Inhaltsverzeichnis/Contents

Themenheft ***Archäologie als Empowerment: Für wen und wie? Kommentare zu einem wissenschaftlichem Aktivismus***

Archaeology as Empowerment: For Whom and How? Comments on Scholarly Activism

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Archaeology as Empowerment: For Whom and How? Comments on Scholarly Activism

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On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Forum Kritische Archäologie, the editorial collective reflected on what has been achieved and what we originally imagined for this journal. While we think that the number of contributions with a critical edge that have been published in our journal over the last 10 years is encouraging, and in many ways innovative, there is still a lot to do in one respect: to advance critical discussions in German archaeology itself. German scholarship continues to construct its discourses largely along the line of cultural-historical knowledge, and university teaching is only slowly integrating theoretical or critical perspectives. So we pondered the question of how the development of more critical approaches in German-speaking archaeology could be supported. We decided to ask authors – international and German – to write about political issues, specifically an activist archaeology. The following set of papers is conceptually similar to those in the first volume of our journal, Forum Kritische Archäologie Special Issue: What is a Critical Archaeology? This time, too, we sent authors a set of questions that we asked them to reflect upon in short essays:

1) Can activism be reconciled with the scientific claims of archaeology?

2) Where do the boundaries between “traditional” and “activist” archaeology lie?

3) How is activism to be evaluated from within academia in an age that often fundamentally denies the capacity of science to make truth claims?

4) What might concrete scholarly projects with an activist claim look like?

Anlässlich des 10-jährigen Bestehens des Forum Kritische Archäologie im Jahr 2022 haben wir im Herausgeber* innenkollektiv darüber nachgedacht, was mit dem Forum bisher erreicht wurde und was wir uns ursprünglich für diese Zeitschrift vorgestellt hatten. Während wir die Anzahl der kritischen Beiträge, die in den letzten 10 Jahren in unserer Zeitschrift veröffentlicht wurden, für ermutigend und in vielerlei Hinsicht innovativ halten, haben wir das Gefühl, dass es in einer Hinsicht noch viel zu tun gibt: die kritische Diskussion in der deutschen Archäologie selbst voranzutreiben. Die deutsche Wissenschaft entwickelt ihre Diskurse nach wie vor weitgehend im Rahmen kulturhistorischer Denkansätze, und die universitäre Lehre integriert nur langsam theoretisch fundierte oder kritischere Perspektiven. Wir haben uns daher gefragt, wie die Entwicklung solcher Ansätze in der deutschsprachigen Archäologie unterstützt werden kann, und uns entschieden, Kolleg*innen – internationale wie deutsche – zu bitten, über politische Formen der Archäologie zu schreiben, insbesondere über solche die als aktivistisch verstanden werden können. Die folgenden Beiträge ähneln konzeptionell denen im ersten Band unserer Zeitschrift (Forum Kritische Archäologie 1/Themenheft: Was ist eine kritische Archäologie?). Auch dieses Mal haben wir den Autor*innen eine Reihe von Fragen gestellt und sie gebeten, diese in kurzen Essays zu reflektieren:

1) Ist Aktivismus angemessen mit einer Archäologie und deren wissenschaftlichem Anspruch in Einklang zu bringen?

2) Wo liegen die Grenzen zwischen „normaler“ und „aktivistischer“ Archäologie?

3) Wie ist Aktivismus aus der Wissenschaft heraus zu bewerten, in einer Zeit, die den Wissenschaften oft grundsätzlich die Wahrheitsfähigkeit abspricht?

4) Wie können konkret wissenschaftliche Projekte mit einem aktivistischen Anspruch aussehen?

Making Archaeology Available to the Subaltern: Towards an Engaged, Militant Archaeology

Félix A. Acuto

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Making Archaeology Available to the Subaltern: Towards an Engaged, Militant Archaeology

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It is not a secret that archaeology is not a politically innocuous enterprise. Throughout its history, and in the name of science, modernity, and the state, the discipline has appropriated minorities' heritage, generating representations that have contributed with their subordination and denial. For some decades now, scholars have critically reflected about archaeology's social role, its contribution to sustain Western, capitalist hegemony, and the negative impact that archaeological narratives have had on different collectives. In this light, the decolonisation of the discipline and the construction of a more reflexive, open, tolerant, and democratic archaeology have become valuable goals. Although some believe that archaeology is no longer what it used to be, in actuality only a small group of scholars have developed an engaged, activist archaeology. Just by attending any archaeology congress in the First World or in Latin America, we can easily realize that the great majority of our colleagues still maintain a bourgeois fascination about the exotic, conducting an uncommitted, apolitical, and increasingly hyper specialized archaeology. Archaeologists keep discussing topics that, in the great majority of the cases, only interest other archaeologists.

The "reflexive turn" has improved archaeology, no doubt about it. Nonetheless I believe that archaeology has become stranded in this process of self-evaluation and internal transformation, leaving aside or minimizing praxis. Praxis is not plain critique (or the critique of the critique of the critique – a game some scholars seem to be playing in their quest to become the coolest guys in the 'postcolonial block'). Praxis is a theoretically informed action(s), but also a politically oriented one(s). It departs from knowing and critiquing the world, but it also entails actions oriented to change it and to fight against inequality, oppression, discrimination, and domination. These actions do not bloom from personal goodwill or political correctness. They are based on knowledge, reflection, and political commitment.

Activist archaeology is certainly a small field in our discipline, and it will probably always be like this, but this does not mean that we should discard our beliefs and obligations toward the subordinate. We should keep fighting to make archaeology a more democratic, participative, plural, and engaged discipline. In my case, my praxis and archaeological militancy have been highly influenced by my relationship with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and territorial organizations in Argentina. They have taken the time to guide me and to explain their perspective about Original Peoples' historical claims and current struggles in general and their demands on science in particular. Being in indigenous territories and learning from native wisdoms have deeply impacted my understanding of archaeological practice, interculturality, and political commitment.

For several decades, Indigenous Peoples in Argentina, and everywhere in Latin America, suffered from discrimination, repression, invisibility, and political and juridical disenfranchisement. Their identities were denied, their cultural practices and spiritualities rejected, and attempts made to eliminate and replace them with modern, Western ways. This situation would begin to change, at least partially, in the 1980s with the regaining of democracy in many Latin American countries after years of military dictatorships and with a new international context that, through what has been defined as the constitutional, neoliberal agenda, has promoted the respect of diversity, pluralism, multiculturalism, and rights for minorities. Original Peoples have found in this context new legal tools to reposition and defend themselves, which has favoured the re-emergence of indigenous identities, organizations, and movements, and the reconstruction of native institutions, cultural practices, and spiritualities. Even though Indigenous Peoples and their communities have gained new rights, these are not always fulfilled and hence

their struggles for recognition, inclusion, consultation, participation, autonomy, self-determination, and territory continue. What should the role of an activist archaeology be, considering this context?

We must begin by accepting that archaeological sites and objects are not national, state/provincial/departmental, or municipal patrimony, but they are the ancestral heritage of Original Peoples and, therefore, they belong to them and not to science, museums, or tourism. Although heritage laws in most Latin American countries establish that archaeological things belong to the state, key contemporary international agreements (for example, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Organisation of American States, and, indirectly, article 5 of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization) recognize that Indigenous Peoples have rights over archaeological sites and objects because they are closely linked with their values and cultural and spiritual practices. That which we call "archaeological" are elements of indigenous territories, important for the territorial balance and for the well-being of people. This is the case for indigenous mortal remains. They are not just inert bones, source of bio-anthropological information, but ancestors who participate in the dynamics of the territory and influence the lives of the living.

When archaeologists visit indigenous territories to register, map, and excavate archaeological sites, they do not find unspecified "local communities or local inhabitants," but they encounter subjects of rights and, as subjects of rights, they have the right to be consulted. In other words, we must receive their free, prior, and informed consent before proceeding with the study of their heritage.

Consultation goes hand-in-hand with participation. Indigenous Peoples have the right to participate in every stage of our projects. In particular, they have the right to talk about their past/present and to narrate their own history and the history of their territories. I am not pleading here for multivocality. Multivocality has failed. It has been frequently applied in paternalist ways, more oriented to put at ease scholars' colonialist anguish than used as a political tool to open spaces to the subaltern to present their perspectives and knowledges with their own voices. Under the premise that they were unqualified and needed guardianship, many have talked for Original Peoples, from the state to churches, and from science to NGOs. Indigenous Peoples today reject those who try to arrogate their voices and claim instead that, as political subjects, they can represent themselves and speak for themselves. We must embrace this political stance and create academic spaces and products where they participate using their voices and express their knowledges in the first person. It is not about creating multivocal products where voices are blended as if they were all the same, or where indigenous voices are presented and mediated by scholars. It is about privileging the always held back voice of the subaltern.

But most importantly, an activist archaeology should transform the discipline into a tool available for the subaltern and their struggles for justice and equity. The great majority of Latin American archaeologists work in indigenous territories and with indigenous patrimony. These territories are crisscrossed by conflicts with the states, landowners, and national and transnational enterprises who seek to appropriate these lands since they are interested in the natural and cultural resources found in these places. These conflicts have involved evictions, repression, and even murders. These powerful actors, with the support of politicians, members of the juridical power, media corporations, and sometimes even science, usually argue that Original Peoples are extinct and that those who claim to be indigenous and who assert their rights over these territories are not actually indigenous, but mestizos or creoles. When they find it difficult to deny the indigenous roots of local residents, these actors contend that they are foreigners from neighbouring countries or newcomers and, therefore, these are not their traditional lands and they do not have rights over them.

Making archaeology available in these cases means developing an archaeology by demand, designing and carrying out investigations useful for Indigenous Peoples and oriented to support their projects and struggles, simultaneously refuting the arguments of those who deny their identity and their pre-existence in the territories. It entails spending time in indigenous territories to establish intercultural dialogues and to learn about their positions, needs, aspirations, and the conflicts they face. These are projects that should come out from the territories and serve the territories.

We must produce solid scientifically generated evidence to connect past and present, to demonstrate the pre-existence and continuity of Indigenous Peoples in their territories, to reject narratives of extinction, creolisation,

or making foreign. We must show that indigenous claims over lands and heritage are in compliance with the law and that Indigenous Peoples are not squatters, agitators, or even terrorists, as right-wing politicians from Argentina have recently accused the Mapuche People. This evidence will underpin Indigenous Peoples' status as subjects of collective rights confronting those who, in their own interest, accuse them of being "fake Indians" or illegitimate usurpers of private property. An example will serve to illustrate these points.

On October 12, 2009, a truck with Darío Amín, who claimed to be the legal owner of the territory of the Chuschagasta People (Diaguita Nation), and the ex-cops Luis Gómez and José Valdivieso arrived in the El Chorro place, Choromoro Valley (Tucumán province, Argentina), where several members of Los Chuschagasta Community, including children, were gathered in a communal assembly. Amín had already threatened the community many times and in different ways. Under the orders of Amín, Gómez approached the group of indigenous people establishing a brief conversation with them, especially with Javier Chocobar, who had identified himself as one of the principal authorities of the community (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZq_mzJSO5M, footage filmed by the perpetrators). Using as an excuse what he believed was some sort of provocation from Chocobar, Gómez took a gun he was hiding in his back under his shirt, fired a shot on the ground and then used the pistol to hit on the head another member of the community who was taking photos. People tried to stop Gómez and take his gun, when Amín and Valdivieso began shooting at the crowd, without any concern about the children present at the scene. As a result, Andrés Mamani, another communal authority, was shot in the stomach and was hospitalized for six months, for two of which he was unconscious. Emilio Mamani received a bullet in his knee, which affected the way he walks. Javier Chocobar was shot in his leg, a direct impact in the femoral artery that led to his demise. As is common in some of Argentina's provinces, landlord families have strong connections with the political and juridical realms, and this was the case of the Amín family. Dario Amín and his accomplices avoided jail and were able to delay the trail for the murder of Javier Chocobar and the injuries produced to the other two members of Los Chuschagasta community for nine years. During this time, Amín and other members of his family often visited the territory of Los Chuschagasta, making threats to different members of the indigenous community and to Javier's family. In a brutal display of power and impunity, Amín organized a barbecue gathering in the exact place where he shot and killed Javier. The trial against Amín, Gómez, and Valdivieso took place in 2018. They were found guilty and sentenced to 22, 18, and 10 years in jail respectively. However, because the provincial Supreme Court did not confirm the sentence, they were released after spending less than two years in prison.

Despair and Amín's constant intimidations produced a paralysing fear in Los Chuschagastas. It took the community years to overcome these feelings, but finally they began a healing process that revitalised them. This process involved the development of different projects oriented to reconnect with their identity, culture, and territory, and to celebrate Javier's life while they waited for the trial. Los Chuschagastas summoned me to participate in two of these projects: the creation of a ceramic workshop oriented to reactivating traditional pottery making, and the production of material markers to place in different locations of the territory, including the place where Javier was murdered. The purpose of these markers was twofold: to reconnect with their ancestral past and worldview, and to create landmarks of memory about Javier's life, Diaguita culture, and indigenous rights and contemporary struggles. The idea was to re-signify the territory and to overcome negative feelings. They requested me to help them explore their ancestral iconography and to produce intercultural knowledge about its meanings. Although this was not the region where I used to conduct my investigations, I invested a considerable amount of time learning about local archaeology, visiting the region, and talking with different members of the Los Chuschagasta community. Presentations before the community and other participants of the projects and a detailed report were the main products of this study.

Amín family attacks against Los Chuschagasta did not cease with the trial and sentence. They sued Javier's nephew, Ismael Chocobar, and his family as usurpers, taking them to justice in 2019. The Chocobar family asked me to prepare a technical/scientific report to support their claims of pre-existence in the territory and to demonstrate that the Chuschagastas were not extinct, a report that was presented as evidence in the trial. Moreover, they asked me to include my name in the list of witnesses of the defence. Once again, I invested time to study the archaeology and colonial documents of the region in order to avoid the eviction of Ismael and his family, which, if it had happened, would have triggered more trials and processes of eviction against other members of Los Chuschagastas. One of the challenges I had was to dismiss the arguments of an anthropologist, witness of the plaintiff, who presented a colonial document that stated that by 1808 the Chuschagasta people were extinct and this land was deserted. On September 13, 2019, I testified in court for around two hours, refuting on methodological

grounds the arguments of this anthropologist and presenting scientifically generated archaeological and historical evidence, both by other colleagues and by myself, that demonstrated that Diaguita People inhabited this region since pre-Hispanic times and that, at least by colonial times, and probably before that, the Chuschagasta community was settled in the region. In the face of this evidence, Amín's family lawyers intended to argue that although this could have been the case, the Chocobar family was not indigenous but were newcomers to the Choromoro Valley. To refute this, I presented and discussed the thorough study of the historical anthropologist Estela Noli, who found colonial documents that showed that the local parish, in charge of registering births, marriages, and deaths during those times, had registered that the Chocobars were an indigenous family who lived in the area back in the seventeenth century, before the constitution of the national and the provincial states. The Amín family lost the trial, Ismael was declared not guilty, and he still lives in the Choromoro Valley with his family.

Three central aspects of a good, engaged, militant archaeology serve as a conclusion. First, it always departs from critical thinking and politically positioned theoretical perspectives. How are we to become truly involved with the subaltern's struggles and emancipation when we spend our efforts in defending things, developing an ethic toward things, and analysing the interactions among them beyond their articulations with people's actions? Many Latin America scholars consider that social sciences will be controversial/anti-establishment or nothing. In this part of the world, social sciences have always been close to emancipatory movements, something very different from contemporary archaeological theory in Europe and the so-called symmetrical archaeology and those perspectives that downplay reflexivity and critical thinking. To me, they are disgraceful bourgeois ways of doing archaeology. Second, archaeology must become a tool for social justice. We need to re-orient our projects and research interests to produce investigations and knowledge that serve the subaltern. This does not imply manipulating or forcing evidence to fit our collective purposes, quite the opposite. Science is still respected and considered a source of reliable discourses in Latin America. A good science, one which produces strong theoretically and methodologically informed arguments and solid evidence, serves to categorically rebut the discourses of the powerful, driven by their political and economic interests. We need to be systematic, rigorous, reflexive, and creative to build these kinds of arguments. Third, a committed, activist archaeology should not be a selfish enterprise. This is not about trying to shine in academic circles by presenting ourselves as anti-establishment or some kind of liberators: that is pure academic snobbism. We are just small contributors to larger fights.

One Size Does Not Fit All: Theory and Practice of Decolonizing Archaeology in Africa

M. Dores Cruz

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One Size Does Not Fit All: Theory and Practice of Decolonizing Archaeology in Africa

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Despite claims to data-driven, objective, scientific approaches, archaeology is unavoidably political and does not exist in a social vacuum. The focus on recent time periods and places that are relevant to local living communities, often with a colonial history of displacement, disenfranchisement, and power relations based on systems of oppression, has driven some archaeologists to grapple with the social, ethical, and political implications of their work. This has propelled calls for a critical and activist archaeology and efforts to decolonize the discipline. While critical archaeology reflects upon political and social impacts that research has on descendant populations, decolonizing archaeology intends to recover knowledges and materials made invisible by colonial relations of power, using heritage to promote self-awareness and empowerment through different ways of knowing and subaltern narratives. However, under the cloak of conspicuously political, radical, and critical archaeology, some authors resort to iconoclastic finger-pointing and simple accusatory language, with limited pragmatic results – that is, beyond publications and lectures for academic purposes and like-minded archaeologists – risking the perception that their arguments constitute just another hegemonic epistemology. My contribution to this issue offers a personal reflection on the role and practice of critical, decolonizing archaeology that steers clear of polemic, drawing upon my experience in African contexts, with special emphasis on research conducted in Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe. I consider how in post-colonial states, colonial legacies continue reproducing and undermining critical archaeological practices. I also examine how African archaeology's current paradigm shifts aim to decolonize traditional frameworks by bringing decision-making back into the community by highlighting local ontologies and concepts, rather than focusing purely on more conspicuous politicized and confrontational discussions anchored in yet other Western paradigms. A culturally informed, nuanced, and context-specific approach that draws upon good archaeological practice, explores complexities, and allows for multiple ways of knowing and versions of the past is certainly subtle and often slow to achieve, but demonstrates great potential for social intervention (as manifested in Zimbabwean and South African projects, for example; Chirikure et al. 2010; Chirikure et al. 2015; Pikirayi and Schmidt 2016; Manyanga and Chirikure 2017).

My observations from archaeological work in Africa reflect on the dilemma(s) faced by scholars working in foreign countries, especially in countries that were colonized spaces and which in addition to inequalities brought in from outside are also burdened by internal colonial structures and institutional dimensions of power. Such complex issues can be explored through engagement with a decolonized critical archaeology that transcends elementary dichotomies such as oppressors/oppressed or colonial agents/colonized victims but is aware of complex local power dynamics. In archaeological practice, we have to be mindful of the excesses of bombastic, but unproductive political discourse, the limitations and local conditions of knowledge production, and the proliferation of competing alternate pasts. A more inclusive and democratic African critical archaeology that aims to put decision-making back into the community needs to take into consideration the diversity of contexts (Pikirayi 2015: 532–533). It requires theoretical flexibility and openness to explanations that are germane to a unique cultural and historical moment, without neglecting the fact that new interpretations must be in dialogue with good archaeological practice, centered on collecting reliable information in places that have been at the periphery of research. The question, then, is how to conduct nuanced archaeology that is decolonized, action-based, and critical, but also faithful to the archaeological record, respectful and meaningful to diverse stakeholders, including erased populations of the past, local communities in the present, and archaeologists and heritage specialists.

Problematizing a Decolonized Activist Archaeology

In his advocacy of archaeology as social activism, Christopher Barton rightly acknowledges that archaeology does not need to take the form of overtly radical social activism to function as political action (Barton 2021: 4). That is, an action-oriented archaeology can be low-key and still promote change that matters. Each case is unique, and we need to be aware that sweeping, overtly uncompromising rhetoric that is intrinsically political may not necessarily overcome the long-lasting inequalities that it seeks to address. Instead, it may create other disparities and even put those it intends to defend in harm's way. Peter Schmidt (2009, 2010) and Karega-Munene (Karega-Munene and Schmidt 2010), among others, report on how being associated with practices and discourses that challenge or oppose state-sanctioned narratives can be dangerous for archaeologists (both African and foreign) and for their local collaborators. Many of us have experienced or know someone who has experienced encounters with authoritarian state representatives and institutional gatekeepers because they/we challenged established paradigms, supported alternative narratives and subaltern communities, or were at odds with systems of patronage and corruption. One possible result is silencing, which can take the form of explicit harassment, denial of research permits and access to funding, and blocked professional advancement (Karega-Munene and Schmidt 2010). The case of Eritrea detailed by Schmidt (2009, 2010) is only one among many examples that expose power relations in the postcolony that directly affect researchers, preventing ethical, socially responsible archaeology as well as putting at risk work, publication, and livelihoods (Karega-Munene and Schmidt 2010). It is also possible that an archaeologist's notion of empowerment through archaeological narrative is not shared by local stakeholders. A rift between (critical) theory and accepted practices can emerge when archaeology projects with a social and political dimension take place among communities that may not acknowledge the importance of a site, may not have a direct connection with it, and may have other, more immediate concerns that supersede preserving heritage monuments. Furthermore, archaeologists supporting a critical, activist, inclusive, and decolonizing approach often must confront local conservative academic and institutional elites trained in traditional Western systems of value and approaches to archaeology, history, and heritage and who dismiss the perspectives of local communities (Pwiti and Ndoro 1999; Ndlovu-Gatscheni 2013; King 2019). In reality, these elites reproduce colonial practices in the post-independence era that privilege object-centered archaeology, scholarly scientific discourse, and employ outdated legislation upholding ostensible international standards of preservation that exclude insights from descendant populations, particularly those that counter official narratives (Rowlands 2009; Cruz 2022a).

But recently, despite limitations, risks, and opposition, archaeology in Africa has seen a proliferation of works that aim to decolonize the practice, actively promoting paradigm shifts and changes to institutions that preserve, archive, and present cultural heritage (e.g., Chirikure et al. 2010; Chirikure 2021; Karega-Munene and Schmidt 2010; Pikirayi 2015; Manyanga and Chirikure 2017). This decolonized and informed critical archaeology has prompted key transformations that go beyond academic and institutional marginalization to scrutinize mainstream methodologies, theories, and entrenched practices. Such efforts call for an ethically committed archaeology that positively affects communities and engages them in telling the story of their past in a way that is creative and culturally appropriate. While overturning hegemonic paradigms, the result is a more democratic archaeology that puts people (both past and present) at the center, recapturing excluded and ignored histories. The centrality of community participation brings to the fore local ontologies and diverse engagements with material culture, privileging the local rather than the national or global. However, this is not without problems, clashes, and contradictions.

A Personal Perspective

My thinking on an action-based archaeology is informed by my experience conducting research in various African countries. I discuss two cases that are particularly noteworthy in terms of their relevance to this issue of *Forum Kritische Archäologie*. In Southern Mozambique, a project that I carried out drew into sharp relief the conflict between local, non-official narratives and state-dominated authorized metanarratives, grounded in long-held, Western-dominated views of what constitutes heritage and who has precedence in its preservation (Cruz 2014, 2022a; and Smith 2006 for a discussion of authorized heritage discourse). This case highlights how local concepts and ontologies are marginalized by institutional knowledge production that centers in intellectual elites' hierarchical structure and their understanding of the past. The second example centers on my current project in São Tomé e Príncipe, one of the few countries in the world that has not yet been the subject of archaeological research.

This case study emphasizes the need to negotiate different views pertaining to community participation and the possibilities offered by critical archaeology. However, the São Tomé project also highlights the laborious process of making local partners aware of the fundamental role of non-Western ontologies and inclusion of communities, their values, and goals without reenacting previous colonialisms. In reflecting on these two different cases, I defend a situated and context-specific practice that eschews rhetorical considerations divorced from the concrete reality of the regions and communities among whom the projects take place. This is not to say that we should dismiss theoretical discussions and practices anchored in political, critical debates (and, just as important, we should not reject robust, empirical data that contribute new evidence to the knowledge of subaltern populations). Instead, I argue that we should resist (generic) categorical radicalisms that may be appropriate in contexts where strong political and cultural engagement exists and where indigenous archaeologies are well established, but which may sound hollow and inappropriate in other settings. As Claire Smith (2012) notes, what seems easy in one part of the world can be difficult in another, and we have to be aware of such differences.

My research in southern Mozambique was limited because the archaeological sites identified during survey revealed themselves to be sacred for local communities, and access to them was restricted. Elders entrusted with the sites' protection, rituals, and ancestral memories controlled visits and objected to the use of prescribed archaeological methods, namely artifact collection, because that would disturb the ancestors. These limitations prompted a more imaginative project emphasizing oral traditions, local narratives of resistance, and elements of nature in an interplay of archaeology, landscape studies, and related disciplines (Cruz 2014, 2022a), which foregrounded the conflict between hegemonic, state-dominated, heroic narratives and a local understanding of the past. Practitioners at Mozambican heritage and academic institutions declared that despite the wishes of local elders that the sites not be disturbed, I could do the work that I had originally envisioned because the research permit granted by a national institution validated archaeological survey and excavation. While the authorized heritage discourse for the region focused on sites related to the liberation struggle and classified as of national interest (Jopela 2017; Cruz 2022a), the way in which heritage conservation was actualized via the actions of official institutions was premised on Western concepts, with little local engagement. It thus precluded alternative constructions of the past that were not aligned with national narratives. In such a context, multifaceted questions surround the responsibilities borne by a western archaeologist whose research in an African nation-state can alternatively be viewed as promoting empowerment by raising up local perspectives or subverting established postcolonial narratives of legitimacy based on symbols of the nation as well as political and elite social hierarchies. The challenge, in such instances, is to decolonize archaeology without replicating colonial practices. An abstract intellectual critique provides little guidance when navigating the power structure and web of social groups with interests in the results of archaeological research. There are implications of aligning with different groups for the production of knowledge and possible negative consequences for the self and collaborators that can result from challenging the official establishment. I chose to respect the local wishes and not trespass on ancestral sites, and instead I collected local counter-narratives focused on an archaeology of the recent past and local ontologies of space and time. However, my choice had repercussions for my access to the official establishment.

The second example and associated reflection pertains to an emerging project on the island of São Tomé, designed in collaboration with colleagues from the University of São Tomé and the Ministry of Culture's Heritage Office. The project was born from an old interest in the origins of the plantation system and the Atlantic world, in which São Tomé played a fundamental role (Cruz 2022b). It centers on Praia Melão, a sixteenth-century sugar mill and estate house site located on privately owned land in a small village outside the capital. The absence of archaeology and heritage specialists in São Tomé prompted extensive discussions aimed to set up the project as a means for capacity building. My colleagues – full partners since the project's inception – have a background in contemporary history and a deep interest in the preservation of the country's heritage that is greatly hindered by the lack of funding and specialized, technical expertise. Nonetheless, our opinions diverge not only regarding concepts of preservation, but particularly on the rightful role and scale of community involvement. For me, community engagement focused on the neighborhood encompassing the site of Praia Melão is fundamental. In contrast, my colleagues defend a heritage-centered approach in which the building takes center stage and needs to be preserved according to international guidelines. The community is not viewed as an equal partner, but a receiver of benefits from forthcoming use of the site for sustainable tourism, deemed a cornerstone of economic development. I am an outsider, while my colleagues are prominent members of the country's establishment, and whereas, from a technical, archaeological perspective, I am the project's lead, in official aspects I must yield to their position. I hope, in time, to be able to persuade my colleagues that different perspectives be included and the community consulted. The

values and understanding that my colleagues have of the construction of knowledge is framed by a purely international heritage agenda as well as by relations of power based on social hierarchy. The fact that the community living near the site is not directly related to it and has very limited knowledge of its history exacerbates the problem. The site itself embodies São Tomé's early colonial history, which is entangled with the formation of the Atlantic world, slavery, and the plantation system. The current community is comprised mostly of more recent arrivals, part of the 19th–20th century forced migration of indentured labor from other Portuguese colonies to São Tomé's cacao plantations and "*Angolares*" fishermen who migrated from the south of the island and who distinguish themselves by an identity that differs from both older populations and recent arrivals. Interestingly, today's *Angolares* possibly descend from maroon communities who maintained independence from the plantation system by living in less-accessible mountainous areas from where they challenged the colonial authority, launched slave rebellions, and engaged in other forms of resistance. Community participation in the project is, thus, essential to bring yet a different narrative and the perspective of a community that has been marginalized by colonial and post-colonial powers. Questions pertaining to the everyday lives of enslaved people and other poorly documented groups, which have been erased from more traditional history, are at the core of the project, and as such, the present community can contribute with historical memory of inequality and oppression in a more recent plantation context and with their own narratives of resistance. My colleagues wholly embrace a perspective that recaptures past, excluded populations and ignored histories, but at the same time defend national values and goals that are more exclusionary and ignore a more democratic interpretation of the past, centered in the interests of the local community.

Reconciling various demands and promoting productive interaction with multiple stakeholders is a challenging task that is made only more difficult by incendiary, uncompromising, righteous theoretical discourse that takes place at the expense of conciliatory, nuanced, and informed inquiries. Commitment to meaningful research cannot preclude the use of robust data and methodologies to concentrate entirely on radical, iconoclastic, dissent-based archaeology or give uncritical precedence to local narratives. Rather, it requires broader, multidisciplinary approaches, of which a critical decolonized archaeology and community engagement are two facets. Only a nuanced, but sound archaeological practice can shed light on aspects of the past and subaltern populations that have been omitted and marginalized by authorized narratives – whether colonial or postcolonial – and offer the potential to truly transform the discipline. This is the case for the enslaved populations that toiled in the sugar mill of Praia Melão, for whom there is no historical record and our knowledge is limited to anecdotal information and snippets in documents. For example, we know that at times the estate had 200 slaves and that in the 19th century the rent paid for the property was significantly reduced because 13 slaves had run away. Little else can be gleaned from the historical record about enslaved persons. Where did they live, how did they resist the structures of power, how was their everyday life? Only archaeology can produce this knowledge, which can help decolonize historic narratives and link past and present populations.

Reflections on Theoretical Discourse from an Africanist Viewpoint

Archaeology in Africa is currently experiencing a profound paradigm shift, and decolonizing theory and practice is pivotal for its future. Such efforts arise mainly from within Africa itself (see Pikirayi 2015; Manyanga and Chirikure 2017; Chirikure 2020; Machiridza and Musindo 2023). This new Africanist archaeology contrasts considerably with Western research that privileges data-driven and scientific methodologies, often alienating local contemporary populations. African-centered paradigms are a call for direct action, stress the centrality of community participation, emphasize the diversity of engagements with material culture and the multiplicity of narratives, local ontologies, and pasts that are locally relevant (e.g., Fontein 2006; Pikirayi and Schmidt 2016; Chirikure 2021). A shift towards communities' needs and parameters is not without problems, and it is a long-term project, frequently contingent upon slow changes. Post-independence national heritage institutions and practitioners consistently reproduce colonial structures and power imbalances (Rowlands 2009; Karega-Munene and Schmidt 2010), at the expense of local communities' interests and values. The question thus becomes how to subvert these relations of power without engaging in new intellectual colonialism, especially when researchers advocating for critical decolonizing practices come from the outside and are associated with well-funded institutions located in the global north. The paradox of African archaeology is that colonial power dynamics are often reproduced by national, post-independence elites, as illustrated by the examples above. Class, social standing, and academic

affiliation can easily overpower the best-laid plans of decolonizing archaeology, but to not take into account local realities and simply attempt to transpose Euro-American epistemologies onto African contexts would be inappropriate and nothing more than a new hegemonic project. The answer may be that an action-driven, critical, and decolonizing archaeology does not need to be explicitly confrontational and iconoclastic. It can be engaged at once with archaeological evidence and local interpretations to create different types of knowledge about erased peoples from the past and promote counter-narratives upheld by present marginalized communities. I propose pursuing an archaeology that is at once grounded in rigorous methods but understands contemporary concerns and promotes change – one that modestly seeks to recapture excluded pasts through collaboration with those connected to it rather than merely heralding a radical rhetoric for ivory tower audiences.

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Eine neutrale Wissenschaft ist nicht möglich

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Aktivistische Archäologie ist ein hochaktuelles Thema, nicht nur aufgrund eines wachsenden Interesses an der Beziehung zwischen Wissenschaft und Aktivismus im Kontext des Klimaschutzes, sondern auch wegen seiner bisherigen geringen Bedeutung in der deutschsprachigen Archäologie – im Gegensatz zur englischsprachigen Diskussion (siehe u. a. Zimmerman 2014; Little und Zimmerman 2010; Stottman 2010). Ein Definitionsansatz einer aktivistischen Perspektive sieht diese als Praktiken der gesellschaftlichen Intervention zur Verbesserung der Lebensumstände, meint also lösungsorientierte Aktivitäten in politischen, sozialen oder ökonomischen Bereichen. Im Hinblick auf die Archäologie scheinen mir zwei Ebenen im Zentrum zu stehen. Während sozialökonomisch orientierte Ansätze die Beziehungen zwischen Archäolog*innen und Gesellschaft in der Forschungsarbeit fokussieren (z. B. die Unterstützung lokaler Akteur*innen im Umfeld einer Ausgrabung), blicken erkenntnisorientierte Perspektiven auf das Potential archäologischer Forschung für gegenwärtige Debatten.

