

## **Seminar: Art History and Archaeology**

Thank you very much, Professor Fernandez Garcia. It is a great pleasure to be here today to give a seminar on art history and archaeology. As you can see, I am a foreigner, and my Spanish is limited; I apologize for that, and I hope you can understand what I mean on this subject despite my broken Spanish.

I was a professor of archaeology in the United States for several decades before retiring and moving to the natural paradise of Asturias. I have excavated in many places: Israel, Jordan, Libya, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, the United States, and here in Spain. In my long career, I taught courses in both archaeology and art history, so for many years I have thought about this topic.

In my talk this morning, I will take a historiographical approach, that is, we will analyze the history of art history and archaeology. I take this approach in part because the two disciplines, historically, were the same. As we will see, during the last century, the discipline of archaeology was separated from the discipline of art history. At the end of my lecture, we will examine how the two disciplines, in our post-modern era, have come back together to take similar, though not identical, approaches to our understanding of the material culture of the past.

Before I begin, let me underline some of the main points I will make this morning:

- The main focus of art history has been aesthetics, that is, judgments of beauty and taste. A key to any historical analysis of the art of a work of art is a technical analysis of how the elements of color, line, space and mass are used in the work.
- In contrast, the focus of the discipline of archaeology is on culture. The material remains found in excavations are studied to reveal clues about how an ancient culture worked. Archaeology is a branch of anthropology.

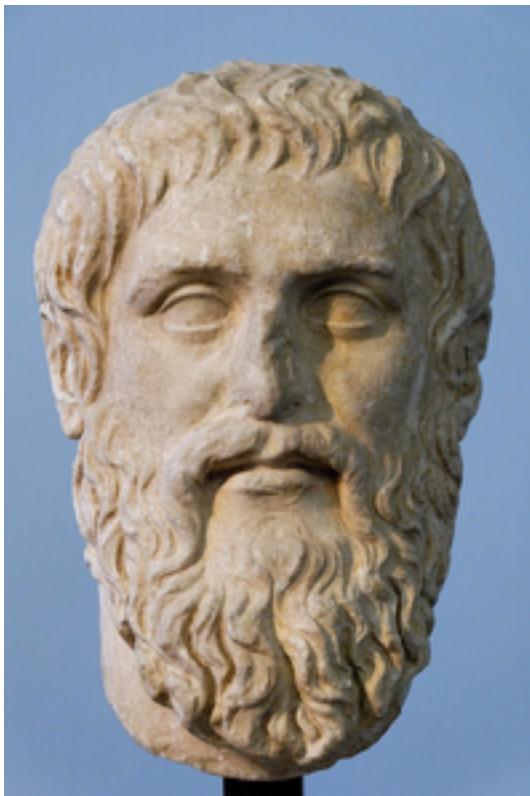
Despite these differences, the disciplines of art history and archaeology share many common characteristics, namely:

- An emphasis on chronology, placing the works of art/cultures that are studied into chronological categories that are supposed to evolve one to another (e.g., Medieval/Renaissance/Baroque/Neo-Classical/Romantic/Modern/Contemporary, or Paleolithic/Mesolithic/Neolithic/Bronze Age/Iron Age/Archaic/Classical/Hellenistic).

- A tendency to see individual works of art or individual artifacts as examples of types (for example, landscape, still-life, or portrait paintings, or architecture, sculpture, or small finds).

In this talk, I will focus on the classical world of the ancient Greeks and Romans, which is my own area of knowledge and which is the basis of Western civilization. It should be noted, however, that equivalent points could be made when comparing the history of art and archaeology of non-Western cultures, such as those of Asia, Africa or the ancient Americas.

Ok. To begin with, we might point out that, among the ancient texts of the Greeks and Romans that have been preserved to us, there are some passages that we could consider art historical.



Platón, copia del retrato realizado por Silanion hacia el año 370 a.n.e. para la Academia de Atenas.



Tommaso y Jacobo Rodari, Estatua de Plinio el Viejo, fachada del Duomo S. Maria Maggiore, Como, Italia, c. 1600.

In the *Sophist* of Plato(234B), Socrates says:

And so we recognize that he who professes to be able by virtue of a single art (μῦξ τέχνη) to make all things will be able by virtue of the painter's art (τῆ γραφικῆ τέχνη), to make imitations which have the same names as the real things, and by showing the pictures at a distance will be able to deceive the duller ones among young children into the belief that he is perfectly able to accomplish in fact whatever he wishes to do.

[Note that in ancient Greek, there was no word for “art” in the sense that we use the word; the Greek term technē (τέχνη) means “skill” and is used to describe activities as diverse as carpentry, sculpture, or medicine. Technē is opposed to epistēmê (ἐπιστήμη) or “knowledge”.]

Another relevant passage from ancient Greece comes from Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* (3.10), which is a supposed conversation between Socrates and the painter Parrhusius. In this dialog, Socrates uses the "Socratic method" to make Parrhusius agree that "it follows, then, that the sculptor must represent in his figures the activities of the soul."

