHEOSTORIE™ JOURNAL *of* PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

VOLUME 1 / 2017

Topic of the Year: Small but Kind of Mighty

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Italian public archaeology on fieldwork: an overview

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Abstract

In recent years, Italian field archaeology has displayed a growing interest in civic engagement. Several ongoing excavation projects have shown both benefits and drawbacks of developing a closer collaboration with non-archaeologists. Through creative and original public outreach activities they have certainly succeeded in reaching different audiences, but problems still remain: there is neither a shared methodology, nor a solid academic background and debate. Is there such a thing, thus, as Italian public archaeology? This paper addresses this crucial question by looking closely at a variety of outreach activities developed by a few Italian excavation projects, and contextualizing them in the framework of public archaeology studies from a global perspective.

Keywords

 *Public archaeology, Italy, field archaeology, excavation, outreach activities.*

Introduction

In 2009, Chiara Bonacchi stated that Italy was experiencing a progressive diffusion of scientific and professional activities aimed at promoting a dialogue between archaeology and the public, both at a practical and at a theoretical level. She used the term '*Archeologia pubblica*' (literally 'public archaeology') for the first time in an academic publication and argued that the Italian experience should be seen within the theoretical framework of the recently established sector of public archaeology studies (Bonacchi 2009, p. 329). Furthermore, she identified museums as potentially privileged contexts in which Italian Public Archaeology could engage audiences in the following years, by developing new forms of archaeological communication (Bonacchi 2009, pp. 341-345).

Seven years later, her predictions have become an assorted reality. While many archaeological museums are moving towards more engaging strategies of communication, they still have difficulties in involving their audiences actively (i.e. De Biase & Valentino 2016).

Archeologia pubblica is not yet an academic sub-discipline, even though great strides have been made toward establishing it as an essential part of contemporary archaeological debate. A workshop and two meetings on this topic have been organised so far: the workshop *Archeologia Pubblica in Toscana: un progetto e una proposta*, was held in Florence in 2010 (Vannini 2011); whereas the *First Italian Congress on Public Archaeology*, held in Florence in 2012 (a descriptive review in Zuanni 2013) was followed by the conference *Public Archaeology in a time of crisis* held in Agrigento in 2013 (Parello & Rizzo 2014a). Together with the collection of papers *Public Archaeology in Europe*, published in 2012 in the *European Journal of Post-Classical Archaeologies* (Brogiolo

2012) and the paper *Archeologia pubblica e archeologia medievale*, published in 2014 in *Archeologia Medievale* (Vannini, Nucciotti & Bonacchi 2014), these *symposia* were the first initiatives expressly organized in order to initiate a scholarly debate about Italian public archaeology.

In these venues, several crucial issues surrounding public archaeology have been discussed for the first time: for example, the intersection between archaeology, politics and policies, heritage education, cultural heritage management, cultural identity, public engagement and outreach. However, the congress and the collection of papers focused mainly on the aspects of conservation and state-led archaeology, while the conference concerned itself mostly with the relationship between the 'public' (intended as 'the people') and the archaeological heritage (Bonacchi 2013, pp. 212-214). Some distinctive contexts (such as museums and archaeological areas) and some particular points of views (i.e. the role of the archaeologists, the history of legislation, issues of economics, communication and heritage education etc.) were the main themes related to public archaeology studies. Only a few times public archaeology was mentioned in terms of fieldwork (e.g. Corrado 2014).

In 2015, the handbook *Archeostorie* was launched (Dal Maso & Ripanti 2015). *Archeostorie* was designed to inform archaeology students about the potential opportunities opened up by the profession, providing a window into the daily lives of archaeologists in Italy. Thirty-four professionals gathered to share their experience with the world. In occasion of the about twenty book presentation events all over Italy, the author of this paper (who edited the handbook with Cinzia Dal Maso) witnessed the spreading interest in public archaeology issues in many universities. Some of the stories included in the book have inspired a deep debate on the current relationship between Italian archaeology and society.

