

Discussing the Participatory Museum:  
Network of School Archaeological Clubs

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Abstract

In this paper we describe the network of archaeology clubs in Portuguese schools. This is a project coordinated by the National Museum of Archaeological which has as main objective the promotion of the museum collections and national archaeological heritage through a set of initiatives that involve the creation of teaching materials, temporary exhibitions, virtual exhibitions that are accessible through an online platform.

Keywords: archaeology clubs, archaeological heritage, museum, schools, education

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## **1-Introduction**

This paper presents a project on Network of School Archaeological Clubs in Portuguese schools under the coordination of the National Museum of Archaeology (MNA).

The museum intends to promote its collections and Archaeological Heritage through a set of initiatives that involve the creation of teaching materials, temporary exhibitions, virtual exhibitions which are accessible to all through an online platform ([www.clubesdearqueologia.org](http://www.clubesdearqueologia.org)).

With the advent of the twenty-first century, museums are questioning their role in society. Museums are starting to see communication as pole generator and creator of education and culture (Garcia, 2003). Schools have a role as an agent of change in society. The Portuguese school has been the scene of an increasing number of educational experiences that link a common goal: improving the education system. It is this perspective the archaeological clubs are an importante part in the dialogue between the Museum and School. They try to approach and establish a network of cooperation between the museum and schools. This project is about linking educational institutions with a mission on non-formal education (Museum) and intuitions with a mission of formal education (schools). Despite different approaches they converge on a common goal of producing education and culture.

## **2- Network of School Archaeological Clubs: key-conepts**

Archaeology is probably one of the most fascinating scientific disciplines that brings together children, adolescents and adults.

This fascination is closely associated with the mystery of discovery and the image that the media makes of archaeology and archaeologists in general, appears as a mix of adventure, mystery, science and cultural heritage.

- As a kind of adventure treasure hunt and a great crusade in search of a lost civilization in any time or to a single object that holds the secrets of the universe. To the archaeologists is reserved the role of "hero" endowed with knowledge, courage, persistence and remarkable intelligence to decipher the riddles of the past (Antas, 1999). For this image greatly contributed characters "manufactured" Indiana Jones, or more recently in the female version Lara Croft, imported directly from the videogames and the movies.

- How often arise mystery why new interpretations and new issues enigmatic monuments such as the Pre Historic Rock Art, the origins of writing, the statues of Easter Island, the mysteries of the cultures of the Mayans, Incas and Aztecs in particular, the secrets of Stonehenge and megalithic monuments in general and a whole long list of lost cities and cultures (Raposo and Silva, 1996). Students of Portuguese schools are therefore imbued with these stereotypes given by a society dominated by audiovisual culture.

- As a science, archaeology emerged as a scientific field based on archaeological methodology and application of specific methods and techniques used in the exact sciences.

- As Cultural Heritage, because as is mentioned in the Lausanne Charter (ICOMOS, 1990), "The archaeological heritage is an essential witness on the activities of the human past. Their protection and management are taken care of, therefore, essential to enable archaeologists and other experts to its study and interpretation on behalf of and for the benefit of present and future generations. "

Being the social image of Archaeology recognized in society, archaeology clubs do not have to go a great way for an initial motivation of students. The greatest difficulty will be to demystify the social image of archeology, and motivate students for technical and scientific activities of the "true" archeology. The archaeological clubs can be a way to "open a new cycle in the teaching of history and archaeology" (Antas, 1999, p. 215) .

## **2.1- Main goals of Network of School Archaeological Clubs**

The network of school archaeological clubs has two major objectives. On one hand, promote effectively the collections of the MNA, thus contributing to a social awareness about the importance of preserving the archaeological heritage.

On the other hand, archaeology clubs are designed to allow new forms of learning for pupils. An Archaeological club can give an impetus to the school through interdisciplinary approach, contributing by this way to an improvement of the teaching-learning process. The objectives must be set, taking into account the annual plan of the school and the socio-cultural context in which it operates.