In Latin literature, an important example of art historical analysis can be found in Book 34 of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. In this part of his encyclopedic work, Pliny offers an extensive discussion of sculpture visible in the city of Rome, a large part of it ancient Greek statuary that had been plundered by Roman generals in their conquest of the Mediterranean and brought back to the capital of the Empire. Pliny's discussion of the sculptural art of Rome has a decidedly modern taste; after a long section on the copper sources used in bronze statuary, Pliny focuses on the political patronage of the statues erected in Rome and the costs involved in their constructions. In chapter 19, Pliny gives a history of Classical Greek sculptors, from Phidias to Myron to Lysippos, paying attention to who studied under whom and to the rivalries between the various Classical Greek sculptors. 5 Among the statues that Pliny highlights for discussion is the Diadumenos of Polykleitos, which he says was “the Model statue, and from which, as from a sort of standard, they study the lineaments: so that he, of all men, is thought in one work of art to have exhausted all the resources of art.” Pliny also discusses Lysippos' body scraper ("Apoxyomenos"), which Marcus Agrippa brought to Rome and established in the new baths he built; when Emperor Tiberius moved the Apoxyomenos to his bedroom, replacing it with a copy, the people of Rome objected and clamored for the statue’s return, which Tiberius was forced to do. About Lysippos Pliny says:

He is considered to have contributed very greatly to the art of statuary by expressing the details of the hair, and by making the head smaller than had been done by the ancients, and the body more graceful and less bulky, a method by which his statues were made to appear taller. The Latin language has no appropriate name for that "symmetry," which he so attentively observed in his new and hitherto untried method of modifying the squareness observable in the ancient statues. Indeed, it was a common saying of his, that other artists made men as they actually were, while he made them as they appeared to be. One peculiar characteristic of his work, is the finish and minuteness which are observed in even the smallest details.



Copia del Diadumenos de Policelio, c. 100 a.n.e. De Delos. Mármol, A. 1,95m. Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Atenas.



Copia romana del Apoxyomenos de Lysippus, Siglo I n.e. Mármol, A. 2,05m. Encontrado en Trastevere, Roma, 1875. Museo Pio-Clementino, Vatican.

The handful of references to art in classical literature tends to emphasize how artists imitate nature. Pliny, for example, reports that the classical Greek painter Eupompus "when asked which of his predecessors he set out to take as a model, he pointed to a multitude of men, and replied that it was nature itself, and no artist, who set out to imitate." Apart from Plato's interest in artists imitating souls, nowhere in ancient literature is there a notion of artists expressing themselves, using their art to make great statements about the human condition. There were no "tortured artists" in antiquity





Apollo Belvedere, c. 120–140 n.e.. Mármol, A. 2,24 m. Descubierto en Anzio, 1489. Vatican Museums.



«Grupo Laocoonte». Mármol, copia según un original helenístico de c. 200 a.n.e.. Encontrado en las Termas de Trajano, 1506. Vatican Museums.

It is not until we reach the Renaissance that we begin to see this notion of artists using their art to express a deep “meaning”. The rediscovery of classical antiquity in Florence and other cities in northern Italy led to the development of humanism so characteristic of the Renaissance. This rediscovery involved not only the ancient Greek texts that influenced this humanism, but also the ancient Roman statues, such as the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoön and his sons, which Pliny (N.H. 36.5) described as “a work that must be preferred to all others whether in painting or sculpture.” (Both the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoön Group were brought to Paris in 1798 by Napoleon and installed in the new Louvre Museum before being returned to the Vatican in 1816.)

I am sure I do not need to tell this group that the true beginnings of art history as a discipline are found in Renaissance Italy, starting with the Florentine sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455), whose 1447 *I Commentarii* presents a discussion about the lives of famous artists from Giotto to, immodestly, himself. Ghiberti’s work was followed by the *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects) by Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), the second, 1568, edition of which has become one of the seminal texts of art history.



Anonymous, *Retrato de Johann Joachim Winckelmann contra el paisaje clásico*, después de 1760. Óleo sobre lienzo, 71 cm × 99 cm. Stadtschloss, Weimar.



Hubert Robert, *Un disegnatore nella Galleria Capitolina*, 1762-1763. Tiza sobre papel, 45.7 × 81 cm. Castillo real, Varsovia.

It was another early art historian, the German Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) who first applied the categories of style on a broad and systematic basis to art history; Winckelmann's 1764 *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (History of Art in Antiquity) defined the art of a civilization in terms of organic growth, maturity, and decline. Winckelmann, who served as Vatican Prefect of Antiquities under Pope Clement XIII, was the first scholar to differentiate Roman copies from ancient Greek statues, and by emphasizing—idealizing—the importance of classical Greek art played a key role in the development of the neoclassical movement in Europe. In his 1755 *Pensamientos sobre la imitación de las obras griegas en pintura y escultura*, Winckelmann wrote: "The general and most distinctive characteristics of Greek masterpieces are, finally, a noble simplicity and a quiet grandeur, both in posture and expression." About Greek art, Winckelmann also said: "The expression of such nobility of the soul goes far beyond the representation of beautiful nature. The artist had to feel the strength of this spirit in himself and then impart it to his marble. . . . Wisdom extended her hand to art and imbued her figures with more than ordinary souls."



Arriba a la izquierda: Peplos Kore, c. 530 a.n.e., Museo de la Acrópolis, Atenas; arriba a la derecha: arquero escita desde el frontón oeste del Templo de Afeia, Egina, c. 500 a.n.e., Glytothek, Múnich. Medio: Chico rubio, c. 480 a.n.e., Museo de la Acrópolis, Atenas; Fondo: Prima Porta Augustus, 1ro siglo n.e., Museos Vaticanos.

In part, the “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” that Wincklemann saw in ancient Greek statuary was due to the fact that ancient statues dug up from the ground



had lost their original painted surfaces. A recent exhibition, *Chroma*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, has highlighted how bright were the colors on ancient Greek and Roman statues. Considering how the ancient Greek statues had originally been painted, we could consider this art as more garish than nobly simple!

"Well, Dr. McClellan," I can hear some of you think, "Are you going to spend all day talking about art history? What about archaeology?"

Okay. Let's turn our attention to archaeology now.



Pietro Fabris, Excavación del Templo de Isis en Pompeya, de William Hamilton, *Campi Phlegraei: Observations on the Volcanoes of the Two Sicilies*, Naples, 1776. Grabado coloreado a mano.

