

Archives, Ancestors, Practices

Histories of Archaeology

General introduction to the series

Nathan Schlanger and Alain Schnapp

Archaeology is surely too interesting and inspiring and important to be left in a state of semi-amnesia, as if indifferent to the circumstances and implications of its own developments. That the past itself matters hardly needs nowadays to be argued – a little more persuasion is however required to extend the same concern and topicality to the ways by which this past has been conceived, researched, reconstructed and represented over the past decades and centuries. The pertinence of such historical and historiographic perspectives is increasingly recognised by today's more theoretically informed and broad-minded practitioners – be they specialising in prehistory, classics, Near Eastern, African or American archaeology, and dealing with material culture, environmental evidence, preventive archaeology or interactions with the public. Archaeologists aside, there is also a wider academic audience to reach and take on board, including historians, anthropologists, museums and heritage specialists, researchers in science and cultural studies, and the like. After all, superficial expectations aside, there is much more at stakes here than the romantic discovery of spectacular finds or lost civilisations. Beyond its undeniable empirical appeal, archaeology, wherever and whenever practiced, has always been fraught with a range of scientific, cultural and ideological challenges – which make the study of its history all the more relevant and rewarding.

As the first series of its kind, 'Histories of Archaeology' aims to contribute to this critical and contextual understanding, and also to serve as a forum for presenting latest insights and perspectives in this domain. The first three volumes in the series promote these objectives in complementary ways. The inaugural volume, 'Archives, Ancestors, Practices. Archaeology in the Light of its History', is the outcome of a major international conference organised by the AREA network in Göteborg. In it, a broad range of authors address issues of historiographic methodology, archaeological practice and visualisation of the past, as well as questions of archaeology and identity. The second volume, 'The History of Archaeology – A Reader', assembles over fifteen previously published articles on the topic: besides serving as a much needed teaching aid, it provides a certain state of the art for ongoing research. The third volume, 'The Fabric of the Past. Historical Perspectives on the Material Culture of Archaeology', examines this particular theme from several historical perspectives and case studies, including Antiquarianism, dictatorial regimes and the Internet. These monographs and edited volumes (and those to follow in the series) are designed to be accessible to both advanced students and scholarly readership worldwide. Informed as they are by latest advances in social sciences and historical research, these publications aim for a broad geographical, chronological and thematic coverage which, so we hope, will do full justice to the richness and pertinence of this field.

Archives, Ancestors, Practices

Archaeology in the light of its history

Nathan Schlanger and Jarl Nordbladh



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Contents

List of Figures	0
List of Plates	0
List of Contributors	0
Preface and acknowledgements	0
General Introduction	0
Archaeology in the light of its histories <i>Nathan Schlanger and Jarl Nordbladh</i>	
Part I : SOURCES AND METHODS FOR THE HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY	
1. Biography as Microhistory: The Relevance of Private Archives for Writing the History of Archaeology <i>Marc-Antoine Kaeser</i>	0
2. From Distant Shores. Nineteenth-Century Dutch Archaeology in European Perspective <i>Ruurd B. Halbertsma</i>	0
3. The Hemenway Southwestern Archaeological Expedition, 1886–1889. Model of Inquiry for the History of Archaeology <i>Curtis M. Hinsley and David R. Wilcox</i>	0
4. The Phenomenon of Pre-Soviet Archaeology. Archival Studies in the History of Russian Archaeology – Methods and Results <i>Nadezhda I. Platonova</i>	0
5. Prehistoric Archaeology in the ‘Parliament of Science’, 1845–1900 <i>Tim Murray</i>	0
Part II : ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE	
6. Wilamowitz and stratigraphy in 1873: A Case Study in the History of Archaeology’s ‘Great Divide’ <i>Giovanna Ceserani</i>	0
7. Methodological Reflections on the History of Excavation Techniques <i>Gisela Eberhardt</i>	0