Die soziale Ebene der Unterstützung lokaler Akteur*innen kann auf eine Verbesserung sozialer und ökonomischer Aspekte abzielen. Häufige Ansätze sind hier die Schaffung von fairen, nachhaltigen Lohnverhältnissen und Absicherungen für Krankheit und Rente. So hat beispielsweise das Projekt in Quseir am Roten Meer in Ostägypten (Moser u. a. 2002) nachhaltige Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten für lokale Akteur*innen in einem gemeinsam gestalteten lokalen Heritage Center etabliert und Merchandising-Konzepte entwickelt, bei dem die Auswahl der Objekte, die Produktion und die Vermarktung durch lokale Akteur*innen kontrolliert wurde. Archäologisches Wissen könnte also im Kontext von Tourismus zu einer ökonomischen Intervention beitragen, indem historische Objekte, Orte und Narrative als Basis einer nachhaltigen ökonomischen Entwicklung genutzt werden. Unterstützung kann auch auf lokale Heritage-Praktiken abzielen. Im Projekt in Quseir wurden dazu die Erfahrungen der lokalen Mitarbeitenden der Ausgrabungen dokumentiert. Ethnographische Forschungen, Interviews und Oral History machen die lokalen Wahrnehmungen des Projekts und lokale Aneignungsstrategien von Archäologie und Heritage sichtbar, und können auch zur Hinterfragung von Annahmen und Wahrnehmungen der hauptamtlichen Archäolog*innen beitragen. Auch die Ergebnispräsentation und Entwicklung von verschiedenen Formaten für breitere Publikumsgruppen (z. B. Unterrichtsmaterialien, Kinderbücher, digitale Artefakt-Datenbanken) sollte in Ko-Produktion bei Planung und Durchführung geschehen.

Die erkenntnistheoretische Frage eines Beitrags archäologischen Materials zu heutigen Debatten besteht z. B. in der Sichtbarmachung von bisher unsichtbaren oder marginalisierten Narrativen, was vor allem in Forschungsprojekten zur Kolonialgeschichte oder zur Sklaverei umgesetzt wurde (siehe u. a. Zimmerman 2014, 19). Auch Ansätze zur kontemporären Geschichte können aktivistische Perspektiven transportieren, wie die Ausgrabungen des Hüttendorfs in Gorleben oder die Grabungsprojekte in KZs oder Zwangsarbeitslagern zeigen. Archäologie könnte auch zur Lösung genereller komplexer sozialer Probleme beitragen, wie etwa Wohnungslosigkeit oder Klimaerwärmung, indem der historische Kontext dieser Entwicklungen sichtbar gemacht wird und aus den Erfahrungen der Vergangenheit Handlungsmodelle für die Zukunft entwickelt werden, oder auch indem archäologische Forschungsmethoden zur Aufarbeitung von Naturkatastrophen oder Massakern genutzt werden.

Da ich mich gerade in einem Forschungsprojekt mit partizipativen Ansätzen in der Archäologie beschäftige, frage ich mich, ob solche Praktiken als aktivistische Archäologie gelten können. Partizipative Archäologie (auch als *Community* oder *Public Archaeology* bzw. *Citizen Science* bezeichnet) meint ko-produzierende Praktiken im Sinne einer Teilhabe ehrenamtlicher Akteur*innen in der wissenschaftlichen Wissensproduktion und -präsentation. Diese können sich auf verschiedenen Ebenen der archäologischen Wissensarbeit entfalten: als Information der Öffentlichkeit über Planungen, Vorgehensweisen und Ergebnisse; als Konsultation von lokalen Akteur*innen und anderweitig Betroffenen, um Entscheidungen z. B. im Hinblick auf Forschungsagenden gemeinsam zu treffen; als

Ko-Produktion im wissenschaftlichen Forschungsprozess; oder als eine generelle Transparenz des wissenschaftlichen Vorgehens zur Förderung eines gegenseitigen Verständnisses. Es finden sich also durchaus Unterschiede im Level der Einbindung von ehrenamtlichen Akteur*innen: von einer bloßen Mitwirkung in Form von *Crowd-Computing*, *Crowdfunding* oder *Crowdsourcing* über die gleichberechtigte Kooperation mit Ehrenamtlichen in Entscheidungsprozessen der Planung, Durchführung, Analyse oder Präsentation bis zu einer *Free Citizen Science*, die komplett von Ehrenamtlichen getragen wird. Konkrete Umsetzungsformen bestehen in der Mitarbeit bei Ausgrabung und Auswertung einzelner archäologischer Projekte, die entweder kostenlos zugänglich oder mit *Crowdfunding* durch die Ehrenamtlichen verbunden sind; in kooperativen Surveytechniken wie die sogenannte *Community Test Pit Excavation* (TPE), bei der Testschnitte von 1x1 Meter an mehreren Stellen in einer Ortschaft oder Region gemeinsam gegraben, dokumentiert und ausgewertet werden (Lewis u. a. 2020); in der Zusammenarbeit mit Sondengänger*innen. Digitalisierung ermöglicht weitere Praktiken: Projekte zur Auswertung digital erzeugter Daten (Satellitenbilder, LiDAR usw.), offene Zugänge zu Forschungsdaten durch Open Data, die Bereitstellung einer Infrastruktur für unabhängige Heritage-Praktiken oder Weiterbildung und E-Learning (Video-Tutorials, Online-Kurse, E-Learning-Plattformen usw.) zur eigenständigen Aneignung von Methoden- oder Erfahrungswissen als Basis einer unabhängigen Wissensproduktion. In den Geschichtswissenschaften arbeitet die *Public History* (siehe u. a. Arendes 2017; Ashton und Kean 2012) in erster Linie mit Transkriptionsprojekten handschriftlicher Quellen oder Sammlungen privater historischer Dokumente (Fotos, Objekte, Briefe, Zeitzeug*innenaussagen usw.), aber beinhaltet auch eigenständige ehrenamtliche historische Forschung, die unabhängig von Hauptamtlichen agiert (z. B. das Projekt „Stadtteilhistoriker“ (https://www.stadtteil-historiker.de/; Stand 03.01.2023). Partizipative Praktiken könnten also tatsächlich als eine Form von aktivistischer Archäologie gelten, wenn sie zu einer Demokratisierung von Wissenschaft beitragen. Demokratisierung wäre hier im Sinne einer selbstständigen Produktions- und Bewertungskompetenz wissenschaftlichen Wissens gemeint, die durch detaillierten Einblick und Einbindung in die Entstehungsprozesse einer wissenschaftlichen Aussage und deren Plausibilisierungspraktiken entsteht. Dazu ist eine generelle Transparenz und die Beteiligung breiterer Bevölkerungsschichten an Entscheidungsprozessen wie auch die gleichberechtigte Zusammenarbeit mit ehrenamtlichen Forschenden in der Wissensproduktion in ko-produzierender Weise notwendig. Solche Ansätze könnten dann aktivistisch im Sinne einer Intervention in der kulturellen Praxis der Wissenserstellung, also in wissenspolitischer Weise verstanden werden. Allerdings scheint es mir problematisch, wirklich alle partizipativen Ansätze grundsätzlich als aktivistisch zu interpretieren. Eine bloße Erweiterung des Transfers wissenschaftlicher Ergebnisse, ohne die Ehrenamtlichen in Entscheidungsprozesse und Wissensproduktion einzubinden, es also auf eine *Science for the Public* zu reduzieren, könnte nicht als Intervention in wissenspolitischer Hinsicht gelten. Entscheidendes Merkmal wäre eben die gleichberechtigte Beteiligung bei allen Ebenen der Wissensproduktion im Sinne einer *Science with the Public*.

Was die Frage nach der Bedeutung einer aktivistischen Archäologie betrifft, halte ich eine solche Perspektive aus ethischen und erkenntnistheoretischen Gründen für sinnvoll und notwendig. Aus ethischer Perspektive hat Wissenschaft eine generelle Verantwortung, gesellschaftliche Prozesse zu reflektieren und konstruktiv zu begleiten. Die Politikwissenschaftlerin Franziska Müller konstatiert in einem Kommentar in der *Zeit* vom 11.08.2022 im Kontext der Klimaforschung eine Verpflichtung der Wissenschaft zur Gestaltung gesellschaftlicher Transformationen, zur Schaffung von Zugängen zu Wissen, und zur Ideenentwicklung, weshalb ein größeres aktivistisches Engagement von Forschenden legitim und geboten sei. Müller argumentiert, dass gerade in der Klimaforschung das Modell der Politikberatung mit einer klaren Arbeitsteilung zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik, bei der sich die Wissenschaft auf die Herstellung von Wissen beschränkt, das von der Politik in politisches Handeln übersetzt wird, als dysfunktional erweist, da notwendige Maßnahmen trotz wissenschaftlicher Plausibilität nicht umgesetzt werden. Wenn politisches Handeln also nicht von Evidenz geleitet sei, können sich Wissenschaftler*innen nicht auf eine neutrale Position zurückziehen, sondern sind aufgefordert, aktiv zu werden. Politische Trägheit macht also Aktivismus notwendig. Gilt das auch für die Archäologie? Auch sie kann sich nicht aus gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen heraushalten. Im Kontext der Klimaforschung könnte Archäologie beispielsweise zu Konzepten konkreter Klimaschutzmaßnahmen beitragen, etwa durch Analysen früherer Umweltkrisen zukünftige Handlungsmodelle entwerfen. Die Notwendigkeit von Aktivismus wird von Bruce C. Glagovic, Timothy F. Smith und Iain White konsequenterweise als Aufruf zu einem generellen Forschungsboykott interpretiert. Forschung habe das Ende des Wissen-Schaffens erreicht, da alles Wissen, alle Prognosen und Szenarien wertlos werden, wenn der CO_2-Ausstoß unvermindert weitergeht (zitiert nach Müller), nicht nur aufgrund der fehlenden politischen Konsequenzen wissenschaftlicher Ergebnisse, sondern auch als Prioritätenentscheidung, sich auf drängendere Fragen zu konzentrieren. Das stellt natürlich die Frage, ob auch archäologische Forschung das Ende ihrer Wissensproduktion erreicht hat. Vielleicht ist diese Einschätzung in der Klimaforschung besonders relevant, weil hier die Folgenlosigkeit die Arbeit sinnlos erscheinen lässt. Aber ob die eigene Energie besser für Forschung oder Aktivismus verwendet wird,

bleibt eine individuelle Entscheidung. Zumindest aber sollte sich archäologische Forschungsarbeit ihres Beitrags zur Klimaerwärmung bewusst werden.

Aktivistische Ansätze sind aber auch aus erkenntnistheoretischer Perspektive notwendig. Denn die Trennung von Wissenschaft und Politik, von Erkenntnisproduktion und Interventionspraktiken ist nicht möglich. Der Rückzug in eine neutrale Distanz der Wissensproduktion bleibt eine Illusion, da Forschung nicht außerhalb von historischen, sozialen und politischen Kontexten existiert und damit immer verflochten bleibt. Diese *Entanglements* müssen reflektiert werden, wenn wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse an Plausibilität gewinnen wollen. Kritik an der Verknüpfung von Forschung und Aktivismus basiert oft auf der Argumentation der unterschiedlichen Wissensräume, die nicht verwechselt werden dürfen. Aktivistische Agenden machen die Wissensproduktion unglaubwürdig, da eine wissenschaftliche Aussage keine politischen Forderungen erlaube. So argumentiert z. B. der Medizinhistoriker Urban Wiesing in seinem Gegenkommentar in der *Zeit* vom 11.08.2022, dass man nicht als Wissenschaftler*in, sondern nur als wissenschaftlich gut informierte Bürger*in aktiv für eine Forderung eintreten könne. Es sollte also immer deutlich gemacht werden, in welcher Rolle man gerade spreche. Er zielt damit auf die Unterschiede zwischen Evidenz und Machbarkeit. Aber dies scheint mir kein Gegenargument zu sein, sondern vor allem eine Klarstellung, dass eine politische Forderung nicht immer von Plausibilität geleitet, sondern eben auch von soziopolitischen Bedingungen und Mehrheitsfähigkeit abhängig ist. Das macht aktivistische wissenschaftliche Forschung nicht weniger legitim, sondern bereichert sie vielmehr, indem Wissensproduktion mit gesellschaftlichen Kontexten und Entwicklungen verknüpft wird und zugleich einer politischen Forderung eine zusätzliche Glaubwürdigkeit verleiht.

Für die Skizzierung einer konkreten aktivistischen Praxis wäre zum Ersten eine Sensibilisierung und Hinterfragung von Forschungskontexten wichtig. Dazu gehört die Reflexion der Wirkmacht archäologischer Wissensarbeit auf lokale Situationen und die Rolle der Archäolog*innen wie auch die Entwicklung einer Sensibilität für potentielle Missverständnisse. Außerdem wäre ein neues Konzept der Beziehungen notwendig: die oftmals noch rein ökonomisch definierten Interaktionen mit lokalen Akteur*innen sollten eher als eine soziale Beziehung verstanden werden. Die Abkehr von asymmetrischen, hierarchischen Konzepten der Definitions- und Deutungsmacht von Kulturerbe, bei denen die hauptamtlichen Akteur*innen dominieren, würde Raum schaffen für ein neues Modell, das Heritage als einen gemeinschaftlichen Besitz sieht, deren Bedeutung in gesamtgesellschaftlichen Diskursen ausgehandelt werden sollte. Insgesamt wäre also ein ständiges Hinterfragen und Abwägen von Vorannahmen, Wahrnehmungen und Handlungsoptionen sinnvoll. Zum Zweiten wäre die Bereitschaft zum konkreten Engagement notwendig: Möglichkeiten der Unterstützung suchen und Interventionsanfragen im Zuge der Forschung aufgreifen; Praktiken der Kollaboration und Partnerschaften entwickeln, die an Probleme oder Themen des Alltags anknüpfen, indem archäologische Erkenntnisse in sinnvolle Handlungen für eine Verbesserung der Lebenssituation übersetzt werden (Zimmerman u. a. 2010: 444–445).

Welche Schritte im Einzelnen sinnvoll sind, kann bisher nur in der jeweiligen Situation entschieden werden. Larry J. Zimmerman hat vor knapp 10 Jahren festgestellt, dass die meisten Archäolog*innen nur wenig Erfahrung mit Aktivismus gesammelt hatten, weshalb noch keine *Best Practices* oder leitenden Epistemologien des Aktivismus entwickelt worden seien (Zimmerman 2014: 20). Und das scheint mir zumindest für die deutschsprachige Archäologie weiterhin zu gelten. Es bleibt also ein *knowledge in the making*. Umso wichtiger ist eine systematische Auseinandersetzung, um tragfähige Ideen und Konzepte zu entwickeln.

Ein zentrales Element wäre die grundsätzliche Offenheit für alle Interessen: die Sichtweise der lokalen Akteur*innen ernst zu nehmen und Praktiken der gleichberechtigten Ko-Produktion von Wissen zu entwickeln. Ein spezielles Augenmerk sollte dabei auf die Machtverhältnisse gerichtet werden, um die marginalisierten und unsichtbaren Akteur*innen in den Fokus zu stellen. Dabei können aber auch konflikthafte Narrative und Praktiken ins Spiel kommen, weshalb bedacht werden sollte, welche Narrative man gegebenenfalls nicht mehr mittragen kann, wie z. B. abwertende Erzählungen (nationalistische, rassistische, homophobe usw.). Hier könnte eine aktivistische Perspektive an der Hinterfragbarkeit abwertender Narrative ansetzen, indem ihre historischen Kontexte sichtbar gemacht werden. Sinnvoll erscheinen mir dabei auch die Impulse aus der partizipativen Archäologie zur Transparenz und zur Entwicklung von Bewertungskompetenz der Erkenntnisherstellung, so dass die Unterschiedlichkeiten der Plausibilitäten von Interpretationen nachvollzogen werden können.

Archäologie könnte dabei ihre Potentiale zur Sichtbarmachung von progressiven Narrationen ausspielen. Archäologie und Heritage scheint zwar eine Affinität zu konservativen Narrativen zu haben, etwa in ihrer Verwendbarkeit zur Behauptung einer historischen Kontinuität von nationalen Strukturen, Herkunft oder Abstammung oder in der

Nutzung zur Verhinderung des Ausbaus erneuerbarer Energien, so wie das Gartendenkmal Damitzow im Landkreis Uckermark als Argument für die Ablehnung eines Windparks diente (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* vom 25.08.2022). Als progressive Narrative könnten beispielsweise erweiterte Konzepte von Heritage gelten, die auch kulturelle Praktiken der Gegenwart als schutzwürdig aufwerten (Hausbesetzungen, Protestbewegungen oder subkulturelle Aktivitäten wie z. B. *Street Art*). Bisher scheint sich aber zumindest das deutschsprachige UNESCO-Komitee eher auf konventionelle Heritagepraktiken wie Trachten oder Brauchtum zu konzentrieren und sich mit subkulturellen Praktiken noch eher schwer zu tun, zumindest wenn man auf die Bewilligungspraxis blickt. Auch die kontemporäre Archäologie kann als aktivistisch gelten, wenn zeitgeschichtliche Entwicklungen aus archäologischer Perspektive analysiert und damit die historischen Untersuchungsansätze erweitert werden. Schließlich erscheint mir auch der Bereich der ökonomischen und politischen Folgenabschätzung vielversprechend: das Potential vergangener politischer oder ökonomischer Modelle als Basis einer Erweiterung der Möglichkeitsräume und Impulse für gegenwärtige Herausforderungen. Die heutige Dominanz hierarchischer Politikmodelle des Nationalstaats und profitorientierter Wirtschaftssysteme des Neoliberalismus lässt diese als quasi ahistorische anthropologische Konstanten erscheinen. Sie sind jedoch konkrete historische Produkte, die neben vielen anderen Formen politischer oder ökonomischer Organisationspraktiken stehen (egalitäre oder direktdemokratische Modelle, *Commons* usw.). Archäologie könnte gemeinsam mit der Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie solche Konzepte erkunden, muss dazu allerdings ihre bisher noch häufig reproduzierten Vorannahmen einer Zwangsläufigkeit und Unumkehrbarkeit der Entstehung von Hierarchien in politischen und ökonomischen Systemen hinterfragen.

Die Archäologie sollte also immer versuchen, Praktiken der Intervention zu entwickeln – nicht nur weil sie Verantwortung für die Konsequenzen ihrer Arbeit trägt, sondern auch weil sie eine generelle Verantwortung als Teil von Gesellschaften übernehmen sollte. Archäolog*innen könnten dann als *scholar activists*, als forschende und lehrende Aktivist*innen agieren.

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Archaeology as Activism: A Southwest Asian Perspective

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Archaeology as Activism: A Southwest Asian Perspective

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Introduction: Contextualizing Iranian Archaeology

In this short paper, the author, an Iranian archaeologist, approaches activism from a perspective of a Western Asian. I try to discuss the characteristics and challenges of activism in Iranian archaeology. Can archaeology have an emancipating role in a Southwest Asian context, where authoritarianism, conflict and political tensions still challenge academic freedom?

The critical discourses in archaeology have challenged the oversimplified notion that archaeology can benefit humanity without active engagement and awareness of the consequences of archaeological practice to the contemporary world (Christensen 2010: 21). There would be numerous versions of activism in archaeology. But the core question of all these versions would be, archaeology for whom? (Panameno and Nalda 1978; Atalay et al. 2014: 7). Hence, the main issue in terms of activism is the audience. Therefore, from the very beginning archaeology should be considered a discipline which is practised in and has consequences for contemporary society. However, in many parts of the world, including Southwest Asia, archaeologists fail or are reluctant to recognize that "our practice is inherently political from our choice of sites to how and to whom we present our research findings" (Christensen 2010: 21).

In Southwest Asia, archaeology has a complicated background. Over the course of the 19th century, archaeology was introduced in the Ottoman territories and Qajar Iran together with colonial and imperial functions (Özdogan 1998: 114; Papoli Yazdi and Garazhian 2012: 25).

> "In its 120-year history in Iran, archaeology has played an administrative role rather than one of academic knowledge production. Under such conditions, it could not be represented in an indigenous version, and in general, it has remained theoretically within the limits of the conditions of traditional archaeology and, at most, cultural-historical archaeology" (Papoli Yazdi and Garazhian 2012: 25–26).

Archaeology is still widely practised as a governmental discipline; namely archaeologists, also in academia, are completely dependent on the government in terms of budgeting and fieldwork permission. Archaeological knowledge in Iran, of course not an exception, is produced and consumed by the state, which usually ignores the diversity of the Iranian population and their socio-cultural expectations. On the other hand, the diversity in archaeological approaches, methodologies and the independency of agents are still challenging issues. Consequently, archaeology lacks the power and proper tools to resist the top-down approach and to claims the rights of its agents and communities.

Generally speaking, archaeology has always been the subject of socio-political tensions, misused by political parties and governments while it has sometimes provoked cultural conflicts and its agents have paved the way for destructive social and environmental policies in Iran. The best example is the rescue archaeology projects in support of destructive dam projects under the name of development, which resulted in the flooding of hundreds of villages and archaeological sites and serious damage to the environment.

Archaeology as Activism in Iran: Characteristics and Challenges

In the following, I will discuss the strategies of a small group of Iranian archaeologists toward a more engaged version of archaeology. This is a personal, and of course political, narrative of shifting from conservative Near Eastern archaeology to an engaged archaeology of the contemporary past. Shortly after starting my education in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Tehran, I discovered that the courses did not meet my expectations. I could not see any tie between the syllabi that discussed the glory of Persian empires and my life and the life of people around me. I just wanted to do something useful, to be active. However, as a young student, I did not have a clear image of activism at that time.

My personal and professional life changed trying to establish an engaged version of archaeology in my homeland. For me, the idea of doing something relevant and useful came from the disaster ethnoarchaeology project in Bam in 2003 when a devastating earthquake exposed the sufferings of people. Our team visited Bam and realized the limitations of conservative archaeology in such situations. Feeling the responsibility to speak and write about the painful experiences of people, our small team was struggling to find a scientific, methodological and yet ethical version of archaeology that could respond to this situation. The project transformed into a contemporary archaeology project in 2008.

What we wanted was to develop an independent version of archaeology which can communicate with society actively without too much governmental intervention. For our small group, GAP END, who wanted to act independently and consider contemporary society as the context of production and consumption of archaeological knowledge, the archaeology of the contemporary past was emancipating. It provided us with a scientific and ethical approach to investigate the challenges and crucial issues of Iran from an archaeological perspective. One of our main activities to establish an engaged version of archaeology was to launch scientific programs for the public, where we could actively communicate with people, be informed about their expectations and learn about the impacts of archaeology on society. This was a brilliant experience leading us to revisit our methodologies and approaches.

After the coup of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009 and the rise of the extreme right, we encountered difficulties. Leila Papoli-Yazdi and Omran Garazhian, the main members of GAP END, had been exiled to a small college in Neyshabour, northeastern Iran, and I was sent to the University of Birjand, a small university near the Afghan border. Our colleagues sent reports against us to the security authorities of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, accusing us of being anti-regime and scientifically and morally unqualified. Nevertheless, we stayed in touch and organized our independent activities under GAP END. However, in the absence of financial support and fieldwork permission, it was not easy.

In 2012 the Center for the Investigation of Unknown Martyrs approached us. This Center is a military organization under the supervision of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, an extreme right army, Sepah, and is responsible for the recovery of the bodies of Iran-Iraq war martyrs. Evidently, they knew that we were the only group of native archaeologists in the region who do the archaeology of the contemporary past. They called Leila and tried to convince the group to cooperate with them. They had access to financial support, well-equipped laboratories, and a group of experts, including anthropologists who worked as military officers. We were told that we could join any prominent university that we wish and have access to all facilities, equipment and finance of the Center.

After several hours of discussion in Leila and Omran's house, the headquarters of GAP END, we decided to refuse the offer. We realized that working with an extreme right governmental organization would have consequences that we could not anticipate. One of our main concerns was the destiny of our research. We were quite aware that the Center would reserve and hold all the rights in terms of our data and results.

In countries under dictatorial regimes, cooperation with the state can have consequences beyond the field of study. So, one of the main characteristics of activist archaeology in countries under dictatorship is to avoid collaboration with governmental organizations. As an independent group in Iranian archaeology, saying no has been sometimes our most effective resistance. In the absence of freedom of speech and independent academia in Iran that could guarantee independent research, doing nothing is pure engagement. It does not necessarily mean passivity and inactivity but rather responsibility about the outcomes of decisions. In this regard, Hannah Arendt's (2003: 48)

words about personal responsibility are notable: “Hence, the question addressed to those who participated and obeyed orders should never be, ‘Why did you obey?’ but ‘Why did you support?’” According to Arendt, better to suffer than collaborate.

Noteworthy are the fruitful discussions by archaeologists to avoid cooperation with military organizations, particularly in critical situations such as war and conflict (see Meskell 2002; Bernbeck 2008; Hamilakis 2009). However, there is an attitude that archaeology in peaceful countries would not be so dangerous. This should be reinvestigated, as in the absence of engagement, archaeological practice can lead to disastrous outcomes.

Activism Can Transform Archaeology and Archaeologists

Activism can change archaeology, its subjects, concerns, methodologies and audience. Activism can lead to the revision of fundamental concepts and definitions. In an interesting case, Max Liboiron’s (2021: 5) engaged research on plastic has introduced a novel understanding of colonialism. They consider plastics’ global distribution as part of colonial land relations and discuss that access to indigenous lands is a colonial strategy for sending pollution abroad. Such critical reflections are crucial if archaeology is determined to contribute to the research on current global challenges.

Scholars have correctly emphasized that we as agents should transform the discipline, not just create an activist niche in archaeology (Silverman and Ruggles 2007; Stottman 2010; Atalay et al. 2014: 8). Zimmerman has subtly discussed that being an activist is a decision. “Archaeologists can provide useful perspectives on contemporary social problems if they are willing to engage in politics and translate their findings into information useful for developing social policy” (Zimmerman 2010: 443). Yannis Hamilakis (2009) has rightly emphasized the multiple identities of “archaeologists such as that of the concerned citizen, the national subject of an invading country, or the public intellectual” and asked archaeologists to express their political, ethical, as well as professional opposition in public to issues such as military invasions and imperialist encroachments.

One might ask if activism can be incorporated with the scientific claims of archaeology. Indeed, challenges such as conflict, climate change, pollution and hyper-consumerism that affect the life of human beings globally stimulate us to deconstruct the dichotomy of activism and scientific claims and consider activism as a necessity for archaeological practice. I cannot see any contradiction between applying scientific methods and activism. Activism is not about the ignorance of scientific methods but rather about a lack of awareness of the socio-political dimension of scientific practice. On the other hand, considering the scientific aspect of archaeology does not mean refusing to engage in critical discussions about ethics and politically-informed decisions. Our work “might be valuable beyond just the human interest to be derived from providing perspectives on cultural adaptations over time” (Zimmerman 2010: 444).

Moreover, one of the most distinguishing aspects of activism in archaeology is to think globally. This scale distinguishes engaged archaeologies from traditional ones. While traditional and conservative archaeologies embedded in local and regional claims are usually at the service of nationalist agendas, activism can situate archaeological practice on a more global scale. As an archaeologist from an unsettled region, I have learnt that global challenges have local consequences, such as the destruction of the environment, subsistence and poverty. I am aware of the painful experiences and bitter stories of ordinary people and communities and the environmental catastrophes when archaeology is conducted in the absence of ethical and professional considerations.

It is worth noting that transformative and engaged archaeologies are also context and agent dependent, and there is no single universal version of activist archaeology that can be applied everywhere.

Concluding Words: Is Activism a Priority in Archaeology?

Anibal Quijano, the Latin American thinker, has applied the term coloniality to demonstrate that issues with "a colonial origin and character can be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix they were established" (Quijano 2000: 533). Quijano's contribution demonstrates new perceptions of colonialism and transcends the orthodox understanding of this term. The colonial function of archaeology in its early days has remained in Iranian archaeology. Archaeology is still almost useless and has failed to establish a proper connection to Iranian society. As a state-sponsored discipline, it is involved in power relations and sometimes has an oppressive role.

To a considerable extent, archaeology is about change and continuities. In a permanently changing world we are not only in need of constant re-evaluation of our methods, like any other discipline, but also of our concerns and questions. With that said, transformations of archaeological practice that call for more engaged versions of archaeology are a necessity in Iranian archaeology. One of the most important goals of archaeology in Iran in the 21st century should be to revise its basic concepts and restructure its relationship with the contemporary world. According to Anne Pyburn (2007: 178) communication with the living context "will force the archaeologist to take the political context of their efforts into account. Gone are the days when the expatriate researcher could ignore local impacts because 'they will never know'."

This has benefits for both sides: On the one hand, it can guarantee the survival of archaeology through its transformation into a politically and socially engaged discipline, which can resist and refuse to be part of the oppression machine. On the other hand, it brings in the active participation of communities and stakeholders whose voices should be heard. As Pyburn (2007: 179) has stated: "Archaeologists have an agenda worth promoting; the problem is making sure our voices speak to the political present and ensuring that the informed voices of other constituencies are also heard and understood".

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Is Protest Really the Problem in Museums?
(Imagine) Museums as Places of Dialogue, Collaboration, and Disruption

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Is Protest Really the Problem in Museums? (Imagine) Museums as Places of Dialogue, Collaboration, and Disruption

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Whether the cake on Mona Lisa's "face" at the Louvre [1] or a Trojan Horse with oil company BP's logo in front of the British Museum [2], recent art news consists of climate change, restitution, indigenous rights, transparency, representation, and fair employment protests in museums. But protest in museums is not new: In 1914 the Rokeby Venus painting by Velazquez was sliced as a protest against the arrest of a suffrage leader. In 1974, Picasso's Guernica was spray painted in an act of protest against the perpetuators of Vietnam War massacres. More recently, "Just Stop Oil" protests have raised awareness of climate change issues, which stirred up new controversies around protests in museums.

Protest is a form of disruption, it interrupts the "normal." When a protest takes place in a museum, it breaks the artificially created and strictly maintained order in the museum space. It challenges the status quo that museums hold onto so tightly. Protest is also a way of starting a dialogue and coming together around ideas and actions. In a recent interview, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said: "Sometimes people ask, 'Oh, what's the point of protest?' The act of protest creates community." (Lowery 2022). If the primary function of a museum is to create space for questioning, speaking out and listening (dialogue), and working together and learning from each other (collaboration and creating community) – and as a museum professional, I argue it should be – then museums need to approach protest differently.

Museums are not neutral (a statement coined by La Tanya Autry and Mike Murawski, also see Raicovich 2021). However, many museum leaders still make decisions that support the museum's mission to be places to appreciate art, science, history, and culture, and only that, and avoid "getting involved" or "being political," as if the objects on display can be separated from their histories, the collectors'/artists' backgrounds, hiring practices, the workplace conditions of the staff who care for them, and the funding bodies that support their creation and exhibition. As places of critical thinking, learning, and questioning, museums question their own practices not nearly enough, at least not in their public platforms and exhibits. It is almost as if museums are stuck in the denial phase of Kübler-Ross' five stages of grief, grieving that we are finally reckoning with their/our problematic pasts. Acceptance seems still a couple of stages away.

But let us accept this: Museums *are* political; they have always been. What is changing is that more of us expect museums to acknowledge this and be active players in fighting against the injustices that enabled the emergence of museums in the first place, such as colonialism, imperialism, racism, xenophobia, inequality, ableism, and elitism, which continue to affect museum practices today. As a reflection of the society they are situated in, museums cannot separate themselves from what is happening around them. If museums want to justify their existence to their various publics (and with support and funds becoming scarcer every day, they have to), they need to take protest as a genuine form of feedback. The public is telling museum leaders what they want from their museums, whether this is in the form of petitions, social media comments, or protests. And museum leaders need to listen, acknowledge, consider, and reevaluate. If museums do not provide space for discussions that the public[1] wants to hold, ideas they want to explore, or practices they want to put in place, they will be met with protest. Worse, they will become irrelevant.

1 The "publics" of museums are, of course, not monolithic in their expectations, priorities, political agendas, backgrounds, or ways of engaging with museums. Museums should thrive to serve everyone, all publics, but this is the ideal mission, whereas in reality, every museum has to prioritize some of its communities over others, whether this is a result of the museum's location, mission, type of the collections, or resources.

Admittedly, museums are easy targets for protest and critique. The problematic, unethical, and sometimes violent past of museums is a burden on those of us who work in museums and visit them. It is a burden on us as a society. This shared burden – and it has to be shared – requires working together. Museums and their visitors, participants, and communities (these may or may not be the same publics) need to inform each other and keep each other accountable. They need to be collaborators. This idea of mutual learning goes against the traditional historical role of museums as places that "teach", because mutual learning requires sharing authority, unlearning, and transparency (Freire 1970). Ironically, it is in fact this position of authority that makes museums ideal platforms for protesting and challenging authority.

Museums have been defined as "contact zones" (Clifford 1997), bringing together and connecting different people, cultures, and ideas. Museums are also "conflict zones" (Løgstrup 2021), because traditional museum practices often bring the museum institution face to face with their current publics. Many have condemned the recent protests involving attacking or gluing oneself to (the frames of) famous artworks, calling it "vandalism" [3]. After the recent "Just Stop Oil" protest, where a tin of tomato soup was thrown at van Gogh's Sunflowers in London's National Gallery [4] or mashed potatoes at the Monet in the Museum Barberini in Potsdam [5], many more have expressed their skepticism (especially in social media) around the act of putting artworks in vulnerable situations to raise awareness of climate change. Yet, many have also talked about climate change as a result.

Some of this criticism comes from the museum world. As museum professionals, it is our responsibility to care for the objects and artworks we steward, so when objects are harmed, threatening their preservation (although what is and should be "preserved" by whom and where is another topic of discussion), some may feel that we are not doing our jobs right. But objects are only one aspect of museum work. "*Quieren el arte, no a la gente* (they want the art, not the people)" was a gentrification protest banner in the Brooklyn Museum in 2018 by the "Decolonize This Place" movement [6]. "Just Stop Oil" protesters cry out a similar sentiment: "What is worth more, art or life? ... Are you more concerned about the protection of a painting or the protection of our planet?" [7]. If museums "protect" artworks but fail to actively serve the people and protect the interests of their communities, they are not doing their jobs right either.