Digging in the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum had been going on since the 16th century, but it was not until the military engineer Karl Weber carried out studies on the sites from 1750 to 1764 under the patronage of Don Carlos, the king of Naples, that the excavation of these cities buried by the 79 C.E. eruption of Vesuvius began to be systematized. However, the aim of the first excavations of Herculaneum (begun in 1738) and Pompeii (begun in 1748) was to produce objects of art historical interest— buildings, sculptures, wall paintings, inscriptions—and not to study the sites for what they might reveal about Roman imperial culture or to discover more modest objects that might shed light on how the ordinary people of that culture lived their lives.

Johann Winklemann frequently visited the excavations of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and his reports on them in 1762 and 1764 were the first notifications that the rest of Europe had of the discoveries that were being made there.



David Allen, *Sir William Hamilton*, 1775. Óleo sobre lienzo, 226 × 180 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London.



Prefacio do *Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman antiquities from the cabinet of the Hon'ble. Wm. Hamilton, His Britannic Majesty's envoy extraordinary at the Court of Naples*, cuatro volúmenes, 1766-1776 (texto de Pierre-François Hugues d'Hancarville, con contribución de Winckelmann y otros)

Another frequent visitor to Herculaneum and Pompeii was Sir William Hamilton, who was the British ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples from 1764 to 1798. Hamilton was very interested in antiques, and he accumulated a large collection of archaic and classical Greek vases, buying them from Etruscan and southern Italian tomb robbers. Hamilton sold part of his collection of ancient Greek vases to the British Museum in 1772. A second shipment of his Greek vessels was lost at sea when the ship carrying him, HMS Colossus, sank off the coast of Sicily in 1798; some 30,000 fragments of that second collection have been discovered underwater and have now entered the collections of the British Museum.



Cerámica griega antigua en el Museo Británico

And the history of archaeology in Spain similarly began with antiquarians who focused on classical antiquities and ancient sites recorded in classical literature. In the 16th century, King Philip II commissioned the historian Ambrose de Morales (1513-1593) to produce a study of the ancient cities of Spain, which De Morales completed in 1575 with his *Discurso general de las antigüedades de España, en Las antigüedades de España que van nombradas en la Coronica con las averiguaciones de sus sitios y nombres antiguos* (subtitled «Discurso general del Autor, donde se enseña todo lo que a estas averiguaciones pertenece para bien hacerlas, y entender las antigüedades, y otras cosas . . . » ). And as in other parts of Europe, during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries aristocrats and clergy accumulated collections of antiquities, mostly from casual finds. As Gloria Mora observed:

... estos grandes coleccionistas se identificaban con los retratos que solían poseer de los hombres ilustres (*viri illustres*) de la Antigüedad, considerados modelos de virtudes cívicas y morales, haciéndose representar como ellos para transmitir una imagen de poder.

Mora sees a nationalist motivation behind this first, antiquarian, stage of Spanish archaeology:



... The ultimate purpose of antiquarian studies was to help the elaboration of a National History, and it responds both to the humanist admiration for Classical Antiquity and to the idea that it was possible to use its vestiges to defend ideas of the present. (Ruiz Zapatero et al., 2017, p. 17.)



Ambrosio de Morales, *Discurso general de las antigüedades de España, en Las antigüedades de España que van nombradas en la Cronica con las averiguaciones de sus sitios y nombres antiguos*, Alcalá de Henares, 1575.



Colección arqueológica de los Padres Escolapios de Yecla ( Murcia ), donde se observan esculturas y piezas arqueológicas procedentes del Cerro de los Santos. (Gonzalo Ruiz Zapatero et al., 2017, p. 36 fig. 12.)

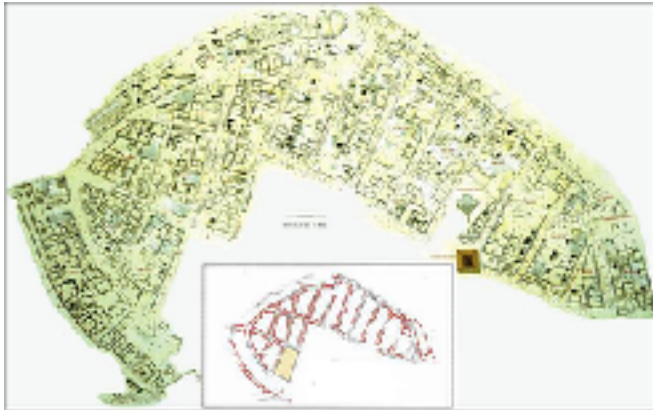
Given this, it is not surprising that the first archaeological excavations in Spain were at sites that appear in classical literature. Among the most important of these are:

- Italica: Birthplace of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian, this Roman colony was abandoned in the 12th century CE., after which it was continuously looted for building material. In 1810, under Napoleonic occupation, the site was protected, although looting continued; in the 1820's, Nathan Wetherell, a British textile merchant in Seville, dug at the site and removed some inscriptions which, along with the inscriptions he removed from the monastery of San Isidoro del Campo are now in the British Museum. In 1839-1840, Ibo de la Cortina y Roperto conducted excavations in the city's forum, the first formal archaeological excavations in Spain.

