

De lovpligtige udgravninger og begrebet “ny viden”

“New knowledge” has become a central concept in the management of contract archaeology in Denmark as the contribution of “new knowledge” has become the decisive criteria for the significance of an archaeological site – and therefore also whether it should be excavated or not within the framework of the law. In the paper, it is demonstrated how perception of the role of contract archaeology in knowledge production has developed from a perspective as rescue archaeology to a perception of the excavation of a scientific activity in itself. However, both approaches are still present in the practice and administration of contract archaeology. The consequence is that different understandings of what “new knowledge” pervade different stages of the contract archaeology which creates ambiguity and uncertainty in the administration and prioritization of the archaeological sites. Therefore, the purpose of the paper is to discuss whether “new knowledge” is an appropriate criteria for prioritization in contract archaeology. The conclusion is that it is a problematic concept which demands a different discussion within the field than what is present today.