Climate change protesters can and perhaps will continue their protests in museums, as they have an important message and the attention of the public. They don't need museums to support them, really. On the other hand, museum leaders are anxiously making plans to prevent possible attacks. Here is a thought for museums: Would people be protesting to raise awareness of climate change in a museum that treats climate change as a serious matter and hosts an exhibit on climate change? Imagine if one of these big art museums that are targets for protests had an exhibit on climate change curated by climate change activists, created with sustainable and reused materials, supported by ethical donors. If the museum acknowledged and aimed to lower its carbon footprint? If public forums were held at the museum, where people could express themselves, make their voices heard? If the museum then integrated these ideas and criticisms into the exhibits? One may argue that protest will always happen, no matter how the museum changes. And it should. Protest is an essential part of progress and should be seen as a stimulator for dialogue and change.

But protest can also happen in collaboration with museums if museums allowed for sharing authority. Ideally, the very confrontation of conflicting positions could be an essential part of museum practice and exhibits. Museums are (or at least they should be) safe spaces to explore different ideas and perspectives. Why can't these ideas include protested subjects and protester voices? What could change in museums if their response to protest was to increase the visibility of the issue rather than increasing security?

When I was writing this piece, a piece of protest art appeared in the Guggenheim New York in support of Iranian women and their freedom [8]. Red banners with images of Mahsa Zhina Amini were hung down the iconic balcony, a commonly chosen platform for protest. Without affecting the artworks on display, this protest intervened in the space, disrupted its normalcy, and used that space to communicate the message. Museums can and should enable these interventions and disruptions. Protest art in itself is an artform and therefore it also belongs in a museum [see 9].

In a recent panel at Futurium's "Shaping Futures in Museum Communities" [10], curator Maria Isabel Garcia at the Mind Museum in Manila, discussed the importance of "ragency;" the anger and agency we carry within

ourselves and bring with us to the museum. There are many issues to be angry about in our world and in museums. Garcia argued that as curators we need to allow this rage in the museum space as a means of dialogue. Our exhibits should talk about it, because it gives visitors and museum professionals a way to collaborate by talking to each other about issues that concern our lives and our shared futures.

Every museum professional and visitor can do something to intervene. Speaking the non-dominant language in the museum space is disruption. Laughing and crying is an intervention. Bringing yourself, your friends, children to the museum is participation. Having discussions, questioning the exhibit is an interaction. Writing a critical reflection, a complaint, or a social media comment is an intervention. So is becoming a member or a donor, joining a museum tour or event, asking for accountability, supporting the good work and condemning the bad. But change and action also needs to come from within the institutions and for this to be set in motion, the "normal" or the "traditional" has to be challenged. When left alone to their own pace, change in (especially encyclopedic) museums will come very slowly, if at all.

Modern museums emerged about two hundred years ago. The dismantling of the deeply rooted power structures and unethical practices in museums, therefore, may take another two centuries. But we can't throw our hands up and say nothing is fixable (even though some days I do feel this desperation). We need to start somewhere, however imperfect the starting point is. And there are glimmers of hope for better things in museums. ICOM's new definition of a museum underlines the importance of ethics, communities, accessibility, inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability [11]. Slowly, more museums are embracing "interventions" into their exhibits, bringing in voices that have been excluded from museum spaces. They have been highlighting indigenous voices, inviting artists from heritage communities to reinterpret objects, asking museum security staff to reflect on artworks, increasing their accessibility features, and offering tours in many languages, including those used in areas where the objects come from. They have started to hire more diverse staff than ever before, mostly thanks to the protests and work by indigenous communities, museum professionals, and activists advocating for equity. This means that the difficult work of changing museums from within will be put increasingly on the shoulders of museum professionals who come from historically underrepresented backgrounds into these positions, who will take the work of changing museums upon themselves. But they shouldn't bear all of the responsibility; again, the burden needs to be shared. To continue to push museums towards becoming more welcoming, inclusive, ethical, and community-centered, we are all responsible for disrupting, intervening, listening, speaking up, and taking action. Part of this is supporting the good work and collaborating to make the good work better.

The "we" here includes archaeologists. Museums are one of the most public platforms for communicating archaeological research and information. However, archaeologists working in universities have rarely made use of this platform. Academic colleagues often use the museum to extract information from the museum's collection for their own research, however, they have not fully explored its potential as a place to reach, connect with, or give back to their non-academic communities. Collaborations between university archaeologists and museum archaeologists for public outreach projects are increasing, but more can be done and is certainly needed. Archaeologists working in universities may have more academic freedom to criticize museums than their museum colleagues, but museum archaeologists are the ones who can do the work of putting this criticism into practice. Collaborations between archaeologists working in universities, museums, research centers, libraries, schools, and beyond, then, can only benefit activist museum work.

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Archäologie ist nie unpolitisch – Ideen zu herrschaftsfreien Archäologien

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Archäologie ist nie unpolitisch – Ideen zu herrschaftsfreien Archäologien

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Einleitung

Die Archäologie erweckt den Anschein, dass sie losgelöst von heutigen Gesellschaften vergangene Gesellschaften erforschen kann und dass sie dabei auch noch unpolitisch ist. Doch das Gegenteil ist der Fall: Vergangenheit und Gegenwart sind unausweichlich miteinander verbunden. Wie auch andere Wissenschaften, egal ob Natur- oder Geisteswissenschaft, findet Archäologie in den heutigen Gesellschaften statt und wird dadurch von denselben gesellschaftlichen und sozialen Aspekten beeinflusst. Da wir in einer kapitalistisch, patriarchal und kolonialistisch geprägten Gesellschaft leben, sind es genau diese Strukturen, die es zu verändern gilt. Daher verstehen wir, ein Kollektiv mit anarchistischen Ansätzen, es als Aufgabe unserer aktivistischen Archäologien, diese Probleme zu analysieren und den Status quo zu verändern. Zwei Fragen gilt es hierbei zu beantworten: Warum ist es notwendig eine aktivistische Archäologie zu betreiben und wie sieht diese aus?

Seit ihren Anfängen ist die Archäologie Teil von gesellschaftlichen Prozessen und geprägt von politisch-ökonomischen Entscheidungen und der Sozialisation von Akteur*innen rund um das Fachgebiet. Dies betrifft Ausgrabungen, Interpretationen des ausgegrabenen Materials, wer es ausgräbt, dokumentiert und auswertet, bis hin zur Kommunikation der Inhalte. Es gibt keine rein objektive, sozusagen neutrale Wissenschaft, keine unvoreingenommene Sicht auf die Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Die Interpretation von Funden und Befunden ist niemals unbefangen und die Synthesen, die daraus über die Lebenswirklichkeit vergangener Menschen entwickelt werden, sind immer von politischen Einstellungen und persönlichen Vorstellungen der Wissenschaftler*innen bestimmt. Keine Synthese, auch wenn sie von Beobachtungen abgeleitet ist, ist rein sachlich aufgebaut. Eine unpolitische und neutrale Archäologie kann es somit nicht geben. Dieser Umstand ist so lange unproblematisch, wie er permanent in der Forschung mitgedacht wird. Problematisch wird er, wenn er nicht transparent gemacht wird, weil sich dadurch eine Art Verselbstständigung von Vorannahmen verfestigt und die Nachvollziehbarkeit der wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen leidet oder gänzlich verloren geht. Wir sollten keine Sachverhalte in ihrer Vollständigkeit wiedergeben, sondern sie im Zuge des Erkenntnisprozesses reduzieren und uns auf den jeweiligen Untersuchungsgegenstand (z. B. ein Befund, eine Frage, eine Querverbindung zwischen Funden) fokussieren. Daher ist die Transparenz bezüglich der Nachvollziehbarkeit von Thesen zwingend erforderlich. Die Erkenntnis, dass Wissenschaft nicht in einem luftleeren Raum entsteht, macht sie nicht unglaubwürdig oder unwahr, sondern wandelbar. Veränderte Bedingungen und Möglichkeiten führen zu anderen Ergebnissen und zu einem anderen Bild der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft.

Die Archäologie trägt aktiv zur Veränderung der Gesellschaft bei. Ein wichtiger Faktor hierbei ist die Identitätsbildung. Wer sind wir und wie sind wir zu unserem „Heute“ gekommen? Was ist „menschlich“ und wie funktionieren Gesellschaften? Antworten auf solche Fragen interessieren unterschiedlichste Menschen und können die Sicht auf ihr Umfeld und auf sich selbst verändern. Hierbei spielt beispielsweise die Legitimierung von Hierarchien durch die Verwendung von Dualismen eine Rolle. Ein Beispiel ist die kolonialistische Praxis, andere Gesellschaften als rückständig zu bezeichnen und dies mithilfe der Archäologie vermeintlich zu rechtfertigen (Starzmann 2018: 3–4).

Das Gleiche gilt, wenn patriarchale Strukturen und geschlechtliche Hierarchien durch vermeintliche Zustände in der „Steinzeit“ begründet werden (Röder 2014). Patriarchale, (neo-)koloniale und hierarchisch organisierte Gesellschaften werden so als „natürlich“ dargestellt – und der Kapitalismus als die zivilisatorisch fortschrittlichste Stufe der Evolution. Dieses Dogma ist die ideologische Grundlage für die strukturelle Unterdrückung vieler Menschen. Durch die gesellschaftliche Rolle der Archäologie und ihre Möglichkeit die bestehende Gesellschaft zu verändern, entsteht die Verantwortung, vergangene Fehler, wie die Aufrechterhaltung von kolonialen, rassistischen und patriarchalen Strukturen, aufzuarbeiten und die gegenwärtige Praxis anders zu gestalten. Doch derartige Veränderungen kommen nicht von allein: Es braucht aktive Gestaltung und Wandel – also den Aktivismus.

Die Geschichte unseres Fachs zeigt, dass viele gesellschaftliche und soziale Bewegungen die Archäologie geprägt haben. Hierbei zu nennen sind beispielsweise die feministischen Archäologien seit den 1970er Jahren, die eine klare politische Haltung haben und den androzentrischen Blick auf die Welt immer weiter dekonstruieren. Ein weiteres Beispiel ist die Bürgerrechtsbewegung in den USA, der die Entstehung der postkolonialen Archäologie und der Archäologie der Afrikanischen Diaspora zugerechnet wird. Vor allem Schwarze Aktivist*innen haben beim Entstehen dieser Forschungsinteressen eine zentrale Rolle gespielt (Epperson 2004; Singelton 2016). Ohne ihre Kämpfe wären wir heute an einem anderen Punkt, was wiederum zeigt, dass es nötig ist, aktiv für Veränderungen zu kämpfen. Nun stellt sich die Frage, wie eine aktivistische Archäologie aussehen kann. Ein wichtiger Teil aktivistischer Archäologie ist, sich zu organisieren, in den Austausch mit anderen Menschen zu gehen und gesellschaftliche und soziale Veränderungen gemeinsam mit dem Blick aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven zu erarbeiten. Es braucht Räume für einen Austausch, der über die Fachwelt hinausgeht.

Wo wir stehen und wohin wir gehen

Als anarchistisches Kollektiv nehmen wir uns vor, für eine herrschaftsfreie Gesellschaft zu kämpfen. Mit unseren Projekten möchten wir einen anarchistischen Anspruch in unserer archäologischen Arbeit vertreten und uns als Kollektiv organisieren. Wir verstehen uns nicht als dogmatische Gruppe, sondern halten es mit der Losung der zapatistischen Bewegung: „Fragend gehen wir voran“. Das bedeutet, dass unser aktivistischer Ansatz durchaus im Wandel sein kann und wir es uns und anderen erlauben, Fehler zu machen und daraus zu lernen. Anarchistische Archäologien verstehen sich als aktiver Teil der Gesellschaft. Es gilt, wie in den Tübinger Thesen (Scherzler und Siegmund 2016) gefordert, einen gegenseitig bereichernden Austausch unter allen Archäologie-Interessierten zu schaffen und nicht lediglich ein Produzent*innen-Konsument*innen-Verhältnis zwischen Wissenschaftler*innen und Interessierten. Aber auch an den Universitäten müssen Wissenshierarchien und die Zentralisierung von Wissen abgebaut werden – mit dem Projekt Anarchäologie verschaffen wir uns als Studierende Gehör in der Fachwelt und bauen aktiv herrschaftsfreiere Strukturen auf.

Wissensliberation ist hierbei ein zentrales Anliegen der Anarchäologie. Die Zielsetzung ist, den Zugang zu Wissen zu dezentralisieren und Barrieren zu senken (z. B. durch Open Source oder Wissenskommunikation). Dafür müssen Wissen und der Zugang zu Wissen von autoritären und ökonomischen Zwängen befreit werden. Das beginnt mit einer anderen Form der Vermittlung von wissenschaftlichen Ergebnissen. Die Nutzung digitaler Medien, um die hierarchischen Strukturen der Wissenschaft aufzubrechen, ist Methode und Praxis von Anarchäologie (Rotermund und Farajdo 2017: 308). Mit unseren Videos versuchen wir bereits die Fachsprache zu überwinden, um archäologische Methoden und Theorien in einer nicht exklusiven Sprache zu erklären und einen niedrigschwelligen Austausch möglich zu machen. Wissensliberation bedeutet aber auch, dass wissenschaftliche Publikationen allen zugänglich gemacht werden. Das versuchen wir mit einer Literaturdatenbank (https://anarchaeologie.de/2020/10/25/anarchaeologie-literaturdatenbank/; Stand 06.09.2022), in der wir frei zugängliche herrschaftskritische und archäologisch interessante Texte sammeln und vorstellen. Um Wissenshierarchien vorzubeugen, vermitteln wir uns gegenseitig unsere Fähigkeiten damit alle alles können.

Die Philosophin Frigga Haug versteht Herrschaft als Knoten aus vielen verschiedenen Formen der Unterdrückung, die man nicht als einzelne Stränge lösen kann. Zieht man nur an einem Strang, besteht sogar die Gefahr den Knoten noch stärker zu schließen (Haug 2013: 11). Die Schwarze Feministin Audre Lorde verdeutlichte auf einer feministischen Konferenz 1984, wie eine von weißen Frauen dominierte feministische Bewegung bestehende rassistische Strukturen weiterträgt und verstärkt (Lorde 2022: 7–12). Wir sehen diese Problematik teilweise auch in den aktivistischen/feministischen Archäologien und möchten uns daher umso mehr auf intersektionale Ansätze, wie sie von Aktivist*innen wie Audre Lorde oder auch Angela Davis mitentwickelt wurden, beziehen (Davis 1981;

Lorde 2022). Intersektionalität sollte nicht in einer theoretischen Diskussion verharren, sondern praktische Veränderungen für die politische Praxis und die Archäologie bedeuten. Intersektionale Ansätze anzuwenden bedeutet, Solidarität aufzubauen, sich mit den eigenen Privilegien auseinanderzusetzen und den Zugang für weniger Privilegierte zu ermöglichen und auch mal einen Schritt zurückzugehen. Wir wollen aber keinen individualistischen Weg vorschlagen, sondern aktiv daran arbeiten, die Verhältnisse in der Gesellschaft und in unserem Fach zu verändern. Eine aktivistische und anarchistische Archäologie ist notwendig.

Praktische Anarchäologie

Aber wie können wissenschaftliche Projekte mit einem aktivistischen Anspruch konkret aussehen? Und wie können wir aktiv dazu beitragen, die Verhältnisse in unserem Fach und in der Gesellschaft zu verändern? Ganz einfach indem wir unsere politischen Ideen nicht nur im Elfenbeinturm formulieren, sondern versuchen sie direkt umzusetzen und im Alltag zu leben – auch wenn sie noch lange nicht perfekt sind.

Ein wichtiger Teil der archäologischen Ausbildung und Arbeit findet auf Ausgrabungen statt. Hier eröffnen sich auch Spannungsfelder einer aktivistischen Praxis. Nehmen wir das Beispiel der Lehrgrabungen an Universitäten. Die allgemein geltenden gesellschaftlichen Machtverhältnisse werden hier verdeutlicht, indem es oft Studierende aus den höheren Semestern sind, die die praktische Ausbildung der Erstsemester übernehmen. Die hier bestehenden Unterschiede in Erfahrung, Wissen, Alter und Geschlecht sorgen schnell für die Herausbildung starker Hierarchien unter den Studierenden, die die „üblichen“ Machtverhältnisse unserer Gesellschaft abbilden. Das äußert sich unter anderem in Rassismus, Ableismus, Trans- & Homophobie und Sexismus. Angefangen bei verbalen Äußerungen, in der ungleichen Verteilung von Aufgaben bis hin zu Gewalt und Übergriffen gegen marginalisierte Personen. Dies sind keine Einzelfälle, sondern strukturelle Probleme, die sich im Mikrokosmos von archäologischen Ausgrabungen teilweise sogar intensivieren.

Unser aktivistischer Anspruch ist es Konzepte zu entwickeln, um diese Machtverhältnisse zu kippen und Awareness und Solidarität zu schaffen. Letztendlich soll auf Ausgrabungen und besonders auch auf Lehrgrabungen gewährleistet werden, dass auf Bedürfnisse von Gruppen und Individuen eingegangen wird, Grenzen gegenüber „Vorgesetzten“ gezogen werden können ohne Repressionen befürchten zu müssen und dass diese auch eingehalten werden. Es sollte möglich sein, sich an unabhängige Stellen, bzw. neutrale Ansprechpartner*innen wenden zu können, die den Fällen von Diskriminierung und Machtmissbrauch nachgehen, ohne dass die Betroffenen negative Folgen für sich und ihre akademische Zukunft befürchten müssen oder ihre negativen Erfahrungen relativiert werden – und das unabhängig von der akademischen Stellung und des Rufs der Beschuldigten. Einerseits müssen Stellen geschaffen werden, um Betroffenen bestmöglich helfen zu können und andererseits sollten wir aber auch endlich anfangen präventiv zu arbeiten und diese Verantwortung nicht nur auf Institutionen abwälzen. Es ist dringend notwendig Konzepte zu entwickeln, wie so etwas auf archäologischen Ausgrabungen umgesetzt werden kann. Wir als Kollektiv versuchen dies bereits in unserem Alltag umzusetzen, um so die Veränderungen anzustoßen, die wir uns wünschen. Der kleine Archäologie-Kosmos bietet uns die Chance im Kleinen anzufangen und mit unseren Ideen auch Menschen zu erreichen.

Praktisch arbeiten wir vor allem an der Liberation von Wissen. Wir versuchen durch unsere Social-Media-Projekte die Archäologie für alle Interessierten zugänglich zu machen. Ein Beispiel ist die CIVIS Summer School 2022 in Tübingen zum Thema Gender-Archäologie. Wir haben die Inhalte der Veranstaltung in mehreren Infoposts und Videos zusammengefasst und es somit vielen Leuten ermöglicht davon zu profitieren. Insgesamt wurden unsere Videos auf YouTube bereits über 185.000-mal geklickt und unser Instagram-Account erreicht mehrere tausend Menschen monatlich – wir kommunizieren auf diesen Kanälen mit Menschen weit über die Fachwelt hinaus. Wir arbeiten in unserer Wissenskommunikation fachlich korrekt und verständlich. So prägen wir archäologische Diskurse an der Schnittstelle zwischen Fachwelt und Öffentlichkeit. Dabei ist es uns besonders wichtig, einen herrschaftskritischen Anspruch zu vertreten, denn gerade auf dieser Schnittstelle entstehen schnell hierarchische Verhältnisse.

Eine weitere Hürde, mit der sich Studierende der Archäologie alltäglich auseinandersetzen müssen, ist ihre Prekarität, welche Christiane Ochs und Sophie-Marie Rotermund bereits in ihrem Beitrag *I Studied Archaeology – Now My Life Is in Ruins?* (Ochs und Rotermund 2021) ausführlich darlegen. Viele der universitären Ausgrabungen oder Pflichtpraktika (die oft bis zu sechs Wochen oder länger andauern) werden schlecht oder überhaupt nicht bezahlt.

Verdienste während der universitären Ausgrabungen können meist nicht einmal die laufenden Mietkosten decken und gleichzeitig sind sie wichtig für die fachliche Vernetzung. Teilweise werden nicht einmal wichtige Aufgaben wie die archäologische Schnittleitung oder die technische Verantwortung einer Ausgrabung richtig bezahlt. Auch weiterbildende Tagungen, Museumsbesuche oder obligatorische Exkursionen werden finanziell nicht gefördert, sondern kosten (trotz Vergünstigungen) für studentische Verhältnisse unbestreitbar viel. Studierende, die sich das nicht leisten können erleiden erhebliche Nachteile, denn vor allem bei verpflichtenden, mehrtägigen Exkursionen werden nur selten bezahlbare Alternativen angeboten. Ein Besuch der EAA (European Association of Archaeologists) Tagung 2022 in Budapest kostete beispielsweise weit über 500 Euro pro Person (inklusive Anreise, Unterkunft, Essen etc.) und selbst die Online-Teilnahme kostete mindestens 155 Euro. Selbst Berufstätige können sich diese Preise für eine einzige Tagung oft nicht leisten und werden so aus der akademischen Welt ausgeschlossen und ihnen wird Bildung und das Knüpfen wichtiger Kontakte verwehrt. An dieser Stelle ist es wichtig solidarisch zu sein. Man könnte sich zusammentun, um solidarische Preise oder „Solifonds“ zu entwickeln, um so die Teilnahme an Exkursionen oder die Besuche von Tagungen für alle Studierenden zu ermöglichen. Grundsätzlich gilt hier das System von Stipendien zu verändern. Meist sind es nämlich Studierende aus akademischen Elternhäusern, die Zugang zu Stipendien bekommen. Studierende, die nicht arbeiten müssen um sich das Studium zu finanzieren, haben bessere Voraussetzungen gute Noten zu erlangen, wie sie für viele Stipendien ausschlaggebend sind. Auch sind Förderanträge meist überbürokratisiert und stellen eine Hürde für Studierende dar und zudem sind die Förderungen ohne entsprechende Kontakte kaum zu bekommen. Mit gutem Beispiel geht hier das Black Trowel Collective voran, dass, ohne Fragen zu stellen, Studierenden der Archäologie finanzielle Hilfe bis zu 300 US Dollar zukommen lässt. Das Geld stammt aus Spenden und wird somit praktisch umverteilt (https://www.archaeology.wiki/blog/2020/06/23/black-trowel-collective-microgrants/; Stand 06.09.2022).

Auch sollten Studierende keine Arbeit ohne Vergütung leisten müssen, selbst wenn sie auf das Gehalt nicht angewiesen sind. Dies ist unsolidarisch, weil es den Wettbewerb enorm verzerrt. Es gibt bereits mit der TVStud-Kampagne eine gewerkschaftliche Organisierung von wissenschaftlichen Hilfskräften. Arbeitsstandards, Chancengleichheit und faire Bezahlung sollten sich jedoch nicht nur auf das Studium und die Universität beschränken. Aufgrund der kolonialen und von Rassismus und Ausbeutung geprägten Geschichte unseres Fachs, stehen wir besonders in der Verantwortung aktiv an Veränderungen zu arbeiten. Trotzdem herrschen auf vielen archäologischen Auslandsgrabungen im Globalen Süden noch koloniale Dynamiken vor. Die Arbeitsbedingungen für einheimische Arbeiter*innen sind oft miserabel. Arbeitsrechte, Bezahlung und Sicherheitsstandards scheinen dort nicht zu gelten. Während die Archäolog*innen der deutschen Universitäten die Dokumentation, Auswertung, Interpretation und Publikation übernehmen, sind es meist lokale Arbeiter*innen, die körperlich harte Arbeit leisten. Es ist kein Zufall, dass es in der Regel die Archäolog*innen aus dem Globalen Norden sind, die die archäologischen Ressourcen aus dem Globalen Süden abschöpfen.

Ausblick und Appell

Wir als Anarchäologie-Kollektiv haben uns einen Raum geschaffen, um uns bereits als Studierende aktiv in das Geschehen einzumischen. Wir haben einen gemeinsamen politischen Anspruch und sehen unsere Organisierung auch als einen Ort für den Austausch untereinander. Dabei ist es für uns besonders bedeutend, dass wir aus verschiedenen Fachrichtungen und Städten kommen und unterschiedliche soziale Hintergründe haben. Wir versuchen unsere politischen Grundsätze im Alltag zu leben und in der archäologischen Forschung umzusetzen. Andere Forschungen führen zu anderen Ergebnissen und zu einem anderen Bild der Vergangenheit. Dieses Bild können wir als Archäolog*innen mitgestalten, indem wir entscheiden in welche Richtung geforscht wird, welche Fragen gestellt und welche Schwerpunkte gesetzt werden. So können wir als Anarcharchäologie-Kollektiv dazu beitragen, unterrepräsentierte Gruppen und in der Forschungsgeschichte vernachlässigte Themen sichtbarer zu machen. Es gilt mit stereotypen Vorstellungen aufzuräumen, zum Beispiel indem wir in der Forschung lange vernachlässigte Themen wie Sorgearbeit, Kindheit, Mehrgeschlechtlichkeit und Subalternität behandeln. Ziel ist es, die Vorstellungen von Vergangenheit und Gegenwart zu hinterfragen und neu zu denken, da diese oft auf konservativen Narrativen beruhen. Traditionen müssen nicht ewig fortgeführt werden, wenn sie überholt sind und nur dazu dienen Herrschaftsverhältnisse aufrechtzuerhalten. Gegenwart ist wandelbar. Für eine transparente und frei zugängliche Wissenschaft und Wissenskommunikation wollen wir in Zukunft weitere Medienprojekte verwirklichen und einen Raum für politischen Austausch schaffen. Selbstverständlich sind wir aktivistisch! Wir arbeiten an einer herrschaftsfreien und solidarischen Archäologie, denn eine andere Archäologie – eine andere Welt – ist möglich!

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The Archaeology of the Egyptian Revolution and Counterrevolution. An Archaeology that Has Never Occurred

Johannes Jungfleisch and Chiara Reali

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The Archaeology of the Egyptian Revolution and Counterrevolution. An Archaeology that Has Never Occurred

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Introduction

At the beginning of 2011, thousands of demonstrators filled the streets in the cities and villages of different countries in North Africa and West Asia, demanding the demise of the ruling authoritarian regimes. In Egypt, people forced Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak to resign after 18 days of mass protests. Shortly after these events, many teams of foreign archaeologists were back in Egypt to continue their work on the distant past (el-Aref 2011). (Archaeological) Business as usual. This was also true for us: PhD students carrying out their research in the eastern Nile delta at that time. As archaeologists, we reflect in this essay on how we could have taken and still could take a stance in the political events that occurred in Egypt from the 2011 revolution onwards.

The Dig Must Go On

In late spring of 2011, a couple of months after the beginning of the Egyptian revolution, the first of the two annual excavations at an archaeological site in Egypt's eastern Nile delta was supposed to start. A little bit later than usual but still consistent with the regular archaeological calendar, the work in the field and on the materials in the excavation house continued – despite the unstable situation and an ongoing and already disappointed revolution heading in directions unknown. But the dig must go on. And it went on, regardless of whether small demonstrations, violent clashes, massacres of civilians, Egypt's first free elections, a *coup d'état* or bomb attacks and fighting occurred. During these troublesome times, we spent many months in Egypt, living and working in a parallel foreign country – the past. Lost in the material remains of pharaonic Egypt, we felt like the protagonist of Max Frisch's novel *Gantenbein* who reflects on his trivial inaction in the face of daily torture during the Algerian Revolution of the 1950s and 1960s: "If I can imagine it for a few moments, there is nothing else, and the idea is almost unbearable. And I am ready for any action. But I sit here, reading an outdated newspaper, enduring it. Doing nothing…"[1] (Frisch 1975: 21–22). On the weekends in Cairo, our eyes saw the revolutionary gatherings taking place in Tahrir Square, t-shirts with revolutionary slogans fluttering on the balustrade around the square, and people covering the walls of the American University in Cairo in Mohamed Mahmoud Street with graffiti. Still, we were sitting there, focusing on archaeology, while the Maspero Massacre[2] was taking place only a few hours away from where we worked. Our professional inaction was appalling, and more alarming is the fact that it was and is not an exception in archaeology.

1 "Wenn ich es mir einige Augenblicke lang vorstellen kann, gibt es nichts anderes, und die Vorstellung ist kaum auszuhalten. Und ich bin bereit zu jeder Tat. Aber ich sitze hier, eine veraltete Zeitung lesend, und halte es aus. Tatlos…"

2 On the 9th of October 2011, security forces and military personnel attacked peaceful Coptic demonstrators on their way to the Maspero television building on the eastern bank of the Nile in Cairo: between 24 and 27 protesters were killed, and more than 300 civilians were injured (Abd el-Fattah 2021: 66).

For the Sake of Archaeology

It may seem surprising that the history and material culture of ancient Egypt inflames archaeologists' scientific passion, while the current political events and their consequences for the people of Egypt remain mostly unnoticed or ignored. But on second sight, Egyptology's apparent neutrality, or, better, passivity, might result from its dependency on the need to keep "good relations" with the Egyptian authorities. After all, they are the ones who issue both the excavation and security permissions that are essential to any archaeological project (Jurman 2022: 14; see also von Rüden 2012: 53). Not taking a position in such an unstable political situation meant continuing our research on the Egyptian past almost undisturbed. Indeed, an exclusive interest in the distant past turns out to be an essential strategy for archaeologists working in regions of political unrest or ruled by authoritarian regimes. This seemingly neutral stance on current politics by foreign archaeologists in Egypt is by no means neutral. On the contrary: it is highly political and in a direction that sharply contrasts with the ethical ideals claimed by the West.

As Claus Jurman recently argued, Egypt's cultural heritage is the main attractor for tourism, and thus an important economic factor, creating employment opportunities and significantly contributing to the gross domestic product (Jurman 2022: 16–17). The touristic consumption of antiquities in Egypt, especially under the current global economic crisis, is therefore comprehensible. What is rarely grasped, though, is the ambiguous and underestimated role archaeology plays with its research in promoting tourism and thus economically supporting past and current regimes. Worse still, it provides insights into the past – especially the pharaonic one – which serves those in power very well for their propaganda (Jurman 2022: 17–18, 20–21).

We believe that there are good reasons for archaeologists working in Egypt to take off their blinkers of imagined neutrality, face up to our entanglement with current politics, and act accordingly. The Egyptian Revolution and its aftermath as well as our passivity in the wake of the events represent a turning point that forces us to reflect on how we, as archaeologists and heritage researchers, could and can engage in the political and social struggles of contemporary Egypt. It is necessary to question our exclusive occupational focus on the material remains of the Egyptian past and instead actively turn the archaeological gaze towards those of the present. Not for the sake of archaeology but for the Egyptian people.

An Archaeology That Has Never Occurred

Documenting the Materialities of the Revolution and Counterrevolution

During the Egyptian revolution, people physically appropriated public space by filling the streets with their bodies and boldly chanting their demands at the sight of police violence. With their protests, the demonstrators transformed the urban landscape of Cairo and other cities in a material way. From the beginning of the revolution, people started sit-ins in the square. For this purpose, they constructed makeshift tents in the open spaces using materials ready at hand. Their protest found many creative and spontaneous forms of expression: self-made posters, banners, stickers, flags, sculptures, puppets, installations, and the omnipresent graffiti formed a multifaceted material culture (see, e.g., Hamdy and Karl 2014).

Violent clashes between the demonstrators on one side and police, paramilitary, and military units on the other also left material marks on the cityscape. Missing or replaced stones in the paving of Tahrir Square, the blackened concrete skeleton, previously the headquarters of Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP), and other signs of destruction remained from the clashes. On the other hand, barbed wire barriers, concrete walls, checkpoints, and tanks represented physical manifestations of the military regime's attempts to take back control of the public space. People responded to the buffer walls of concrete blocks with various practices of resistance, ranging from graffiti paintings to creative occupations and partial demolitions (see, e.g., Abaza 2013). These elements shaped together the materiality of Tahrir Square in the years between 2011 and 2015.

From the first days of the revolution, people took pictures and videos of both protest rallies and the state violence used to suppress the protests, to bear witness to the events and disseminate the images worldwide through social media. At a time when photography was in many areas prohibited, the act of making images was in and of itself revolutionary and political (Baladi 2016: 132). At the same time, people realised the need to collect footage and pictures to preserve a digital memory of the events (Mosireen Collective 2018). Similarly, there was a strong desire

to photographically document the emerging revolutionary street art, especially the ephemeral graffiti paintings with their versatile visual language (Abaza 2013: 125, 138).

Transient in nature, the material expressions of contestation and political struggle have mostly disappeared from Egypt's streets today. After Mubarak's resignation, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) started to whitewash the revolutionary graffiti from Cairo's urban fabric (Abaza 2013: 125). And soon after its takeover in 2013, the military regime initiated the extensive redesign of Tahrir Square and the renovation of other areas in downtown Cairo, erasing the material traces of the revolution (Abaza 2017a; 2017b). Transformed into images, the materiality of the revolution survived in publications about street art (see, e.g., Gröndahl 2012; Hamdy and Karl 2014) and virtual media archives created by Egyptian activists and foreign journalists and researchers (Egypt Revolution 2011; Morayef 2011–2015; Mosireen Collective 2018). Nonetheless, virtual archives are vulnerable since their visibility depends on the economic logic embedded in the search engines' algorithms (Baladi 2016: 135).