With regard to educational objectives, the club will serve to adapt the democratization of education to the heterogeneity of the school population,

thereby contributing to the integration and motivation of students within the school reality. On more specific inter-personal relations, the club will serve as a form of innovation, changing pedagogical practices (Franco, 1998). At the level of student-centered pedagogy, the club can you offer another way of learning "learning by doing", which focuses more practice than theory, trying to motivate students to school. On the other hand, the student tries to raise awareness and recognize the importance of their work at the club. Thus reinforces their self-esteem. It is intended that the club act to motivation and a way to awaken the student to knowledge.

On the scientific level, the club will enable or reinforce interdisciplinarity between various school areas (such as history, geography, Portuguese language, science, biology, geology, computer science, visual education, among others). More specifically, the main objective is to explain to the students the true meaning of archaeology as a scientific discipline.

Through archaeology, we can build the big puzzle of fragments of the history of mankind.

The club uses various learning methods that aim to live in history through their testimonies, allowing students to contact with archaeological materials and other documents rather than one based solely on theoretical textbooks.

### **3.-Archaeological clubs: How does it work?**

#### **3.1- In the National Museum of Archaeology**

The ultimate goal of the National Museum of Archaeology should be the same archeology "to be an instrument of memories, recorded in material artefacts" (Raposo, 1997: 86). In this sense and a Museum should also produce historical syntheses, to enable its users to an overview of the archaeological richness and variety in Portugal (Raposo, 2003).

The museum have the following functions:

- a) Take an active role providing coordination between the schools involved;
- b) Provide educational materials about the collections of the museum and

archaeological subjects considered important for the dissemination and understanding of "nature fragile and nonrenewable" (Letter of Lausanne, 1990) of the Archaeological Heritage;

c) Create a virtual space, a database where all project participants can exchange experiences, ideas and educational resources.

d) Organise in partnership with schools, conferences, debates and small thematic exhibitions about archaeology, archaeological or other multidisciplinary issues related to the themes developed in the club.

e) Organize and allow the participation of schools in all educational activities in the museum (guided tours, workshops and the workshops, exhibitions, when previously agreed between both parties).

f) Establish a center of educational resources (at a later stage of the project)

g) Involve other museums of archaeology, in a more advanced stage of the project, to join a network to support schools in their region and contribute with educational resources to the virtual platform.

As Paul Bahn (1997) refers to "the ultimate goal of archeology - if it has to have some sense or justification - must be the communication of their findings, not only to students and colleagues, but above all, to the public."

Therefore archaeological clubs can be a more effective way for the museum to reach to schools in a different way and pro-active way of preserving the archaeological heritage.

### **3.2 In Schools**

The organization of an archaeological club in a school depends on several factors. Depending on how the school decides to organize the club (to be approved by the school board), it will need a physical space within the school to work. This space may be a dedicated room, a multipurpose room or a classroom, where a certain time to perform the activities of the club.

The question of resources available (human and logistical) is central since the size of the club and its activities are directly dependent on these resources involved.

### **Who may belong to the archaeological club?**

All Students at the school how have interest or curiosity in archaeology.

### **How to organize a club of Archaeology?**

The club must have an organizational structure which allow the students to work according in different areas:

a) Areas of scientific work coordinated and planned by teachers that focus on specific issues addressed by the curricula of history or another discipline. These working groups activities promote contact and handling practices of "materials" of the archaeological period that each group studied.. The working group should be used as a way to create and strengthen relationships between teaching student-student and student-teacher. For example, a working group on pre-history in Portugal composed of students from 7th grade and 10th grade, where students in higher level teach others through a process similar to tutoring. This group might be called the "rock group" would study the monuments (Regional Archaeological Heritage) located in the geographical area of the school. The same logic would apply to other study groups such as "The Legion" that would study the Romans, the "Democrats" who would study the Greek civilization and a whole other set of groups that may provide planning and creativity. This would be a way to motivate students for the school. These working groups would also be responsible for the organization of activities planned in conjunction with the teachers involved in the project.

