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Topic of the Year: Small but Kind of Mighty

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Disciplinary *locus* and professional *habitus*: the roles of Researcher and Discipline within the socio-political and cultural domains

Massimiliano Secci

Independent Researcher | ✉ massimiliano.secci.ms@gmail.com**Abstract**

Archaeology is a valuable discipline, both in what regards the ability to create historical knowledge and the potential to participate in contemporary socio-cultural dynamics in place. On a disciplinary level, archaeology has already produced steps towards inclusiveness, participation, collaboration and sharing, with two disciplinary approaches known under the names of Public Archaeology and Community Archaeology. Nonetheless, for these approaches to be truly effective, the disciplinary predisposition needs to go hand in hand with a 'new' intellectual approach of the researcher-archaeologist. The present paper wishes to put forward some considerations on the disciplinary locus and professional habitus which, in conjunction, allow to build solid and positive bases for a more inclusive, democratic, participative and dialogical archaeology, which could definitively be more effective on the socio-cultural ground. The disciplinary domain (locus) and the researcher's praxis are examined by attempting to stress the required active intellectual exercise - based on the conceptualization of the intellectual given by Antonio Gramsci - which could make archaeological activities effective in devising hypotheses and pursuing a common "intellectual and moral direction." A combination of sociological, anthropological and pedagogical ideas are framed within what can be called the professional habitus, in order to provide some food for thought in approaching archaeology and, particularly, the fields of Public and Community Archaeology.

Keywords

 *Disciplinary locus, professional habitus, community archaeology, public archaeology, intellectual archaeologist, sociation.*

Introduction

George S. Smith and John E. Ehrenhard (2002, p. 123) stress that, while archaeological research allows to apprehend cultural modifications on a wide scale, "as in politics, all archaeology is [primarily] local." Following this assumption, as it happens with politics, archaeology primarily finds itself confronting issues and responding for its activities on a local scale. As politics - in the understanding of the term given by Aristotle with *Τα Πολιτικά*, that is, the administration of the affairs regarding the *πόλις*, hence the community of citizens identifying themselves with the *πόλις* - appears connected to the achievement of the common good (*utilitas publica*), similarly archaeological research appears strictly stretched towards the achievement of the *utilitas publica* (Settis 2010). However, as it happened in the *πόλις* par excellence, Athens, in its fullest magnificence, where the efforts towards this aim couldn't be understood if not framed within a democratic participation in the administration of

the public asset, similarly the management of cultural heritage cannot be fully and positively achieved without a generalized, inclusive and participative effort. A commitment where all stances can find a voice and the ability to express themselves, without excluding any voice but, on the contrary, by promoting a wide and inclusive debate which could elicit, *ab imis fundamentis*, an increased knowledge of the past, foster awareness on cultural heritage issues and produce a generalized cultural growth that could grant advancements and developments on the socio-cultural and economic ground.

In order to achieve such goals, some modifications appear necessary, both in terms of the disciplinary approaches to the study of the past, and in terms of the connection of the researcher's efforts to research as well as to the socio-cultural scene where the latter is produced. To say it in a schematic way, it appears essential to modify both the disciplinary *locus* - that is, the general framework and the philosophy that lie behind the development of archaeology - and the professional *habitus*, that is, the theoretical, philosophical basis and the *praxis* that define the conduct of the archaeologist. The concept of *habitus* proposed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1990) is brilliantly defined by Chris Gosden (1999, p. 177) as the set of understandings of the world upon which we elaborate judgments that help us unravel human hardships. In this endeavour, the *habitus* is not a static but rather an organic reality, continuously modified along a lifespan (either individual or disciplinary), as the relations between individuals and groups continuously change.

To explicit the idea proposed throughout the present paper, as the disciplinary *locus* evolves and modifies as time goes by, the professional *habitus* needs to follow these evolutions, both potentially and positively stimulated by the interaction between the discipline and the outside world. In this direction, the present paper aims to introduce a series of considerations that could act as - in a general and preliminary fashion - parameters within which the disciplinary *locus* and professional

habitus could develop, and attempts to combine the appropriate scientific approach with an active adhesion of archaeology to the socio-cultural dynamics in place.