In our view, we should have offered our specific repertoire of recording methods to the people and activists in Egypt. Firstly, archaeologists could have helped with the systematic geo-referenced photogrammetric documentation of street art and its integration into a diachronic open map of protest. Putting ourselves into service, we would have assisted in preserving and transforming the material culture of the revolution into "a new kind of intangible heritage" some Egyptian researchers hoped for (Naguib 2016: 79). Secondly, we could have practised a form of counter-mapping, correlating roadblocks implemented by the security forces to disrupt the protests with the movements of demonstrators, as well as the number of casualties. Thirdly, the archaeological documentation of weapon fragments, for example, cartridge casings of ammunition and tear gas canisters, could have been the starting point for tracing the trajectories of weapon exports to Egypt. And finally, our continuous presence in Egypt would have enabled us to observe how the military regime seized the memory of Tahrir by whitewashing the façades of the surrounding buildings and erecting monuments with eclectic borrowings from ancient Egypt (Abaza 2017b: 185) or actual antiquities in the middle of the square (Jurman 2022: 17–18).

Collecting the Debris of a Not-bygone Past

The premises for the touristic "improvement" of Lower and Upper Egypt at the cost of both the Egyptian population and its non-pharaonic heritage had already been laid out under Mubarak (Hanna 2013: 372). However, after the *coup d'état*, a major emphasis placed on dynastic Egypt allowed for the normalisation and justification of the demolition of historic buildings, residential areas, and neighbourhoods throughout the country. In the case of the "Sphinx Avenue" in Luxor, the destruction of modern dwellings and the inhabitants' mass relocation took place to "preserve" the dynastic period remains and ensure access for tourists and income from ticket sales (Ayyad 2021; Jurman 2022: 18 and fn 113). In addition, the military regime continues to launch large infrastructure projects to the detriment of Egypt's non-pharaonic cultural heritage and the people residing close by. One notorious example is the City of the Dead in Cairo. This monumental historic cemetery, home to thousands of people, is currently being demolished to build flyovers that will connect Cairo to Egypt's New Administrative Capital (NAC) (El Sawy 2022; Yee 2022). Lucrative enterprises such as cafes and bistros are also "good reasons" to empty areas destined for gentrification. Authorities deprived the neighbourhood of Imbaba, Cairo of the iconic houseboats moored along the Nile Corniche by Kit Kat square, which were symbols of 20th-century Egyptian intellectual life (Gamal El-Gafrie 2022; Kotb and Omar 2022). This search for "modernisation" is being used together with Egypt's pharaonic splendour as a smokescreen to hide real life hardships, attract investments, and gain the support of the private sector. Destructions create discontent in local communities and mistrust of the government.

Egyptologists have already missed several opportunities to tell the unheard stories of these destructions over the last years. Exceptions among us (see, e.g., Sheikh Abd el-Qurna and el-Khokha in Upper Egypt: Strong 2016: 8; Strong and Bednarski 2016: 131–132, 141; Lemos et al. 2017) showed that simply doing our job, i.e. combining archaeological recording methods (3D laser scanner surveys of architectural remains, photogrammetry, inventory of finds) with interdisciplinary teamwork, would have allowed for the documentation of vanishing non-pharaonic cultural heritage and of people's memories. In this way, archaeological practice could offer a different perspective on these destructions and the ensuing conflicts and create an alternative to existing narratives.

Taking Apart the Pharaoh's Palace

Beyond the appropriation of Egyptian antiquities for majestic events with international media coverage and relocating monuments to resignify parts of the urban landscape like Tahrir Square (for examples, see Jurman 2022: 17–18 fn 107), al-Sisi's regime has been using Egypt's pharaonic legacy as architectural inspiration for the most famous of its infrastructure projects, the New Administrative Capital (Jurman 2022: 21). Even surpassing previous Egyptian presidents' ambitions,[3] the NAC was presented as one of the largest mega-projects ever initiated in Egypt. Thus, it appears to be a "pharaonic" enterprise in itself. This city amid the desert 50 km east of Cairo is a showroom of absolute superlatives: tallest skyscraper in Africa, largest cathedral in North Africa and West Asia, biggest military headquarters in the world, largest park in the world. Not only the superlatives of the building activity but also the relocation of the capital to a previously undeveloped area far from the people are reminiscent of the strategies employed by rulers in ancient West Asia and pharaonic Egypt after they ascended the throne (cf. Sargon of Akkad and Sargon II of Assur: Heinz 2007; 2008: 141–158). Two pharaonic symbols are the landmarks of this city. The shape of the "Iconic Tower" was inspired by the crown of the god Amun, while the world's largest park named Green River Park mimics the Nile and resounds like the "Great Green" of the ancient Egyptians, a large body of water. A huge glass obelisk, meant to become the highest building in the world, is also in the works. Further pharaonic reminiscences are migdol-like gates evoking the entrance to the Medinet Habu Temple, scattered papyrus columns, ankh-shaped structures, obelisks, sphinxes, pyramids, and, of course, a presidential palace. The shining façade of the latter building nicknamed "Temple of Pharaoh" reproduces a winged sun disk (a symbol of kingship in ancient Egypt, where the king was also named "Son of Ra," nothing less than "son of the sun god") and is the emblem of the propagandistic use of pharaonic legacy in modern Egypt (for the NAC, see Menshawy 2021; Ebrahim 2022; Walsh and Yee 2022).

Allusions to the past in art and architecture are outward-directed messages stating legitimacy. Archaeologists are used to recording, analysing, and interpreting such anachronistic features at archaeological sites. Documenting these references to dynastic Egypt in the case of the NAC[4] could reveal the strategies used by the current regime to legitimise its rule and erase the memories of the revolution.

Concluding Thoughts

Archaeology possesses an inescapable political dimension in the present. Despite its obviousness, we often ignore this simple fact and focus on an apolitical imagined past. In particular, archaeologies conducted in times and regions of conflict tend to separate the political dimension from the scientific one for several reasons. Such an oblivious attitude fails to recognise that our inaction is highly political. Concerning Egyptian archaeology, this implicitly means winking at an authoritative regime's repression, violence, and injustice.

In a context like the Egyptian revolution and counterrevolution, the concept of activist archaeology might appear not only ambitious, since most of us would never call ourselves activists, but also inappropriate with respect to the activists detained in the Egyptian prisons. Nonetheless, we believe that we need a responsible archaeology, aware of and interested in the social and political circumstances and struggles in which it operates. Individual responsibilities are crucial but not enough. Starting with these, we need to foster communal responsibility, which can only be reached by listening to local communities, cooperating with them, and cultivating a debate within archaeology that outreaches knowledge production about the past. From 2011 onwards, there were many situations in Egypt in which archaeologists could have engaged with current political and social issues. As we argued in this essay, we could have assisted as archaeologists working in Egypt in preserving heritage and producing evidence of the present through the practice of archaeology. An archaeology of the Egyptian revolution and counterrevolution has not occurred (yet). But the examples outlined above illustrate how we could have embarked (not without risks) on an archaeology that is responsible for both the past and the present. Some of these ideas might become projects to be carried out in the future, ideally in collaborative and polyphonic ways. And this time, it will not be for the sake of archaeology.

3 See the construction of Nasr City (currently the largest city district in Cairo but projected to be Egypt's new capital) by Gamal Abdel Nasser (Elshahed 2015) or New Cairo City, built under Mubarak to reduce the overcrowding of the capital city.

4 It might also be interesting to carry out comparative studies, considering the resort to ancient Egyptian elements in other ongoing architectural mega-projects, for example, in New Alamein, New Mansoura, and New Aswan City.

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Archaeology as Necessarily Political

Beatriz Marín-Aguilera

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Archaeology as Necessarily Political

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Mucha gente pequeña, en lugares pequeños, haciendo cosas pequeñas, puede cambiar el mundo.

Eduardo Galeano

In October 2020, as part of a panel on Black History and Archaeology in British schools organised by the Department of Archaeology at Cambridge, a sixth-form student from Greater London, when asked about their perception of archaeology as a discipline, replied with the following: 'Posh, classy, not very diverse.'

Posh. Classy. Not *very* diverse.

Let that sink in.

Archaeology is indeed one of the whitest disciplines. In the report *American Archaeologist* carried out by the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), 89% of respondents identified themselves as having European ancestry, i.e. being white (Zeder 1997: 13). More recently, the 2020 *Profiling the Profession* report states that 97% of archaeologists in the UK are white (Aitchison et al. 2021). There are no official data for the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), but I surmise a similar percentage of white people. There are only few initiatives whose work has been crucial to truly diversify ethnicity within the discipline, namely the Society of Black Archaeologists (SBA) and the Indigenous Archaeologist Collective (IAC) in the US and the European Society of Black and Allies Archaeologies (ESBAA).

Regarding socioeconomic background, the 2020 *Profiling the Profession* report calculates that 62% of UK archaeologists come from well-off families, with parents holding managerial and professional occupations. It is difficult to know whether this would apply to other European countries because educational systems differ between them, but the UK evidence is telling. Regarding gender, in the US the number of female students was slightly higher than male learners in archaeology, as in the SAA 1997 report. Yet, double as many men as women worked as archaeologists (in companies or in academia) (Zeder 1997: 9). In the UK, archaeology currently employs 47% women and 53% men, according to *Profiling the Profession*. This does not mean, however, that working conditions are equal: 88% of women experienced sexual harassment versus 12% men, according to the same report. In fact, as a recent survey confirms, "women encounter unfavourable wage gaps, more inequitable hiring practices, publishing and citation biases, discrimination due to pregnancy and childrearing, and are often constrained by gendered divisions of labour both inside and outside academia, as well as experience higher rates of bullying, harassment, and assault" (Brami et al. 2022: 13; see also Coto Sarmiento et al. 2020; Heath-Stout 2020; Voss 2021a, 2021b).

Archaeology, as Alex Fitzpatrick blatantly puts it, "is perhaps one of the more egregious examples of an academic discipline whose origins and foundations are almost entirely based on weaponising science for the purposes of

subjugation" (2021: 29). Indeed, archaeological (and anthropological) narratives and fieldwork practices have supported, legitimised, and sustained colonial, racist, classist, and misogynistic discourses, policies, and institutions since the 19th century. This had, and continues to have, very real consequences for Indigenous, non-white people, and non-hetero-white-cis males around the globe.

Now, do we need an activist archaeology?

In what follows, I gather and urge us to take a few actions that will help us move towards what I understand as an archaeology of social justice or an activist archaeology. At the heart of these suggestions lies willingness and commitment to build a more just, diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible archaeology with all and for all.

1. Positionality and acknowledging of our bio- and geo-political location. Concealing the standpoint of the author hides epistemic privilege and violence as well as power asymmetries. This is something that feminist, decolonial, post-structuralist, and Indigenous scholars have been advocating for a while (hooks 1984; Rivera Cusicanqui 1987, 2010; Haraway 1988; Smith 1999; Lander 2000; Mignolo 2002; Wylie 2003; Harding 2004; Grosfoguel 2006; Sundberg 2014; Fryer 2020), but there is still much work to do in archaeology in this regard.

2. Reckoning with whiteness and racism is urgent. It is not enough to tick the box of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) trainings. We need to confront the roots, historiography, mainstream and subjugated knowledges, and practices of our discipline (Mullings 2005; Hutchings and La Salle 2014; Blakey 2020; Franklin et al. 2020; Flewellen et al. 2021; Reilly 2022).

3. Decolonising the archaeology curriculum. This implies reflecting on the way we teach archaeology (periodisation, geographies covered, topics, themes, methods) and reformulating our syllabus and praxis. The websites of the Society of Black Archaeologists and Queer Archaeology, among many others, have very useful resources in that regard (see also Smith 1999; Watkins 2000; Silliman 2008; Hutchings and La Salle 2014; Cobb and Croucher 2020; Supernant et al. 2020). Specific examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *honestly* looking for non-white scholarship as part of our syllabi, i.e. not tokenising Black, Indigenous, and People Of Colour (BIPOC) scholars, but engaging seriously with their scholarship;
- actively avoiding a mostly white-male reference list in our syllabus;
- rethinking labels such as "prehistory" and "protohistory" that still assume writing as the precondition for "History"; perhaps even abandoning them altogether. The term "prehistory", in particular, is a clear reminiscence of colonialism that, in many places, erases all (Indigenous) history existing before the brutal invasion by Europeans. As Miguel Aguilar Díaz insists, "our history is not "pre" anything!" (2010: 21).

4. Diversifying staff members. This starts with arranging hiring panels that are deliberately diverse in terms of race, ethnic, and socioeconomic background, gender, sexuality, disability, and age, and actively avoiding almost exclusively white male panels. If our department/school/institute does not have such a diversity of scholars to set up a hiring panel, we can always invite (and compensate) scholars from other universities or institutions (either in person or online) to the panel to ensure heterogeneity.

5. Citational practices are important. Citations are a "reproductive technology, a way of reproducing the world around certain bodies," and "*screening techniques*: how certain bodies take up spaces by screening out the existence of others" (Ahmed 2013). This is especially the case of Indigenous people, whose knowledge has been extracted, filtered, co-opted, and depoliticised by white bodies, who, in the process, have gained considerable symbolic capital (Smith 1999; Rivera Cusicanqui 2010, 2016; Simpson and Klein 2013; Ndlovu 2014; Todd 2016; Mendoza 2018). As Max Liboiron points out, "Citing the knowledges of Black, Indigenous, poc, women, lgbtqai+, two-spirit, and young thinkers is one small part of an anticolonial methodology that refuses to reproduce the myth that knowledge, and particularly science, is the domain of pale, male, and stale gatekeepers" (Liboiron 2021: viii). Undercitation goes against academic integrity and honesty, it consciously ignores, disregards, and screens out non-white male bodies, and has very real consequences in terms of hiring, promotion, success in funding and publishing for those uncited scholars (12 Women Scholars 2021; see also "Cite Black Women").

6. Fleshing out the material culture of subalterns and of marginal lives forgotten and/or ignored in written records, including disabled people, prostitutes, Indigenous communities, slaves, asylum seekers, immigrants, convicts, lgbtqai+, women, poor and homeless people, discriminated religious and ethnic communities, colonised people, and victims of fascism and dictatorships (Scott 1994; Casella 2001; Given 2004; Singleton 2009; Wilcox 2009; Funari et al. 2009; Delgado Hervás 2010; Dezhamkhooy and Papoli-Yazdi 2010, 2020; Spencer-Wood 2010; Myers and Moshenska 2011; Weismantel 2013; Marshall 2014; Funari and Orser, Jr. 2015; Ogundiran and Ige 2015; Pollock and Bernbeck 2016; Hamilakis 2016; Bates et al. 2016; Battle-Baptiste 2016; Kiddey 2017; Byrnes and Muller 2017; Tejerizo-García et al. 2017; Zuchtriegel 2018; Chalfin 2019; Hansson et al. 2019; Rosignoli et al. 2020; López Mazz et al. 2020; González-Ruibal 2021; Marín-Aguilera 2021). Intersectionality, as Latinx and Black Feminist thought have demonstrated, is key for mapping precarious lives (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Collins 1986; Anzaldúa 1987; Crenshaw 1989; Lorde 2007 [1984]; Collins 2009).

7. Critically examining the focus of traditionally androcentric research areas and shifting them towards other silenced topics, e.g., from the male-warrior Viking stereotype to personhood, sexuality, and the domestic among the Vikings (Eriksen 2019; Moen and Walsh 2021); from the androcentric military/defensive aspects of medieval castles to gendered narratives (Dempsey 2019); instead of focusing on change in the archaeological record, bringing to the forefront continuity and the importance of care and everyday maintenance activities (Montón Subías and Sánchez Romero 2008; Montón Subías and Hernando 2018: 461–464).

8. Working *with* and *for* local communities (Indigenous, descendants, and otherwise), not only collaborating with them (Swidler et al. 1997; Watkins 2000; Singleton and Orser, Jr. 2003; Smith and Wobst 2005; Ayala Rocabado 2008; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Gnecco and Ayala 2011; Paillalef Carinao 2011; Atalay et al. 2016; Ayán Vila and Gago García-Brabo 2018; Cipolla et al. 2019; López Mazz et al. 2020; Supernant et al. 2020). It might be good to learn from other academe beyond the West. Since the 1970s, university extension programmes at the Universidad de La República in Uruguay, for instance, "aim at building a collaboration between academics and other agentive communities, *on an equal footing*, discussing and combining their respective knowledge to the service of socially valuable objectives, giving priority to the problems of the most oppressed groups" (Grabino and Santos 2017, emphasis added). These collaborative schemes follow a bottom-up approach – from the community to the university. They have an integrative approach – community knowledge(s), academic knowledge, interdisciplinarity – and, most importantly, they aim at enacting social change.

9. Challenging problematic practices and contents, and holding people in our communities and outside them accountable. This also includes allowing space for amending wrongdoings, learning, apologising, healing, and repairing. Confronting whiteness, racism, androcentrism, ableism, and socioeconomic, sexual and gender discrimination are processes of learning (and unlearning privileges), and we will all commit mistakes. Therefore, it is also important to recognise when someone is apologising and changing.

We could practice one or (hopefully) more of these suggested paths. There are many other actions that one can take to work towards social justice as an activist archaeologist. Reciprocity and cross-learning are crucial steps, as it is the decolonisation, as a process, of archaeology in particular and of Western knowledge in general. Greater diversity, equality, and inclusivity enriches perspectives, narratives, pedagogies, methodologies, experiences, and praxis. An activist archaeology thus does not have a political dimension, paraphrasing José Luis Rebellato (2009 [1988]: 64); it is necessarily political.

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Active Archaeology in the Middle East

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Active Archaeology in the Middle East

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Whether because of the lack of funds or personnel, or the flooding, or intensifying hostilities that ultimately resulted in the deaths of several site workers, William Kennett Loftus's excavations at Susa during the 1850s were far from an absolute success. This is not to say that the undertaking was an utter failure either; Loftus, after all, produced a detailed plan of the site and oversaw the uncovering of the Apadana – the audience hall of the Palace of Darius (Loftus 1857; Curtis 1993). He is also credited with identifying the site as the biblical Shushan. But after Loftus finished digging at Susa, British researcher and diplomat Henry Rawlinson stated that Loftus "had turned the mound of Susa topsy-turvey without finding much" (Curtis 1993: 15).

Rawlinson was not the only one to feel this way. When the Dieulafoys arrived at Susa in the 1880s, Jane Dieulafoy politely described Loftus's work as a series of "awkward attempts to secure an inscription" (J. Dieulafoy 1890: 42). In contrast to this, the Dieulafoys prioritized planning their expedition to be accurate, systematic, and thorough. In Jane's own words: "it does not enter into my husband's views to dig any holes whatever and to *search*, in the dark, for 'museum-objects;' excavations executed with method alone can give scientific results" (J. Dieulafoy 1890: 89).

Their contemporaries, too, recognized the Dieulafoys' excavation for its exacting execution and control. In an 1884 review of Marcel Dieulafoy's *L'art antique de la Perse*, Auguste Choisy called M. Dieulafoy's work and publication "*vraiment scientifique*" (Choisy 1884: 395). In 1886, Ernest Babelon deemed M. Dieulafoy to have broken new empirical ground, saying that "no one, until now, had studied and classified scientifically the ancient monuments of Iran, or carried on methodical excavations on sites" (Babelon 1886: 53).

As a result of this adherence to systematism and the evidence thereby collected, M. Dieulafoy mounted a case that Persians had borrowed their artistic techniques from other cultural groups – primarily the Greeks. M. Dieulafoy (1884) argued that although many of the architectural forms visible at Susa and other Persian sites were unique because of the particular climatological conditions in Persia, many of the foundational construction practices evident in Persian sites were fundamentally Greek in origin.

While such a diffusionist standpoint is now quite outdated, it was conceived with the utmost commitment to what was at the time objective and scientific evidence-gathering and interpretation. This is perhaps why Babelon claimed that M. Dieulafoy has provided "a certain *proof* that the Persians learned from the Ionian Greeks the secret of their art" (Babelon 1886: 56, emphasis added).

But the use of scientific methods and data to make an argument does not make it apolitical. M. Dieulafoy's claims that Persian art and architecture were not indigenous inventions take on a sharp edge when viewed in light of Jane's descriptions of the "Dizfulites," a contemporary Iranian population whom she refers to as "the last representatives of the old Susian race" (J. Dieulafoy 1890: 90). Jane says that the Dizfulites are "the scum of the population," and:

> "They are small, puny, weak, badly formed, afflicted with purulent diseases, adorned with bandages and plasters, ugly in appearance, covered with a light chocolate-colored skin, and present the striking characteristics of certain black races. The forehead, two fingers high, is surrounded by hair cut straight around it; the skull is small, the mouth thick-lipped, the heel protruding… [Their] poverty would account, to a certain extent, for their moral and physical infirmities." (J. Dieulafoy 1890: 90)

M. Dieulafoy's conclusions, despite their scientific basis – or perhaps even because of it – were not agenda-free. The thoughtfully-placed trenches and thorough excavation served to motivate the cultural dispossession of both ancient and contemporary Persians. This was, in 1886, an activist archaeology. It was also a scientific excavation; these are not exclusive categories.

There are archaeologists like Randall McGuire who have stated that "archaeology is always political" (2008: xii; see also Panameño and Nalda 1979; Hamilakis and Duke 2007; Boytner et al. 2010). Archaeology-based claims and archaeological practice itself are both implicated in power dynamics. Nationalist archaeologies serve to re-entrench state power, while archaeologies of marginalized communities hold liberatory potential. Whether reinforcing or challenging contemporary hierarchies and structures, archaeology is political.

I argue that it is also activist, in the sense of intentionally trying to effect a certain social or political outcome. Colonial archaeology was activist, working to both ideologically and materially enable conquest and colonial administration. The archaeologies of newly independent nations in the early 20th century often sought to establish national narratives and identities. But even positivist archaeological work such as that of the Dieulafoys at Susa has aimed at questions relevant to contemporary social structure and power dynamics. It is a false dichotomy to imagine that only archaeological work aimed at overturning inequities is activist, but archaeological work serving – even implicitly – to uphold and justify those same inequities is not.

In the Middle East it is particularly clear how archaeological sites are always imbricated in contemporary politics. Monuments have been destroyed and artifacts sold by extremist groups such as the Taliban and Da'esh for both ideological and financial ends (Flood 2002; Brodie and Sabrine 2017). Archaeological sites in countries such as Egypt and Jordan are popular tourism destinations for visitors from all over the globe, driving a vital sector of the national economy. And in the Gulf archaeology and cultural heritage have become a key state strategy for projecting a more cosmopolitan and liberal identity to the world (Ouroussoff 2010; Hanounik Huth 2014; Abuhjeeleh 2019). Throughout this region, archaeology, society, and economy are intrinsically married to one another.

It is therefore unsurprising to see archaeological sites and symbols show up across the range of activism in the Middle East. For example, in 2019, Egyptian whistleblower Mohamed Ali called for protestors against Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's presidency to congregate at the Great Pyramids in Giza. The iconic ancient remains were, in his mind, an ideal staging ground for visible political demonstration (Middle East Eye 2019).

Palestinian activists have utilized similar strategies, as in 1993 when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) centered on a scale model of the Dome of the Rock (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). In this case, it was a representation of a cultural heritage site rather than the site itself which signified the protestors' demands. Museums, too, play an important role in activist curation and storytelling in the Middle East. Lina Khatib (2012) describes the museumification of material culture from uprisings in Egypt and Libya, in which tear gas canisters and protest signs are being preserved in cases and contextualized with labels. Khatib states that this process is a means for citizens to lay claim to power; the museum and its relationship to cultural heritage transform trash into material culture and legitimize the struggle as a whole. Archaeology and cultural heritage function both materially and ideologically as flashpoints and pathways for activism.

I witnessed this during my fieldwork in Petra, Jordan. In spring 2015, the Jordanian government shut down a money-laundering scheme that had been operating in southern Jordan for years. In the venture, families would lend property, usually cars, to Azmi Nasarat and his brother, who would pay amounts 30–40% in excess of the value of the property (al-Tweissi 2015). While the scheme had always been illegal, and many interlocutors told me it always seemed suspicious, families in the south believed that the government was aware of it and was allowing it to continue. They perceived it as an open secret with minimal risk if they chose to participate. But the end came swiftly and unexpectedly when the government seized all of the property lent to Nasarat at the time. Families throughout southern Jordan lost huge amounts of savings and property overnight – everything from cash to cars to sheep and goats. The impact on the town of Wadi Musa, where I was living, was immediately apparent. Streets ordinarily blocked with gridlock were suddenly empty; the usual sounds of honking and diesel engines rumbling were replaced with eerie silence. The loss was devastating and the communities living near Petra organized to pressure the government to return the seized property. They decided to shut down the highway leading to Petra as well as the Park's main entrance.

The choice to close off access to Petra was, of course, in part economic. Although 2015 saw a slump in tourism to Jordan, there were still around a half million visitors that year – most of whom would come to Petra and pay the 50–90 JD entrance ticket (AlArabiya News 2020). More recently, visitorship to Petra has surpassed a million people annually (Arraf 2020). Some have even estimated that Petra alone supplies around 10% of Jordan's GDP (Bille 2019: 13). Closing off the entrances to the Park would send a powerful signal to the state, depriving it of much-needed and significant revenue.

But Petra also occupies an important symbolic position for contemporary Jordanians. It is iconic, almost a metonym for authentic Jordanian identity. The singular architecture, the dusky desert landscape, and its position as a trading center all evoke pride in elements of what is supposedly most core to being Jordanian – innovation, strength, and most of all, hospitality. However unintentionally, archaeological work at Petra has fed into this perception of connection between past and present Jordanian identity. Excavations have illustrated the engineering acumen of the Nabataean population, and their ability to persist through extreme environmental conditions. Archaeologists have written about the Nabataeans feasting and about syncretic rituals and religious practices at the cosmopolitan trading center. These findings have fed into the pride and feelings of connection between modern Jordan and ancient Petra.

The work of archaeologists therefore contributed to the reasons why Petra served as such an ideal focal point for protest in Wadi Musa. The message was not only one of control over funds but also over past and narrative. The choice of Petra as a site for resistance was based in both material conditions and historical understandings. Archaeological work contributes to both of these, whether intentionally or not. In Petra, archaeological work underpins activism.

The history of archaeology is one of activism and in the present-day Middle East, activism makes use of archaeological spaces and claims. As such, archaeologists have no choice but to recognize their role in political struggle. Fortunately, there are ways to use this inescapable position to work toward emancipatory futures, and not to be co-opted into oppression and violence. What does that look like?

In Jordan, water availability is an activist issue (Zawahri 2012). Amidst protests against the current systems governing water management in Jordan, archaeologists are positioned to contribute to the science and infrastructure of water reclamation. Our excavations have revealed how communities in antiquity constructed dams, wells, terraces, and channels to collect and redistribute water – and successfully managed large-scale gardens and even pools. In the context of the contemporary water crisis, this is knowledge that can be marshalled for public benefit. Some archaeologists have begun doing just this – in Umm al-Jimal, in Udhruh, and in Petra (AbdulKhaleq and Ahmed 2007; al Zeez Shqairat et al. 2010; Abdelal et al. 2021).

Relatedly, landscape restoration can be as much a part of heritage conservation as of activist praxis. Increasingly, plant life and terrain feature in conservation and restoration plans, with the absorption, windbreak, and cultural value of flora all being considered as potential assets to site preservation (Restuccia et al. 2012; Scharf 2014; Margetts 2021). Planting and re-wilding a landscape also impinges on sustainability, food shortage, and even place-making. In Petra, deforestation has had dramatic effects both ecologically and culturally (Addison 2011); the loss of trees has contributed to the drought in the area, the loss of other plants, the shrinking of traditional grazing lands, and the depletion of wooded picnicking areas. Implementing landscape restoration as part of conservation practice in this context is activist, enabling social and subsistence practices to continue and ensuring public space for diverse community members.

Archaeologists' practices and decisions around how we organize our excavations are also inherently political and activist. Choices about accommodations, equipment rental and purchasing, as well as codes of conduct are all caught up in aspirational power dynamics. Labor conditions are a particularly salient focal point for activist archaeological practice. Choosing whether or not to make an effort to hire women, safety procedures, and pay scales are all political issues (Mickel 2021). Particularly in places with high unemployment and poverty rates, decisions about who to hire are fraught with issues of need, equity, and power-sharing. Furthermore, in a region where archaeology has been so entwined historically with conquest and extraction, treating and paying local workers as meaningful partners in all elements of the excavation process is ultimately activist practice.

Precisely because it is always political, and always *active* in the world, archaeology is inherently activist, as it has been since its inception. Archaeological work – from the questions asked to the methodologies implemented – takes account of the past and aims toward specific visions and ideals of the future. In the Middle East, this orientation has historically been one of foreign control over archaeological resources within the region, and thereby the territories and nations of the area. But today, archaeologists have a choice in whether they are swept up in this current – whether intentionally or simply by attempting to stand still. Instead, archaeologists can make investigations and interventions, redirecting the activist force of archaeology to serve liberatory futures for the diverse communities affected by archaeological work.

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A Gloves-off Activist Archaeology?

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A Gloves-off Activist Archaeology?

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The Indiana Jones memes have spoken: the Nazis are back, and archaeologists need to start punching heads. The current resurgence of the political far-right across many parts of the world presents a distinctive set of challenges and threats. Within archaeology some have responded with outrage, activism, and acts of resistance. Others remain uncertain how to respond: whether as citizens, professionals, intellectuals, or activists? How can we organise to amplify our messages and strengthen our efforts? Where should these efforts be targeted?

Recent scholarly interventions have focused on specific events such as Donald Trump's election and the Brexit vote (see, for example, Gardner 2017; Muckle 2017; Bonacchi et al. 2018). In a lively debate in *Antiquity*, Alfredo González-Ruibal et al. (2018a) decried the weaknesses of liberal-minded social archaeologists and critical heritage scholars, calling for an interventionist public archaeology that can confront the rising tides of reactionary populism. Nor can we pretend that the enemy is solely outside the ivory tower: a few years ago I watched a distinguished colleague speak on ancient DNA to an overwhelmingly white bourgeois public audience, outlining the triumphant rise of "we, the Europeans".

These concerns are not new, and any discussion of resurgent reaction is haunted by spectres of 1930s Europe. The autobiography of the philosopher-archaeologist Robin G. Collingwood offers an insight into the mindset of scholars in this period. Written in 1938 in the shadow of the rise of Nazism and the Spanish Civil War, Collingwood reflected on his struggles for a *rapprochement* between theory and practice, both intellectual and political. Collingwood was a leading British intellectual of his time, an important figure in Roman archaeology and in the philosophy of history. An instinctive liberal with a powerful faith in democracy and a high-handed disdain for Marxism, socialism, and fascism, Collingwood wrote with a searing anger of the appeasement of Hitler and the betrayal of Spain by the European democracies: "The Spanish civil war was a straight fight between Fascist dictatorship and parliamentary democracy. The British government, behind all its disguises, had declared itself a partisan of Fascist dictatorship" (1939: 166–167). The newly-radicalised Collingwood reflected that his earlier pose as a "detached professional thinker" had kept him away from what he described as "a gloves-off philosophy … a philosophy that should be a weapon" and from the fight against fascism: "I know that all my life I have been engaged unawares in a political struggle, fighting against these things in the dark. Henceforth I shall fight in the daylight." (1939: 167, 153).

To fight effectively, we must understand our adversary. Two things struck me about González-Ruibal et al.'s characterisation of the problematic publics and non-publics of archaeology. First is their identification of "the supporters of reactionary populism" as coming from "(t)he American Rust Belt or the impoverished European working classes" (González-Ruibal et al. 2018b: 525). Second is their identification of the populations that leftist, activist public archaeologists have hitherto overlooked: those deemed too "greedy, patriarchal, xenophobic or uninterested in the past" (González-Ruibal et al. 2018a: 508). I am interested in these characterisations because they are directly contradicted by my own understandings and experiences of radical populism and of the publics for archaeology. This divergence has significance for an activist archaeology.

In the first case, there is strong evidence that the core support for reactionary populism in many countries comes not from the unemployed or impoverished, but from the middle class:

> "About two-thirds of Trump voters in 2016 had household incomes above $50,000 (then about the US average), according to the American National Election Study. Most British Leave voters lived in the south of England, and 59 per cent were middle class (social classes A, B or C1), writes Danny Dorling, geographer at Oxford University. In the Netherlands, two-thirds of supporters of far-right Thierry Baudet are moderately or highly educated, say pollsters Ipsos." (Kuper 2020).

A growing number of studies are highlighting the heterogeneity of support for reactionary populism, bringing together "radical conservative elites, anti-redistributionist small owners, and rural economic middle-class fractions, as well as declassed segments of the working class" (Westheuser 2020; and see also Evans and Mellon 2016; Oesch and Rennwald 2018; Damhuis 2020). González-Ruibal et al.'s mischaracterisation of the people of reactionary populism is itself part of a widespread trend: "most journalists and academics still overlook the provincial middle class. The socialist-realist figure of the laid-off factory worker remains more compelling." (Kuper 2020).

In the second case, the idea that public archaeologists have neglected those inconvenient "greedy, patriarchal, xenophobic or uninterested in the past" is again directly contradicted by the evidence. As Bruce G. Trigger and others have pointed out, for centuries archaeology has been the preserve of the middle classes (Trigger 1989; McGuire and Walker 1999). Numerically speaking, we professional and academic archaeologists are vastly outnumbered by heritage tourists, antiquity collectors, local history society members, genealogists, metal detectorists, and amateur archaeologists – most of them comfortably (or at least petit) bourgeois. In Britain the beating heart of public archaeology is the great body of local and regional amateur archaeological societies, some of them more than two centuries old. Like many academics I have worked with and alongside these groups, given guest lectures at their meetings, and remain a member of several.