- Numancia: This Celtiberian settlement, famous for its heroic resistance during the Roman siege of Scipio Aemilianus in 133 BCE, recorded in the works of Polybius, Strabo, Sallust, and many other Roman authors, and the theme of Cervantes' 1582 play *El cerco de Numancia*. It was first explored by the Spanish engineer Eduardo Saavedra y Moragas in 1853. Subsequent excavations were carried out in 1861-1867 and again in 1905-1912, the latter led by the German archaeologist Adolf Schulten and, later, by the "father of Spanish archaeology" José Ramon Melida y Alinari.
- Empúries: The Greek city of Ampurias, founded in the 6th century BCE by settlers from Phokaia and later an important Roman city, was excavated by Emili Gandia i Ortega from 1908 to 1937, in collaboration with Josep Puig i Cadafalch and, later, Pere Bosch-Gimpera. Since 1947, an annual archaeological field school has been held at the site which has trained a large number of the professional archaeologists in Spain.
- Mérida: Emerita Augusta, one of the most impressive preserved Roman cities in Spain, was founded by Augustus in 25 BCE. The first excavations, in the Roman theater, were made by José Ramon Melida and Alinari in 1910.



Italica, primeras excavaciones 1839-1840.



Numancia, primeras excavaciones, 1853, 1861-1867, 1905-1912.



Joaquín Sorolla, *Retrato de José Ramón Mélida y Alinari*, 1904. Óleo sobre lienzo, 0,95 x 0,59 m. Hispanic Society of America, New York.



Empúries, primera excavación, 1908.



Mérida, primera excavación, 1910.

It should be noted that, in addition to these first excavations at classical sites in Spain, the archaeology of prehistoric Spain also had its origin in the nineteenth century. In 1862, the Spanish mining engineer and pioneer of Spanish prehistory Casiano de Prado (1797-1866), together with the French geologists and paleontologists Louis Lartet and Edouard de Verneuil, discovered stone axes associated with the bones of extinct animals at the San Isidro site near Madrid. A few years later, Lartet carried out excavations in the caves of Álava and the Sierra de Cameros (La Rioja). In 1864, the Spanish Anthropological Society was founded after the French model, and one of its founding members, Juan Vilanova y Piera (who had been Professor of Natural History at



the University of Oviedo before becoming Professor of Geology and Paleontology at the University of Madrid) carried out important paleontological studies, publishing them in his 1872 *Orígenes, naturaleza y antigüedad del hombre* and in his 1876 *La Creación. Historia natural*, which was the first Spanish exposition of Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection.



María Sanz de Sautuola y Escalante (1871-1946).



Bisonte, cueva de Altamira, Santillana, Santander.

In 1879, the wealthy naturalist Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola y Pedrueca was digging in the floor of the Altamira cave, located on his estate, when his daughter Maria famously declared: "Look, dad! Painted cows!"—the first Paleolithic cave paintings discovered in Spain. Although they were initially discarded as fakes at an international congress in Lisbon in 1880, after the discovery of similar cave paintings in France, the authenticity of the cave paintings at Altamira was established, although only after Sautuola's death..

[Two random facts about Sanz de Sautuola that I love and I can't help but share here: Marcelino was the first person to introduce the Australian eucalyptus tree in Spain, a tree that now covers almost all the hills of Cantabria and Asturias. And the second fact: Sautuola's daughter, Maria, married into the rich Botin family and was the grandmother of the founders of Banco Santander.]

[Another digression: Every standard art history textbook begins with an image of the cave paintings from Altamira or Lascaux and a discussion of what they can mean, from the old idea of Abbé Breuil that they served as sympathetic magic to help in a hunt to the more current theory that they were created by hallucinatory shamans trying to make contact with the spiritual world. Some textbook authors, such as Yayo Aznar Almazan and Jesus Lopez Diaz (2014, p. 19), are careful to point out: “If we think of prehistoric paintings such as those found in the cave of Altamira in Spain or Lascaux in France, we cannot help but question the fact that they could be conceived as mere works of art as we now understand them.” However, the fact that these images appear in the first pages of art history books reflects a sense in the general public that these cave paintings are art, equivalent to Michelangelo’s *Last Supper* or Picasso’s *Guernica*. One more point on this aside: as Aznar Almazán y López Díaz (2015, p. 20) say: “Although it is a simple conjecture, we can think that these paintings were conceived as objects that possessed a definite function. . .” While it is certainly not controversial to say that these cave paintings served some function or functions among the Upper Paleolithic hunter-gatherer groups who produced them for 10,000 years, it seems difficult for many people to understand the simple fact that, in the absence of any written documentation or oral histories, we simply cannot know what those functions were.

There are, simply, some aspects of the past that we cannot know, no matter how much we dig. Our popular media, however, seem addicted to calling everything about the archaeological record a “mystery.” It bothers me no end to read about the “mystery” of the Egyptian pyramids or the “mystery” of Stonehenge. There is no “mystery” about the pyramids of Giza, as we know from historical records exactly when, how, and why they were built; in addition, we can use models of state formation derived from anthropological theory to say that the construction of these enormous sepulchral monuments erected during the 26<sup>th</sup> century BCE served to consolidate the emerging power of the pharaoh god-kings. While we do not have such detailed records for the construction of Stonehenge, we can similarly postulate that the construction of this astronomically oriented complex served to consolidate the emerging Neolithic chiefdoms of the Salisbury Plain in England. I’m sorry, there is no “mystery.” No need to call in extraterrestrial aliens.



Las pirámides de Menkaure (2510 a.n.e.), Khafre (2570 a.n.e.), y Khufu (2560 a.n.e.), Giza.



Stonehenge, c. 3100–2000 a.n.e.



Ilustración de mediados del siglo XIV de un manuscrito del *Roman de Brut* por Wace, que muestra a un gigante ayudando al mago Merlín a construir Stonehenge, Biblioteca Británica (Egerton MS 3028).

