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WHY ALWAYS MALE BODIES? 2.0 REVISITING UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Gender studies and underwater archaeology is a theme still rarely explored together. In this paper, I aim at reanalyzing the data presented in the paper “Why Always Male Bodies?” (2013). In it, I discuss theoretical aspects of gender studies, the context in the history of archaeology, and the non-neutrality of image building. Then, I recover the data presented in the mentioned paper and reanalyze the data. The paper concludes that underwater archaeology, as in the case of other science fields, excluded both women and people who identify with other gender identities from being represented in their books and manuals.

KEYWORDS: Gender Studies; Underwater Archaeology; History of Archaeology;

RESUMO

Estudos de gênero e arqueologia subaquática são temas ainda pouco explorados juntos. Neste artigo, reanaliso os dados apresentados no artigo “Why Always Male Bodies?” (2013). Nele, discuto aspectos teóricos dos estudos de gênero, dos usos do contexto na história da arqueologia e da não-neutralidade na criação de imagens. Em seguida, reanaliso os dados apresentados no artigo mencionado. Este artigo conclui que a arqueologia subaquática, como no caso de outros campos da ciência, exclui tanto mulheres quanto pessoas que se identificam com outras identidades de gênero de serem representadas em seus livros e manuais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Estudos de Gênero; Arqueologia Subaquática; História da Arqueologia;

RESUMÉ

Les études de genre et l'archéologie sous-marine sont encore peu explorées ensemble. Dans cet article, je passe en revue les données présentées dans l'article « Why Always

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Male Bodies?» (2013). J'y discute des aspects théoriques des études de genre, des utilisations du contexte dans l'histoire de l'archéologie et de la non-neutralité dans la création d'images. Ensuite, je réanalyse les données présentées dans l'article mentionné. Cet article conclut que l'archéologie sous-marine, comme dans le cas d'autres domaines scientifiques, exclut à la fois les femmes et les personnes qui s'identifient à d'autres identités de genre d'être représentées dans leurs livres et manuels.

Mots clés: Études de genre; Archéologie sous-marine; Histoire de l'archéologie;

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, I published a paper entitled “Why Always Male Bodies?” at the now-extinct História E-História journal.² Since its hay day, I defended my Master's dissertation at the University of Campinas' Department of History (Universidade Estadual de Campinas – UNICAMP). This dissertation was on gender representations in the history of Underwater Archaeology. Then, I decided to change my research subjects and end up defending a Ph.D. thesis on the role of localization in the videogame industry at the Department of Science and Technology Policy (UNICAMP). However, I was invited by the archaeologist Cristina Amarante to participate in a YouTube live.³ This live was the first time in years that I was dealing with the theme of Underwater Archaeology again, but it was one of those pleasant surprises. When I was invited to write for this special issue at the Revista de Arqueologia Pública, I could not help to think that I should revisit that paper.

This paper aims to reanalyze the data gathered for the paper entitled Why Always Male Bodies (FONTOLAN, 2013). For it, I review the theoretical aspects of gender and archaeology. Then, I present the data gathered, analyzing the details of schematic drawings published in books about underwater archaeology. At last, the final thoughts show that changes in body representation are tied to changes in current stands on gender studies.

ARCHEOLOGY AND GENDER

Archaeology is a discipline that focuses its studies on the material culture produced by human beings (RENFREW and BAHN, 2008). The analysis of the material culture can be given throughout different theoretical approaches - including gender studies – and different

² Original link: http://historiaehistoria.com.br/materia.cfm?tb=alunos&id=491#_ftn6

³ Link for the live recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EB9ykad5yUc>, accessed October 16th 2020.

methodologies – such as underwater archaeology. However, an important aspect of archaeological studies is that the context in which certain material cultures appear is an important asset in the discipline. After all, context is used both to categorize and explain the phenomena related to the material culture.

The discussion of context, however, must not be only focused on the production and use of different types of material culture. Archaeologists concerned with the development of archaeology stress that context is at the core of the discipline. Thus, the work of Margarita Díaz-Andreu (2007), Richard Hingley (2000), and Michael Shanks (1996) pledge for the use of historical context in their analysis, showing that archaeology is a social science and avoiding the trap of writing in a positivist manner (DÍAZ-ANDREU, 2007: 2). This paper will further this notion of context in the history of archaeology, as I will also consider the context in which schematic drawings of underwater archaeological sites were made.