As a cosmopolitan communist intellectual, I have noticed that virtually all of my thankfully limited encounters with right-wing populist beliefs have come from these middle-class British amateur archaeologists. These have ranged from support for Brexit and UKIP, to admiration of Trump, outspoken homophobia, and violent anti-immigrant rhetoric. This is by no means universal – there is a wide spectrum of ideologies within amateur archaeology, from far left to far right – but the size of this reactionary community and their outspoken confidence in sharing their views surprised me and troubled me. The problem here, contra González-Ruibal et al., is an archaeological public "greedy, patriarchal, xenophobic *and interested in the past*".

An activist public archaeology must ask: why are these awful people attracted to archaeology? Why is it a fertile ground for their ideologies? And how can we drive them out? How can we forge within archaeology our version of Collingwood's "philosophy that should be a weapon"? I don't have a whole, neat answer (structural problems rarely have individual solutions), but when I look around I see sparks and embers of activism, fragments of a larger radical upsurge in archaeology. I see efforts to identify and call out the right-wing extremism and white supremacist myth that thrives in pseudoarchaeology, such as the work of Stephanie Halmhofer and others (e.g., Halmhofer 2021). I see the Black Trowel Collective's resources for debunking gender and sex binaries, standing against the misuse of archaeology in transphobic bigotry that rests upon the same fallacious biological essentialism as white supremacism (Black Trowel Collective 2021). I see radical ideas about the human past sneaking into the sphere of "popular" prehistory – traditionally the reserve of reactionary oversimplifications (Graeber and Wengrow 2021). I see a growing reaction to the incautiousness and poor public communication of aDNA work (e.g., Frieman and Hofmann 2019). I see efforts to remake archaeological thought and practice around principles of care, connection, and love (Supernant et al. 2020). In all of these fragments I see a will and a means to shape a disciplinary future where new fascisms will find fewer footholds. But here I am falling into the error I have criticised above, of highlighting external threats and overlooking the internal ones. This has its own risks for a growing activist sphere.

The most significant aspect of Collingwood's writing for my purposes is its description of the radicalisation of a political moderate: what we might now call a "centrist". Much of the success of an activist archaeology will lie in its ability to convince, welcome, and mobilise this large and generally liberal-minded demographic. What spurs the moderate archaeologist to action? For those not steeped in radical ideologies the most common form of activism is "reactivism". For some, like Collingwood, this is sparked by perceived threats to orderly, liberal society: Brexit, Trump, and the rise of reactionary populism worldwide. For others, activism comes in response to specific events, like the widespread archaeological outrage that led to the cancellation of National Geographic Channel's deeply

unethical *Nazi War Diggers* (Thomas 2015), or the (current at time of writing) reaction to Graham Hancock's ridiculous Netflix series *Ancient Apocalypse*.

As every successful fascist knows, it is easy to mobilise people against perceived external threats. Criticising bad television archaeology also appeals to the intellectual snob, and vocal opposition to pseudoarchaeology remains popular amongst unreconstructed positivists. Opposition to reactionary populism, as we have seen, can also draw on bourgeois disdain for the working classes.

In contrast, the identification of internal threats can be seen as divisive and threatening to the status quo (the merits of the status quo being a fundamental point of disagreements for liberal and more radical activists). It is hard to confront the aDNA enthusiasts who slide towards white supremacism while they remain insulated by grants and prestige. To challenge bigotry in colleagues and institutional partners risks real professional harm. The same mechanisms that protect bullies and abusers in academia and professional environments also stifle activist impulses. One important principle of organising for activism is giving people some control over their exposure to risk: who can take on the very real repurcussions of arrest, discomfort, or violence, and who cannot. If we are going to clean house, the challenge for Collingwood-esque liberals is to demonstrate that their principled commitment extends beyond their comfort zones.

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Aktivistische Archäologie – JA!

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Aktivistische Archäologie – JA!

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Wer denkt bei „Aktivismus“ nicht zunächst an die Aktionen der *Extinction Rebellion*, den Aktivisten*innen von „Ende Gelände“ oder auch Fridays-for-Future-Demonstrationen? Diese werden oftmals mit spektakulären Aktionen verbunden, und leider zu oft werden diese nicht nur von einer rechten oder rechtskonservativen Presse mit Begriffen wie „radikal“, „militant“, „extremistisch“ oder gar „terroristisch“ belegt wie die jüngsten Ereignisse zu Lützerath oder die Bewertung der „Letzten Generation“ zeigen. Dabei gerät leicht aus dem Blick, das Aktivismus zunächst einmal ein politisches, soziales, ökologisches oder humanitäres Handeln meint und ein essentieller Bestandteil demokratischer Aushandlungsprozesses sein sollte.

Es sind nicht nur die Wissenschaftler*innen von S4F oder *Scientist Rebellion*, sondern auch ganz „normale“ Wissenschaftler*innen, die sich zunehmend und ausdrücklich mit normativen Überzeugungen in öffentliche Debatten einmischen. Das ist auch nicht ungewöhnlich, denn spätestens mit der Etablierung einer „Third Mission“ wird ein Engagement abseits des klassischen universitären Themas „Forschung und Lehre“ gewünscht. Die Diskussionen zum Klimawandel und der COVID-19-Pandemie haben allerdings offengelegt, dass ein Verständnis von „Third Mission“ als Sammelbegriff für Aktivitäten im Sinne der Beachtung und Bewertung gesellschaftlicher Trends und Bedürfnisse bisweilen als „aktivistisch“ abgestempelt wird oder Wissenschaft und Forschung sich mit „aktivistischen“ Ansprüchen und Erwartungen konfrontiert sieht. Dies gilt vor allem dann, wenn „die Wissenschaft“ als Autorität bei Debatten angeführt wird und an die Wissenschaft Ansprüche aus unterschiedlichen aktivistischen Feldern formuliert werden. Diese Diskussion ist nicht neu; im Kern geht es auch um die Frage nach der „Werturteilsfreiheit“, ein Paradigma, dass insbesondere von Max Weber formuliert wurde und in der Positivismusdebatte (Adorno/Habermas vs. Popper/Albert) nicht nur die Soziologie prägte.

Forschung ist nie „neutral“ und Forschung schafft soziale Wirklichkeit. Sie ist politisch und ethisch positioniert, ob sich dies Forscher*innen eingestehen oder nicht. Wenn explizit normative Äußerungen und Überzeugungen als aktivistisch gelten, dann beinhaltet jedes *statement* einer/s Wissenschaftler*in auch ein aktivistisches Moment. Nun mag man mit Blick auf die klassischen Zeiträume und Epochen der Archäologie geneigt sein, solche performativen Prozesse zu negieren oder gering zu schätzen. Wenn es der Anspruch der Archäologie ist, durch die Analyse (überwiegend) vergangener Gesellschaften einen Beitrag zum Verstehen heutigen gesellschaftlichen Handelns zu leisten und hieraus Handlungsempfehlungen für die Zukunft zu entwickeln, wird aber deutlich, dass sich auch die Archäologie mit diesem Themenfeld auseinandersetzen muss. Ob Migration, Sklaverei und andere Abhängigkeitsformen, soziale Ungleichheiten, aber auch *gender*, Globalisierung oder das Anthropozän: Mit meinen Aussagen und durch den Bezug auf „vergangene“ Epochen und dort untersuchter historischer Wirklichkeiten“ trage ich als Wissenschaftler*in eine hohe Verantwortung.

Versteht man Aktivismus als ein wertegeleitetes Handeln, dass über formale Beteiligungsprozesse hinausgeht und den bewussten Regelbruch in Kauf nimmt um auf gesellschaftliche Missstände und Defizite hinzuweisen und das auf konkrete Veränderung bestehender Verhältnisse hinwirken soll, dann findet Aktivismus vielfach an der Grenze zum jeweiligen politischen System statt. In diesem Sinne ist Aktivismus vielfach Teil sozialer Bewegungen und betrifft nicht nur unterschiedlichste Themen, sondern hat auch stark variierende Reichweiten. Aktivismus ist aber nicht mit „Militanz“ gleichzusetzen (die auch erst einmal definiert werden müsste) und beschränkt sich nicht auf spektakuläre Aktionen: Die Angst archäologische Aktivist*innen könnten sich am rekonstruierten Tor der Heuneburg festketten, dürfte eher in den Bereich der Fiktion gehören.

Für eine kritische Debatte scheint es mir wichtig, dass wir den Blick auf die Grundlagen der „Aktionsforschung“ richten, die in Politik-, Sozial- und auch Kulturwissenschaften durchaus ihren Platz haben. Betreibt man/frau als

Archäolog*in „Aktionsforschung“ oder „aktivitische Archäologie“ so bedeutet dies, die paradigmatische strikte Trennung zwischen Wissenschaft und politischer Praxis aufzuheben und zwischen Forschung und Aktivismus zu überwinden. Das erscheint problematisch und vielleicht auch gefährlich (s. u.), aber wir können aus den methodologischen und theoretischen Arbeiten der Sozial- und Kulturwissenschaften lernen. Hierbei sollte man nicht nur an „Klimawandel“ denken, sondern z. B. die *degrowth*-Bewegung, *transition-town*-Bewegung, *urban gardening* und vieles mehr in den Blick nehmen, die aktionsbasiert und aktivistisch „beforscht“ werden. In solchen Projekten wurde/wird der performative Charakter von Wissenschaft betont. Dies meint, die Forscher*innen tragen zusammen mit weiteren außer-wissenschaftlichen Akteur*innen dazu bei, Wirklichkeit nicht nur darzustellen, sondern (mit) zu gestalten.

Die Frage nach der Abgrenzung von „normaler“ und „aktivistischer“ Archäologie hängt sicherlich davon ab, wie ich aktionsbasierte Forschung und aktivistische Forschung definiere. Zunächst einmal ist auch die „normale“ Archäologie – wie jede Wissenschaft – in dem Sinne politisch, als die Akteur*innen Teil politischer Systeme sind. Der archäologische Forschungsprozess wird nicht allein durch die Rahmenbedingungen von Gesetzen und Verordnungen, von Erhaltungs- und Grabungsbedingungen oder den Ressourcen zur Archivierung, Auswertung oder Ausstellung bestimmt. Wie jeder Forschungsprozess besteht archäologisches Arbeiten aus der Wahl des Themas und der Forschungsfrage, den Theorien und Methoden sowie der Wahl der Kategorien, unter denen Daten selbst erhoben und zusammengefasst werden. Und selbstverständlich gehört auch zum Forschungsprozess die Entscheidung, welche Daten wie interpretiert werden. Diese und weitere Schritte sind normative Entscheidungen. Sie erfolgen aber vor dem Hintergrund der persönlichen und gesellschaftlichen Kontexte, der politischen und ethischen Positionen. Mit diesen Rahmenbedingungen nimmt der/die Archäolog*in bereits einen forschungs-leitenden Standpunkt ein. Die Wahl des Thema kann politisch motiviert sein, sie muss aber nicht unbedingt ein Ausdruck der eigenen politischen Überzeugung sein. In jedem Falle ist die eigene Forschung in ein (forschungs)politisches Netzwerk eingebunden und als Wissenschaftler*in gestalte ich dieses immer mit.

Eine aktionsbasierte bzw. aktivistische Archäologie unterscheidet sich allerdings insofern von einer „normalen“ Archäologie, als das sie eine situierte, intersubjektive und positionalisierte Forschung ist, die nicht zwangsläufig dem Postulat von Objektivität und Neutralität folgen muss. Mit Blick auf die Geschichte des Faches kommen spätestens hier Zweifel auf?! Für eine aktionsbasierte Forschung stehen nicht primär wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisziele im Vordergrund, sondern die Auswahl des Forschungsbereiches und -gegenstandes richtet sich nach konkreten gesellschaftlichen Bedürfnissen und soll damit zielorientiert in gesellschaftliche Zusammenhänge eingreifen.

Die – hier nicht zur Debatte stehende Diskussion – um die Objektivität von Forschung ist aber nicht mit der Missachtung ethischer und wissenschaftlicher Standards gleichsetzen. Aktionsforschung erfolgt kontextsensibel und kollektiv. Damit ist beispielsweise auch ein anderes Datenhandling verbunden, denn die Datenerhebung erfolgt prozessintegiert und kontextuell als Gesamtheit des (sozialen) Feldes. Ebenso grundsätzlich ist die bewusste (vorübergehende) Aufgabe der Distanz zum Forschungsobjekt. Angestrebt wird eine einflussnehmende Haltung, die bis zur aktiven Interaktion reichen kann. Konkret bedeutet dies unter anderem die „Wissensfrage“ zu stellen, sich also damit auseinanderzusetzen, das Wissen situativ generiert wird, die Wissensproduktion immer eine umfeldgeprägte Wissenskonstruktion ist. Dahinter steht auch eine machtkritische Sichtweise bzw. Herangehensweise und Reflexion, die letztlich ein *empowerment* der Akteur*innen ermöglichen soll.

Betreiben wir Archäologie auf solchen Wegen, können wir uns auf die vielgestaltigen Forschungsansätze der *actions research* berufen. Die partizipative Forschung ist nicht nur durch eine kritische Analyse der Wissensproduktion mit Blick auf lokale Faktoren gekennzeichnet, sondern auch durch aktive Beteiligung, Interventionen und nicht zuletzt dem Ziel des empowerments verhaftet. Hierzu gehören *community-based* Konzepte oder auch *citizen science*. International und vor allem im anglophonen Raum wurde und werden *community-based* Forschungen beispielsweise zur Sklaverei, interne Konflikten („Bürgerkriege“ etc.), Wohnungslosigkeit oder Protestcamps durchgeführt. Im deutschsprachigen Raum sind solche seltener anzutreffen, stellvertretend seien neben Projekten von Reinhard Bernbeck, Barbara Hausmair oder Susan Pollock vor allem das „Gorleben-Projekt“ (Attila Dézsi) genannt. Hinzukommen sind einige Initiativen wie anarchistische Archäologe, Queer-Archäologie oder *gender*-Archäologie, die im Kern einer aktivistischen Archäologie zuzuordnen sind.

Weitaus stärker in das traditionelle Wissenschaftsverständnis eingreifend sind Ansätze, bei denen politisches Handeln und Forschung auf einer gemeinsamen Strategie aufbauen. Hierbei ist der/die Forscher*in entweder aktiv in einer Bewegung tätig oder sympathisiert zumindest mit ihr. Dies beinhaltet eine ausdrückliche politische Positionierung, aber auch eine bewusste Aufgabe der Grenze zwischen Forscher*in und Aktivist*in, zwischen

forschendem Aktivismus und aktivistischer Forschung. Forschung in diesem Sinnen soll einen aktiven Beitrag zur Transformation bestehender Verhältnisse liefern, so dass neben etablierten wissenschaftlichen Methoden auch gezielt Interventionen und Aktionen als Methode miteinbezogen werden. Ebenso werden die klassischen Orte und Prozesse der akademischen Wissensproduktion an Universitäten oder Museen entweder grundsätzlich in Frage gestellt oder zumindest die Forderung erhoben, dass aus den Institutionen heraus aktivistisch geforscht werden muss.

Eine explizit „aktivistische Archäologie“ folgt einem Ziel abseits der „objektiven“ archäologischen Erkenntnis. Sie will auf Missstände hinweisen, verborgene oder unerwünschte (Ge)Schichten freilegen. Hier könnte Kritik kommen, denn eine solche Archäologie ist auch außerhalb des eigentlichen archäologischen Erkenntnisprozesses zielgerichtet. Ob sie damit auch den Erfolg als Ziel einschließt und somit neue Machtpositionen markiert, bliebe zu diskutieren. Angemerkt sei, dass auch eine konventionell betriebene Archäologie einem Erfolgsdruck ausgesetzt ist, wenn es um Drittmittelquoten oder Akzeptanz im Rahmen von Bauprojekten geht.

Eine aktionsbasierte oder aktivistische Archäologie stellt alle Beteiligten vor große Herausforderungen. Wie jede wissenschaftliche Forschung muss sie auf Transparenz aufbauen. Hierzu gehören nicht nur die klassischen „Verarbeitungsschritte“ auf Grabungen oder der Fundinventarisation. Transparenz betrifft in diesem Falle auch den Einsatz und die (Weiter)Entwicklung von partizipativen und kollaborativen Methoden und Theorien sowie die Entwicklung von Qualitätskriterien. Transparenz beinhaltet auch permanente Lern- und Refexionsprozesse, die nicht nur die internen und externen Akteur*innen meint, sondern sich auch mit den Grenzen des Ansatzes und der Rolle der Institutionen auseinandersetzt. Manche dieser Punkte mögen sich auf den ersten Blick nicht von „normalen“ Forschungsprozessen unterscheiden. Während eine partizipative Forschung durchaus noch dem epistemologisch externen Wissenschaftsanspruch folgt oder zumindest Universität, Museum, Denkmalpflege und soziale Bewegungen als parallele Praxen gelten, ist bei einer aktivistischen Archäologie die Grenze oder Distanz zwischen Wissenschaft und Aktivismus aufgehoben.

Aktivistische Archäologie heißt zudem, sich selbst als Wissenschaftler*in in dem ausgeübten Beruf und den damit verbundenen Funktionen kritisch zu hinterfragen. Eine solche Pfadabhängigkeit zu durchbrechen, ist wichtig. Allerdings kann „aktivistisch“ handeln auch bedeuten, sich als Teil einer Opposition zu sehen. Persönliche wissenschaftliche Lebensläufe, Karrieren und Kompetenzen, sind also damit verknüpft – auch in unserem Wissenschaftssystem. Stärker noch als partizipatorische Ansätze muss sich eine aktivistische Forschung über die Gefahr der Vereinnahmung und des Missbrauchs zur Legitimierung von dominanten Machtverhältnissen ebenso im Klaren sein wie der Tatsache, dass aktivistische Forschung nicht per se „links“ ist. Gerade letzteres wird gerne ausgeblendet. Dies führt wiederum zur Frage, ob und wie sich eine politisch motivierte Archäologie von einer aktivistischen Archäologie unterscheiden und abgrenzen lässt. Hier kann und muss eine aktivistische Archäologie auf die eigene disziplinäre Geschichte blicken.

Eine aktivistische Archäologie scheint mir auf den ersten Blick von der Anwendung, der Praxis auszugehen. Aktivismus kann durch die Nutzung wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse auf politische Ziele außerhalb des Wissenschaftsbetriebes abzielen. Aktivismus kann aber ebenso auf die Wissenschaft abzielen und somit zu einem Hinterfragen von etablierten Ansätzen und Sichtweisen führen. Dies ist vielfach mit der Anwendung oder Entwicklung neuer Theorien, Methoden oder Techniken verbunden. Auf beiden miteinander verbundenen Feldern sollte diskutiert werden, wo und wie Aktivismus und Wissenschaft zusammenpassen und wo nicht. Dies meint nicht nur die universitäre Forschung und Lehre, sondern betrifft Institutionen der Denkmalpflege und Museen, die meines Erachtens dezidiert gefragt sind, da sie zwischen breiter Öffentlichkeit und Wissenschaft stehen.

Aktive Forschung und teilweise auch aktivistische archäologische Projekte wurden und werden gerade im internationalen Rahmen auf unterschiedlichen Ebenen durchgeführt. Grundsätzlich stellte sich bereits die Frage bei der Erforschung und dem Umgang mit den Zeugnissen versklavter Menschen, aber auch indigener Gruppen/*First Nations* vor dem Hintergrund post-kolonialer Bewegungen und der *community-based archaeology*. Wenngleich nicht explizit als „aktivistisch“ bezeichnet, so haben die Einbeziehung wohnungsloser Menschen bei *surveys* (John Schofield, Larry Zimmermann), die Ausgrabungen aus der Zeit des spanischen Bürgerkrieges (Alfredo González-Ruibal) oder die Forschungen an der US-amerikanisch-mexikanischen Grenze (Jason De León) eine deutlich aktivistische Komponente. Es geht um die Frage, wer festlegt, wessen Geschichte(n) von wem mit welchen Mittel „geschrieben“ wird und geschrieben werden sollte oder gar darf – ein Thema, dass seit den 2000er-Jahren auch in Deutschland vor dem Hintergrund der *critical whiteness* und in Bezug auf BAME (*black, Asian, and minority ethnic*) diskutiert wird, aber sehr viel weiter reicht. Dies betrifft nicht zuletzt auch das Feld des Kulturerbes (*Authorized Heritage Discourse*) vor dem Hintergrund der Faro-Konvention, aber auch den Umgang mit

„*dissonant*“ oder „*unwanted heritage*“. Auch im deutschsprachigen Raum finden sich Beispiele einer aktiven Einbeziehung und des Austauschs zwischen den Forschenden und weiteren Akteur*innen. Solche Projekte erfolgen bislang eher im Zuge der Archäologie des 20. Jahrhunderts, sei es im Rahmen der Gedenkstättenarbeit bzw. der Beschäftigung mit den Hinterlassenschaften der NS-Zeit (insb. Tempelhofer Feld) sowie der Weltkriege und in jüngerer Zeit auch mit Blick auf stalinistischen Terror (Brandenburg) sowie Protestcamps (z. B. Gorleben).

Diese und weitere Forschungen sind indes eher dem Ansatz einer Trennung von Forschung und politischer Praxis geschuldet. Ich denke, wir sollten zunächst die Felder einer „aktionsbasierten Forschung“, eines „forschendem Aktivismus“ und einer „aktivistischen Forschung“ genauer in den Blick nehmen – und dies mit Bezug auf Aktivist*innen außerhalb der Archäologie und innerhalb der Archäologie. Hinzu kommt, dass der archäologische Wissenschaftsbetrieb generell davon profitieren kann, wenn nicht nur Themenfelder, sondern eben auch zentrale Begriffe und Konzepte sowie die Rolle der Archäologie in der Gesellschaft kritisch hinterfragt werden. Zudem bietet es sich an, Aktivist*innen bei Konferenzen oder Workshops, aber auch Ausstellungen oder eben Forschungsprojekten miteinzubeziehen. Hierbei meine ich nicht nur lokale Grabungsprojekte, sondern auch und insbesondere übergreifende Themen, die in den letzten Jahren verschiedentlich in den Archäologien verhandelt wurden wie Fragen nach dem „Anthropozän“, der „Globalisierung“ oder „Konflikten“, aber auch nach „Gender“, „sozialen Ungleichheiten“ oder „*heritage*/Kulturerbe“ (um nur einige zu nennen). Dies würde im Übrigen auch die Diskussion stärken, ob und in welchem Umfange Aktivismus mit dem wissenschaftlichen Anspruch der archäologischen Wissenschaften in Einklang zu bringen ist.

Als gesellschaftliche Subjekte prägen Archäolog*innen nicht nur wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisprozesse (mit), sondern können implizit oder explizit einen Beitrag zur politischen Willensbildung leisten. Hierzu gehört auch, die Wissenschaft als ein „Kontrollinstrument“ zu erkennen, die politische Entscheidungsprozesse kritisch hinterfragen und kritisieren darf. Wenn archäologische Forschungen „Völkerwanderungszeit“ und „Stämme“ als Konzepte aus dem 18. und 19. Jh. erkennt und Völker/Stämme keineswegs als homogene, in sich geschlossene und klar abgrenzbare Entitäten interpretiert werden, so muss sie/er diese Ergebnisse nicht nur in die Gesellschaft tragen. Verantwortung zu übernehmen heißt auch, sich aktiv in Debatten einzumischen und sie mitzugestalten. Sie/Er sollte Position beziehen und z. B. darstellen, dass Migrationen (an welcher Küste auch immer) keine Invasionen sind.

Daher bin ich der Meinung, dass sich Aktionsforschung durchaus mit der Archäologie in Einklang bringen lässt. Im Sinne der oben genannten „normativen Äußerungen“ wird wohl kaum jemand dies verneinen. Schwieriger wird es, wenn ich als Archäolog*in zugleich Aktivist*in bin und mein archäologisches Handeln an bestimmten Zielen ausrichte oder unterordne, also forschende/r Aktivist*in bin. Das Unbehagen und sogar die Angst vor einer „aktivistischen Forschung“ oder „forschenden Aktivist*innen“ und insbesondere für die nicht unproblematische Aufhebung von Objekt und Subjekt, aber auch einer Hegemonie oder Instrumentalisierung mag berechtigt sein. Ich bin aber der Meinung, dass eine demokratische Gesellschaft sich solchen Herausforderungen aktiv zu stellen hat und wir als Archäolog*innen engagierte Verantwortung für unser Heute und das Morgen übernehmen müssen.

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Indigenous Concerns, Archaeology, and Activism

Martin Porr and Henny Piezonka

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Indigenous Concerns, Archaeology, and Activism

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Introduction

Archaeologists have been in contact with Indigenous communities since the origins of the discipline during the 19th century. From the beginning, this relationship was fundamentally structured by the fact that academic archaeology reflects the development of European/Western modernity, nationalism, and imperialism. As a consequence, during archaeology's long and complex history, the relationship with Indigenous communities has often been characterised by confrontations, disputes, and misunderstandings. The dominant worldview upon which archaeology stands, rooted in Enlightenment philosophies and materialism, is often in contradiction to Indigenous perspectives. This applies, for example, to notions of time and history, the position and roles of humans within the natural world, ancestry and personhood, distinctions between life and death, and the animated and unanimated. These fundamental differences, and the associated unequal power relations between researchers on the one hand and Indigenous communities on the other, have caused innumerable instances of the appropriation and/or destruction of heritage sites and built structures and the removal and theft of artefacts and human remains. Accordingly, archaeological practices have been causing pain and suffering for Indigenous communities. However, these aspects are not restricted to archaeology but are more broadly related to the idea and reality of modern science and research practice itself. The perspective of Indigenous communities is encapsulated in Linda Tuhiwai Smith's statement that "scientific research remains inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism […] The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012: 232). This understanding reflects the extensive and continuing experiences of objectification by Indigenous people in their engagements with researchers. It unmasks the position of Western (and other imperially rooted) science as yet another facet of extractive and exploitative practices of European domination. Indigenous communities have criticised that scientific practices can extract and claim ownership of Indigenous ways of knowing and heritage while excluding the people themselves from these processes and the subsequent results (Tuhiwai Smith 2012: 240).

It is now generally recognized that the development of archaeology as a discipline has been closely related to the expansion and establishment of the global European colonial system and the subsequent denigration of colonised peoples (Liebmann and Rizvi 2008; Gosden 2012; Lydon and Rizvi 2012). This recognition has facilitated a range of important developments towards critical academic (self-) reflection, and essential work has been undertaken over the last years to uncover the intellectual and institutional legacies of these problematic foundations (Bruchac et al. 2010; Porr and Matthews 2020). Growing research in this direction emphasises the importance of reflexivity towards archaeological methods and theories, towards the socio-economic circumstances and consequences of archaeological research, and, hence, its ethical, moral, and political position (Cunningham and MacEachern 2016). While these aspects apply to archaeological research in general, they take on a special role in countries with Indigenous populations, who are often under severe political, economic, legislative, and social pressures to maintain their physical and cultural survival. Here, an activist archaeology can help to re-centre Indigenous concerns in the interpretation of the world and support the endeavour to re-gain control of histories, cultural continuation, and survival.

Boundaries between "Traditional" and "Activist" Archaeology with Respect to Indigenous Concerns

Within so-called settler-colonial contexts, archaeological research is always deeply entangled with questions of cultural heritage documentation, management, and preservation. However, following the problematic association of archaeology with the project of European colonialism, the discipline continues to be connected to practices of the destruction and removal of heritage sites and artefacts while at the same time appropriating the past and claiming hegemony over the histories produced. One reason is that most archaeological work is conducted as part of legislative requirements and within professional consultancy contexts. As legislation often prioritises development demands in many countries, archaeologists continue to support dominant discourses and capitalist values. Accordingly, in the perception and experience of many Indigenous people, archaeology and archaeologists continue to perpetuate existing asymmetrical power relationships between government and research institutions and their own communities. These attitudes can also extend towards other research activities and scientific interpretations, especially if they are conducted without appropriate consultations of Indigenous Traditional Owners and knowledge holders.

However, archaeology also has the inherent possibility to position itself in these circumstances very differently and instead become an ally of Indigenous concerns (Smith and Wobst 2005). Archaeology has the potential to uncover and make visible aspects of societies that otherwise might remain hidden and peripheral. To a certain extent, archaeology can adopt a position that is comparable to the location of subaltern studies within the postcolonial tradition (Nicholas and Hollowell 2007). In this way, archaeology has the capacity to adopt an activist stance and align itself with the demands and concerns of Indigenous communities. Archaeology can become a supporter of the fundamental interests of Indigenous stakeholders. Hence, the archaeological documentation and preservation of cultural heritage can line up with the aims of the Indigenous struggles for survival. As these processes are often entangled in complex political and economic conflicts, an activist agenda becomes part of archaeological work on the ground. The preservation of cultural heritage is, thus, not just an aim in itself or a consequence of legislative requirements but becomes a matter of social justice (Smith et al. 2019, 2022b).

However, tensions between the mechanisms and processes of mainstream scientific knowledge production and Indigenous knowledge systems remain (McNiven 2016). This necessitates constant reflection and collaborative efforts. It also requires an assessment of the entanglements between archaeological practices and power imbalances and the asymmetries that continue to govern the relations between researchers and Indigenous communities. For example, aspects of data access and sovereignty are of central importance. If these aspects are not addressed in a transparent and inclusive way, research will continue to follow an extractive logic and will cause further harm to Indigenous communities. Therefore, breaking with these established mechanisms of the conduct and communication of research and its protagonists can itself constitute an activist agenda for archaeology.

Can Activism for Indigenous Concerns Be Reconciled with the Scientific Claims of Archaeology?

Archaeological research must not be conducted against the wishes, interests and concerns of Indigenous communities. In virtually all countries, legislative frameworks are in place today to protect Indigenous heritage. Possibly the most prominent example is the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the United States that was legislated in 1990. This step was an important beacon for the installation and development of collaborative engagements between Native American groups and Cultural Resource Management companies. It also facilitated crucial debates around repatriation issues and the Indigenous participation in archaeological and heritage management projects in the United States, and it poses an opportunity to legitimize the Indigenous past and histories against the dominant settler-colonial society. While these developments have not been without frictions, partnership projects are now the norm in research and cultural management projects in the U.S. Similar legislation to protect Indigenous heritage now exists in many other countries together with complex engagements about the access to archaeological sites and evidence and the treatment of artefacts and human remains (Colwell 2016). These are the contexts in which archaeology needs to operate today together with Indigenous communities in settler-colonial countries. Activist elements, e.g., in knowledge dissemination, participation, legal issues, land rights, etc., come into the equation whenever issues of power are to be navigated and the aims of archaeology guided by Indigenous concerns are not aligned with the aims of the dominant discourses.

While the scientific claims and methods of archaeology in general can support or undermine Indigenous concerns, it should be noted that there are many different ways in which archaeological research can be conducted and in which archaeological research and its findings can be communicated. It is the responsibility of researchers to design and conduct projects in ethical ways that do not cause harm to communities, that allow the latter a voice in the project itself and the ways in which its results are communicated, or that are altogether Indigenous-led. In the end, so-called scientific aims and claims of archaeology today cannot anymore take priority over the concerns of communities, and they need to become informed and shaped by the interests, world concepts and histories of the Indigenous communities in question. As outlined above, these processes in themselves can constitute a form of activism as they often are not aligned with dominant discourses and political and economic interests.

Beyond these considerations, which are often guided by existing professional Codes of Ethics and Codes of Practice, it must also be recognised that research itself as knowledge production can be defined in different ways, and prevailing understandings of science and academic practice may be questioned. In fact, archaeologists in many settler-colonial countries have already integrated elements of Indigenous thinking into their work and their interpretations, either implicitly or as conscious efforts to actively promote more symmetrical approaches to the pasts and its material reflections. For example, engagements with Indigenous communities as well as Indigenous-led discourses have generated new discussions about the meaning and significance of oral traditions and histories (Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem et al. 2020). Oral evidence gains weight as a source of alternative hypotheses and propositions that contribute to a new understanding of archaeological evidence (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2012). In different parts of the world, Indigenous narratives are increasingly recognised to accurately reflect and record deep time historical events or environmental changes (Echo-Hawk 2000; Nunn 2018). Likewise, Traditional Ecological Knowledge is gaining weight in shaping research agendas and scientific interpretations (Wall-Kimmerer 2013; Berkes 2018), while at the same time becoming increasingly important as a source of information for activist de-growth and anti-extractionist endeavours. In summary, while the integration of scientific and Indigenous knowledge is not always unproblematic, it is essential to enable reflections on the strengths of different understandings of the world, if it is done in a reflective and symmetrical fashion.

These developments within archaeology have an activist aim in disrupting established ways of scientific practice and in questioning the foundations of scientific reasoning itself. The concern with Indigenous forms of knowledge creation and preservation draws attention to the fundamental processes of archaeological academic practices themselves, as these are largely products of the view that knowledge can be compartmentalized and separated from its generation and application. As academic knowledge is generated and mediated through writing and printed text, most researchers find it difficult to move away from essentialist understandings of the world. In contrast, in traditional Indigenous contexts, learning and knowledge acquisition are often understood as embodied, skill-focused, and without mechanisms of context-independent transmission of information (e.g., through schools, classrooms, textbooks). The so-called ontological turn in archaeology and anthropology has attempted to reflect these differences to a greater extent in the recent past (Alberti 2016; Holbraad and Pedersen 2017; Moro Abadía and Porr 2021). However, some Indigenous scholars have since critiqued these developments because they nonetheless largely continue to benefit from and perpetuate established power relations within academia. In addition, Zoe Todd (2016) has drawn attention to the fact that many recent academic debates and contributions rarely engage with the work of Indigenous philosophers and thinkers.

This key challenge relates to the above-mentioned difficulties to truly transform and decolonise the often still exclusionary processes of academia and its mechanisms of communication. To reach a greater degree of inclusivity and diversity, the political economy and the power structures that enable, create, and reproduce the practices and forms of academic discourses need to be subjected to much more fundamental ontological critiques and revisions. Otherwise, the activist aim of a truly relational, holistic, and equitable archaeology will remain unrealised.

