



Separating Archaeology from Political Elements: Science and Neutral Investigation

Adem Yutsever*

Department of Archaeology, Anadolu University, Turkey

*Corresponding author: Adem Yurtsever, Department of Archaeology, Anadolu University, Turkey

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Abstract

This paper discusses the critical necessity for maintaining neutrality in archaeological research to uphold scientific objectivity, amidst the frequent entanglement of the discipline in political debates. Archaeology's primary role is to elucidate human history through the scientific examination of artifacts and historical data, demanding an objective and unbiased approach. However, political and ideological influences often permeate the field, potentially skewing interpretations and compromising the integrity of findings. This work specifically critiques the prevalent media practice of highlighting archaeological discoveries with superlatives like "the oldest," "the most important," or "the best-preserved." While such descriptions can significantly boost public interest and attract funding, they may also overshadow other important findings and foster unrealistic expectations. The discussion emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach in media presentations and scholarly communications to prevent the devaluation of other archaeological work and to ensure the comprehensive preservation of cultural heritage. Ultimately, the study advocates for a strict adherence to scientific principles and the maintenance of a neutral perspective in archaeological research, which is essential for the authentic understanding and preservation of human history.

Keywords:

Archaeology; Political influence; Scientific objectivity; Archaeological superlatives

The Primary Goal of Archaeology: Science and Scientific Investigation

Archaeology is closely related to politics and regulations due to its goal of preserving historical and cultural heritage. However, the intrusion of political influences into archaeology can lead to a deviation from scientific objectivity. Issues such as land ownership and nationalism can compromise the reliability of this scientific field when they interfere with archaeological studies. It should be remembered that archaeologists, who wish to work without being marginalized and who are committed to the unity and integrity of their country, should not be stigmatized or subjected to mobbing simply because they do not take a political stance. The apolitical

stance of scientists in the field of archaeology, or their behavior that does not conform to the spirit of the time, is to protect the objective results of the science they respect and the profession they wish to pursue.

Neutral Investigation: Adherence to Scientific Principles

Archaeologists must work in adherence to scientific principles, which entails an objective, evidence-based approach. Allowing political or ideological views to influence archaeological interpretations can lead to a departure from historical reality. Archaeology should operate based on concrete evidence and scientific methods. This principle is also valid for all other scientific

disciplines. Objectivity equals science. Therefore, a neutral approach free from political and ideological biases is essential for cultural science researchers.

Historical and Cultural Diversity: Preserved Through Neutral Investigation

Archaeology contributes to the preservation of cultural diversity by studying the pasts of different societies and cultures. However, this requires adopting a neutral investigative approach. Political influences in archaeology can lead to discriminatory interpretations of the past of certain cultural groups or communities. A neutral investigation respects everyone's right to understand their past and heritage. This allows for the presentation of objective information about the civilizations that lived on these lands, which are a cultural crossroads. Otherwise, society may be misled, and the findings may not be scientifically recognized in the international community.

The Major Problem in Archaeology: The Superlatives

When archaeologists encounter or uncover a significant find during their excavations, they often give statements to the media. These statements frequently begin with superlatives such as "the first," "the most...," "the most important," "the oldest," "the best-preserved." The underlying reasons and consequences of this approach need to be thoroughly evaluated.

The positive aspects of such statements include attracting public attention and increasing interest in archaeological work. Media statements that begin with superlatives capture public interest, leading to positive outcomes such as funding and support for archaeological projects. Additionally, archaeologists and their work gain recognition and scientific prestige through these statements, which is crucial for their career advancement and participation in new projects. Highlighted finds create awareness for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage to future generations. However, these statements also have negative aspects. Superlatives can overshadow and devalue other finds and discoveries from different excavations. This can make it difficult to evaluate archaeological work comprehensively. Excessive exaggeration can undermine scientific objectivity and create unrealistic expectations in the public. Such statements can lead to credibility issues within the academic world. Media exaggeration can result in the misinterpretation of scientific data and misinformation, complicating the understanding of historical truths. The future consequences of these negative aspects are also significant. Excessive exaggeration can render archaeological work less credible. This can negatively impact the scientific prestige and public reputation of archaeologists. The devaluation of other finds may lead to some archaeological projects struggling to secure adequate funding, threatening the sustainability of archaeological work. Overemphasizing certain finds can disadvantage the preservation and promotion of other cultural heritages, making it difficult to protect cultural diversity.

