



LABORATOIRE TRAVAUX ET RECHERCHES ARCHÉOLOGIQUES
SUR LES CULTURES, LES ESPACES ET LES SOCIÉTÉS
Proceedings of the Symposium, September 17-18 2015
University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès

2017 # 9

<http://www.palethnologie.org>
ISSN 2108-6532

directed by | **ARCHAEOLOGY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Philippe BOISSINOT | **40th anniversary of the EHESS**



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p@LETHNOLOGY
Bilingual review of prehistory

Review published by the P@lethnologie association, created and supported by the TRACES laboratory, Inrap and the Ministry of Culture and Communication.

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This digital publication received support from





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INTRODUCTION

Philippe BOISSINOT

More than a decade has passed since archaeology first gained a level of autonomy as a discipline in France. Freed from the tutelage of history, but not having joined the departments of anthropology (as is often the case in the United States, for example), archaeology also benefited from a law which was favourable towards the rescue of heritage (development-led archaeology) and a growing interest among regional authorities. As a result, researchers and the various actors who align themselves with them, form a population which is larger than ever – without forgetting the added success of exhibitions and broadcasts dedicated to archaeology. At the interface of the human and natural sciences (with the deterioration of our ecosystems, environmental issues are topical as never before), this discipline has become a major producer of facts, divided into numerous sub-disciplines, each of which is developing the most advanced technologies.

Is this proliferation of methods and objects – we now speak, without provocation, of contemporary archaeology – accompanied by a questioning of its identity and a renewal of its theoretical ambitions? At first glance, it appears that a relative consensus has been formed in relation to a specific knowledge of material culture, due to its restriction to material things and the expertise which has been acquired for a long time in this field. In the Anglo-American world, aside from a few exceptions, the same perspectives were accepted thanks to the success of the works of Bruno Latour or Daniel Miller in the context of material studies. Manifestly, however, this has involved simple declarations of principle, without a precise examination of the cognitive procedures which are mobilised. Furthermore, the presentation of archaeology adapts to the grey area which exists between that which belongs to historiography, epistemology and the sociology of science, as well as a constant coming and going between descriptive and prescriptive aspects; to the extent that the precise description of what takes place finds itself constrained by what should take place.

In addition to internal theoretical difficulties, there is a rather unsatisfying reliance on external knowledge from the other social sciences. How many archaeological works, perfect in their precision, their systematicity and their use of the most sophisticated techniques, find themselves weakened by reference to rearguard reasoning or overly hasty generalisations! However, if we imagine that archaeologists are perfectly informed about the most recent debates which enliven the social sciences (identity, ethnicity, gender, religiousness, agency, etc.), finally deigning to give them a little time, could they contribute to them in a meaningful way, beyond the “passive” production of well dated – but at times badly adjusted – facts? We all remember the fertile propositions of Leroi-Gourhan or Gardin, to name but a couple of French former colleagues. But was the first of these not above all an ethnologist? And the second, latterly, more focused on documentary and logicist approaches than archaeological ones?

Do the difficulties we have mentioned not come from a problematic adjustment between a methodology – or an epistemic position? – and the scope of the discipline? By way of analogy, who would think to make an entire discipline from the ‘comprehensive interview’, ignoring the

observation of agents in action or the use of measurements of numbers of people? It is clear that archaeology strives for the status of discipline because many contexts can only be comprehended in this way: it would be a mistake to overlook that which represents over 90% of human history and an equally large proportion of human practices spread across space and time, by partially filling in the gaps in the historical sources, when they exist. And while the archaeologist is forced to admit a level of powerlessness (in relation to the indeterminacy of identity, for example), he or she can at least benefit from certain probative criteria; because “a good excavation cannot lie”, which the consideration of written or oral accounts cannot guarantee. If one defines a science by its ability to prove, then archaeology is on solid ground. However, it appears that that which it ultimately seeks to demonstrate often requires reinforcement from concepts developed in other disciplines. What would the “archaeology of religion” be, for example, without taking into account the most recent conceptual approaches and the contributing observations of ethnologists? How would the expansion of the term come to “meet” the material things recovered by excavation? Without a doubt, we would at best have a few hints, but no certitudes, at times mistaken targets, or even underestimations; in total, a mediocre knowledge of religion in general...

The volume which follows is the result of a conference which took place at the TRACES research laboratory (UMR 5608 of the CNRS) in Toulouse, as part of celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (EHESS), to which it is linked. Within archaeology, and despite the work of a number of people, we must be noted that this institution does not occupy a position of great importance. If we look closely, it is clear that many researchers make use, or made use, of archaeological facts in the context of a seminar or meetings. However, beyond a few contributions by Jean-Claude Gardin, archaeology has remained invisible in most of the epistemological debates which have taken place within the *École*¹. This is surprising, as there is clear evidence that the “science of digging” constitutes an important laboratory for those wishing to examine the edges of the field of practice in social science, at the very least – in a Foucauldian gesture – to define them better. In any event, even though it may not have been a principal contributor, this institution, which supports interdisciplinarity in the social sciences, can be called upon to take a critical look at this scientific field. That is what we have begun to do here, by establishing questions for future research.

The conference (which took place on 17 and 18 September 2015) of course examined a number of major figures from this *École*: Jean-Claude Gardin, through the debate in which he opposed the sociologist Jean-Claude Passeron on the ever-important question of the naturalism of social science and the two scientific traditions (*S. Plutniak*); Jean-Marie Pesez, in his contribution to the concept of “material culture”, aimed not only at medieval studies, but at the whole of archaeology (*J.-M. Poisson*). The relationships between archaeology and other disciplines were discussed in various domains, without claiming to be exhaustive, and of course only mentioning those which were brought to publication (it is unfortunate that anthropology and linguistics, which were well represented during the conference – and rather emphatically so – are absent from this volume). History, first and foremost (and unsurprisingly), in the specific field of religious history, at the frontier of theology, where the same stratification of textual and artefactual objects is required in order to find a common ground for comparison (*C. Bonnet and F. Porzia*). Geography next, and the place which this discipline of space has by turns given to time; consequently, we can observe in archaeology an interrelation which finds itself formalised today in the very recent field of archaeogeography, which uses, for example, the concept of resilience, which is more productive

1. For an assessment of the archaeological studies carried out at the EHESS, aside from a few reports which have not yet been published, see Boissinot 2014 and Pesez 1996.

than seeking an ideal synchrony (*S. Robert*). The economic approach, when it does not sufficiently take into account the specificities of “archaeological things” runs the risk of falling into the trap of uniformitarianism, for example by giving too much importance to the very contemporary criterion of growth, while other adjustments between questions and data seem more relevant (*C. D’Ercole*). On an epistemological level, we know the extent to which Freudian psychoanalysis has made use of the archaeological metaphor to conceive its work of uncovering the unconscious, and how it fits into the evidential paradigm of the sciences, thus providing an understanding of the practice of inquiry (*F.-X. Fauvelle*). With a more philosophical argument, and a determined use of ontology – i.e. in an analytical way, of the entities which we acknowledge as having an existence, properties, and specific relationships – we can reflect more precisely on this distinctive inquiry, that which we can call “archaeological”, where human and natural things are built into a narrative, the latter being deduced from the former (*P. Boissinot*).

The observant reader will notice that diverse and sometimes unequivocal theoretical positions have been defended by the participants (and the final discussion, which we have not transposed here, was equally lively). This demonstrates both the dynamism of this field of research and the need for an even more in-depth clarification of the concepts, objects and methods, now that the issue of a hierarchical relationship between disciplines appears to be largely outdated. Do we believe that there is a place for this debate, at a time when social demand and political injunctions – also regarding scientific policies – call for increasing enchantment in relation to past things and increasing technoscience in their display.

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IS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE THEORY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE POSSIBLE?

Archaeological data and concepts in the dispute
between Jean-Claude Gardin and Jean-Claude Passeron

Sébastien PLUTNIAK

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To cite this article

Plutniak S., 2017 - Is an archaeological contribution to the theory of social science possible? Archaeological data and concepts in the dispute between Jean-Claude Gardin and Jean-Claude Passeron, in Boissinot P. (dir.), *Archaeology and social sciences*, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, *P@lethnology*, 9, 7-21.

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Abstract

The issue of the definition and position of archaeology as a discipline is examined in relation to the dispute which took place from 1980 to 2009 between the archaeologist Jean-Claude Gardin and the sociologist Jean-Claude Passeron. This case study enables us to explore the actual conceptual relationships between archaeology and the other sciences (as opposed to those wished for or prescribed). The contrasts between the positions declared by the two researchers and the rooting of their arguments in their disciplines are examined: where the sociologist makes use of his philosophical training, the archaeologist relies mainly on his work on semiology and informatics. Archaeology ultimately plays a minor role in the arguments proposed. This dispute therefore cannot be considered as evidence for the movement of concepts between archaeology and the social sciences. A blind spot in the debate, relating to the ontological specificities of archaeological objects, nevertheless presents itself as a possible way of implementing this movement.

Keywords

Theoretical archaeology, epistemology of social science, scientific dispute, EHESS.

Since it was founded in 1975, the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (EHESS) has regularly organised “discussion days”, aimed at bringing together its various component disciplines around a single research question. Archaeology has featured among these disciplines since the creation, in 1960, of a *directeur d'études* (research director) chair at the *École pratique des hautes études* (EPHE; the EHESS was established in 1975, by splitting from the EPHE). This was created for Paul Courbin (1922-1994), a Hellenistic archaeologist who, in 1967, founded and ran a research department focused on archaeological methods, within the EPHE (Darcque, 1996: 319). In 1987, the discussion days at the EHESS focused on the “Problems and objectives of social science research” and took place in Marseille (5 and 6 June) and Montrouge (12 and 13 June). Having read the programme of papers, Courbin decided to write to the president of the *École*, Marc Augé: he wished to bring to his attention that “1. Archaeology, a social science if ever there was one, did not feature at all. 2. It was nevertheless present everywhere” (Courbin, 1987: 54). Having gone into some detail about the reasons for this apparent paradox, Courbin expressed his wish that “archaeology not be forgotten amongst all the prestigious and abundantly represented disciplines which are the pride of the *École*”. As a field archaeologist, and involved in an excavation, Courbin was unable to take part in these meetings, except through this letter. The situation was the same for one of the few other archaeologists in the *École*, Jean-Claude Gardin (1925-2013).

The above reference to the 1987 meetings illustrates the difficulties regarding the integration of archaeology into the social sciences, even in an institution which is specifically dedicated to them, such as the EHESS. This can be measured by both the limited numbers of archaeologists, and the equally tenuous position held by their specific knowledge and concepts. To state the existence of a particular kind of science, such as the social sciences, and to then claim the inclusion of archaeology among these is one thing; to examine the nature of the *actual* established (or, on the contrary, absent) relationships between these sciences is another. In this article, I hope to contribute to the second perspective. The reader may point out that the subject is not new, that today it is firmly accepted that archaeology is a social science (André Leroi-Gourhan is one of the authority figures regularly cited in this regard) and that much work has already been done on the connections between archaeology and ethnology, archaeology and history etc.: the work of Alain Testart and others even more specific can be mentioned here (Latour, Lemonnier, 1994; Gally, 2011). Furthermore, this list could be expanded considerably by taking into account non-francophone literature. Can we be sure, however, that we are dealing with descriptions of these relationships between disciplines and not prescriptions of what they should be? This is far from certain, and the juxtaposition of disciplines regularly appears to be the most frequent relational operator.

So as not to resign ourselves too quickly to the idea that such juxtaposition is the only possible method, I will examine a dispute which presented the most favourable conditions for real conceptual movement. This argument saw two researchers from the EHESS oppose each other: the archaeologist Jean-Claude Gardin and the sociologist Jean-Claude Passeron (1930-). Two factors make their dispute a particularly favourable case. Firstly, both researchers brought together, in their respective disciplines, considerable experience in empirical research and reflexive skill. Secondly, their disagreement was specifically in relation to the nature and the expression of reasoning in the sciences which study humans, as well as to the positions held by these disciplines within science as a whole. While Passeron supported the idea of an epistemological specificity among sciences which he grouped into the category of “historical sciences” (the core of which is made up of sociology, history and anthropology), Gardin refuted this. It should be noted that their dispute fits into wider contemporary debates across the social sciences and the humanities, both between various fields, within particular disciplines.

In archaeology, Gardin confronted the movement known as “post-processual” (or “interpretive”) archaeology which developed in particular in Great Britain as archaeologists assimilated certain “post-modern” ideas and rejected the earlier propositions of the New (or processual) archaeology. Gardin explored some of the work of Ian Hodder (1948-), who was the leader of the movement (Gardin, 1987a), and later commented on the development of these debates (Gardin, 1999: 124, 2009a: 178-179). During the 1990s, the challenging of the criteria of scientificity in archaeology led him to a more general critique of the idea of the epistemological “Third Way”. This supposes the existence of a means of producing knowledge – and, as a result, of a type of knowledge – which is simultaneously distinct from literature and from the so-called “hard” sciences. This denomination refers to the distinction popularised by Wolf Lepenies (1941-) between the “three cultures”, which correspond with the three types of knowledge mentioned above (Lepenies, 1988). In the Gardin collection of the Strasbourg National University Library (currently being catalogued), the documents collected in the folder entitled “Third Way” attest to this interest. For Gardin, the positions defended by Passeron constitute a francophone example of this more general trend (Gardin, 1995: 23). Conversely, Passeron presents the work of his rival as an example of scientific positivism which defends the illusion of the unified nature of the sciences, a positivism exemplified by the theories of the philosopher Karl Popper. Passeron, by contrast, defends a middle ground based on a double criticism aimed, on the one hand, at ambitions (promoted by Gardin, in particular) to formalise

reasoning and, on the other hand (though this time in line with Gardin), at the most radical forms of linguistic reductionism. As such, Passeron clearly distances himself from work conveniently grouped under the label of the linguistic turn, such as that of Hayden White, for whom history could be assimilated to tropology, the abstract science of symbols (Passeron *et al.*, 1996: 299-300).

The dispute, focused principally on the possibility of differentiating types of scientific reasoning, is thus a potential example of confrontation, and therefore exchange, between archaeology and the “human sciences”. I will examine it using a very simple question: what in this dispute was strictly “archaeological”? How is archaeology involved, whether by the introduction of knowledge or by its conceptual frameworks? Is this dialogue, between a sociologist and epistemologist of the “historical sciences”, and an archaeologist and proponent of a “practical epistemology”, an example of the *actual* inclusion of archaeology in the conceptual network of the social sciences? In short, will this dispute reveal a discrepancy in the accusation of reclusion which is often levelled against archaeology in France (Audouze, Leroi-Gourhan, 1981; Guerreau, 2001: 142-143; Dufal, 2010)?

Firstly, I will summarise the chronological and spatial dimensions of the dispute. Although the two authors were respectively a sociologist and an archaeologist, I will demonstrate secondly that the issue which brought them into conflict in fact stems from an issue related to the philosophy of science. I will then go on to show that the authors approached this issue first and foremost in its epistemological dimension, to the detriment of the ontological aspects. Finally, by exploring the authors’ use of empirical examples, archaeological concepts and the ontological properties of the data analysed in this science, I will highlight the ultimately tenuous role played by archaeology in this debate.

1 - From the analysis of discourse to the epistemology of social science

A - Chronology of the dispute

During the 1960s, Gardin conducted several research projects relating to the automation of non-digital information. His first contribution to this field dates from 1958, with his paper *On the coding of geometrical shapes and other representations, with reference to archaeological documents*, presented at the International Conference on Scientific Information in Washington, a milestone in the history of the automation of documentation (Gardin, 1959). Of the 232 publications of Gardin’s that I inventoried, 33 deal specifically with documentation issues, most of which were published in specialised volumes. I have not included the 75 publications about the application of documentation in a specific field, predominantly archaeology. From 1960 to 1971, Gardin directed the *Centre d’analyse documentaire pour l’archéologie* (CADA), based initially in Paris (1962-1964) and later on the CNRS campus in Marseille (1964-1971). Alongside this, from 1960 to 1966, he also directed the *Section d’automatique documentaire* (SAD) of the *Institut Blaise Pascal*, located in Paris, 23 rue du Maroc. From 1971, he decided to concentrate on his archaeological research in Afghanistan. In 1974, he nevertheless published a collection entitled *Les analyses de discours* (Gardin, 1974). This book fed the debate which put him in opposition to other practitioners of this type of analysis, such as Michel Pêcheux (1938-1983), although he is not mentioned explicitly (on this subject, see Léon, 2015: 144-148).

A few years later, Passeron presented an initial wording of his general epistemology of the historical sciences in his *thèse d’État* (a work in which he brings together more than twenty years of research), *Les mots de la sociologie* (Passeron, 1980). Here he discusses “illusory [methodological] solutions”, and dedicates a chapter to the “artificial paradise of formalism”. His criticisms are especially aimed at certain aspirations of automation in discourse analysis, a domain populated

mainly by sociologists, psycho-sociologists and mathematicians. He mentions Gardin's work and takes up a number of criticisms presented by him (Passeron, 1980: 139-141). He adopts in particular the "relevance tests" prescribed by Gardin (Gardin, 1970: 648), aimed at measuring the "differentiating capability of the categories used to 'describe' the texts" (Gardin, 1974: 21) and which Gardin saw as safeguards against a complete removal of responsibility on the part of the analyst, in favour of the machine.

In 1991, Passeron published a reworked version of his *thèse d'État* under the title *Le raisonnement sociologique. L'espace non-poppérien du raisonnement naturel* (Passeron, 1991; translator's note: as this book has never been translated into English, all quotations have been translated specifically for this paper). In the "Propositions récapitulatives" (summary propositions) which conclude this work, the author posits that "sociological reasoning" constitutes an alternative form of scientific rationality, common to all "historical" sciences. Gardin's "logicist" works are explicitly challenged, not in relation to the analysis of discourse, but in terms of the general epistemology of the humanities. This is particularly true of the chapter "*Les contrôles illusoire*s" (illusory controls) (p. 158) and, especially, in the "Propositions récapitulatives" (p. 373). Here, Passeron targets a collective volume edited by Gardin, *Systèmes experts et sciences humaines. Le cas de l'archéologie* (Gardin et al., 1987). Gardin was subsequently invited by the editors of the *European Journal of Sociology* to write a review of *Le raisonnement sociologique*. This meticulously critical piece was initially published under the title "*Les embarras du naturel*" ("The discomforts of the natural") (Gardin, 1993) and then republished three years later by Ariane Miéville and Giovanni Busino, on the occasion of a special edition of the *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, entitled "*Pavane pour Jean-Claude Passeron*" ("A Tribute to Jean-Claude Passeron": Gardin, 1996a). In later articles, Passeron responded to his various critics (including Gardin, though he does not mention him specifically): "*Logique et schématisation dans l'argumentation des sciences sociales*" (Passeron, 1997), "*Logique formelle, rhétorique et schématisation*" (Passeron 2002), and even clarifies his arguments against "logicism" in general, in "*Le cas et la preuve. Raisonner à partir de singularités*" (Passeron, Revel, 2005: 31-40). Later, Gardin summarised and included this dispute in a synopsis of the evolution of his own work since the 1950s, while remarking in passing that Passeron and his various co-authors had successively defended varying positions on the modes of reasoning which belong to the social sciences (Gardin, 2009: 174-175).

B - The contexts of the debate in Marseille and Paris

In addition to the publications, certain places also played a part in the dispute. Marseille and Paris are of particular interest in this regard. In the early 1970s, Gardin left Marseille and the direction of CADA, and returned to Paris to oversee the launch of the new *Centre de recherches archéologiques* (CRA) which he had largely helped to create. In 1982, Passeron was elected as a *directeur d'études* at the EHESS, with a chair entitled "sociology of arts and culture". In keeping with the decentralisation taking place within the EHESS, he moved to Marseille and founded the "*Centre d'études et de recherches sur la culture, la communication, les modes de vie et la socialisation*" (CERCOM, located in La Vieille Charité), in addition to the journal *Enquête*. This laboratory contributed to the renewal of the dynamism in social science in Marseille during the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1990s, a meeting between Passeron and Gardin was organised there on the initiative of André Tchernia (1936-). A *directeur d'études* at the EHESS and a specialist in Classical and sub-aquatic archaeology, Tchernia was also interested in formal approaches in archaeology, which he had practised during collaborations with Gardin and researchers from CADA (École française de Rome, 1977). Furthermore, the debate between Gardin and Passeron also continued during seminars: those of the "*Raison et rationalités*" (reason and rationalities) group, run by Giovanni Busino (1929-)

(Passeron, 1997) and, in particular, one called “*Le modèle et le récit*” (the model and the narrative), which took place at the *Maison des Sciences de l’Homme* in Paris, between 1995 and 1999 (Gardin, 2001; Passeron, 2001). During each of these meetings, the debates focused on the general epistemology of scientific knowledge relating to humans.

2 - A philosophy of science issue

A - An ambivalent distancing of philosophy

Since the debate was epistemological, both authors found themselves in a domain which was, in theory, neither that of the sociologist nor that of the archaeologist. How did they situate themselves in relation to what appears to be a transgression of their legitimate fields of activity? This point is of importance: it directly concerns the distribution of legitimacy regarding the metadiscourse relating to a science. This legitimacy is claimed by the historians and sociologists of science, who have a troubled relationship with philosophers and their older prerogatives in this domain (Shapin, 1992).

In this regard, both authors claim the same detachment from philosophy. Passeron, who trained at the *École Normale Supérieure* on rue d’Ulm in Paris, like other sociologists or anthropologists of his generation, thus claims a detachment from the discipline which had been at the heart of his education. Nevertheless, as was already the case in the work he carried out in collaboration with Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), his practice of sociology contained an underlying philosophical element. This ambivalence has at times been highlighted as being part of Passeron’s style. In *Le raisonnement sociologique*, it initially manifests itself by the explicit denial of any philosophical influence:

“[...] I explained [during an interview], though without any great hope of being believed, that my epistemological reflections were born directly of my perplexities as an investigative sociologist, and not of any nostalgia for the distant philosophical studies of my youth” (Passeron, 2006: 20; see also Passeron *et al.* 1996: 275-279).

In spite of this, Passeron’s texts display a certain number of traits typical of philosophical writing: abundant references to philosophical authors and publications, as well as the use of *more geometrico* reasoning, through propositions and corollaries. This mode of presentation, of which Spinoza’s *Ethics* is the paradigmatic example, is particularly obvious in the “*Propositions récapitulatives*” of *Le raisonnement sociologique*. In the book’s index, one observes the names of Karl Popper, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gaston Bachelard, Gottlob Frege, Saul Kripke (Passeron 2006: 662-666). In short, philosophy, pushed out the door by a criticism of biographical determinism, comes back through the window, in the methods of writing and of presenting arguments.

As for Gardin’s texts, references to works of philosophy of science are, if not absent, quite sporadic: in the article “*Les embarras du naturel*”, there is only one reference, to Bertrand Russell (Gardin, 1993: 162). And while elsewhere he may have mentioned Nelson Goodman or Daniel Dennett, this was precisely to provide contrast to the objectives of the “practical epistemology” which he defends (Gardin, 1987b: 245-246). Gardin also differentiates his approach from those developed in logic and in psychology. If he mentions the logic of Gottlob Frege (Gardin 1980: 15) or the logicism of Charles Morris and of the Vienna Circle (Gardin, 2003: 8; 2009a: 170), it is to emphasise the tenuous links which tie them to his own sense of logicism. More generally, the rare positive references to philosophical work can be summarised in the mention – recurrent and unchanging – of the “field-related logics” of Stephen Toulmin (Toulmin, 1958: see Gardin, 1987c: 195; 1997a), the “crude uniformities” of Bertrand Russell (Russell, 1918: 118: see Gardin, 1991: 96;

Gardin, 1993: 162; 1995: 20) or, potentially, reference to the works of Roy Howard or Karl Popper (Gardin, 1987b: 255; 1999: 121). In fact, Gardin begins his 1993 critique by introducing himself exclusively as an archaeologist and takes care to deny any skill in sociology:

“What should be understood in the world of scientific research when we say that reasoning is natural? This question has intrigued me for a long time. It is asked in my field, archaeology, as well as in sociology [...] because one could be justifiably surprised that my knowledge, restricted to the archaeology of central Asia, would enable me to give an opinion on works focusing on the ‘teaching system, cultural diffusion and the reception of works of art’ gathered in this anthology.” (Gardin, 1993: 152).

A rejection of philosophy and an assertion of a rootedness in their field: despite this double gesture, common to both authors, the dispute ended up shifting to the terrain of philosophy of science and moves away from the practical concerns of the inquiry, be it sociological or archaeological.

