Staša Babić
*Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy*
*University of Belgrade, Serbia*

# Archaeological programmes. Notes on epistemic diversity

Determining the current state of a discipline and its future prospects is not a straightforward task, especially since a number of disparate sets of criteria may be applied for this purpose. In the case of archaeology, this investigation into the most productive modes of research raises specific issues since, by virtue of its tasks and the data set at our disposal, the discipline is positioned at the crossroads of the natural and social sciences, with strong links to the humanities (Babić, 2022; 2023). Rather than judge this opportunistic methodological omnivory (Currie, 2018, 25, passim) as a symptom of trouble, my aim here is to argue that it is the main source of its potential for future growth. This exercise in metaarchaeology (Babić, 2018) presupposes reaching out of the discipline itself and introducing the conceptual tools from other fields of knowledge, above all those from the domains of the philosophy of science and sociology (Wylie, 2002, 7, 12–15).

Some of the tools at our disposal have a long history, reaching back to the Classical Greek philosophers and the quests of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle for the ways to distinguish reliable and truthful knowledge (Agassi, 2008, 335–346; Weinert, 2009). However, the advent of the age of modernity marks the crucial turning point in establishing the norms of scientific reasoning, as distinct from any other pursuit of explanations of the world. The rules of the scientific method postulated by René Descartes (1596 – 1650) formed the bedrock on which a substantial body of literature has been built, positioning human reason as the ultimate criterion of truthful knowledge (Babić, 2018, 18–23; Thomas, 2004). At the same time, these new rules of reasoning generated new social norms of research and institutions emerged tasked with producing knowledge deemed relevant and useful for the community, and obliged both by the internal rules and by the demands of society (Bourdieu, 2004). The order of the modern scientific inquiry was thus formed, both concerning its internal principles and the wider social framework sustaining it. Henceforth, the rules securing logical consistency, leaning heavily on the Cartesian tradition and rooted almost exclusively in the domain of natural sciences, above all physics, have been established as the ideal



DOI:10.4312/ars.17.2.9-20

of trustworthy investigation (Babić, 2018, 18–23). This "tyranny of method" (Thomas, 2004, 55 ff.) has been opposed by researchers devoted to the study of the social dimensions of human lives at least from the middle of the 19th century, notably in the works of the German historians Johann Gustav Droysen and Wilhelm Dilthey, who claimed that the ultimate goal of the humanities is to understand (*verstehen*), rather than *explain* (*erklären*) their object of study (Babić, 2018, 58–62). In other words, studying human affairs includes reflecting upon their meaning, purpose, and value as intrinsic features of social facts, which cannot be equated with the task of natural sciences (Weinert, 2009, 213–214). This line of reasoning thus challenged the modernist ideal of a unified set of premises of scientific work, leading to the indisputable progress of human knowledge, and of logically rigorous, objective and quantifiable observations as the sole mode of scientific enquiry.

By the middle of the 20th century, the scrutiny of the social conditions of knowledge production started to develop as a distinct field of study, primarily initiated in the domain of sociology (Bourdieu, 2004; Babić, 2018, 36–42). The ensuing interest among philosophers led to the emergence of social epistemology (Fuller, 2015; Longino, 1990, 2002; Babić, 2018, 43–46). In spite of a number of contesting positions, these endeavours have converged in arguing that the processes of knowledge production are deeply immersed into the social conditions of the practitioners and decisively contextualized into particular ideological, political, economic realities. Specialized knowledge, produced by researchers, needs to resonate with its wider social context in order to enjoy the privileges of the social capital (Bourdieu, 2004) bestowed equally by the official decision-makers and general public. Consequently, in order to advance a field of knowledge needs to meet a number of conditions, in terms of its internal epistemic coherence and productivity, but also in terms of the relevance of its results for the concerns of the society that sustains it. Even when discussing the fields of inquiry into natural phenomena, such as physics or biology (Longino, 1990, 2002), it is now apparent that, apart from the rules of formal logic, a number of socially conditioned factors play equally important roles in knowledge production and dissemination. The example of Louis Pasteur and his admirable skills both in the laboratory and outside its confines, elegantly summarized by Bruno Latour (1983), well illustrates that even the most ground-breaking scientific discovery is mediated by social realities (Babić, 2022, 87–88).

