

## Informe 2

### *Politics and Archaeology: The Practice of WAC3 In India*

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The third edition of the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) was held in New Delhi (India), from December 4th to December 11th 1994. The WAC was born in 1986, as the organizers of the Southampton UISPP meeting decided (followed by archaeologists from the third world and other countries) to adhere to the sanctions imposed to the then apartheid regime of South Africa.

Politics were incorporated to the academic debate. The academic discussion of the relationship of archaeology and politics and society were one of the preferred topics of this new international organization, as it is reflected in several volumes of the resulting *One World Archaeology* series. Worldwide participation and non-restriction of academic discussion are two of the major aims of WAC.

Indian WAC3 was a demonstration of both the development of this process of broadening scopes of archaeology, and the limitations imposed by the practical political context of a third world nation.

Beginning with the academic side of the congress, the broad scope of archaeology prompted by WAC can't be emphasized more than what is reflected in the following list of themes discussed:

1. Concepts of time, including traditional and cultural concepts of time and how science based archaeology has affected our understanding of the past;

2. Archaeology as an indicator of trade and contact, including trade as a vehicle of religion and traditions, maritime trade, commerce and contact, the material evidence of trade and exchange (punctualizing on ceramics), regional perspectives on trade and contact (punctualizing on the Vijayanagar empire and hunter gatherer exchange in India and Southeast Asia) and trade, exchange

and culture change (and specifically in Oceania);

3. Language, anthropology and archaeology;

4. Ethnoarchaeology, regarding theoretical considerations, case studies and their cultural settings, living traditions, peripheral groups and frontier cultures, and current responses by indigenous people;

5. State, city and society, discussing subsistence bases of the pre-industrial city, urban design and layout, cities in regional context, the urbanism in the humid tropics, the social, political, economic and ideological factors in urban origins and development, the legitimization of political coercion in the early state, the relationship between state and urban development, and the incorporation of heterogeneous groups within the state;

6. The Neogene and the Quaternary, specifying the environment and chronology, human evolution, colonization, palaeodemography, settlement and technology, and the archaeology of cognition;

7. Technological innovations and power;

8. Change in agrarian systems, in particular the broadening of concepts of change, the introductions, the intensification, and sedentism and subsistence;

9. Cultural property, conservation and public awareness, with a first part about heritage, conservation, management and protection, including world heritage sites and the International Committee for sites and monuments, heritage management in the face of modern life, ethics and other decision-making in heritage management, legal protection and enforcement, methods and techniques of heritage conservation, power through the control of information, and presentation, preservation, exchange and

control of archaeological information; and a second session on education and the past, including school education, the role of museums and preservation organizations in public education and outreach, and the multifaceted aims of reconstruction sites (archaeological evidence, "reconstruction" of sites, education and public awareness);

10. Relationship between archaeological theory and practice, with the treatment of recent developments in archaeological theory, theory and practice in archaeology and regional traditions in archaeological theory;

11. Changing perspectives in historical archaeology, exploring epistemological problems (questions of definition of the subject), the plurality of material culture (race, ethnicity, tribe, class and gender), historical archaeology and the representation of modern identities (national, colonial, imperial), and feminist historical archaeology;

12. The frontiers of landscape archaeology: time, space and humanity; spanning over landscapes of social power, of ecological and economic management, and conservation and possession of landscapes;

13. Archaeological manifestations of religious traditions and institutions on society and culture, specifying on myths, rituals and practices, symbols and forms, customs and traditions; and

14. Material culture and the body.

In addition, several symposia were organized on the Indus civilization, archaeological source material and the reconstruction of history, rock art of Asia and the Pacific, new archaeological discoveries in Asia and the Pacific, recent advances in archaeological field and laboratory techniques, recent advances in archaeometallurgy and maritime (underwater) archaeology. The inaugural session was devoted to Indian archaeology, with the participation of leading Indian scholars.

But the greatest surprise was met by the delegates at the arrival

to the congress hall: a note by the President of WAC was circulated, claiming for the avoidance of discussing "the Ayodhya issue" during the sessions of the Congress. As was thoroughly explained by WAC authorities, this

was the result of the pressure impinged over the Committee by the Indian organizers. The "Ayodhya issue" refers to a case of manipulation of archaeology by political interests. An excavation was done in a temple, and different interpretations arose over ethnic traditional ancient sources, in a context of religious struggles. Violence was not absent, including the death of many people, and an anniversary of this massacre was expected during the period of WAC meeting. Indian organizers argued that the treatment of the "Ayodhya issue" would have had unpredictable results, maybe including violent reactions of political-religious groups, with the consequent danger for the personal security of the delegates. Facing this situation, the WAC committee decided the exclusion of the "Ayodhya issue" from all the sessions and meetings of the Congress. All the Congress meetings and social gatherings occurred in a context of political contestation towards the Congress, both in the streets and in the news.