B - Data and procedures of knowledge in analysing science

The issue at the heart of the dispute was in relation to the possibility of distinguishing between types of reasoning and, more specifically, the characterisation of the “natural” reasoning which was of particular importance to Passeron. In addition, the debate explored the conditions of possibility, in the humanities, of the “deindexation” of concepts in relation to their historical context. In other words, must we necessarily analyse these modes of scientific reasoning in a historical way, that is, by relating them to the contexts of their production and pronouncement (in science as a whole, and in the “human sciences”)? If the “deindexation” in question is possible, another issue arises, in knowing to what degree this may be applied. The solution to this problem determines the possibility of formalising utterances in the humanities: indeed, this deindexation is a prerequisite of any attempt at formalised abstraction of an utterance or its component concepts. Where Gardin argued for the possibility of formalising utterances to a certain degree, Passeron, in contrast, maintained that historical reasoning contains properties which prohibit this “deindexation”, and ultimately, therefore, any formalisation.

Gardin considered *reasoning* and the *degree of generality in the definition of objects* to be two separate things. The level of generality necessary for defining types – and the criteria which determine whether they can be associated with empirical data – *varies* according to the type of phenomena observed (material, social). Nevertheless, the modes of reasoning are the same in natural science and in historical science. With reference to the Big Bang, he adds that *hapax legomena* – the most extreme form of uniqueness of a phenomenon, and therefore the most difficult to classify – are not specific to human phenomena (Gardin, 1993: 158; this argument also features in Gardin, 2009a: 174). However, Gardin does not go into more detail about what *varies*, or about the categories into which fall archaeological data (material, mental, social?). Thus, both authors’ divergence on the (epistemological) issue of reasoning coincides with a common undervaluing of the ontological aspects, that is, the properties relating to the very existence of the realities being considered.

C - Undervaluing of the ontological aspects

The wavering, between an ontological and an epistemological approach, which is present in Passeron’s *Le raisonnement sociologique*, remains, for the anthropologist Gérard Lenclud, an “unresolved issue”. Concerned by this indecision, Lenclud nevertheless emphasises that, fundamentally, Passeron appears to construct his epistemology of the “historical” sciences on an ontological theory: the

inherent uniqueness of human facts (Lenclud, 2001: 453). He notes that on this basis, the author's theoretical construction remains nevertheless predominantly attached to the epistemological aspects, relating to reasoning. Elsewhere, in noting this shortcoming, Lenclud lamented that the distinction introduced by Passeron between "synoptic social sciences" (history, anthropology, sociology) and "specific social sciences" (linguistics, economics, demography) was not based on a joint analysis of their ontological and epistemological specificities (Lenclud, 1991: 265).

In this regard, the priority given by Passeron to epistemology over ontology may help to explain why archaeology was not taken into consideration in *Le raisonnement sociologique*. Another reason for this omission can most likely be found in the general absence, in France, of archaeologists in interdisciplinary debates in social science, as illustrated by Courbin's letter, mentioned in the introduction. Under these circumstances, it is true that Gardin himself extended Passeron's theories to include archaeology, which the former included by default among the "historical disciplines". Nevertheless, as we will see, consideration of the ontological aspects, particularly in relation to archaeology, would not take place without further perturbing definitions of the various social sciences, their objects and their relations.

3 - Archaeology: mute, absent

A - The discomfort of archaeological facts

Although the archaeological object was not treated as such by Passeron, he nevertheless provided a number of elements which could be applied to it, when he defined the "empirical world" in his "*Propositions et scolies*" (propositions and corollaries):

"Set of observable occurrences: all that is observable, nothing that is not. It goes without saying that vestiges, in so far as they constitute directly observable occurrences, permit, through use of presumptive reasoning which sometimes attains certitude, the reconstruction of a larger field, that of *indirect observation*: in the restricted meaning of the word 'history', the procedures of this presumptive reasoning make up the 'historical method'" (Passeron, 1991: 398-399).

The vestige encompasses indifferently of all that which lasts through time and which enables, by direct observation of it, the indirect observation of past states of the entity in question. No difference is made between a textual or non-textual vestige: history and archaeology are thus presented on a single plane. This is also the case in Gardin's work.

It would be a mistake to consider that Gardin had a "naive" relationship with the archaeological object, as evidenced by his particularly precocious critique of the application of multidimensional statistical analysis in archaeology, when these are employed in a way that is indifferent to the nature of the archaeological entities (Gardin, 1965). He did not, however, develop his reflections on this subject much further. In his later works he certainly deals with ontology, but more in relation to the meaning of the term in informatics than in philosophy, whereby the distinction between an archaeological fact and a social or historical one would be studied (Gardin, 2009a: 182-183). Moreover, as his work on Asia demonstrates, for Gardin, archaeology's objective is to produce knowledge about the past states of collective human entities:

"[...] archaeology, as a form of history, based on material remains instead of or in addition to textual sources." (Gardin, 1987b: 235).

Archaeology is therefore no different from history, and for this reason, he extended the range of Passeron's theories to include archaeology (Gardin, 2002: 22)... even though Passeron had in fact avoided doing so (though for reasons which remain unclear). It is therefore not surprising that in this dispute the ontological aspects did not constitute an argumentative resource for Gardin.

After being surprised at the absence of detailed analyses of the status of language during the debates of the "*Le modèle et le récit*" seminar, Gardin asks: "Does my field play a different game, impracticable in sociology or in any other social science?" (Gardin, 2001: 469). The equating of archaeology with history and sociology, taken as a given, despite their respective objects not being discussed or compared, has a tendency to – justifiably – cause surprise. If archaeology constitutes a counterexample to Passeron's theories, as Gardin would have it, to what extent is this due to the nature of the realities studied by this science and, in particular, to the central yet distinct status of language within it? Gardin does not provide a response to the question: archaeology's inclusion in the social sciences is a blind spot in his position. The focus is on the procedures which enable reasoning to be carried out, since the aims are taken as non-problematic. In sociology, language is always available to define objects (we can conduct an inquiry into suicide while ignoring the discourses, but it is always possible to repeat it and include them). On the contrary, in archaeology, the analytic procedures focus on the non-discursive properties of archaeological objects (if these have discursive properties, they are processed using methods for the criticism of historical, epigraphic or philological sources). It should also be noted that in informatics and the automation of documentation, language itself is the object of study: a language that is, however, heavily controlled and defined, even if just by writing. In this regard, it is noteworthy that *Les analyses de discours* discusses arguments expressed solely in textual form (Gardin, 1974).

Thus, if archaeology is a "human science", then Gardin's interest is more focused on the second term in the expression (science) than the first (the unique nature of the human as an object of knowledge). As a result, the lack of weight behind the archaeological examples in his discussion of Passeron's theories should not be surprising.

B - The use of archaeological examples

Unlike Karl Popper, who limited his use of examples to a method of refuting statements, Passeron favourably envisaged their usage as the principal probative method in historical science (Passeron, 1991: 289-290). Gardin, though he did not specifically take a position on this point, made several uses of the example of archaeology to back up his propositions. Let us examine the position of these examples in his argument. I wish to make clear that I have deliberately omitted mentions of archaeology when in relation to the analysis of *texts* and not of archaeological facts (for example in Gardin, 1999). In a text published in 2002, Gardin recalled the reservations he had expressed in his 1993 article. These had, he said, "their source in the counterexamples that the long history of archaeological research provides in abundance" (Gardin, 2002: 22). Interestingly, it turns out that the text in question contains a very limited number of archaeological examples: there are only two, and their development is limited. These examples are revisited, in somewhat greater depth, in his contribution to the *Le modèle et le récit* seminar (Gardin, 2001: 467). Gardin believed he had found in archaeology two counterexamples to Passeron's principal theories: the one stating the absence of knowledge cumulability in historical science (proposition 2.1, Passeron, 1991: 364) and the one supporting the impossibility of conducting experimental and predictive reasoning.

Against the theory of an impossible cumulability, Gardin offers the example of history and prehistory. The observation of new data regularly invalidates theories. New theories will, in turn, be invalidated, but “[...] this widening of the empirical bases of our constructions is nonetheless a cumulative process.” (Gardin, 1993: 155). For history, he gives the example of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, knowledge of which was added to what was already known of the origins of Christianity. For archaeology, he refers to the evolution of theories on anthropogenesis (Gardin, 1993: 158-159) and palaeobotany, which has increased our knowledge of the origins of agriculture (Gardin, 1993: 155). In a later text, he underlines the temporal specificity of the archaeological mode of inquiry:

“On the long time scale which is inherent to archaeology, it appears that ‘reality’, in the relative and temporary sense of the term defined above, eventually wins out over the cultural biases we are subject to [...]” (Gardin, 2009b: 27).

As such, archaeology illustrates, according to Gardin, that it is possible to both produce stabilised knowledge about human phenomena, and to revise it, to improve it, by taking into account new empirical data (see also Gardin, 2001: 467). As we can see, the archaeological and historical examples stand alongside each other, ultimately with no differences being envisaged.

A second of Passeron’s arguments rejects the possibility of an experimental approach in the humanities: the uniqueness and variability of the phenomena prohibits the making of “all other things being equal” comparisons. As a result, it is impossible to evaluate the “relative validity of concurrent theories”. Gardin objected that one can read the clause “all other things being equal” in two ways: in theory, he agreed with Passeron that nothing allows us to state that we “reason in an ‘unchanging context’”; nevertheless, in practice, and “until proven otherwise” this is possible (Gardin, 1993: 156). Indeed, how does one explain the predictive effectiveness of certain archaeological theories – no specific example is given in the 1993 text – if it is impossible to experiment (that is, isolate variables and identify the stable and regular relationships between them, all things being equal)? Gardin thus admitted the possibility of distinctions and local generalisations, stabilised in “field-related logics” (as developed by Toulmin). He later recognised, and added to this, two archaeological procedures which he identified as experimental approaches: the “directed observation”, which we practise during field survey or when digging test trenches based on the presumption that they will (in)validate a proposition, and the making of “useful fakes”, such as flint knapped by archaeologists or reference examples of pottery typologies, which provide a standard that enables differences to be measured (Gardin, 2001, p. 468 and 470 respectively).

This means of weakening, by virtue of pragmatic criteria, the logical requirements which weigh upon reasoning was a frequent motive for the positions defended by Gardin. Thus, the simulation of reasoning requires that one proceeds “as if” the discursive practices counted as a local expression of more general rules of reasoning (Gardin, 1997b: 52; 1999: 121). Gardin put forward that the logicist approach:

“[...] consists of ‘doing as if’ the majority of the theories about a given subject was an unresolved problem, an intellectual challenge to be overcome, rather than an unavoidable phenomenon, or even desirable, not something to be concerned about, in any case.” (Gardin, 2001: 472).

Passeron aimed his criticism directly at this use of the hypothetical, even though simulation is used indirectly here, to simulate, not the phenomena themselves, but the conditions of possibility for simulations formed by the theories (Gardin 1996b: 196). Passeron’s determined rejection of what could be seen as a limited and modest ambition appears to betray his attachment to another

“*contrôle illusoire*” (“illusory control”), which is missing from the inventory that he had established: an over-assessment of the probative nature of historical indexation on the value of propositions in social science.

C - The epistemological deficiency of archaeological concepts

A third and final element of the potential integration of archaeology in the dispute concerns not the data processed in archaeology, but the concepts which are developed and used within it. From this viewpoint, Gardin and Passeron were unable to make use of the resources produced by their respective disciplines in the same way.

Regarding sociology, it is quite possible (and debatable) to connect some arguments which are sociological in nature, and others which are epistemological in nature. It is interesting to note that in *Le raisonnement sociologique*, Passeron distanced himself from one of his earlier publications, *Le métier de sociologue*, co-written in 1967 with Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Chamboredon. In this work the authors took on the challenge of building an epistemology of sociology based on a reflexive sociology of this discipline (Passeron *et al.*, 1996: 322). Gardin disagreed with Passeron’s use of sociological explanations. In relation to the function of “special languages” (i.e. those specific to a scientific field), Gardin accused him of having reduced their function to one of differentiation and social justification of expertise:

“The position of specialist that is given to us would, it is true, be in danger of becoming clouded if we did not have the possibility of using special languages [...]; but the principal function of these is – one hopes – not simply to differentiate us. A theoretical descriptive language’s *raison d’être* is, after all, to express or to establish a theory.” (Gardin, 1993: 163¹).

The combination of epistemological and archaeological analyses appears much less obvious than it actually is, in the case of sociology. Firstly, this is because, while specifically archaeological concepts may exist (such as negative contexts or certain taphonomic processes) – and this remains a subject of debate – it is difficult to imagine the way in which these could inform an epistemological analysis. Indeed, an “archaeology” of knowledge supposes that these concepts may be used to analyse the creation and spread of knowledge as is the case with concepts defined by sociologists or psychologists (metaphoric uses of archaeology, including the one popularised by Michel Foucault, are irrelevant here, since they do not make use of concepts belonging to archaeology as it is conducted by archaeologists). Secondly, if such archaeological concepts exist, they are relative to the description of the data. The operations which render these events intelligible in archaeological reasoning are themselves carried out with the help of concepts borrowed from ethnology, sociology and even primatology and biology. Thus, in the absence of (real or relevant) archaeological concepts, Gardin was forced to look elsewhere for an analytical repertoire capable of informing the epistemological analysis: specifically, to linguistics, in the broad sense of the term (semiology, discourse analysis, document automation and formal linguistics).

1. Gardin later revisited this argument, but this time conceding both the epistemological and sociological reasons for demarcating scientific languages. Elsewhere, he distinguished between the sociological and psychological factors supporting the choice of an epistemological option (Gardin, 2001: 466 and 474 respectively). While he admitted that non-epistemological factors could be relevant to our ability to understand short sequences in the history of science, he denied their pertinence to its long term evolution (Gardin, 1999: 122; 2009b: 27).

Conclusion

The dispute between Passeron and Gardin is among the most in-depth francophone intellectual debates in which an archaeologist sought to represent archaeology. Archaeology has indeed been represented in this debate, but its own resources were in fact scarcely used, as I hope to have demonstrated. Thus, neither the concepts, nor the empirical facts considered by archaeologists, have significantly contributed to this debate. A blind spot – the inclusion of the ontological specificities of archaeological data – is nevertheless an area which deserves to be researched in greater depth. In the case of the dispute between Passeron and Gardin, such an in-depth study would be possible based on their respective ideas of the linguistic properties of the data analysed, as well as the status of language in the operations of knowledge: this aspect appears to be crucial for the definition of sociological and archaeological data. Regarding the latter, a number of recent publications have in fact given increased attention to their ontological properties (Olsen *et al.*, 2012; Lucas, 2012; Boissinot, 2015; Niccolucci *et al.*, 2015). This may be the way in which francophone archaeology could integrate itself into the conceptual *kula* of the humanities: or, to borrow Blaise Dufal’s elegant phrase, to stop being “*enfermée dehors*” (“locked out”) (Dufal, 2010).

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Denise Bailly and Yasmina Irid for their research in the EHESS archives, in Marseille and Paris respectively; to Françoise Olivier-Utard and Daniel Bornemann for their guidance in the Gardin collection of the Strasbourg National University Library; to Oliver Hochadel for the documentary resources which he procured for me at the CSIC in Barcelona; to the two anonymous reviewers from *Palethnology* journal; to Philippe Boissinot, Wiktor Stoczkowski, Michaël Gasperoni and Marie Bossaert for their invaluable comments on previous versions of this text; to Rowan Lacey for the English translation.

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MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY
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To cite this article

Poisson J.-M., 2017 - Medieval archaeology and the history of material culture: Forty years later, in Boissinot P. (dir.), *Archaeology and social sciences*, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, *P@lethnology*, 9, 22-30.

MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE HISTORY OF MATERIAL CULTURE: forty years later

Jean-Michel POISSON

Abstract

The notion of material culture used in various historical and anthropological disciplines was principally introduced into France in several articles written by Jean-Marie Pesez in the late 1970s, to be applied in the field of medieval archaeology. These works reviewed the origins and the circumstances surrounding the emergence of this field of reflection and research, and established an initial framework for putting into practice, in archaeology, the use of material data as a source in the historical approach. A re-examination of these propositions and of the context of their application can be useful in order to investigate the current meaning of the concept, its heuristic potential (which still appears to be too limited), and the role it can play in the convergence of several social sciences.

Keywords

Archaeology, Middle Ages, material culture.

It is useful to re-examine the concept of material culture (which today seems to us to be well accepted), which began in France principally within the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (EHESS) and which developed there, and to observe how it has evolved in today's research practice and scientific thinking. This theme appears to be well suited to such introspection, insofar as this concept has affected or stimulated part of the methodological and thematic approach of archaeologists such as J.-M. Pesez, J.-L. Gardin, J. Guilaine or P. Courbin, and of historians such as F. Braudel, J. Le Goff or J. Goy, to mention but a few names from within the EHESS. I will begin with the work of Jean-Marie Pesez, who was behind these propositions. A medieval historian by training, as well as a field archaeologist, he taught at the EHESS from 1965 to 1998, and published three articles on material culture which introduced the concept into France and formed the basis for a reflection on archaeology's issues, fields and methodologies. The first article "*Histoire de la culture matérielle*" ("History of material culture") appeared in the volume edited by J. Le Goff, *La Nouvelle histoire* (Pesez, 1978), which brought together contributions from the principal figures involved in the renewal of history which took place under the impetus of the *Annales* School. In the article, he put forward a historiography of the subject, which grew out of the evolution of scientific thought in the second half of the 19th century and, in particular, from the works of Boucher de Perthes, Darwin and historical materialism, which had been somewhat formalized by the creation of the Institute for the History of Material Culture in the USSR by Lenin in 1919. Encompassing from the outset the approach of the historian (through the study of the material conditions of life as a way of exploring means of production and economic history), that of the sociologist (by taking into account the conditions of existence as factors in social relations), and that of the archaeologist (whose focus shifted from

prestigious architecture and works of art towards material evidence in its totality). The emergence of this particular field of the humanities, linked mainly to history, evidently owed much to archaeology, as the principal supplier of data. Materiality, which had not yet been precisely defined, is the main characteristic of the sources which archaeological practice collects and analyses. It is therefore unsurprising that archaeology, in taking on the task of producing this type of information, aspired to be a driving force in the development of the concept. While lamenting the absence of a definition of material culture, Pesez nevertheless attempted to characterise the object, by initially outlining it within the general notion of culture. Having briefly explained what was, in his opinion, excluded from the category of material culture, namely, “that which culture expresses in an abstract way”, i.e. the domain of “mental representations, of law, of religious and philosophical thought, of language and the arts, but also of socio-economic structures, social relations and relations of production” – that is to say, a very large part of what one calls – or called – “civilisation”, he further restricts the domain of material culture, saying: “it expresses itself only in the concrete, in and through objects (...) in the relationship man has with objects”. Of course, the article devotes considerable space to the renewal of the traditional research questions and to the opening up of the domain of the historian by the *Annales* School to geography, archaeology, and anthropology, in a move towards a holistic history. It was in socialist Europe that the notion of material culture was most extensively used at that time, notably in its relationship with socio-economic facts, though the former was most often subordinate to the latter. K. Marx mentioned the “material conditions of life” which can be identified among human social practices and isolated as an aspect of people’s social being, sufficiently independent to form the subject of a distinct scientific discipline (Marx, 1963: 272). The study of the means of production is a good example of this as it clearly combines a history of techniques, the analysis of the material itself, and the distribution and consumption of products. In this domain, the approach of the historian and especially the archaeologist becomes technological, and must call on natural sciences which need not be listed here. Pesez also presented a bibliographical overview which showed the extent to which historians of the Middle Ages had already largely integrated the notion of material culture into their approaches and results: rural economy, history of consumption, etc. To illustrate the breadth of the field covered by the application of the concept of material culture to archaeology, despite the restrictive definition given (paradoxically) above, several examples of research projects taking place at the time were given by the author, taken for the most part from his own field practice, that is, the medieval domain, among which the rural house and artefacts were the favoured examples. As the chosen means of approach for the study of material culture, archaeology therefore made it its principal objective. This could not occur without raising some questions, however. One of these was the relationship with texts. Indeed, a proportion of material culture can be perceived by historians in textual sources, and archaeology cannot therefore claim a monopoly on the production of material data. This is particularly notable for historical periods such as the Middle Ages where documents are abundant and varied, especially the “pragmatic writings”, among which it is possible to cite collections as extensive as they are rich, such as accounts or inventories, for example. This first article established an overview, and put forward a number of propositions to promote this field of research, but also argued for it to be made a subject of conversation between social sciences, despite an unfortunate lack of definition.

At the same time in Turin, the same author published, with R. Bucaille, another encyclopaedia article, “*Cultura materiale*” (Bucaille, Pesez, 1978). In this text, the authors developed the historiographical context in which material culture came about and evolved, and the political and intellectual influences which contributed to it. By insisting on the specificity of archaeology regarding access to material data and on the evolution which this discipline had undergone and was still undergoing, precisely under the impetus of these new research questions, they put forward an assessment of medieval archaeology in Europe which was still a young discipline, having emerged approximately

fifteen years before the article was published. They advocated a somewhat exclusive approach, claiming that the archaeological approach played a preeminent role in accessing material culture. The issue of the definition, which had been left unresolved in the previous article, was addressed here with a degree of caution. Having observed that the field covered by the concept was wider than that designated by the name (“material culture is in part, but not only, composed of material forms of culture”), Pesez assigned four characteristics to it:

1. It is about the culture of a group of people and, as such, is opposed to individuality. However, the text is somewhat ambiguous at this point: although it seems clear that Pesez means the totality of the population being considered, he speaks of a “huge majority”, which suggests, wrongly, that it could concern only majority social groups. Nevertheless, the group taken into account can comprise just one part of a larger group, defined in theory (though in some cases with difficulty) according to criteria which may ultimately be geographical, cultural, ethnic, social, etc. Here, there is a risk of confinement, since it is often material culture itself which ends up characterising the group in question.
2. It is about consistent or repetitive facts, with the exception of “events”, whether accidental or exceptional. The influence of anthropology is noticeable here, as this gives a value of characterisation to that which is stable and consistent.
3. It is about facts considered as meaningful in their materiality, in line with Marxist theory; the involvement of sociocultural facts therefore favours the material elements over superstructural systems (legal, symbolic, moral, etc.). Although it moved gradually away from Marxism, which gave infrastructures a vital role in the social relationships which drove historical evolution, the study of material culture claims a preeminent role in the demonstration and explanation of human activities.
4. Finally, the materiality of these facts takes on extremely varied appearances, which go from the nature of the material itself, their form and function, the ultimately extreme complexity of their development, or, on the contrary, the extreme subtlety of their appearance, such as the negative traces or even the absence of traces (one example is the use which was made of the presence or absence of ochre on the ground in order to reconstruct the Magdalenian domestic space at Pincevent [Leroi-Gourhan, Brézillon, 1972]), to the fact that they can be the material basis for superstructural elements: religion, tradition, aesthetics, status of the owner, language, etc. On this subject, the article could be suggesting, by the use of the word “object”, a restriction to a limited category of material facts, but clearly we must not misunderstand it, and be reassured that the field is in fact extremely broad, comprising, for example, everything related to construction and planning – from the cabin to the whole town, from the tomb to the cathedral, from the plough furrow to the plot of land – to the extent that it is a vast field, whose outline has not been fully (or definitively) settled upon.

At the end of the article, Pesez included a few considerations which must also contribute to the definition. The first of these was a dynamic element which concerned the spatial or temporal factors that introduce variations in the material culture of a given group, based on external inputs or internal processes. The second was an element of internal differentiation (called “levels of material culture”) introduced by a social dimension within a human group. This last point is probably worth being discussed.

Pesez’s third article “*Culture matérielle et archéologie médiévale*” (“Material culture and medieval archaeology”) was published in the proceedings of a conference which had taken place in Krems (Austria) on the theme of ‘Man and the object’ (Pesez, 1990a). Though written more than ten years after the previous work, he discusses more or less the same issues, writing, “nothing that I have read since has led me to modify my propositions” (p. 37). He returns to the issue of the definition,

making use of propositions made by Polish historians and archaeologists. In my opinion, these definitions give rise to a clarification, but also a certain restriction of the field assigned to the concept:

- The means of production taken from nature, the natural conditions of life, the changes made by man to the environment;
- The forces of production: tools, people and their practice, organisation of work;
- The products: the tools for production and the goods to be consumed.