What Might Concrete Scholarly Projects with an Activist Claim Look Like?

If activism is broadly understood as actions to question and disrupt established power structures, activist projects in archaeology would be those that either question the power structures within archaeological knowledge production or that question the power structures within which archaeology operates. Above it was already noted

that archaeological practitioners in countries with Indigenous populations often operate in complex political and institutional environments in which their work can either align with or challenge existing power relationships. These challenges can be directed at internal and external forces that either enable or prevent certain projects from going ahead. One of us has attempted a project in this spirit and has drawn attention to the possibility that rock art research can be understood as cultural critique if it questions established research and interpretative practices. The respective publication consequently was aimed at breaking with established conventions of academic publishing by using a multi-vocal structure and integrating direct Indigenous voices (Porr and Bell 2012).

In recent years, archaeological research in settler-colonial contexts has been increasingly influenced by the demands of Indigenous communities that question the mechanisms and the justifications of scientific practices. For example, it has been put forward that the basis of research should not be the quest for universal knowledge, which will often remain inaccessible and irrelevant to Indigenous communities. Rather, the key aim of research should be the specific and tangible benefit for the Indigenous partners. This is, for example, the proposition of the *Archaeologies of the Heart* (Supernant et al. 2020) or the basis of an understanding of archaeology as therapy (Schaepe et al. 2017). The healing potentials of collaborative and two-way archaeological and heritage projects have been documented and assessed in many different circumstances around the world. The fundamental aim of archaeological research consequently becomes not the pursuit of knowledge but of social justice (Smith et al. 2022a, 2022b). Within the existing conflicts about the interpretation and the survival of the world between powerful destructive forces, fulfilling such an objective can only be pursued through activist projects.

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Archaeology as Radical Care

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Archaeology as Radical Care

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A guiding frame for much of my activism is contending with the juxtaposition of how the world is and how I believe the world ought to be (i.e. just). I also think deeply about how our research practice can create the conditions to get there (i.e. to a just world). Within this process I have found that justice flourishes within frameworks of care, generosity, and a heart-centered approach.[1] These acts of kindness and care are radical within the (settler) colonial frameworks which inform, code, and maintain archaeological practice in most of the world today: a world in which care is coded as unscientific and biased. It is important to recognize that it is precisely in those spaces of care and kindness that transformative practices emerge.[2] These gestures have the capacity to become healing balms for the many bodies of difference who experience the violence of the institution and academy.

> "It is precisely from this audacity to produce, apply, and effect care despite dark histories and futures that its radical nature emerges. Radical care can present an otherwise, even if it cannot completely disengage from structural inequalities and normative assumptions regarding social reproduction, gender, race, class, sexuality, and citizenship." (Hobart and Kneese 2020)

These are the political stakes of my own practice and are guided by a desire for equity and justice in the world. In order to recognize these inequities, I follow the steps of those before me such as CRT legal theorist Mari Matsuda's invitation to always "ask the other question" (Matsuda 1991: 1189–1190), indexing the interconnections of all forms of subordination. This means that if we are in a situation in which there is an issue about coloniality, I ask about patriarchy, if there's an issue about patriarchy, I ask about race, if I am confronted with an issue about race, I ask about homophobia, etc. We must acknowledge that our struggles are linked and they are inherently intersectional.[3] By recognizing and acknowledging those linkages, we open up the space to care for one another and work on healing through practice.

These frameworks have always been well informed by anti-racist, anti-colonial/decolonizing, and feminist/queer scholarship. As a social scientist, my queries about the ancient world are not produced in a vacuum, but rather in conversation with those who exist within the spaces where antiquity is a lived experience. This involves acts of translation; it includes the many ways we translate while working with the archaeological record within all of those contexts. In some deep sense, I have found the work of being a translator integral to being an archaeologist. The act of translation creates space for change; this is in contrast to the act of transliteration, which, in most of the Global South, is how archaeology is practiced. Transliteration transfers utterances from the sound of one lexical register to the text of another. The sound of the first remains as a trace, as a holding, as an artifact of where the word/concept/universe came from. We may think of the word *pajama* in English that came from Persian/Urdu or the word *archaeology* in Urdu that came from English (clearly, some transliterations carry more baggage with them). Translation, on the other hand, provides some space for interpretation, for a shift of tone, an amplification of

1 I am using Kisha Supernant's "heart-centered approach," in line with theories laid out in *Archaeologies of the Heart* (Supernant et al. 2020).

2 These conversations around archaeology, decolonization and care have been swirling in my mind and world for a while. This is seen in my articles such as Rizvi 2016, 2017.

3 This is also the framework used in the book *Abolition. Feminism. Now.* (Davis et al. 2022). I used this intersectional framework as a guide for *Heritage Practice: The Politics of Race/Gender/Sexuality* (Rizvi 2020).

a different aspect of the same.[4] That opening, that space is important for any possibility for transformation, which is often the root of our activist claims. Moreover, it is often in those spaces that are research questions are formed, and thus inform the episteme of our research.

In addition to the space of transformation, I have found myself thinking a lot about scale, and in this regard have found adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy* (2017) and *Holding Change* (2021), to have within them some key points that are relevant for archaeology in the contemporary moment. I consider these texts invitations to consider reconceptualizing what we have been taught and perhaps to redirect, reimagine, or remind ourselves that there are so many other ways to do the work that we do in the world. In particular, I have found her focus on scale to be of particular interest, in particular the focus on how smaller-scale endeavors resist the capitalist impulse to scale up all the time (brown 2021: 14). Small scale, relation-building projects create the conditions within which radical care can be enacted.

Important also is figuring out how such work can be sustainable over our careers, as such work is a process, a constant, and not an end point. Activism within archaeology must be an ongoing way of thinking, doing, and being with research. This recognition liberates us from the capitalist push within the academy to quickly finish projects and publish results. I prefer to resist that push, slow research down, spend time with materials with care, and publish process. It is important to recognize that the division between "process" and "content" is an artificial division – and for decolonial scholarship, process *is* content. The lab I facilitate coproduces knowledge in Global South contexts, maintaining at its core anti/decolonial, feminist, and respectful practices through community-based participatory action research. In the Laboratory for Archaeological Visualization and Heritage (LIAVH), we create conditions within which capacity building and transferable skill sets are a part of the research design.[5] We write about what we do as methodology, theory, practice, and analysis. We are deeply committed to considering alternative ways to do archaeology in a practical sense, as a logistical conundrum. Archaeology is not just about excavation, in fact, we argue that that should be the last resort for knowledge production.

We have followed that model throughout our practice in LIAVH. Rather than follow a colonial extractive model of research, in which we only read and work in order to take and control information, we are in step with the guidance of Kisha Supernant, who speaks carefully about how one must visit with and understand what it means to be in relation to everything around us, seen most clearly in the work she directs through the Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology. We are also inspired by the practice of Olo Be Taloha Lab, led by Kristina Douglass, and their commitment to inclusive and co-produced research. Our work in LIAVH has also been profoundly influenced by feminist and anticolonial labs such as CLEAR, headed by STS researcher and discard studies scholar, Max Liboiron.[6] These scientific labs and methods have proven to be spaces of radical care. These spaces provide us with the evidence that science resides in respectful practice, with heart-centered work, and as an anticolonial, feminist practice.

And so what does such activism look like within the (archaeological) academy, and how might we all work towards a different kind of future?[7] We stand on the shoulders of generations of scholar/activists, and we are part of a growing cohort of folx informed by anti-colonial/decolonizing, anti-racist, anti-casteist, and queer/feminist scholarship. Within this new world of scholarship, how might we hold change and move intentionally through the world of scientific research? Holding change is about an activation of space. "To hold change is to make it easy for people with shared intentions to be around each other and move towards their visions and values (facilitate), and/or navigate conflict in a way that is generative and accountable (mediate)" (brown 2021: 7). And so for me, at this

4 I've written about the significance of the opening of such speculative space in *Archaeological Encounters: The Role of the Speculative in Decolonial Archaeology* (Rizvi 2019).

5 LIAVH makes connections between technology, archaeological data management, and heritage practice. We are a feminist, anticolonial, and antiracist platform focused explicitly on undoing colonial harm through generative, rather than extractive, interdisciplinary archaeological research. See liavh.org (last viewed 2.3.2023) for more information.

6 Max Liboiron's work in Discard Studies is brilliant. But I wanted to take this footnote to enact, as they say, "good relations within a text, through a text." This appears in their first footnote in the 2021 book, *Pollution is Colonialism* (Liboiron 2021). Thank you, Max, for all the work that you do, and everything that you inspire. Thank you, Kristina, and thank you, Kisha. Your labs, practices, and care have influenced and transformed how I work in the world.

7 Given all the work that has happened in the last five years, the future for archaeology in North America is bright. Some of the texts that provide that future-oriented look include: Odewale et al. 2018; Franklin et al. 2020; Flewellen et al. 2021.

moment, the most important thing is to figure out how to hold space and hold change. There is such momentum from our junior scholars and researchers that it is important to find ways to keep this energy centered, and be intentional about how we support their visions of the future. Recently, at the American Anthropological Association meetings (November 2022), in a panel entitled, "Emergent Collaborations: Unsettling Archaeology and Radically Reorienting the Discipline," we saw some of these new worlds that are being made, how they were supported, and how they supported each other, and it was truly beautiful. It had some of us in the audience in tears. As time has passed, I recognize that the language, vocabularies, concerns, and ways forward have shifted. I am not claiming the wisdom of being an elder, but I am saying that I can see the wisdom in creating the space and support for those who are building new just worlds, rather than insisting that they live in the one we created. And perhaps that may be the most radical gesture of care we can make within archaeology.

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In Defense of Incremental Change

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In Defense of Incremental Change

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We seem to live in an age of euphemism. A recent article in *The Guardian* titled "Iraqi discoveries help shed light on British Museum treasures" explains the lack of provenience of some antiquities as "owing to the *circumstances* of their discovery and retrieval during the *buccaneering* period of early archaeology."[1] Neither the word "circumstances" nor "buccaneering" do justice to the colonial legacy of the discipline and the complex and asymmetrical power relationships that led to the exhibition of such "discoveries" in Britain. Even in the well-documented case of the Benin Bronzes, a journalist for the *New York Times* prefers to put the word "looting" in quotation marks in the article's title and speaks of the "so-called looted works of art" in the text, despite the fact that the curator who is interviewed in the same article refers to the same sculptures as "indisputably looted."[2]

One also finds parallels to this troubling rhetoric in academic works, such as when James Cuno asserts that antiquities have "no obvious relation" to source countries "other than the *accident of geography*: they *happen to have been found* within its modern borders" (Cuno 2008: 146; my emphasis). Or take Kwame Anthony Appiah's idea of "cosmopolitanism" (Appiah 2006),[3] according to which artworks *belong to us all* regardless of our cultural, social, and economic backgrounds and hence can remain exactly where they are. Critical historical processes are thereby reduced to "accidents of geography," while deeply exclusionary politics are presented as "cosmopolitanism." This is nothing but the "mental and moral offense of euphemism" (Hitchens 2002: 273).

I approach activist archaeology from the context of decolonization, and it is imperative that decolonization does not turn into another euphemism or into a metaphor for other forms of justice-seeking. Within the context of the United States, "decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck and Yang 2012: 31; cf. Garba and Sorentino 2020). Within the context of my recent work, which focuses on the particularities of European colonial archaeology in Ottoman and post-Ottoman Iraq, decolonization requires the restitution and repatriation of looted and illegally exported objects. As such, efforts towards decolonization should render the constitutive colonial structures and their legacies transparent and decentralize and diversify both those structures as well as the narratives that they continue to produce. Whether these objectives are meaningful at all in a discipline that is inherently a product of colonialism and racism is still under debate.[4]

My contention is that those objectives are indeed meaningful. In fact, I find them compatible with the individual and collective efforts that are currently taking place in the streets, on university campuses, and inside museums and research institutions. For instance, the pioneering 2015 protest movement leading to the removal of the statue of the British colonialist and diamond merchant Cecil Rhodes from the University of Cape Town is important, even if another Rhodes statue at the University of Oxford remains on display, with the recent addition of an explanatory

1 "Iraqi discoveries help shed light on British Museum treasures," *The Guardian*, 29 January 2020 (my emphasis). The use of the word "treasures" necessitates a separate discussion.

2 "A Long Way Home for 'Looted' Art is Getting Shorter," *The New York Times*, 27 April 2022.

3 "There Is No National Home for Art," *The New York Times*, 22 January 2015. See also Appiah's lecture titled "Art and Identity" given at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, on October 30, 2016, the recording of which is available online.

4 There have been two major questionnaires published in the last two years, asking the opinions of a diverse group of scholars, activists, and artists on what decolonization means. See Copeland et al. 2020; Grant and Price 2020. See also the related questionnaire, Baker and Joselit 2022.

plaque.[5] The same goes for the persistent and eventually successful calls for the resignation of Warren B. Kanders, the vice chairman of the Whitney Museum of American Art, even if he is reported not to have divested from tear gas manufacturing.[6] The recent appointment of Patricia Marroquin Norby as the first full-time Indigenous curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, or the ongoing calls for changing departmental names from "Near East" to "Western Asia" in various museums and universities,[7] are extremely meaningful, even if ideas of institutional inclusivity and diversity are often utilized as an "easy way out." I am therefore not in favor of underestimating or dismissing these moments as examples of "incremental" progress, even if the funding structures and the inextricable ties of our institutions to the national and global capitalism currently remain intact.

In other words, there is much that *can* be done in the here and now using the very positions of power that we occupy. The scholarly tendency to focus exclusively on the enormous difficulties facing a decolonial project, often combined with fatalistic despair about its impossibility, has increasingly downplayed the power a university professor, a museum curator, a field archaeologist, or a heritage specialist wields. There *are* things we can do, some of which go beyond epistemological musings and can have tremendous impact on peoples' lives. To me, foregrounding underrepresented, neglected, or ignored sources, languages, population groups, and regions is essential. In tandem, we must question and dispense with disciplinary practices that have promoted themselves as natural and universal, and integrate into our work different temporalities, ontologies, and epistemologies. These objectives require us:

- To forgo beginning every single survey of Mesopotamian archaeology with the travels of Benjamin of Tudela but to make an effort to study millennia-long histories of local engagement with ancient sites and monuments.
- To start exploring the histories of Mesopotamian archaeology from the vantage points of Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, and Shatra.
- To learn the modern languages of the region and to push universities, research institutions, and museums to make modern language instruction an integral part of their professional training as well as an employment prerequisite.
- To study and actively cite the works of scholars and students writing in non-European languages.
- To study past and present *non-academic* forms of knowledge keeping, especially in non-European languages.
- To dispense with the notion of "discovery" as an explanatory model in academic writings and museum didactics, and to argue against anti-restitution pundits who continue to claim that local populations were entirely detached from the ancient pasts of their lands until the arrival of the European traveler, diplomat, or archaeologist.
- To stop referring to the members of local populations as "informants," "natives," or "escorts," or taking them as interruptive nuisances to the "discovery" at hand, but to name them individually (if that is not jeopardizing their safety) and to acknowledge that if there is any "interruption," it is the one that is caused by launching massive archaeological campaigns.
- To regard community outreach (both during fieldwork and "off-season") not as an additive free-time activity but as a foundational research methodology, and to study examples such as Halet Çambel's work at Karatepe which touched the lives of so many people that her name resonates in the region even today.
- To develop research objectives and create funding mechanisms that prioritize the safety and well-being of local scholars and students, the protection of sites, and the publication of excavation results over moving from one country to another to initiate new excavations.
- To include Arabic, Farsi, Turkish, and Kurdish names in both academic publications and public-facing museum didactics, with full use of diacritical marks.

5 "Cecil Rhodes statue will not be removed by Oxford College," *BBC News*, 20 May 2021; "Cecil Rhodes statue: Explanatory plaque placed at Oxford college," *BBC News*, 12 October 2021.

6 "Ousted Whitney Museum Board Member Still Selling Tear Gas Despite Divestment Claim," *The Intercept*, 5 June 2022.

7 For example, see the recent change at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York (Tamur 2020).

- To create space to discuss the most “radical” opinions at the very center of colonial institutions, and to demonstrate in practice why museums cannot (and should not) be “neutral.”
- To use the platforms and resources of colonial institutions to shape public discourse and to change public opinions on both individual and mass scale.

Finally, to be cognizant that the past is always entangled with the present, and that a critical, multi-temporal investigation should not merely be a “celebration” of the lives of artworks but one that foregrounds questions of power, colonial violence, and dispossession.

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Aktivismus in der Archäologie als Chance

Geesche Wilts

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Aktivismus in der Archäologie als Chance

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Einführung

Diesen Text schreibe ich aus meiner persönlichen Perspektive. Einerseits bin ich Archäologin, andererseits Aktivistin und verorte mich im linken politischen Spektrum. In einem selbstorganisierten Projekt habe ich 2015 auf Lampedusa Fluchtspuren mit archäologischen Methoden aufgespürt, dokumentiert und Objekte zur Anschauung mitgebracht, um im deutschsprachigen Teil Europas über die Grenzsituation aufzuklären, denn „the most violent element in society is ignorance“ (Goldman 1917: 2). Mit archäologischen Methoden möchte ich dieser Form der Gewalt entgegentreten, denn ich sehe den Nutzen archäologischer Methoden für Aktivist*innen. Dabei erfahre ich wiederholt Kritik aus dem Kollegium, welches befürchtet, die Wissenschaftlichkeit gehe durch solche Aktionen verloren. Im Folgenden beschäftigte ich mich daher mit beiden Aspekten. Hierbei werde ich beispielhaft immer wieder auf die Untersuchung der Fluchtspuren zurückgreifen und weitere Formen des Aktivismus aus dem linken Spektrum einbeziehen.

Geht die Wissenschaftlichkeit verloren?

Die Hauptkritik beläuft sich darauf, dass im Verlauf des politischen Aktionismus die Wissenschaftlichkeit verloren geht. Eine Gefahr wäre z. B., dass sich bei einer Methode wie der Fotografie die Erkenntnisse und Ergebnisse eines aktivistischen Zugangs von dem einer üblichen archäologischen Untersuchung deutlich unterscheiden. Während Aktivist*innen z. B. emotionale Blickwinkel nutzen könnten, zeigt Fotografie nach herkömmlichen archäologischen Kriterien die Missstände nüchtern. Die dokumentierten Befunde sollen so Geschichten ohne manipulative Effekte zeigen (Steffan 2017).[1] Unabhängig von der Absicht der Dokumentator*innen wird jedoch im Falle dokumentierter Fluchtboote immer ein politischer Effekt mit der Dokumentation erzielt. Doch an dem Fakt der Anwesenheit von Fluchtbooten auf Lampedusa ändert die Art der Dokumentation nichts. Im Vergleich dazu sind Erhebungen, die statistisch ausgewertet werden, abstrakt, während fotografische Dokumentationen der Fluchtspuren darauf abzielen, Missstände direkt aufzuzeigen. Die Bilder oder Objekte sind emotional wirksamer als Zahlen. Im Kern des Vorwurfs steht möglicherweise also nicht der Unterschied der Methoden, sondern eine generelle Ablehnung gegenüber Aufklärung in Bezug auf das dokumentierte Thema.[2]

Ein weiterer Vorwurf der Unwissenschaftlichkeit aktivistischer Arbeit ist, dass Dinge verfälscht gezeigt oder auch überzeichnet würden. Die Argumentation ähnelt dem Vergleich von Intellektuellen und Wissenschaftler*innen (vgl. Jung 2012: 41–42) – beim Aktivismus steht die Wertgebundenheit der Handlungen im Vordergrund. Dies schließt aber einen wissenschaftlichen Anspruch nicht aus. Hinzu kommt: Jeder Fundplatz kann politisch verfälscht werden. Auch Funde werden oft überzeichnet gezeigt, um die Aufmerksamkeit der Medien zu wecken. Zugleich steckt hinter der Kritik die positivistische Idee eines objektiven Blicks auf Funde und Befunde. Diesen Blick kann es aber ohnehin nicht geben, da jeder Blickwinkel mit den Diskursen der deutenden Person einhergeht, in die diese eingebunden ist. Deswegen ist es vielmehr zu begrüßen, aktivistische Ansätze nicht auszuschließen,

1 Auch der Zeitgeist der Betrachter*innen ist bei einer wissenschaftlichen Dokumentation entscheidend – z. B. sind Hinterlassenschaften der Flucht in Europa eher ein Argument für die Sichtbarmachung der Refugees, so ist es in den USA andersherum Müll in der Wüste, der Migrationsgegner*innen als Argument dient (Steffan 2017: 130).

2 Ich bedanke mich bei Anders Kühne für diesen Gedankengang.

sondern anzuerkennen, dass jeder Mensch in Diskurse eingebunden und ihnen zu einem gewissen Teil unterworfen ist, um eine Toleranz dafür zu entwickeln. Dass sich das gesamte Kollegium seiner eigenen Diskurse bewusst wird und diese auch offen äußert, ist sicherlich eine Utopie. Der Vorteil dieser Offenheit wäre: Wenn Archäolog*innen ihre Auffassungen nach außen tragen, ist es einfacher, oft unbewusste Einbindungen in bestehende Diskurse, sichtbar zu machen, zu entlarven und die Person darauf hinzuweisen.

Allerdings ist zu bedenken, dass der zwischenmenschliche Umgang innerhalb der Archäologie teils zu wünschen übrig lässt, was möglicherweise auf die prekäre Berufssituation und auf den Konkurrenzdruck zurückzuführen ist – dies hat ein bedenkliches Ausmaß angenommen (s. dazu auch Schreiber u. a. 2018: 345). Auch dadurch entsteht die Angst einiger Kolleg*innen, sich politisch zu äußern, da ihnen dies negativ ausgelegt werden könnte. In diese Kategorie möchte ich auch den Vorwurf, politisch aktivistische Archäolog*innen würden den Ruf ihrer ganzen Institution „in den Dreck ziehen“ einordnen. Dies ist Teil der angstmachenden Art der Kommunikation.

Einige Kritiker*innen sehen zudem durch archäologischen Aktivismus die wissenschaftliche Freiheit bedroht. Dies übersieht, dass aktivistische Archäologie selten im universitären Rahmen gestaltet wird, sondern den akademischen Betrieb nur tangiert. Sie nimmt keinen Einfluss auf die Entscheidungsfreiheit der Forscher*innen, welche Thematiken sie bspw. erforschen. Vielmehr ist es eine Erweiterung der Freiheit, wenn Forscher*innen sich dazu entscheiden, auch aktivistisch tätig zu sein.

Ein weiterer Kritikpunkt resultiert aus der Annahme, aktivistische Textproduktionen wären unwissenschaftlich und verfälschten dadurch wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse. Dies verkennt, dass es viele Aktivist*innen gibt, die einen wissenschaftlichen Hintergrund haben und dass auch bei aktivistischer Textproduktion Fakten recherchiert, analysiert und eingeordnet werden. Es findet eine Bewertung der beobachteten Thematik statt und eine Diskussion theoretischer Aspekte. Dies sind alles ebenso Bestandteile wissenschaftlicher Textproduktion. Bei der Produktion aktivistischer Texte kommt noch eine politische Einordnung hinzu – es werden bspw. Forderungen formuliert.[3] Einzig fehlt bei aktivistischer Textproduktion oft ein Peer Review. Nicht zuletzt ist aber die Glaubwürdigkeit der politischen Forderungen von der Qualität der vorangegangenen Analyse abhängig. Damit ist es im Interesse der Aktivist*innen hier eine gründliche Recherche vorzunehmen. Die Qualität der politischen Arbeit steht im direkten Zusammenhang mit valide argumentierten Hintergründen. Es gilt also für die Qualität der Texte des politischen Spektrums ein identischer Maßstab wie für die Bewertung einer wissenschaftlichen Arbeit. Beide sollten kritisch reflektiert werden, denn die Qualität kann in beiden Fällen mangelhaft sein.

Ist der Unterschied zwischen archäologischer und aktivistischer Arbeit so groß?

Archäologischer Aktivismus ist eine Form, Verantwortung in der Gesellschaft zu übernehmen, wie 2012 von Randall H. McGuire (2012) gefordert. Die Differenz zwischen wissenschaftlicher und aktivistischer Archäologie ist teils gering. Es gibt keine feststehende Definition der Bezeichnung „Aktivismus“, sodass es teils Ansichtssache ist, welcher Kategorie man z. B. einzelne Texte zuordnet. Hierzu gehört beispielsweise die Thematisierung des Missbrauchs von Symbolen aus archäologischen Kontexten durch Rechtsextremist*innen (s. bspw. Pesch und Oerl 2017). Inhaltlich sind diese Texte nicht zu trennen von Texten antifaschistischer Aktivist*innen (vgl. bspw. asp 2017). Das Thema ist von besonderer Relevanz, da eine Gesellschaft durch den politischen Missbrauch der Archäologie manipuliert werden kann: „Everything we do as archaeologists has social, political, and ethical consequences. Even doing nothing simply reinforces the status quo“ (Smith 2012: 91). In dieser Hinsicht ist es kritisch zu betrachten, dass manche Archäolog*innen linke mit rechten Positionen gleichsetzen. In Bezug auf mein Lampedusa-Projekt bedeutet dies eine Gleichsetzung der Aufklärung über Menschenrechtsverbrechen mit menschenverachtender Politik. In der *Allgemeinen Erklärung der Menschenrechte* der Vereinten Nationen wird jedem Menschen das Recht auf Asyl vor Verfolgung zugestanden (United Nations 1948: Art. 14). Aufklärung über menschenunwürdige Verhältnisse stellen also keinen Missbrauch der archäologischen Fächer dar, sondern einen Gebrauch. Und dieser Gebrauch zeigt, wie nahe sich Aktivismus und Archäologie stehen. Hierzu ein Blick auf den Umgang mit Objekten:

3 Ich bedanke mich bei Andreas Blechschmidt, der mir in einem längeren Telefonat die Vorgehensweise bei einer aktivistischen Buchproduktion erläutert und ergänzend angefügt hat, dass er seine Texte durchaus als wissenschaftlich valide Produkte ansieht.

Zeigt man Flucht anhand von Funden, ist es möglich, dass die Betrachter*innen eine Distanz zu dem Geschehen haben, welche gleichsam eine Identifikation, mit den Personen, die diese Objekte genutzt haben, ermöglicht (Datlı 2017: 28). Dabei ist die Hauptschwierigkeit, die Objekte nicht zu banalisieren (Seitsonen u. a. 2016: 259). Objekte, wie z. B. Rettungswesten, die auf Lesbos angespült wurden, werfen Fragen auf, z. B. ob die Träger*innen dieser Westen noch leben (Tyrikos-Ergas 2016: 230). Diese Objekte zeigen einen direkten Teil der Lebenswelt auf der Flucht (Seitsonen u. a. 2016: 247). Die Vermittlung der Geschehnisse mit solchen Funden kann Verständnis auf einer anderen Ebene erschaffen (Steffan 2017: 130). So hat sich bei meinen Workshops gezeigt, dass eine Konfrontation mit den auf Lampedusa gesammelten Objekten, zu einem genaueren Verständnis der Situation an der EU-Außengrenze führt. Die Rekonstruktion von Lebensrealitäten anhand von Funden und Befunden ist bzgl. anderer Zeiten die Hauptaufgabe der Archäologie. Es gibt also große Überschneidungen zwischen der aktivistischen und der Facharchäologie.

Code of Conduct für den Archäo-Aktivismus

Archäolog*innen haben in der Vergangenheit immer wieder ihre Fähigkeiten eingesetzt, sich gegen einen ungerechten und menschenunwürdigen Status quo einzusetzen, für eine humanere Welt einzutreten und damit ein Bewusstsein geweckt, dass gesellschaftliche Veränderungen möglich sind (McGuire 2012: 77). Dies ist für die Archäologie eine Chance, vor allem in Zeiten krankender Finanzierungen, den Sinn und Nutzen unseres Faches aufzuzeigen (Holtorf 2012: 100). Eine größere Bereitschaft zur Finanzierung der Archäologie kann mit gesellschaftlich orientierten Projekten gefördert werden. Im gleichen Atemzug wird die Archäologie damit Bestandteil einer qualitativ verbesserten Aufklärung bzgl. politisch relevanter Sachverhalte. Gleichzeitig ist aber unübersehbar, dass es auch zu einem Missbrauch kommen kann. Dies gilt nicht nur für die neurechte und neonazistische Archäologie in der europäischen Geschichte, sondern z. B. auch für nationale Hinduist*innen in Indien (McGuire 2012: 80). Da dieser Missbrauch aber nicht nur bei aktivistischen, sondern besonders durch das Objektivitätsnarrativ auch bei archäologischen Fachtexten entstehen kann, könnte man darüber nachdenken einen *Code of Conduct* zu etablieren. Die Idee eines *Code of Conduct* schließt direkt an die Diskussionen über Ethik in der Archäologie an, die auf einem Workshop des Forum Kritische Archäologie und der AG Theorien in der Archäologie 2015 zur Sprache kamen (s. dazu Schreiber u. a. 2018: 341). Es braucht dafür die bisher oft vernachlässigten Grundsatzdebatten bzgl. der Fachethik.

Ein *Code of Conduct* könnte sich weitestgehend an bereits üblichen Maßstäben bei der Qualitätssicherung wissenschaftlicher Texte[4] orientieren, wie z. B. der methodisch angemessenen Gewinnung und Überprüfbarkeit der genannten Fakten. Um einen Missbrauch der Archäologie auszuschließen, könnte man dem die Achtung der Menschenwürde und Menschenrechte hinzufügen. Dies zu formulieren ist allerdings eine Herausforderung, denn es gibt in der global angelegten Archäologie verschiedene Gesellschaften, unterschiedliche ethische Vorstellungen sowie unterschiedlichste politische Umstände (siehe Smith 2012: 91).

Nicht zuletzt sollte auch auf die Differenzen zwischen aktivistisch und nicht aktivistisch durchgeführter Archäologie eingegangen werden. Dies möchte ich anhand zweier Beispiele kurz skizzieren:

1. Der Gesetzesübertritt. So war es für die Dokumentation der Fluchtboote auf Lampedusa notwendig, sich illegal Zugang zu einer Militärzone zu verschaffen. Die Frage dabei ist, ob es dadurch auch weniger legitim ist. Forscher*innen und Aktivist*innen können in dieser Hinsicht zu unterschiedlichen Ansichten kommen. Gerade deshalb sollten Diskussionen darüber gemeinsam geführt werden. In aktivistischen Kreisen ist diese Diskussion üblich, ebenso wie verschiedene Ansichten im Einzelfall.
2. Einige erhobene Daten des Aktivismus sind so sensibel, dass sie niemals publiziert werden dürfen, um beispielsweise nicht von Schlepper*innen verwendet zu werden (Steffan 2017: 131). Diese notwendige Intransparenz stellt ebenfalls einen Gegensatz zur normalen Wissenschaftlichkeit dar, bei der Transparenz für eine Reflexion notwendig ist. Daher sollte auch diese Form aktivistischer Arbeit diskutiert, aber auch anerkannt und formuliert werden.

4 In diesem Zusammenhang ist zu erwähnen, dass es oftmals diejenigen Autor*innen sind, welche menschenunwürdige Praktiken heroisieren, welche im politischen Zusammenhang mit Wissenschaftsleugner*innen stehen, und im gleichen Atemzug selbst oft unsauber recherchieren.

Die Verzahnung von Archäologie und Aktivismus als Chance

> „Eine Archäologie, die sich von aktuellen Zeitströmungen distanziert oder sich in gewisser Weise über oder jedenfalls außerhalb unserer Gesellschaft zu befinden wähnt, ist für meine Begriffe jedenfalls nicht in der Lage, eine unverzichtbare Rolle im Zentrum dieser Gesellschaft zu spielen.“ (Holtorf 2012: 100)

Mithilfe archäologischer Methoden können hochwertige Argumente, Dokumentationen, Recherchen usw. entstehen, die politisch für unser aller Wohl genutzt werden können (Seitsonen u. a. 2016: 245). Dabei können Archäolog*innen auch von Aktivist*innen lernen. Denn diese verfügen oftmals über eine deutlich höhere Kompetenz, die Sinnhaftigkeit ihres Anliegens und damit z. B. auch die Sinnhaftigkeit archäologischer Forschungen medial darzustellen; Qualifikationen, an denen es in der Archäologie oft mangelt.

Die Möglichkeiten der Archäologie bei der Unterstützung von Aktivist*innen liegen vor allem in der Unterstützung der Wissensproduktion, der Dokumentation sowie in der Aufklärung und der Recherche. Ebenso sind Ausgrabungen, welche über Menschenrechtsverbrechen aufklären, zu erwähnen, wie beispielsweise Untersuchungen an Tatorten des NS-Regimes, welche die Relevanz der Archäologie ebenfalls unterstreichen (Seitsonen u. a. 2016: 245). Auch die Methoden- und Themenvielfalt der Archäologie kann aktivistisch ganz unterschiedlich genutzt werden. Bei den bisher genannten Beispielen handelte es sich vor allem um die Themen Flucht oder antifaschistische Textproduktion. Eine aktivistische Archäologie könnte sich z. B. aber auch den Interessen einer unterdrückten Bevölkerungsgruppe widmen (Starzmann 2012: 149–150) oder über verschiedene Gesellschaftsstrukturen aufklären bzw. die Diversität von Geschlechterkonzepten aufzeigen (Starzmann 2012: 152) und bspw. auch die menschlichen Verstrickungen in den Klimawandel fokussieren.