8. 'More than a Village'. On the Medieval Countryside as an Archaeological Field of Study
Emma Bentz 0
9. Amateurs and Professionals in Nineteenth-Century Archaeology. The Case of the Oxford 'Antiquarian and Grocer' H. M. J. Underhill (1855–1920)
Megan Price 0
10. Revisiting the "Invisible College": José Ramón Mélida in Early Twentieth-Century Spain
Margarita Díaz-Andreu 0
11. Between Sweden and Central Asia. Practising Archaeology in the 1920s and 1930s
Jan Bergman 0
12. Model Excavations: 'Performance' and the Three-Dimensional Display of Knowledge
Christopher Evans 0

Part III : VISUALISING ARCHAEOLOGY

13. The Impossible Museum: Exhibitions of Archaeology as Reflections of Contemporary Ideologies
Marcello Barbanera 0
14. Towards a More 'Scientific' Archaeological Tool: The Accurate Drawing of Greek Vases Between the End of the Nineteenth—and the First Half of the Twentieth Centuries
Christine Walter 0
15. European Images of the Ancient Near East at the Beginnings of the Twentieth Century
Maria Gabriella Micale 0
16. Weaving Images. Juan Cabré and Spanish Archaeology in the First Half of the Twentieth Century
Susana González Reyero 0
17. Frozen in Time: Photography and the Beginnings of Modern Archaeology in The Netherlands
Leo Verhart 0

Part IV : QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY

18. Choosing Ancestors: The Mechanisms of Ethnic Ascription in the Age of Patriotic Antiquarianism (1815–1850)
Ulrike Sommer 0
19. Archaeology, Politics and Identity. The Case of the Canary Islands in the Nineteenth Century
José Farrujia de la Rosa and Carmen del Arco Aguilar 0

20. The Wagner Brothers: French Archaeologists and Original Myths in Early Twentieth Century Argentina <i>Ana Teresa Martínez, Constanza Taboada and Alejandro Auat</i>	0
21. Language, Nationalism and the Identity of the Archaeologists: The Case of Juhani Rinne's Professorship in the 1920s <i>Visa Immonen and Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen</i>	0
22. Protohistory at the Portuguese Association of Archaeologists: A Question of National Identity? <i>Ana Cristina Martins</i>	0
23. Making Spain Hispanic. Gómez-Moreno and Iberian archaeology <i>Juan P. Bellón, Arturo Ruiz, and Alberto Sánchez</i>	0
24. Virchow and Kossinna. From the Science-Based Anthropology of Humankind to the Culture-Historical Archaeology of Peoples <i>Sebastian Brather</i>	0
25. Dutch Archaeology and National Socialism <i>Martijn Eickhoff</i>	0
Index	0

List of Figures

- Figure 1.1 Edouard Desor (1811–1882). Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Neuchâtel (Switzerland).
- Figure 1.2 Edouard Desor's diary, 10–11 July 1850. Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Neuchâtel (Switzerland).
- Figure 1.3 Combe-Varin, Desor's second home in the Jura Mountains. (Vogt 1879, De Beer 1950). Engraving by Auguste Bachelin, 1860.
- Figure 2.1 The Marmora Papenburgica in the orangery of the botanical garden. Drawing by J. van Werven, *ca.* 1745, Leiden City Archive.
- Figure 2.2 Portrait of Professor C.J.C. Reuvens (1793–1835), anonymous, *ca.* 1819. University History Museum, Leiden.
- Figure 2.3 Camillio Borgia and Jean Emile Humbert on horseback in the interior of Tunisia (*ca.* 1816). Anonymous lithograph. Archive, National Museum of Antiquities.
- Figure 2.4 Plan, sections and details of a Roman mausoleum, discovered in 1822 near Tunis. Drawing by J.E. Humbert. Archive, National Museum of Antiquities.
- Figure 6.1 Picture of Wilamowitz as a young man.
- Figure 6.2 Register of attendance at the weekly meetings of the Institute of Archaeological Correspondence.
- Figure 6.3 Drawing of an Etruscan engraved mirror-case of the same type as the one discussed by Wilamowitz. From the archives of the Institute of Archaeological Correspondence.
- Figure 6.4 Reconstruction of the Capua's temple. From the archives of the Institute of Archaeological Correspondence.
- Figure 8.1 Map showing the location of the sites mentioned in the text.
- Figure 8.2 Photo showing dwelling house number 1 in Hohenrode, as seen from the west. Photo by the author.
- Figure 8.3 Plan of the deserted medieval settlement at Hohenrode, Germany. After Grimm (1939) with modifications.
- Figure 11.1 Folke Bergman in Visby, Gotland (Nihlén 1982).
- Figure 11.2 Excavation at Gödåker, Uppland, 1925 Photo Pär Olsén.
- Figure 11.3 Folke Bergman's practice areas in Asia.
- Figure 11.4 Stone setting in Inner Mongolia. Photo: F. Bergman.
- Figure 11.5 Meat supply guaranteed. Photo: F. Bergman.
- Figure 11.6 Second from left: Huang Wen-pi. In the middle, with stick: Sven Hedin. Extreme right: Folke Bergman (Hedin 1935).
- Figure 12.1 Right, Standlake excavation plan (Stone 1857 : 94); left, the plaster with sand coating model (85 x 84 x 10 cm, scale 1/2" to 1'. Published with permission of Oxfordshire County Museums.