Furthermore, it is not only the external social context that determines the course of science: it has been convincingly argued that the internal dynamics of a particular scientific community decisively shapes the epistemic standards considered adequate at a certain point in time (Fagan, 2010; Fuller, 2015; Milosavljević, 2018). Knowledge production is a collective practice, constrained by certain rules and standards, but they are under constant reconsideration and prone to changes. The history of science is not

only a string of amazing advancements, but also of persistent refinements of the methods applied to solve new problems. In order to bridge the gap between the idealized epistemic standards and the actual practices of researchers, Helen Longino proposed a set of epistemic norms for productive critical interaction: 1) public forum for debate, 2) "uptake" or response to criticism, 3) public standards for debate, and 4) tempered equality of intellectual authority within the community (Longino, 2002, 128–135).

It is also important to note that these standards may also vary from one such community to the next, some being more prolific than the others in setting the rules. Local intellectual traditions, institutional infrastructure, economic and political circumstances of research, all play equally important roles in the processes of knowledge transfers among diverse thought collectives (Milosavljević, 2018; see also Babić, 2023; 2023b). However, acknowledging the importance of the external social settings in which scholars produce the relevant knowledge does not mean that they are not bound by structured epistemic norms. The fact that they are produced and negotiated in constant interaction of both internal and external actors does not absolve the researchers, but rather emphasizes their responsibility to scrupulously investigate the mechanisms of knowledge production, in search for the most robust and coherent strategies. Archaeologists have not been oblivious of this responsibility, and discussions on the character of our evidence and the most productive approaches to it have long been present (Lucas, 2012; Chapman et al., 2016, 15 ff.), albeit not always with the same intensity.

## Paradigm shifts?

In the last decades of the 20th century many archaeologists inclined to discuss the epistemic foundations of our research have adopted the conceptual framework set by Thomas Kuhn in his seminal work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). His account of the ways in which science operates has been a very potent inspiration for scholars in diverse fields of study and has produced important insights into the changes occurring in epistemic standards. The basic premise of his account is that the old worldview, burdened with unresolvable fallacies, is replaced by the radically different set of epistemic principles, thus setting into motion a *paradigm shift,* as a radical and abrupt overhaul of the entire field of study. Due to its perceived ability to explain the sudden leaps in science and radical shifts in worldviews in ways different from the conventional narrative of continuous accumulation of knowledge, he is often cast as the pivotal figure in the constructivist philosophy of science (Babić, 2018, 33–36).

Kuhn's ideas have been applied to account for two periods of turbulent discussions in archaeology: during the 1960s, when the explicitly logical-positivistic approach was advocated by the proponents of New Archaeology, emphasizing its links to the hard

sciences, and again in the 1980s, when its post-processual critique turned to other sources of inspiration, derived from the humanities (Lucas, 2016; Babić, 2023b). There is, of course, a much more complex argument behind both these sets of ideas, thoroughly investigated in a vast body of literature. For the present purpose, though, it is important to note that in both instances it was claimed that a fundamental change in epistemic standards is needed, and indeed achieved. Hence, the idea of a radical overturn of the previous standards, as postulated by Kuhn, presented itself as the most appropriate way to account for the course of events. Yet, the shift when the new paradigm – a disciplinary matrix encompassing the state of a particular field of research, or a shared set of ideas, concepts and procedures normalizing the state in the field (Bourdieu, 2004, 28) – completely obliterates the previous one, never really occurred in the archaeological reasoning in the way comparable to the examples described by Kuhn. Instead, both processual and post-processual approaches survived together, more or less harmoniously, up to the first decades of the 21st century, when new competing ideas are emerging, based upon the premises of new materialism and posthumanism in philosophy and social anthropology (Harris et al., 2017), again challenging the very epistemic foundations of the discipline and calling for a radical (ontological) turn. At the same time, the rapid increase in the possibilities of gathering and processing information about the past via various techniques and methods derived from the hard sciences resulted in the declaration that "*the third science revolution*" is taking place in archaeology (Kristiansen, 2014). Following the previously established pattern, it might be argued that at least two new *paradigms* are currently contending for the position of *normal science* – the prevalent set of premises and methods at a certain point in time, according to Kuhn. However, the previous course of events does not encourage the prediction that this time the entire archaeological community will finally embrace any of the approaches currently existing in the disciplinary field, including both the ones present for decades, and the currently fervently advocated ones. It may therefore be useful to take another look at the idea of paradigm shifts and its applicability in archaeology.