The disciplinary *locus*: archaeology framed within the contemporary socio-cultural ground

The crisis of modernity, variously analysed by historians, sociologists and psychologists, has created a social scenario where the ever-faster transfer of ideas, products and people, gives rise to social dynamics variously defined as post-modern (Lyotard 1979) and/or multicultural (Habermas 1996; Taylor 1992). The disenchanted flow of information facilitated by the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and migration movements larger and faster than in the past, create a dynamic and sudden disequilibrium in the order developed during the modern era when the representations of social life were grounded on 'great narratives' (Bauman 2000). Conversely, with the crisis of modernity and the advent of the 'liquid modernity' theorized by the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2000), the 'great projects' have been replaced by a pragmatism consecrated to 'individual accounts' regarded as helpful to concretely and practically answer the struggles of the individual. In such a frame the age of crisis - but it should be better named 'age of change and transition' - represented by 'liquid modernity' finds individuals still lacking the set of competences, principles and abilities that could help them confront the challenges of life (in this regard see Nussbaum 2011).

Within this dynamic context, two archaeological approaches have tried, on the one hand to develop a major connection between archaeology and the social environment, and on the other to foster a more active involvement - a civic engagement - of the citizens in the process of research: *Public Archaeology* (PA) and *Community Archaeology* (CA). Regarding the former, within the well known volume *Public Archaeology*, Charles R. McGimsey III (1972, p. 5; see also McGimsey & Davis 1977; Merriman 2004a) states that there is no 'public archaeology' opposed to

'private archaeology', as "no individual may act in a manner such that the public right to knowledge is unduly endangered or destroyed." If the definition of PA proposed by McGimsey is contextualized within a meta-structure of archaeology developed by public institutions and with public funding, in the attempt to elaborate a management program for the protection of the archaeological heritage highly endangered by the economic boom and infrastructural developments (Schadla-Hall 1999, p. 148), successive advancements starting from the 1980s and 1990s - as specified by John Jameson Jr. (2004) - produced a transfer of significance, identifying PA with what elsewhere is termed "*educational archaeology*" (Stone & Molyneaux 1994; Smardz & Smith 2000; see also McManamon & Hutton 2000; Merriman 2004b), "*public interpretation of archaeology*" (Jameson 1997; Jameson & Baugher 2007; Little 2002; see also Merriman 2004b) or again "*public outreach of archaeology*" (Spirek & Scott-Ireton 2003; Jameson & Scott-Ireton 2007).

The philosophy at the basis of PA lies on some fundamental assumptions that could be schematically synthesized as follows:

1. archaeology represents an activity developed under the auspices and in favour of the public sphere (Habermas 1962);
2. the final aim of archaeology - as a humanistic science - is to contribute to cultural growth and to enhance the understanding of humanity as well as to elevate the socio-cultural environment where it develops its activities;
3. therefore, archaeology's founding goals are to reconstruct the past and to share the acquired knowledge in the present cultural ground, in order to inspire a generalized cultural growth;
4. the acquisition or strengthening of a real value for archaeology in society, moves from the understanding by the public of what archaeology 'produces' and for the value of such 'production' for humankind (see Moshenska & Dhanjal 2011a;

particularly the introduction Moshenska & Dhanjal 2011b, and the paper by Henson 2011).

Since the 1960s, the neo-positivistic thrust of the *New Archaeology*, i.e. the search for an objectivity in the discipline's activity and the subduction of archaeological practice to archaeological theory, generated a marked detachment between the theoretical and the fieldwork archaeologist. In contrast, since the 1980s the influence of the Frankfurt School (and the so-called *Critical Theory*) produced a profound analysis of archaeological approaches. Michael Shanks and Randall McGuire (1996, p. 78) stress how the disorientation of the scholar following the separation between theory and practice could be overtaken once archaeology is seen as a craft; if the "craft is productive work for a purpose: it is utilitarian, and avoids a separation of reasoning from the execution of a task. Craft is holistic," and "a craft of archaeology manufactures archaeological knowledge," while "archaeologists craft facts out of a chaotic welter of conflicting and confused observations." Assuming that archaeological knowledge is produced and not discovered, the purpose of the craft of the archaeologist is to integrate his/her actions in the present scene as a fruitful activity for cultural development, and "most important aspect of archaeological craft: our obligation to take responsibility for what we do and produce. A craft archaeology cannot hide its interests behind the notion of knowledge for its own sake, detached from the needs and interests of contemporary communities" (Shanks & McGuire 1996, pp. 85-86; see also Schiffer 1988, pp. 478-479; Clarke 1973; Bourdieu 1984). However, "[t]o conceive archaeology as craft is also to confirm the importance of theory, but not so much as an abstract model of procedure, belief, explanation, or description," but by "simply being reflective, applying critique (aesthetic, philosophical, ethical, political, whatever) to the practice at hand" (Shanks & McGuire 1996, p. 86). As Ian Hodder, Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley (Hodder 1992; Shanks & Tilley 1987a; 1987b), also Randall McGuire (2008) apparently supports the potential of