- Figure 12.2 Top, the Society of Antiquaries of London model of the ‘Druidical Temple’ at Mont St Helier, Jersey (Cat no. 57); below, Tongue’s 1832 model of the double ‘Cromlech’ megalith at Plas Newydd (scale 1" to 1'; British Museum).
- Figure 12.3 Sopwith’s boxed set of wooden geological models of 1841 (Whipple Museum, Cambridge Cat no. 1581).
- Figure 12.4 The site as model. Top, John Alexander’s employment of the Wheeler box-excavation technique at the Arbury Villa site, Cambridge (1970; see also Wheeler 1954). Below, the senior staff of the Feddersen Wierde excavations analyse the Roman Iron Age *terpen* settlement’s sequence.
- Figure 13.1 A visitor in Museo Nazionale Romano.
- Figure 13.2 Vatican Museums: Cortile of Belvedere, general view.
- Figure 13.3 Wall paintings reconstructed in the Campanari Tomb in London.
- Figure 13.4 Charles Simart, Athena Parthenos, 1846–1855. Château de Dampierre.
- Figure 13.5 Rome, Baths of Diocletian: *Mostra Archeologica* of 1911.
- Figure 13.6 Rome, view of the former Museo dell’Impero.
- Figure 14.1 Drawing of three cups held in Berlin (after Furtwängler, A., 1883, pl. XXVIII).
- Figure 14.2 Drawing of a part of a red figure cup signed by Euphronios and held in Munich (after Furtwängler, A. and K. Reichhold 1904–1932, n°2620).
- Figure 14.3 Illustration of part of an Attic red-figure cup (after Hartwig, P., 1893, p. 416, fig. 56a).
- Figure 14.4 Drawing by Beazley after an Attic red-figure stamnos held in Castle Ashby and attributed to the Berlin Painter. Oxford, Beazley Archive.
- Figure 14.5 Drawing realised by Humphry Payne after an Attic black figure fragment of Crater. Athens, British School Archive.
- Figure 14.6 Drawings realised by Beazley after ‘mantle figures’ on reverses of vases attributed to the Achilles Painter (after Beazley, J. D., 1914, p. 185).
- Figure 15.1 Ashur, Temple of Anu and Adad: perspective reconstruction. Drawing by Walter Andrae, 1924 (Andrae 1977: 189, fig. 168).
- Figure 15.2 Babylon, Emakh: perspective reconstruction. Drawing by Robert Koldewey, 1907 (Koldewey 1911: 4, fig. 1).
- Figure 15.3 Ashur: panoramic view from North. Drawing by Walter Andrae, 1937 (Andrae 1977: 54, fig. 37).
- Figure 15.4 Ashur, Tabira Gate: perspective reconstruction. Drawing by Walter Andrae, 1937 (Andrae 1977: 22, fig. 5).
- Figure 15.5 Khorsabad, the Citadel: bird’s eye view from South-East (Place 1867–1870).
- Figure 15.6 Stage setting for the opera Sardanapal: Court of an Assyrian temple. Draft by Walter Andrae, 1907 (Andrae – Boehmer 1992: fig. 132).
- Figure 16.1 J. Cabré Aguilo (1882–1947). One of the main researchers of Spanish archaeology in the first half of the twentieth century. © Cabré’s family.
- Figure 16.2 Illustrious visitors to the Altamira cave, ca. 1912. From left to right Juan Cabré, the guide, Pascual Serrano, Henri Breuil, Louis Siret, Hugo Obermaier, H. Alcalde del Rio and Henri Siret. © Museo Juan Cabré, Calaceite (Teruel).
- Figure 16.3 Photographs and drawings representing the Iberian burial mound no 74 from Galera (Granada). © Cabré and De Motos (1920: pl. XII).
- Figure 16.4 Juan Cabré, his family and workers, in the Celtic site of Las Cogotas (Ávila) during the summer of 1931. © Cabré’s family.
- Figure 16.5 Carpenter compares the ‘Lady of Elche’ with a Greek sculpture. From left to right: The Apollo Chatsworth and the ‘Lady of Elche’ (Carpenter 1925: pl. IX).