Okay, digression over. Let's get back to Spanish archaeology

Ruiz Zapatero et al. (2017) date their “The pioneering stage of Spanish archaeology” to 1867-1912. 1867 was undoubtedly a crucial year for Spanish archaeology. In that year, the National Archaeological Museum was established in Madrid, with the aim of

... to gather and organize the historical monuments that speak to the eye, incorruptible witnesses of the ages that were, and irrefutable



proofs of the state of industry, science, customs, institutions and general culture of the country in the various epochs of its history.

and

to gather these vestiges, which help so much to clarify the annals of those times that providentially came preparing the paths of modern civilization.

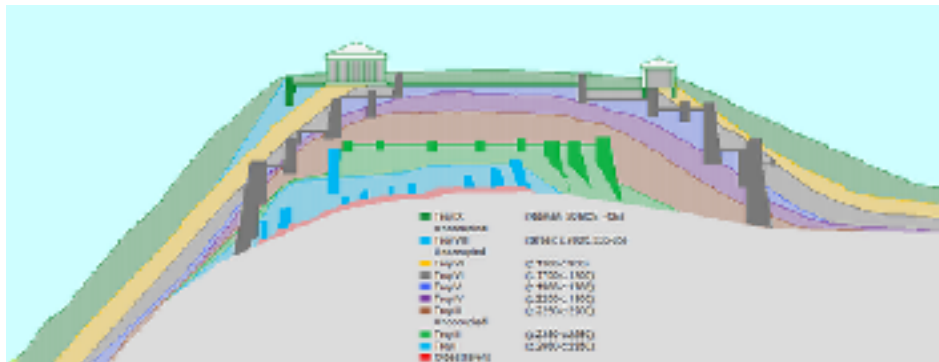


Sala Clásica del Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Viñeta publicada en *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, no 33, 1872, pp. 520-521. (Ruiz Zapatero et al., 2017, p. 34, fig. 10).

The creation of the National Archaeological Museum was the culmination of a process that had begun two decades earlier with the creation of the Provincial Commissions of Monuments in 1844, which convened provincial museums to recover, catalog, and safeguard cultural assets from the Spanish *desamortización* (confiscations).

In her last year as Queen of Spain, the government of Isabel II took the first steps toward the elaboration of a General Plan of Excavations. “The government requested, by means of a Royal Order of . . . 1868, a report to the Royal Academy of History on the drafting of a Bill on Excavations and Antiquities and, in particular, a General Plan for Excavations” (Ruiz Zapatero et al., 2017, p. 33). This report finally led to the 1912 Law of Archaeological Excavations for “the defense of artistic vestiges that link the memory of our past glories, constituting an irreplaceable element of national wealth.”

And in 1867–1868 systematic excavations began in the regions of Leon, Zaragoza, Cordoba, and other parts of Spain, initiating a process of archaeological investigations that continues to this day.



La excavación y la estratigrafía de Schliemann en Hissarlik, Turquía.



Heinrich y Sofía Schliemann (con parte de del «Tesoro de Príamo»), y «la Máscara de Agamenón».

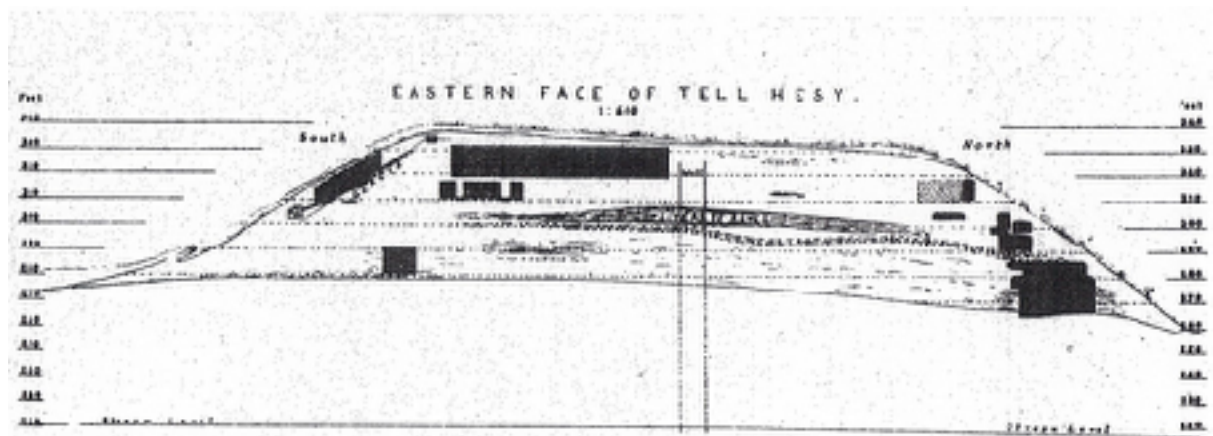
Meanwhile, when these first excavations were taking place in Spain, an important development in the history of archaeology was taking place in the Near East.

In 1870, the businessman and amateur archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann began digging at the site of Hissarlik in Turkey, convinced that he had discovered Homer's Troy.

While there is general agreement that Hissarlik was Troy, no one believes today, as Schliemann did, in the historicity of the Trojan War as recounted in Homer's mythological poem. On the other hand, while Schliemann thought that, of the nine cities superimposed one on top of the other that he unearthed at Hissarlik, his Troy III, with its impressive defensive walls covered by a layer of destruction, was Homer's Troy, we now know that Schliemann's Troy III is a thousand years older than the time when the ancient Greeks would have dated the Trojan War. Schliemann lost his permit to dig at Troy after smuggling the so-called Priam Treasure out of Turkey and, in 1876, began digging in Mycenae in Greece, where he discovered a series of shaft graves just inside the monumental walls of this late Bronze Age city. With his faith in the historicity of Homer, Schliemann believed that he had found the burial place of the great Achaean hero, Agamemnon. Once again, Schliemann's chronology was wrong, as the burials in Grave Circle A date to c. 1600 B.C., some four hundred years before the supposed time of the Trojan War. (There is also evidence that the unscrupulous Schliemann may have falsified the so-called "Agamemnon's Mask" by taking one of the gold death masks found in Grave Circle A and altering it to look more like a 19th-century idea of a great Greek hero.)