In spite of its huge popularity and influence, both in academia and beyond (Bourdieu, 2004, 32), a number of shortcomings of Kuhn's structure of changes in scientific principles have been put forward. The universality of his observations and applicability to all research situations is questioned, not least because Kuhn rooted his observations mainly in his own academic background, that of physics – the epitome of the natural sciences, and did not discuss at all the mechanisms of knowledge production in the sphere of social sciences or humanities (Fuller, 2015, 131, 134, 144). His subsequent critics rightfully stress that Kuhn syncretically selected the instances of profound changes, with the aim to create a coherent narrative about the history of scientific shifts. Steve Fuller even challenges Kuhn's constructivist creden-

tials, asserting that he in fact presents science as a self-regulatory and self-sufficient system, divorced from the society, in which changes occur as the result of internal, "normal", and not intentional actions of the scientific community immersed into its social setting (Fuller, 2015, 132, 136, 140; also Bourdieu, 2004, 29; Joyce et al., 2019, 841; Babić, 2023b).

Regardless of these critiques, archaeologists have copiously borrowed Kuhn's concept of paradigm, supplementing it with our own disciplinary concerns. The tides of debates in the 1960s and the 1980s have been denoted as instances of paradigm shift, marking clean breaks between three distinct *phases* of archaeological reasoning: culture-historical, processual, and post-processual. In this manner, two closely related, but distinct aspects of the concept of paradigm have been conflated: epistemological – stressing that scientific communities share a common mode of reasoning (heavily leaning onto Fleck's thought collectives, see Milosavljević, 2018), and historiographic – aimed at monitoring and explaining the changes in this shared pattern through time (Lucas, 2016, 4). In other words, theoretically inclined archaeologists have tacitly assumed that the introduction of novel epistemic tools inevitably completely overshadowed all the previously existing ones, thus implying an unsurmountable epistemological distance between the three approaches identified in the history of the discipline. Even when the term paradigm is not explicitly used, the underlying assumption in most of the historical overviews is that three modes of archaeological reasoning are at the same time three distinct *phases* in its development. Thus, Kuhn's concept became a tool "*to create simplistic historiographic divisions*" (Lucas, 2016, 3), heuristically useful to a certain degree, but at the same time generating several problems.

Firstly, in the effort to comply with Kuhn's idea of a radical overturn, we may end up emphasizing the differences rather than similarities that run through the entire history of the discipline (cf. Lucas, 2012; see also Babić, 2018). In this manner, the actual research practice of the majority of archaeologists around the world, enjoying the benefits of the opportunistic methodological omnivory (Currie, 2018) is disregarded for the sake of an idealized pattern of growth. Furthermore, the huge variety of locally specific intellectual traditions and their echoes in archaeological research is taken to be the signal of varying rates of progress, with some local communities relegated to the position of (un)willing recipients of ready-made ideas from the centres of the academic debate (Babić, 2023b). Ultimately, the established pattern of periodical radical changes sets the expectations that every few decades an earth-shattering shift is bound to happen in the epistemic domain (Thomas, 2015), resulting in only one paradigm claiming the status of normal science according to Kuhn. All these problems stem from the idealized notion that the entire field of archaeology can, and indeed should, be unified under the same standardized set of premises, regardless of a

huge variety of actual research situations, different in terms of goals, tasks, or circumstances. Some but not all of these aspects of archaeological practices can be controlled by researchers themselves, and an ideal setting is rarely, if ever achieved. It is therefore prudent to bear in mind the warning:

> "Purely abstract standards for epistemic justification, lacking any connection to our practices, are at best pretty fictions, descriptions of imaginary science to dazzle the uninitiated and inspire novices. At worst, they mask relations of power and politics that determine what is accepted as scientific knowledge, protecting inequities from critique and lending social biases an appearance of inevitability. To prevent such misuse of epistemic ideals, their connection with scientific practice must be articulated." (Fagan, 2010, 103)

Consequently, instead of casting the debate in terms of a contest for an idealized exclusive mode of reasoning, it may be more productive to search for a way to retain the plurality of possible approaches, already present in the practice of the discipline. After all, the "*theory wars*" (Chapman et al., 2016), waged at least from the middle of the 20th century, did not produce a unified set of practices, but only amplified the opportunities for the "methodological omnivory". New possibilities emerge, especially those based upon STEM-derived techniques and methods, while the old procedures are still practised, such as typological analyses. Discarding the old ones, just because they are perceived as parts of the outdated paradigm may deprive us of valuable epistemic tools. Equally, fully embracing the new ones without carefully investigating their potential may produce misleading results. This is especially problematic when archaeologists borrow concepts and ideas from another field of study, without much thought about their original context and the distortions induced by the transfer from one disciplinary setting to the other (Babić, 2018, 116 f.). Therefore, we need to reconsider the particular epistemic proposals on their own merit and to seek for the meaningful connections between various lines of inquiry. However, arguing for plurality does not in any way imply that all the proposed approaches are equally valid or efficient in producing the relevant knowledge. In order to discern the ones worth pursuing and increase the epistemic potential of the entire discipline, it may be prudent to abandon the search for clearly bounded theoretical and methodological units. This *bloc* approach presupposes clear-cut segments curtailed by nonporous boundaries and filled with homogenous contents (cf. Crellin, 2020). However, research practice rarely operates in this manner and, in archaeology as well as other disciplines, it consists mainly in interaction between competing research programmes.

