

WHITLING, FREDERICK. WESTERN WAYS: FOREIGN SCHOOLS IN ROME AND ATHENS. BERLIN/BOSTON: WALTER DE GRUYTER, 2019. ISBN: 978-3110601589

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Classic; Classical Archeology; international; National States; Financing.

The book *Western Ways: Foreign Schools in Rome and Athens* is the publication of Frederick Whitling's doctoral thesis, awarded in 2013 with the *3e prix Étienne Baluze d'histoire locale européenne*. Based on extensive research in the archives of foreign schools of archeology in Rome and Athens, the author presents detailed information on the creation, financing and maintenance of these institutions in a time frame that spans from the beginning of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century.² Divided into six chapters, the work provides the reader with a deep understanding of the dynamics of agents involved in research and in the management of foreign schools, highlighting the power that certain individual actions had on the history of classical archeology.

In the introduction, Whitling highlights the size of the archival collection analyzed, referring to 25 schools in Rome and 18 schools in Athens. The set of information referring to these 43 institutions is exposed in a narrative constituted from a comparative perspective, in order to identify the relationships between foreign schools, their members and the sociopolitical context in which they were inserted. At the same time, the active role of foreign schools in the organization of classical studies is highlighted, as they constituted academic and educational traditions that influenced the various areas of the humanities, such as Classical Archeology, Art History and Ancient History. The concept of “classic”

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² As the author himself defines in the preface of the work, foreign schools of archeology emerged as institutions that articulated research in various areas, such as Classical Archeology, Philology and Art History, with the aim of studying the ancient world.

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permeates all these areas, conferring status on those involved in studies of Greece and Rome. In this sense, the author proposes to make a *heritageography*, that is, a more critical and contextualized history of the humanities, which takes into account the links between the Ancient and the Modern and the instrumentalization of the past in favor of national interests.

In chapter 1, Whitling discusses the beginnings of classical archeology and the precursor institutions of foreign schools. In Rome, the *École française* was preceded by the *Académie de France*, founded in 1666 by King Louis XIV and finance minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Linked to a tradition of Italian Renaissance academies, the *Académie* offered – and currently offers – temporary residency and training for young artists. Unlike Rome, traditionally linked to an artistic canon from the Renaissance, in Athens the first foreign associations dedicated to the study of the classical past were always linked to archaeology. The first of these associations – the *Xenioi* – was founded in 1810 by a very diverse group, consisting of two German painters, a Bavarian architect, a Danish archaeologist and philologist, and two English architects.³

The diversified character of *Xenioi* corroborates one of the author's arguments: classical studies have, since their origin, a strong potential for internationalization. This group, considered the first international archaeological society, inspired the creation of a similar group in Rome, called the “Association of Roman Hyperboreans”.⁴ The German painter Otto Magnus Stackelberg, one of the *Xenioi*, was among the founders of this association, which became the *Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica* (ICA) between 1828 and 1829 and was financed by the Prussian prince Friedrich Wilhelm. State funding is the first step towards the establishment of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) in 1874.

In Greece, the government's concern with antiquities was one of the reasons that led to the creation of the Archaeological Society of Athens in 1837. More than that, the author highlights that, in this post-independence context, Greek antiquity was used by the government as ideological support for the formation of the nation. The founding of the Archaeological

³ In that order, they are: Jakob Linckh and Otto Magnus von Stackelberg, Carl Haller von Hallerstein, Peter Oluf Brøndsted and Georg Koës, John Foster and Charles Robert Cockerell.

⁴ The original name is Hyperboreisch-römische Gesellschaft.

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Society of Athens involved many individuals, from scholars and government officials to ex-combatants of the Greek independence movement. The connection with Classical Antiquity is also what leads to the establishment of Athens as the capital of Greece, in 1834. Thus, the Archaeological Society of Athens – a national institution – is among the foreign institutions analyzed by the author as a way to expose the reader the active participation of the Greeks themselves in the study of the classical past, as well as their concern to protect the antiquities and keep them on Greek soil.

In chapter 2, Whitling makes a deep sociopolitical analysis of the activities of foreign schools of archeology, from the creation of the first of them – the French School of Athens (1846) – until the beginning of the First World War. Created in a context of imperialism and competition among the great European powers, the French School of Athens is linked to a series of explorations undertaken since Napoleon Bonaparte, who led military and scientific expeditions to Egypt and Syria (1798-1801). However, the Morea Scientific Expedition (1828-1833) gained greater prominence due to its relationship with Philellenism and the effort to ensure the French presence in Greece, considered the cradle of European civilization.