- Figure 16.6 A detail of the excavation process. Celtiberian necrópolis at Aguilar de Anguita. © Aguilera y Gamboa (1916: 18–19, pl. II).
- Figure 16.7 The new assessment of the archaeological context. A collection of votive offerings and the place of their finding at the Iberian sanctuary of Collado de los Jardines (Santa Elena, Jaén). © I. Calvo and J. Cabré (1917: pl. XXI).
- Figure 17.1 The Dutch Society of Anthropology visits the excavation of the megalithic monument at Drouwen in 1912.
- Figure 17.2 Holwerda's wheeled excavation hut at the excavation of Uddelermeer in 1910.
- Figure 17.3 The excavation of a grave mound at Vaassen in 1909.
- Figure 17.4 The discovery of the Roman sarcophagus at Simpelveld in 1930.
- Figure 17.5 Holwerda found soil traces beneath barrows, which he interpreted as the remnants of burned logs from a wooden superstructure, a primitive prehistoric translation of stone domed grave chambers from the Mediterranean.
- Figure 17.6 Queen Wilhelmina of Orange visits the excavation of Niersen in 1907.
- Figure 17.7 A picture of a sod hut in the province of Drenthe around 1900.
- Figure 18.1 Map of the Thuringian states, 1816–1848. Source: after Zentralinstitut für Geschichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR 1989.
- Figure 18.2 Foundation dates of German antiquarian and historical societies.
- Figure 18.3 Finds from Ranis. Source: Alberti (1830: Table 4).
- Figure 19.1 Tagoror or place for assemblies, related by Berthelot (1876) to the Celtic megalithic structures
- Figure 19.2 René Verneau studying the Guanche skulls in El Museo Canario (Photo: El Museo Canario)
- Figure 19.3 Felix von Luschan.
- Figure 19.4 Rock engravings of Belmaco's cave (La Palma), related by Chil y Naranjo (1876) to those of the Dolmens of Morbihan (Brittany) (Photo: J. Farrujia).
- Figure 20.1 A very young Emilio Wagner, probably at the time of his arrival in the Santiagueña countryside (originally published by El Liberal, 25º Aniversario 1923: 81, Santiago del Estero).
- Figure 20.2 Archaeological vessels from Santiago del Estero, painted by Duncan Wagner (originally published by Wagner and Wagner 1934).
- Figure 20.3 Map showing the routes and migratory waves that led to the colonization of the world from a continent now disappeared, according to the Wagner brothers' final proposition (originally published in Wagner and Righetti 1946).
- Figure 20.4 Sensational headlines from local and national newspapers announcing the archaeological discoveries of the Wagner brothers in Santiago del Estero, and their international repercussions.
- Figure 20.5 Canal Feijóo's book (1937) dedicated to the popular contemporary art of Santiago del Estero, but significantly illustrating a fragment of Santiagueña pottery on the cover.
- Figure 21.1 A portrait of the archaeologist Juhani Rinne. Photo courtesy of Johan Nikula.
- Figure 21.2 The representatives of the Rettig company have delivered the donation to the university for founding a chair in historical archaeology (Photo: The archive of the Otava Publishing Company).
- Figure 21.3 Juhani Rinne at Turku Cathedral (Photo: The national Board of Antiquities).
- Figure 21.4 Political cartoon depicting the philosopher Eino Kaila.
- Figure 21.5 Rinne walking in Turku (Photo courtesy of Johan Nikula)