This focus on rather strictly defined themes has the merit, according to the author, of homogenising the concept's field of application, by excluding areas where social organisation or cultural practices contribute to the shaping of certain material elements. Moreover, defining the notional field in this way would allow it to gain greater independence in relation to economic and social history, and would enable material culture to avoid finding itself in a position of inferiority with regards to other concepts which contribute to historical knowledge. This appears to be a sort of withdrawal, even though it was justified by the strategic necessity of putting forward an efficient framework to stimulate the increase in research in this field of study which was still explored very little. We can nevertheless lament that Pesez appeared to close the door on collaborations with other disciplines, with phrases such as “the development of material culture will gain nothing from being led by questions which the social sciences may ask it” (p. 40). Typical of this period, when the concept was constructed based on diverse intellectual influences, Pesez's reflections highlight a risk created directly by the restriction of the field which he had advised. Indeed, there is a real danger of the reification of culture within this confinement, and a history of material culture built upon solely archaeological data would probably be taking a considerable risk. Pottery offers an obvious example of this.

Pesez's reflection and propositions regarding the concept of material culture of course fit into the favourable context of the 1970s. Fernand Braudel's 1967 book *Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme* (“Material civilisation and capitalism”), which was reworked to produce *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme* (“Material civilisation, economy and capitalism”) (1979) was an important first among historical syntheses (Braudel, 1979). The concept of “material civilisation” does not appear to have been theorised, but was at least explained as follows: “A zone of obscurity, often difficult to observe in the absence of sufficient historical documentation, spreads underneath the market; it is the basic elementary activity which one encounters everywhere and whose volume is simply extraordinary. For want of a better term, I have called this zone, which is thick and at ground level, *material life* or *material civilisation*” (t. 1: 8). There is no doubt that it is Braudel's interest in material culture, however imperfectly delimited and very much subordinate to economic history, which is at the root of his encouragement – as president of the 6th section of the *École pratique des hautes études* (EPHE) – of medieval archaeology, notably through a major study of deserted villages (*Villages*, 1965). Conditions were also favourable because of a collaboration which took place with Polish medieval archaeologists from the Institute of Material Culture at the Polish Academy of Sciences (Wàsowicz, 1962). To the young French team (P. Courbin, J.-M. Pesez, F. Piponnier), these brought not only technical expertise and field experience on sites with modest rural settlements – which previously had virtually never been the focus of excavations – but also the conceptual tools which enabled the material facts in general and the objects in particular to be granted the role of cultural witnesses. It is of course necessary at this point to mention the names of Witold Hensel, Andrzej Nadolski and Tadeusz Poklewski (Poisson, 2013; Poklewski, 2002).

In parallel, and at around the same time, very similar issues were being explored in Italy. Andrea Carandini's book *Archeologia e cultura materiale* (Carandini, 1975) had a large impact and a considerable influence on the rebuilding of Classical archaeology and the birth of medieval archaeology in Italy. The author, a Romanist archaeologist, severely criticised an archaeology which had been preoccupied with monumental architecture and artistic production, still in

the tradition of early “antiquarians”, and suggested a thorough reworking of field methods (such as also collecting coarse ware pottery, for example...) and of the conceptual tools of research. Clearly influenced by Marxism, he wanted particular attention to be paid to the material elements associated with inferior social categories, from a perspective of the history of social relations. He also proposed that all material evidence be analysed with the same rigour, from the most remarkable work of art to the most modest object, because “the most humble objects provide as much information about Rome’s economic and social history as the works of art” (p. 8). Finally, to limit myself to a few examples from this small yet rich book, he stated the need for a close relationship with other human and social sciences, in particular anthropology and cultural history. He added that the notion of material culture needed to play a fundamental role in this new archaeology, “provided that, on one hand, the adjective ‘material’ is not taken too literally [i.e. the term also covers certain intangible elements, such as gestures] and on the other hand, that the word ‘culture’ is not understood in a selective way, and that it takes all processes of production into account” (p. 84-85). A parallel intellectual process – and most likely mutually influenced – led to the declaration of intent presented in the editorial of the first edition of the journal *Archeologia medievale* (October 1974). Featured in the journal’s subtitle, *Cultura materiale, insediamenti, territorio* (*Material culture, settlements, territory*), the issue of material culture as object and question was highlighted. One of the aims was “to contribute to going beyond the separation between material and daily life, and history” (“Editoriale”: 7-9), which means integrating the consideration of material data into social history. Clear reference is also made to the “Polish School”, as we find a definition of material culture already mentioned above: “the material aspects of activities aimed at the production, distribution and consumption of goods, and the conditions of these activities in their evolution and the connections with the historical process” (p. 8). The following year (1976), an initial illustration was given in Volume 31 of the history journal *Quaderni storici*, which was dedicated to *Cultura materiale* (*Cultura materiale*, 1976). Diego Moreno and Massimo Quaini developed their propositions in the editorial of *Archeologia medievale* mentioned above, and the volume contained contributions from archaeologists and ethnologists.

Since these pioneering works, the concept of material culture has become a key feature in many works by archaeologists, historians and anthropologists. While bearing in mind Joseph Goy’s statement that material culture is “an area of research which belongs to archaeologists, ethnologists and historians” (Goy, 1979), it can be noted that the three disciplines make use of the concept to varying degrees and in doing so take courses which are parallel and at times somewhat divergent. If we accept that material culture is archaeology’s almost exclusive domain, while being just one of the domains of history, anthropology or sociology, we must nevertheless note that the most convincing and most substantial reflections, methodologies and results on this subject often come from anthropology, as the work of Jean-Pierre Warnier, *Construire la culture matérielle* (Warnier, 1999), attests. Archaeology has perhaps not sufficiently evaluated the issues which, in this domain, concern it directly, as well as its relationships with the other social sciences. In playing a leading role in the consideration of material facts, archaeology is also required to integrate into its field of investigation elements which do not necessarily take material form, but which concern data that is material in nature, provided, for example, by texts, ethnographic observations, etc. According to Jean-Claude Gardin, “As a result, all work or writings about the material remains of an activity exercised by people in the past, in a given geohistorical context, shall be considered as archaeological” (Gardin, 1979: 15). The restriction of the concept’s field of application which can be observed in archaeological publications is representative of this “lateness” compared with other disciplines and with the reflection conducted – or begun – forty years ago. In several cases, alongside the analysis of stratigraphy or even built structures, the attention

given to artefacts, whatever the material used (pottery, glass, metal, bone, etc.) is contained in a “material culture” section, as if the concept could be reduced to this category of archaeological facts, even when – and this is not always the case – the analysis of the artefacts does not restrict itself to a simple catalogue, and takes into account the manufacturing techniques and the functions of the objects. We can of course congratulate ourselves on the growing space occupied by artefact analysis, especially non-ceramic, in the publications of medieval archaeological excavations, following a long period of great scarcity. By way of example, evidence of this can be found in the recent publication of the excavation of the Andone *castrum* by Luc Bourgeois, where over half of the five hundred pages of the work are devoted to the artefacts (Bourgeois, 2009). It is now therefore necessary to explore in greater depth the methodological reflection begun by Pesez, particularly in order to broaden the concept of material culture in archaeology and to alter the trend whereby it is used as a simple adjective encompassing all artefacts. This evolution is indeed probably dangerous, as it reinforces to a certain extent, in archaeological practice, “the elimination of scientific perspectives in the face of heritage priorities” (Pesez, 1996). Indeed, this field, based on the archaeological data, is in fact very extensive. It covers not only artefacts in all their variety, but goes far beyond this category, and also includes, for example:

- The human body itself in its materiality: a body shaped, constrained, bruised, repaired or modified by repetitive behaviours or positions;
- Traces: of visits, use, reflections of the gestures of production or usage, decorations (Bruneau, 1992);
- Religious, social, political uses of objects: reuse, diversion, transfer;
- Contexts, too: objects thrown out, lost, deposited, hidden, or randomly located.

In other words, it involves taking into account that which we can call the “reason of objects”, in direct reference to Jean-Claude Schmitt’s work of historical anthropology, *La raison des gestes* (“the reason of gestures”), which can also be read through the lens of material culture (Schmitt, 1990). Alain Guerreau was right to admonish archaeologists: “The use of an object according to a concrete, determined method only makes sense in relation to all of the alternative or complimentary practices which would have taken place in the society in question, at the time when the object was in use: the meaning refers, by definition, to the characteristics of a specific social practice, considered in their relationship with those of other practices, whereby the whole forms a structure” (Guerreau, 2001: 143). On this subject, it is also unfortunate that medieval archaeology does not yet call often enough upon ethnology, which can, as we know, provide interpretative models, even though the notion of ethnoarchaeology, which enables us to go beyond a simple description of facts, is used in certain fieldwork approaches (Bazzana, Delaigue, 1995).

It is also in the domain of material culture that the combining of approaches from archaeology and medieval history can be among the most fertile, provided, of course, that we seek to go beyond a simple “history of everyday life”, even understood in the Braudelian sense of the relationship between people and objects (“material life is people and things, things and people”), because material culture as dealt with by textual sources is indeed also a vast field, at times somewhat left aside in favour of a “history of ways of thinking”, which is equally important. To reduce the field of material culture in archaeology to only the artefacts also runs the risk of compromising the necessary partnership with the historical approach, of which Pesez was also one of the promoters (Pesez, 1990b; Dufal, 2010). Moreover, it would also be unfortunate considering that archaeology has succeeded in increasing part of the area assigned to material culture. Having given particular attention to the culture of the masses rather than that of the elites (Mazzi, 1991), in keeping with Marxist theory, this attitude is currently in the process of evolving. It is worth noting that social differentiation is a domain explored in recent research, which focuses on the material culture of the elites, by abandoning a discrimination which is not relevant, and which also allows for a better approach, in particular to questions of identity or gender (Julien, Rosselin, 2005).

Having long been considered an “unworthy subject” of research, to borrow Pierre Bourdieu’s expression (Bourdieu, 2002), material culture has become the heuristic framework for a rather vast scientific field within which archaeology holds a central place through its object and means of acquisition. It appears that there is still space for progress, so that it can aspire to become the nodal point of methodological and conceptual exchanges within the social sciences.

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THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE BETWEEN “THEOLOGY” AND ARCHAEOLOGY:

which issues, what dialogue?

Fabio PORZIA, Corinne BONNET

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To cite this article

Porzia F., Bonnet C., 2017 - The Jerusalem temple between “theology” and archaeology: which issues, what dialogue?, in Boissinot P. (dir.), *Archaeology and social sciences*, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, *P@lethnology*, 9, 31-51.

THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE BETWEEN “THEOLOGY” AND ARCHAEOLOGY:

which issues, what dialogue?

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Abstract

Divine presence on earth constitutes an aporia. However, it is also necessary, since that which we call “religion” is simply a series of social practices which aim to establish a line of communication, benevolent if possible, between superior beings and mankind. Ontologically speaking, divine powers are “superhuman”, which means that common parameters do not apply to them. This paper explores the first temple of Jerusalem using two sources: textual and archaeological evidence. We will therefore compare the theological and archaeological data in order to analyse the interactions between these two disciplines. The place of worship appears to be an ideal laboratory where several disciplines, methodologies and issues can be brought together to understand representations of divinity. In other words, we will explore how the consideration of “discourses about the gods” (theo-logy) can enhance the work of archaeologists and raise new questions: inversely, we will highlight that which archaeology contributes to those who conduct research into the representation of divinity in the texts.

Keywords

Archaeology of religion, theology, Bible, Jerusalem temple.

For many years, archaeologists of the ancient Near-East have shown great interest in the study of the sanctuaries and temples of the Levant, in particular from architectural and iconographic perspectives (Oggiano, 2005; Wightman, 2007: 144-197; Mierse, 2010; Kamlah, 2012b, to mention but a few recent titles). However, it is rare to find works which, from an archaeological point of view, take into account the theology, in the etymological sense meaning “discourse about the gods”, which a place of worship expresses (the works of Zevit, 2001; Hundley, 2013 and Laneri, 2015 are some notable exceptions). Yet, on closer inspection, among the many variations of the discipline which have existed throughout the centuries, the one which anchors it to the religious dimension should find its place within a diachronic study of religious systems. Consequently, this paper’s aim is to reaffirm the necessity for dialogue between two disciplines, theology and archaeology, for which religion is a shared “common ground”. Our case study consists of an issue not only hotly debated, but also paradoxical. Fixed in the collective imagination, in part due to the absence of any archaeological evidence, and in part in response to texts which glorify it, the first temple in Jerusalem – built by King Solomon according to the Bible – is, in fact, a reality which obliges specialists from different fields to communicate in order to produce a historically coherent view, at the meeting point of several approaches (*cf.* for example, Busink, 1970; Zwickel, 1999; Kamlah, 2012a). First, we will briefly discuss the biblical “theology” relating to

the presence of Yahweh among humans. We will then demonstrate the so-called biblical archaeology's specific contributions and issues. Finally, we will explore the type of dialogue that is possible between these two approaches¹.

1 - A textual perspective

Chronology of the events and periods mentioned in the article (as in the article, all dates are before the Common Era; moreover, these dates fit into the Low Chronology and follow the chronology of Finkelstein, Silberman, 2004: 32-33).

Archaeological periods

1550-1150	Late Bronze Age
1150-900	Iron Age I
900-586	Iron Age II
586-538	Babylonian Period (exilic)
538-333	Persian Period (postexilic)

History of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah and of the Temple in Jerusalem

11025-1005(?)	Saul
1005-970(?)	David
970-931(?)	Solomon – construction of the first temple?
931	The schism? : Separation of the Davidic and Solomonic Kingdoms in two: the Kingdom of Israel (with Samaria as capital) and the Kingdom of Judah (with Jerusalem as capital)
722	Conquest of Samaria by the Neo-Assyrians and end of the Kingdom of Israel
586	Fall of Jerusalem, destruction of the first temple by the Neo-Babylonians and exile of some of the Judean elite to Babylon
538	Edict of Cyrus II, allowing the Judeans to return to their country and to rebuild their temple
538-516	Reconstruction of the Temple, known as the second temple
70 CE	Destruction of the second temple by the Romans

In the numerous Old Testament texts which mention the Jerusalem temple, great importance is given to King David's intention to build it; let us recall the context which provides the background for this. The Second Book of Samuel opens with the mourning for Saul and the anointing of David at Hebron. Six sons were born to David and he made an alliance with the tribes of Israel. Next came the conquest of Jerusalem. Having seized the stronghold, David built his palace there with the help of Phoenician workers, and then fathered other sons and daughters, marking his power in space and time under the benevolent watch of Yahweh. To complete his work, David had the Ark of the Covenant brought to Jerusalem from the northern edge of the territory of Judah.

1. The article is co-authored, Corinne Bonnet focused on the first section, while Fabio Porzia on the second and the third.

It was to the sound of trumpets that the precious repository of Yahweh's power arrived at its destination, accompanied by sacrifices and hymns. Suddenly, a question occurred to David, which he asked of the prophet Nathan: "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent". The prophet replied by telling him to act as he wished, for God was with him. However, that night, Yahweh appeared to the prophet and questioned the validity of the project (7:5-7):

"Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I command to shepherd my people Israel, saying: 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'" (All translations of the Bible are those of the NRSV, 2006).

The next passage of the text implies that it was up to Yahweh to build a house for his people (7:10-12), while, in reality, it was Solomon, the son of David, who built a house for Yahweh (7:13). It is clear from these passages that the act of establishing divine presence on earth is an aporia and that the efforts of the king to shelter it in a temple are foolish. In a subtly controversial tone, this passage contests the possibility that Yahweh could "live" (*yšb*) in a dimension which belongs to humans. The transcendence of Yahweh differentiates him from the model of divine immanence, by virtue of which one of the main responsibilities of kings is to construct or restore the buildings where the gods "live" (Lackenbacher, 1982). By expressing his reluctance to be "settled", treated like a plant that one places in the earth, Yahweh, through the voice of this text's postexilic writer, highlights the contrast between his way of being in the world, and that of his adversaries, the numerous and immanent gods of the surrounding polytheisms. While the same term, *byt*, typically means, in the Semitic languages, the house of the king, i.e. the palace, and the house of god, i.e. the sanctuary, the Hebrew Bible, without straying from this meaning, uses a discourse which aims to divide the king and the god, the human and the divine, and to widen this gap as much as possible. As such, the duo of king's palace / national god's temple, built at the same time on a monumental acropolis (here, Zion) is called into question.

Despite the tendency towards a transcendent model of divine representation, the example from the Second Book of Samuel also reveals that "establishing" the gods on earth is a response to a practical necessity, related to the creation of lines of communication (benevolent where possible) between beings considered superior and powerful, and mankind, whose destiny depends on the former. The multiple strategies for inscribing the one or many divine powers in space, as well as the discourses which describe them, inevitably encourage discussion between archaeology and "theology". The place of worship can thus be seen as a laboratory where several disciplines, methodologies and issues can and must be brought together, to understand all that relates to the meeting of two dimensions, the human and the divine, the earthly and the heavenly, the self and the other, as it were. In other words, the material manifestation of the presence of god, or of gods, among people, calls for a resolutely interdisciplinary approach, capable of considering *all* of the theological and archaeological aspects, without separating them.

2 - An archaeological perspective

In wondering about the king's will to build a temple, the author of the Second Book of Samuel means in all likelihood to justify the fact that Solomon – and not his father David – built this temple. An initial point worth considering is that the biblical text, which recounts the construction of

the temple by Solomon, associates the building of this structure with that of the royal quarter. According to the text of the First Book of Kings, this quarter was made up of two areas within a single large edifice: the "House of the Forest of the Lebanon" (figure 1a) for public exercising of power, and the king's private residence. The description of this area (7:1-12) is book-ended by the story of the temple (5:15-16) and another about its furniture (7:13-51). By describing the project for a royal acropolis in Jerusalem, comprised of the temple and the king's palace, the biblical text carries on the Near-Eastern model of the builder-king and the typical duality between the king's *byt* and the deity's *byt*. This operation is moreover well known across this geo-cultural zone and its best attested architectural manifestation, from an archaeological perspective, is the *Bīt-Ḫilāni* type, according to the Assyrian terminology. This architectural model was widespread in the Levant in the early 1st millennium, particularly in the region between southern Anatolia and northern Syria (Lehman, Killebrew, 2010). It appears to be typical of palatial constructions, but also seems to have influenced temple architecture. The model of the *Bīt-Ḫilāni* is characterised by a portico supported by columns, above the entrance, as in the palaces of Tell Halaf and Zincirli Höyük (for a recent analysis of this model, see Osborne, 2012).

However, while the description of the temple may, to a certain extent, correspond to a number of complexes classified as *Bīt-Ḫilāni* (including the temple of Tell Tayinat), it is more difficult to associate the description of Solomon's palace with this architectural category, *pace* D. Ussishkin (1973) and A. Mazar (1990: 378-379). On the one hand, exegetical and historical considerations suggest that these texts were written in the Persian period (Jigoulov, 2010: 133-135, 148-153), while on the other hand, a more attentive analysis of the text itself demonstrates that the biblical description raises a number of issues. As I. Oggiano has rightly noted (2005: 220), the text in question mixes two distinct architectural traditions: a North Syrian model for the temple and an Achaemenid model for the palace. This typological differentiation also affects the chronology: while the temple type existed over a long period (from the 18th to 6th centuries), that of the Achaemenid palace can be dated more precisely to between the 6th and 5th centuries, as evidenced by the examples of Susa and Persepolis (Huff, 2005) (figure 1b).

The existence – in the literature at least – of a hypostyle hall in Jerusalem is echoed in archaeological examples, in particular from Sidon (Doumet-Serhal, 1999: 33-35; Stucky *et al.*, 2005: 109-115) and Byblos (Jigoulov, 2009: 144) (figure 1c), which are structures that M. Liverani calls "provincial apadana" (2002: 363)². The building of the acropolis in Jerusalem, according to the biblical description, required large quantities of material (5:6), and in particular, specialist Phoenician workers (5:17-18). As M. Dunand had previously suggested (1969), followed by K. M. Kenyon (1974: 111-112), a relationship between certain constructions in Jerusalem and the Phoenician world (especially places of worship built on podiums) can be envisaged, as well as a chronological shift in relations between the kingdom of Judah and Phoenicia from the 10th to the end of the 6th century.

Let us briefly consider the case of King Solomon, an example not simply of proverbial wisdom, but also of intense activity as a builder-king: 1 Kings 9:15 provides information about his activities in the major northern sites (Megiddo, Gezer, Hazor), while 1 Kings 5-7 informs us about the acropolis in Jerusalem which was also said to be his work. In light of recent research and excavations, the figure of Solomon as builder-king has been drastically reduced in the last few years, as a result

2. In the case of Byblos, it seems more likely that this structure was in fact a podium (Wright, 1958: 98; Rossi, 2007: 26-29; Oggiano, Pedrazzi, 2013: 63).

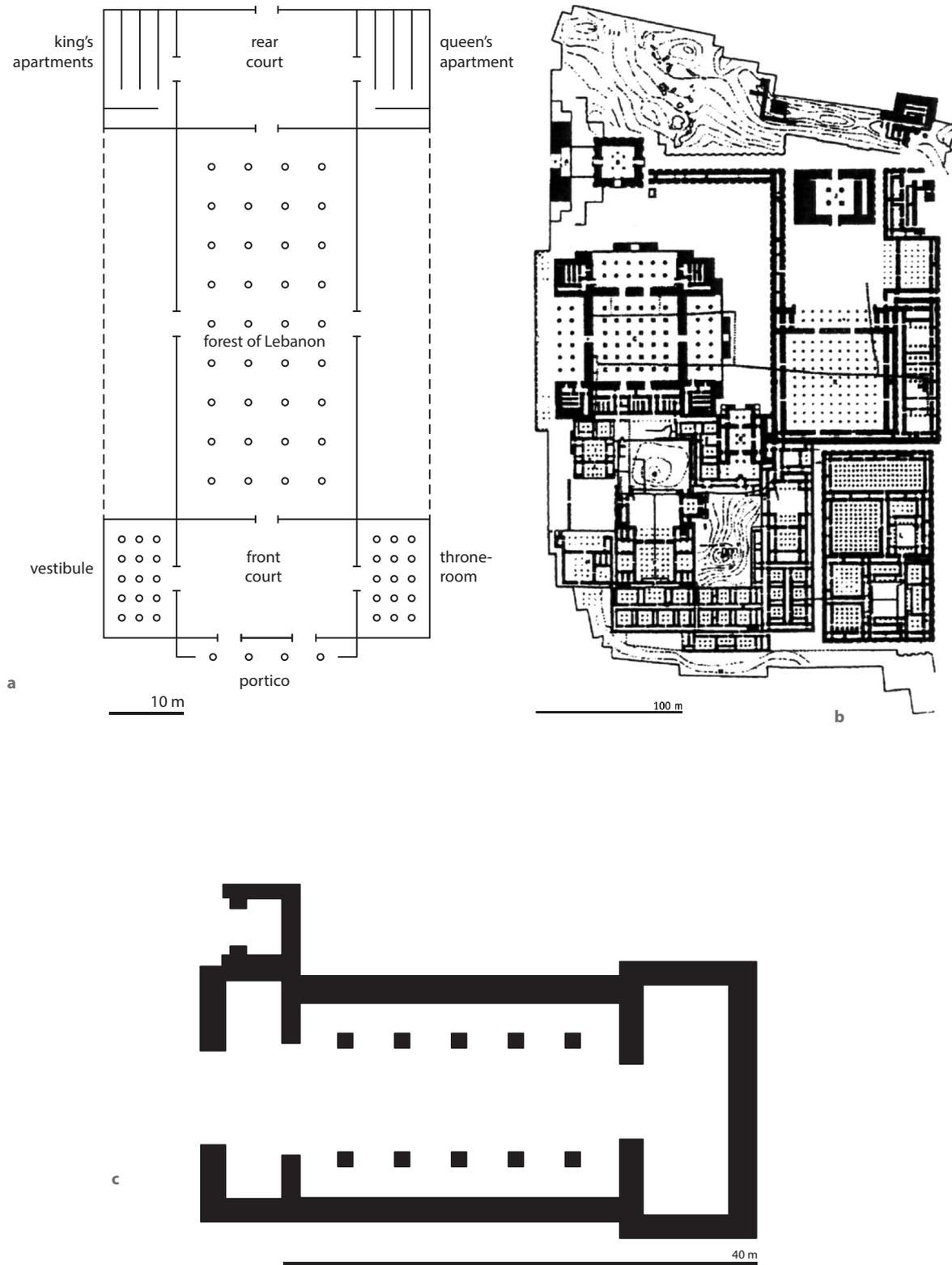


Figure 1 - Solomon's palace and the Achaemenid apadana. a: Hypothetical reconstruction of the "House of the Forest of the Lebanon" (according to 1 Kings 7:1-8), plan (after Liverani, 2003: pl. 57a); b: terrace in Persepolis with the apadana of Darius, plan (after Wilber, 1969: pl. XVIII); c: the "provincial apadana" of Byblos, plan (after Wright, 1985: pl. 201).

of a chronological argument (Finkelstein, Silberman, 2004; 2007). The chronology of the transition between Iron Age I and Iron Age II is traditionally founded on two elements: (1) the dating of Philistine Monochrome pottery to the end of the Iron Age I period; (2) the dating of layers from Iron Age IIA in the northern sites. Based on the archaeological data, independent of the biblical data, I. Finkelstein proposed a date of approximately 1135 for the Philistine pottery which had been dated to between the 13th and 12th centuries (high chronology) or between the 12th and 11th centuries (middle chronology). From there, the dates of all pottery assemblages were lowered (low chronology) by around a century, which resulted in the transition between Iron Age I and Iron Age IIA being fixed at the end of the 10th century and not the end of the 11th (for a discussion of this issue, see Finkelstein, 2005; Finkelstein, Mazar, 2007: 99-140 and, for a recent overview, Pedrazzi, 2013). The establishment of a low chronology, supported by new radiocarbon dates, also had consequences for the general chronology of the eastern Mediterranean in these periods (Fantalkin *et al.*, 2015). For the purposes of our paper, this dating enables several archaeologists today to concede that Solomon did not leave any notable architectural legacies, and that many public buildings in the north of the country which were previously attributed to him, in fact date from the 8th century. These conclusions led I. Finkelstein and N.A. Silberman (2004: 221) to question not only the truth of the biblical account of the Solomonic *gesta*, but also the existence of a united monarchy (encompassing the north and south of the country) during the Iron Age. Thus, if no evidence has survived of Solomonic activities in the north, and if the royal palace of Jerusalem corresponds with later models, what can be said of the Jerusalem temple (figure 2)?

