Session #247

BACK TO THE BEGINNING: WHAT PHILOSOPHY OF TECHNOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY MAY LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER

Theme:
6. Transient theories

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Archaeology has traditionally always positioned itself in two ways. On the one hand it is a technoscience, studying the human condition by excavating sites and analysing material remains. On the other hand it is a humanities field and aims to deepen human self-understanding by addressing the question who we are and where we come from. A dialogue between philosophy and archaeology has a long history and has always been fostered by the fact that both areas of inquiry follow the same adagium: know thyself. This session invites critical reflection on our relationship with technology, past and present. On the one hand, technological practices have shaped the trajectory of human evolution; on the other, in today's archaeology, technological methods themselves increasingly drive research questions . How does this shift affect the epistemology of the field? What is gained and lost when technicity overtakes inquiry, especially with growing reliance on AI, which risks distancing researchers from ther material object of study?
In contemporary philosophy, the question of technology has taken centre stage; not only in response to disruptive developments such as AI, but because human existence and thought have always been conditioned by technology. It is here that the philosophy of technology and the philosophy of archaeology meet, for archaeology explores the relationship between technics and human existence from its very beginnings.
What is needed is an understanding of technology that treats technics not merely as a means or byproduct, but as a structuring aspect of what it means to be human. Drawing on the work of Gilbert Simondon, Bernard Stiegler, and André Leroi-Gourhan, this session seeks a shared framework where critical reflection takes precedence over purely technical approaches.

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Philosophy of Technology, Epistemology, Archaeological Theory, Human Evolution, Human–technology relations, Technics