- Figure 22.1 J. Possidónio N. da Silva (ca. 1857). AH/AAP.
- Figure 22.2 The Carmo Archaeological Museum at the end of the nineteenth century. AH/AAP.
- Figure 22.3 F. Martins Sarmiento (ca. 1876). (From *Dispersos*, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, 1933).
- Figure 22.4 The Handsome Stone (From *Dispersos*, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, 1933, p. 477).
- Figure 23.1 M. Gómez-Moreno and M. Almagro-Basch at the Shelter of Cogull (Leida, Spain) (Archive Gómez-Moreno).
- Figure 23.2 An outline of Spanish protohistory and final ‘national reaction’ (V–III B.C.) (Archive Gómez-Moreno).
- Figure 23.3 Temporal framework of the Hispanic concept in the Gómez-Moreno school.
- Figure 23.4 Hispanic culture according to Gómez-Moreno.
- Figure 24.1 The second Kissarlık conference, 1890 (DAI Athen, Neg.-Nr. 1990/94).
- Figure 24.2 Gustaf Kossinna at the 11th Congress for prehistory in Königsberg 1930, together with the managing committee of his Society for German Prehistory) (from Stampfuß 1935: table 4).
- Figure 24.3 Anthropometric measurements of skulls from an early medieval row grave cemetery near Worms, carried out by Virchow (from Virchow 1877: [503]).
- Figure 24.4 Kossinna’s map of the ancient Germans, expanding from North and Central Europe southwards during the Bronze and Iron Ages (from Kossinna 1926–1927: fig. 52).
- Figure 24.5 Museums with prehistoric collections visited by Kossinna, who was travelling by railway (from Schwerin v. Krosigk 1982: 25, map 1).
- Figure 25.1 The main levels of Dutch identity. a) The Netherlands, b) The Dutch provinces, c) The Dutch-speaking area, d) The Frisian (=green), Saxon (=red) and Franconian (=blue) regions.
- Figure 25.2 A boundary marker from the province of Gelderland, considered to contain a depiction of an Irmin column.
- Figure 25.3 Cover of the *Westland* magazine. The Netherlands are depicted as part of a Greater-Germanic unity.

List of Plates

1. C.J.C. Reuvens and Conrad Leemans at the excavations at Arentsburg. Drawing by T. Hooiberg, ca. 1829. Archive, National Museum of Antiquities.
2. Drawing of Roman well and its contents. Drawing with watercolour by T. Hooiberg, ca. 1829. Archive, National Museum of Antiquities.
3. Wayland's Smithy, Oxfordshire.
4. Pitt Rivers' hinged model of the Cissbury hillfort with flint mines below. Pitt Rivers (1897: 333).
5. Vatican Museums: Rotunda of the Museum Pio-Clementino.
6. Campanari's Plan of the Tomb in London.
7. Vatican Museums: Museum Gregoriano Etrusco, view before 1920-22.
8. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Sculpturae Vitam insufflat Pictura*, 1893. Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario.
9. Drawing of several Attic black-figure amphorae held in Munich (after Brunn, H., Krell, P. F. and Lau, G.T., 1877, pl. XII).
10. Nimrud: fantastic reconstruction (Layard 1849, II: Pl. 1).
11. Joseph Déchelette during his visit to Santa María de Huerta in 1912 (Soria, Spain). © Aguilera y Gamboa (1916: 78-79, pl. XIV).
12. The excavation of supposed sunken huts at Uddelermeer in 1908.
13. During a study tour through Germany, Holwerda documented these urns in the Landesmuseum in Trier.
14. Early representation of Torriani Indigenes.
15. Spectacular and symbolic cover showing an entrance to the great Civilización Chaco-Santiagueña. Painted by Duncan Wagner for the Wagners' book (originally published by Wagner and Wagner 1934).
16. Excavations in the bombed city centre of Middelburg by the National Museum of Antiquities (1941) (fotocollection RMO).

