

**„Contemporary faces of the past”
Interdisciplinary conference,
Institute of Prehistory Poznań & ACE
Poznań, 21-22. October 2009**

Conference summary

An interdisciplinary conference „Contemporary faces of the past” was held in the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, on 21-22 October 2009. It was a joint initiative, partially financed by ACE and partially by our national funds. The conference was an integral part of „ACE project” - I research theme, that is „researching the significance of the past”.

We did not expect that it would be of interest for so many people – there were seventeen papers and a lot of people came to listen to them (about 50). The speakers and participants came not only from Poznań, but also from all over the Poland: Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Wrocław, Rzeszów, Lublin, Kraków, Warszawa. We had a pleasure to have as guest also people from „ACE project” who presented their papers – that is Nina Schücker from Frankfurt and Kostas Kasvikis and Eleutheria Theodoroudi from Thessaloniki. Thus, we think it was a success in this respect as a conference was attended not only for speakers but also by a lot of students and old and young scholars and archaeologists from different sectors of archaeology. Moreover, information about this conference appeared also on a website of PAP (Polish Press Agency).

There were four main thematic blocks preceded by an introduction by Arek Marciniak – coordinator of ACE project in Poland, who introduced our conference and presented in more details to the Polish public „ACE project” – its aims and activities undertaken.

1. Theoretical block. In this section there were five papers in which speakers from different perspectives talked about such issues as: who needs the past?; for whom excavations are ?; self-creative role of archaeology in the present; the category of

palimpsest as a form of interaction between the past and the present. Speakers in this section approached and discussed things from different theoretical perspectives and considered many very important aspects of archaeological theory and practice as well as crucial issue of a present-day practice of archaeology not only in Poland, but also worldwide. This section constituted an important „introduction” into following sections.

2. Next section (5 papers) was concerned with the issue of interpretation of the past by archaeologists and by other group of people, considering such important issues as migrationist theories in archaeology; changes in the portraying of the past by archaeologists, but also questions of archaeological heritage – not only the need of its protection, but also in reference to current social expectations and demands.

3. Thursday morning session was in English. Paper of Kostas and Eleutheria presented approaches to cultural diversity in Greece, referring mainly to museum exhibitions, education and forms of interactions between society and museums. Nina in her paper presented the reception of the Teutoburg Forrest Battle by the German public since 16th century until today. These papers were found of great interest for other participants and were vividly discussed.

In this session there were two other papers (in Polish) about archaeological reserves and open-air museums in Poland, namely Biskupin and „Osada VI Oraczy” in Bochnia that constituted a rather practical but very informative site of this conference in respect to presentation of archaeological heritage to the general public.

4. The last session was concerned with relationship between archaeology and media. One paper was dealing with the challenge of new media for archaeological theory and practice and the other one dealt with archaeology in Polish media and press.

After each paper and after the particular section there was a broad and vivid discussion about topics and issues that were touched upon in presentations. So we are really glad that conference did not take a form series of lectures but rather of an interactive discussion with constructive remarks.

The papers presented during a conference will be published in an edited volume what is scheduled for 2010 or 2011. Now we have collected all papers and are about to deliver them to the publisher, that will be „Wydawnictwo Poznańskie”. The language of publication will be Polish (with an exception of foreign speakers) but each paper will be provided with a long summary in English.

To sum up, conference „Contemporary faces of the past” was a successful and needed initiative that was trying to research the significance of the past in present. Hopefully it will be soon materialized in a form of publication.

Michał Pawleta, co-organizer of conference.
(photos by Anna Zalewska)