In parallel with these initiatives, and at a fast pace of evolution, a growing awareness that a more mature dialogue between archaeology and the public is necessary is apparently

finding a breeding ground in excavation research projects. The amount of activities aiming to engage the audience, organised by archaeologists during the excavation seasons, is growing at an unexpected pace year after year (as attested in a recent overview published in *Forma Urbis* 2016). Since a similar wave of public-oriented outreach activities in Italian field archaeology is unprecedented, the aim of this paper is to bring this phenomenon into focus and ultimately to contextualize it in the framework of public archaeology studies from a global perspective.

Public archaeology and fieldwork

Before entering the Italian panorama, it is necessary to point out briefly why field archaeology fits into the study of the relationship between archaeology and the public, and how it can support its organisation and evolution.

The essential principle is that "the objectives, the stratigraphy and the social context where field archaeologists work always differ, everytime and everywhere" (Carver 2011, p. 35). In a certain period and in a well-defined social context, the field team carries out a research project, which takes place at a unique juncture. What characterises each single juncture is a series of complex processes, always in evolution year after year and different from place to place. The relationship with the public is part of these complex processes.

In the majority of cases, during the first excavation campaigns the field team does not have an accurate knowledge of the area where the excavation takes place. Except for the scope of the research and its main partners, archaeologists cannot imagine *a priori* how to include the public in the project design. They need to think about the best ways to approach people if they want to justify their work within government's political agendas (Simpson & Williams 2006, p. 87), especially when one of their main goals is attempting to raise public interest – in its different meanings (Little & Zimmerman 2010).

One of the most distinguishing features of field archaeology is perhaps its aptitude for

developing a one-to-one approach especially with local communities. Fieldwork is a privileged place for raising the interest of citizens in research and in their own past. Archaeologists should always talk in person with visitors to their sites, answer their questions and show the recent progress. The one-to-one approach is crucial to establishing a durable relationship with a specific community, and to becoming part of its daily life in the short period of an excavation season.

A generic example of the fruitful interrelationships that archaeologists may develop with the communities in whose territory they work, is the interaction that could be developed in the case of a new and unexpected find, an occurrence often difficult to manage by the field team. In addition, during the excavation, archaeologists could ask the community for help in terms of materials, services or craftsmanship. During and after the excavation, outreach and engagement activities may help develop relationships with various audiences: children could be made aware of the new find with a series of didactic labs; adults could take part in guided tours and be ambassadors for the search of funds, necessary for the protection and the promotion of the discovery. After the excavation, the local community could keep in touch with the archaeologists and inform them of potential problems or situations that require their involvement (i.e. vandalism or looting).

In sum, the crucial notion that links fieldwork and public archaeology is 'action.' Fieldwork is where and when archaeology is in action: "practice is the process of relationship between theory and data" (Lucas 2001, p. 10).

Similarly, Okamura and Matsuda conceived public archaeology "as a dynamic endeavour, which consists of an ever-evolving two-stage cycle comprising both research and action" (Okamura & Matsuda 2011, p. 4). Thus, research is the counterpart of action; consequently, action may be defined as an essential element, in public archaeology no less than in field archaeology.

Archaeological fieldwork involve a high number of carefully organized and sequenced

actions; each stage in the sequence is potentially an opportunity to involve members of the communities in the projects. These are the first steps to take, in order to increase the commitment of archaeologists towards their audiences, and to inspire new forms of engagement and new objectives to achieve.

Italian public archaeology on fieldwork: an overview

Acquiring data: finding the excavation projects on the web

Table 1 represents a shortlist of ten excavation projects that state to do activities with the public. They are unevenly distributed across the Italian peninsula (Figure 1): the most aggregated group is situated in a small area of Tuscany; another more scattered group is located in southern Italy. The shortlist is the result of an online search, much as it would be carried out by an average web user looking for ongoing excavation projects.