b) Area of practical activities promoted by the club members for the school and community. Archaeological club members organize field trips to places with archaeological interest (archaeological sites, museums). They can also organize activities such as exhibitions of archaeological material and recreations of historical events. The exhibitions are mainly intended to show the school community and the local community the archaeological materials.

c) Area of communication and information. In this area could be developed

activities that relate directly to journalism. The club could have a newspaper which disclose their activities. This area could also be a collaboration with teachers in the area of computer science. Students could make a website or a blog about the archaeological club activities. Besides the use of new technologies is also a way to captivate students.

In summary, the main activities of the clubs go through archeology in schools to encourage students to develop research, organize lectures and discussions and to promote exhibitions and visits to archaeological sites and museums, an approach to develop skills in the areas of communication, Knowledge, Education for Heritage and Culture

### **Proposals for activities proposals for Archaeological clubs in schools**

This guide gives several suggestions for activities that can be developed in archeological clubs in schools.

#### a) Activities aimed primarily of students

- Archaeologist for a day: To allow students contact with the various aspects of field and laboratory archaeological science;
- MMS visits: study visits to Museums, Monuments and Sites (MMS)
- Laboratory of Archaeology: research about archaeological sites in the area of school or on the great "mysteries of archeology" or on other national sites with archaeological interest (Coa, Escoural, Lapedo, Conimbriga, Milreu Miróbriga, Sanford, Briteiros, Panóias, megalithic monuments ...) and international (Pompeii, Atapuerca, Lascaux, Stonhenge, Altamira, Bath, Great Pyramids of Egypt .....);
- The prehistoric man did. And I? Develop practical activities about technologies of prehistoric man;
- Journal of the Stone: Draw up a newspaper, wall newspaper
- Working with the collections and exhibitions of the museum MNA
- Learn ... playing: Create or play educational games on archaeology



- Reporter of other times: Develop short videos or other type of audiovisual production about archaeology;

- AA = Arts and Archaeology: Developing theater, dance, cinema;

Produce and assemble artwork (drawings, comics, postcards, stamps, paintings, miniatures, etc.), sculptures or other forms of communication on issues of archaeology.

b) activities aimed at teachers

- Provide specialized training on general themes of archeology and relate it to school curricula.

- Promoting meetings for planning and preparation of joint activities.

c) activities directed at the whole school community

- Archaeological Club: Promoting an online platform where participants can share the teaching materials developed;

- How was the past ... Make and historical-archeological Festival: reconstruction of environments focusing on archaeological evidence and where possible relate them to the MNA collections or other museums and archaeology;

- Arkeotube: Create a YouTube channel about archaeological clubs in schools to show the work of different school archaeological clubs;

- Celebrating Archaeology: Organize your day or week of Archaeology!

- The Heritage is all! Promote local civic actions about Heritage, as a way to involve the community, calling for their participation.

- Annual meeting of Archaeology Clubs: organize an annual meeting of the Archaeological Clubs, to present the most relevant activities organized by clubs.

### **3.3- Online Platform**

An online platform was create to improve the communication between the museum and schools ([www.clubedearqueologia.org](http://www.clubedearqueologia.org)). This interactive platform is a space for exchange experiences among all the participants, and

a place to share online educational resources in the field of archeology.