archaeology to acquire a perceived and direct value for society, but only if archaeological reconstructions are seen as thoroughly connected to the social context where they are temporarily and spatially located, and such interpretive and reconstructive activities are seen as a social and political practice (*praxis*).

Therefore, during the last two decades PA focused on the public implications of archaeological endeavours and on a greater involvement of communities in order to “empower the public to participate in the critical evaluations of historical and archaeological interpretations that are presented to them and to better understand how and why the past is relevant to the present” (Jameson 2004, p. 22; see also Jameson 1997). As a further step in this process, the last decades have seen the birth of a new disciplinary approach called *Community Archaeology* (CA). As Stephanie Moser and colleagues (Moser et al. 2002, p. 220; see also Moshenska & Dhanjal 2011b) specify, differently from the PA, CA should not be intended as a simple and sterile consultation with the community where the site is located, but rather “it goes far beyond that, incorporating a range of strategies designed to facilitate the involvement of local people in the investigation and interpretation of the past.” Illustrative experiences in this direction have been developed in the United States (McDavid 2002; 2004b), and in Australia (Field et al. 2000; Brady, David & Manas 2003; Greer 2010; Greer, Harrison & McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002).

Stephanie Moser and colleagues (Moser et al. 2002), in the frame of their *Community Archaeology Project at Quseir, Egypt* offer a series of theoretical and methodological considerations connected to the planning and implementation of a CA project, among which are: support processes of ‘*sociation*’ between archaeologists and community members; keep a presence in the area outside excavation seasons, in order to keep interest in the project alive; search for funding and resources to employ local residents; work towards *capacity building* in the area; and finally, maintain an archaeological collection in the area. Similarly, Randall McGuire (2008, p. xii) specifies how

“[f]or effective collaboration, however, we do need to enter into a dialogue with the communities that we work with and to surrender significant control over our research agenda.” For McGuire, this does not mean that the collaborative efforts require an abandonment of the needed professionalism and authority deriving from the specific qualifications. Conversely, opening up to collaboration goes hand in hand with the acknowledgment of the specific *intelligenzie* that derive from mastering the archaeological craft.

The experiences in Australia, United States and Egypt outline the potentialities on various levels of such approaches for the local communities: on the socio-cultural level, on the occupational level and, lastly, on the sustainability and economic development levels. The opportunities offered by such approaches, weighed and harmonized with the peculiar local contexts, nurture a socio-political action and promote the democratic potentials of archaeology (McDavid 2004a; 2004b; see also Hodder 1999; McDavid & Babson 1997; Meskell 1998; Schmidt & Patterson 1995; Merriman 2004a), on the assumption that the reconstruction of the past facilitates the engagement of the wider public, the inclusion of ‘multiple voices,’ in the ethical and deontological acknowledgment of the value and potentiality of our discipline to participate in building a better world starting, at least, from the local. Interesting in this direction is the volume *Community Archaeology. Themes, Methods and Practices* edited by Gabriel Moshenska and Sarah Dhanjal (2011a) where a series of themes central to CA are put forward and discussed by several contributors. Among these themes are: the problematic, unequivocal and definitive definition of who and what represents the ‘community’ concept (on this issue, interesting socio-anthropological analyses are available in Anderson 1983; Bauman 2001); how the interaction with the world outside archaeology inevitably brings along issues of politics and power; how the CA approach is strictly tied to aspects of education and social inclusion; and, definitively, how the efficacy of CA on the

short and, most particularly, on the long term (sustainability) is strictly tied to funding issues (see in particular Cole 2011; Hawken 2011; Knowles 2011; Simpson 2011; cfr. Simpson & Williams 2008). Also extremely important in these disciplinary exercises is the continuous evaluation of processes and activities *in situ*, in order to monitor their effectiveness and adjust them according to intervening modifications in the *status quo* of the project itself or of the socio-cultural background. In this direction, Faye Simpson and Howard Williams (2008) propose two possible methods for evaluating CA: one of self-reflexivity and one based on the ethno-archaeological analysis (see Simpson & Williams 2008, pp. 70-71 and 76-87).

