

REVIEW OF / RECENSIÓN DE: Ignacio Montero Ruiz y Antonio Pizzo (Eds.). *Conociendo nuestro pasado: proyectos e investigaciones arqueológicas en el CSIC*. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Madrid, 2023, 283 pp., ilustraciones a color y b/n. ISBN 978-84-00-11163-2; e-ISBN 978-84-00-11164-9.

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This volume showcases the archaeological work currently in progress at the historical branches of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC by its acronym in Spanish): the *Escuela Española de Historia y Arqueología en Roma* (EEHAR), Rome; *Escuela de Estudios Árabes* (EEA), Granada; *Institución Milá y Fontanals de Investigación en Humanidades* (IMF), Barcelona; *Instituto de Arqueología - Mérida* (IAM), Mérida; *Instituto de Ciencias del Patrimonio* (INCIPIT), Santiago de Compostela; *Instituto de Historia* (IH), Madrid; *Instituto de Lenguas y Culturas del Mediterráneo y Oriente Próximo* (ILC), Madrid. These institutions operate independently of one another, but the CSIC has tried to coordinate them through the so-called “Archaeologyhub” (<https://archaeologyhub.csic.es/>), of which *Conociendo nuestro pasado* is one result. Thirty-one well-illustrated chapters present the work of various research teams and a list of references for further reading. The number and brevity of these reports make it impossible to do them justice individually within the necessarily limited length of a book review. Collectively, however, they permit this reviewer to consider how much Spanish archaeology has changed since he began his post-doctoral work in that field 50 years ago.

The geographical scope of the CSIC’s operations has vastly increased. In the early 1970s, Spanish archaeology had long had an outpost in Italy, EEHAR, established by CSIC’s institutional predecessor in 1910. Under the leadership of Martín Almagro Basch, the founder of CSIC’s prehistoric division (the Spanish Institute of Prehistory, now integrated into the IH), Spain participated in the UNESCO Aswan Dam salvage program beginning in 1960 and subsequently maintained, under varying institutional auspices, projects in Egypt and the Levant. As this volume demonstrates, these commitments of the CSIC continue, but the operations outside of Spain now range from northwest Argentina to Mongolia and from Tanzania to Brittany.

Equally striking is the development of interdisciplinary scientific approaches. In 1974 the only such manifestation in Spain was the radiocarbon laboratory in the CSIC’s *Instituto de Química Física Blas Cabrera*. Many of the chapters in this volume present the CSIC’s commitment to the broad range of such approaches: archaeozoological and archaeobotanical laboratories in the IH and IMF, geophysical approaches to non-invasive archaeological survey (IAM and INCIPIT), archaeometallurgical research (IH), use-wear analysis of lithic artifacts (IMF), stable isotope analyses to assess the mobility of persons and livestock (IH and IMF), and the incorporation of these lines of evidence into interactive databases (e.g., the IH’s IDEArq) and geographical information systems (INCIPIT and others).

Fifty years ago, most Spanish archaeologists considered all these approaches to be outside the realm of true archaeological research. Working, as they did, within a normative framework, their principal task was to track similarities in objects of material culture over time (these would be traditions) and across space (these would indicate diffusion or migrations). The above-mentioned interdisciplinary approaches would come into play as archaeologists gave primary importance to aspects of the record that would indicate how its makers functioned as ecological organisms and as economic, social and political actors. The chapters on collective labor (3) and on the development of the Iron Age Castro culture in northwest Iberia (14, 15) and the impact on it of Roman mining (22) are good examples of the subtle processual archaeology now practiced in Spain.

Pedro Díaz-del-Río, one of the contributors to this volume, who is currently serving as a scientific officer in the European Research Council Executive Agency, informs me that from 2008 through 2022 the ERC funded 210 archaeological projects. Of those 58 went to principal investigators at institutions in the United Kingdom (where an explicitly functionalist approach

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to archaeology goes back 85 years [Clark, 1939]), 27 to Spain, 25 to Germany, 11 apiece to Italy, France and Austria, 7 to the Netherlands, and 60 to scholars at institutions in various other countries. Readers of this volume will understand the reasons for Spain's comparative success.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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