It is important to bear in mind that we are dealing with an issue of a textual – and not archaeological – nature. E.-M. Laperrousaz (1988) has claimed to have identified a portion of the temple wall, at the place where he observed a “straight joint” in the eastern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif. Although a discontinuity is indeed visible in the masonry located approximately 32 metres north of the south-east corner (figure 3), various opinions have been expressed in relation to it. In any event, E.-M. Laperrousaz’s hypothesis has generally been refuted and, with it, any possibility of identifying a vestige of the first temple at that location.

Epigraphic evidence relating to the temple is equally non-existent. Two famous inscriptions, which mention a *byt yhwh*, have been reported as false several times: one of these is on the Ivory Pomegranate from the Israel Museum (Goren, Ahituv *et al.*, 2005; Ahituv *et al.*, 2007; Rollston, 2015); the other is on an ostrakon from the Moussaieff collection (Goren, Bar-Matthews *et al.*, 2005). The only authentic inscription which mentions a *byt yhwh* is ostrakon 18 (recto, line 9) from Tel Arad, from the mid-8th century, but neither the context nor the location of this temple are known (Aharoni, 1981: 35-38; Ahituv, 2008: 119-122; Dobbs-Allsopp *et al.*, 2005: 37-41) (figure 4).

Faced with a total lack of material evidence, the archaeologist must settle for rationally analysing the textual information and comparing it with remains found elsewhere. This practice nevertheless encounters an initial obstacle: we do not in fact know if the biblical description stems from actual knowledge of the temple in question (a true *autopsia*, to use Herodotus’ terminology), or from the consultation of archival documents containing such information (or even from an oral tradition). Furthermore, it appears that the description of the building’s floor plan corresponds with a religious model which was widespread in the Levant from the 2nd millennium. Despite the limitations of any typological comparisons (Oggiano, 2012: 198), it is possible to identify various major points of comparison: the long, tripartite and symmetrical layout, and an entrance on the short side (also known as *Langraum in antis*).

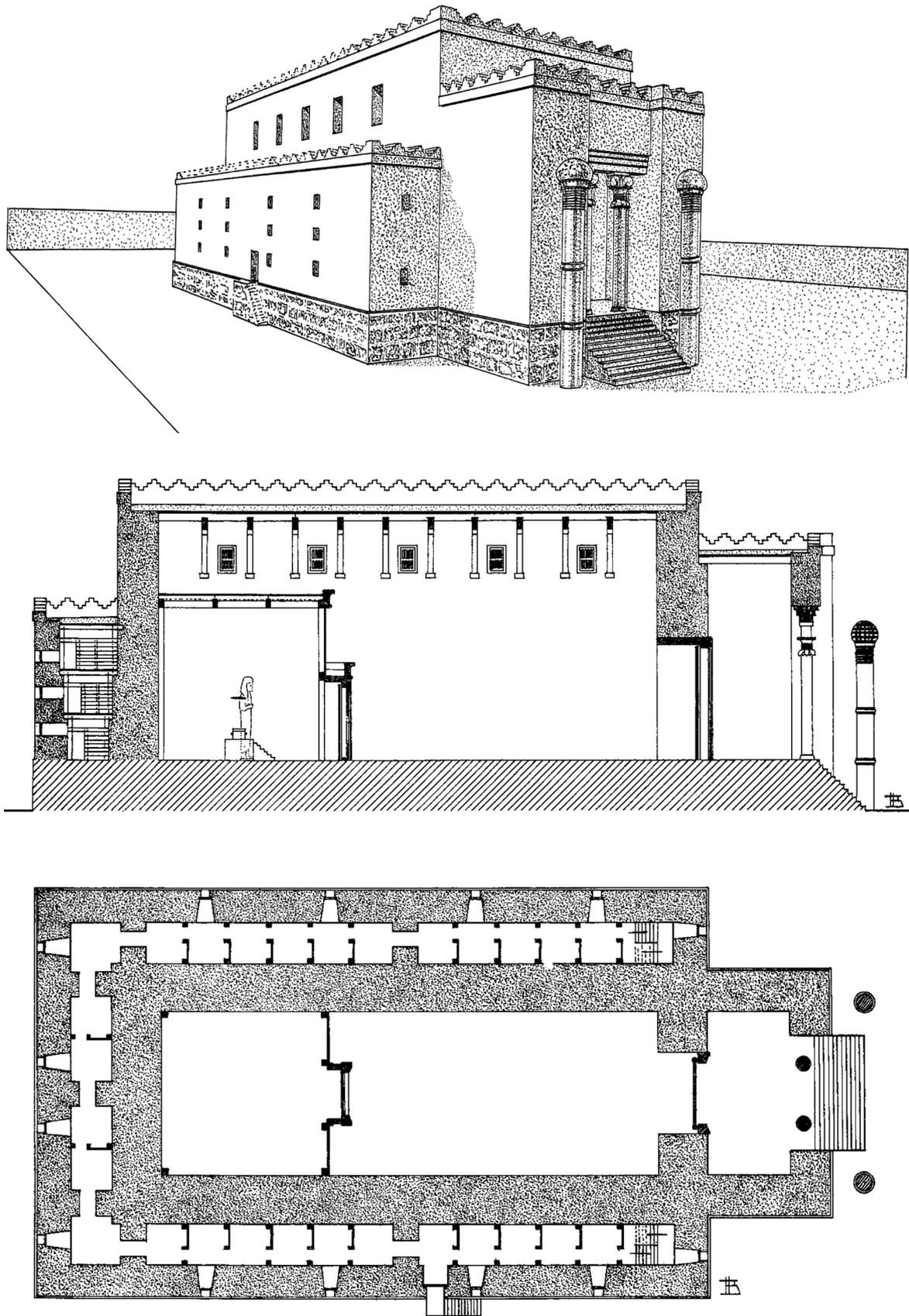


Figure 2 - Hypothetical reconstruction of the first temple in Jerusalem. a: view of the exterior (after Busnik, 1970: pl.47); b: cross-section (after Busnik, 1970: pl. 49); c: plan (after Busnik. 1970: pl. 48).



Figure 3 - Eastern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif, seen from the south-east: the "discontinuity" between the Herodian wall and another earlier section of the wall (Solomonic, Persian-era, Hasmonean?). On the left, smooth-sided stones from the Herodian part of the wall, built up against bossages from the part of the wall located to the north of the "discontinuity". a-b. The "discontinuity" as demonstrated by E.-M. Laperrousaz, 1973: fig. 3-4; c. The "discontinuity" as it is visible today, general view of the eastern wall, looking towards the south-east corner; d. The "discontinuity" as it is visible today, detail of the lower section of the currently visible part (photograph: F. Porzia).

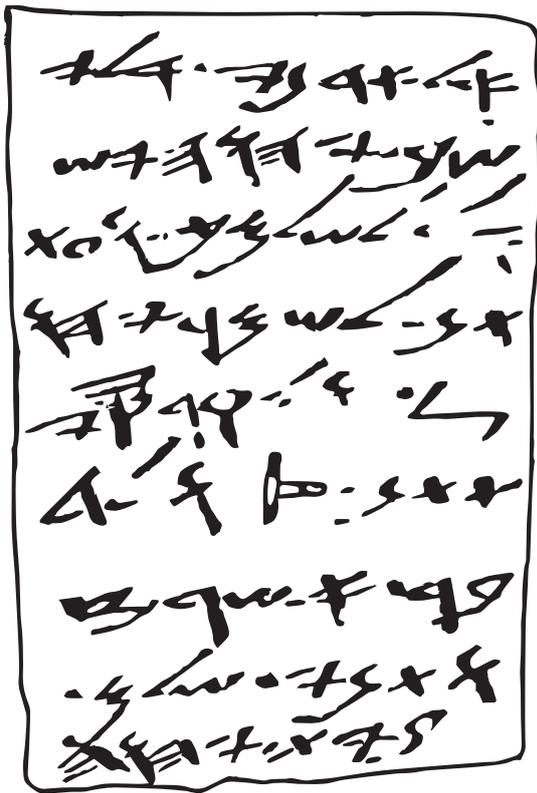
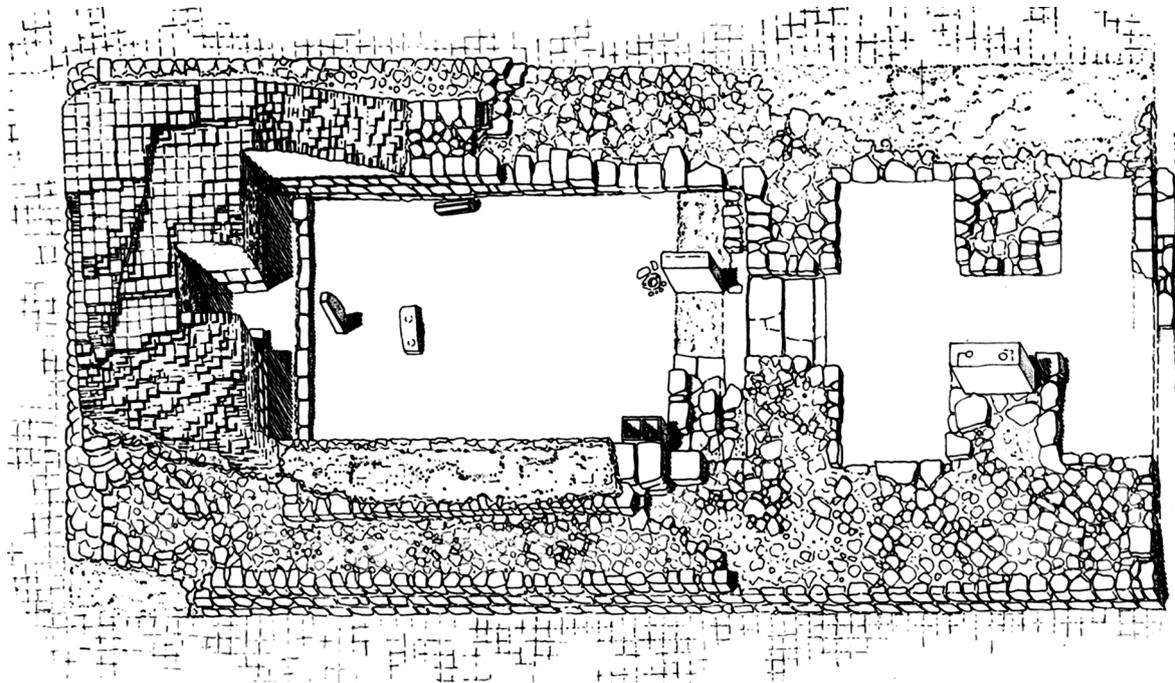


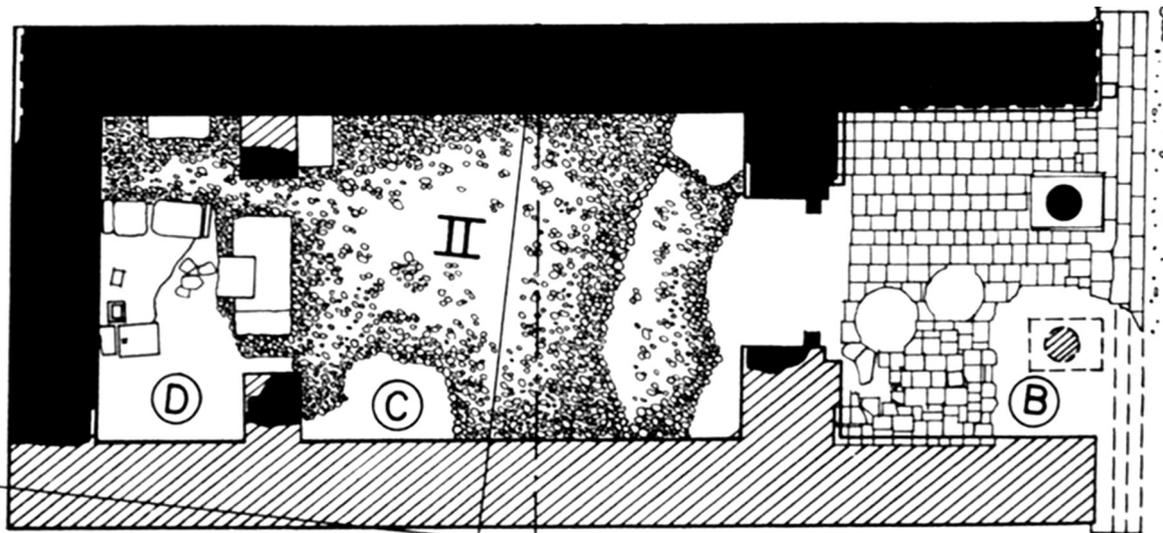
Figure 4 - Replica of the recto of the ostracon from Tell Arad, which mentions at the very end (line 9) a *byt yhwh*, "house/temple of YHWH" (after Aharoni, 1981: 35).

As a result, the temple's layout, like the association of the royal building (palace) with the cultic building (temple) derives from models which are well-known in northern Syria from the 18th century onwards (figures 5-6). Similar complexes have been identified at Ebla (Temple D, dedicated to Ishtar) and at Alalakh (level VII) (Werner, 1994: 110-115; Matthiae, 1997: 263), with some lasting into the Late Bronze Age, such as Alalakh (level IV) and Hazor (level XIII; Mazar, 1992). In the same region, during the 1st millennium, it is worth mentioning the temple of Ain Dara (11th-10th centuries), which shares with the temple in Jerusalem the existence of an ambulatory all around the cella, and the temple of Tell Tayinat, from the late 9th century, which constitutes – chronologically speaking – the closest point of comparison, at least if one accepts the date given by the Bible (Haines, 1971: 53-55; Matthiae, 1992). These comparisons indicate that the description of the temple of Solomon fits into a typology of religious architecture which is perfectly understood and still visible at the beginning of the Iron Age in the Levant (Dever, 2001: 144-157; Matthiae, 2002; Oggiano, 2005: 215-224). The parallels are not restricted to the layout, but also concern a number of architectural elements, analysed by J. Monson (2006) and decorative details, such as the presence of two columns flanking the doorway, named in the Bible as Yakin and Boaz (Porzia, 2017), or even the practice of surrounding the doors with multiple chambranles (Garfinkel, Mumcuoglu, 2013).

Despite its great age, the temple built according to the *Langraum in antis* model is attested in the Levant up to the 8th and 7th centuries, albeit considerably more modest in size by comparison with the earlier centuries (Mazzoni, 2010: 363-364, with bibliography). In particular, archaeological evidence for the typology of the Jerusalem temple, as described in the biblical text, including the ambulatory, has been found in the North Syrian temple AI of Tel Afis which dates from the 7th-6th centuries (Mazzoni, 2010; 2012) and which S. Mazzoni associates with Assyrian models.

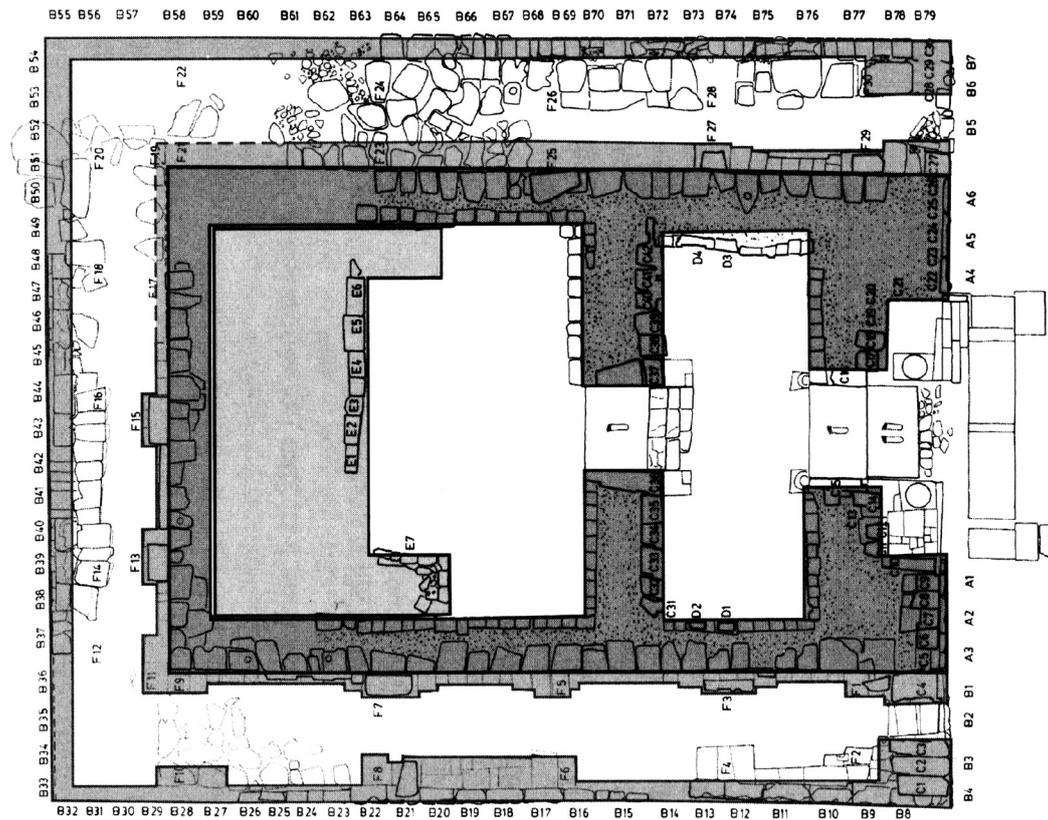


a

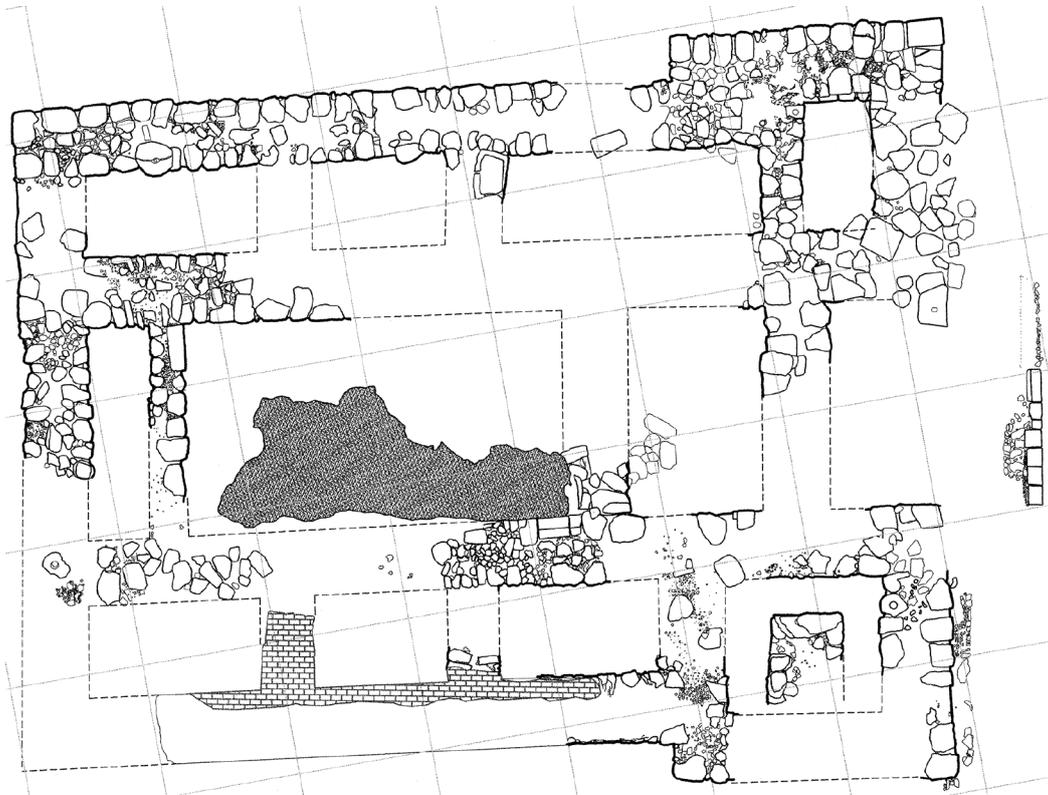


b

Figure 5 - Examples of temples of the *Langraum in antis* type in the Levant. a: Ebla, temple D (after Matthiae, 2000: 181); b: Tell Tayinat, temple II (after Haines, 1971: pl. 103).



a



b

Figure 6 - Examples of temples of the *Langraum in antis* type in the Levant. a: Ain Dara, temple (after Novák, 2012: fig. 4); b: Tel Afis, temple AI (after Mazzoni, 2010: fig. 10).

3 - The need for a historical perspective

Are these comparisons sufficient to justify attributing the temple, if not to Solomon, at least approximately to his era? On close inspection, given their chronological scope, they do not contribute at all to the identification of the first temple's builder. We are forced to admit, therefore, that neither archaeology nor biblical exegesis (which places the final writing of the relevant texts several centuries after Solomon) can aid us in this operation. There is a high risk of surreptitious use of archaeological or textual data, or worse still, of a deliberate construction of a convergence (or inversely, a radical opposition). In order to avoid such a trap, we can call on a third discipline, history, which is accustomed to comparing data sourced from multiple "fields", while endeavouring to maintain an axiomatic neutrality regarding them. In other words, in the case which interests us, we need to ask ourselves at what moment in the long history of Jerusalem was a king in a position to undertake – from an political as well as an economic point of view – the design and construction of a monumental acropolis, comprising a royal palace and its temple. For the Northern Kingdom, it appears that such conditions existed in the mid-9th century, as demonstrated by the construction of the capital, Samaria, by King Omri (Finkelstein, 2013). However, for the Southern Kingdom and for the city of Jerusalem, such a project would have been later, despite the media coverage of the discovery of what E. Mazar wished to call "King David's Palace" (2006; 2009). The debate surrounding these structures is still ongoing and dates range from Iron Age I, when Jerusalem was a Jebusite city, as the Bible recounts (Faust, 2011), to the Hellenistic period (Finkelstein *et al.*, 2007; Finkelstein, 2011). In any event, the probability that the entire acropolis is covered by the current Temple Mount appears increasingly likely, which would explain its inaccessibility to archaeological excavations (Finkelstein *et al.*, 2011) (figure 7).

