

Review of Enrico Giannichedda, Typologies

It is difficult to judge the paper under review from the background of the guidelines for reviewers. The paper is not a classical research paper, which starts with a question, proceeds with an analysis and ultimately draws conclusions from the results of the analysis. The text instead offers a loose reflection on the multiple ways of classifying and interpreting archaeological artifacts. The author presents a typology of different directions of approaching ‚material culture‘ (chrono-typological, culture-historical, technological, techno-anthropological, sociological, economical, cognitional). This could well be of interest, especially to a student audience.

Unfortunately the references in the text are very limited („the bibliography will be kept to a minimum“). And one half of the publications mentioned are works of the author himself. References to publications specially devoted to the problems of archaeological classifications are largely missing. Classical northern and central European perspectives in the tradition of Montelius are not even mentioned once. From the international discussion only Childe, Leroi-Gourhan and Renfrew (with his introduction together with Bahn) are mentioned (Some scholars – as for example Latour - are mentioned in the text without direct references.)

I’m not able here to comment on the numerous publications of the author. But with the arguments presented in the article alone, the paper doesn’t work as it (in my opinion) would be necessary. Main problem: The six „types“ of archaeological reasoning, that were presented, are not clearly associated with the respective paradigms and persons. Different positions in the debate were not presented and commented on.

Title and abstract mirror the problems mentioned for the total text.

The key words for the text are partly misleading: as still mentioned the article is on artefact classification in an abstract sense. Concepts as „attributes“, „types“ and „variants“ were not discussed in detail. The discussion instead is primarily focused on the question to which end artifacts were classified. Problems of a „global archaeology“ and even „material culture“ rank low in the paper. The concluding brief reflection on „the definition of material culture“ doesn’t include a single reference on the large debate on this issue in the last decades.

Two figures included in the text for illustrating/summarizing the arguments presented, were left in Italian?

Ulrich Veit, 21.12.2022