The research has been twofold. The first step consisted in a web-based research conducted via the principal search engines (Google and Bing) and web-listening aggregators (Semrush, SocialMention and Google Trends).

The keywords that were used (chosen to represent as closely as possible the perspective of an average web user) are:

- ◆ 'scavo archeologico + aperto al pubblico' (archaeological excavation + open to the public);
- ◆ 'scavo archeologico + aperto + pubblico' (archaeological excavation + open + public);
- ◆ 'sito archeologico + aperto al pubblico' (archaeological site + open to the public);
- ◆ 'sito archeologico + aperto + pubblico' (archaeological site + open + public)
- ◆ 'scavo archeologico + aperto + attività per il pubblico' (archaeological excavation + open + activities for the public)
- ◆ 'scavo archeologico + archeologia pubblica' (archaeological excavation + public archaeology).

Results are very disappointing: the majority of the searches does not match the requested

terms, showing no results, or results not relevant for the research. Only some Google queries on 'scavo archeologico + aperto al pubblico' and 'scavo archeologico + archeologia pubblica' showed three diagnostic results (the *Scavo della Terramara di Pilastrì* website for the first search string, and the *Uomini e cose a Vignale* and *Aquinum* websites for the second

search string).

The second step consisted in a social media-based research. On Facebook, using the keywords 'archeologia,' 'scavi archeologici' and 'area archeologica' yields a considerable number of Page results (respectively 70, 18 and 95), although these are not diagnostic.

Project	Starting date	Description	Main portal
Miranduolo	2001	Archaeological excavation of the castle of Miranduolo (Chiusdino - SI, Tuscany). Main Promoter: Università di Siena	http://archeologiamedievale.unisi.it/miranduolo
Uomini e cose a Vignale	2004	Archaeological excavation of the Roman farm, posting station and villa of Vignale (Piombino - LI, Tuscany). Main Promoter: Università di Siena, Comune di Piombino	http://www.uominiecoseavignale.it
Apolline Project	2004	Multidisciplinary research project aiming to investigate the ancient territories of Neapolis (Napoli/Naples), Nola, and the wider landscape of the North Slope of Mt. Vesuvius. Main Promoters: Comune di Pollena Trocchia, Università Suor Orsola Benincasa Federico II, University of Oxford.	http://www.apollineproject.org
Progetto Satrianum	2006	Archaeological investigations in the medieval fortified settlement of Satrianum (PZ, Basilicata). Main Promoter: Università della Basilicata - Sede di Matera, Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni Archeologici	http://www2.unibas.it/ssa/index.php/it/torre-di-satriano
Poggio del Molino	2008	Archaeological excavation of the Roman settlement of Poggio del Molino in the territory of Populonia (Piombino - LI, Tuscany). Main promoters: Archeodig project, Università di Firenze	http://www.archeodig.com
Aquinum	2009	Archaeological excavation of the Roman city of Aquinum (Castrocielo - FR, Lazio). Main Promoter: Università del Salento	https://aquinum.wordpress.com
Siligo	2011	Archaeological excavation of the rural settlement of Bidda Noa, in the area of the medieval and postmedieval village of Villanova Montesanto (Siligo, SS, Sardinia). Main Promoters: Università di Sassari, Comune di Siligo	https://www.facebook.com/SiligoLiveArchaeology
Rada di Portoferraio	2012	Archaeological excavation of San Giovanni (LI, Tuscany), a Roman farm dated about 100 BC situated in the eastern side of the inlet of Portoferraio, on Elba Island. Main Promoter: Università di Siena	https://www.facebook.com/ScavoSanGiovanni
Terramara di Pilastrì	2013	Archaeological excavation of the Middle and Late Bronze Age settlement of a Terramara (Bondeno - FE, Emilia Romagna). Main Promoter: Soprintendenza archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Bologna e le province di Modena, Reggio Emilia e Ferrara, Comune di Bondeno	http://www.terramarapilastrì.com
Salapia	2014	Archaeological excavation of the Roman city of Salapia (Trinitapoli - BT, Puglia). Main Promoter: Università di Foggia, Davidson College	https://www.facebook.com/progettosalapia

Tab. 1. Shortlist of the Italian excavation projects doing public outreach activities.

