Response Paper -- Archaeology in the News
2-page response paper due Friday, December 2 in class

Archaeological discoveries are often in the news, although the quality of the reporting varies greatly. Some articles are well researched and presented, while others are sloppy and misleading; however, it is not always immediately obvious which kind you are reading. This assignment is designed to give you some practice evaluating archaeological news stories. Please choose one of the topics below (Mount Lykaion or Amphipolis Tomb), then follow the instructions at the bottom of the page to write your response paper.

**Amphipolis Tomb**

Since August 2014, excavations at this tomb have uncovered a series of chambers adorned with painted, sculptural, and mosaic decoration, and containing the remains of several human bodies. Although the precise dates of the burials are uncertain, the excavators believe that they were roughly contemporary with the life of Alexander III of Macedon (Alexander the Great). Detailed study of the tomb and its contents is currently underway, and while much remains unknown about the tomb, the uncertainty has not stopped academics, journalists, and archaeology fans from speculating about the tomb, its contents, and its occupants at every step of the way.

I have chosen two short news articles about the Amphipolis tomb for you to read:

"Queen of the Underworld Sheds New Light on Greek Tomb" (Heather Pringle, National Geographic, October 18, 2014)

"Amphipolis Skeleton from Alexander's Time Found in Greece," (Giorgos Christides, BBC News, November 12, 2015)

These are neither the best nor the most recent articles about the Amphipolis excavations, but they are reasonably representative of the reporting on the tomb.

**Human sacrifice at Mount Lykaion?**

A number of you have expressed interest in questions about human sacrifice in the ancient world, so you also have the option of reading two articles about a recent discovery at Mount Lykaion in Greece. Most scholars believe that the ancient Greeks did not practice human sacrifice, but a few have suggested that the Mount Lykaion discovery should cause us to reevaluate our understanding of early Greek sacrificial practices.


**Response paper instructions:**
Once you have read the articles on your chosen topic, you are to write a 2-page response paper (12-pt. Times New Roman, double spaced) evaluating the quality of their reporting. (This means two pages total, not two pages for each article.) We will discuss the issues raised by these articles on Friday, December 2.

As you read and evaluate each article, consider the following questions:

1) Is the article accurate in its presentation of historical information? *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* and *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome* (both of which are available through the UW libraries online and in hard copy) are good resources for fact-checking, as is your course textbook.

2) Which (if any) scholarly experts does the article quote (or cite)? In which areas of Classical archaeology, history, or art do these scholars have expertise? (You can usually find this information on a person’s academic webpage.) Are these scholars involved in the excavations at the sites discussed?

3) Do the scholars quoted (or cited) in the article appear to draw reasonable conclusions from the evidence they cite?

4) Does the author of the article appear to draw reasonable conclusions from the evidence s/he cites?

5) If images are included, are the captions accurate and informative? Is the relationship between the images and the content of the article clear?

6) Having read these articles, what conclusions can you draw about the reporting of archaeological news in the popular press?

Keep in mind that these articles were written during different stages of the excavations, so their authors did not all have access to the same information. Don’t worry about that; your job is to evaluate each article’s reporting of the information available at the time, not its ability to predict future discoveries.

The websites maintained by the excavation teams at Amphipolis and Mount Lykaion will be useful to you as you read. Because websites are regularly updated, however, don’t assume that the authors of the assigned articles had access to the information you find there.

A few final points to keep in mind:

Remember to **cite any and all sources you consult** for fact-checking purposes; parenthetical citations within the text of the paper are fine, but please also include a full bibliography (not included in the 2-page count). If you choose to consult resources other than your textbook or the reference works recommended above, make sure that they are reliable scholarly publications (e.g., journals archived in JSTOR or scholarly books). Most websites are unreliable for fact-checking purposes, since anyone can write anything on the internet, and this is especially true of Wikipedia. **You should never cite Wikipedia in an academic paper.**

**Your treatment of sources should abide by the UW guidelines for academic honesty; if you do not know what these are, see the "Academic Honesty" link at**
Please note that although this is a short response paper, it should still follow the conventions of academic writing. Papers that are overly informal or poorly written will be penalized.

Finally, because the response paper is intended to help you to prepare for our class discussion, **I will not accept late papers.** If you are unable to attend class on December 2 for any reason, **you are responsible for having someone leave your paper in my mailbox in Denny 262 (or sliding it under the door of my office, Denny 229) by the beginning of class.** Please do not email me your paper.