The example of the northern sites has enabled us to demonstrate that a Solomonic architecture does not exist, and even less so a Davidic architecture (*pace* Y. Garfinkel in relation to the site of Khirbet Qeiyafa in the Shephelah lowlands; Na'man, 2017). Those in power during the transition between the 8th and 7th centuries seem to be more likely candidates, seeing as King Solomon was not in a position to accomplish such tasks. Jerusalem and Judea in general were going through a particularly prosperous period at this time, and undergoing significant population growth. In this context, just before or after the collapse of the rival Kingdom of Samaria in 722 and thanks to pressure from the Neo-Assyrians which caused this, the project of a royal acropolis can be understood as an attempt to project the capital Jerusalem on an "international" scale (Mazzoni, 2012: 30).

A gap therefore exists between the biblical accounts which place the temple in the 10th century and the historical considerations which tend towards the 8th and 7th centuries. Moreover, from an archaeological perspective, two later elements must be taken into account. Firstly, parallels may be observed with the Phoenician region in the 6th century, although the archaeological evidence is very limited and the dates uncertain (such as the use of podiums and bossages); secondly, the archaeological parallels suggested by the biblical description of Solomon's temple correspond more with models inspired by 8th-7th century Aram or Assyria, than with 10th century models.

Such a blend of styles and such a range of comparisons are probably due to the fact that the biblical description mixes elements related to the second temple, which was built during the Persian era, after the exile, and elements of the first temple, which most likely dates from the 8th century and which was retroactively attributed to the great ruler of the 10th century.

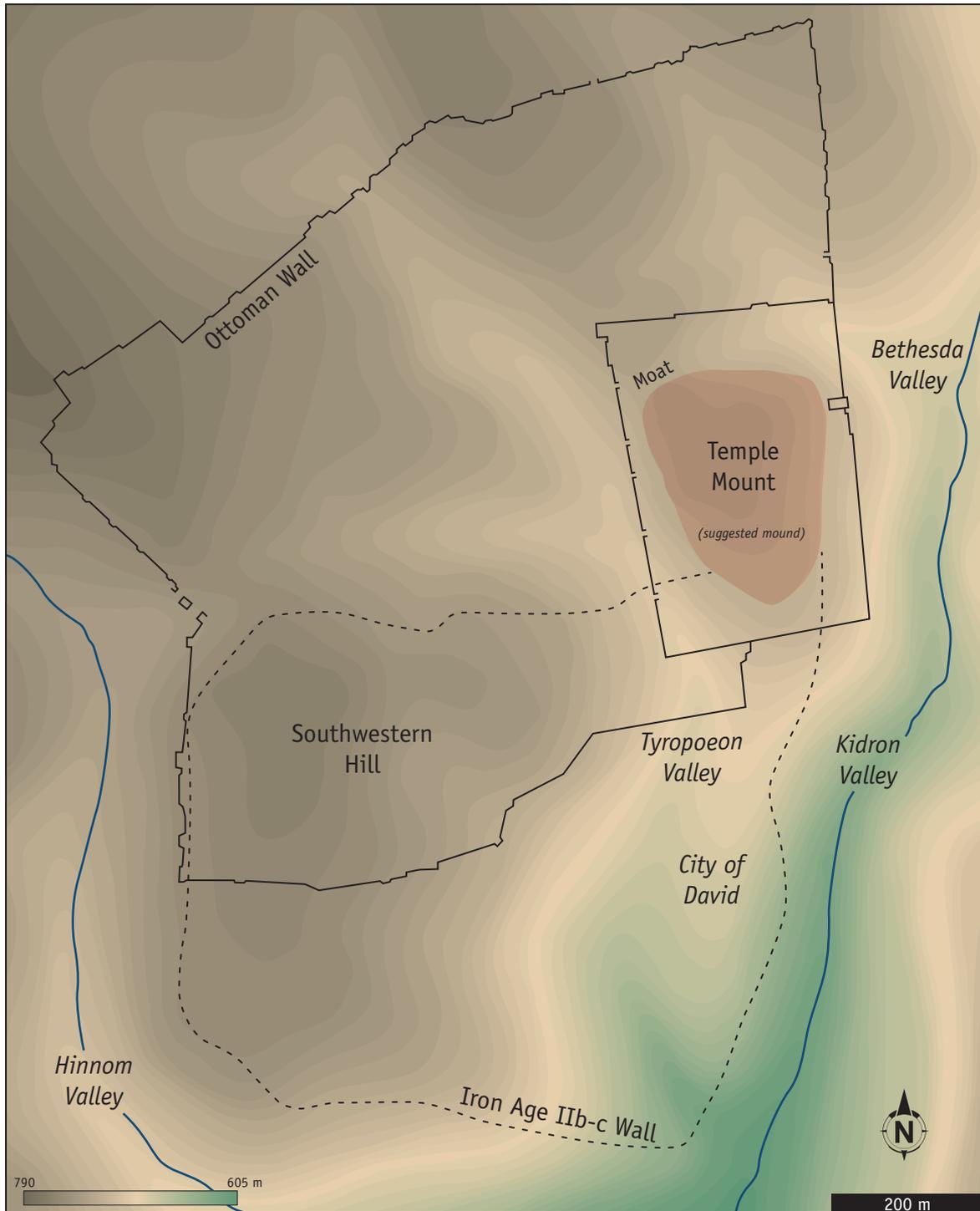


Figure 7 - Hypothetical location in the middle of the modern-day Temple Mount of the acropolis of Jerusalem during the Iron Age, containing both the royal quarter and the temple (CAD:T.Rivera-Tessier, after Finkelstein et al., 2011: fig 2).

4 - Between texts and archaeology: an assessment

In order to build the temple of a dynastic and therefore national god, the sovereigns who ruled in Jerusalem adopted a model which had previously characterised poliadic divinity, the protector of a group of people, situated on an acropolis. Although the biblical text gives the Jerusalem temple an aura of exclusivity, we can state with confidence that "there is nothing new under the sun". However, this choice was not inevitable, as we know that new architectural typologies could be developed when new religions emerged, as evidenced by the site of Amrit, which was dedicated to the worship of a benevolent and therapeutic divinity (Oggiano, 2012). The royal project for a monumental acropolis has repercussions at a theological level, in relation to an implicit (but sensitive and full of meaning) parallel between the king and the god, which is attested everywhere in the region (Hurowitz, 1992; Boda, Novotny, 2010). If our analysis is correct, we can therefore conclude that the first temple – with all of its ceremonial, symbolic and theological splendour – had much more in common with the other Levantine religious establishments than with the highly theologised vision (aniconic, monotheistic, in a word, "extraordinary") constructed by the Bible. As a result, the theology of the text of the Second Book of Samuel can only be understood as a post-monarchic theology, produced after the collapse of the local dynasty and the destruction of the main temple in 586. It reflects a concept of divinity which is linked to the living conditions of a people in exile in Babylon, who favour the nomadic vision of the divinity who accompanies the tribulations of its people. Once again, the notion of divinity is based not on the God / king duo, but on a comparison between God and his people. Stripped of the protection of the king but also liberated from the limitations set by the monarchic establishment, divinity frees itself by developing greater transcendence.

As regards the methodological aspect of our inquiry, although it is limited to the example of the Jerusalem temple, it opens up a number of avenues to be explored in relation to the dynamic between archaeology and "theology" in every sense:

- a) An initial formalisation of the dialogue between the two disciplines requires that archaeologists interpret the structures they uncover in light of the ways of thinking about the "presentification" of the gods, of making the invisible visible, and that the historians of religions, but also the exegetes and theologians, take on the material as "translations" of a more or less normative thought, in order to understand the various representations of the divine that are expressed by the layout of rooms, their furniture, their decoration, etc.;
- b) Dialogue between different disciplines cannot take place harmoniously if one has hegemony over the other. With this in mind, we have highlighted the role of history, with its own methodology, as a possible means of mediation, where the archaeological field data and the exegetic inputs can be discussed and synthesised in a balanced and dialectical way;
- c) As Plato said long ago, a dialogue can only emerge from a "common ground", which he called the *koinòn*. The work of the archaeologist and that of the biblical exegete share a certain "stratigraphic method" with the "phasing" of archaeological layers on one side, and layers of writing on the other, by means of the "historical-critical method" (Dever, 1997, 2001: 1-21; Frendo, 2011: 61-67). In other words, to avoid both forced consensuses and sterile oppositions, it is consideration of the diachronic dimension into which ancient material fits which enables us to combine heterogeneous data and to formulate truly historical interpretations. In this context, not only is the object treated as a text, but the text itself is understood as an object;
- d) In the dialogue between archaeology and history, political uses of the past are an additional factor. In a region which is "sick with history" (Tommasi, 2016: 546), archaeology and politics could not remain indifferent to each other. Without engaging in a debate on the limitations of

an epistemology in which facts confront ideological dreams, it turns out that archaeology in this region has been forced to fight for its own independence in the face of narrative identities, that is, those which pay little heed to methodologically founded reconstructions, and which are produced by politics. I. Finkelstein states, significantly, that it is "completely absurd to use scientific paradigms about the history of Israel during biblical times to back up or deny a contemporary reality" (2008: 22), but also that archaeology "must be free and freed from all judgement of a theological nature" (2008: 21). Politics and theology, in the case of Israel, are often at risk of being mixed together and being confused. From a pragmatic standpoint, two extremes should therefore be avoided: the idea that archaeology must or can play a role in the definition of the identity of an Israeli or Palestinian person today is scientifically inappropriate, just as, inversely, it is equally outrageous to think that archaeology, or any other form of human knowledge, can remain in an ivory tower and not be used to define or corroborate political or religious identities, or both at the same time. In this extremely delicate context, the role of the archaeologist, the exegete, or the historian, in a word, the role of the scholar, should be to broaden the horizon of the discussion and to return to each subject its complexity, without bending it to fit roles which do not suit it.

Ultimately, the paradoxical case of the Jerusalem temple, for which archaeology appears to be of little help, has turned out to be an effective laboratory. To return one last time to our initial theme, that is, the material manifestation of divine presence on earth, the debates raised by the Jerusalem temple's "*lieux de mémoire*" (memory spaces), i.e. the Temple Mount or the Wailing Wall, also illustrate the difficulty which currently remains in freeing scientific, archaeological or exegetic research from the "utilitarian" constraint which weighs upon them. However, without prejudice and removed of any desire to favour one discipline over another, the study of the Jerusalem temple can recover a holistic historical dimension, despite, on one hand, the absence of remains and, on the other, the clearly partisan nature of the written accounts, ancient or recent, which perpetuate its memory.

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LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY:

between observation, transfers and co-constructions

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To cite this article

Robert S., 2017 - Landscape archaeology and geography: between observation, transfers and co-constructions, in Boissinot P. (dir.), *Archaeology and social sciences*, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, *P@lethnology*, 9, 52-61.

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between observation, transfers and co-constructions

Sandrine ROBERT

Abstract

Since the end of the 19th century, relationships between landscape archaeology and geography appear to have been determined as much by the concept of time as by that of space. We can distinguish an initial period when geography and historical sciences were linked by a cyclical perception of the dynamic of landforms. From the 1960s, theoretical complementarities became more difficult because the explanatory model changed in geography, towards a view of a present which was no longer dynamically linked to the past. Since the 1990s, the theory of self-organisation and the concept of resilience, by introducing time as an agent in its own right within organisations, have made theoretical co-constructions possible once again.

Keywords

Archaeogeography, landscape, resilience, temporalities.

Introduction

As early as 1921, Jean Brunhes and Camille Vallaux, in *Géographie de l'Histoire*, and Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford, in *The Man and his Past*, attempted to clarify the relationship between geography and archaeology (Brunhes, Vallaux, 1921; Crawford, 1921). Giving a full overview of this interaction is beyond the scope of this paper. I aim to examine it in relation to the theme of landscape and agrarian structures, which was an important melting pot for these exchanges (for another point of view, see for example: Gentelle, 1995).

1 - Complementarity and interdependence in cyclical time

In 1921, Jean Brunhes and Camille Vallaux, in defining the relationship between geography and other social sciences, wrote: “history, archaeology, prehistory, anthropology, ethnology, economic and statistical sciences [...] all understand and affirm that the isolated event can be subject to such contradictory interpretations that it must not be studied in isolation; it is necessary to situate it in the context of the life which created it; it is a link in a chain...” (Brunhes, Vallaux, 1921: 21).

To understand this concept, we must examine it in relation to the theory of landform change adopted by geographers at the end of the 19th century. This theory favours a cyclical view, inspired by the life sciences, which is expressed in the idea of an erosion cycle, or of “*ages of topographic forms*” (Brunhes, 1925: 11, italics in original). According to this theory, defined by William M. Davis (1850-1934) and brought into France by Henri Baulig, landforms fit into progressive series which follow an irreversible sequence, ending in a final, denuded state of the original feature

(Coque, 1996: 367). This notion of a cycle was transferred to human geographical features and Jean Brunhes, for example, suggests “searching, first and foremost, for the cause responsible for the birth of these phenomena, and for whether their current state indicates maturity or degradation” (Brunhes, 1925: 13). Archaeology, like history, is therefore called upon to provide chronological elements capable of defining a phenomenon’s origin or its stage of development. This organisation of knowledge was formalised in Roger Dion’s project of retrospective geography. While historians and archaeologists situate their viewpoint in the past in attempting to provide a full picture of earlier periods, geographers sort through historical events and only keep those which have left traces in the present, or which can explain it (Dion, 1949; 1957; Flatrès, 1994). The past is mobilised in order to establish a “genealogy of what has remained through transformation” (Verdier, 2009: 13).

For Brunhes and Vallaux, the interaction between archaeology and geography occurred in particular in relation to cartography. During the early 20th century, this became vital for geographers, as a way of generalising observations by correcting the limitations of a local viewpoint, and as a means of explanation (Clozier, 1942: 111-112). With this in mind, Brunhes and Vallaux encouraged archaeologists to use it in order to define “true periods” such as the Neolithic, and not “simple local constructs” (Brunhes, Vallaux, 1921: 30-31).

We find the same position in the work of O. G. S. Crawford, for whom cartography was necessary in order to define “*the extent in space of a given culture during a given period*” (Crawford, 1921: 79, italics in the original). However, he states that it is necessary to go further when placing archaeological sites in their geographical context. Taking the example of Sussex, he proposes maps which link the distribution of “Celts-Roman” and “Anglo-Saxon” settlements with slope, water, and the remains of field systems on the upper slopes of the plateaux (Crawford, Keiller, 1928: 8-9, figs. 1-2). He thus applied the geographers’ explanatory model founded on notions of “combination” (Vidal de la Blache, 1913) or “connection” (Brunhes, 1925: 36). Cartography simultaneously carries out a generalisation and an explanation by comparing different elements. This idea of combination is expressed in particular through the notion of “landscape”, which establishes links between human morphological features and natural features (Dion, 1934). Geography does not simply give a list of localised events or enable the generalisation of a local observation; it contributes a scientific explanation by organising landforms into groups whose components affect each other as part of a whole. Landscape thus constitutes a “synthesis” prior to analysis (Meynier, 1970).

During this initial period, the study of agrarian structures became an important space for exchanges between geographers and archaeologists with shared themes and, in particular, a shared method: morphological analysis. Created by the natural sciences, this enabled geographers and archaeologists in the second half of the 19th century to establish their own systems of classification. Observation (in the field) and explanation of material remains were of great importance to both disciplines. The latter must enable us to “perceive the social event which is contained within it” (Brunhes, Vallaux, 1921: 42). Morphology, by placing geography and archaeology alongside the observational sciences, allows them to take a step back from history, their mother-discipline, where the study of documents dominates.

After World War I, archaeologists and geographers developed the conditions of use for a new source of information: aerial photography. This was used as the basis for morphological analyses of landscapes, in geography and archaeology. It seems significant that one of the two key manuals in this field in the 1960s and 1970s was written by a geomorphologist, Jean Tricart, while the other was by Raymond Chevallier, a historian with an interest in archaeology and who played an important role in the morphological analysis of land divisions (Tricart *et al.*, 1970;

Chevallier, 1971).¹ Aerial photographs enabled the landscape to be analysed “in a global way” (Chevallier, 1976: 507) and photo interpretation fostered collaboration between the two disciplines (Snacken, 1964: 232). During this initial period, syntheses typically came from the geography side, which produced the theory of change and the explanatory model by means of the concept of landscape. This placed archaeology in a supporting role whereby it provided daymarks which determined one’s position in the cycle of time: “The sciences which support history and geography provide important information [...] Archaeology dates objects discovered in the banks and the fields.” (Meynier, 1970: 9-10). Nevertheless, it appears that geography was also somewhat dependent on the sciences of the past, because in the cyclical perception of time, the present is linked to the past by a shared dynamic. Understanding the past was therefore necessary to explain the present.

2 - A phase of mutual observation

In the second phase, which began in the 1960s, geography’s explanatory model shifted from human-environment relationships towards social and economic relationships. Functions and flux were overemphasised, at the expense of form. Geography sought to highlight processes and laws, using the deductive method. For certain geographers, traditional cartography was seen as a “static language”, no longer relevant as a tool for synthesis, as it prioritised the “visible in the landscape”, at the expense of the invisible aspects of space: decision processes, spread of information, etc. (Dauphiné, 1998: 57). Morphological analysis was gradually replaced by mathematical models and explanatory diagrams.

However, at the same time as many geographers were abandoning landscape as an explanatory model, archaeologists were adopting it in order to develop *Landscape archaeology* (Aston, Rowley, 1974). In 1977, Raymond Chevallier organised the first French conference on the “*Archéologie du paysage*” (landscape archaeology), which he saw as fitting into two research traditions: that of the geographers, from the time of Vidal de la Blache, up to Georges Bertrand, and that of historians such as Marc Bloch or Emilio Sereni (Chevallier, 1976: 507). Maurice Le Lannou gave the conference’s inaugural address and Georges Bertrand presented a paper where he proposed viewing landscape archaeology from the perspective of historical ecology (Chevallier, 1978).

From the 1970s onwards, archaeologists continued to develop the methods and tools of morphological analysis, which had been somewhat abandoned by geographers. The “seminar on photo interpretation and historical topography”, created by Raymond Chevallier at the *École pratique des hautes études* (EPHE) in 1963, was attended by archaeologists, cartographers and urban planners and his photo interpretation textbook was aimed at a much wider public than simply the historical community (Chevallier, 1971). With the help of engineers, historians and archaeologists developed increasingly sophisticated tools for analysing landscapes, such as the optical filtering method (Chouquer, Favory, 1981), frequency and direction analysis (Charraut, Favory, 1995) or pattern recognition (Robert *et al.*, 2013). However, beginning in the 1970-1980s, ties weakened between geographers and archaeologists regarding morphological analysis and photo interpretation, in the face of criticisms of morphological analysis² and the use of satellite imagery, which was difficult for archaeologists to access. Alongside this, agrarian and landscape archaeology were slow

1. Fernand Joly compared the two in a 1972 review (Joly, 1972).

2. For Gérard Chouquer, this rejection of morphological analysis of landscape demonstrated that archaeology possessed “a resolutely geographical genealogy, but with no possible link to the discipline.” (Chouquer, 2011: § 29).

to apply systems theory, despite the calls of Georges Bertrand who, as early as 1975, invited historians and archaeologists to use it (Bertrand, Bertrand, 1975; Bertrand, 1978; 1991). He saw in it the potential to establish an agrarian archaeology and a landscape archaeology which would be more “than a conglomerate of different research projects [...] without communication between them and without an overall objective” (Bertrand, 1991: 16). The new geography favoured a time of flux and functions (Bailly, 1998). The present was no longer explained by the origin of a process which began in the past, but by economic and social relationships which were constantly being updated. Past and present were no longer questioned in the context of a dynamic relationship because geographers no longer needed the past to explain the present. In *L'Ère des techniques*, for example, Pierre Georges describes the surviving strata in the landscape as “scenery from times gone by”, frozen in “the resistance of small out-of-date economies and aged populations, who missed the train of modernisation” (Georges, 1974: 22).

Despite this, exchanges between the two disciplines multiplied from the early 1970s onwards, in relation to spatial analysis and urban analysis (without listing them all, see in particular the studies cited in Djindjian, 1991). They focused in particular on the use of methods of spatial analysis (site catchment analysis, central place theory, gravity models etc.) and, starting in the 1990s, on the development of new tools such as geographical information systems (Rodier, 2011). Fundamentally, however, relations between archaeology and geography remained centred around the observation of a sequence of states, rather than the understanding of real dynamics. In the fields of agrarian and landscape archaeology, geographers appear to have been in a position of observation rather than true collaboration: they were invited to write prefaces to books (Le Lannou, 1978; Bertrand, Bertrand, 1975; Bertrand, 1991), but we find few shared theoretical or methodological constructions.

3 - Co-constructions in non-linear temporalities

The period from the 1990s onwards became more conducive to co-constructions, in particular thanks to a more widespread adoption of systems analysis by the archaeological community. In 1997, Gérard Chouquer named Volume 3 of the series “*Les formes du paysage*” (“The forms of landscape”): “*L’analyse des systèmes spatiaux*” (“Analysis of spatial systems”). Here, he suggests replacing the discipline’s traditional pattern with a systems approach based on the relationships between ecosystems, social systems and morphological systems. He makes specific reference to the works of geographers such as Claude and Georges Bertrand, Roger Brunet, Philippe Pinchemel, etc. (Chouquer, 1997).³

Systems theory was at the heart of the Archaeomedes project, a European research programme (1992-1999) which was instrumental in bringing together geographers and archaeologists. This project aimed to highlight the anthropogenic and natural dynamics involved in the deterioration of the Mediterranean environment, and particularly in desertification (van der Leeuw, 1998). In France, this took the form of research focused on the resilience of a system of towns which contributed to the integration of the theory of self-organisation and resilience in archaeology and geography (Durand-Dastès *et al.*, 1998). By demonstrating that the population structure of the South of France was already in place during the Roman period and that the mutations of the modern and contemporary periods had merely adapted the Roman and medieval heritage,

3. In archaeology, systems theory was particularly active in the field of fluvial ecosystems where we also find concrete examples of theoretical co-constructions which brought together geographers and archaeologists.

researchers proposed drawing their explanatory model from that of self-organisation. In this concept, the form of organisation stems more from interactions between the elements which make up the system, than from an order imposed by an external force, and time becomes one of the agents in the structuring of these organisations (Durand-Dastès *et al.*, 1998: 17).

In order to understand how the overall structure of the network of towns survived, through constant reorganisations of their environment, researchers suggested using the concept of resilience which implies “an ability to adapt to external changes, but also to the production or adoption of technical and cultural innovations...” (Durand-Dastès *et al.*, 1998: 13-14). In her thesis, produced as part of the Archaeomedes project, Cristina Aschan-Leygonie proposed that the concept of resilience be applied to geography, using the definition given by the ecologist Crawford S. Holling, who defined resilience as a system’s ability to absorb and even use disturbances and changes which affect it, without a qualitative change taking place in its structure (Aschan-Leygonie, 1998; 2000; van der Leeuw, Aschan-Leygonie, 2000). After a disturbance, the system does not return to its previous equilibrium, but rather it reacts in a creative manner, through multiple changes and readjustments (Aschan-Leygonie, 2000: 65). In this theory, changes and disturbances appear to be inevitable and even necessary for the dynamic and preservation of the system.

These propositions arrived in archaeogeography at the same time as researchers began to compare planimetric data with fieldwork data on a large scale, in the context of rescue archaeology. Increasing numbers of incoherencies were found between the supposed dates of landforms according to “morpho-historical” and synchronic models, and those obtained in the field (Robert, 2003a). Certain patterns of land divisions, road networks etc. appear to develop, beyond the cultural and political contexts which introduced them, in non-linear chronologies, marked by phenomena of hiatus and renewal. They are reappropriated by societies which treat them differently (Marchand, 2003). It is not therefore inertia which passes down a system through time, but transformation at smaller scales which helps to maintain a macro-structure (Robert, 2003b). In 2003, I used the work of Cristina Aschan-Leygonie to put forward a model for structuring spatio-temporal scales which explained the resilience of regional routeways, from the Roman period to the present-day, through constant transformations which took place at micro- (modelled) and meso- (pattern) scales (Robert, 2003c).

Resilience theory, which became widespread in geography during the second half of the 2000s through the geography of risk, is today the subject of numerous debates and the study of systems in the *longue durée* appears to be one of the means of overcoming the current limitations of the theory (Reghezza-Zitt *et al.*, 2012; Djament-Tran, 2015). In 2003, the archaeologist Charles L. Redman and the ecologist Ann P. Kinzig dedicated an article approximately thirty pages in length to archaeology’s contribution to resilience theory (Redman, Kinzig, 2003).⁴ More recently, Ann P. Kinzig has shown that the definition of resilience would greatly benefit by integrating the research on “cultural landscapes” carried out by the social sciences, as this demonstrates the complex relationship which exists between humans and nature (Kinzig, 2012). The geographer Géraldine Djament-Tran suggests we “historicise resilience” in order to understand more fully the various time scales and endorses a transfer and a dialogue with the work of historians and geohistorians who typically do not use the term ‘resilience’ but who explore the continuity of urban trajectories through notions of urban permanence or spatial reproduction (Djament-Tran, 2015: 75-76).