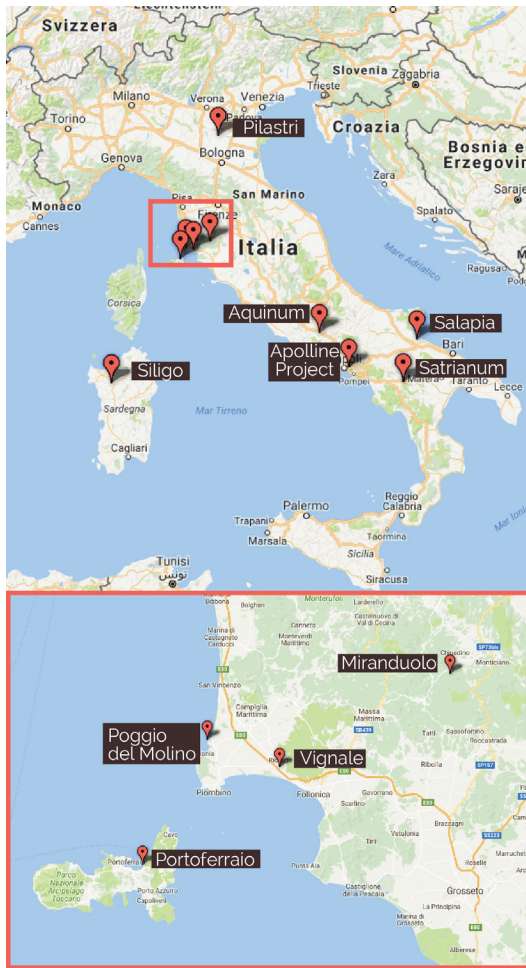


Fig. 1. Distribution map of the research projects.

They do not refer directly to the pages of the excavation projects, but to other pages related to archaeology. The only way to find archaeological excavations on Facebook is to open their social media profiles starting from the links on their websites.

This kind of searches suggested that Italian excavation projects websites are not well indexed from a Search Engine Optimization point of view. When testing our keywords on a tool as Keyword Rank Checker of Small SEO Tools (2016), these results were confirmed: it is not possible to find these websites in the first page of results on Google.it if we do not know the exact name of the projects. We can say the same about Facebook, where the Pages of the

excavation projects listed do not use the same category. Only after in-depth web research, it has been possible to find the excavation projects listed.

Overview

It is quite difficult to analyse the different ways in which excavation projects are developing activities aimed at involving public; in most cases, it is not possible to trace a specific development process.

In order to trace the outlines of this evolving phenomenon, this paper will describe the main standard outreach activities, grouping them by specific typologies of action aimed to connect archaeology with its audiences. Each typology arises from an analysis on the website/social media profiles of the projects with the aim of listing and organising all the activities promoted.

All projects surveyed started a dialogue with the public, proposing outreach and engagement activities both offline (on site) and online. Since there are few scholarly analyses and the absence of data compounds on these activities, this paper will privilege a survey of the common features among projects rather than in-depth scrutiny of each. The various case studies differ significantly: for example, some projects repeat their activities more times in every excavation season; in other cases, a specific initiative is carried out just once.

Guided Tours

Almost all projects examined propose guided tours of the excavation site: in some cases, for example in the Late Antique / Early Middle Ages site of Siligo (Sardinia), tours are scheduled daily at a fixed time; in other cases, for instance in the Medieval fortified settlement of Satrianum (Basilicata), tours are condensed in an open day at the conclusion of the excavation season (Figure 2a).

