



The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (UISPP) participates in World Logic Day

The International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences (UISPP) aims to bring together researchers from around the world who are working to reconstruct societies of the past, prehistory and protohistory in their climatic, flora and fauna environment. As such, UISPP is a member of the CIPSH and the International Academic Union.

Prehistoric research is based on the results of excavations of archaeological sites and studies of preserved remains (typology, technology, archaeozoology, archaeobotany, human and animal paleontology, paleogenetic, absolute dating, physical-chemical analyses, art, etc.).

Prehistoric and protohistoric archaeology therefore has a multidisciplinary vocation by nature, integrating the Exact Sciences (mathematics, physics, chemistry), Earth Sciences (geology, geomorphology, zoology, botany, paleontology, climatology), Human Sciences (history, ethnology, geography, sociology, philology, art history) and Engineering Sciences (field methods and techniques, quantitative analysis, computerization).

Any work of systemic reconstruction of past societies is the result of scientific reasoning that develops an argument based on the criticism of data (taphonomy of material remains), the formalization of information, the identification of structures and their iterative enrichment aimed at the reconstruction of systems, the analysis of anomalies, the modeling of societies and their simulation, their validation or refutation by new results of excavations and studies.

What we understand Logic, in the context of this day, is the implementation of a formalized and explicit epistemology, applying to prehistory and protohistory a scientific process of creating knowledge about the past societies, that is, in the Auguste Comte sense of the term, a process not of establishing a definitive truth but of permanent corrections of errors of research.

Prehistory is a Science that emerged in the 19th century by encountering considerable difficulties in establishing the truth about the early age of Humanity, in the face of the creationist dogma of the religions of the Book. The first golden age of prehistory at the end of the 19th century allowed the development of a first global chronology of humanity. The second golden age, in the 1960s and 1990s, saw considerable input from other sciences, including Earth sciences, Exact sciences and computer science.

From the 1990s, the emergence of postmodernism from Anglo-Saxon world had a negative impact on prehistoric research, such as:

- The emergence of hermeneutics replacing the logic of scientific reasoning,



- The use of deconstructions as spectacular as sterile, where it would have been necessary to make clarifications, corrections of errors, more or less important questionings or targeted refutations.
- The entrisment of explicit or hidden ideologies, transforming archaeology into a land of militancy or activism for causes unrelated to the field of Science.

The success of the development of archaeology in general and prehistory in particular since the 1950s has had both positive and negative aspects, and for these we can cite three of them:

- University training in archaeology is too often separated between departments of Humanities (which attract students with insufficient basic training in Exact and Earth sciences, and thereby have significant inadequacies in manipulating concepts, performing calculations and developing logical reasoning) and Earth sciences (where students having often difficulty understanding the complexity of human societies and going beyond the quantitative accumulation of technical information),
- The hyper-specialization of the profession (a phenomenon that also affects the entire scientific research world) whose consequences have a severe impact for archaeology because it makes it more difficult or impossible to integrate the results and their synthesis for the reconstruction of human societies,
- The emergence of scientific marketing whose original good intentions were to energize research, but whose side effects are increasingly pervasive, such as too short-term projects with cosmetic results (while the constant of time in archaeology, including excavations, is about ten years), the search for sensationalism in publications (especially in some international high-scoring scientific journals), in their mediation in print and television documentaries, and finally in their relay in social networks. The editorial success of some books, which reflect more the postmodern projection of an historian of recent periods than the popularizing scholarship of a prehistorian, is thus revealing.

The 21st century, spiritual or religious, a phrase that André Malraux would have said, sees indeed the return or emergence of various movements of thought that have in common their opposition to rationalism and critical thinking, and which heralds the return of an inquisition that is expressed through denunciations, prohibitions and even condemnations via social networks (cancel culture). For prehistory, the return of creationism and the negation of evolution, the perverted recovery or destruction of archaeological sites or artifacts whose presence could refute a rewriting of the past by a State, a political party, a religion or a minority, and finally the threats, exclusion and repression of academics who do not submit to them are all dangers that the scientific community will have to face in the 21st century.

Faced with this rise of threats, Science must rediscover its enthusiasms, its high level of requirements and its unity, which it has experienced in the great moments of its past, near or far.