In the second half of the 19th century, the rivalry between the European imperialist powers was reflected in the archeological schools, especially between the French, German and British schools. The author states, for example, that the French School of Rome was created in 1873 as a way of dealing with the Institute of archaeological correspondence, which was nationalized that same year and became the German Imperial Archaeological Institute. In Greece, the permission obtained by the German Institute to excavate Olympia was also a reason for the French School, which held the excavation rights to Delos, to look for another more prestigious archaeological site to match its German rival. Tension between schools increased when the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA) entered disputes over archaeological sites from 1881 onwards.

Competition for parts of Greece considered the most archaeologically valuable could transcend the limits of archeology and move towards international and commercial politics: in 1891, when the French, German and American schools were fighting for the Delphi concession, the French school won the rights to exploit the site through a trade agreement that involved the export of currants to France. Through these examples and

others in the chapter, the reader gains a greater understanding of the race for institutional presence in Greece and Italy. In this way, the motivations of these foreign schools are explained in light of the concept of “classic”: the Greco-Roman past, as a bearer of universal values and the cradle of European civilization, conferred prestige on National States. In other words, the classical heritage was like a testament to civilization and superiority.

The national prestige conferred by archaeological excavations was also used as a way to convince government authorities and private investors to finance the projects, especially in contexts of crisis. Chapter 3 exposes how foreign schools articulated to maintain their activities during the First World War and, above all, in the interwar period. It is evident how the war, even in the academic field, opens gaps for more opportunistic attitudes between the rival powers: with the defeat of Germany in the war, the German Archaeological Institute in Rome was closed and the German libraries were confiscated by Italy. This situation was only reversed in 1920 through an agreement that returned the libraries to the German institutes, but prohibited their removal from Italian soil.

Another aspect addressed in the same chapter is the similarity between the American School and the Swedish Institute in Rome, founded in 1925. The author emphasizes that, as neither Sweden nor the United States has material evidence of classical antiquity in their territory, they assumed the “classic” for itself through excavations and acquisition of objects. The Swedish Institute occupies a prominent place throughout the book due to its political neutrality in the context of world wars and the role of its agents in relations between other foreign schools. Whitling emphasizes that the political positioning of these other schools did not prevent them from maintaining their activities in Fascist Italy, for example, since the regime itself was interested in classical studies as a way of spreading Romanità. However, schools were limited to carrying out topographic studies and advising the Italian government, as foreign excavations were prohibited in Italy.

In chapter 4, the weight of the actions and choices of the directors of foreign schools on these same institutions becomes more evident, although the author emphasizes that their functioning dynamics is also guided by their respective corporate cultures, developed in previous contexts. A specific event – the celebration of the centenary of the Archaeological Society of

Athens in 1938 – illustrates the climate of tension between the national and international spheres. Held at the Parthenon, the event was attended by the Greek dictator Metaxas, the king of Greece George II and foreign delegations. The speeches given at the opening of the event indicate, in a way, a game of collaboration and competition between foreign schools.

As part of the political agreements, France declared its support for the Metaxas dictatorship in 1938, but disagreed with Italy the following year, when the Pact of Steel was signed. That same year, Italy invaded northern Greece, shaking relations with Metaxas. From the examples provided by the author, it is clear how this immediately pre-war period disrupted the composition of foreign schools, as they are traditionally linked to the States they represent and are affected by political conjunctures.

During World War II, the Swedish Institute in Rome was the only one among foreign schools to remain in operation, due to its political neutrality. The role of the Swedish Institute in this period is addressed in chapter 5, dedicated to the analysis of foreign schools in the scope of international relations and survival strategies under the German threat. The schools representing the allied countries in Rome remained closed during the war and generally collaborated to preserve their respective buildings and collections. The situation was not very different in Greece, occupied by Germany from 1941. Among the allies, only the French School of Athens managed to remain open during the conflict due to the Vichy regime, despite the complicated relations between the school and that government.

In Greece and Rome, the Swedish Institute mediated the relationships and interests of most foreign schools. An important aspect highlighted in the chapter is the use of facilities in foreign schools aimed at diplomatic and humanitarian actions, as was the case with ASCSA. In addition, German and American schools were also involved in spying services for their respective governments.