In conclusion, it is important for archaeologists to adopt a balanced approach when giving statements to the media. Superlatives should be used carefully and judiciously to ensure comprehensive evaluation of archaeological work and the preservation of cultural heritage. This balanced approach will enhance the reliability and value of archaeological science.

Please See:

1. <https://www.livescience.com/57690-amazing-archaeological-discoveries.html>
2. <https://stacker.com/environment/50-greatest-archaeological-discoveries-all-time>
3. <https://www.ekathimerini.com/society/1213009/8-of-the-most-important-discoveries-in-greek-archaeology/>
4. <https://onedio.com/haber/2020-yilinda-turkiye-deki-en-onemli-10-arkeolojik-kesif-947621>

Conclusion: Neutral Investigation in Archaeology

While aiming to illuminate historical reality, archaeology should be separated from political elements. Scientific objectivity is a fundamental requirement for the reliability and value of this discipline. Archaeologists should work independently of politics and ideology to best understand and preserve the past. This remains the most effective way to protect cultural diversity and historical heritage. Separating archaeology from political elements reflects our commitment to the principles of science and the objectivity of historical science. This way, human history will be more accurately understood, and our cultural heritage will be preserved for generations to come. So, how can we separate the science of archeology from political influences and communicate more effectively? Here are some suggestions.

Avoiding Superlative Descriptions

One practical approach to avoid superlative descriptions in archaeology is to emphasize the contextual significance of findings rather than their perceived superiority. Instead of labeling a discovery as "the oldest" or "the best-preserved," archaeologists and media can focus on what the discovery reveals about the historical context, the civilization it belonged to, and its contribution to our understanding of human history. For example, describing a site as "a significant example of early urban planning" or "a well-preserved instance of Bronze Age craftsmanship" provides valuable context without resorting to superlatives.

Ensuring Balanced Media Reporting

To mitigate the impact of sensationalism in media reports, collaboration between archaeologists and journalists is crucial. Archaeologists can provide detailed briefings and fact sheets to journalists to ensure accurate and nuanced reporting. Educational workshops for journalists on the principles of archaeological

research and its implications can also foster more responsible reporting. This collaboration can help create media narratives that respect the complexity and breadth of archaeological discoveries without oversimplifying or exaggerating their significance.

Maintaining Scientific Objectivity

To maintain scientific objectivity, archaeological research must be grounded in rigorous methodologies and peer review processes. Encouraging transparency in research methods and data sharing among the scientific community can enhance the credibility and reliability of archaeological findings. Moreover, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations can bring diverse perspectives and expertise to archaeological studies, helping to counteract potential biases.

Institutional Support and Policies

Institutions and funding bodies can play a pivotal role in promoting neutrality in archaeology by establishing clear guidelines and policies that prioritize scientific integrity over political or ideological considerations. Providing funding for projects based on their scientific merit and potential contributions to knowledge, rather than their sensational appeal, can help maintain a focus on

objective research.

Education and Public Engagement

Public education initiatives that emphasize the scientific process and the importance of objectivity in archaeology can also be effective. Museums, universities, and cultural heritage organizations can develop programs and exhibits that highlight the methods and ethics of archaeological research, fostering a more informed and critical public. Engaging the public through lectures, publications, and interactive platforms can also help demystify the work of archaeologists and underscore the value of nuanced, accurate representations of the past.

In summary, the path to ensuring neutrality and avoiding superlative descriptions in archaeology involves a multi-faceted approach that includes improving media collaboration, upholding rigorous scientific standards, implementing supportive institutional policies, and engaging in comprehensive public education. These steps are essential for preserving the integrity of archaeological research and enhancing our understanding of human history.



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