4. More widely, on the central role that archaeology could play in research on the environment: van der Leeuw, Redman, 2002.

One possible contribution of history and archaeology can be observed in relation to the definition of the role of inherited structures in current systems (Aschan-Leygonie, 2000: 75). The historical sciences also favour the study of the effects of past disturbances as they enable us to observe them in the *longue durée* (in the domain of land use, for example: Redman, Kinzig, 2003). Contributions also seem possible regarding the theorisation of the model of change known as “panarchic”, which has been put forward by theoreticians of resilience (Gunderson, Crawford, 2002). In this model, researchers struggle to agree on what should be considered a major change, otherwise known as a bifurcation (Reghezza-Zitt, 2012). Archaeology can enable the observation of full cycles and the identification of real and deep transformations, as well as the evaluation of their geographic expansion (Redman, Kinzig, 2003). The part played by archaeology and the historical sciences more broadly appears fundamental for gaining a greater understanding of the structuring of spatio-temporal scales in the resilience of socio-spatial systems. Landscape analysis in the *longue durée* and archaeogeography are particularly well-placed to participate in this debate (Kinzig, 2012). Within interdisciplinary networks, working groups enable resilience theory to be honed.⁵ By giving a space to the *longue durée* in the dynamic of systems, it reintroduces a heuristic bridge between geography and archaeology.

Conclusion

Today, conditions appear to be favourable to conceptual exchanges and co-constructions between archaeologists and geographers. Time has been reintroduced as an agent in its own right in the comprehension and construction of the resilience of systems. Contrary to the framework which linked archaeology and geography in cyclical time, the present is not tied to the past by a predetermined process. It appears instead as a remobilisation of possibilities opened by the past, as demonstrated, for example, by the use of the notion of uchronia in archaeogeography (Chouquer, 2007: 266-267). More broadly, archaeologists and geographers also share a methodology, through systems analysis and common tools such as geographical information systems (GIS) which bring together different traditions by simultaneously linking their descriptive, modelling and quantitative dimensions. Through the formalisation of data, they make these elements interoperable between the two groups and facilitate exchanges between disciplines.

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5. See for example the work of the Resilience Alliance (<https://www.resalliance.org>) or the research project REAL: Resilience in East African Landscapes (<http://www.real-project.eu>), which are collaborations between archaeologists, anthropologists, ecologists, geographers and historians. In France, resilience is explored in the spatio-temporal lexicon currently being written by the group “Systèmes du peuplement sur le temps long”, which involves geographers and archaeologists in the *Laboratoire d'Excellence “Dynamiques Territoriales et Spatiale”* (LabEx DynamiTe).

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND ECONOMIC HISTORY:

between affinities and discord

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To cite this article

D'Ercole M.C., 2017 - Archaeology and economic history: between affinities and discord, in Boissinot P. (dir.), *Archaeology and social sciences*, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, *P@lethnology*, 9, 62-74.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ECONOMIC HISTORY: between affinities and discord

Maria Cecilia D'ERCOLE

Abstract

Beyond the obvious points of convergence, these two disciplines have often followed parallel or even divergent courses. As such, the first major narratives about the economy of ancient societies were constructed with the almost complete omission of archaeological data. This indifference has even been openly admitted by historians who were otherwise mindful of a holistic approach to ancient societies (M. Finley, E. Will). This context appears to have changed in the 1980s, when a number of themes common to historical and archaeological inquiries were explored: for example, research on landscape in several Mediterranean regions (Greece, Italy, North Africa). Today, the tendency towards modelling in economic history leads to the selection of material indicators on the basis of criteria (economic growth) which fit more with current economic behaviours. There is nevertheless space for multidisciplinary convergence.

Keywords

Archaeology, history, economy, material data, evidence, growth.

Archaeology and economic history: the connections between these two disciplines are both obvious and necessary. Obvious, in so far as it would be superfluous to list the numerous investigative areas where archaeology has crossed paths with economic history. As early as 1967, Sally Humphreys presented an overview of this which has not changed substantially: “forms of production and exchange, patterns of settlement, cultural interrelations between the Greeks and Romans and their subjects or barbarian neighbours, (...) excavation of new types of site (farms, workshops...)” (Humphreys, 1967: 374), and to this we could add mines and many other domains. Necessary, because in the recognised absence of ancient discourse on economy, a fact common to both the Greek and Roman worlds, archaeology provides, in many cases, the only documentary basis and the only conceptual tools for historical reflection. However, despite this necessary interdependence, encounters between the two disciplines have not always been successful: on the contrary, they sometimes appeared as voluntary omissions or failed meetings. This paper aims to examine a number of important steps in the relationship between these disciplines, without in any way claiming to be exhaustive.

1 - The major narratives on the economy of classical antiquity

At the end of the 19th century, the first major historical narratives on the classical economy were developed, in a specific scientific and academic context: their antagonisms continue to have an impact on current scientific debate (Bruhns, 2014). As divergent as they were, these narratives nevertheless shared a language and a place of origin: the German scientific milieu of the final

decades of the 19th century. They also shared, in my view, an attitude towards the data produced by material culture. As a recent analysis has clearly shown (Mazza, 2008), the protagonists in this dispute, Karl Bücher and Eduard Meyer, drew their theories from a German academic field which was still under the intellectual influence of the ideas of Leopold von Ranke, whereby the notion of civilisation was firmly anchored in a sort of typology of historical development. The two rivals also advocated a theory of phases of development (Bücher's *Entwicklungsstufen*) which for them represented stages which were common to all past civilisations. These steps corresponded with well defined economic practices and forms of social life.

However, from this shared terrain, each succeeded in devising markedly different theories. For Bücher, every ancient civilisation fit into the stage which he defined as "*die geschlossene Hauswirtschaft*", that is, a closed economy, founded on a somewhat self-sufficient family unit ("*selbst genügende Wirtschaft*"). This stage was principally characterised by an agricultural economy and by the use of slave labour. The city-state itself behaved as a sort of "large family", or even as a father figure: "*Auch der Staat wirtschaftete wie ein reicher Hausvater*" (Bücher, 1914: 10-11). In this context, trade naturally played a lesser role (Bücher, 1914: 18, "*Auf der Stufe, des Hauswirtschaft ist der Handel zumeist interlokaler oder internationaler Wanderhandel*").

In contrast, Eduard Meyer's outlook accentuated the modern traits of the classical economy, which was interpreted as a sort of industrial economy *ante litteram*. Consequently, the German historian was led to dogmatically deny the importance of slavery in ancient societies and to emphasise the importance of trade in Archaic society, which cannot be considered, in his view, as a closed economy (Mazza, 2008: 53-54). Quite on the contrary, as early as the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, the Greek world was thought to have seen the rise of a mercantilist type of economy, established on a much larger scale than the family and urban environment. In addition, the phenomenon of ancient colonisation, which was revisited in this perspective, was considered as a trading zone covering a vast territorial space, from Caucasia to Crimea and the Iberian Peninsula. The social crises of the 7th and 6th centuries BCE were also interpreted as being direct consequences of the monetary economy, which destroyed the powers of the major aristocratic *gênê* (Mazza, 2008: 51-52). From these assumptions, Meyer was led to insist upon the destructive force¹ of great wealth holders, which disrupted the traditional economic and social bases and which caused the destruction of ancient society (Mazza, 2008: 75-76).

Both of these reconstructions were destined for considerable posterity, and are relevant to our analysis regarding a specific point, which, moreover, they both share (once again). These two visions of ancient society almost completely disregard the material data, or else bend them to fit their interpretation, as part of a schematic reconstruction whose theoretical legitimacy comes from other disciplines. In practice, these depictions belong neither to archaeological knowledge, nor even to historical knowledge of ancient societies. Comparisons with modern and contemporary history, economy and the geography of human societies had a much deeper impact than studies on ancient societies, where philological and aesthetic approaches were largely dominant, particularly in Germany. It was therefore with an almost total disregard for archaeology's contribution that the first comprehensive models of classical economy came about, with an impact which is still being felt. It was not until Mikhail Rostovtzeff's overview (1957, first edition 1926; Andreau, 1988), which fit more with Meyer's school of thought, without being in complete agreement with his position, that the quantitative data which archaeology could provide were finally taken into account.

1. "*zerstende Wirkung*".

2 - Finley's scepticism

This first failed meeting would be followed by others. Archaeology's contribution to the economic history of classical antiquity did not succeed in convincing the great historians, despite their interest in a holistic and innovative approach to ancient societies, which led them to put in place illuminating parallels with the modern and contemporary worlds, in the legal, political and social domains. Moses I. Finley did not hesitate to express his reservations regarding material culture as a basis for historical reconstruction. This position almost certainly stemmed from the historian's mistrust of quantitative data, which was clearly explained in the work written in 1986 by a great historian of the economy of classical antiquity, David Whittaker, shortly after Finley's death (Whittaker, 1986: 127-128). Having recalled that these methods of quantitative history were developed in particular with the founding of the *Journal of Economic History* in 1941, and initially applied to the history of modern slavery, Whittaker gave two essential reasons for Finley's hostility towards material culture. The first was his suspicion of all quantitative formulae, which, in his opinion, aimed to fix concepts which were, in reality, fluid and undefined. The second reason was Finley's defiance of the Anglo-American style of empiricism, where the term "cliometrics" had existed at least since the mid-1960s. It can nevertheless be noted that in his last work, *Ancient History, Evidence and Models* (Finley, 1985: 7-26, a chapter dedicated to the sources available to a historian of classical antiquity, "The Ancient Historian and his Sources"), Finley makes considerable space for archaeology's contribution to historical reconstruction, which at times goes further than the role of written sources: because: "the privileged position of Greek and Latin (...) is especially unacceptable for the early periods of both Greek and Roman history, where the archaeological evidence bulks so large (...) and where the quantitatively far from inconsiderable literary tradition is particularly suspect". The problem which remained for Finley was the use of archaeological data beyond their ability to provide information: a theme to which we will return below.

Finley was far from alone in his scepticism. Around the same time, several works by an important French historian, Édouard Will, raised the question of the limitations of archaeological documentation as the basis for historical reconstruction. Let us recall, by way of example, the "methodological reflections" presented in 1972 in Taranto, at the annual conference on the history and archaeology of Magna Graecia, whose focus that year was economic and social events. In his paper, Will acknowledged the progress made by the archaeological evidence, though it could not, however, escape "*cruelles incertitudes*" ("cruel uncertainties") (Will, 1973: 33). His account also expressed an extreme and open distrust of the very possibility "of discussing trade movements, or commercial relations in truly historic terms if we cannot precisely define that which hides behind these expressions – and we can never do this.", because, he said, we will never know the totality of the objects of trade, or the identity of those who transported these goods, or the itineraries or chronology of these trades. In relation to all of these questions, the partial responses which archaeology can provide will "always be insufficient to construct a history worthy of the name" (Will, 1973: 34). In the face of this damning indictment, I am inclined to suggest the much more accommodating attitude of an important economic historian, Carlo Cipolla. In a methodological piece which has lost none of its value, published in Italian and English, Cipolla highlights the necessity for historians to refine their tools of comprehension and their documentary bases, all the more so if their sources are scarce or incomplete. This necessity becomes urgent for periods like classical antiquity, when written sources become so uncertain and lacking in information. Even in this situation, Cipolla does not appear to have given in to scepticism, quite the opposite in fact: it is at this point that historians need to broaden their viewpoint, by attempting to find evidence in linguistics,

archaeology, numismatics, and epigraphy (Cipolla, 1988: 42-43).² It is therefore through history as a form of inquiry, a perspective which seems to me to agree with the notion of the “evidential paradigm” developed by Carlo Ginzburg (1979; 1980), that economic history and archaeology appear to come together.

3 - A new confidence

The 1980s appear to mark a positive turning point in these relations, at least in Europe. Firstly, several themes shared by the historical and archaeological inquiries were explored: here we can mention the research into landscape and the occupation of territory in several Mediterranean regions (Greece, Italy, North Africa), or the large pottery collections and studies on construction techniques which, in particular for the Roman world, enabled an assessment of the large scale move towards the exploitation of slave labour.³ This period also saw the publication of journals specially dedicated to economic and social themes. This was the case of the international journal *Opus*, created in Italy in 1982, which stated from the outset its ambition to make use of all types of sources, textual and material, by giving them equal roles in the reconstruction of the economic and social history of ancient worlds. The editors highlighted their wish to create a true historical and archaeological “bilingualism”, while respecting the research traditions and methodological tools of each body of evidence and each discipline (Ampolo, Pucci, 1982).⁴ The progress made during this period remains an essential part of our understanding of classical antiquity in several fields: artefact studies (*instrumentum domesticum*), analysis of territorial dynamics⁵ and urban topography, helped by tools of archaeological inquiry on a vast scale (surveys) and by the increasingly widespread adoption of the stratigraphic excavation method. In France and Italy, several studies concentrated on the slave mode of production in classical antiquity: historical analyses went hand in hand with field research, such as excavations of large rural estates, the *villae*⁶ and reflections on the use of archaeological material by historians (Garlan, 1985; Gras, 1987). During these same years, a work by K. Greene on the archaeology of the Roman economy presented an overview of the possible reconstructions, based on archaeology, in several fields of economic history: transport, agriculture, metalworking and pottery manufacture (Greene, 1986). Nevertheless, the signs of a new divorce were lying in wait for these two disciplines, which were far from being fixed and monolithic.

2. “But the written sources surviving from certain periods - from classical antiquity, for example - are so few and far between and so insubstantial that even the most powerful magnifying glass is of no avail. In these circumstances historians have to look around for other evidence.(...) historians hunt for clues in linguistics, archaeology, numismatics and epigraphy.”
3. One key example is the classic work of Jean-Paul Morel on black-glaze ware (Morel, 1981), as well as the work of Kevin Greene (1986).
4. “*Opus ha l'ambizione di voler occupare uno spazio: la storia economica e sociale del mondo antico, nella sua accezione più vasta. (...) Caratteristica di Opus sarà l'utilizzazione critica di tutti i «sistemi» di fonti, da quelle letterarie a quelle materiali, dando ad esse pari dignità. Dovremo lavorare perchè si giunga a un vero e proprio 'bilinguismo' storico-archeologico, che rispetti pero' la specificità dei diversi linguaggi, ciascuno con la propria tradizione.*”
5. On land registers: Chouquer, Favory, 1980.
6. The first volume on the excavation of Villa Settefinestre appeared in 1985: Carandini, 1985.

4 - A contrasting present

So near and yet so far: the danger of mutual inattention still looms over the various approaches to ancient societies, however complementary they may be. In my view, one of the risks lies in the excessive tendency towards modelling, which is very common in economic history and in economics in general. The construction of models certainly has the advantage of proposing interpretations based on a theoretical organisation of the data. However, it sometimes leads to the selection of material indicators on the basis of criteria which are close to contemporary economic behaviours, rather than the operating demands of ancient societies. If we return to Carlo Cipolla's remarks, this attitude is suited to the approach of the economist, whose objective is to create models destined to have a practical influence, but not for historians, whose goal is to provide an explanation of the past and must therefore consider all the available variables for their argument (Cipolla, 1988: 20-21). Here are a few examples. The concepts of risk and survival, which are at the heart of demographic reproduction in ancient Greece, for example, closely recall modern economic theories. They are featured in a recent work, where archaeology plays a role which is generally rather marginal (Galant, 1991: 15-17). Another case provides an effective illustration of the gap between the questions asked, the functioning of ancient societies and the use of material data. The concept of economic growth is emphasised in several overviews and specific studies published in recent years,⁷ in relation to both the Greek and Roman worlds. These works explore models of growth, with an approach which is both spatial and temporal. Although these studies are of interest, I believe that the approach followed presents two types of problem: the first concerns the legitimacy of the question itself; the second focuses on the methodological tools used to answer it. Regarding the first point, we cannot deny that growth is in itself a factor of capital importance in historical development and periodization. According to certain authors, it is the very core of economic reflection. However, in my view it would be illusory to think that the question presents itself in the same way for all periods. The recent economic history of modern Europe, published in 2010 by Stephen Broadberry and Kevin O'Rourke, begins precisely by noting the development which came about with the Industrial Revolution. In this decisive period, for the first time in history, population growth was not followed by a crisis, because the new technology enabled the consistent satisfaction of increasing demands and needs (Broadberry, O'Rourke, 2010). It seems to me that this situation was in no way shared by ancient societies. Indeed, the notion of economic growth does not come about on the same terms for societies where a constant rate of demographic reproduction was already a sign of material prosperity. Furthermore, other criteria and parameters appear to be more relevant in this analysis. On this subject, we can share the opinion of Roland Étienne: the functioning of an ancient society was quite similar to that of a society under the Ancien Régime. This means that it was considered satisfactory if it allowed above all the maintenance of an army efficient enough to succeed in conquest, and then to ensure a suitable lifestyle for the court and to build monuments to the glory of the state. By highlighting the similarities between this economic outlook and that of other preindustrial societies, Étienne concludes that the criteria of "efficiency" were not the same as for contemporary societies. Analysis of ancient societies must take into account this difference (Étienne, 2007: 446).⁸ Let us be clear: this does not mean a return to a vision of technological and economic stagnation within ancient societies, which is an issue responsible for vast volumes of spilt ink (Finley, 1965, and Greene's re-reading, 2000; on technological progress in Rome;

7. Such as Morris, 2006: 93, for example: "These new questions are mostly about standards of living, and, indirectly, economic growth".

8. Criticism of this model of growth was expressed with new arguments by the same author: Étienne, 2010: 14-15.

Domergue, Bordès, 2006). Rather, this position aims to search for the keys to the explanations of economic events by deconstructing the dynamics of functioning unique to each society, including ancient ones. Regarding the Roman economy (which in reality encompasses a plurality of economies, in both the temporal and spatial sense), Gloria Vivenza recently highlighted the need to distinguish the economy of the Romans from later models of production (Vivenza, 2012: 25). She affirmed the importance of agrarian production, adding: “This supremacy of the countryside, even in a context where various forms of economic activity had reached significant levels, is undoubtedly a feature that distinguishes the Roman economy from those that followed, in which the most dynamic sector invariably prevailed” (Vivenza, 2012: 28).

It seems to me, once again, that archaeological data are mentioned in the most recent studies as part of a quantitative reflection which aims to demonstrate a unidirectional trend in economic growth, of which the material data are indicators. Also, archaeology is often evoked when it is necessary to establish an idea of scale, understood here as a measure of size: the scale of territories, of properties, of the urban area. We find this type of argument, for example, in the recent study by François de Callataÿ who reinstated - with a hint of provocation - the concept of the “Greek miracle”, by means of quantification. He demonstrated, on the basis of tangible indicators, the overall growth of Greek society between the Archaic and Hellenistic periods. The indicators used were height (which was moderately higher for the Greeks than for the Romans), life expectancy (here, again, Greeks lived longer than Romans), the degree of urbanisation and the surface area of houses, evaluated at an average of between 290 m² (Olynthus) and 205 m² (Priene), and finally salaries, estimated at one drachma per day in Athens in the construction sector (de Callataÿ, 2012: 64-65). Without examining the issue of the choice of indicators, it is interesting to analyse the creation of these data. Let us take the example of the surface area of the houses, a criterion which several authors have used, from W. Scheidel to I. Morris (Manning, Morris, 2005) and many others. This is certainly an indicator which appears to be objective, since it is founded on a simple measurement. However, it is difficult to extract data of (relative) value from this (objective) measurement, as we do not know the number of cases considered. Furthermore, this same objective criterion needs to be compared with other indicators which are more random because they are more subjective or difficult to reconstruct: for example, decoration, which is evidence of a house’s luxury emphasised to a greater or lesser extent, or even the idea of volume, and therefore the potential existence of upper floors, which is not taken into account in this type of estimation. On the other hand, taking the surface area as the only indicator runs the risk of producing generalisations. Let us consider two opposite examples. The houses of Megara Hyblaea in Sicily, display a standardised and egalitarian dimension of 15 to 20 m² of construction during the 7th century BC; the remaining area of 100 to 120m² was not built on (Gras, Tréziny, 2004: 533-537). However, this standard measurement is incapable of providing any information on the fact that several houses could have been grouped together and belonged to a single family group. An opposite example can be seen in houses with a large surface area, which may be found in classical or Hellenistic Greek cities. Sylvie Rougier-Blanc demonstrated in her recent inquiry into poverty in ancient Greece that these large houses could have belonged to a single occupant, but could also have been inhabited by several families. This practice of *synoikia*, house sharing, offered the possibility of accommodation to citizens on modest incomes and constituted a source of revenue for the owner. Regarding the price of these rentals, they were variable enough to discourage any sort of average calculation (Rougier-Blanc, 2014). A very significant case, which summarises all of the possibilities considered here, is the example of the sales agreements for houses in Olynthus, which are known through both the archaeological remains of the dwellings and the inscriptions which were found there, and which date from the first half of the 4th century BC. We can note that the estimations of the value of properties have an extremely large range, from 230 to 5 300 drachmas per house: the variation in prices and

therefore the estimated value can be explained not only by the surface area, which of course remains the basic criterion, but also by a considerable series of variables ranging from how centrally located the house was, to the presence of an upper floor, to the existence of internal divisions which imply the sale of the whole or of only part of the building.⁹ We can also mention cases which demonstrate the contradiction between certain material indicators: the site of Spina (late 6th-3rd centuries BC), on the mouth of the Po, is a perfect example. This settlement, though only partly excavated, has a modest appearance and a limited surface area (just 6 hectares). Despite its rudimentary form, this site has revealed luxurious grave goods and the remains of substantial urban decoration, such as Cycladic marble basins (Sassatelli, 1977: 119, n.7, fig. 3c: 133). This shows, yet again, the extent to which isolated indicators can be deceptive. The question of salaries enables us to add more arguments to this subject. The standard calculation of a salary of one drachma per day is essentially based, to my knowledge, on a single epigraphic text: the accounts of the construction site of the Erechtheion in 409/408 (Feyel, 2006, and previous reference), where the salary of one drachma per day was paid to certain categories of skilled workers, in particular the architect and the secretary (*grammateus*). The information may come from an epigraphic source, but it relates to well-known archaeological context. This record refers to contracts of limited duration and for a precise task, which therefore cannot be considered as the norm or as a standard benchmark for comparison.¹⁰ In fact, in-depth research recently carried out on pay rates on the construction sites of Delphi, Epidaurus and Delos demonstrate clearly that salaries were the product of constant and detailed negotiations which may not be reduced to an established norm or to an arbitrary abstraction (Feyel, 2006: 408-428; as well as the excellent, as yet unpublished, doctoral thesis by V. Mathé, 2010). More generally, I believe that even today it is worth considering the criticisms of the model of economic growth expressed by Whittaker in his 1986 article cited above. On this, he wrote that the models of growth always separated gross national product from gross domestic product per capita. In a society that was essentially agrarian and with limited technology, the latter is an essential factor, as population increase can lead to both an increase in the GDP and a fall in individual revenue. Moreover, for ancient societies, we do not have access to the variables for the increase in production and for market activity. Between individual wealth and growth, there is not a cause and effect relationship: despite this, Whittaker notes that archaeologists and historians of classical antiquity regularly consider that increases in housing, construction and luxury artefacts are the sure signs of per capita growth. This is far from certain: if we examine comparative examples which have at their disposal more substantial quantitative data than ancient societies, such as Polish society in the feudal period, we can observe that production and individual revenues could decrease, while building construction and luxury artefacts increase (Whittaker, 1986: 130). Of course, we do not deny the existence of periods of growth in ancient societies and economies. I nevertheless believe that applying this interpretation to the dynamics and aims of classical economies can produce an arbitrary superposition onto ancient societies of very contemporary issues, which are themselves subject to debate (Méda, 2013).

9. On this interesting example: Nevett, 2000.

10. As done, for example, by Azoulay, 2010: 129, who used the supposed salary of one drachma per day to estimate the value of the *misthos*, the token of presence received by the 6000 Athenian *dikastes* (judges), which corresponded to two, and later three, obols per day.

