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Bridging Continents, Confronting Change: Lessons from US and European Archaeology in a Tumultuous World

This lecture/workshop will explore the dynamic landscape of archaeological research and practice, drawing critical comparisons between experiences in the United States, informed by my Fulbright scholarship, and the ongoing developments in European archaeology. The session will delve into how rapid global shifts – encompassing technological advancements, evolving ethical frameworks, and changing societal expectations – impact the discipline, challenging the often-assumed linear progression of ‘progress.’

I will share insights from both continents, analysing how different legal, cultural, and academic contexts influence methodological innovation, community engagement strategies, and the preservation of heritage in an increasingly complex world. We will examine instances where rapid change has led to positive advancements, such as the adoption of cutting-edge digital technologies for documentation and analysis. Crucially, however, the presentation will also critically address the less favourable consequences of accelerated transformation, including new ethical dilemmas, challenges in heritage management under pressure, and the potential for increased commercialisation or misinterpretation of archaeological findings.

By highlighting both successes and the inherent complexities of these ‘tumultuous’ changes, this discussion aims to foster a nuanced understanding of archaeology’s role in a world that is not only rapidly changing but also constantly re-evaluating its relationship with the past. The goal is to stimulate dialogue on how museology, as a field deeply connected to heritage, can adapt to these evolving realities while upholding its core responsibilities.

Ivana Pandžić holds a PhD from the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, on the topic ‘Salt in the Neolithic in the Territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.’ She earned her Master of Science degree from the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (2010). She graduated from the Department of History and Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece (2004), as a recipient of a Greek Government scholarship. Since November 2006, she has been employed full-time at the PI Museum of the Republic of Srpska, serving as a museum advisor and archaeologist at the Department for Prehistory (Stone Age). Since October 2007, she has worked part-time at the Department of History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Banja Luka, on subjects Archaeology and Museology, currently as an assistant professor. She speaks Greek, English and German. She is one of the founders of the Society of Archaeologists of the Republic of Srpska, Banja Luka, and a member of the Serbian Archaeology Society (Belgrade), Matica srpska, Novi Sad and the Association of Members of Matica srpska for the Republic of Srpska, Banja Luka, ICOM BH and EAA. So far, she has successfully conducted several international projects and is currently involved in several ongoing international projects (COST, HORIZON 2020, bilateral relations projects), as well as participating in numerous excavations and seminars in the country and the region. In the academic year 2024–2025, she spent time in the United States of America at Middle Tennessee State University as a Fulbright visiting scholar.

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