Archaeology and the Media
Edited by Timothy Clack and Marcus Brittain

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The controversial relationship of the Media and archaeology always raises burning questions about the impact that the one has on the other. Clack and Brittain have gathered, in 300 pages, some of the most crucial issues, trying to explore "the long-term implications of the increasing exposure through—and reliance upon—media forms for the practice of archaeology" (Back Cover).

The book is organised into five parts, which represent the core concerns of this relationship. By critically examining the different phases of this relationship, the introduction gives a taste of what comes later, providing a great range of references and case studies. In the first part, entitled "Archaeology's Reception of the Media", Holtorf discusses the archaeological dressing codes which reflect various images of what an archaeologist does, whereas Fowler, in "Not Archaeology and the Media", successfully addresses and criticises issues regarding the relationship of archaeology with a range of media, discussing their positive and negative aspects.

In the next chapter, "Translating Archaeological Narratives", Kulik provides a very useful and well-documented 'diary' of this relationship since the 1700s, in her "Short History of Archaeological Communication". Brittain and Clack, in a brief interview with Pryor and Fagan, introduce the different perspectives of British and American 'Public Archaeology', presenting a favourable view and a more sceptical approach respectively. Finn brings together the world of science and the world of art through the well-known 'Bog Burials', vividly describing the past and the present of this relationship and arguing that archaeology can be a

fertile land for artistic expression, resulting in wider dissemination of archaeological knowledge.

''Archaeology and the German Press'' by Benz and Liedmeir is part of the section entitled ''Has the Media Changed Archaeology?'' The authors are trying to describe the attitude of German press towards archaeology by explaining and interpreting the press' choices, while mentioning its ploys to attract wider audiences. Price objectively describes the current trend of Great War Archaeology, which is led by the Media who fund this kind of archaeology, raising important ethical issues. However, he implies that when audiences stop being fascinated by such stories, these projects will slump and Great War Archaeology may disappear.

Taylor's article ''Screening Biases'', which is part of the fourth section entitled ''Visual Archaeology'', is somewhat confusing. Although there are some good ideas, the sociological paradigm is irrelevant on its own, whereas the cannibal controversies seem to be included only to persuade readers of the existence of cannibalistic practices in Iron Age Siberia, as well as in a more general context, rather than to enhance the validity of his arguments about banality in archaeology and television. Stern presents an overview of mainly German archaeological productions, making a brief reference to TV commercials which use archaeology and to the archaeological film festivals across Europe. In particular, he is very informative as well as complimentary about the production of this kind of film, although in the post-script there is an adverse criticism, concluding that production companies and media in general are guided only by market trends and appetites. In ''Faking it'', Piccini presents a useful discussion about principles in documentary programmes and the purposes of Public Service Broadcasting, and skilfully uses specific examples from archaeological TV programmes to underline producers' obsession to achieve credibility. The last article by Renshaw deals with a rather complicated issue, relating civil war to modern politics and archaeology. Through hard facts, Renshaw tries to raise our awareness about how mass media use sensitive issues for their own profit.

The final part of the book, entitled ''Archaeology, the Media and the Digital Future'', describes the relationship of archaeology with modern digital technologies. Gardner provides a good analysis and critique of

the representation of the past in video games, while Shanks, through some good use of anecdotes, indirectly refers to the fact that digital media gradually change and, as a result, we should rethink the way we do archaeology in order to keep up with the current trends. However, this message becomes clear only at the very end.

Archaeology and the Media encompasses a wide range of issues related to the relationship between the Media and archaeology, and the ways in which the Media affect archaeological practice. Although the book does not present any novelties in this field of study, the views expressed in the various articles reflect the controversies and the growing polarity that this relationship has stimulated. Although the majority of the articles advocate the benefits of this relationship, there are always some voices expostulating about the reliance of archaeology upon the Media. However, because there is not a concluding chapter to summarise or evaluate the several arguments, readers are free to decide ''which of these suits them and archaeology most appropriately'' (page 9).

The book is a remarkable attempt to incorporate, in a relatively simple and comprehensible way, some of the implications of the complicated and controversial issue of the effects of media on archaeology and *vice versa*. However, it leaves a lot to be desired, as most of the critiques are superficial and readers cannot clearly distinguish that this relationship comprises a powerful hunter and a feeble prey struggling to adapt itself to current trends and appetites.