Not only the Congress was politically manipulated, but the case was that an international organization as WAC explicitly committed with academic freedom was forced to apply censorship on an academic issue (the archaeological excavation of the temple and its interpretation) under the pressure of nationalists (both in the government and in the organization of WAC3). Archaeology in India, as the scientific discipline studying ethnic origins, is subjected to political manipulation in a context of ethnicity construction by the national state and the different resistant minoritarian groups. The language of power is overarching and controls archaeology through its potential to "demonstrate" ethnic precedences. In relationship to a sensible issue such as the one of Ayodhya, language of academic discussion was silenced during WAC3, only remaining the force of power.

WAC has greatly benefited today's archaeology, in the direction of pluralism, the breaking down of academic isolation in peripheral countries, and the bringing into the academic debate the social and political contexts of its practice.

Allowing to be manipulated by particular interests and restricting the debate is the best

way to divorce the WAC organization from its own aims.

Even accepting that the decision of the WAC authorities preferred the assumption of responsibilities over the personal security of the delegates rather than over the political line

of the organization, and that this can be understandable in context, the World Archaeological Congress should go through a pluralistic self-criticism if it pretends to perdure as what it was thought to be.

WAC deserves it.-

### Informe 3

#### *O Centro de Pesquisas Informáticas para os Bens Culturais, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa*

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1. À História da Arte, à Arqueologia e a todas as Ciências Humanas voltadas ao patrimônio cultural se apresenta hoje, reconhecidamente, a Informática enquanto um instrumento de grande potencial. Das muitas experiências que se sucederam, muitas em sedes universitárias, podemos já conferir atraentes resultados publicados, e, não apenas sob o nome de especialistas e técnicos do mundo eletrônico mas também sob o nome de notórios e simpáticos acadêmicos, como Jacques Thuillier ou Eugenio Battisti.

Neste sentido, gostaríamos de informar-vos sobre um interessante núcleo de pesquisas informáticas da Scuola Normale Superiore de Pisa.

Hoje, no posto normalista da via della Faggiola, centro histórico de Pisa, quase sob a sombra da torre inclinada já intimamente conhecida, encontramos a sede do *Centro de Pesquisas Informáticas para os Bens Culturais*, e, entre literatos, arqueólogos, historiadores da arte, linguístas, técnicos e curiosos estudantes que a freqüentam, podemos conferir alguns princípios que, justamente, os movem ao redor das grandes e pequenas máquinas de cálculo ali instaladas: o reconhecimento das potencialidades da pesquisa informática, em sentido técnico e aplicativo, para as disciplinas tuteladoras do patrimônio; a preocupação constante sobre os meios e procedimentos técnicos e logísticos neste sentido; a participação máxima, na

especificidade do projeto em curso, de outras disciplinas que podem em muito contribuir nos projetos em desenvolvimento, e, destacamos aqui, o caso da linguística.

Atividades que, listadas brevemente sempre em função da fórmula patrimônio cultural/informática, vão desde a análise profunda de fontes textuais significativas para a história da crítica de arte à implantação de sistemas de catalogação e consulta em museus e departamentos de patrimônio públicos; da divulgação de avanços ora técnicos, ora conceituais e metodológicos para os interessados da área ao gerenciamento e distribuição de softwares de domínio público na Itália; e, sem esgotar este elenco, o nosso *Centro* estende as suas atividades até o apoio logístico e documentário em restauro de obras de incontestável valor artístico, como o precioso campanário na praça do Domo pisano.

E, testemunhamos, um *Centro* que não transcura um fundamental apoio aos programas internos, didáticos ou especificamente investigativos, desenvolvidos na Scuola Normale Superiore, sejam inclusive as singelas composições de índices para documentos estudados em teses e pesquisas restritas a cursos e disciplinas.

A origem do *Centro de Pesquisas Informática para os Bens Culturais* pode ser assinalada em 1976: a já afirmada Prof.<sup>a</sup> Paola Barocchi, junto com um grupo de