Although the examples proposed here and much of the origins of CA are based and developed in post-colonial contexts, it seems hurried to label these approaches as practicable and effective solely in socio-cultural landscapes where descendant communities or groups are strictly tied and with a direct link to the cultural heritage and landscape. On the contrary, the cultural anthropology aspects touched by archaeological research and heritage are common to humankind and characterize the way human beings relate to periods of socio-cultural crisis, on whose I attempted to reflect upon elsewhere (Secci 2013; 2014).

The professional *habitus*: the role of the researcher within the contemporary social dynamics and the disciplinary *locus*

If the disciplinary *locus*, characterized by the approaches defined as PA and CA, contextualizes with full rights the methods, approaches, and philosophy that grant the archaeological discipline the ability to fully interact with the local socio-cultural *milieu*, in order for these activities to sort a full effect a different definition of the researcher's role is needed. The Californian archaeologist Brian Fagan (2006, p. 240) stresses how the frequently observable tendency of scholars to disdain and often scorn those disciplinary aspects they often consider optional and pointless - such as, for example, the educational and awareness

raising commitments, and even the openness to the public - is an "arrogant nonsense!" (Fagan 2006, p. 240), as the discipline cannot limit itself anymore to the traditional hierarchical value system "that considers research, excavation, new discoveries, and publication the pinnacle of achievement" (Fagan 2006, p. 239).

The *habitus* described by Brian Fagan - following the definition of *habitus* given by the French philosopher and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1990) - is likely to cause, or better, perpetrate a net and counter-productive dissociation between archaeology and the external world, between past and present, between the protection and conservation efforts and the instances linked to progress, between the ability of the past to serve as a guide for the future and the birth of myth-making processes, of the "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Anderson 1983), of extremisms related to the identity formulation (Remotti 1996; Sen 2006), and of those processes of individualization of the human experience (Bauman 2000) and of the "solitarist approach" to human identity and to social coexistence identified by Nobel Prize Amartya Sen (2006), all of which aspects are strongly perceived in distressed socio-cultural contexts and in periods of socio-economic crisis. Archaeology and the knowledge of the past have, in these spheres, the ability and obligation to act as intermediaries between the past and the present, between public and private stances, between individualistic and social instances - however not disjointed from one another (Carr 1961) - and to function as instruments for the "care for oneself (*epimeleia heautou*)" (Foucault 2001) and the development of those abilities, competences and aptitudes that allow the human being to build an individuality solid and functional to social and democratic experience (Nussbaum 2011). Such interaction cannot develop in a dogmatic and axiomatic way but it should propose itself as an interplay among different positions so that it is possible and therefore appropriate to find a balance. In such process, as the following lines attempt to show, the role and engagement of the researcher

is crucial. A century ago, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) advised of the risks inherent in lethargy, in letting it be and in the lack of interest, strongly concluding that “I hate the indifferent. I believe, as Frederick Hebbel did, that ‘living means being partisan.’ There cannot be men who are men alone and exist outside the city. To live means to be a citizen and to take part. Indifference is *aboulia*, is parasitism, is cowardice, it is not life. This is why I hate the indifferent” (author’s translation; Gramsci 2011a, p. 3). He asserted an active participation in the social and political life and the necessity to “build hypotheses” (Gramsci 2011a, p. 6) for a political, social and cultural growth aimed at creating a more democratic world. For Gramsci, the political analysis is not separated from the social and cultural aspects, conversely it is in a “philosophy of *praxis*,” that is, in a dialectical synthesis between theory and practice, in the “concrete action of the man who, on the basis of his own historical needs, acts and transforms reality” (author’s translation; Gramsci 1977, pp. 657-658 and 1598-1599). For the Sardinian intellectual, politics represents a *praxis* per se, since it means precisely to understand the world and attempt to change it. In this picture Gramsci develops and integrates the concept or, better, the function of the intellectual who acts as an integral part of a required equilibrium between “political society and civic society,” where “particularly operate the intellectuals” (Gramsci 2011b, p. 161; Hobsbawm 2011, pp. 315-333). Following the idea of Antonio Gramsci, everyone uses his own intellect and therefore “all men are intellectuals,” but “not all men have in society the function of intellectuals” (Gramsci 2007, p. 16; Hobsbawm 2011, p. 326).