## Progressive programmes?

The concept of a research programme was first introduced in the late 1960s by the philosopher of science Imre Lakatos, as a tool to evaluate different scientific theories and methods, and their potential for further growth (Lakatos, 1968; 1970). The basic idea is that in practice researchers choose to commit to a string of ideas and propositions – a programme, with its core consisting of the defining postulates. In the process of positive heuristics hypotheses are formulated, aimed at the empirical testing of the core propositions of the programme. In time, some of these propositions are empirically validated and start forming a *protective belt* around the core, enhancing its epistemic potential. Lakatos allows for some of the propositions to fail the empirical test and get rejected, as long as the core is capable of generating new viable propositions. The ones that are corroborated add robustness to the core and extend its protective belt, and the entire programme is judged to be progressive (Joyce et al., 2019, 842–843). Failures can be overcome as long as the core is still potent enough to produce new postulates. Although Lakatos permits trial-and-error, the ultimate goal of a programme is to be both theoretically and empirically progressive: it must predict novel and hitherto unexpected facts, and at least some of these have to be verified (Musgrave et al., 2023). If, on the other hand, a programme fails to deliver successive new propositions and/or if the novel predictions turn out to be false, the programme is degenerating (Lakatos, 1970; 33, 34). The recent refurbishment of Lakatos's model introduces the third possible state of a scientific programme – a static one, where it may be possible that researchers cease to produce new hypotheses and are forced to go into stasis until technological or other developments allow for testing to begin or resume. And yet "*having a static research program might be better for a field of study than having a degenerative research program or having no research program at all*" (Joyce et al., 2019, 849).

How does this approach to validation of research help archaeologists in judging the best possible path to follow in order to produce relevant and epistemically sound knowledge? Firstly, Lakatos offers the means to observe discrete sets of propositions over time, not monitoring success in terms of a sudden breakthrough, like Kuhn's paradigms, but in the potential to gradually improve and enlarge knowledge. So instead of treating the periods of more dynamic debates as breaking points, aimed at discrediting the previous positions, we can think of them as the moments in the history of the discipline when valuable insights have been *added* to our epistemic repertoire. Several competing programmes may exist at the same time, since the scientific process is envisaged as a string of research practices, constantly exploring a number of working premises, not as a solid front that advances in unison until fatally challenged. Their success is constantly monitored with respect to the rival propositions (Musgrave et al., 2023), not only confined to the periods of sudden and radical change. Some pro-

grammes may even stagnate (Joyce et al., 2019), but still hold a certain epistemic value, which can be reinvigorated under some future conditions.

The debates in the history of archaeology when the existing premises were most radically challenged and declared obsolete by the proponents of the new set of proposals, as a rule, revolved around its position with regard to the distinction between the sciences and humanities. This tension between the epistemic standards derived from the Cartesian tradition, and the ones following in the footsteps of Droysen and Dilthey has been articulated most notably in the 1960s, when the processual credo explicitly demanded "more science", and again in the 1980s, when the pendulum swung towards understanding, rather than explaining (Babić, 2018, 116–120). This perpetual problem, succinctly labelled as "*the paradox of material evidence*" (Chapman et al., 2016), can hardly be resolved by committing ourselves exclusively to one set of premises at the expense of the other, since it lies in the fact that its subject matter can and indeed should be approached both by those means closely associated with the realm of natural sciences, and those close to the humanities. When viewed from the angle of the Lakatosian *programmes*, this apparent incommensurability of approaches proves to cause less friction, since individual research strategies are judged according to their potential to corroborate and expand its core in relation to other propositions in the field. Some of the protective belts may overlap, eventually creating synergies between the cores.