Guided tours are the first essential step to take, in order to establish a relationship with the local community. Residents can discover the site where the research takes place, and they can meet and know better the archaeologists who work there.

Didactic activities

Didactic activities have always had an important position in Italian archaeology, mainly in museums and in archaeological parks (i.e. Maggi 2008). Children attending primary and secondary school go to the site, or in a separated area near the site, to make some experiences in labs, usually related to the job of the archaeologist or to some typical features of the population who used to live in the site.

An example of the former model is the *Salapia Open Lab* (Figure 2b): in the 2016 excavation season of the Roman city of Salapia, in Apulia, archaeologists have opened their labs to the public and have involved children in activities with pottery and various materials.

An example of the latter model is a lab organised by Bondeno Cultura, an association managing outreach activities at the excavation of Terramara di Pilastri. In *Dall'uovo al... colore* (From egg... to colour), 10-years-old children paint subjects inspired by the Bronze Age period on wooden tablets with mineral colours (*Didattica - Culture Keys* 2016).

The frequency of these didactic activities greatly varies in the excavation projects listed, usually depending on the space available and on the number of archaeologists involved. In some cases, didactic labs are carried out only on specific days; in others, classes go to the site every day, and calendars of activities are available in advance.

Dedicated events

For the purpose of this paper, 'dedicated events' means site-based, complex initiatives involving other partners in addition to archaeologists.

A good example is *Una notte romana a Vignale* (A Roman night at Vignale, Figure 2c), an event carried out on 26th September 2014 in the archaeological site of Vignale (Tuscany). There, archaeologists and actors of a local theatre company performed stories documented by the dig and literary sources, set both in the posting station and in the Roman villa excavated in the previous years. After the performance, a local hunters association organised a dinner with traditional dishes (more

details in Mariotti, Marotta & Ripanti 2016).

Another example is the participation of the excavation project at Poggio del Molino in the sport event *Outdoor Sports Festival*, held on 4th June 2016 at Populonia (Tuscany). A visit to the Roman villa was the final step of an archaeological hiking through the areas of major interests in the Gulf of Baratti. have managed these multi-level initiatives effectively. The participation of Poggio del Molino in the *Outdoor Sports Festival* also shows the interest that the project elicits with communities living in or passing through the area.

Dedicated projects

For the purpose of this paper, 'dedicated projects' means projects resulting from a formalized and continuous partnership between archaeologists and some external institutions.

A good example of a dedicated project may be found in the collaboration between the archaeologists of the cultural association Bondeno Cultura and the social enterprise 'IAL' based in Ferrara, in the Terramara di Pilastri excavation. From November 2015 to May 2016, archaeologists have held lessons at school, and organised activities designed to familiarize the students with the different aspects of the archaeological site, such as daily life of the ancient inhabitants, the ancient production technologies and the archaeologist's work. The result of this collaboration is a short book edited by the school, where students described their experience (Boschetti & Tassi 2016, p. 64).

Another example is the partnership of Poggio del Molino with the American NGO Earthwatch Institute. The collaboration started in 2007 and consists in the involvement of 'citizen-scientists' both in the funding of the research and in the actual digging on the site, as non-specialist personnel working side-by-side with archaeologists and students (Figure 2d). People who are interested pay a fee in order to take part in the excavation and thus contribute to the continuation of the research (Megale 2015, pp. 149-152).



Fig. 2a to 2f. Guided Tours: an open day at the conclusion of the excavation season: the example of Satrianum [a]. Didactic Activities: Salapia Open Lab, an example of involving children in some activities with pottery and various materials [b]. Dedicated Events: a site-based, articulated initiative with archaeologists and other partners involved, "Una Notte Romana a Vignale" [c]. Dedicated Projects: an archaeologist shows some bones to an American volunteer at Area Archeologica di Poggio del Molino [d]. Outreach Management Activities: "History from the Earth", a recent project carried out by Muovimenti, the association that manages the outreach activities at Vignale [e]. Online Communication: an example of direct interaction between real and online activities in Aquinum, take and share your photos [f].