As asserted in the introduction, archaeology is profoundly local. It has the capacity to unfold a profound political role, in the sense of the term given by Antonio Gramsci and, before him, by Aristotle. Archaeology and the intellectual function of the archaeologist have the power to contemporaneously enact the “hegemonic activity” - defined by Gramsci as the “intellectual and moral direction” - and to participate in creating and building hypotheses

(Gramsci 2007). The intellectual is the man who is capable of fusing together, in the *praxis* of his/her daily life, a change in the *status quo* and the representation of a different future, through a commitment that is strongly defined by its social and civic function. The intellectual is therefore contemporaneously a social actor and a cultural and ideological producer. In this picture, the intellectual community is characterized by a set of possibilities carried out by the intellectuals within and from within the social fabric through training and educational institutions that have the power to condense the instances of reaction to the *status quo* (Holub 1992). Therefore, the intellectual function can only be understood and produced in relation to the system, according to the terms through which the intellectual confronts the *status quo* where he/she operates. It is only through this relation that the role of the intellectual is fulfilled and can be fully understood as a ‘creative’ relation capable to frame a new view, a new ethic and a new *status quo*. After all, even Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Marx & Engels 1971) stressed how “philosophers have only interpreted the world differently; the point is, to change it.”

Regarding the archaeological domain, it is only through a paradigmatic change that the intellectual archaeologist can truly elaborate an “intellectual and moral direction” that could do justice of the role of archaeology in contemporary society, and structure a disciplinary *locus* that could do justice of the social and cultural role of the craft of archaeology (Shanks & McGuire 1996). In this framework the task of the archaeologist-intellectual is to work in the cultural and public opinion (Habermas 1962) domains, that is, in the social and political spheres. However, the dedication of the archaeologist-intellectual is not abstract, but it is only through an active participation in the socio-cultural dynamics that his/her intellectual activities can produce positive effects and have a share in making social life more democratic. To say it with a motto borrowed from Buddhist philosophy, the effect is the confirmation of the cause: the social effect is the confirmation of the

intellectual cause put in place by the “man who wants” (Weber 1922, p. 11). On this matter, for the archaeological domain, it is interesting the recommendation proposed by Carol McDavid (2011) for an intellectual who unfolds a “public service” in order to contribute in his specific way to the “collective *praxis*” in terms of a greater involvement on an individual as well as a disciplinary level within the contemporary socio-cultural and political panorama.

In this cadre, it is interesting to underline the position of Georg Simmel (1858-1918), who admonished the negative impact of the “progressive specialization of the liberal professions” (Simmel 1918; see also Bauman 1996; Bourdieu 1984). According to Simmel, the knowledge and understanding of the surrounding world and, specifically, of social life cannot be an objective comprehension of reality but, rather, it consists of the construction of forms, symbols, concepts and narrations that define the investigated object from the observer’s point of view. In doing so, the extreme specialization and subdivision of knowledge creates a short circuit between the ability to solve immediate and practical problems and the inability to respond to cultural problems of more general relevance (Simmel 1918; Bauman 1996; see also Feyerabend 1975). In order to strengthen the concert between rational thinking and nature (between intellectual activity and factual reality), and to contain the “process of forgetting” analysed by Paul Connerton (2010), Georg Simmel (Simmel 1917, p. 42; see also Rammstedt 2010, pp. 18-19) identifies the relevance of experience and education in the consolidation of cultural memory which is, in turn, useful to stimulate processes of interaction that, once settled, vivify forms of *sociation* (*Vergesellschaftung*) through which “circles of individuals bind one another through reciprocal relationships (*Wechselwirkung*);” where *sociation* is the process through which a type of reciprocal action between individuals or groups stabilizes through time, fully realizing the society. In these processes the role of the individual is crucial and more so the role of the intellectual. The intellectual - in our

understanding, the intellectual archaeologist - is therefore a creator; his/her duty is to connect the experience and comprehension of the past with the world of a collective *praxis*, while simultaneously serving as educator. The intellectual researcher does not have to strive for an objective understanding and explanation of the social and disciplinary facts, conversely he/she will have to operate on the basis of a comprehension strongly dependent on his/her position (both physical and intellectual), and his/her activity will be the result of the identification of the set of phenomena that, by intertwining and conditioning one another, create given social characteristics which represent nothing but processes of *sociation*. The understanding of these processes, just like the understanding and reconstruction of the past, is fundamental for archaeology if it wants to be completely integrated in the contemporary world and capable to acquire perceived value and support.