This leaves unresolved the issue of empirical verification as the key criterion proposed by Lakatos for discerning the character of a particular programme. Strictly speaking, this step in a research presupposes the satisfactory outcome of an empirical test designed to verify a hypothesis (Franklin et al., 2016). This goal is rarely, if ever, achievable in archaeology, even when researchers firmly adhere to the positivistic ideals of hypothetico-deductive method. However, archaeologists share this problem with other disciplines aimed at producing inferences about the deep past, such as geology, palaeontology, or evolutionary biology (Currie, 2018). A more elaborate account on the solution to this problem is outside the limits of this text, but an interim proposition may be put forward that theoretically and logically consistent propositions, corroborated by newly acquired evidence (*cf.* Joyce et al., 2019), are considered to meet the criteria of a progressive research programme.

To conclude, the current state of archaeological theory and practice, much like it has been the case throughout the history of the discipline, is characterized by multiple propositions, ranging from those explicitly putting faith in the application of hard-science methods (Kristiansen, 2016), to those opulently borrowing from philosophy and social anthropology (Olsen et al., 2012). The multitude of approaches generated over more than a century meets the diverse demands of the complex task before us – to produce sound and meaningful knowledge about human interactions with the

material world. If we choose to observe these propositions as discrete programmes, all geared towards the same ultimate goal, but honed to meet particular challenges, posed by the character of our evidence, we may be able to determine their epistemic potential in a more astute manner. Ultimately, their mutual reinforcement may prove to be more frequent than expected and the unity of archaeological research practices may be reached precisely by embracing their plurality. Consequently, the most productive way forward for archaeology, in epistemic terms at least, is to fully embrace its already existing plurality of approaches and to constantly verify their epistemic robustness through structured and theoretically informed practices. In this manner, a more active role can be achieved in the interdisciplinary exchanges and, ultimately, the esteem of archaeological knowledge can be restored in society.

**Acknowledgments**: Many thanks to Zorica Kuzmanović, Monika Milosavljević and Aleksandar Palavestra for their comments.

## References

Agassi, J., *Science and its History. A Reassessment of the Historiography of Science*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Boston, Springer 2008.

Babić, S., *Metaarheologija. Ogled o uslovima znanja o prošlosti*, Belgrade, Klio 2018.

Babić, S., Teaching STEM in Archaeology – Notes from a Devil's Advocate, in: *STEM in Heritage: Procedures, Methods, and Teaching*, (ed. Vuković, J.) Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, 2022, p. 83–90.

Babić, S., Archaeological theory at the edge(s), in: *Archaeological theory at the edge(s)* (ed. Babić, S), Belgrade: Faculty of Philosophy 2023, p. 7–12.

Babić, S., Plus ça change? Balkan archaeology in search of identity, *Ex Novo* 8, 2023 (in preparation).

Bourdieu, P., *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, Cambridge, Polity Press 2004.

Chapman, R., Wylie, A., *Evidential Reasoning in Archaeology*, Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, London 2016.

Crellin, R. J., *Change and Archaeology*, London, New York, Routledge 2020.

Currie, A., *Rock, Bone and Ruin. An Optimist's Guide to Historical Sciences*, Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press 2018.

Fagan, M., 2010. Social Construction Revisited: Epistemology and Scientific Practice, *Philosophy of Science* 77, 1, p. 92–116.

Franklin, A., Perović, S, Experiment in Physics, in: *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Ed.) (ed. Zalda E. N.), 2016 https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/physics-experiment/.

Fuller, S., *Knowledge. The philosophical quest in history*, London, New York: Routledge 2015.

Harris, O.J.T., Cipolla, C., *Archaeological Theory in the New Millennium. Introducing Current Perspectives*, London, New York: Routledge 2017.

Havstad, J.C., Smith, N.A,. Fossils with Feathers and Philosophy of Science, *Systematic Biology* 68 (5), 2019, p. 840–851.

Kristiansen, K., Towards a New Paradigm? The Third Science Revolution and its Possible Consequences in Archaeology, *Current Swedish Archaeology* 22, 2014, p. 11–34.

Kuhn, T., *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press 1962.

Lakatos, I., Criticism and the methodology of scientific research programmes, *Proc. Aristotelian Soc.* 69, 1968, p.149–186.

Lakatos, I., Falsificationism and the methodology of scientific research programmes, in: *Criticism and the growth of knowledge* (eds. Lakatos, I, Musgrave, A.), Cambridge University Press 1970, p. 91–196.

Latour, B., "Give Me a Laboratory and I Will Raise the World", in: *Science Observed: Perspectives on the Social Study of Science* (eds. Knorr-Cetina, K, Mulkay, M.), London, Sage 1983, p. 141–170.

Longino, H., *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry*, Princeton University Press 1990.