The production of images, being them photographs or drawings, are not neutral activities. I agree with art professor Frederick N. Bohrer's argument on photographic production:

"Rather than completely capturing or recording, the photographer's value is its filtering, reorganizing, and fundamental improvement upon real conditions. [...] My point here is not merely that the photographer's choice of images is related to his interests and prejudices, nor that photographic image is thus not as innocent or objective as might have been claimed." (BOHRER, 2005: 184 e 186)

The production of images – regardless of their nature - are permeated with choices done consciously or not by the photographer/artist or by the one asking for it. This leads me to think that the images are both produced and used across "[...] socially mediated actions" (BATEMAN, 2005: 195). Therefore, the context in which the images are created and used will be crucial for a better understanding of changes in gender representations in schematic drawings published in books on underwater archaeology.

Gender studies is a scholarly topic that discusses several aspects of gender identity, involving several disciplines – including archaeology. It had its origins in feminist and LGBTQ+ movements from the 1980s, but it developed to consider other gender expressions (PINTO, 2011). According to Roberta Gilchrist,

"The Academic study of gender is not restricted to the feminist arena, nor is it a topic studied exclusively by women. [...] Gender centers on social construction of masculinity and femininity: the social values invested in the sexual differences between men and women. In this respect gender archaeology is part of the study of social structure, as significant as rank in the social stratification and the evolution of past societies." (GILCHRIST, 1998: 51)

Gender studies consider social constructions related to femininity, masculinity, and other forms of gender expressions (such as non-binaries and trans-people). This approach intends to further the discussions related to body form and genitalia, arguing that there is a social construction of gender roles. This approach leads us to rethink the construction of gender roles in different societies nowadays (VOSS, 2000).

THE SOURCES

The analysis will be based on a series of publications on underwater archaeology, which comprises four books. Those books were chosen for the availability of field-work drawings that pictured human bodies on them. Even if the corpus is limited, it enables us to discuss a series of issues related to gender representation in underwater archaeology.

The earliest one was published by Bass in 1966, with a Portuguese version published in 1971. It is one of the earliest manuals for underwater research in archaeology, and it explains some technical issues related to excavation and analysis of underwater sites.

The second book is a UNESCO's collection on the subject. It compresses 15 articles and one appendix on the most diverse themes: from site descriptions to technical issues, such as underwater photography. It is entitled "underwater archaeology: a nascent discipline" and was published in 1972.

The third, also written by Bass, is a museum catalog, intended for the general public. It is entitled "Shipwrecks in the Bodrum Museum of underwater archaeology", published in 1996. As common in books for the lay public written by him (e.g. BASS, 2005), it contains not just the interpretation given to the site itself, but also a story of how the site was found and excavated.

The last source used in this analysis is another manual, written by Amanda Bowens and published in 2009, entitled "underwater archaeology: the NAS guide to Principles and

Practices". Like most of them, this one describes field techniques and defines what underwater archaeology is, but it also includes the post-field work processes, law, and public archaeology issues.

METHOD

This analysis comprises two different steps: a quantitative and a qualitative analysis. For the quantitative analysis, I counted the number of drawings published and categorized them concerning theme and gender – if humans were depicted in them. In this case, I had to use the shape of the body to determine the gender depicted in the drawings. I compare this data with the quantitative data on photographs depicting humans in these same books. For gathering this data, I used the information given in each of the photo's captions. If the caption identified the people in the photo, I would search for the person and identify how they identified themselves gender-wise, either by the pronouns they used or by self-identification available in their social media. As, at the time, there were no people self-identifying as trans, non-binary, or any other gender identity, I focused the data on analyzing male and female gender.

After the presentation of the quantitative data, I present the qualitative data. This is comprised of a detailed analysis of four different schematic drawings. These drawings were chosen because they allow for a detailed analysis and also to discuss other aspects of gender representations that the quantitative analysis does not allow us to have.