Ich möchte abschließend aufzeigen, wie groß die Bandbreite der Themen ist, bei denen eine Zusammenarbeit von Archäolog*innen und politischen Aktivist*innen nicht nur möglich ist, sondern auch für beide Seiten sinnvoll. Die Archäologie betrachtet Lebensrealitäten und Lebensrealitäten sind eben immer auch politisch – dies sollte ohnehin immer reflektiert werden, um einen Missbrauch der Forschungsergebnisse frühzeitig aufzuzeigen. Die Erforschung von Vergangenheiten, aber auch einzelne Methoden können Aktivist*innen nutzen, um ihre Forderungen qualitativ zu verbessern. Dies hat im besten Falle einen positiven Effekt für die gesamte Gesellschaft und kann ein Teil der Sinnstiftung der archäologischen Fächer sein. Das Herausstellen der gesamtgesellschaftlichen Relevanz der archäologischen Forschung wäre eine Folge dieser Zusammenarbeit und das kann langfristig auch zu einem Bedeutungsgewinn für das gesamte Fach führen.

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What Concrete Forms Might an Activist Scholarly Archaeology Take? – Two Examples of Experimental Projects

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What Concrete Forms Might an Activist Scholarly Archaeology Take? – Two Examples of Experimental Projects

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"Prenons garde à ne pas céder à la désespérance, car il ne reste de temps à autre lueur d'espoir"
(Edouard Saouma, 1993)

"Without being an activist, I would fall into despair…"
Greta Thunberg (November 1st, 2022; interview on Channel 4)

Since the 1970s, scholars like Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows, and Jorgen Randers (Meadows et al. 2022 [2004]: 383–454), have been actively proposing actions to guarantee the sustainability for life outside of the ideological framework imposed within the 'Capitalocene' (Moore 2016). In this specific context, activist archaeology certainly has a role to play in answering the questions: "is archaeology useful?" (Dawdy 2009: 131), or "why archaeology?" (Tilley 1989: 105; McGuire 2008: xi). The genesis of these questions likely emerges from the aim of millennial and Gen Z archaeologists to use their archaeological skills meaningfully, or at least in a way that does not harm people or the environment and preferably is somehow beneficial to communities. Thus, an activist archaeology is about reorienting the focus of archaeological research and emphasizing action itself as the heart of future research programs (Stottman 2010: 9) or even as a rescue program that seeks social, economic, political, and ecological justice. This active approach challenges and transgresses the traditional bounds of academic archaeology, rather than conceptualizing activism as a potential by-product of archaeological practice (McGuire 2008: xii).

The Impossibility of an Activist Archaeology?

Recently, Richard M. Hutchings and Marina La Salle (2021: 12) warned the archaeological community about the potential false hopes raised by diverse forms of activist archaeological practices. They suggested that the trend of adding 'prefixes + archaeology', such as 'sustainable', 'public', 'Indigenous', 'community' archaeology only demonstrated the desperate attempt of archaeologists to survive by correcting or pretending to correct archaeological practices that were abusive, commodified, cynical, and self-serving. If 'surviving' means maintaining 'business as usual' (i.e., surviving a highly competitive job market), while pretending to serve reparatory claims, then I must agree with Hutchings and La Salle that the archaeological discipline largely deserves to be condemned.

This current trend of 'prefix' archaeology can be seen as a form of rebranding of the discipline to make it look 'responsible' towards social and ecological issues and embedded in present problematic practices. This is especially the case for those bodies that employ archaeologists or for the institutions that distribute grants and awards such as universities, governments, and private sponsors. As such, typical 'activist' vocabulary is used, commodified, and displayed in archaeological research contexts. This is visible, for example, in browsing through random programs of current international archaeology conferences; one might get the impression of a cynical, as well as opportunistic and manipulative choice in terms of research subjects, that just mimic various current activist trends. Sometimes this is not only an impression, as trendy terms linked to 'sustainability' will be prominently spread on the screen and in the conference printed program, quoting heavily from decades-old landmark studies, but often without a clear understanding of the concepts at stake, nor any clear intention to implement them meaningfully

with a demanding intellectual, critical process. These ‘prefix archaeologies’ are then only implemented superficially, notably by packing a research presentation with fancy digital illustrations, or even sometimes by professing a state or religious moralist agenda in total contradiction with the emancipatory or collaborative agenda claimed in the first place. In the end, such discourses are meant to please sponsors – or not to upset them – in a career agenda of self-interest and self-survival.

In the meantime, the situation in academia is far from being that low-spirited, as many researchers are choosing not to follow the trends and branded thematic research. They were already or are presently engaged with communities before the so called ‘brands’ existed. Many archaeologists are not only researchers, but also citizens involved in their communities at many different levels, and this permeates their research subjects and projects as well. In this light, doing so-called ‘prefix’ archaeology is not a defensive reaction to an accusation of being per se an assistant of a colonial, capitalist, and extractive society, but rather a pre-existing, ethical, and self-imposed imperative both to research and civic duties. This “political action” (McGuire 2008) often opposes or is at least critical of the values, colonialism, authoritarianism, nationalism, and patriarchy of hyper-capitalist societies and their deleterious effects on any living communities.

Concrete Examples

1. The E-waste Erren River Archaeological Project in Taiwan: Archaeology as Eco-Environmentalist Activism

This archaeology research project was conducted by a Master’s student from the Institute of Archaeology of the National Cheng Kung University (Taiwan). Dong-Yo Shih [施東佑] (2022) focused on a recent e-waste industrial toxic heritage located at the banks of Erren River in Southern Taiwan. The Erren River was one of the places for metal recycling activities in the 1960s-1980s that resulted from Taiwan’s booming economy, which durably devastated its shores and the nearby areas.

From my external perspective, Shih acted as an ‘activist archaeologist’ in the sense that the project was born from his own initial engagement as a young citizen in a local ecological activism association (referred to by the term ‘grassroot’ in Taiwan). He developed an evolving, organic, and personal connection with a specific area, its environment, and its peoples. The combination of his study specialization in archaeology with this ‘grassroots’ background resulted in the formulation of his MA thesis project. This project was contextualized within a collective of local citizens consisting of diverse specialists and/or activists in various domains and visual artists, all of whom were dedicated to environmental preservation/reparation.

The strength of his scholarly project resides especially in the use of multidisciplinary approaches and media, which confront contemporary Taiwanese society with the consequences of an ecological disaster directly resulting from the globalized market-economy. It should be noted here that one of the key elements of the success of this project was its financial independence, relying notably on unpaid volunteers and unpaid research by the student/researcher himself. Some of the funds necessary for conducting the project were obtained from the university (through the financial support of the Institute of Archaeology), while some additional funds were obtained from a private corporate sponsor (without controlling the aims and/or results of the research). This configuration allowed the researcher to be critical, and most importantly disruptive, of the capitalist consensus, which was in denial of: 1) the existence of a pollution, 2) the ideological origin of its existence, and 3) its present and future consequences for the environment and for the health of people living in the area.

While the presence of e-waste and the associated activities of metal extractions using chemical products and plastic combustion was known by local populations, the reality of the pollution and its proportions remained an abstraction and was easily hidden underground. The work of Shih gave the e-waste toxic pollution a materiality that could be quantified and interpreted in the general globalized context with the help of qualitative data (notably through semi-directed interviews). Furthermore, as archaeology can be particularly dry or difficult to grasp for the public,

the association of an invited artist reflecting on the archaeological process generated another outcome, more poetic and more accessible to the wider public. The combination of excavation, public archaeology events, community archaeology, and artist performances successfully established a general awareness of the e-waste pollution and its consequences, bringing the e-waste and its toxic legacy directly to the political forefront. In this case, joining forces and crafts to form a collective reflection of the state of the Erren River could establish what we interpret as an 'activist archaeology'.

2. Structural Control and Reactionary Forces – Breaking an 'Archaeological Ethnography' and Planned Artistic Performances in Greece

The Toumba Serron Research Project conducted in Northern Greece since 2019, is an ongoing academic project that is particularly relevant here given the oppositions it has faced. It is a large-scale project embedded within university regulations and largely financially dependent on various national governmental institutions. This dependence, in contrast to the previous case presented above, resulted in all social aspects of the project being cancelled by the funding institutions, themselves essentially a jury composed of archaeologists and other scholars under governmental jurisdiction. Part of the project aimed toward fostering socio-political engagement. The project was threatened with a loss of funding if it did not stick strictly to archaeological fieldwork with its expected scientific practices and analyses. Political actions through artistic performances, a self-reflexive documentary, and archaeological-ethnography plans were thus eliminated (at least on paper) through financial pressure. Still, some forms of 'action' were partially maintained, notably through "archaeological ethnography" (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009; Stefanou and Antoniadou 2021), but they were hidden from the funding institutions. An archaeological ethnography approach consists precisely in decentring an archaeological project from the scientific study of the past by examining the present of people as well and their interest in the past and integrating them within the project as legitimate stakeholders of the past(s).

Yet, with very limited funding, such 'prefix' archaeology implementation depends mostly on the good-will and backing of unpaid or low-paid researchers, as well as the care of the local community through gifts, participation, or lending equipment. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as it can provide much more freedom for collective actions, but it does considerably limit these actions and creates an unfair divide between the funded scientists and the unfunded or badly funded socially engaged actors. This current financial configuration still does not allow the directors of the project to involve a theatrical performance and a film director for the fieldwork due to the lack of available funds. This restriction is based on a reactionary assumption that 'prefixes archaeologies' are 'irrelevant' or even detrimental to a 'professional' archaeological practice, as stated by the committee awarding research grants (in this case, in East Asia). In contrast, the project was initially defined by its directors with the opposite assumption that there are no ethical and professional archaeological practices conceivable today without a significant social involvement of the teams and a clear archaeological problematic serving, not only the construction of knowledge on the past, but also the present and future of local populations.

The Current Necessity of an Activist Archaeology

An 'activist archaeology' can nurture, solidify, and justify actions against social, ecological, or socio-political injustices. It can achieve such aims by participating in the building of scientifically rooted arguments, notably by giving an opportunity to establish solid quantitative and qualitative data corpuses. Yet, most importantly, an activist archaeology can give opportunities for transdisciplinary, interconnected and engaged interactions with other citizens involved in curving or fighting back against, for example, the deleterious effects of a mega-development project.

As we saw with the example of the Erren River in Taiwan, archaeology can revive the materiality of pollution related to a global capitalist market logic; it can even go further by measuring it and offering the tools to evaluate its potential effects on present and future human communities and on all living things. While action is triggered by archaeology and the results passed on to the community/group/minority of oppressed, disenfranchised, alienated

people (from their environment), our duty as activist archaeologists is then to move on and start something else somewhere else. If we stick around making such projects a permanent job, we will place ourselves in a position of conflict of interest by making our subsistence rely on the existence of an issue we are supposed to solve or, as least, raise awareness about.

In Ursula Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*, individuals accomplish a mission for a community in need according to the crafts they possess and then move on to the next, but it can preferably be a collective, formed by complementary and interdependent skilled individuals, as in the novel of Alain Damasio *La horde du contrevent* (Damasio 2004). As stated by Chambers (2004: 207), "The kinds of career opportunities and challenges that many archaeologists now face might require new skills and areas of specialization, some of which can be provided by their cultural colleagues". Then, the collective should not be composed only of archaeologists, and this is exactly when artists, other scholars, and skilled locals can join forces to intervene when needed.

From my perspective, when a project is completed, such as for the Erren River, with ecological awareness goals reached and tools transferred to local stakeholders to seek for more ecological justice aiming for the full detoxification of soils, the role of the archaeologist would then be to fade away. Yet, a long-term meaningful project also implies keeping in contact with the community as a referent, to accompany them in their journey dealing with their own heritage, as toxic it can be. As stated by Shih,

> "The electronic toxic wastes revealed by the excavation will be an important element, or catalyst, for the understanding of local and global socio-politics, creating future opportunities for both reflection and dialogue on environmental issues [in which the archaeologist will certainly participate if requested]" (Shih 2022 – Zorzin, translation from Mandarin).

Even further, an activist archaeology might simply have to be detached from any forms of financial dependences to avoid self-censorship or self-moderating in every situation involving the necessity of a radical action. To avoid the inertia in such situations of dependency, I have already suggested in a previous publication the potential support of the "universal basic income" (UBI) (Zorzin 2021: 11–12). It could be provided by the state, local authorities, or directly by the community concerned by a project, as soon as a communal nature of the activities (i.e. of public interest) can be demonstrated. Such UBI could be granted without obligations of results and without any form of control of the institutions in the nature of the results. Such results may go against the state's policies or interests, as, for example, in the case of Indigenous or environmental claims, where archaeology could provide the arguments justifying radical actions or other forms of resistance.

Finally, what if the very justification of the existence of our archaeological practices could be based on itinerant, ephemeral, and radical actions all serving the common good? What if the usefulness of archaeology is to bring knowledge to communities, and what if this knowledge could support the tools for building collectively a better future? I can foresee that archaeology, as dominantly practiced today, will have no justification if it continues to exist essentially as a vassal of 'extractivism' and development. It will only be relevant and useful to communities seeking for a sustainable future if it becomes socially engaged – an 'activist archaeology'.

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Activism: The End of History – Adjourned

Johannes Müller

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Activism: The End of History – Adjourned

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The editors of Forum Kritische Archäologie have asked me to write something on the question of archaeological activism. My question in return – activism for what? – was answered to the effect that the potential of archaeology or archaeologists in the "struggle" for a better world should be discussed in more detail.

What is a better world is answered very differently, especially in intellectual circles, but also in society as a whole. At the same time, the existence of a "bad" world is implied. In my observation, the constants have shifted towards a "better" world in the last twenty years: the clear differentiation of society into rulers and ruled is no longer obvious and decisive, for example, within North American and European late capitalist societies or between the global North and the global South. The structural differentiation into ruling and oppressed classes has given way to a constructivist diversification of issues. The shift of financial resources by the rulers of the South to the North also points to the fact that the global differentiation of power structures no longer corresponds to the classical scheme of "imperialist" exploitation. Overall, we can observe not only an atomisation of individuals, but also an individualisation of resistances against a supposed late capitalist system.

Academic discourses have always been incomprehensible to many and rarely claim to speak a language that everyone understands or to actively engage in social debates. Intellectual debates have often centred on the question of what constitutes social progress in the first place. While a right-wing intellectual "abolition of history" could be observed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, such an abolition can now also be observed in left-wing intellectual circles (cf. *The Dawn of Everything*; Graeber and Wengrow 2022).

The aforementioned uncertainties in the assessment of the "world" are joined by a qualitative change in the state of the "world" and thus also in the possibilities of societies to shape their politics. While we assumed, at least until about 30 years ago, that the riches of our world would be sufficient for "everyone" if they were distributed fairly, and that accordingly social models without a domination of one person over another would keep open paradisical access options to all resources for each and everyone, we know today that this will not be the case. The ecological state of the planet has, through the technical development of industrial societies, led to a situation in which the collapse of the ecosystem "world" is possible. It is not the over-exploitation of resources caused by a ruling class that has produced this state, but the participation of large parts of the societies of the North that is contributing to the current global development.

In this respect, activism can no longer necessarily involve improving the economic situation of large sections of the population in the sense of improving prosperity. Instead, in the highly industrialised countries of the North, it will have to be more about redistribution and, to some extent, de-growth through ecologically compatible technologies.

In this respect, an activist perspective again requires a clear definition of what we mean by progress. If we disregard the liberal-anarchist attempts to end history, i.e. the attempt to see no progress or regress in history, I would like to single out three aspects here that can be determined as "progressive":

- The improvement of the health situation and the increase in life expectancy. Linked to this are infrastructural changes (e.g., access to clean water, introduction of toilets), improvements in the supply situation (e.g., access to food, basic medical care) and adequate technical development.

- The reduction of ecological contamination at local, regional, and global levels with the development of resilience strategies to deal with anthropogenically-induced climate change.
- The creation of cooperative and truly democratic conditions, i.e. free of domination, which allow the participation of all in a correspondingly resilient handling of the ecological situation on a global scale.

There are numerous social groups that support, sometimes contradictorily, such a progressive development. They range from grassroots activists of variously radical or system-adapted persuasions, NGOs and trade unions or workers' representatives and gender and diversity activists to political institutions and organisations that represent such objectives (e.g., UNESCO).

The contribution of archaeology can be directed at different target groups. If intended, general questions about the development of inequality, the social consequences of technological developments, questions about violence and counter-violence or the emergence of democratic or non-democratic institutions can also be answered archaeologically. For example, one of the main results of the Cluster of Excellence ROOTS is that economic and social inequality above a certain level leads to an increase in intra- and inter-societal conflicts and ultimately to system collapse. Another result demonstrates that high mobility, i.e. a high proportion of not only local but also non-local people, is part of the basic pattern of social relations. It also becomes clear that a democratic social formation without social oppression can exist independently of demographic variables or economic and technological potentials. One of the results of SFB 1266 "Transformation Dimensions – Human-Environment Interactions in Prehistoric and Archaic Societies" is that many prehistoric societies were able to operate sustainably despite climatic changes. It also becomes clear that "open" societies in particular, which absorb impulses from other networks, "cushion" critical ecological or political situations better than those that tend to be closed off from the outside.

What to do with such knowledge? Corresponding research results must be made available to grass roots movements, NGOs, but also political institutions, in order to support the associated political arguments and actions (an example of this is the Kiel Social Archaeology and Climate Change (SACC) Summit, cf. https://www.jma.uni-kiel.de/en/research-projects/sacc). Especially the long-term perspective can become an important argumentative aid for local and regional groups. Activism in this sense thus initially involves leaving the academic ivory tower and discussing the results achieved in the appropriate contexts of resistance to ecological and social catastrophe. No more and no less. The perspective of "think global, act local" can thus be extended by a "think long term, act short term."

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Empowerment by Whom and for Whom?
Empowerment durch wen und für wen?

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Empowerment by Whom and for Whom?

FKA Editorial Collective

In our concluding commentary on this theme issue, we would like to take a step back and address some questions about activism in general and the values we attach to it.

What Is Activism?

The question of an activist archaeology generated a series of responses that were focused in particular on what such an archaeology does. We also consider reflections on what activism is or how it can be characterized as relevant in the context of the essays gathered here.

At first glance, activism is closely related to the notion of intervention, as Tonia Davidovic-Walther suggests in her contribution. Such interventions advocate – "actively" – for sociopolitical, economic, ecological, or other ideals or protest against existing structures: an "uprising" for social change. This is the case, for example, when archaeologists seek to support processes of decolonization by actively engaging with local communities or challenging influential hegemonic narratives against the will of ruling elites.

Beyond the concrete goals of individual movements, the mere existence of activism can represent a structural success, even if only as small-scale obstinacy in James Scott's (1989) sense of everyday resistance. Such repeated acts often turn into role models and incentives for new movements that can have a considerable impact on local conditions. From a current perspective, if we look at the movement "Last Generation," it may well be that its immediate goals, such as the introduction of a speed limit on German highways or even the banning of motorized individual transport, are not achieved. But the protest may nonetheless motivate individuals to reflect more on their own behavior or even to change it, that which Erhan Tamur refers to as "incremental change."

Activism, therefore, does not necessarily always have to become larger, more active, more radical, more militant, or more global; it does not require growth. As Maryam Dezhamkhooy points out, "saying no" and deliberately remaining "inactive" can be equally activist when used as a form of resistance, for example, against dictatorial oppression or traditionalist expectations. For archaeologists, this can mean refusing to do certain kinds of research or to do so under certain conditions, even if they thereby face punishment or exclusion as consequences.

However, the idea of "activism" refers not only to the struggle for social justice, for example in liberation movements, decolonization efforts, the fight for women's rights or in radical environmental movements such as "Extinction Rebellion." It is obvious when one looks around that there are activists not only on the left side of the political spectrum. Allison Mickel shows convincingly that archaeological undertakings in the 19th century in western Asia contained an activist component, in that they contributed substantially to the cultural disempowerment of the local population and to the consolidation of colonial power structures. In the present, activists can also be found in arch-conservative and ultra-reactionary circles, indeed, across the entire political spectrum (cf. Latour 2018 on terrestrial vs. extraterrestrial politics). One has only to look at the so-called Tea Party in the U.S.A. and the dynamics it unleashed, which were instrumental in helping Donald Trump to power. Pegida in Germany, the supporters of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, or neo-fascist movements in Italy are only some of the other prominent examples of a

"great regression" (Geiselberger 2017) that seems to be spreading globally. Gabriel Moshenska observes that current "community archaeology," especially in industrialized nations, is not so much associated with the aspirations of the marginalized, but rather is mostly challenged by claims of conservative and bourgeois groups – claims that an activist archaeology should by all means counter.

On the other hand, activist projects stemming from left-leaning circles also develop in unforeseen directions. If one assumes that activism is primarily political action in the public sphere that does not make use of established mechanisms that are officially available in a political system but rather seeks to influence social structures through other channels, the great success of many activist projects for social justice on an international scale has led to strong networking and complex organizations that have emerged in the form of NGOs. One may well endorse their work, but as apparatuses endowed with large financial resources, they take over governmental tasks in many places where political systems are weak (Lewis 2017). Many of these originally activist organizations – one can think of Greenpeace, for example – are themselves turning into parts of a neoliberal governmentality and risk becoming political accomplices of the powerful by being a well-functioning wheel in the operation of capitalism.

The problem of an ascent into formal politics is, at its core, a problem of activism as a whole. Long ago Baruch Spinoza (2018 [1677]) and more recently Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004) have used the term "multitude" to describe how networks of relationships with a specific goal – for example, the right to abortion, peace in Ukraine, an end to the compulsory wearing of a headscarf in Iran, and so on – emerge independently of other, sometimes conflicting political worldviews held by their members. Such movements – multitudes, – have no predictable political direction, but their impetus is clearly one of active intervention that deliberately positions itself outside the usual strategies of power.

We consider these reflections on how to circumscribe an understanding of activism to be imperative in order to point out that activist movements can have a significant impact on local living conditions and existing power relations but that they do not necessarily only fight for social justice. Activism is a thoroughly ambivalent form of practice, one that may have an inherent subversiveness due to its preferred means of action. Whether a movement is successful cannot always be answered unequivocally. If the specific political goal is achieved, that may be considered a measure of success. But the original activist tendency may also be transformed with the aim of integrating itself into the apparatuses of power. Trump's America is a vivid example of this, but so is the West German anti-nuclear movement, which ultimately led to the Green party, today part of the government. A movement can also end in failure and the disintegration of multitudes, as happened in the case of the "yellow vests" in France or the protest against NATO's deployment of nuclear arms in Europe. And not only in recent years: James Scott (1976) details in *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* that peasant uprisings have often ended in failure throughout history.

Activist Archaeology "for Others"

The aforementioned characteristics of activism apply only conditionally to archaeological contexts. In most statements on this matter, including many gathered here, activism is not self-referential but rather is directed at others, usually people from non-academic circles. Often closely intertwined with notions of community archaeology (Marshall 2022), archaeologists who see themselves as activists aim to incorporate into archaeological projects the histories, interests, and understandings of the world of local disadvantaged or marginalized communities, or to mobilize their own research specifically for the interests of such groups, as can be seen in the contributions here by Félix Acuto, Beatriz Marín-Aguilera, and Nicholas Zorzin.

The discussion often revolves around whether the impetus for a research project should come from the communities themselves rather than from an academic or heritage archaeology that functions only as a specialized apparatus attempting to implement goals external to it (academic reputation, "apolitical" generation of knowledge, fulfillment of state/legal requirements, etc.). Such communities are referred to as subaltern (Bernbeck and Egbers 2019: 60), which suggests a wide variety of structural inequalities that may be gender-, class-, or age-specific in concrete individual cases, but may also be based on racializing attributions, as Félix Acuto demonstrates here using the example of his efforts to support indigenous groups in conflicts over territorial claims in Argentina.

However, this ideal image of a subaltern group actively and independently approaching the profession of archaeology for help in solving particular problems, and in doing so encountering activists, does not correspond to the usual situation. Most examples of activist archaeology continue to have their origins from the outside, with an impetus to give voice to the interests of the subaltern.

Archaeologists are in a privileged position vis-à-vis marginalized groups because of their education (often based on a privileged social background) and the networks that come with it. Being able to use this privileged position for the benefit of others and thus contribute to the empowerment of marginalized groups is a motivation that underlies many activist or participatory projects. This goes beyond "community archaeology." It is not simply a matter of involving local communities but of deliberately dismantling social structures of injustice to the point of breaking down long-entrenched colonial and hegemonic structures, as M. Dores Cruz demonstrates using the example of archaeology in Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe.

At the same time, in some texts on activism in archaeology, one can read between the lines a quite understandable desire to be relevant beyond one's own profession (Clauss 2014). Such approaches and projects are desirable when they are oriented toward goals of social justice – a matter that is not self-evident. However, the ideal of self-determination by subaltern groups can rarely be achieved. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) demonstrates in her epochal article on the (in)ability of the subaltern to speak attempting to speak for them *deprives them of their voice*. In the same vein, archaeologists need to critically question their own ambitions and practices – in the context of academic discourse as well as activist intervention or participatory archaeology – in order to reduce epistemic violence and paternalism.

Sonya Atalay (2014) has been working for some time to apply Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR; Wallerstein and Duran 2003) to archaeology. This approach, which originated in South America, contains a strong activist element. Atalay points out that it is precisely an activist archaeology that requires methodological rigor. The oft-assumed impossibility of a scientific and yet activist scholarship is also a main concern for Ulrich Müller. He sees in the traditional axiom of observation rather than intervention in investigative relations the justification for more stringent rather than weaker methodological requirements of activist archaeology.

It seems, then, that activism in the context of archaeology targets primarily non-archaeologists. The tables can also be turned, because archaeology itself is often the object of activism. Of particular interest are protest sites, in the form of museums, the original goal of which was a mediation between expertise and the public. Their discourses, mainly material, were supposed to become sites for lucid, comprehensible communication. However, they quickly ossified into elitist institutions. Pınar Durgun's contribution shows how these ritualized spaces in fact could lend themselves to being targets for anti-elitist activism.

Activism within Archaeology

Activism can also be pursued internal to archaeology, as some of the contributions here demonstrate. The highly hierarchical university or professional structures that exist in many places are marked by injustices, a parallel to the profession's relationship to non-specialist groups. This concerns both authority structures and economic relations. A targeted dismantling of internal authoritarianism, sexism, and exploitative relationships can only be regarded as positive. Nevertheless, it is often accompanied by a tendency toward solutions that tighten legal frameworks, which hardly allows for dynamic decisions. Underpay, unequal power relations, and precarious working conditions within the discipline are problems that can lead to activism, as the contribution of the Anarchaeology Collective (Hahn et al.) illustrates. Such structures are often specific to national and local conditions. Neoliberal "hire and fire" policies that are pronounced in the U.S.A. are also spreading rapidly to other countries. Underpaid work on excavations or in the university sector, lack of compensation for overtime, and precarious working conditions are equally a reality in Germany (cf. Gutsmiedl-Schümann et al. 2021; Forum Archäologie in Gesellschaft 2021). In our opinion, due to the small number of archaeologists, union support is needed. Beatriz Marín-Aguilera and Erhan Tamur call for a fundamental dismantling of the elitism of the discipline through, for example, deliberate decolonization of curricula, application and hiring procedures, as well as citation practices that work against archaeology's systemic racism, sexism, and elitism. Uzma Rizvi also voices demands for decolonization, but

clearly disassociates herself from any competitive stance and thus from the scholarly habitus. She sees a much more radical activist practice in relations of attentiveness and care for one another. All of these voices emphasize that the aspirations of "internal activism" should be joined by those directed toward non-academic communities.

We regard the latter demand as indispensable. The struggle for social justice unites both activisms, although they are often categorically separated. We ask what possibilities there are for a link between an "external" and an "internal" activism, and how an awareness of this can be promoted. While we are skeptical of ideal concepts, we also depend to an extent on such formulations:

- Archaeological education, whether of students or technical staff, should be structured so that it promotes critical thinking in formal terms and thus the potential to contradict or question authority. However, such an education should also encourage dissent at the substantive, formal, or procedural levels.
- A basic stock of factual knowledge imparted in a course of study is essential, but it should always be imbued with knowledge of its historicity, changeability, and relativity. The latter results from alternative ontologies (Descola 2013), which are a fundamental prerequisite for engaging with other understandings of the world.
- Specialization in a profession through education usually leads to a habitus that places "scientific-ness" in the traditional sense of the Enlightenment above all other knowledge. This epistemic arrogance too easily leads to a naïve ignorance of the diversity of entirely different complex knowledge structures (de Sousa Santos 2014). The willingness to engage with other systems of thought is the foundation for a critical as well as an activist archaeology.
- Equipped with knowledge of the relativity of scientific epistemology, it is possible to open up to the potentially "other" of non-archaeological communities. However, the aforementioned giving-a-voice by activist archaeology, for all its efforts to take knowledge differences seriously, ends up in the aporia of subalternity and external partisanship, as Spivak showed.
- The temporality of a collaborative process is another fundamental component of activist archaeology. A long duration will always create dependencies that cannot be dissolved to the extent that an activist archaeology fulfills its task of reducing repression; rather, it may require long-term structural interventions, which, however, an activist archaeology cannot afford. Nicolas Zorzin's idea of immediately withdrawing after an initial push for a community-based project seems to us to be exemplary in this respect.

Archaeology of Activism

Atalay (2014: 51) noted that on the occasion of a forum on Challenges for Activist Ethnography she left the meeting "wondering about yet another meaning of the term 'activist archaeology.' I wondered if there had yet been any archaeological research conducted on activist movements. [...] What would the material signature of the 'Arab Spring' look like, and how could archaeological research contribute to our knowledge about this and other social movements?" In their essay on the Arab Spring in Cairo, Johannes Jungfleisch and Chiara Reali make clear that such efforts are more complex than Atalay assumes. Those archaeologists whose projects consist of "archaeologies of activism" usually see themselves as activist scholars. On such occasions, positionality and the subject of research coincide. Examples of this certainly exist, ranging from the archaeology of the 1914 coal mining labor camp in Ludlow, Colorado (McGuire et al. 1998; The Ludlow Collective 2001) to the anti-nuclear movement in Gorleben (Dézsi 2018; Ziegler 2017), refugees in Athens (Tulke 2019), or in Jungfleisch and Reali's contribution to the Arab Spring in Egypt.

As Atalay (2014) notes, such archaeology need not in any way be one-sided. Methodological rigor can be accompanied by research questions that depart radically from traditional research foci. A critical archaeology pursues similar goals, abandoning the well-trodden paths of ordinary, knowledge-gap-filling science. As Martin Porr and Henny Piezonka call for in their reflections on forms of indigenous archaeology, uncommon perspectives that simultaneously pursue uncommon research goals should take their place. Geesche Wilts tries to do this with her archaeological look at traces of refugees on Lampedusa in order to contribute to awareness raising for the dramatic

situation of refugees. In this sense, a methodologically traditional archaeology is questioned after all. Quetzil Castañeda (2014: 70) writes: “Here then is a conflict within the individual between vested interests and capabilities calling in doing the profession on one side, and the activist calling not simply to use the profession for social justice but to also change perceived negative dimensions of the profession on the other side.”

An activist archaeology therefore always represents a paradox, the resolution of which can never be completely successful. Precisely for this reason, it should nevertheless be pursued. It can be intellectual liberation or social intervention, and at the same time it must maintain an independence from the apparatuses of power in order not to be appropriated. It oscillates between direct action and the facilitation of action, with empowerment and social justice at its core. Such an agenda also necessarily requires a close connection to a critical archaeology that exposes injustices and inequalities in the past, examines their influence on the contemporary social fabric, and is aware of the consequences of archaeological knowledge production for current social discourses (McGuire 2012: 78).

Empowerment durch wen und für wen?

FKA-Herausgeber*innenkollektiv

In unserem abschließenden Kommentar zu diesem FKA-Themenheft möchten wir einen Schritt zurücktreten und einige Fragen zum Aktivismus im Allgemeinen und zu den Werten, die wir ihm beimessen, ansprechen.

Was ist Aktivismus?

Unsere Frage nach einer „aktivistischen Archäologie“ generierte eine Serie von Antworten, die sich vor allem darauf konzentrieren, wie eine solche Archäologie vorgeht. Wir halten Reflexionen darüber, wie Aktivismus grundsätzlich charakterisiert werden kann, im Zusammenhang der hier versammelten Kommentare ebenfalls für relevant.

Auf den ersten Blick ist Aktivismus eng mit dem Begriff der Intervention verbunden, wie Tonia Davidovic-Walther in ihrem Beitrag betont. Derartige Eingriffe treten aktiv für gesellschaftspolitische, wirtschaftliche, ökologische oder andere Ideale ein oder protestieren gegen bestehende Strukturen: ein Aufstand für gesellschaftliche Veränderungen. Dies ist z. B. der Fall, wenn Archäolog*innen Prozesse der Dekolonisierung unterstützen wollen, indem sie sich aktiv mit lokalen Communities auseinandersetzen oder einflussreiche, hegemoniale Narrative gegen den Willen der herrschenden Eliten anfechten.

Jenseits des konkreten Ziels einzelner Bewegungen kann die bloße Existenz aktivistischer Bewegungen einen strukturellen Erfolg darstellen, und sei es nur im Sinne eines alltäglichen Eigensinns der „everyday resistance“ (Scott 1989). Diese bildet über die Zeit hinweg immer wieder Vorbild und Ansporn für neue Bewegungen und kann zumindest lokal eine nicht unerhebliche Auswirkung haben. Sieht man sich etwa aus aktueller Perspektive die „Letzte Generation“ an, mag es zwar durchaus sein, dass die direkten Ziele der Bewegung, wie Einführung eines Tempolimits auf deutschen Autobahnen oder gar das Verbot motorisierten Individualverkehrs, nicht erreicht werden, aber der Protest mag doch vereinzelt Mitbürger*innen dazu motivieren, bewusster über das eigene Verhalten nachzudenken oder dieses sogar zu verändern, was Erhan Tamur einen „incremental change“ nennt.