List of Contributors

Preface and Acknowledgements

Nathan Schlanger and Jarl Nordbladh

The book now in your hands is, unashamedly, a conference volume. It is true that such publications often suffer from poor press in academic circles: editors of multi-authored proceedings tend to downplay this fact, and publishers too are often reticent to deal with them. It is also true that planning a conference and editing a book are quite different matters, and similarly that a brilliant orator may prove a poorly structured author, that twenty minutes will not necessarily make twenty pages, and indeed that these ever so valued requirements of ‘coherence’ and ‘novelty’, bolstered by the effervescence of the conference itself, may seem with hindsight and changed media somewhat less compelling. As editors we are not oblivious to such pitfalls, of course, and nor can we pretend to have avoided them all. Nevertheless, we do believe that the origins of this volume in a particular conference deserves to be specifically highlighted – both for the benefit of the present publication, its genuine coherence and novelty, and more generally, if we may be so bold, for the sake of this emerging field of research, the history of archaeology.

The conference in question, titled ‘Histories of archaeology. Archives, ancestors, practices’, was held at the Department of Archaeology, University of Göteborg, Sweden, on 17–19 June 2004. In both chronological and conceptual terms, this conference represents the culmination of an important phase of activity of the European-wide research network known as AREA – Archives of European Archaeology. The AREA network is probably unique in being specifically dedicated to research and documentation on the history of archaeology, with a strong emphasis on the archives of the discipline. Since its launching in 1998, the AREA network has gone through four funding phases, each including a growing number of partner institutions from across the continent – university departments and institutes, museums, research centres and public bodies – working together within a common European framework¹. The AREA network, the Göteborg conference and the resulting book are obviously connected. Some conceptual and methodological links will be mentioned in our editorial Introduction (and of course in the chapters themselves), so here we simply point at some specificities of the conference in terms of its structure and its composition.

AREA partners, who had planned together the conference and its themes, were of course present and well represented on the day. It was agreed however that AREA members should not themselves give any papers (but only contribute to the poster session). Besides serving to bypass issues of selection and representation within the network itself, this withdrawal also made room available for welcoming other scholars, other voices, other experiences. Some of these scholars were specifically contacted by the scientific committee – and here is the place to acknowledge the very useful and lively participation of Alice Kehoe, the good wishes sent to us by Bruce Trigger who unfortunately could not attend, and more specifically the contribution of Leo Klejn, who was unable to travel to the meeting, but who provided instead on the basis of the extended abstracts a penetrating commentary which was included in the conference booklet. Most speakers however simply responded to the call for paper, and submitted their proposals along the indicated guidelines. Those selected were then happy to realise that their costs were taken care of by the

conference organisers – the AREA network. Altogether, 23 papers were presented at the conference, and the vast majority are published here, reworked and edited as the case might be. Several speakers did not see their papers through to publication (A. Doulgeri-Intzesiloglou, S. Wiell, M. Svedin), and likewise some additional papers were accepted from authors who could not attend (A. T. Martinez et al.), or who had only presented posters (J. Bergman, U. Sommer, M. Diaz-Andreu, J.-P. Bellón et al.). The contributors to this volume range from well-established academics to emerging scholars, some at doctoral or post-doctoral stage, and others relatively new to the field. In line with the intrinsically international character of archaeology itself, and the vocation of the AREA network and its funding programme, these contributors came from all over Europe, from St Petersburg to Portugal and the Canaries Islands, and the Mediterranean through to Scandinavia, and also from North and South America, as well as Australia.