THE QUANTITATIVE DATA

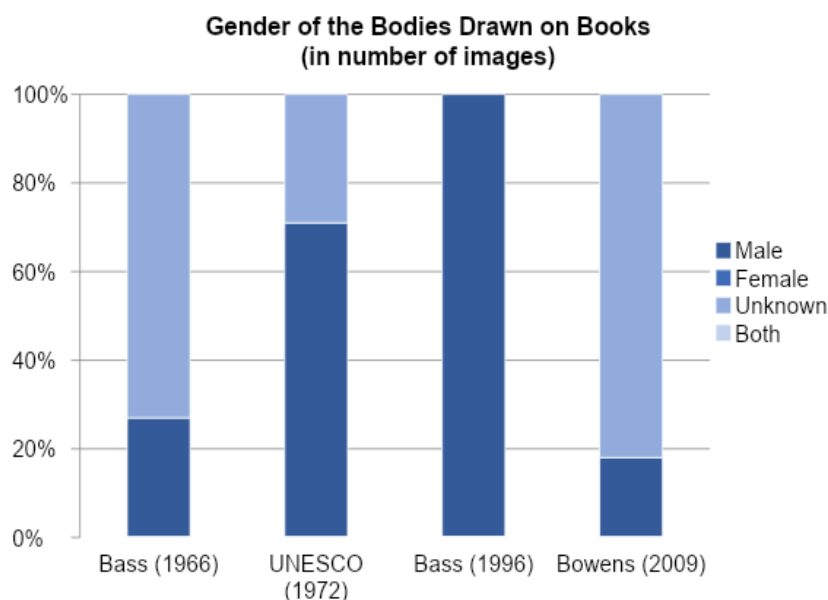


FIGURE 1: shows the number of drawings in which people were represented (Gender Bodies Drawn on books/ Source: Own Authorship).

In Bass' 1966 book, there were 11 images, where 3 (27%) represented a male body as the main character, and 8 (73%) the sex/gender weren't recognizable. In UNESCO's (1972) one, 7 figures were analyzed, being 5 (71%) of them representing a male body, as the other 2 (29%) the sex/gender is unknown. In Bass's 1996 work there is only 1 human figure, picturing a male body as the main character. At last, at Bowens' publication, it pictured 22 images; being 4 (18%) representing what seemed to be male bodies 18 (72%).

Although the number of published images varies a lot, we have that all the identifiable bodies are related to masculine bodies. To have a better understanding of the meaning of this data, enabling a better discussion of meanings and context-relations, we must present the data related to the photographs published in these same books.