Máscaras de oro de Grave Circle A, Micenas,, c. 1600 a.n.e.



Sir Flinders Petrie y la estratigrafía de Tell el Hesi, Israel.

Although Heinrich Schliemann helped bring archaeology to the popular imagination perhaps more than anyone before him, his horribly destructive methods of excavation, not to mention his shenanigans with the “Priam’s Treasure” and “The Mask of Agamemnon”, makes it inappropriate to honor Schliemann as the “Father of Archaeology” as he is often called. One person with a better claim for this title was Sir Flinders Petrie, a British archaeologist who excavated in Egypt and Palestine and who was the first to recognize that understanding the stratigraphy of a site is the key to proper excavation; Petrie was the first archaeologist to use stratigraphy to develop a chronological seriation of artifacts, something that remains fundamental in all archaeological research today.





Dibujo de estratigrafía de Almizaraque ( Almería ) por L. Siret ( excavaciones de 1903-1906 ). Ruiz Zapatero et al. (2017), p. 60.

Petrie's ideas on stratigraphy soon spread throughout the archaeological community. Here in Spain, the Belgian-Spanish archaeologist Luis Siret y Cels helped develop the stratigraphic sequences of archaeological sites in southern Iberia from the Paleolithic to the Iron Age.

I know I have spoken for too long about the history of archaeology, but I need to point out a few other important developments in the discipline before concluding this lecture. In the 1960's, British and American archaeologists such as Lord Colin Renfrew, Gordon Willey, and Lewis Binford rejected the historical-cultural model of archaeology, where the objective of excavation is the discovery of artifacts of historical or historical-artistic interest. These "New Archaeologists", rather, argued that archaeology, as I've said, is a branch of anthropology, and that the purpose of excavation is to obtain information about human cultures of the past. In "New" or "Processual" archaeology, one does not dig simply to find out what is under the ground; one mounts an excavation, rather, to test anthropological theories about past cultures.



**FIG. 4**  
 El firmamento de la teoría arqueológica contemporánea. Con las cuatro grandes «galaxias»: 1) arqueología histórico-cultural, 2) Nueva arqueología o arqueología procesual, 3) arqueología postprocesual y 4) arqueología materialista, histórica o marxista. Se indican las tradiciones arqueológicas más relevantes de cada paradigma teórico y algunos de sus investigadores más representativos.

Ruiz Zapatero et al. (2017), p. 101.

During the 1980s, as happened in many other social sciences, post-structural theories developed in France by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and others led to a rejection of the scientific approach of procedural archaeology. Post-processual archaeology rejects the notion of objective observations, holding that all our observations about the past are subjective. It was also at this time that feminist archaeology and Marxist archaeology developed, the first trying to give voice to a gender often overlooked in our reconstructions of the past, the second, historical-materialistic approach, being particularly popular in post-Franco Spain.

Another characteristic of post-processual archaeology in recent decades is the rejection of the culture-history model of cultural change, where innovations have been seen as moving from one region to another without changes, like the Neolithic Revolution which spread throughout Europe from the Fertile Crescent or the emergence of urban civilizations that were seen to have come as an *ex oriente lux*. Post-processualists, rather, see such developments as moderated by indigenous groups that are making cultural changes to meet their own social needs. Here in Spain, for example, the emergence of indigenous Celtiberian, Tartessian, or Castro cultures is explained by local groups reacting to the new commercial opportunities offered by the establishment of Greek and Phoenician colonies in the northeast and south of the peninsula.





Ullastret (Baix Empordà), 6to al 3er siglos a.n.e.



Castro de Campo Torres, Gijón, 6to siglo a.n.e.–3er siglo n.e.



La Dama de Baza, 4to siglo a.n.e.

Okay. It is time for me to begin to wrap up this lecture by returning to the statement I made at the beginning, namely that the two disciplines—art history and archaeology—have come together again in our post-modern era to take similar, though not identical, approaches. We will look at two works to see how recent art-historical analyses have focused on their broader contexts in ways that resemble an anthropological-archaeological approach.

We start with perhaps the most famous painting in Spain, Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. Hundreds, if not thousands, of art historians have written about this painting, focusing on its amazing composition, with the self-portrait of the painter behind his canvas, the Infanta Margaret Teresa surrounded by her entourage in the center, and King Philip V and Queen Mariana—the sitters for the painting Velázquez's painting—

reflected in the mirror on the back wall. Art historians have pointed out Velázquez's incredible use of the qualities of color, light and surface in the painting and his multiple focal points leading to the vanishing point of the Queen's chamberlain mounting the stairs behind the open door in the back.

In 1965, Michel Foucault wrote an essay on *Las Meninas*, seeing it as an early sign of a break between classical and modern worldviews (*episteme*): "Perhaps there exists, in this painting by Velázquez, the representation as it were, of Classical representation, and the definition of the space it opens up to us. [. . .] And representation, freed finally from the relation that was impeding it, can offer itself as representation in its pure form." *Las Meninas*, for Foucault, is not only a metanarrative in that it represents a new worldview, it is a metanarrative in being a representation-within-a-representation, a *mise-en-scène* where we, the spectators of the painting, have become the sitters of the portrait, with the artist at his canvas looking out at us. Inspired by Foucault, other scholars have highlighted how the artificiality of this painting is making a statement about the difference between representation and reality, just as Cervantes did in his book-within-a-book *Don Quixote*, first published half a century before Velázquez painted *Las Meninas*.



Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656. Óleo sobre lienzo, 320,5 cm × 281,5 cm. Museo del Prado.



Recently, other scholars have taken a more historical-materialistic approach to their analysis of this masterpiece. The historical anthropologist Byron Hamann (2010) has seen the painting through the lens of postcolonial theory, noting that the búcaro jug presented to the Infanta, the silver tray on which the Menina presents it, and the cochineal-dyed red tapestry above the reflected images of the king and queen, are all products of colonial possessions. Kelly Grovier (2020) has taken Hamann's analysis a step further, noting that the minerals added to the búcaro clay, designed to give a pleasant fragrance to the liquids it contained, would also produce, when the rim of the jar was nibbled—something that women of the age did to lighten their skin color—a slightly hallucinogenic effect. Grovier concludes:

Suddenly, we see *Las Meninas* for what it is – not just a snapshot of a moment in time, but a soulful meditation on the evanescence of the material world and the inevitable evaporation of self. Over the course of his nearly four decades of service to the court, Velázquez [*sic*] witnessed the gradual diminishment of Philip IV's dominion. The world was slipping away. The crumbly *búcaro*, a dissoluble trophy of colonial exploits and dwindling imperial power that has the power to reveal realms that lie beyond, is the perfect symbol of that diminuendo and the letting go of the mirage of now.

Another example of a famous work of art that has recently been reinterpreted along historical-materialistic lines: the temple of Athena Parthenos erected on the Acropolis of Athens between 447 BCE. and 432 BCE. Most of the original sculptural



decoration of the Parthenon no longer exists—Phidias’ famous gold and ivory statue of Athena was dismantled in antiquity and much of the marble sculptures that adorned the temple were destroyed in 1687, when during the Morea War the Venetians lobbed a bomb into the Parthenon, which the Ottomans were using as an ammunition depot. Almost all of the Parthenon’s sculptural decorations that survived that destruction—mainly the sculpted frieze surrounding the inner portico of the temple—was carried off by Bruce, Lord of Elgin, who sold them to the British Museum in 1816.



Partenón, Friso del Este., 443–437 a.n.e. Mármol Pentélico, A. 1 m. Museo Británico, Block E IV.



Long considered the epitome of High Classical Greek art, the Parthenon frieze represents an Athenian procession, generally interpreted as the Greater Panathenaic procession, although others have suggested that it represents the mythological foundation of the city of Athens. On the east side of this frieze, seated Olympic gods watch the procession. Most art historians who have discussed the Parthenon frieze have emphasized its “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur, both in posture and expression” (but, yes, the frieze had originally been painted in bright, garish colors!).

Other scholars, however, have taken a more historical-materialistic approach to their interpretation of the Athenian Parthenon, noting that it was built during the Thirty Years Peace, between the First and Second Peloponnesian Wars, using money Athens had coerced from the so-called Delian League—allies of Athens who were forced to pay tribute to the city. The Parthenon, which housed the treasury of the Delian League, was thus a monument to Athenian imperialism and a warning to Athen’s enemy Sparta. On the eastern portion of the Parthenon frieze, an archon in charge of the procession turns back to look at it, with the seated god Hermes behind him, his divine foot partially overlapped with that of the Athenian. This work of art, then, is saying that the Athenians were, literally, on the same level as the Olympic gods.

The so-called Elgin marbles in the British Museum take us to our last topic, the looting of archaeological artifacts. (I do not want to dwell on this, but there are no good arguments to support the position that the Parthenon sculptures now in London should not be returned to Athens, which has built a beautiful museum on the slopes of the Acropolis to house them. Spain is a signatory partner of the International Association for the Reunification of Parthenon Sculptures.)



La Guardia Civil incauta antigüedades saqueadas en Valencia, 2018.

The illegal collection of antiquities, especially from underwater sites, was widespread in Spain in the 1970’s (Rodríguez Temiño and Roma Valdés, 2015), but the

systematic looting of antiquities by organized gangs was never as much of a problem here as it has been in Italy and in war-torn countries like Syria, Iraq and now, sadly, Ukraine, although looting still occurs occasionally in Spain, especially in Andalusia and Valencia. (It has been said that the international trade in illicit antiquities is only matched by the trafficking of illegal drugs, although illegal drug users know they are violating the law, while many of the people who buy illicit antiquities do not know they are doing something illegal.)



Tesoro de Caldas de Reis, c. 1.200–1.000 a. n. e.. Oro. Hallado en 1940, As Silgadas (Caldas de Reis, Pontevedra), Museo de Pontevedra.

We have seen that, by considering the social and cultural context of a work of art in addition to the traditional analysis of the formal characteristics of that work, art historians have moved closer to the analytical approaches taken by processual and post-processual archaeologists. And we have seen that the discipline of archaeology has moved away from its traditional role as the producers of objects of historical or artistic interest. But, in the case of antiquities that find their way into the art market clandestinely, the link between archaeological artifacts and the art world has still not been severed.