Collaborations of this kind can only occur, if since the project design phase, the public inclusion is consistent. Archaeologists should increase the awareness about what they are really doing, calculating the need for data collection about the impact of the research on different types of audiences.

Managing outreach activities

Excavation projects increasingly value outreach activities. A sign is the bestowal of their management to some cultural association deeply rooted in the area where the dig is situated. Usually, the main efforts of such associations are directed to organising didactic labs and dedicated events. But they often also deal with logistics, for instance providing board and lodging for the archaeologists.

Most associations were founded expressly by archaeologists when the outreach activities on site needed a more specific organisation behind the scenes. Muovimenti is an example of this kind: founded in Siena when the relationship with the public on the site of Vignale was stable and constant, it manages the outreach activities on the excavations of Vignale and Salapia. Like other associations, Muovimenti gained visibility thanks to its work on the site of Vignale and, after some time, managed to develop shared projects with some local institutions. In March 2015, for instance, it carried out the project *Storie dalla terra* (Histories from the earth) together with a game room in Venturina (Figure 2e), a small town near Vignale ("*Storie dalla terra*" alla ludoteca di Venturina 2015). At present, it is running a project with a

local high school funded by the Ministry of Education, University and Research.

On the contrary, Lestrigonia, the association that works in Aquinum (Lazio), was founded just before the first year of the excavation, - it runs several projects, and, starting from 2015, it also organises events in the Roman city (*Lestrigonia Home Page* 2016).

Online communication

Online communication has been an essential part of the process that has brought these excavation projects closer to the public.

In 2009, Miranduolo was the first, trail-blazing dig to use the Web with the purpose of sharing the daily excavation activity, mainly directed to other archaeologists. It was a sort of 'live excavation,' as Valenti called it (Valenti 2012, p. 48). The documentation was entirely uploaded on the website and accessible to everyone (*Scavo del Castello di Miranduolo* 2016); Facebook was used as a real-time diary with debates and reflections on daily work (Isabella 2012).

In 2011, Uomini e cose a Vignale started *Excava(c)tion*, an integrated approach to fieldwork, that included its account and its dissemination among the public in several venues, comprehending social media (Costa & Ripanti 2013). Archaeologists shared their work with the public in the form of guided tours and theatrical-like performances on site, with narrative diaries, videos on a blog (*Uomini e cose a Vignale Home Page* 2016) and on social media.

Since 2013 there has been a marked shift. Examples of excavations engaged in activities with the public have rapidly multiplied as online communication turned into a trend. Many research projects have opened social media accounts and websites, which increased their visibility and public awareness. In most cases, the creation of social accounts was directly related to the start of activities on fieldwork. Online communication has often been set with the main goal of promoting events. Most of the projects started to have a more structured web presence only in 2013 and 2014.

Not all the excavations listed have a website,

but all of them have at least a Facebook Fan Page. The frequency and tone of communications, as well as the kind of audience to reach and the contents shared may differ, depending on the case. Some projects focus on updates on daily work for other archaeologists (i.e. Miranduolo and Siligo); others have an intermediate register (i.e. Rada di Portoferraio and Progetto Satrionum) or rely on irony, creativity, images and written texts with the aim of involving various kinds of public (i.e. Aquinum and Uomini e cose a Vignale).

Aquinum has been one of the first sites to promote a direct interaction between real and online activities, allowing visitors to take photos on site and to share their own pics on social networks (Figure 2f). Another example of this kind of interaction is the initiative *Ecce Vesuvius*, promoted by the Apolline Project (*Concorso Ecce Vesuvius!* 2015). It consisted in a contest for children living in the province of Naples: they were asked to draw a daily life scene set in their territory, 2000 years ago. The drawings have been published on the Facebook Fan Page of the project, and a jury declared three winners awarding them three prizes: book vouchers of 100 euros each.