It is on the basis of these reflections that the ‘intellectual heirs’ of Georg Simmel, those referring to the Frankfurt School, developed the *Critical Theory*. Among them - on the wake of the linguistic structuralism theorized by Ferdinand de Saussure, of Kant’s moral law (Kant 1997) and of the *Critical Theory* - Jürgen Habermas (1981) elaborated the *Theory of Communicative Action*, where he suggests how the idiosyncrasy between rational thinking and nature, between thought and practice, that is, between theory and *praxis*, can be outdone by reformulating the very concept of rationality. In modern societies the *instrumental rationality* has been interpreted as suitable for an end, instrumental towards the achievement of a result, and therefore the human being becomes an instrument and a means to ends that are often economical. Opposite to this understanding, Habermas (1981), recognizes what he defines the *communicative action*, i.e. the ability to put people in touch in a discursive movement so as to make them not the means but the end of the process. In his vision, language and communication are *a priori* instruments of a “universal pragmatics” suitable for mending human relations that were teared

apart by an instrumentalist vision of the human being and the reification of men and human relations. The *communicative action* ensures the outplacement of people and their relations at the centre of social life, and the goal of a generalized wellness as the end of the processes of *sociation*. Ultimately, it is in the connection between experience, cultural memory and *communicative action* that a complex and fulfilled process can be accomplished thus allowing individuals and society altogether to “build hypotheses” and to pursue a common “moral and intellectual direction” (Gramsci 2007 and 2011a, p. 6). This dialogic relation among experience, cultural memory and *communicative action* is inescapable if humans are to try to build a better world. This is even more so for archaeology if it wants to become a valuable endeavour for society and for the people. Experiencing the past, solidifying an individual and a common cultural memory in the process of ‘sociating’ on the basis of a fruitful *communicative action*, describes a most desirable *praxis* for archaeology. A *praxis* that is potentially ‘productive’ in terms of perceived effects on the socio-cultural ground.

It is now essential to consider the implications of the role of the intellectual on the *habitus* of the modern archaeologist, particularly in the development of the activities typical of archaeology as craft. As suggested by Brian Fagan (2006), the old paradigm based on “research, excavation, new discoveries, and publication” proves itself inadequate. In a world in continuous evolution, variably defined as post-modern (Lyotard 1979), multicultural (Habermas 1996; Taylor 1992) and liquid (Bauman 2000), archaeology finds itself confronting social instances related to the elaboration of historical and cultural memories, to the struggle for recognition (Taylor 1992), to identity formulation processes (Remotti 1996), and more in general to those instances and dynamics that characterize the contemporary socio-cultural *milieu*.

The ‘traditional’ archaeological *habitus* characterized by the values stigmatized by Brian Fagan, totally rules out these public implications of archaeology. An approach based on the “utter nonsense” (Fagan 2006, pp. 240-241), it grows and nourishes itself on a continuous understatement and often on granitic censure of any opening up to the social sphere, both of a basic communicative sort and of a more participative one. If the refusal of an opening of archaeology towards the “out there” (Edwards-Ingram 1997, p. 27) could be seen as a resilience of a traditional archaeological configuration, this does not justify the alimony of a *habitus* which is noxious, primarily, for the very survival of archaeology.