No matter what its intrinsic or artistic value, an artifact removed from its context without proper documentation is, archaeologically speaking, almost worthless. This goes for antiquities that were found accidentally, as well as those that were looted. Three cases in point:



The Treasure of Caldas de Reis was dug up in an agricultural field in Galicia in 1940. The farm worker who uncovered this cache of gold objects and the manager of the estate divided up the loot evenly with the intent to sell off pieces little by little. After a some objects were sold, the Guardia Civil was alerted to this discovery and, in 1941, the pair and the intermediaries who sold pieces were arrested and the remaining gold objects, with a total weight of 15 kilograms, was placed in the Pontevedra museum. It is unclear exactly how much gold was originally found, with estimates between 27 and 50 kilograms. In any case, the Treasure of Caldas de Reis had the most gold found in any archaeological site in Europe, at least twice the amount of gold that Schliemann found at Mycenae. And yet Caldas de Reis remains virtually unknown, even among archaeologists specializing in the Late Bronze Age of Europe. I had never heard of it until I happened to visit the Pontevedra museum; the [wikipedia.es](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tesoro_de_Caldas_de_Reis) article on the contemporary “Tesoro de Villena” erroneously describes that Alicante hoard: “Esa magnitud [casi 10 kilos] lo convierte en el tesoro de vajilla áurea más importante de España y el segundo de toda Europa, solo superado por el de las Tumbas Reales de Micenas, Grecia.” (“That magnitude [almost 10 kilos] makes it the most important golden tableware treasure in Spain and the second in all of Europe, only surpassed by that of the Royal Tombs of Mycenae, Greece.”).

But because the Treasure of Caldas de Reis was discovered accidentally and not as a result of archaeological field research, we have many unanswered questions about it. We can assume that it was a hoard, presumably intentionally buried during a time of danger. And because the gold cups in this hoard have the same, biconical, shape as Late Bronze ceramics in Galicia, we can assume that these gold objects were locally produced. But, without a broader archaeological context, we have no idea of who mined the gold, who fashioned the gold into these cups and rings, or what cultural purposes they served.

Had the Treasure of Caldas de Reis been discovered by archaeologists—or at least not uncovered during World War II—it would have been an international sensation. While modern archaeologists are not motivated by finding gold or ancient carved statues, we certainly are not unhappy when we make such spectacular discoveries. Most archaeologists seek a career in academia, and the popular notoriety that comes from making spectacular discoveries goes a long way to help someone obtain a tenured position in a university. But the popular image of the archaeologist as a

swash-buckling Indiana Jones or Laura Croft, risking life and limb to dig up spectacular treasures, just reinforces the culture-history origins of the discipline, and, ironically, helps contribute to archaeological looting.



La Diadema de Moñes, 3ro–2do siglo a.n.e. Oro. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, y el Musée des Antiquités Nationales de Saint Germain-en-Lay.

Like the Treasure of Caldas de Reis, the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the Diadem de Moñes remain murky. Most scholars now believe that it was found by peasants in the region of Piloña in the 1860s before it came into the possession of the collector Sebastián de Soto Cortés (1833-1915) in the 1890s. The fragments of what is perhaps the most important Asturian pre-Roman piece of jewelry are now distributed among the collections of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, the Musée des Antiquités Nationales de Saint Germain-en-Laye, and the Instituto Valencia de Don Juan in Madrid. (Here in our Museo Arqueológico de Asturias in Oviedo, there is only a copy of the two main fragments.)

Art historians who have written about the Diadem de Moñes have focused on its iconography, with the main interpretations seeing it as either a sacrificial scene or as a

reflection of Celtic beliefs related to the Otherworld. But here again, without an archaeological context, there are many fundamental question about the Diadem de Moñes that we simply cannot answer. Was it a personal gift left in a sanctuary? Was it placed in a tomb, and if so was that a burial of a man or a woman?



La Dama de Elche, 4to siglo a.n.e. Caliza, 56 × 45 × 37 cm. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid.

One final example of an archaeological object found by chance: the Lady of Elche. Originally dug up by agricultural laborers at the site of La Acudia (Elche, Alicante) in 1897, the limestone bust passed into the hands of the land's owner, the doctor Manuel Campello, in whose house it was seen by a visiting French archaeologist who arranged for its purchase by the Louvre museum for 4,000 francs—an immense sum at the time. And for forty years, the Lady of Elche was on display in Paris until Franco arranged an exchange of artworks with the Vichy government and, in 1941, the statue was returned to Spain.

And here yet again, not having a precise archaeological context leaves many questions about the Lady of Elche unanswerable. Much of what has been written about this most well known of Iberian statuary has focused on its iconography—on the elaborate jewelry, hairdo, and clothing; scholars have speculated on whether the statue might be a representation of some deity—perhaps an Iberian version of a Punic goddess—or whether it might be a portrait of an aristocrat. In 1995, the art historian John Moffitt published a monograph supporting the old claim that the limestone bust was a

forgery made in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but this calumny has been rejected by the archaeological community, given the similar Iberian statues that were found after the Lady of Elche turned up, such as the Lady of Baza, the Lady of Guardamar, and the Lady of Caudete. In 2005, María Pilar de Luxán of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas studied the traces of paint still adhering to the Lady of Elche statue (yes, it had been painted with garish colors!) and concluded that the pigments were consistent with ancient materials and that no modern pigments had been found; in 2011 Pilar de Luxán undertook an electron microscopy study of the micro-particles found in the large cavity in the back of the statue and concluded that they belong to cremated human bones.

So we do know that the Lady of Elche came from an Punic-Iberian settlement and apparently had been used as a cinerary urn. In 1996, the Universidad de Alicante purchased the site of La Acudia has been excavating there since then. In the region where the Lady of Elche was said to have been found, the Universidad de Alicante team has unearthed a statue of a male warrior, perhaps belonging to a heroön, or hero-shrine. It is a shame that we cannot definitively associate the Lady of Elche with that sanctuary.

I know that I have talked at too great a length on this topic, but I would just like to end by saying that, despite their different approaches, the disciplines of art history and of archaeology will certainly continued to be intertwined. Archaeologists will continue to uncover artifacts that have a role to play in the narrative that art historian construct about our quintessentially human need to express ourselves in the visual arts. And, speaking as an archaeologist, I hope that the community of art historians will do more to help end the trafficking of looted antiquities on the art market. We both need each other.





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