

## Archaeology and the structure of class 9

*Katarína Chovanová*  
Bibliography Department  
Slovak National Library

Despite the intensive revision carried out in the past two decades, there are still some outdated parts of UDC in need of attention. Although new terminology may be added on a more specific subject level, the outdated and illogical structure of the top classes in class 9 stands out. The work on recent extensions of class 94 History has reminded us of what is wrong on the level above. The sequence in which 91 *Geography* and 929 *Biographical studies* are intercalated and interrupt the logical sequence of classes 902/904 *Archaeology, Prehistory and Cultural remains of historical times* and 93/94 *History* cannot be justified:

9	Geography. Biography. History
902	Archaeology
903	Prehistory. Prehistoric remains, artefacts, antiquities
904	Cultural remains of historical times
908	Area studies. Study of a locality
<b>91</b>	<b>Geography. Exploration of the Earth and of individual countries. Travel. Regional geography</b>
<b>929</b>	<b>Biographical and related studies</b>
93/94	History
930	Science of history. Historiography
94	General history

Furthermore, 902 *Archaeology* seems outdated in what its position in the hierarchy conditions its meaning, away from History and close to Prehistory. When we look into definitions of archaeology, for instance, we will find that they may not always be helpful in understanding the scope of the science. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines archaeology as a “study of human and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artefacts and other physical remains.” According to *Encyklopédia archeológie* (1985), for instance, Archaeology is considered to be “a part of historiography focusing on the oldest period of human history for which written sources are lacking or they do not provide full information on individuals or society” but also “archaeology is used synonymously with disciplines traditionally considered as prehistory and protohistory”.

In the 19th century when archaeology was established as a science it was generally understood as science about prehistory. Over time, archaeology has evolved and developed into the science that deals and evaluates cultural artefacts irrespective the age and origin, as sources for interpretation of human history at large. Therefore, it nowadays represents the scientific study of the material remains of past societies, human life and activities in general, not any more restricted to periods of human history from which there are few or no written sources. On the contrary, modern archaeology, represents an essential component of history of all periods. In epistemological terms, archaeology and history share the same subject of study differing in the fact that archaeology deals with material remains and artefacts only.

In the contemporary historiography, many would consider the term ‘prehistory’ as anachronistic and in conflict with both the continuous nature of human history and the current understanding

of history and historical sources. Some suggest that the expression 'primeval age history' would be much more appropriate to denote earliest stages, the oldest and the longest chapter of human history. In its entry 'primeval age history' *Slovak Archaeology Encyclopaedia* states: "in relation to the fact that history is a continuous process, pre-historical period (i.e. prehistory) appears to be an anachronism, and there is a clear tendency to avoid this expression".

In the light of these arguments, we would welcome classes 902, 903, 904 to be revised as part of class 93 *History* where they would logically fit into the sequence of human history, understood as a continuum.

*(Translated by Alžbeta Martinická)*

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