The ‘traditional’ disciplinary *habitus* appears as a paradigm founded on static values, from which the components of contemporary society are totally excluded. On the contrary, a disciplinary *habitus* totally versed in the present aspires to expand the static-value-system by attempting to integrate, in a due scientific- and research-based approach, a greater consideration for the public consequences of the archaeological activity. Furthermore, we noticed how the concept of *habitus* is anything but static. There appears to be an urgent need to make room within the ‘traditional’ *habitus* for the set of ethical and deontological precepts that, by defining the actions of the archaeologist as intellectual, participate in the structuring of an archaeological discipline in line with the times, accomplished and operative within the social dynamics, that is, in the public sphere. After all, as Jürgen Habermas suggests (1962), the public sphere is where the critical conscience develops, a conscience that in line with the Enlightenment’s philosophy and Kant’s moral, allows the rational man to analyse the present, identify potential impostures and operate to oppose them. Therefore the public sphere is the very social place where the human being can emancipate himself/herself. If cultural heritage has a value in participating in social processes, in facilitating *sociation* according to Georg Simmel (1918), where the “reciprocal relationships (*Wechselwirkung*)” consolidate

in a way functional to a more democratic world, it is precisely in the public sphere that archaeology needs to find the energy to debate and dialogue. It is in these prosceniums that the efforts of the researcher and of archaeology as a whole find their full accomplishment. It is only by understanding the local social dynamics and adapting the craft of archaeology to the peculiar socio-cultural environment that archaeology can truly become relevant, acquire appreciation and support by the public opinion and, consequently, political relevance. A political relevance for an archaeology that often experiments poor consideration by local administrators, funding shortage and a predominance of private-sector requests over the requirements of the *utilitas publica*. Furthermore, the past has the power to be a life coach, to offer bases for comparison and, if not solutions, at least instruments to find or elaborate such solutions (Carr 1961). In fact, in order to understand past sufferings and achievements, it also elaborates mechanisms to confront present challenges. The ability to rely on terms of comparison allows the “man who wants” (Weber 1922) to find his route in calm seas as well as in stormy waters, supporting the attainment of a safe haven. As archaeologists we have this duty: to participate to the great obligation of Humanities to offer individuals useful tools for a safe navigation in societal waters.

The role of archaeology in the third millennium: intellectual activity and communicative action

The work of the archaeologist seen as an intellectual capable of building hypotheses for the future as well as analysing and reconstructing the past, cannot be regardless of an active participation within contemporary socio-cultural dynamics. After all, as this paper attempted to show, a profound re-elaboration of the disciplinary *locus* is necessary, in line with the peculiarities of the liquid modernity, sustained by an intellectual *habitus* (function) of the archaeologist who can definitively and organically contribute to make archaeology active on the social, cultural and economic panoramas. In such process of cultural

production, a fundamental role is played by the activities intended to educate the public on the value of cultural heritage, through communicative, discursive and conversational processes. One of the most influential pedagogues of the twentieth century, John Dewey, suggested that education does not represent a process concluded in the young age but, rather, it is a continuous process useful to build a more democratic world.

For the American philosopher and pedagogue (Dewey 1983) the foundation of education lays in experience, intended as social experience. In order for the individual to fully develop and participate in a democratic society, education offers opportunities to *experiment* and grant the abilities to reinforce and go beyond existing individual opportunities, capabilities and competences. It is in the social environment that the reinforcement of such abilities and the full exploitation of individual *stamina* participate in building a democratic society. In order to accomplish a more democratic society, individuals have to develop prerequisites such as alphabetization - in the broadest sense of the term -, possess cultural and social competences useful to participate in a common development, develop independent and critical thinking - useful to contrast the effects of any ideological indoctrination (McDavid 2004a, pp. 161 and 167; McDavid 2002a, p. 305; Rorty 1989) - and, lastly, must be ready to be inclusive and sharing, which are the fundamental premises for the existence of society (Dewey 1983).

He sees education as a process based on experience capable to confront dualisms and dichotomies often existing in the inference processes as well as in the pedagogical ones. In fact, the American pedagogue is critical of those who suggested supposed contrasting relations between, for instance, “theory and practice, individual and group, public and private, method and subject matter, mind and behaviour, means and ends, and culture and vocation” (Palmer 2001, p. 197); the reformulation of the problem, on the basis of the connections rather than the differences that link these ‘supposed opposites,’ enables