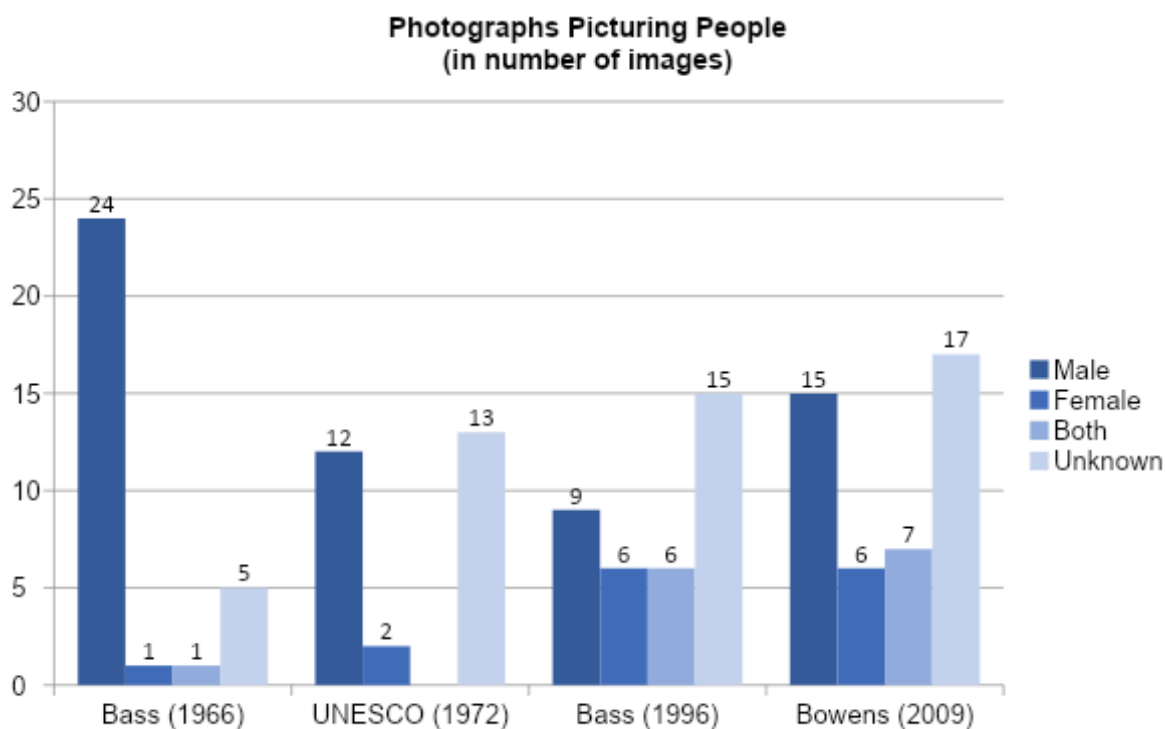


FIGURE 2: shows the number of photographs in which people were represented, categorized by gender (Photographs published, by gender/ Source: Own Authorship).

Bass' (1966) book presents 31 photos of people. Of them, 24 (77.4 %) depicted males, 5 (16.1%) were not possible to identify, 1 (3.25%) depicting a female, and 1 (3.25%) photo that shows both genders. UNESCO'S (1972) has 27 pictures of people, divided into 12 (44.4%) pictures of males, 13 (48.1%) which were not possible to identify, and 2 (7.5%) photos of females. Bass' (1996) book has 36 photos depicting human beings. Of them, 9 (25%) has only males in it, 6 (17%) has only females, 6 (17%) have both gender, and 15 (41%) are people whose gender could not be identified. At last, Bowens' (2009) work presents 45 photos of people, divided into: 15 (35.7%) of males, 6 (13.3%) of females, 7 (15.5%) photos that depict both genders, and 17 (35.5%) in which genders could not be identified.

Comparing the data provided by the analysis of drawings and the ones from the photographs, one shall notice that there is a clear choice in depicting male bodies in the schematic field drawings. After all, women would participate in underwater archaeology fieldwork and studies since their first attempts in Cape Gelidonya (BASS, 2005). Therefore, the lack of representation of female and other gender identities resulted in the research questions that entitled this paper: 'why always male bodies?'

A HISTORY OF DIVING AND THE GENDER REPRESENTATION

One possible answer to this research question might be given if we analyze the context of the development of underwater archaeology and its relationship with the history of diving. According to Gilson Rambelli (2002), diving is a practice dated thousands of years and it is documented since classical antiquity, and the history of diving is still focused on manhood.

From antiquity to almost until the 1940's only men would be able to dive. There could have existed women who dived and made her life out of that, but they were either forgotten, did not have their lives documented or their history is still to be written. As Rambelli (2002) continues to present his history of the diving practice, through the technologies created to make diving more accessible, longer, and safer, he always refers to man's inventions.

Although the scholar does not mention female characters during his history of diving, he provides an analysis of the reasons why this still happens. "The 'romanticism' related to the long history of the diving practice - associated with the rescue and recovery of underwater objects and the unscrupulous explorations of wrecks - continued". (RAMBELLI, 2002: 28 - my translation⁴). The idea of treasure hunting and adventure remained constantly being reproduced, regardless of the kind of diving equipment used. This discourse, along with constructions on the social role of women, results in ongoing exclusion. The social construction of the feminine was summarized by Solometo and Moss (2013):

"(...) is based in part on presumed biological differences between the sexes, including greater male aggressiveness, intellect, and strength (...). Women are passive in that they are supposed to engage in activities considered less physically and mentally strenuous, including child-rearing, and to perform work that is more stationary, more repetitive, and more likely to be confined to the domestic realm." (SOLOMETO and MOSS, 2013: 136)

Diving is, nowadays, a quite easy practice, as the equipment is much cheaper and easier to use than it was at the beginning of the 20th century. However, we continue to construct the female role tied to the domestic realm, and this can influence the

⁴Original: "O 'romantismo' presente na longa trajetória histórica das atividades de mergulho - voltadas ao resgate e à recuperação de objetos dos fundos marinhos e à exploração inescrupulosa dos navios naufragados - continuou".

representations created in the drawings. After all, even if females are allowed and actually dive, representing female (and even other gender identities) in the realms of underwater archaeology schematic drawings would not be considered a necessity. Of course, as Bohrer stressed, this is may not be a conscious choice of the artist, but the image itself is not a neutral one (BOHRER, 2005) and all those readings became possible.