The conference itself was structured into four major themes, namely ‘Sources and methods for the history of archaeology’, ‘Archaeological practice’, ‘Visualising archaeology’ and ‘Questions of identity’. Papers were submitted and selected in function of these themes (see further in the editorial Introduction). From the onset, it was decided not to hold separate or parallel sessions, but on the contrary to remain together for the whole duration of the conference. Practical considerations aside – the auditorium at our disposal was of a proper ‘human’ scale for the c. 100 participants that we were – this decision followed from reasons of principle: on balance, the history of archaeology is really not sufficiently advanced or established to permit itself the luxury (if such it is) of further fragmentation into specialism. Not only did all the participants, audience and speakers alike, wish to attend all the presentations, also the very attribution of some papers to this or that theme proved quite difficult and arbitrary to maintain – so much so that several papers presented under one theme at the conference, ended up better placed under another theme in the publication. Last but not least, bringing all the participants together under one roof certainly encouraged longer and wider ranging discussions (held mostly in English, our chosen ‘official’ language). Many of these lively exchanges continued throughout the social programme of the conference, including a fabulous evening cruise along the Göteborg archipelago, and of course in the weeks and months following the conference itself, thus confirming one of its tacit objectives: to further broaden the network of contacts, competencies and commitment dedicated to the history of archaeology.

As indicated, the conference at the origin of this volume was not only organised but also funded by the AREA network – and here again we must acknowledge the very generous support of the Culture 2000 programme of the DG Education and Culture of the European commission. The *Institut national d’histoire de l’art* – INHA, then project-leader of the AREA network, provided further assistance in terms of funding, logistics and information technology: special thanks are due to Alain Schnapp, to Dominique Barillé and to Pascal Presle and his team. In Göteborg, financial and logistical support were received from Göteborg University, the Jubilee Foundation and the Department of Archaeology, the Magnus Bregvall Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the National Heritage Board, the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, the Wilhelm and Martina Lundgren Research Foundation I, and the Göteborg Municipality. The conference itself, and the sortie with the Bohuslän, the last remaining passenger steamer boat on the Swedish West Coast, were smoothly organised by the conference organising firm Inspiro Event with Henrik Svensson. In addition, Jarl Nordblad thanks the archaeology students Malin Börjes, Mikael Cerbing, Maria Persson and Andreas Skredsvik for their devoted assistance with practical matters during the conference. Lastly, Nathan Schlanger wishes to thank Marion Berghahn and Marc Stanton for their support and much needed patience during the production of this volume, the first in the ‘Histories of archaeology’ series.

Note

1. Support for the AREA network was generously awarded by the Raphael programme (AREA phase I, 1998–1999), and subsequently by the Culture 2000 programme of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (AREA phase II, 1999–2000, an experimental measure, and AREA phase III, 2001–2004, followed by AREA phase IV, 2005–2008, both multiannual cultural collaboration projects). Initiated by Sander van der Leeuw, Giovanni Schicilone and Alain Schnapp, AREA has continued under the leadership of the latter and with the scientific coordination of David van Reybrouck (AREA I, II) and Nathan Schlanger (AREA III, IV). Institutional project leaders were the Maison des sciences de l'homme – MSH (AREA I, II), the Institut national d'histoire de l'art – INHA (AREA III), and the Maison de l'archéologie et de l'ethnologie – CNRS (AREA IV). The following institutions were and are partners of the AREA network (in parenthesis is indicated the AREA phase in which they participated): National Archive of Monuments, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens, Greece (AREA I, II, III, IV); Centro Andaluz de Arqueologia Ibérica, Jaén, Spain (I, II, III, IV); Department of Archaeology, University of Göteborg, Sweden (I, II, III, IV); Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme – MSH, Paris, France (I, II); Institut national d'histoire de l'art – INHA, Paris, France (II, III, IV); Maison de l'archéologie et de l'ethnologie – CNRS, Nanterre, France (IV); Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin, Germany (I, II); McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge, United Kingdom (I, II); Service de Préhistoire, Université de Liège, Belgium (I, II); Archeologisch Diensten Centrum, Bunschoten, Netherlands (II); Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza, Rome, Italy (II, IV); Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, United Kingdom (III); The Butrint Foundation, London / University of East Anglia, United Kingdom (III); Department of Archaeology, University College Cork, Ireland (III); Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, Granada, Spain (II); Department of History, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium (III); Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters, Freiburg University, Germany (III, IV); Poznan Archaeological Museum, Poznan, Poland (III, IV); Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom (IV); Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic (IV); Institutul de Arheologie 'vasile Parvan', Bucharest, Romania (IV); Museu Monográfico de Conimbriga, Coimbra, Portugal (IV); Professur für Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Universität Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany (IV).