The rapid spreading of online communication on excavations has helped to develop this new kind of approach towards the public and a new perception of the role of archaeologists in society.

The Italian way: some thoughts on the overview

The shortlist analysis confirms that the Italian approach to public archaeology on fieldwork is punctuated. There has undoubtedly been a quite recent and radical change in attitude: the number of excavation projects that meet the challenge of public archaeology is rapidly increasing. As the analysis has shown, there is a great variety of activities offered to the public, and much more attention is paid to their arrangement. An increasing number of archaeologists has come to think that research is only the first product of their work, not the only one. They are starting to think that it is important to make visible and accessible

beyond the academic context the research they are carrying out, and they are trying to do so in innovative ways. If we intend public archaeology in its more generic definition, “as a commitment made by archaeologists to making archaeology more relevant to contemporary society” (Okamura & Matsuda 2011, p. 4), we may confidently affirm that we are starting to notice commitment.

Although they may vary greatly from one another, all initiatives surveyed above may be conceived as attempts to establish a relationship with the communities. Archaeologists use their creativity and take advantage of the peculiar features of their last discovery, using its announcement to create a specific outreach activity. They act on their ability to operate in harmony with others and prove their skills in forging relationships with outsiders, looking together for sustainable solutions.

The public outreach activities usually proposed are held just once or twice per excavation season and are a result of a positive improvisation of personal initiatives, often stimulated and helped by favourable situations in the single excavation season. Only in some cases, public outreach activities are part of an actual calendar of events planned at the beginning of the work. When a calendar is used, it suggests that a change in attitude has taken place, one that has at the very least legitimized the presence of these activities in the research project design – little or no critical reflections have been offered, however, so far.

We can provisionally try to frame the above-described Italian way from a global public archaeology point of view, as theorised by Okamura & Matsuda (2011, pp. 1-10). Adopting a global point of view is essential, because ‘public’ and ‘archaeology’ have different meanings in different cultures and countries. Developing under the influence of different theories, socio-political conditions, and history, public archaeology has evolved neither uniformly nor equally across the world. Only by adopting this perspective, we are able to examine the extent to which this subject has become familiar to archaeologists and to understand how it has been accepted in each

local context or country (i.e. Muraki 2011). Starting from the premise that there are many ways in which public archaeology is conceived, depending on the country being considered, we can go deeper, trying to analyse the Italian way in terms of the approaches (Table 2) outlined by Merriman (2004, pp. 5-8) and Holtorf (2007, pp. 114-119), and re-arranged by Okamura and Matsuda (Okamura & Matsuda 2011, pp. 6-7).

It is an easy task. The prevailing model expresses how archaeology operates and is situated in each society. Looking at the shortlist, the Italian public archaeology is surely more practice-oriented: all the excavation projects described so far give priority to practical activities over theoretical strategies of involvement. Italian public archaeology is mainly designed to inform the public, with the aim of making archaeology significant (education model in Holtorf 2007; part of the deficit model in Merriman 2004) and to “improve the public image of archaeology to encourage more social, economic and political support to it” (public relations model, in Holtorf 2007; part of the deficit model in Merriman 2004).

The education model is a widespread approach, almost innate in the Italian attitude. In the great majority of the projects, didactic activities and guided tours with more or less articulated proposals are offered; similarly, contents shared online inform the public about the archaeologists’ point of view.

The collaboration between excavations and associations, as stated previously, should be looked at positively also from the point of view of the education model. The involvement of children, as well as adults, in more organised outreach activities is designed to make archaeology part of their daily lives.