Longino, H., *The Fate of Knowledge*, Princeton University Press 2002.

Lucas, G., *Understanding the Archaeological Record*, Cambridge University Press 2002.

Lucas, G., The paradigm concept in archaeology, *World Archaeology* 49, 2016, p. 1–11.

Milosavljević, M., How Archaeological Communities Think? Re-thinking Ludwik Fleck's Concept of the Thought-Collective According to the Case of Serbian Archaeology, in: *Communities and Knowledge Production in Archaeology* (eds. Roberts, J., Sheppard, K., Hansson, U., Trigg, J.), Manchester University Press 2018.

Musgrave, A., Pigden, C., Imre Lakatos, in: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2023 Edition), (eds. Zalta, E.N., Nodelman, U.) https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2023/entries/lakatos/&gt.

Olsen, B., Shanks, M, Webmoor, T, Witmore, C., *Archaeology – The Discipline of Things*, Berkeley, University of California Press 2012.

Thomas, J., *Archaeology and Modernity*, London, Routledge 2004.

Thomas, J., Why "The death of archaeological theory"?, in: *Debating archaeological empiricism: the ambiguity of material evidence* (eds. Hillerdal, C., Siapkas, J.), Routledge 2015, p. 11–36.

Weinert, Friedel. 2009. *Copernicus, Darwin and Freud. Revolutions in the History and Philosophy of Science*, Oxford, Blackwell 2009.

Wylie, A., *Thinking from Things. Essays in the Philosophy of Archaeology*, 2002, Berkeley, University of California Press.

## Arheološki programi. Komentarji k epistemični raznovrstnosti

**Ključne besede**: arheološko sklepanje, epistemične norme, paradigmatski obrat, raziskovalni programi, Imre Lakatos

V članku je predstavljen kratek pregled konceptov preučevanja sprememb epistemičnih standardov v arheologiji in njenega potenciala v bodočnosti. Opozarja na pomanjkljivost pogoste rabe Kuhnovega koncepta paradigem pri razvrščanju arheoloških teoretskih pristopov v tri izrazito ločene in izključujoče se faze. Namesto tega predlaga koncept raziskovalnih programov filozofa znanosti Imreja Lakatosa, ki se zdi bolj produktiven za vrednotenje različnih pristopov v arheologiji in s katerim je možno ohraniti različnost epistemičnih idej in se tako bolje soočiti z izzivi, ki so imanentni arheološkim dokazom.

## Archaeological programmes. Notes on epistemic diversity

**Keywords**: archaeological reasoning, epistemic norms, paradigm shift, research programme, Imre Lakatos

The paper presents a short overview of the concepts used to observe the changes in epistemic standards of a discipline and its future potential, in respect to archaeology. The shortcomings are outlined of the common practice of structuring the theoretical approaches in archaeology into distinct, mutually exclusive modes of reasoning, implying three distinct phases, inspired by Kuhn's concept of paradigm. The concept of a research programme, introduced by the philosopher of science Imre Lakatos, is suggested as the more productive mode of assessing the multitude of approaches present in archaeology. In this manner, it is possible to retain the diversity of epistemic proposals and to meet the challenges immanent in the character of archaeological evidence.

## O avtorici

**Staša Babić** je profesorica klasične arheologije Grčije na Oddelku za arheologijo Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Beogradu. Raziskovalno se ukvarja z železno dobo Evrope in Balkana, kulturnimi kontakti Grkov in njihovih sodobnikov, recepcijo klasične grške kulture v sodobnem svetu ter teorijo in epistemologijo arheologije. Je avtorica monografij *Grci i Drugi. Antička percepcija i percepcija antike* (Beograd: Clio 2008) in *Metaarheologija. Ogled o uslovima znanja o prošlosti* (Beograd: Clio 2018).

E-naslov: sbabic@f.bg.ac.rs

## About the author

**Staša Babić** is a Professor of Classical Archaeology of Greece at the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Research interests: European and Balkan Iron Age; cultural contacts between the Greeks and their contemporaries; reception of the Classical Greek culture in the modern world; theory and epistemology of archaeology. Published works include the monographs: *Grci i Drugi. Antička percepcija i percepcija antike (Greeks and others. Ancient perceptions and perceptions of antiquity), Belgrade: Clio (2008),* and *Metaarheologija. Ogled o uslovima znanja o prošlosti (Metaarchaeology. An essay on the conditions of knowledge about the past); Belgrade: Clio (2018).*

E-mail: sbabic@f.bg.ac.rs