Fig 1: General view of the front page of the Archaeological Clubs

This platform is organized into several areas. It has a main menu with six tabs. In the first named top there is a menu with two areas. The first area is dedicated to the National Museum of Archaeology and presents a short film about the history and mission of the MNA. The second area is dedicated to institutional partners that allow the operationalization of the project in practice. The second tab is dedicated to the network of archaeological clubs and is organized in three areas: participating schools, area reserved for each school, how to join the network of clubs archeology. In the area of the participating schools, there is a map of Portugal with the location of the participating schools, as shown in figure 2:

CLUBES DE ARQUEOLOGIA  
Um projeto do Museu Nacional de Arqueologia

Inicio  
Arqueologia  
Recursos  
Agenda  
Forum  
Contactos

Mapa da Rede de Clubes

Nome de Utilizador  
Senha  
Lembrar de mim  
entrar  
Esqueceu seu login?  
Registrar

Curiosidade

José Leite de Vasconcelos, fundador e primeiro director do actual Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, ao tempo designado por Museu Etnográfico Português, constitui um dos principais vultos da Cultura Portuguesa dos séculos XIX e XX.

Com este mapa pretendemos que se consiga visualizar a implantação geográfica da Rede de Clubes de Arqueologia.

O mapa irá sendo actualizado periodicamente de acordo com o crescimento da própria rede.

Com esta ferramenta visual, as escolas também ficam a saber onde estão e quem são as outras escolas que com o seu trabalho ajudam a implantar este projecto nacional.

## 2 - General view of the map of Portugal with the location of the clubs of Archaeology

In the specific area of each school, you can have access to activities that the club had developed. The reserved area for schools will serve precisely to each school to share information that want to publish in the online platform. The area devoted to membership in archaeological clubs provides an online form, allowing quick access to the network of clubs archeology.

The third tab is dedicated to educational resources online and is organized into four areas or categories: chronological periods, archaeological materials, exhibitions and themes. In chronological periods, the MNA provides a feature article with the main features of each period from the Paleolithic to the modern times. The category of archaeological material is dedicated to specific articles

of the culture archaeological material such as the bifaces, slate plates, among others. The part dedicated to exhibitions, presents articles about MNA exhibitions or virtual exhibitions. Finally there is a part devoted to topics of great themes of archaeology, such as Neanderthal man, the pyramids of Egypt, human evolution, megaliths, and others ...

The fourth tab refers to a schedule of events, where to put the main activities of various clubs and archeology own MNA.

The fifth tab opens a forum for discussion among all members of the network of clubs (museums professionals, teachers or students).

Finally a sixth tab contacts are listed allowing a contact and feedback about network of archaeological clubs.

#### 5 - Network of School Archaeological Clubs: the progress made and the work to the future

The network of School Archaeological is a project under construction, more than that: is a project always under construction. The first actions related to the project were developed in 2011. The process of establishing partnerships with schools began in June 2011. The launch of the online platform took place between October and November and passed various stages of planning. From working with the web designer to find technical solutions that would allow a better match in terms of interactivity of the scientific content of the platform to the usability of those who visit the page. After registration of the domain and the tests made on the platform, finally the platform was online, precisely on November 29. The beginning of the activities of the Museum and schools in online platform began from the first moment. As a platform for continuous use is depending on the introduction of the contents by the various partners. The maintenance and updating of the platform is performed by MNA and schools. Each school is responsible for managing its area on the platform by placing news in a chronological order. Club members from each school can also produce articles in the field of archeology that are available on the tab of the platform dedicated to teaching materials.

The Museum is responsible for managing the platform and especially for

producing learning content that are available on the platform.



The screenshot shows the website 'CLUBES DE ARQUEOLOGIA', a project of the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia. The navigation menu includes 'Início bem-vindo', 'Arqueologia rede de clubes', 'Recursos didáticos', 'Agenda de Eventos', 'Fórum de debates', and 'Contactos fale conosco'. The main content area is titled 'Breve caracterização do Paleolítico' and contains the following text:

O Paleolítico é o primeiro e o mais vasto período da Pré-História. Neste período assistimos a expansão territorial do homem que, vindo de África, penetra na Europa por diferentes vias. Estes caçadores-recolectores, deslocam-se em pequenos grupos no interior de vastos territórios e fabricam instrumentos de pedra lascada, madeira e osso.