Conclusion

Should we deny the possibility of an economic history on the basis of archaeology? Far from it. A recent overview of archaeology and trade demonstrated, from a comparative and diachronic perspective, the large variety of thematic directions and fields (spatial, symbolic, social, and anthropological) which opens up from such a multi-decade inquiry, which is still in the making (Oka, Kusimba, 2008). Several results from archaeological inquiry have a real impact on our understanding of the mechanisms of the classical economy. One of the most fertile of these fields of application seems to be research into craft areas, which developed in both Greek societies and the Roman world. Here, studies on the location and distribution of craft spaces demonstrate the centrality and visibility of the workshops (for pottery and metal production), which undoubtedly had an impact on the social esteem for the production activity.¹¹ For the Roman world, recent studies have revisited the economy of Pompeii based on an observation of areas of production and sales: for example, the analysis of the structures of bakers' workshops was carried out not simply in relation to this specific business, but also in relation to their ability to drive the economic activity of various trades (masons, carpenters, blacksmiths) and goods (stone and marble, wood and fuel), at different scales, local and distant, by applying the concept of a "technical system" (Monteix, 2017: 233-235). Observations on the distribution of spaces, for example in fulling workshops (*fullonicae*) enable us to approach in a new way the question of the division of work within these same societies (Flohr, 2011: 95-96).

Archaeology therefore affirms itself as a possible basis for the explanation of economic and social behaviours. However, the issue of the limits of the information which we can extract from material data is certainly real and has not changed radically in relation to the concerns voiced by Finley in 1985. Let us consider an eloquent example, that of the study of the remains of pottery kilns: archaeology can inform us about the distribution, the type of product, and the production capacity, but in the absence of texts, it cannot shed light on ownership relations, work contracts and the status, free or dependent, of the workers: as Finley put it, "the ownership of potteries and their labour force are unknown except for a relatively small number of cases in which amphora-marks indicate the presence or absence of slaves among the work-force. Our ignorance in this respect includes such central aspects as the relationship of the potters and potteries to the ownership of the land (including clay-beds), to the men involved in the trade, or to 'branches' in other places" (Finley, 1985: 24). The weight of this absence can be confirmed in recent studies. F. Laubenheimer's excellent work on an important workshop for the production of amphorae in the French Midi (Sallèles d'Aude) has provided a series of essential data on the typology of the products (Gauloise 4 type amphorae), the technique and volume of production, and on the workers themselves (presence of family groups) (Laubenheimer, 1990). This research used with precision and subtlety all of the data that one can extract on the basis of an archaeological inquiry and material remains. However, in the absence of any onomastic information, the relations of ownership and the status of the workforce remain unknown, just as Finley had predicted a few years earlier. This silence also concerns other fields. I can cite an example that I have explored in my previous work: the movement and working of amber from the Iron Age to the Roman Imperial period. Analyses carried out on a few samples, of several provenances and periods, demonstrated that carved amber found in several Mediterranean sites, in particular the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic sites, virtually all came from the Baltic Sea. This origin proves the existence of a very wide transport and trade network

11. On the urban centrality of Greek workshops: Sanidas, 2013, especially: 213-245. On the social status of a number of trades: D'Ercole, 2014, regarding cobblers in Greek and Roman societies.

(D'Ercole, 2008: 9-18). Stylistic analysis of a number of items also demonstrated the extent of the mobility of workshops and individuals, from Eastern Greece to Etruria and Southern Italy (D'Ercole, 2008: 52-61; 2013: 22-28). No text, be it literary or epigraphic, accompanies or sheds light on these vast movements. We can only suppose that non-monetary trade probably accompanied raw materials (metals, grain), which followed river routes and which involved a series of successive crossings in which the value of the material and the artefacts noticeably increased. Here, we can measure the strength and limitations of a trading process almost entirely demonstrated by archaeology: on one hand, the material objects reveal the geographic scale and the longevity of such trade routes, on the other hand, the almost total absence of sources does not enable us to understand the forms of acquisition of the raw material, or to quantify its value and the cost of working it, the organisation of the workshops and many other aspects of this phenomenon. However, the fact remains that the observation of the archaeological documents is in this case the only evidence for an economic phenomenon which has gone almost entirely unmentioned by textual sources, with the exception of a few brief allusions by authors from the Imperial Roman period, Pliny (*Natural History*, XXXVII, 3. 43-44) and especially Tacitus, who provided a very sharp insight into the difference in the value of amber among the Germanic peoples and in Rome (*Germania*, XLVI).

At the end of this analysis, I believe that the empirical and almost artisanal nature of mutual relations between archaeology and history, which was hoped for by the editors of *Opus*, is the best way to establish a useful confrontation between the archaeology and history of ancient societies, in particular of the Greek and Roman worlds. This confrontation implies the methodologically rigorous use of each type of evidence, of their respective possibilities and limitations: which also means constantly bearing in mind the notion of context in both spatial and chronological terms. In such conditions, archaeology and economic history can write, without establishing any mutual hierarchy but with each fulfilling its own potential, new hypotheses and interpretations.

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS:

what is the inquiry searching for?

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To cite this article

Fauvelle F.-X., 2017 - Archaeology and psychoanalysis: what is the inquiry searching for?, in Boissinot P. (dir.), *Archaeology and social sciences*, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, *P@lethnology*, 9, 75-85.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS:

what is the inquiry searching for?

François-Xavier FAUVELLE

Abstract

This article is a comparative reflection on the modes of inquiry proposed by two disciplines or practices which investigate the past, namely archaeology and psychoanalysis. These two types of regressive inquiry make use of present clues (material or psychological) in order to recover the past. However, beyond a superficial similarity, archaeology and psychoanalysis do not offer the same heuristic. This is not because they do not share the same objects, but rather because they do not have the same representation and the same practice of the processes of burial and recovery of their respective objects. Through discussion of the “hyperarchaeological” hermeneutics put forward by Jean Laplanche, this article pleads in favour of a mosaic history which enables us to bring together in one narrative the becoming of an object as well as each of its remains and memories.

Keywords

Archaeology, psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, Freud (Sigmund), Laplanche (Jean), Pompeii, Rome, Moses.

The inquiry is the format necessary for the search for things past. It is the heuristic technique which aims to produce a plausible story that brings together on one plane the clues available in the present: physical remains, intact or fragmentary, or which exist as negatives, texts in the form of documents or as stories, written or oral, static or performed, traces of gestures or intention, rituals, words or linguistic structures, all sorts of acts of the mind, memories, symptoms. This paper is a comparative exploration of the modes of inquiry offered by two practices which explore the past: archaeology and psychoanalysis. While aware of the previous reflections on this subject, these pages focus on confronting an illusion: that the investigative procedures differ according to whether the remains to be recovered are material or psychological. This is not the case. The inquiry's methods are not determined by the nature of the object. On the contrary, it is the methods which inform the discursive structure of the recovered object (in other words, what can be said about it). Ultimately, this means that an archaeological approach can easily be applied to other fields within the humanities. To begin, since it is always advisable to present one's project at the start, my aim is to contribute to the re-evaluation of archaeology's position and role, not simply as a discipline which generates data, but as an investigative and discursive practice (for a recent take on this subject, see Boissinot, 2015).

1 - Inquiry, evidential paradigm and escape of the object

It goes without saying that we never access the past itself; we elucidate it using clues which have survived into the present. Archaeology and psychoanalysis are two forms (among others) of elucidation of the past. Clearly, in these forms of investigation there are contemporary variants

of the “evidential paradigm” identified by Carlo Ginzburg (1989 [1986]). This evidential paradigm was born concurrently with Freud, Conan Doyle and Bertillon in the 1870s (and finds a brilliant literary incarnation in Proust’s *Remembrance of things past*, Ginzburg adds). It is the epistemological template as much responsible for technocracy as for psychoanalysis and the crime novel (which are, I am inclined to add, the three pillars of our modernity). There is no doubt that in promoting the inquiry as a means of comprehending reality and a privileged form of narrative (as demonstrated by the omnipresence of police and medical drama series in our imaginations), the evidential paradigm has selected, from a few chosen disciplines, forms of obsessional searches which defer the pleasure of revealing the past, through the accumulation of precautions and protocol. This is a point of convergence between archaeology and psychoanalysis which Jean-Paul Demoule (2003) quite rightly highlighted. Although it is of course not the case in the field of police inquiries (where the goal of the investigation is to conclude by resolving the crime), individual neurosis was enlisted by disciplines which had succeeded in sublimating their object. Ultimately, the object of the inquiry, as well as the satisfaction it provides (and maybe even its usefulness), resides not so much in its outcome as in the inquiry itself. And yet, the object exists. Or, at least, something exists which fulfils the role of an object, even if it slips away during the inquiry which hopes to capture it, changing its shape as it is pushed towards a more distant horizon.

This escape of the object, common to both archaeology and psychoanalysis, means that the investigation is necessarily a progressive uncovering, or more specifically, a regressive inquiry. Among the very diverse methods of elucidating the past (find, discover, reveal, expose present remains, to reveal, recreate, bring forth, or reconstruct past states) – and all these words, all these actions do not mean the same thing – archaeology and psychoanalysis seem at first glance to share the same mode of inquiry. But let us examine this more closely.

2 - Regressive inquiry: the buried object towards which it regresses

Since clues are the basis of every inquiry, and since clues are by definition the remains of past things and relationships, every inquiry is in some way the recovery of a lost time, which no longer exists in its complete form in the present in which the inquiry takes place. However, although the objective of every inquiry is to recover something from the past – especially police or judicial inquiries, which resolve a murder or judge a crime, respectively – not every inquiry is necessarily regressive. An inquiry is only regressive if its procedures, organisation and narrative have an end goal within which resides its satisfaction, and whereby the possibility of immediate satisfaction has been suspended. This is not the case in an inquiry whose logical sequence involves obtaining – here and now – a confession, whether given by the guilty party or deduced using other means, of a crime or a case, or more generally in any inquiry with the inherent constraint of the resolution of an enigma. Carlo Ginzburg, in his analysis of the conviction without proof of Adriano Sofri, a far-left militant charged in 1990 with the assassination of a police officer 18 years earlier, clearly demonstrated the different modes of truth in judicial and historical inquiries (Ginzburg, 1997 [1991]). Freed of the presentist logic of the “solution” to a current problem, archaeology and psychoanalysis set themselves the goal, not of satisfying immediate demands, but of recovering for themselves the earlier states of reality, replacing the overhanging present with an escape towards an attainable point of origin – or one which is thought to be so.

Whether they are material on the one hand or immaterial on the other, these former states of reality have characteristics which seem similar at first glance: they are buried remains, brought to light by the work of the researcher. However, on closer inspection, is being buried a necessary characteristic? It is not, for example, in the case of a medieval building whose elevations reveal earlier architectural states, or in that of living languages which are used by linguists to reconstruct lost protolanguages. As regards the processes by which remains are buried, are they really the same when we are talking about material and psychological objects? Or, in other words: do memories rise to the surface in the same way as potsherds? Can we even say that material remains *rise* to the surface, or are simply revealed by the archaeologist, when, like mnemonic traces, they are remains which only exist through an interpretative operation which reconstructs the lived past (Olivier, 2008)? Is it the same thing, for a past state of reality, to be *discovered* in fragmentary form (as is typically the case in archaeology) or to have been subject to a *repression*, which nevertheless preserves it intact and potentially copresent with the current world (as is the case in psychoanalytic theory)? In short, beyond the metaphors, which illustrate the limitations of language as much as disciplinary prejudices, it must be possible to say something more specific about the burial of traces of the past, about the ways in which remains are preserved, or even about their relationships with posterity.

3 - Psychoanalysis and archaeology: two sidesteps to escape history

In a paper published in 1991 in the *Revue française de psychanalyse*, the great French psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche noted the conflict between two theories of analytic interpretation: that of anamnesis (i.e. the removal through the work of analysis of the amnesia which obscures the patient's personal history, thereby enabling their recovery), and that of creative hermeneutics (i.e. the interpretative action of analysis whereby a useful fantasy is constructed, which did not exist prior to its pronouncement). The third option proposed by Laplanche is of interest to us, as it enables us to ask the question – albeit in rather clumsy terms at first – of what differentiates the various practices of recovery of the past.

In the terms of this conflict between fact and discourse – which already featured in Freud's work – it is possible to identify a debate which regularly stirs up the historical discipline. (Let us note in passing that, although the relationships between history and psychoanalysis have been the subject of much literature, this has almost exclusively been focused on debating the driving forces of individual action and the usefulness of analytic uses in history, and rarely on questioning the heuristic benefits of the inquiry; by way of introduction, see Dosse, 2002; Anheim, 2011). All the more so, because, for Laplanche, these two theories are overly tied to historical locatable conceptions of the truth (in other words: the objective truth versus a narrative which enables us to access the past), and so it is better to get rid of them and to look for something else. Out with history, therefore. To further free psychoanalytic interpretation from the shadow of history, Laplanche suggests looking to archaeology. Very well. But not “modern” archaeology (and by that, he means the archaeology of André Leroi-Gourhan), for that archaeology would only get caught up in “bundles of relationships and techniques”, would be incessantly “didactic”, and would sterilise wonder “with heavy use of maps, diagrams and charts” in order to encase “the vase or statue [...] in the invention of the potter's wheel and the trade of clay or tin” (Laplanche, 1991). Laplanche's criticism may seem paradoxical, insofar as it devalues an economy of delayed satisfaction which actually tends towards making this modern archaeology converge with the intended purpose of analysis. However, if we look more closely, what really takes place is another sidestep:

to appropriate an archaeology which is not that of the archaeologists (or at least not of today's archaeologists) for the benefit of psychoanalysis, is a way of distancing oneself from a discipline perceived – rightly or wrongly – as being swollen by useless technical aspects and hindered by history. Out with history, therefore, once again.

It is interesting that in both psychoanalysis and archaeology, we can identify a desire to create and demonstrate a heuristic originality by setting themselves apart from history. That is not the subject of this paper, however. Seemingly, for one of the great contemporary theorists of psychoanalysis, the psychoanalytic methods for recovering the past resemble a different archaeology; one which, Laplanche emphasises with delight, fully accepts its three founding fathers: the traveller, the looter and the art-lover. This is a far cry from the modern sophistication inspired by prehistoric archaeology's stratigraphic method. And a far cry from the archaeology which recognises the geologist as its founding father. This is not simply down to ignorance or bad taste; the archaeology that is "useful" to psychoanalysis was already the same at the time of Freud: the archaeology of Troy, the Mycenaeans and Pompeii, as practised by Heinrich Schliemann, finder of Priam's treasure, or Arthur Evans, who excavated Knossos (Demoule, 2003). The psychoanalysts might be looking towards the archaeologists, but what they wish to see is very much beyond them.

4 - The archaeology of Freud and of Freudianism

Freud's interest in archaeology is well demonstrated by his library and by the hundreds of artefacts in his collection, which he displayed in his consulting rooms in Vienna and later in London (Yerushalmi, 1993; a useful synopsis of the exhibitions and catalogues by Armstrong, 1999; then, *inter alia*, Burke, 2006; Marinelli, 2009). Beyond the visual analogy between remains from humanity's past and scraps from an individual's past revealed by psychoanalysis, some have seen a metaphor which is of epistemological value (Spence, 1987; Kuspit, 1989; Bowdler, 1996; Thomas, 2009). Let us not move too quickly, however. While there is no doubt that this metaphor exists in psychoanalysis, and that it may have been fed by Freud's passion for antiquities as well as by his friendship with Emmanuel Loewy (Wolf, 1998) – a classical archaeologist, who was the first professor of archaeology and art history in Rome, before moving to Vienna – the epistemological permeability between the two then budding disciplines appears limited. In reality, the archaeology of Freud and Freudianism concentrates on three focal points which leave out most of the practical reality of archaeology.

First focal point: the archaeologist. Throughout all of Freud's work, the archaeologist is only represented as the discoverer of Troy, the Egyptologist, the looter of temples and tombs (with varying degrees of legitimacy), or perhaps the epigraphist, such as Champollion, who solves the mystery of an undeciphered writing system using just his genius. They are pioneers whose perseverance reveals whole buried worlds, and it is even better if, like Schliemann, they are confronted with the incredulity of the academic world of their time. A solitary discoverer, this archaeologist is the prototype of the founder, the idea of whom feeds Freud's intellectual ambition. It is moreover a model for the analyst, confronted with the defence mechanisms of the patient, which he will eventually overcome. However, the comparison does not go any further than the initial posture: nothing in Freud's writings brings us tangibly closer to the *work* involved in archaeological investigation. This is especially true in the case of Norbert Hanold, the lovesick archaeologist who is the main character in *Gradiva*, the novel by Wilhelm Jensen (1903), of whom Freud conducted a psychoanalytic literary study (Freud, 1907). Hanold does not conduct excavations; in modern-day

Pompeii, his character finds the woman he had seen in a dream, which had taken place in Pompeii, in 79 AD, and whom he had been unable to save from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. (We later discover that the woman was Zoë, a childhood friend whom he had completely forgotten, and whose memory was sparked by a Roman low-relief sculpture which had provoked the dream about Mount Vesuvius).

Second focal point: the chronological period. Freud and the subsequent psychoanalytic movement demonstrated a particularly strong preference for the Protohistoric and Classical periods in the Mediterranean and the Levant, namely the great civilisations of Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, pharaonic Egypt, the Aegean world, Greece and Italy. This has been noted on several occasions (for example, Corcoran, 1991 in relation to Egypt; D'Agata, 1994 in relation to the Aegean). Herein, there is – to use the analytic vocabulary – a screen which condenses all of psychoanalysis' interest in both the buried treasures and the halo of mystery which, on the threshold of civilisation, surrounds the origins of the great psychological universals (the Oedipus complex, infantile neurosis, etc.). In short, Classical archaeology is the nodal point where humanity, as it leaves infancy, suppresses the happy or traumatic memories of the primitive age. One can search psychoanalytic literature in vain for references to research in Prehistory, or an even rudimentary understanding of the major chrono-cultural categories of European Prehistory (categories which are created during Freud's time), or even an allusion to the major discoveries of European and world cave art sites, which could in fact have contributed to reflections on the animal totemism of the primitive horde.

Third and final focal point: the object. We would also search in vain, in psychoanalytic literature, for precise references to the stratigraphic or even (if we remain vague) cultural contexts in which objects were discovered. Having observed an indifference to the processes of burial and to that which could enable a genuine comparison with the procedures involved in covering up the past, Dietmar Schmidt pointed out that Freud was unaware of the archaeology of "refuse", developed in Berlin by Rudolf Virchow, an exact contemporary of Schliemann (Schmidt, 2001) – an archaeology which explored new categories of objects (tools, bones...) as well as the processes of stratification of remains and the sequential discontinuities within deposits (should we perhaps consider Virchow as a founding father of modern archaeology?). In any event, psychoanalysis is clearly only interested in the archaeology of the noble object, the unique object, the treasure; an archaeology we can call pre-evidential. It is necessary to return to the issue of the object of the inquiry, without prejudice and by trying to understand, beyond *what* archaeology and psychoanalysis find, *how* they find it.

5 - Archaeology and psychoanalysis: what do they find and how?

Even in our modern archaeology, there is still undeniably a temptation for an instantaneous reveal, though this is certainly suppressed by science. Setting aside the reality of looting, this temptation can be seen in certain areas of professional archaeology, and particularly in those focused on the Mediterranean worlds of the Protohistoric and Classical periods, where the work essentially involves removing the sediment which has built up around a ruin, whose content or inscriptions will soon reveal a mystery. If such a procedure seems outdated today, this is not simply because it favours the objects to the detriment of the clues; there is also the apparent shame of giving in to instant satisfaction. Indeed, it is this relationship between the clue and the object which appears to be fundamentally different in archaeology and in psychoanalysis. In psychoanalysis, the clues given by the patient's resistances inform us about the object at the same time as they

obscure it, and thus lose all heuristic benefit as soon as the object can be recovered. This is nothing like modern archaeology, where the clue is itself an object of knowledge. A methodological consequence of this is that the archaeologist becomes a typologist of static clues (tool, table ware, jewellery, cooking residues, etc.) which are his or her objects of study, while the analyst adopts an approach whereby the value of the clues changes as the inquiry progresses.

This initial dichotomy gives rise to a second. When describing the recovery procedure he is developing, in *Studies on Hysteria* (Freud, Breuer, 1895; on this work and its context, see chapter 3 of the intellectual biography of Freud by Roudinesco, 2014), Freud writes that it involves “clearing away the pathogenic psychic material layer by layer” to uncover the buried memories, as one would do when excavating a city. It is clear that the layers of psychic material are seen here as sediment which hinders the discovery of the object, and not as the very condition for the archaeological deposit’s existence. The implication, in topical terms, regarding the processes by which remains are buried, is that the analyst works to remove sedimentation within which he or she can nevertheless recognise vestigial remains, while the archaeologist (even Schliemann) aims to document through excavation the strata which form part of the continuous historical truth of the object, and at the same time, of the discontinuous processes of burial. Although in both cases the recovery destroys some “layers”, excavation reveals an object which is always already damaged and in *stratigraphy*, while psychoanalysis reveals an intact object, through *anamnesis*.

Let us go a little further, in an attempt to compare, not simply the work of the investigator or the topic of the site of the inquiry, but rather the processes by which an object is buried. As we saw with the lovesick archaeologist, the intact object, which psychoanalysis recovers, is a repressed childhood memory. It also appears that the story began and ended in Pompeii. It is clear that, in the archaeological allegory used in psychoanalysis, the image of the Roman city destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD is a recurring one. It is interesting that this borderline case and virtually unique event in archaeology serves as an exemplum. In his case history of “Rat Man” (1909), Freud says he showed the patient the classical statuettes in his consulting room, explaining that they had been preserved intact thanks to their being buried in the tomb. He illustrated his statement by taking the example of Pompeii, a sort of archaeological prototype for the psychic “site” which is observed as an unconscious formation miraculously found under layers of volcanic ash (Freud, paraphrased here after Bowdler, 1996). In his own rephrasing of this paradigm of burial and recovery in psychoanalysis, Laplanche speaks of a “psychic phenomenon which is simultaneously a cataclysm (like the burial of Pompeii) and a definitive preservation (as in the entombment of Tutankhamun’s belongings)” (Laplanche, 1991: 1305). An informative detail is worth noting in passing: Freud continued his explanation to the patient by saying that the true destruction of Pompeii was only just beginning, with the excavation of the archaeological remains, in an effort to illustrate the difference between the integrity of unconscious memory and the reshuffled nature of recollections (Freud, once again paraphrased after Bowdler, 1996; and remarks by Laplanche, 1991: 1305). By suggesting nonchalantly that everything is worthy of being destroyed (by archaeologists) because the main part has been saved (by the cataclysm), Freud’s way of thinking demonstrates what distinguishes – in his eyes – psychoanalysis from archaeology. In response, the archaeologist would promptly declare that everything is worthy of being saved (by him or her), because the main part has already been destroyed (by the cataclysm). The whole economy of the integrity of an object is therefore in completely opposite grounds in these two modes of inquiry.

6 - Analytical hyperarchaeology, really? The vestige as a relic

We had left Jean Laplanche as he was eyeing up archaeology, although it was in fact an archaeology that is not that of the archaeologists. Without going into an analysis of the interpretative concept that he sketches out, it is interesting to note that his rejection of “modern” archaeology does not stem from a naive understanding of the object of the inquiry. Laplanche suggests putting the human being on a level with a “hyperarchaeological site”, and explores a striking and oft-quoted passage from Freud’s *Civilisation and its Discontents* on the “manner in which the past is preserved”:

“Now let us, by a flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past – an entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one. This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus would still be rising to their old height on the Palatine and that the castle of S. Angelo would still be carrying on its battlements the beautiful statues which graced it until the siege by the Goths, and so on. But more than this. In the place occupied by the Palazzo Caffarelli would once more stand – without the Palazzo having to be removed – the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; and this not only in its latest shape, as the Romans of the Empire saw it, but also in its earliest one, when it still showed Etruscan forms [...]. Where the Coliseum now stands we could at the same time admire Nero’s vanished Golden House. On the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of to-day, as it was bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but, on the same site, the original edifice erected by Agrippa; indeed, the same piece of ground would be supporting the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the ancient temple over which it was built. And the observer would perhaps only have to change the direction of his glance or his position in order to call up the one view or the other” (Freud, 1961: 17).