The public relations model is the root both of the dedicated events and of the dedicated projects. Most of these activities would not have been organised in the absence of other factors, such as the active involvement of local associations, fund-raising efforts, and political support. With this kind of events, archaeologists also ask the community for support and, by doing so, they involve their

members. The spirit of initiative is contagious, because archaeology matters. Those projects that carry out dedicated events and dedicated projects manage to establish a network of well-structured relationships in the territory. And the effort to enhance the public image of a project proved to be very important and profitable for fieldwork activity as well.

Both these two models share the same status: they are top-down, i.e information flows from archaeology to people, with little - or no exchange of views. Archaeologists decide the activities and the kind of involvement to prioritise. The projects listed are all situated in this frame: however, it is difficult to understand the direction they are taking. First in the *First Italian Congress on Public Archaeology* and then, even more directly, during the conference *Public Archaeology in a time of crisis*, a specific Italian objective has been pointed out. In addition to producing scientific results, thus furthering academic research, an archaeological project should contribute to the cultural development of the community and the economic development of the territory (Bonacchi 2014, p. 20). Some well-framed projects, as the Parco della Valle dei Templi of Agrigento and the Archeodromo of Poggibonsi, started moving toward this objective (Parello & Rizzo 2014b, Valenti 2016).

However, as far as excavation projects are concerned, so far the most discussed topic has been the sustainability of research rather than an effective strategy of cultural and economic development (see Belford 2014 for an international perspective and Anichini et al. 2015 for Italy).

Conclusion

In recent years, Italian field archaeology showed a growing interest in civic engagement. Thanks to several public outreach activities, repeated many times in different ways and directed to various kinds of audiences, the excavation sites in which these initiatives occurred have become sort of laboratories where archaeologists test the benefits and the drawbacks of developing a closer collaboration with non-archaeologists.

So far, not only creativity and originality have characterized these initiatives, but also a high dose of improvisation and scarce planning. In Italy there is neither a shared methodology, nor a solid academic background and debate in public archaeology.

Then, can we speak of an Italian public archaeology? Public archaeology is not only practice: it's also strategy, planning, debate, vision, a long journey that archaeologists should take together with non-specialists. The attitude has changed, we have seen this, giving rise to a widespread commitment.

Italian public archaeology lives a period of innocence, and the success of several experiences is perhaps overly relying on favourable situations and personal initiatives. The lack in critical reflection, in method, in visitor studies and in evaluation of activities risks constricting the commitment toward the public within the confines of empiricism, condemning it to be a mere practice. The only published research in Italy regarding an analysis of the public on fieldwork has been carried out by Matsuda in *Somma Vesuviana* in 2004 (Matsuda 2011). Archaeologists need to know their audiences, they have to know if people want to be involved and how they want to be

	More practice-oriented		More theory-oriented	
Corresponding model suggested by Okamura and Matsuda (2011)	Educational approach	Public Relations approach	Critical approach	Multivocal approach
Corresponding model suggested by Merriman (2004)	Deficit model		Multiple Perspective model	
Corresponding model suggested by Holtorf (2007)	Educational model	Public Relations model	Democratic model	

Tab. 2. The different approaches to public archaeology as outlined by Okamura & Matsuda (2011, p.6).

involved; what they could do for research and why; how much time they could spend on it. These and other questions should be answered if archaeologists want to know how much time to dedicate to public archaeology and if they want to set real objectives that might lead into the right direction. Qualitative and quantitative analyses are priorities in the research agenda. If we want to delineate some trends, data need to be published and compared at a national level.

Before anything else, however, Italian archaeologists need to expand the ways of dealing with public archaeology to theory-oriented models. These models give the public a major role, so that a more significant overlap of the local community and the community of archaeologists becomes possible, with the ensuing mutually beneficial social, educational and economic interactions (Faulkner 2000; Moshenska & Dhanjal 2012, pp. 2-3). Some excavation projects are moving in this direction, with some critical reflections (i.e. see Osti et al. in this volume). However, if we really wish to increase the overall quality of Italian public archaeology, this needs to become an academic sub-discipline soon.

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