to identify the experiential process connecting theory and practice, public and private, method and subject matter. In this direction, as we have seen for the theoretical issues related to the craft of archaeology, the problem does not lay in the attempt to reconcile theory and practice, for instance, but rather to find those processes based on experience - processes of *sociation* functional to the development of the archaeological craft - which allow the discipline to connect the opposites: to explain, understand and improve the relationship between the discipline and the 'out there,' through a commitment strongly characterized by an intellectual and educational activity. After all, as stressed by Carol McDavid (2004a, pp. 161 and 167; 2002a, p. 305), such activities cannot positively develop if they are not understood as a conversation between the involved stakeholders. The experience recalled by John Dewey, based on a dialogue between archaeology and the social sphere, is a direct experience which allows to understand the productive, intellectual, technical and mechanical processes that lay behind social dynamics, both in the economic and in the cultural field. Understanding these processes not only allows to establish a social membership based on morals but also, in agreement with Paul Connerton (2009), to understand the efforts and the requirements of the social productive system, where production is intended in its broadest sense. Only through this peculiar process it is possible to understand the effort behind any object or social fact, and advance a more ethical and moral evaluation of other people's struggles, definitively creating a broader reciprocal empathy among individuals. Through education it is possible to offer instruments that reconcile the human being with the world he/she lives in, and hand back a more human dimension to community life, embanking the "process of forgetting" (Connerton 2009) that deprives human beings of a clear understanding of the surrounding world and deteriorates the required empathy for the other, for his/her work, for his/her efforts and sufferings. In this direction, archaeology and the narrative of the past have the opportunity to put humankind in

contact with its past and, by doing so, to bring people together. It is only by acknowledging and understanding the history that, in one way or another, associates people - or by evidencing the influences and confluences more than the divisions - that it is possible to confront with 'the stranger' and ensure that, as Leonardo da Vinci said, "the fear slowly transforms into curiosity for what is inside," for the substance rather than the appearance of things. For this potential of archaeology and of the past to be fully accomplished, it is necessary that the education processes to be effective and purposeful, dialogical rather than indoctrinating, and that they are focused on the targeted audience and, eventually, that the archaeologist is prone to remould his/her language in a more narrative guise that could reveal itself more fertile and profitable in terms of social effect and of the achievement of the final objectives of the discipline; that is, to elevate society's cultural level.

The founding element of education is communication. It is in such fundamental aspect of a discipline which is more active on the social level, that archaeology and archaeologists must rework their lexicon in order to convey typical concepts and knowledge without descending into worthless technicalities and scientisms, which often achieve results opposite to the originally intended ones. Therefore, the duty of archaeology and of archaeologists is to develop means and approaches capable of entering the social dialogue and of spending that *communicative action* which, according to Jürgen Habermas (1981), "refers to the interaction of at least two subjects capable of language and action (with verbal or extra-verbal means) which stabilize an interpersonal relationship." In general, someone understands and appreciates what he/she can fully interpret and feels engaged in something only when between him/her, the observer, and the observed object (physical or conceptual) a concrete emotional bond is realized. The duty of the archaeologist is to attempt to create this emotional link between the individual, totally versed in the present, and the past, and try to highlight archetypes and models -

generalizations - which characterized events and people of the past. The knowledge of and the emotional connections with these archetypes and models have the authority to create robust bases capable of elaborating solutions (beacons in the storms) useful to orientate daily life.

Conclusions

This paper attempted to outline in broad terms a setting for the discipline and the researcher's approaches, that can ultimately make archaeology an active exercise in the public sphere, capable of intervening in contemporary socio-cultural and economic dynamics. It attempted to highlight how archaeology has the potentiality to intervene in the processes of *sociation*, and how the intellectual commitment of the archaeologist can promote these processes. Archaeology, if understood and practiced as a craft and as a socio-political action in the present, allows to reformulate the relation between theory and *praxis* and to reinforce the bond between the scientific activity and the social environment. Within this arrangement, the disciplinary approaches called *Public Archaeology* and *Community Archaeology* entirely allow and promote the creation of those processes of *sociation* whose actors are the archaeologist on one side, and the community of people on the other. However, in order for these *sociations* to have positive effects, the activities and actions of archaeology and the archaeologist have to develop on the basis of an educational and communicative effort that could be effectively inclusive, cooperative, multi-vocal and participative. After all, as the sociological debate well illustrates, the commitment towards a more democratic and inclusive society goes through dialogic and communicative forms that allow social actors to get in touch, develop 'reciprocal relationships' and, on the basis of the latter, 'create hypotheses' towards a common 'intellectual and moral direction.'

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