By the present time, diving certifications, such as the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), are trying to break the image that just male people dive. On their website, there are shown plenty of images of women and children dressed in diving suits⁵. Their videos⁶ do not show the adventurous part of diving, but they picture the easiness of the practice and the fun it provides, with a lot of young women participating. It is notable that in none of the cases - website or video - elder people (male or female) nor people of color are pictured, bringing us the idea of other restrictions to diving: age and race, not gender.

THE QUALITATIVE DATA

The explanation of the exclusion of a plethora of different gender identities in underwater archaeology is not enough though. The quantitative data showed that there are drawings in which one could not identify the body's gender. However, an analysis of the qualitative data allows for a further debate and understanding of the nature of the representations, its changes, and its meanings for the development of underwater archaeology. In this session, I will analyze four different drawings.

⁵ <http://www.padi.com/scuba/>, accessed in March, 26 2013.

⁶ E.g. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmqjNJOVSuU>, accessed in March, 26 2013.

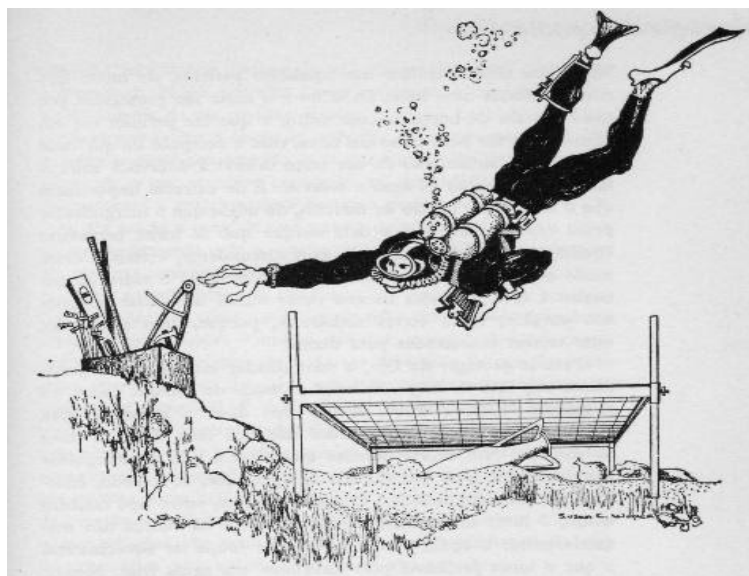


FIGURE 3 – Male excavating a site. Source: Bass, 1966: 29⁷

Figure 3 shows a male excavating a site and he is drawn intentionally to show the equipment he is using. Despite the didactical goal of the equipment used for underwater excavations, the character himself calls up our attention. He is not just a common archaeologist who learned how to dive, he is a strong and bold man. He has strong (frog-like) muscles and carries a knife to dispel any danger. This image reinforces the adventure and dangerous aspects of the diving practice. The result of such an image tends to the exclusion of people, either because people do not feel represented by this type of image or even by archaeologists who do not share the image of archaeology being a constantly adventurous endeavor.

⁷The drawing caption says: "A diver with air cylinder, diving outfit, knife, belt with weights, depth gauge, watch, mask, regulator, flippers, clipboard and pencil. In the box, near the grid, there are compasses, hammer, rulers, plummet and tags for objects" (BASS, 1966: 29 - my translation). Original: "Mergulhador autônomo com garrafas de ar, fato aberto, faca, cinto com pesos, profundímetro, relógio de pulso, máscara, regulador, barbatanas, tábua de apontamentos e lápis de grafite. Na caixa, perto da grelha, estão compassos, martelo, réguas de medida, nível e etiquetas para objectos."