Under Nazi rule, the German institutes in Athens and Rome undertook projects that provided advantages over their rivals and extolled German racial superiority. In the latter case, the author emphasizes that a teleological line was established with the Lombards and Ostrogoths, who occupied an old villa between Forli and Bologna. In this way, the Germanic presence in Italy and the nobility of its origin was “proven”. On Greek soil, the characteristic philhellenism of the 19th century took a back seat, as

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Germany invaded the country and German archaeologists has benefited from it. Obviously, the game turned with the defeat of Germany, which tried to remove its libraries from Italy, thus breaking the 1920 treaty, discussed in chapter 3. The libraries were even sent to Austria in 1944, but were returned to Rome under the protection of the Swedish Institute, as the American School wanted to confiscate them in reparation for the damage caused by the war.

In chapter 6, the author argues that, in the process of reorganizing research after World War II, there was a tendency for international collaboration among members of foreign schools. In 1945, Sjöqvist was involved in the creation of the *Associazione Internazionale di Archeologia Classica* (AIAC), an institution inspired by the ancient international archeology organizations, discussed in the first chapter. The following year, the *Unione degli Istituti di Archeologia, Storia and Storia dell'Arte* emerged with the same international character, as a way of strengthening relations between foreign and Italian schools. Alongside this idea of integrating scholars and their projects, Whiting says that this institution had a more practical objective: to pressure Germany to send its libraries back to Rome, which continued to be surrounded by the aura of the center of universal culture, despite all the setbacks in history. In fact, German libraries returned to Rome and Florence between 1945 and 1946 and were under the care of the *Unione*.

The climate of cooperation and internationalization was affected by financial issues, after all, the two institutions mentioned above could not count on the investment of foreign and Italian schools due to the damage caused by the war. Having been created in the same year as Unesco, *Unione* hoped to receive international financial assistance, but this did not materialize. The solution found was to draw up a treaty authorizing the liquidation of German assets in Italy to finance the institution, which did not materialize due to the fact that the United States gave up on the agreement, fearing the bad reputation that this practice could cause.

Together with the British, French and Italian schools in Athens, the ASCSA spearheaded the project of an “international archaeological library”, which would be composed of the collections of German libraries added to its own collections. The project did not go forward, but it demonstrates that this game of competition and collaboration gives openings for the opportunism of these institutions, which can act alone or together. Thus, in the last

chapter, Whitling closes the long history of foreign archeological schools in Rome and Athens, unraveling aspects and information that certainly open up many possibilities for research.

At the Conclusion, the author raises important and current questions for classical studies. One of them concerns the financing difficulties faced by archeological schools to date, especially those that depend more on state subsidies. Financial difficulties seem to be less when the institution generates 100% of its budget, as is the case with the American Academy in Rome (AAR). What impact does the private nature of these institutions have on research field? Would this have any influence on academic discourses and approaches to the classical past? The archeological schools themselves, which are mostly centuries old, contribute to the organization of classical studies at universities around the world, hence the importance of a sociopolitical analysis of their history and academic discourse.

The concept of “classic”, present throughout the work, historically situate at the base of European identity and constituted a source of cultural capital for the States that established links with Greco-Roman antiquity. The invention of the classical past by modern academic structures leads to another question: why has the supposedly universal classical gained so many national identifications? According to the author, academic traditions, funding sources and even the language of each country are forces that influence the production of knowledge within each corporate culture involved.

The “classic”, analyzed in the light of this set of little-known and even unpublished information in the book, leads to the questioning of the very relevance of still studying it in today's world. As the political uses of the past still occur, especially by far-right groups, and the problems related to the preservation of historical and archaeological heritage multiply, it is worth reflecting on the directions that classical studies are taking and how they contribute to the present, after all, is where the historian situates himself when looking at the past. When it comes to the “classic” and the cultural heritage related to it, the local, national and international spheres merge and create contact networks between institutions dedicated not only to archeology, but to all humanities.

Reflections on classical studies and the performance of foreign schools of archeology suggest that the potential for internationalization, present at the origin of these institutions, has been resumed mainly from universities

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around the world and from the connections they establish among themselves. Throughout the chapters, it is evident that this potential was outweighed by the socio-political context between the 1870s and the end of World War II. Whitling states, however, that after this period, international collaboration motivated foreign schools to adapt to the post-war world, which also contributed to the classical studies area itself having this international character.

The book is quite descriptive, so it lacks a little more theoretical reflection throughout the chapters. However, considering the volume of sources and information presented by the author, it is possible that this choice was made with the intention of not harming the fluidity of the narrative. Anyway, the contribution of *Western Ways* to new studies related to Classical Antiquity is undeniable.