However, this holographic metaphor, which does justice to the various facets and transformations of the psychical object through time – what we could call its *taphonomy* –, is not wholly satisfactory for Jean Laplanche. In his view, what are missing are the major stages, the transitions – we could say the *stratigraphy* which punctuates and organises the deposits and corresponds to the “nodal points” of the analytic inquiry. Also missing are the episodes of manipulation, the coexistence of “veracity and artifice” in an object – an object “which is not simply a thing, but which contains within it the time of its construction, the affective reactions which it provoked and probably more besides” (quoted or paraphrased after Laplanche, 1991: 1304-1306). Paradoxically, the way in which the analyst uses this *hyperarchaeology* contains several characteristics found in modern archaeology, as they are produced by the inseparable duo of stratigraphy and taphonomy (the first published use of the latter dates to exactly one year after Freud’s death, in an article in English by Efremov in the journal *Pan-American Geologist*; Efremov, 1940). However, if we turn the proposition around, the metaphor also points towards an *archaeological hyperanalysis*, capable of imaging the material object in its reinvested dimensions: “*spolia*”, of course, but also the replenishing of meaning which moves, unearths, erases, destroys, transforms, reappropriates, devaluates, invents and preserves earlier remains. A sort of augmented archaeology, in which the vestige is a relic, an object whose modes of investment over time give rhythm to the sequence of its existence.

7 - Back to the inquiry: milestones of a mosaic history

How does one narrate this phenomenology of the object through time, without being slave to just one of its dimensions, without having to choose between original intactness, and the forms and stages of deterioration? We have no choice but to turn back to the inquiry and its only true hero and narrator, the investigator. An investigator who does not pull blindly on a loose thread woven before them, who does not simply go back through the stratigraphy, who will not settle for merely removing built-up sand, but who will follow, through successive choices, intuition and lessons, a network of paths, to produce a mosaic history which is both informed by the multidimensionality of the past and by the subjectivity of the inquiry. “Mosaic history” therefore covers the double meaning of a historical exercise of devising a plot made from dispersed fragments, and a system of historicity which finds its niche in lived temporalities, in other words, in discontinuous time.

To conclude, I wish to present two such inquiries, which I believe to be two important milestones of this mosaic history. The first was conducted by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and published in 1941 under the title *La Topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre sainte* (Halbwachs, 2008 [1941]). The work has been heavily criticised for its shortcomings and inaccuracies (for a review of the 2008 reedition and a study of the work’s critical reception, see Iogna-Prat, 2011). Although the text does not live up to the potential of its very project, it is nevertheless a fine example of a regressive approach which combines archaeological and psychoanalytic resources in order to individualise the strata of memory by which, over the past two thousand years, the topography of Christian sacred sites in Jerusalem and Palestine has been transformed. The second milestone of this mosaic history is a story linked to Moses, which comes from the German archaeologist (Egyptologist, to be precise) Jan Assmann, under the title *Moses the Egyptian* (Assmann, 1997). What exactly does this history book discuss? The subtitle of the French translation leaves little doubt: *Un essai d’histoire de la mémoire* (Assmann, 2001), “an essay on the history of memory”. The German subtitle, however, *Entzifferung einer Gedächtnisspur*, “decoding the traces of a memory” reveals more about the mobilisation of the heuristic resources of epigraphy, archaeology and psychoanalysis. Assmann is not interested in Moses the historical figure, or in Moses as a figure of Judaism. Nor is he interested in how the figure of Moses was depicted in literature or art. In short, we are dealing with neither religious history, nor biblical archaeology, nor Egyptology, nor a history of mentalities. Assmann observes, or rather reconstructs, the network of traces left across time, throughout the last 3 500 years, by the memory of the radical invention of monotheism. In other words, the memory of the sidelining of polytheistic, idolatrous and abundant Egypt, instigated by Akhenaten in the 14th century BC, a memory which is renewed in the form of the Exodus and in all subsequent thinking, including that of Freud, on the significance and influence of this revolution. It is a memory by turns repressed, shifted, reused, condensed, transmuted, but which signals the astounding mark left by pharaonic Egypt on the world and the emancipating cataclysm which both buries and liberates. Moses is not the subject whose history is retraced; Moses is the name given to this memory.

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WHY ARCHAEOLOGY, IN ALL OF ITS COMPONENTS, IS A SOCIAL SCIENCE

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To cite this article

Boissinot P., 2017 - Why archaeology, in all of its components, is a social science, in Boissinot P. (dir.), *Archaeology and social sciences*, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès, *P@lethnology*, 9, 86-94.

WHY ARCHAEOLOGY, IN ALL OF ITS COMPONENTS, IS A SOCIAL SCIENCE

Philippe BOISSINOT

Abstract

It is often said that archaeology lies at the interface between the natural and social sciences, as demonstrated by its range of publications, the distribution of its research teams, and its varied theoretical propositions. By re-examining these theoretical propositions and suggesting a new object for this science, it becomes possible to find a unity and uniqueness specific to archaeology. Based on the idea of the aggregate, and then exploring the minimalist ontology of the philosopher F. Wolff (things, events, people), it is suggested that what is being referred to is a world at our own scale and within our own semantic field, but which is designed using concepts developed by the other social sciences. While the use of analyses (physicochemical, biological) is increasingly common, these are not the determining aspect of archaeological discourse, which cannot present its constituent parts independently of all points of view, unlike the natural sciences.

Keywords

Archaeology, archaeometry, epistemology, ontology, natural science, social science.

It is often said – and I have written it myself – that archaeology resides at the interface between the humanities and natural science. Does this mean that it is on the point of tipping indifferently over onto one or other side? Can we say that, like a border, it does not really belong to anyone, to neither of these two types of science? Is it in an intersection, to use a set theory term, with elements common to both fields? Or rather, a bridge which provides a connection, and therefore a relationship and not a discipline? Could it be a hybrid science, made up of two very different elements, “abnormally” joined?

Things, methods and results are basic elements found in all sciences: so what of all that is shared? Or is this sharing deceptive? Whatever about the formal aspects, the effects appear to provide evidence. For example: what do two journals, such as the *Revue Archéologique* published in France by the PUF and the international *Journal of Archaeological Science*, have in common? Another example: is the distribution of archaeologists in France across two CNRS institutes not also a consequence of this heterogeneity? And finally, in relation to training, the variety of possible educational paths must be acknowledged (the former Science or Arts faculties). Should we be discussing archaeologies (in the plural) and giving up on any criteria of identity? And in doing so, adding a further division to those already acknowledged, resulting in so many sub-disciplines (which I called components in my title): prehistoric archaeology, protohistoric archaeology, classical archaeology, zooarchaeology, archaeobotany, archaeogeography, etc... Ultimately, beyond these divisions, is there perhaps a sort of indecision in archaeological knowledge? And has the whole thing not been particularly clouded since research was first extended to the contemporary period? Up to the Great War and the more recent past? This addition of the recent is of course not being questioned, but does it justify giving archaeology the subject of “material culture”, making it

the “discipline of things” or even that of the entanglement of humans or non-humans as Ian Hodder proposes, in an idea that owes much to Bruno Latour, Daniel Miller and Tim Ingold – who find themselves cited abundantly in recent reflections published about theoretical archaeology? Why should archaeology be the chosen carrier of this “material turn,” which sometimes goes so far as to replace the earlier linguistic turn (which was condemned for its lack of symmetry and harmfulness to the notion of care for things)? Furthermore, archaeology so often finds itself unable to access the function of artefacts, in the absence of their producers and users. By assuming this position or asking this sort of question, are we not confusing an epistemological point of view with one which falls under the jurisdiction of the sociology of science, in relation to neighbouring disciplines? In short, between knowledge and discipline, even though groups of people are necessary to create both.

In order to formulate our questions more effectively, we must first attempt to accurately describe the procedures of knowledge in question. As with any science – and archaeology is one, in so far as it proves things using universalisable methods – it combines things, methods and results, which it invents, which it adapts or recycles. As we all know, typology and stratigraphy came from the natural sciences, and are put to different uses in archaeology. If we wish to understand these differences better, we need, in my opinion, to shift our focus to even more fundamental entities; but which ones?

Based on the propositions of the logician and philosopher of science Carlos Ulises Moulines, we can say that every science is the configuration of a complex that is simultaneously ontological, epistemological and semantic, three domains not easily separated. These three components answer different questions, but it would be illusory to assume that they cover independent fields. We see this in particular in certain domains such as information technology or geography: with GIS, when we discuss ontologies, we are also talking about lexicons. From an intuitive point of view, it is easy to see that the ontological entities correspond in part with our most day-to-day experience, in terms of the vocabulary used to name them, and that it is difficult to avoid creating equivalence between the perceived and the named. What is different with “scientific” ontology is that we attempt to give greater coherence to all of this (a logical requirement), while reducing as much as possible the number of accepted entities (the famous Occam’s razor, well known to metaphysicists).

1 - A triadic ontology

With archaeology, we propose to apply this “onto-epistemo-semantic” complex to the idea of an “aggregate”, a term which describes a specific type of entity, knowable in a certain way, to which we give a meaning within a particular semantic field. The term “site”, often employed to designate the same thing, is in another language-game: it is not substantial, but belongs to the relational, due to its potential for locating, and is therefore relative. By choosing “aggregate”, we wish to first discuss a material complex, which occupies a given space, and to take responsibility for it (Boissinot, 2015). It is important to remember that we are referring to an ensemble of disparate material elements which have been juxtaposed. These are linked by a particular cohesion and demonstrate a relative structuring, in contrast with a pile of material, for example. This is how it is perceived during an archaeological excavation, which is the only procedure that enables it to be understood as a whole, albeit in a very ephemeral (and often incomplete) way. To then consider this aggregate as a “site” is a way of relating the aggregate to geographical entities. The term “deposit”, predominantly used by prehistorians up to the last century, turns out to be closer to the immediate experience of the excavators, as it refers to a mass of material things, without

assuming from the beginning an interpretation in causal terms (proximity to a river, for example, is often suggested as the reason for choosing a particular location). However, it must be acknowledged that the notion of a “site” also rather quickly became a useful tool for situating remains which were not connected with any historiographical tradition, without relying on geodesy.

To develop this idea further, we need to define the “building blocks” of our ontology, its basic entities. This is because, as we have seen, the main activity of science, as well as philosophy, is to ask ontological questions. We can borrow the ontology of the French philosopher Francis Wolff due to its simplicity, and its intuitive and practical nature, far from any prescriptive aim. Once again, the basic entities support relatively simple questions, which will be useful in order to respond more analytically to our initial question, on the relationship between nature and culture. There are three types, widely recognised in Western metaphysics:

- Things: these are countable, well defined in space and can be named, ensuring their identification and re-identification. Although natural language will always have a certain amount of flexibility, there are still parallels between the perceptive structures and the semantic structures of language;
- Events: when things move, they usually emit sounds (one of their attributes, on which F. Wolff has recently worked), and we describe what happens to them using verbs (one of the necessary and universal elements of all languages). And, of course, they require the support of things in order to express themselves. The question we ask of events is why they happen, and how one can cause another, in a virtually infinite regress;
- People (or agents): these are the specific things which provoke particular events, which we call actions. These are caused by agents who have reasons for acting. Also, as speakers, they express themselves in the first person, through the use of indexicals. By acting, they do not simply see the world as a spectacle; they participate in it. They conceptualise and transform it. But, at a certain scale, if we wish to really know what ultimately exists, behind all appearances (quarks, for example or Higgs bosons – or who knows what, as F. Wolff says), we can of course leave out this all too human level...

Clearly, this ontological proposition exists within a world at our human scale, in which asymmetries exist. This runs contrary to the material turn, which brushed aside the fundamental importance of language, its predicative and indexical function. It is almost certainly a question of where we place the cursor. As F. Wolff notes, the major categories of art, as well as the structure of law, appear to support this manner of considering the fundamental entities (“tropes” are more complicated: the act of reducing everything to a single entity, like the events or the processes, does not take into account the intuitive way in which we perceive the world). Thus, we can easily understand the problems faced by law when one of the elements of the triad is missing (the person), such as in the very current example of driverless cars, which could cause harm to a third party, without any responsibility on the part of a real agent. F. Wolff’s ontology does not answer natural science’s broad question, “What ultimately exists in the world?” Instead, it responds more specifically to the following: “What exists in the world inevitably and universally for all human beings?": clearly, first and foremost, there are things, events and people, before we can consider other categories, such as processes, animals, natural and artefactual things...

The aggregate had barely held the attention of metaphysicians because it is a combination which had remained unnoticed, which had no reason to be named, considered in an even more vague way than a detritus, than a remnant or vestige, since these assume a voluntary action by people, or the idea of a whole which undergoes a subtraction. An aggregate can be anything and everything, except that it does not stretch on indefinitely. It is compact and more heterogeneous

than a pile; it holds together well. It really is a metaphysical entity which acts as a foil, even more so than compounds or hybrids... That is why philosophers have hardly taken an interest in our archaeological affairs, except to use a metaphor, in the case of Sigmund Freud or Michel Foucault.

If we retain F. Wolff's triadic ontology, dividing the world into things, events and agents, it must be said that archaeology, while aiming for all three, really only has access to the first (and these are inert), in a world within our abilities (at a mesoscopic scale, and with the supposition of predication, but in its absence). This opens up the possibility of telling a story – if we are willing to accept this as archaeology's purpose, rather than contenting ourselves with a basic inventory of things in space and time. Paradoxically, this initial limitation to things is also the guarantee of virtual immutability, separability and individuability, which is exactly what all normative ontologies strive for. Quite the opposite, therefore, of the elements in a dream, for example, which have a particular fluidity, with characters which remain indeterminate, and everything being interpreted as soon as it occurs. By contrast, the things in an aggregate hold something tangible which we divide up according to its natural articulations (mainly its stratigraphic limits) like a chicken (to borrow a hackneyed philosophical simile)! We can of course debate the “inert” nature of an aggregate when we know that its components can undergo numerous processes (chemical alteration, erosion, bioturbation...), which can cause radical transformations, or even the disappearance of the structure. However, when the archaeologist perceives it, the aggregate presents itself as an inert mass where nothing moves; and from this observation, he or she deduces that things have moved (taphonomy).

The excavation of the structure of an aggregate is the only operation which we can follow; unlike when we read a text or when we look at an image, here we do not receive any points of view, since an aggregate is not addressed to anyone. It is a singular activity in the context of telling a story, far removed from the work of historians, but is one which guarantees “that a good excavation cannot lie” (Besson *et al.*, 2011). A “good excavation” is a procedure carried out methodically and sincerely, under the critical eye of the public – exactly what was missing in famous hoaxes such as Glözel.

2 - A unique inquiry

The “archaeological inquiry” is what I call the two questions asked successively of every aggregate, which, since nothing moves there yet, correspond with a decoupling of space and time. The former is the only one truly observed, while the latter is deduced from the structure and the properties of its spatial elements. As soon as the initial question is formulated (“what is here”), the archaeologist shifts towards a second question (“what happened here”), which provides the main motivation for excavating the aggregate. And so, on the basis of a list of consequences (things), the aim is to find the causes (events, actions), much the same way a police inquiry is carried out. Excavation takes place at a mesoscopic scale (Schaeffer, 2007), which is simultaneously that of the people excavating (archaeologists) and of those who left these things in this place. It is at this level that decisions are taken to leave, assemble or remove the tangible remains. The use of supra and infra (macro/micro) scales can be considered supplementary. In the confines of the laboratory, we proceed to characterise some of the things we have discovered, in so far as they are made of a particular substance: it is as if these things are labelled, associated with a strict reference (“it is limestone”, “those are pine pollen grains” etc.). This is why it is said that the pronouncement of a chemical, mineral or organic formula, from atoms up to genetic macromolecules, is like a proper noun, or is at least true regardless of the place it is found. However, at larger scales, we are dealing with a world seen as shared: it does not matter that a wall is made up of a particular set

of chemical elements (unless one is particularly interested in the provenance of the materials), what interests us is the fact that it was built here, in this context, as a wall, a grouping of parts with one or more aims, and in a way that can be imagined if we put ourselves in the position of the builders, in thinking about their movements and the constraints they encountered (this is what we mean when we speak of a “shared” thing), as well as the movement of products. Even though an artefact might be comprised of the same atoms as the rest of the universe, we cannot elucidate its function (i.e. the reasons for its use in a particular context) by crushing it into powder and examining it under a microscope. In order to successfully complete this inquiry, a small amount of anthropology will therefore be required.

However, not all aggregates deserve to be treated together to make up a single discipline that we can call “archaeology”. Some are falsified, and do not hide it (*Le déjeuner sous l’herbe* by Daniel Spoerri: Demoule, 2012), while others manipulate the potential audience, as is the case with the true hoaxes, those who do not admit they are hoaxes (Glozel) and which are only the echoes of the technical and historical knowledge of their time. Others, conceived as concrete wholes (with some parts understood to varying degrees), about which it is possible to predicate, as in the case of bazaars or libraries considered disordered, yet where someone is still able to recognise that everything is poorly catalogued, or to find an object which exists – as though “stratified” – within it. Ultimately, agents exist who are not only the cause of these assemblages, but who still recognise them as nameable entities, as wholes greater than the sum of their parts. The first and only predicator of an aggregate is the archaeologist who excavates it. In short, he or she is its ephemeral subject.

Another requirement in order to hit the right targets in our regional ontology (since this is focused on the archaeological inquiry) is that at least part of the aggregate be an artefact (or, as is more typically encountered, part of an artefact. The discovery of a potsherd in an alluvial deposit, whereby the sherd is one of the deposit’s components, along with gravels or tree stumps, is not enough to qualify the deposit as archaeological. Furthermore, such a deposit could never be understood by means of a comprehensive excavation. Also of little interest are the aggregates which reveal themselves to be almost entirely comprised of parts of a single artefact, which, once reassembled, form an isolated whole. In such an instance, it would be necessary, for example, to consider the restoration of a building after an earthquake as archaeology, and that there would be a benefit in giving such a meaning to this practice (a semantic project), even though it does not necessarily aim to tell a story. Fieldwork experience, commonly called “archaeological”, demonstrates that this is rarely the case, because there is always something missing, or something unexpected, in what we find: a far cry from the image of a jigsaw puzzle so widely used in the popularisation of the discipline! It is simultaneously more and less, with no guarantee that the missing piece of the aggregate exists elsewhere, or that what we find here is the same as anywhere else. That is the epistemic situation in which we find ourselves as archaeologists. As we know, the success of certain police inquiries resides precisely in this complementarity between the scene of the crime and the world as it continues to exist beyond it – which is an excellent reason for not mixing up the two types of research.

Furthermore, there is a vacuum around aggregates, which we can call specifically an “archaeological vacuum”. It is in fact impossible to conduct an investigation such as the one we have just described, even if there is material between two aggregates, in the form of terrain and sedimentary deposits. It is also impossible to be certain of their coexistence, since the chronologies determined by the archaeological investigation are always probabilistic, with the exception of a few iconic examples (such as the region of Pompeii). This leads to a problematic use of geographical concepts, which leave no portion of space without classification. There is also always the possibility

of naming an entity between two others which have already been identified. In other words, there is a sort of criterion of continuity which is lacking in archaeology, as philosophers have already noted.

3 - A world at our own scale

Through archaeological practice, the agents – though largely undefined, as they are reconstructed by thought, using things – are understood at our own scale. Below are a few examples which illustrate this, because the issue is important, as it enables us, through the use of F. Wolff's simplified ontology, to confirm that we do indeed fall under the heading of social science.

All of us, as children, were no doubt surprised to learn in geography or geology class, while looking at certain mountains, that “before, this area was a sea”; and that this was because there were fossils of aquatic species in the rock. The mountains, seen from this angle, are not part of a world at our scale, as our geographical reference points are disrupted: both the actual spatial entities and, more importantly, their relationships. This paradoxical predication which places sea before mountain is the only reference for a single geometric position, and is therefore abstract. It involves the proposition of a naturalist ontology in the context of our “natural” ontology (i.e. “that which is natural, or familiar, to us”). It is as if we imagined, this time at a microscopic scale, that all of this before us, the objects on the table, for example, was simply the bustling of electrons around billions of atomic nuclei. This may be no less true, but it does not describe the world for us human beings, as we “naïvely” perceive and conceive it (“naïve physics” is a very important branch of science which has enabled the development of artificial intelligence).

The artefact, according to François Sigaut's definition, that is to say, a thing which satisfies three conditions (form, use and function), cannot be fully conceived without prior use of language. Its criteria of identity (that which allows us to say that we are dealing with the same artefact), require us to turn to the actions of the makers and users: the artefacts must be credited with existence in order to truly exist (Lenclud, 2007). They are only artefacts in our human world and at our scale. At the very least, every artefact contradicts “nature” (intrinsically or extrinsically), even if, at a different scale, they are nature itself (mineral or plant, atoms...).

What of animals? They certainly act, but are they capable of communicating the reasons for their actions, even to themselves? Clearly, it is necessary to create bridges and to shift our frames of reference in order to understand and accept the phenomenon of hominisation and the emergence of language. Beyond the blurred boundaries and hazily outlined concepts, there is one essential difference: an animal only perceives that which is important to it based on its possible actions. It perceives and acts in its own world. It is a subject which lives in a world of its own, and of which it is the centre (Von Uexkull, 1934). By following the analyses of Étienne Bimbenet, we can discuss the notion of the animal's “idealism” (Bimbenet, 2011). In contrast, the human being, following the process of hominisation (as well as throughout their ontogenesis, from baby to adult), will recognise “the World” which belongs to everyone, and which exists beyond his or her own world. Humans invent realism (Bimbenet, 2015), which acknowledges that the world exceeds and precedes them, and will most likely survive them. It is a world older than their thoughts, which contains things that exist outside of their field of vision. Humans make the world their space for discussion (and ultimately make archaeology, among many other things, possible).

Designating a thing in the world, by pointing at it, as we sometimes do with the stars, is to recognise that shown thing as being the same for everyone, nameable and translatable, rather than only being of use to oneself. This is what we call curiosity. No animals argue about what things are in reality, independently of oneself. Here we see the willingness to acknowledge through (archaeological) inquiry the specific actions of people capable of predication, as having formed part of our world. As archaeologists, we ask questions of the aggregate not only as we would an ecological niche (like we do for any group of animals), but also as a place of action by agents capable of curiosity and predication, who are absent at the time of excavation.

A few thinkers, such as François Djindjian (2011) – though I am not sure he really believed it himself – have imagined the possibility of codifying the “archaeological reality” by presenting it as a set of formulae, as one might do in chemistry, for example, or for some aspects of biology (we know that for Alain Gallay [1986] too, this could be a model for our archaeological science). Despite calling on semiology, following an idea heavily inspired by Jean-Claude Gardin, this description of the world does not fit into our semantic field. Unlike natural language, it contains neither the fundamental structures of predication (subject, verbs, indexicals), nor the useful distinction between proper and common nouns, with the latter often being socio-anthropological concepts which are not as easily defined as we like to think.

These concepts, such as that of a town, for example, refuse to be held in by a mesh of strictly objective criteria. They move according to human intersubjectivity and often remain vague, which probably also enables us to combine them. In other words, there is no set of necessary and sufficient conditions allowing us to precisely define the concept, which is typically used retrospectively and synoptically (Boissinot, 2011). However, without the opinion of the makers and users, and therefore the function of the artefact, the archaeologist will not avoid an argument as to its classification, that of the town in this example, and must bring it before the world for approval. He or she will contribute to a definition of the town, but only by taking into account the extent of the term (with further cases), incapable of questioning its intent (or comprehension). This is why I believe there are so few conceptual debates in archaeology...

Conclusion

Archaeologists do not simply observe things as in a theatre. They act upon them to render them at the scale of our human world, where it is necessary to count things, events and people. If they were naturalists, they would aim for a knowledge independent of themselves and of their human group, even when it is the work of mankind, whether made in a laboratory or in nature. However, with the undeniable evidence acquired through the excavation of aggregates, archaeologists contribute to the updating of the world’s inventory and, in part, to that of the concepts necessary for understanding it. But of course, this “undeniable evidence” only pertains to certain properties of artefacts (or assemblages) which cannot be apprehended in their entirety.

Although specialised in the search for “ecofacts” (defined by our colleagues from Québec as the material remains from the animal, plant or mineral worlds, which comprise the residues of humans’ action on their environment), archaeologists only take interest in them, ahead of artefacts, in so far as they inform us about social practices, in other words, people’s styles of actions. The plural is of the essence here, especially since archaeology focuses on assemblages, rather than isolated objects – which are even more elusive – which places it at once in the realm of the social. Even in funerary archaeology, where we sometimes believe that we have perceived the individual, we need to remember that at least two people are required to make a grave: one deceased and one living.

Regarding works of art, ultimately what interests us is not so much their “authors” and their impossible biographies, but rather the role these aesthetic objects played in society. In the end, working with archaeological aggregates turns out to be a specific approach to social science.

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