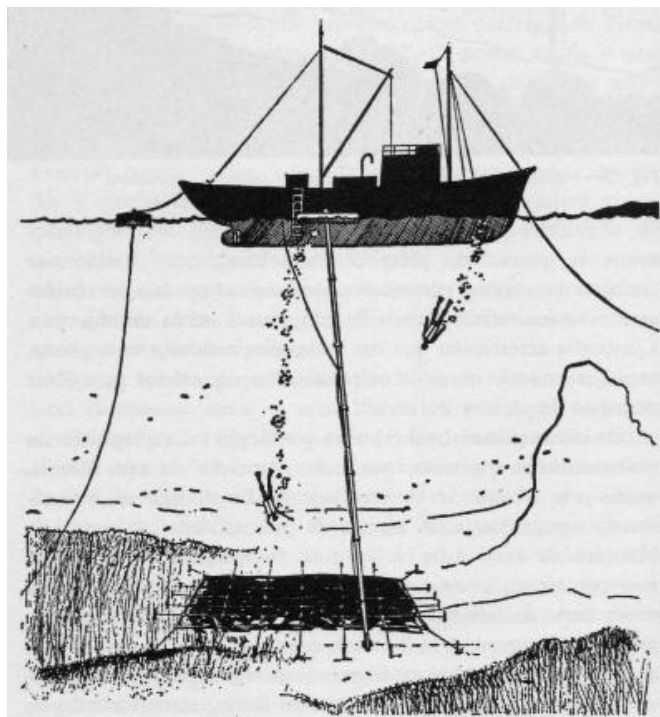


FIGURE 4 – General drawing of an underwater site, gender of human unknown⁸ (BASS, 1966: 120).

Figure 4 shows a drawing of an archaeological site from a distance. In this case, one cannot identify the gender of the people in it due to the distance in which they were drawn. This means that the artist of this picture would not be considered to draw bodies in a way in which gender would not be identifiable. Similar cases also appear in two other books: the UNESCO's one (1972), e.g. the figures on pages 281 and 292; and the Bass' newer one (1996), e.g. page 12. This reinforces my argument on using presumed biological differences as a way to exclude people from being represented in a variety of places, including scientific books. Besides, the choice of representation shows the importance of analyzing at least part of the data qualitatively. This allows for further understanding and better contextualization of the materials studied.

⁸ The drawing caption says: "One of the first methods for topographic survey of a place of debris of an ancient shipwreck; Spargi (as Roghi states)" (BASS, 1966: 120 - my translation). Original: Um dos primeiros métodos de levantamento topográfico de um lugar de restos de um barco naufragado da Antiguidade; Spargi (segundo Roghi)".



FIGURE 5 - Male studying an archaeological site (UNESCO, 1972: 130)⁹

Figure 5 shows a male diver studying an archaeological site on a grid. Comparing to Figure 3, this image – although representing a male body – it shows a much friendlier person. He does not exhibit all his male boldness and strength, he does not carry a knife in this scene and he is presented as doing his job in a relaxed manner. This image allows for a better representation of the archaeological work in sites, as it is a job that needs to be carefully done. Even though this book lacks representing different gender identities in their drawings, how this representation was made makes underwater archaeology much more inviting both to general and scholar audiences. After all, it does not bring that discourse of a highly-challenging archaeological method, which requires military training to be able to do.

⁹The drawing caption says: "The grid used for making measured drawings" (UNESCO, 1972: 130).