Pensa-se que o homem penetrou na Europa por diversas vias há cerca de 1,5 milhões de anos. Até há cerca de 600 ou 700 mil anos a Europa era um continente "vazio", apenas ocupado ocasionalmente por pequenos grupos humanos. Estes pequenos grupos de *Homo antecessor* ou, mais tarde, *Homo heidelbergensis* / *Homo erectus* deixaram alguns testemunhos líticos. A esta tipo de fabrico de instrumentos líticos caracterizado por seixos talhados de forma mais ou menos elementar e que surgiu no Paleolítico Inferior Arcaico denomina-se por cultura Pré-achulense.

Below the text is an image of a unifacial flint tool (seixo talhado unifacial). The caption reads: 'Seixo talhado unifacial', 'Nº de inventário: 27 453', 'Código da Estação: MNA 2429', 'Cronologia: Paleolítico Inferior', and 'Local: Magoto, Sintra'.

### 3 - Appearance partial teaching resource dedicated to the Paleolithic in the online platform of the Network of clubs archeology

In addition, the museum promotes other activities to disseminate archeology in schools. Apart from lectures and educational activities, the Museum developed a didactic exhibition in order to be itinerant. Named "a look at the past", this didactic exhibition consists of archaeological objects from the collections of the MNA. The main objective is to try to trace the evolution from the Paleolithic to the Middle Ages with a variety of objects from the Paleolithic through the Roman building materials, up to objects used in the Middle Ages. In 2012, a second phase of the project, the MNA is establishing a network partnerships with other museums, as the network of clubs archeology has a nationwide deployment. The partnerships with other museum institutions allow this network to be able to support schools in a more effective way. Finally, in 2013, the network intend to became international, stablishing of partnerships, particularly with Portuguese schools worldwide. In this sense,

some contacts have been made to bring this network to East Timor and Mozambique.

## **5- General Conclusions**

The network of clubs Archaeology is a project for the dissemination of archeology as a science. This project has its theoretical basis in three principles:

1 - Principle of transversality of the archaeological heritage stated by Luis Raposo (1997, 2009) recognizing that the archaeological heritage is "the most democratic heritage " (Raposo, 2009, p. 76), because:

"The archaeological exist everywhere, from the village to the city, literally under our feet, and fill out an exceeding broad range of social expressions, ranging from liturgical common instrument to the implement, the rough stone wall built in the dry finely lacy stonework or even the smallest mobile object to the megalithic monument, the fort and castle "(Fox, 2009, p. 76).

2 - Principle of musealization of archeology. Cristina Bruno define as a "process consisting of a set of factors and procedures that allow portions of the cultural heritage become an inheritance, as it is something of preservation and communication" (Bruno, 1996, p. 67-68).

3 - Principle of participatory museum defined by Nina Simon (2010) as: "place where visitors can create, share and connect with each other around the content. Create means that visitors contribute their own ideas, objects and creative expression to the institution and to each other. Share means that people discuss, take home, remix, and redistribute both what they see and what they make during their visit. Connect means that visitors socialize with other people – staff and visitors – who share their particular interests. Around content means that visitors' conversations and creations focus on the evidence, object, and ideas most important to the institution in question" (Simon, 2010, p. ii-iii)

More than an innovative educational experience, it is a way of reconciling formal forms of learning (school) with non-formal (Museum).

With the Network of School Archaeological Clubs , all parties can gain huge benefits:

- a) The National Museum of Archaeology can take a leading role in education for the dissemination of Archaeology and Heritage, involving civil society.
- b) The mediators / educators of the museum can share educational experiences with school teachers.
- c) Schools benefit from a new dynamic and disseminate innovative pedagogical practices.
- d) Teachers develop a different way of teaching and a new dimension in a pedagogical relationship with students.
- e) Students can discover a new dimension in the school and a new way of learning. They feel more motivated to learn and develop working methods and new knowledge without having to be studying the traditional method.

So we can win a new generation with new skills to preserve and defend the heritage in general and archaeological heritage in particular.

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