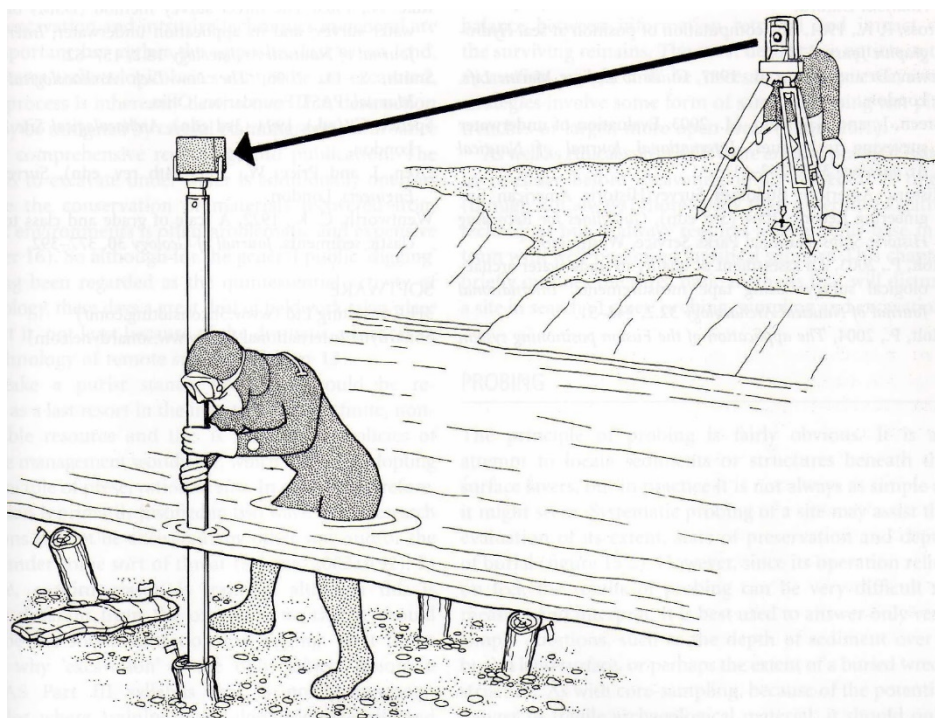


FIGURE 6 – People surveying a site in shallow water¹⁰ (BOWENS, 2009: 133).

Bowens' (2009) book has yet another set of discussions related to gender representation in drawings. Figure 6 shows two people surveying a shallow-water site. Different than Figure 4, one cannot identify the gender of the person on land. The reason for it was because the person was drawn to look ungendered, not because of the drawing distance. However, the person in the water has a more masculine body type. Even though this representation is much different from the ones analyzed before, the male body is the choice when the body's position forces the artist to make a choice. The masculine body type as a standard in underwater archaeology still reflects the discussions on the history of diving and the quantitative data analyzed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Quantitative data showed that there was a choice for the focus on male bodies. Women participated in underwater archaeology since its beginning, but their representations in the photos (as archaeologists) also took some time to actually be featured (FONTOLAN, 2015). The quantitative data on the drawings, though, showed that there were a great

¹⁰Drawing caption: Surveying a submerged site in shallow water using a shore-based total station. (Drawing by Graham Scott; after Morrion, 1985, fig. 5.2).

number of drawings in which the gender of the bodies depicted was not able to be identified. The qualitative analysis shows how gender representation has actually changed over time and ranged from bodies having their gender not possible to be identified due to draw distance to bodies draw intentionally so their gender could not be identified. The research question that guided this paper 'why always male bodies?' still needs to be discussed, now in light of the data.

Solometo and Moss (2013) stress it might be related to gender bias, especially biological essentialism. This legitimate and rationalized gender polarization, focused on androcentrism. It naturalizes and constructs gender polarization and binarism as natural consequences of intrinsic biological natures of men and women (SOLOMETO and MOSS, 2013). The results are that women would not be depicted in diving activities because the artist cannot imagine a woman in a diving suit, a trend that followed up until the most recent books about underwater archaeology. Solometo and Moss' (2013) suggest that the artist should be encouraged to consider other visions of mankind, obscure or blur the gender of individuals or, even, depict all the people with the same hairstyle and clothing, leaving to the reader to imagine who that figure might be (SOLOMETO and MOSS, 2013: 142-143). This strategy is widely used in Bowens' (2009) book, as the vast majority of the drawings were designed to blur the gender of the characters.

Besides new understandings of gender roles, recent research in Science and Technology Studies show that women (and people who identify with other gender identities) have always participated in the construction of knowledge. However, the recognition of the role women had in science and technology took a long time to be acknowledged and there still are inequalities spread in different sciences (FREITAS and LUZ, 2017; CARVALHO, 2011). Underwater archaeology is not different than any other science in this regard, as it excluded the history of women and people of other gender identities from its books. However, it is highly necessary to rethink this aspect, so science can actually booster equality in itself and society in general.

CONCLUSION

If, as Barbara Voss states

"Archaeology faces the unique challenge of stretching theories of sexuality in new chronological and cultural directions and in probing the

cultural and representational limits of distinctions between gender and sexuality. While neither feminist nor queer theories should be applied unquestioningly to the past, together they provide powerful tools that can broaden archaeological interpretations of past sexualities." (VOSS, 2000: 187)

Then, why should we not start thinking about gender and sexuality in the discipline itself? If we must change the way we look to the past, we also should do the same for our discipline, as it makes us understand better the capacities and limitations of it. After all, we could note that a discourse change, from the bold and really strong men to the ungendered representations, accompanied by an increasing number of women's photographs on archaeological work, can make us understand better our own discipline, relating knowledge to power and gender relations. In other words, male bodies should not be the standard for representing underwater archaeology.

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