Aktivismus muss daher nicht zwingend immer größer, aktiver, radikaler, militanter oder globaler werden. Wie Maryam Dezhamkhooy hervorhebt, kann „Nein sagen“ und bewusstes „untätig“ bleiben ebenso aktivistisch sein, wenn es als Form des Widerstands eingesetzt wird, z. B. gegen diktatorische Unterdrückung oder traditionalistische Erwartungen. Für Archäolog*innen gerade in solchen undemokratischen Verhältnissen kann die offene oder auch stille Weigerung, bestimmte Arten von Forschung zu betreiben, in Bestrafung oder Ausschluss resultieren.

Die Idee des Begriffs „Aktivismus“ bezeichnet aber schon seit einiger Zeit nicht mehr nur den Kampf für soziale Gerechtigkeit, etwa in Befreiungsbewegungen, Dekolonisierungsbestrebungen, dem Kampf für Frauenrechte oder in radikalen Umweltbewegungen wie der „Extinction Rebellion“. Es ist offensichtlich, dass es Aktivist*innen nicht (mehr) nur auf der „linken“ Seite der politischen Spektren gibt. Allison Mickel zeigt eindrucksvoll, dass etwa archäologische Unterfangen des 19. Jahrhunderts in Westasien durchaus eine aktivistische Komponente beinhalteten, in dem sie substantiell zur kulturellen Entmächtigung der dortigen Bevölkerung und zur Festigung kolonialer Machtstrukturen beitrugen. Auch für die Gegenwart ist zu konstatieren, dass Aktivist*innen ebenso im Bereich der ultrakonservativen bis erzreaktionären Kreise sowie gänzlich quer zu bisherigen politischen Spektren anzutreffen sind (vgl. Latour 2018 zu terrestrischen vs. extraterrestrischen Politiken). Man muss sich nur die sogenannte „Tea Party“ in den USA ansehen, deren Dynamik entscheidend dazu beitrug, Donald Trump an die Macht zu verhelfen. Daneben sind Pegida in Deutschland, die Anhänger*innen von Jair Bolsonaro in Brasilien, oder neofaschistische Bewegungen in Italien nur prominente weitere Beispiele einer „großen Regression“ (Geiselberger 2017), die sich global zu verbreiten scheint. Gabriel Moshenska merkt hierzu kritisch an, dass die gegenwärtige „community archaeology“ besonders in den Industrienationen nicht so sehr mit den Bestrebungen marginalisierter Gruppen einhergeht, sondern sich zumeist mit Ansprüchen konservativer und bourgeoiser Gruppen beschäftigt, denen eine aktivistische Archäologie eigentlich konsequent entgegentreten müsste.

Auf der anderen Seite haben sich aktivistische Projekte linker Kreise auch in unvorhergesehene Richtungen entwickelt. Solche Gruppen verstanden Aktivismus primär als ein politisches Handeln im öffentlichen Raum, das sich nicht der in einem System offiziell zur Verfügung stehenden politischen Mechanismen bedient, sondern über andere Wege Einfluss auf gesellschaftliche Strukturen nehmen will. Der große Erfolg vieler solcher aktivistischer Projekte für soziale Gerechtigkeit hat auf internationaler Skala zu einer so starken Vernetzung geführt, dass daraus komplexe Organisationen entstanden, die bekannten Nichtregierungsorganisationen (NGOs). Deren Arbeit mag man gutheißen, sie übernehmen jedoch auch vielerorts als mit großen finanziellen Ressourcen ausgestattete Apparate Regierungsaufgaben, wo politische Systeme schwach sind (Lewis 2017). Mithin werden viele dieser ursprünglich aktivistischen Organisationen – man denke an Greenpeace und andere – selbst zu Teilen einer neoliberalen Gouvernmentalität und laufen Gefahr, politisch Komplizen der Mächtigen zu werden, in dem sie ein gut funktionierendes Rad im Betrieb des Kapitalismus sind.

Das Problem des Aufstiegs in die formale Politik ist im Kern eines des Aktivismus insgesamt. Schon Baruch Spinoza (2018 [1677]) und zeitnaher Michael Hardt und Antonio Negri (2004) beschreiben mit dem Begriff „Multitude“ anschaulich, wie Beziehungsgeflechte mit einem bestimmten Ziel entstehen, unabhängig von anderen, mitunter gegensätzlichen politischen Weltverständnissen ihrer Mitglieder – das Recht auf Abtreibung, Frieden in der Ukraine, Ende des Kopftuchzwangs im Iran usw. Solche Bewegungen – „Multituden“ bei Spinoza – haben keine vorhersehbare politische Richtung, ihr Impetus ist jedoch deutlich die aktive Intervention, die sich bewusst außerhalb der üblichen Machtstrategien positioniert.

Wir halten diese allgemeinen Überlegungen für notwendig, um deutlich zu machen, dass aktivistische Bewegungen eine beträchtliche Wirkung auf lokale Lebensverhältnisse oder bestehende Machtverhältnisse haben können. Dennoch kämpfen sie nicht notwendigerweise nur für soziale Gerechtigkeit. Aktivismus ist ein durch und durch ambivalentes Verhalten, eine Praxis, die durch die von ihr bevorzugten Mittel eine inhärente Subversivität haben mag. Ob eine Bewegung erfolgreich ist, lässt sich allerdings nicht immer eindeutig beantworten. Wird das punktuelle politische Ziel erreicht, mag das als Erfolg zu werten sein. Ursprünglich aktivistische Bewegungen können mit der Zeit zum Teil des Machtapparates werden. Trumps Amerika ist hierfür ein anschauliches Beispiel, aber auch die westdeutsche Anti-Atom-Bewegung, die letztlich zu der heute regierungstragenden Partei der „Grünen“ führte. Ebenso kann eine Bewegung auch im Misserfolg und dem Auseinanderlaufen solcher Multituden enden. Man denke an die Gelbwesten in Frankreich oder den Protest gegen die nukleare Aufrüstung durch die NATO in Europa. Wie James C. Scott (1976) in *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* ausführlich darlegt, endeten Bauernaufstände in der Geschichte ebenfalls meist im Misserfolg.

Aktivistische Archäologie „für Andere“

Die obigen Merkmale des Aktivismus treffen nur bedingt auf archäologische Kontexte zu. Denn in den meisten Ausführungen hierzu, auch in vielen der hier versammelten, ist der Aktivismus nicht selbstbezüglich, sondern richtet sich auf „Andere“ aus, in der Regel Menschen aus nicht-akademischen Kreisen. Oft eng verschränkt mit den Vorstellungen einer „community archaeology“ (Marshall 2022), binden Archäolog*innen, die sich als aktivistisch verstehen, die Geschichten, Interessen und Weltverständnisse lokaler benachteiligter bzw. marginalisierter Communities in archäologische Projekte ein. Oder sie richten die eigene Forschung gezielt auf die Interessen solcher Gruppen au, wie in den Beiträgen von Félix Acuto, Beatriz Marín-Aguilera und Nicholas Zorzin deutlich wird.

Die Diskussion dreht sich oftmals darum, ob der Impetus für ein Forschungsprojekt von den Communities selbst kommen soll und nicht von einer akademischen oder denkmalpflegerischen Archäologie, die nur als spezialisierter Apparat funktioniert, der die ihm äußerlichen Ziele (akademische Reputation, „apolitische“ Wissensgenerierung, Erfüllung staatlich/gesetzlicher Vorgaben usw.) umzusetzen versucht. Derartige Communities werden mit dem Begriff der „Subalternität“ belegt, der unterschiedlichste strukturelle Ungleichheiten andeutet. Im konkreten Einzelfall mögen dies gender-, klassen- oder altersspezifische, aber auch rassifizierende Zuschreibungen sein (Bernbeck und Egbers 2019: 60). Félix Acuto zeigt dies drastisch am Beispiel seiner Unterstützung indigener Gruppen in Konflikten um territorialen Besitzansprüche in Argentinien auf.

Dieses Idealbild einer subalternen Gruppe, die sich aktiv und selbstständig an die Facharchäologie für die Lösung von bestimmten Problemen wendet und dort auf Aktivist*innen trifft, ist jedoch nicht die Regel. Die meisten Beispiele für eine aktivistische Archäologie sind nach wie vor geprägt von dem Wunsch, von außen den Interessen Subalterner eine Stimme zu geben.

Archäolog*innen befinden sich aufgrund ihrer Ausbildung (die oft auf einem privilegierten sozialen Hintergrund beruht) und der damit verbundenen Netzwerke in einer Vorteilsposition gegenüber marginalisierten Gruppen. Diese Sonderstellung zum Nutzen anderer einsetzen zu können und damit zur Stärkung von Randgruppen beizutragen, ist eine Motivation, die vielen aktivistischen oder partizipativen Projekten zugrunde liegt. Das reicht über eine „community archaeology“ hinaus. Denn es geht nicht einfach um die Einbeziehung lokaler Communities, sondern um den gezielten Abbau sozialer Ungerechtigkeitsstrukturen bis hin zum Aufbrechen lang gediehener kolonialer und hegemonialer Strukturen. M. Dores Cruz beschreibt dies anschaulich am Beispiel der Archäologie in Mozambique und São Tomé e Príncipe.

Gleichzeitig findet sich in manchen Texten zu Aktivismus in der Archäologie zwischen den Zeilen ein durchaus nachvollziehbares Begehren, über die eigene Profession hinaus relevant zu sein (Clauss 2014). Derartige Ansätze und Projekte sind wünschenswert, wenn sie auf soziale Gerechtigkeit ausgerichtet sind, was nicht selbstverständlich ist. Dennoch kann das Ideal der Selbstbestimmung subalterner Gruppen kaum oder nur selten erreicht werden. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivaks (1988) Einwände in ihrem epochalen Artikel zur Sprach(un)fähigkeit der Subalternen kommen auch hier zum Tragen. Wer für andere spricht, nimmt ihnen die Stimme. Auch Archäolog*innen müssen eigene Ambitionen und das konkrete Vorgehen – sowohl im Fall akademischer Fachdiskurse als auch aktivistischer Intervention oder partizipatorischer Archäologie – kritisch hinterfragen, um epistemische Gewalt und Paternalismus abzubauen.

Sonya Atalay (2014) arbeitet seit längerem daran, die aus Südamerika stammende „Community-Based Participatory Research“ (CBPR; Wallerstein und Duran 2003) auch auf die Archäologie anzuwenden. Dieser Ansatz enthält ein starkes aktivistisches Element. Sie weist darauf hin, dass gerade eine aktivistische Archäologie methodologische Strenge benötigt. Die oftmals angenommene Unmöglichkeit einer seriösen und dennoch aktivistischen Wissenschaft beschäftigt in den hier versammelten Kommentaren besonders Ulrich Müller. Er sieht im traditionellen Axiom der Beobachtung statt des Eingreifens in Untersuchungsverhältnisse die Begründung für schärfere und nicht schwache methodologische Anforderungen der aktivistischen Archäologie.

Es scheint, als ob Aktivismus im Zusammenhang mit Archäologie vor allem Nicht-Archäolog*innen zum Ziel hat. Der Spieß lässt sich umdrehen, denn die Archäologie ist selbst oft Objekt des Aktivismus. Von besonderem Interesse sind dabei Protestorte, deren ursprüngliches Ziel gerade eine Vermittlung zwischen Fachwissen und Öffentlichkeit war: Museen. Ihre Diskurse, hauptsächlich materielle, sollten Produktionsorte der Anschaulichkeit

sein oder werden. Sie verknöcherten jedoch schnell zu Institutionen des Klassendünkels. Pınar Durguns Beitrag zeigt, wie sehr sich diese ritualisierten Räume als Zielscheibe eines anti-elitären Aktivismus eignen.

Aktivismus innerhalb der Archäologie

Archäologie kann auch innerhalb der eigenen Community aktivistisch sein, wie einige der hier versammelten Beiträge zeigen. Die vielerorts stark hierarchisierten universitären oder beruflichen Strukturen sind ebenso von Ungerechtigkeiten gezeichnet wie das Verhältnis der Profession zu nichtfachlichen Gruppen. Dabei geht es sowohl um Autoritätsstrukturen als auch um ökonomische Verhältnisse. Natürlich ist ein gezielter Abbau interner Autoritarismen, Sexismen und Ausbeutungsverhältnisse positiv zu bewerten. Dennoch geht er oft auch mit einer Verrechtlichungstendenz einher, deren Ergebnis dynamische Entscheidungen kaum mehr zulässt. Hier unterscheiden sich allerdings nationale, aber auch lokale Verhältnisse deutlich voneinander. Unterbezahlung, ungleiche Machtverhältnisse und prekäre Arbeitsverhältnisse innerhalb des Faches sind Probleme, die zu Aktivismus führen können, wie der Beitrag des Anarchaeologie-Kollektivs verdeutlicht (Hahn u. a.). Je nach nationalem Kontext sind auch hier die Strukturen divers. Neoliberale „hire and fire“-Verhältnisse sind in den U.S.A. sehr ausgeprägt, verbreiten sich jedoch schnell auch in anderen Ländern. Unterbezahlte Arbeit auf Ausgrabungen oder im universitären Sektor, nicht abgegoltene Mehrarbeit und prekäre Arbeitsverhältnisse gehören auch in Deutschland zur Realität (vgl. Gutsmiedl-Schümann u. a. 2021; Forum Archäologie in Gesellschaft 2021). Unseres Erachtens braucht es hier aufgrund der geringen Zahl von Archäolog*innen gewerkschaftliche Unterstützung, um etwas zu erreichen. Beatriz Marín-Aguilera und Erhan Tamur fordern zudem eine grundlegende Ent-Elitisierung des Faches. Hierzu gehört die bewusste Dekolonialisierung von Curricula, von Bewerbungs- und Einstellungsverfahren sowie von Zitierpraktiken. Das Ziel ist die Überwindung von systemimmanentem Rassismus, Sexismus und Elitismus der Archäologie. Auch Uzma Rizvi äußert Forderungen nach Dekolonisierung des wissenschaftlichen Habitus, allerdings in deutlicher Abgrenzung von jeder kompetitiven Haltung. Eine viel radikalere aktivistische Praxis sieht sie in Verhältnissen der Zugewandtheit und Sorge füreinander. Gleichzeitig betonen diese Stimmen, dass die Bestrebungen des „internen Aktivismus“ mit denen zu verbinden sind, die auf nichtakademische Communities ausgerichtet sind.

Eine solche Forderung der Verknüpfung eines „inneren“ und eines „äußeren“ Aktivismus scheint uns unabdingbar. Der Kampf für soziale Gerechtigkeit vereint beide oft kategorisch geschiedenen Aktivismen. Wir fragen daher, welche Möglichkeiten für einen Zusammenschluss gegeben sind und wie eine Bewusstseinsbildung hierfür schon in der Ausbildung gefördert werden kann. Wir sind hierfür – wie oben eher kritisiert – auf die Formulierung von Idealvorstellungen angewiesen:

- Die archäologische Ausbildung, ob von Studierenden oder technischem Fachpersonal, sollte so strukturiert sein, dass sie in formaler Hinsicht primär kritisches Denken fördert. Das schließt die Fähigkeit ein, Autoritäten zu widersprechen bzw. sie in Frage zu stellen. Diese zu schaffende Bedingung für die Möglichkeit des auf das Inhaltliche, Formale oder Prozedurale abzielenden Widerspruchs muss explizit gefördert werden.
- Ein Grundbestand an im Studium vermitteltem Faktenwissen ist essenziell, dieses sollte aber immer durchdrungen sein vom Wissen um seine Historizität, Veränderbarkeit und Relativität. Letztere ergibt sich aus der Erkenntnis, dass alternative Ontologien eine fundamentale Voraussetzung für die Auseinandersetzung mit anderen Weltverständnissen darstellen (Descola 2013).
- Die Spezialisierung auf einen Beruf durch Ausbildung führt in der Regel zu einem Habitus, der „Wissenschaftlichkeit“ im traditionellen Sinn des Hintergrunds der Aufklärung über alles andere Wissen setzt. Diese epistemische Überheblichkeit endet leicht in einer geradezu naiven Ignoranz gegenüber der Vielfalt gänzlich anderer komplexer Wissensgefüge (de Sousa Santos 2014). Dabei ist die Bereitschaft, sich auf andere Denksysteme einzulassen, das Fundament für eine kritische wie auch eine aktivistische Archäologie.
- Mit dem Bewusstsein um die Relativität wissenschaftlicher Epistemologie ausgestattet ist es möglich, sich dem potenziell „Anderen“ der außerarchäologischen Communities zu öffnen. Das oben angesprochene Verleihen einer Stimme durch die aktivistische Archäologie endet allerdings bei allem Bemühen, Wissensdifferenzen ernst zu nehmen, in der Aporie der Subalternität, wie Spivak dies zeigte.

- Die Zeitlichkeit eines Kooperationsprozesses zwischen Archäologie und nicht-archäologischen Communities ist eine weitere grundsätzliche Komponente aktivistischen Engagements. Eine lange Dauer der Intervention wird immer Abhängigkeiten kreieren, die nicht mehr soweit aufzulösen sind, dass eine engagierte Archäologie ihre Aufgabe einer Reduktion von Repression erfüllt. Das erfordert womöglich langfristige strukturelle Eingriffe, die aber eine aktivistische Archäologie gar nicht leisten kann oder soll. Nicolas Zorzins Idee, sich nach einem ersten Anstoß für ein gemeinschaftsbasiertes Projekt sogleich zurückzuziehen, erscheint uns in dieser Hinsicht als vorbildlich.

Archäologie des Aktivismus

Atalay (2014: 51) bemerkte aus Anlass eines Forums zu *Challenges for Activist Ethnography*, dass sie das Treffen verließ, "wondering about yet another meaning of the term 'activist archaeology.' I wondered if there had yet been any archaeological research conducted on activist movements. [...] What would the material signature of the 'Arab Spring' look like, and how could archaeological research contribute to our knowledge about this and other social movements?" In unserem Themenheft verdeutlicht der Beitrag von Johannes Jungfleisch und Chiara Reali über den Arabischen Frühling in Kairo, dass solche Bestrebungen komplexer sind als von Atalay angenommen. Diejenigen Archäolog*innen, deren Projekte „Archäologien des Aktivismus" sind, verstehen sich meist selbst als aktivistische Wissenschaftler*innen. Bei solchen Gelegenheiten fallen Positionalität und Subjekt der Forschung ineinander. Beispiele reichen von der Archäologie des Arbeitscamps im Kohlebergbau des Jahres 1914 in Ludlow, Colorado (McGuire u. a. 1998; The Ludlow Collective 2001) über die Anti-Atomkraft-Bewegung in Gorleben (Dézsi 2018; Ziegler 2017) bis zu heutigen Flüchtlingen in Athen (Tulke 2019).

Wie Atalay (2014) feststellt, muss eine solche Archäologie in keiner Weise einseitig sein. Methodologische Strenge kann durchaus mit Forschungsfragen einhergehen, die radikal von traditionellen Forschungsschwerpunkten abweichen. Eine „kritische Archäologie" verfolgt ähnliche Ziele: die ausgetretenen Pfade gewöhnlicher, Wissenslücken füllender Wissenschaft sollten verlassen werden, wie es auch Martin Porr und Henny Piezonka in ihren Überlegungen zu Formen von „indigenous archaeology" fordern. An ihre Stelle sollten unübliche Perspektiven treten, die gleichzeitig auch unkonventionelle Forschungsziele verfolgen. Geesche Wilts versucht dies etwa mit ihrem archäologischen Blick auf Fluchtspuren auf Lampedusa, um zur Bewusstseinsbildung für die dramatische Situation von Geflüchteten beizutragen. In diesem Sinne wird eine methodologisch traditionelle Archäologie dann doch in Frage gestellt. Quetzil Castañeda (2014: 70) schreibt dazu: „Here then is a conflict within the individual between vested interests and capabilities calling in doing the profession on one side, and the activist calling not simply to use the profession for social justice but to also change perceived negative dimensions of the profession on the other side."

Eine aktivistische Archäologie stellt immer ein Paradox dar, dessen Auflösung nie vollständig gelingen kann. Gerade deswegen sollte sie dennoch betrieben werden. Sie kann intellektueller Befreiungsschlag oder gesellschaftliche Intervention sein, und muss sich zugleich eine Unabhängigkeit von den Machtapparaten bewahren, um nicht vereinnahmt zu werden. Sie changiert daher zwischen direkter Aktion und Aktionsermöglichung, wobei Empowerment und soziale Gerechtigkeit im Mittelpunkt stehen. Für eine solche Agenda bedarf es notwendigerweise eines engen Schulterschlusses mit einer kritischen Archäologie, die Ungerechtigkeiten und Ungleichheiten in der Vergangenheit offenlegt. Sie sollte zudem den Einfluss der (Vor)Zeit auf die Entwicklungen gegenwärtiger Sozialgefüge untersuchen, um daraus ein klares Bewusstsein für die Konsequenzen der archäologischen Wissensproduktion für gegenwärtige gesellschaftliche Diskurse zu schaffen (McGuire 2012: 78).

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Archaeological Interpretation and Current Events: Some Reflections on the War in Ukraine from the Point of View of Philosophy of Archaeology and Anthropology

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Abstract

Russia's brutal invasion into Ukraine, launched in 2022, has been widely condemned internationally. Using an interdisciplinary perspective, this paper investigates the notions of *spheres of influence* and *personalist authoritarianism* as they appear in international relations debates on the war in Ukraine. Interpretative tropes parallel to Russian versus Western spheres of influence as they figure in debates about Ukraine also appear in archaeological narratives of the Neolithic and Bronze Age transformations that progress from demographic growth to increasing competition over resources and exclusionary resource bases. Moreover, the personalist authoritarian system of Putin's Russia parallels the idea of the exclusionary power of archaeological elites. However, the in-efficiency and corruption of Putin's personalist authoritarianism as a root cause of the inefficiency of the Russian war effort are rarely raised as issues regarding the concept of elites in archaeology.

Keywords

Spheres of Influence, Realism, Personalist and Collectivist Authoritarianism, Aggrandizing, Political Organisation

Zusammenfassung

Russlands brutale Invasion in die Ukraine im Jahr 2022 ist international weitgehend verurteilt worden. Interdisziplinär werden in diesem Beitrag die Begriffe *spheres of influence* und *personalised authoritarianism* untersucht, wie sie in den Debatten über den Krieg in der Ukraine in den Politikwissenschaften benutzt werden. Interpretationen, die parallel zu den russischen beziehungsweise westlichen Einflusssphären in den Debatten über die Ukraine auftauchen, finden sich auch in archäologischen Narrativen über neolithische und bronzezeitliche Transformationen, die von einem demographischen Wachstum zu einem zunehmenden Wettbewerb um Ressourcen und den sozialen Ausschluss von Ressourcen führen. Auch das personalistisch-autoritäre System von Putins Russland weist Parallelen zur Idee der ausschließenden Macht archäologischer Eliten auf, doch die Ineffizienz und Korruption von beispielsweise Putins personalistischem Autoritarismus als Ursache für die Ineffizienz der russischen Kriegsanstrengungen wird in Bezug auf das Konzept der Eliten in der Archäologie selten angesprochen.

Schlagwörter

Einflusssphäre, Realismus, personalistischer und kollektiver Autoritarismus, politische Organisation

Introduction

On February 24th, 2022, as Russia launched a brutal invasion into Ukraine, many in Europe and around the world were shocked. How could such a war be launched in Europe in the 21st century? As of the time of writing this paper, unspeakable destruction, human rights violations, and suffering continue to be inflicted, not only upon Ukraine but also on the Russian population and others drawn into the conflict. The manner in which this is happening is shocking and defies reason for many, also in archaeology (see, e.g., Bošković 2022).

Historical events such as these can be defining moments that shape the way we understand the world around us, as they become generational experiences. In this paper, we aim to reflect upon some issues that could arise for archaeological interpretation from the conflict in Ukraine. At first glance, the connection between the conflict and archaeology might seem distant. However, as we will demonstrate below, many of the interpretative tropes and contexts used to understand the causes of the conflict are, upon deeper analysis, familiar to us from archaeological and anthropological theory.

To be more specific, understanding the war in Ukraine leads us to reconsider certain cultural evolutionary tropes of conflicts and the factors that drive conflict potential in human beings. Our specific argument is that the notions of spheres of influence and the effectiveness of personalist authoritarian systems have been questioned in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, yet the same or parallel concepts appear without problem in certain popular and widely accepted archaeological interpretations of the past, particularly regarding the late Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age processes of individualization and social stratification. The following considerations provide further details, which are elaborated on in the text below.

From the philosophical question of the nature of humans as peaceable or confrontational beings, we quickly delve into questions about the evolutionary advantages of confrontational behaviours that seek to safeguard and demonstrate security, resource access, and ability. In the international relations literature, a popular framework referred to as *realism* draws from the evolutionary concept of individual fitness, extrapolated to the scale of nation-states. States are seen as actors interested in their own survival, which involves creating and safeguarding their own spheres of influence. These spheres of influence can be understood as akin to biological territories that encompass economic, military, and political realms, representing the exclusive zones of hegemony for particular nation-states, which will be defended accordingly. Certain interpretations in the international relations literature regarding the thinking of Vladimir Putin and his strategists point precisely in this direction.

Parallel interpretative tropes can be found in the archaeological narratives of the Neolithic and Bronze Age transformations, which trace the progression from demographic growth to increasing competition over resources and exclusionary control over resource bases (e.g., Shennan 2008). In other words, similar notions of spheres of influence, as discussed in contemporary contexts, appear in these archaeological narratives. The first discrepancy we wish to highlight is that while the Russian right to assert its sphere of influence over smaller sovereign states is vigorously disputed (rightfully so), those same spheres of influence are seen not only as unproblematic but also as indicative of societal flourishing, as evidenced in the late Neolithic, Bronze Age, and subsequent periods.

Next, our article delves into analysing the failures of the Russian war effort as characterized in the media and international relations analysis. In this regard, a particularly relevant distinction made in the international relations literature is between *personalist* and *collectivist authoritarianism*, and we aim to explore the implications of this distinction in archaeology. The analysis of the failure of Russia's war effort points to well-known weaknesses of personalist authoritarian systems, as evidenced in Russia under Putin's leadership. Such systems encounter serious problems in the transfer of information both top-down and bottom-up, leading to catastrophic deficiencies as illustrated by Russia's failure in the war.

Simultaneously, there are interpretative approaches in archaeology and anthropology that emphasize the emergence and success of the individual from the late Neolithic period to the Bronze Age and beyond. Some of these approaches go as far as to attribute significant changes in archaeology to powerful individuals, suggesting a parallel to personalist authoritarian figures and "strongmen" in contemporary political events. These individuals are portrayed as leaders during periods of flourishing when power is established and maintained, international trade emerges, and technology develops. Again, by contrast, in the context of the war in Ukraine today, individualism in

the form of personalist authoritarianism appears as a remarkably weak form of political organisation, something that does not appear to register in archaeological contexts.

The purpose of this article is to highlight that approaches and understandings that many find repulsive in the context of the war in Ukraine may have parallel applications in archaeological and anthropological theory, where they receive less scrutiny. By illuminating these parallels and connections between the past and the present, we aim to facilitate a greater reflective awareness and, ultimately, objectivity in explanatory practices in archaeology. In this sense, we consider ourselves engaged in the philosophy of science, exploring the foundations of scientific knowledge production practices (in the spirit of Kuhn 1996 and Bloor 1976, 1983).

Human Condition and Evolutionary Advantage

One of the oldest and central philosophical questions revolves around the fundamental nature of human beings: are we essentially peaceable or confrontational? This abstract and contextless question may not lead us very far, but it becomes intriguing when related to modern ideas about evolutionary advantage (compare Fontijn 2021a). To bring these connections to light is our aim in the present section.

Anthropology often traces the exploration of the fundamental human character regarding war and peace back to two early modern philosophical influences (Otto et al. 2006; Sahlins 2008). On one hand, we have the French Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1755), who argued that human beings are essentially peaceable and compassionate. On the other hand, we have the opposing school of thought, stemming from the early modern philosopher Thomas Hobbes, which viewed the original or natural human state as characterized by a "war of all against all" (Hobbes 1642, 1651). The reception of these concepts in archaeological and anthropological research, according to Helle Vandkilde (2006b: 106), experienced "periodic ups and downs for either view." If Vandkilde is correct, the question of human nature is always as much a question of that nature itself as it is about how we have conceived it in different periods. Using the famous terminology of the philosopher of science, Thomas S. Kuhn (1996), one could argue that the concept of human nature reflects different paradigms or paradigmatic understandings of the human being and the human condition.

While the 17th-century philosopher Hobbes predates these developments by a considerable margin, in anthropology the Hobbesian concept found its natural place in the cultural evolutionary understanding of human beings stemming from Charles Darwin's work. Classic cultural evolutionary anthropology (e.g., Service 1962) examined human development through the lens of adaptation. The entirety of human history can be seen as exemplifying this evolutionary trend of "how human societies transformed from small mobile groups to settled communities [with] social complexity [and] institutionalization of social inequality" (Oka et al. 2018: 68). Just as a bird could better adapt to environmental changes through the colour of its feathers resulting from random mutations in its genes, which, due to its survival success, would be passed on to future generations, human groups and societies could likewise develop technological, political, social, and cultural strategies to adapt to challenges (Childe 1936). This perspective implied that the development of technological and other strategies in complex societies represented a greater level of human adaptation. Consequently, the now criticized concept of stages of cultural evolution emerged. This notion, in turn, supported the belief that strategically complex societies were more advanced than their "primitive" counterparts that Europeans encountered and colonized.

The Hobbesian concept of human nature seemed to align with what the Darwinian concept of cultural evolution proposed later, namely, that human beings were naturally inclined to seek their own advantage in the struggle for survival and reproduction, based on the principle of the fittest. This drive to survive and reproduce was fundamental to human behaviour, and in the absence of more advanced strategic considerations, the natural state would logically be a "war of all against all."

One of the most striking implications of these philosophies is the idea of the human socio-cultural world as a "dog-eat-dog" world. As recently criticized by David Graeber and David Wengrow (2021: 17), the evolutionary view suggests that "humans are at base somewhat nasty and selfish creatures." The logic is that if individuals and groups do not actively pursue and defend their self-interest, they would be overrun by those who do. Such biologistic

concepts, or human behavioural ecology, describe a common perception of the prehistoric development of human life under the pressures of demographic and environmental factors, within which particular behaviours flourish and thrive. In this sense, referring to Quamrul Ashraf and Oded Galor (2011), Stephen Shennan (2018: 3) argued that "the population growth rate associated with a given economic strategy at a specific point in time is a measure of its success."

In a more general argument, Shennan (2008: 86–87) presents a Malthusian dynamic for the Central European Neolithic. According to this perspective, the pressures of demographic growth, settlement of available land, and reaching local carrying capacities would lead to the emergence of "institutions ... that integrated larger numbers of people into a cooperating unit [and] could be more successful in competition than groups not integrated in this way" and so "other groups had little option but to copy them if they wished to avoid potentially disastrous consequences" (however, compare, e.g., Müller 2000). Shennan further draws attention to the few known, large-scale massacres of the Neolithic period in Central Europe (see Schulting 2013) to illustrate the possibility that demographic pressures and disputes over land and resources may have resulted in violence. The imagery presented suggests that biologically and culturally expansive groups overpower others by securing territory through advanced technological, political, and socio-cultural means, as will be discussed further below in relation to the onset of the Bronze Age:

> "Farming spread because it enabled people to be reproductively successful by colonising new territories that had low-density forager populations, so long as they kept passing on the knowledge, practices, and the crops and animals themselves, to their children." (Shennan 2018: 1)

However, this is just one recent example, as such approaches can be traced back to a broader view rooted in evolutionary theory in archaeology and anthropology. For instance, in his essay, *The Law of Cultural Dominance*, David Kaplan (1960) distinguishes between specific and general dominance. Specific dominance is related to niche construction theory, where "upon ultimate success the victorious species is finally the sole exploiter of the contested resources of its niche" (Kaplan 1960: 70). In contrast, general dominance is associated with the increasing complexity of societies or internal heterogeneity. While specific dominance aligns with ever smaller niches, general dominance extends its influence over a broader range of environments and cultures, logically resulting in larger and overall less diverse cultures. A contemporary example of this could be the so-called Global North or Western Culture. In summary, the law of cultural dominance states that "that cultural system which more effectively exploits the energy resources of a given environment will tend to spread in that environment at the expense of less effective systems" (Kaplan 1960: 75).

Similarly, Allen W. Johnson and Timothy Earle (1987: 4) argued that "the reality of cultural evolution is an accepted truth." However, they acknowledge a disillusionment that progress would inevitably lead to increasing well-being (Johnson and Earle 1987: 2). Instead, they propose a narrative of limited choices in accepting change, where

> "[a]s competition […] increases, people must live close together to defend themselves, their stored foods, and their lands. Leadership becomes a necessity for defense and alliance formation. […] In this light, population growth and a chain reaction of economic and social changes underlie cultural evolution." (Johnson and Earle 1987: 5)

Similarly, following the examples mentioned earlier, they argue that "fundamentally, it is population growth (of which warfare [...] is one result) that propels the evolution of economy" (Johnson and Earle 1987: 5).

We want to clarify that the examples mentioned are not intended as attacks on moral standpoints but rather demonstrate how such approaches may seem natural when interpreting prehistoric transformations but simplistic or plain wrong models of human flourishing in modern contexts. Our own past research is not necessarily free from such premises about the human condition when modelling population growth and carrying capacities (Ohlrau 2015, 2020).

With ideas like these about how human groups thrive, we are brought to the battlefields of international relations in the 21st century, as we will explore in the next section.

Realism and Spheres of Influence

The preceding analogies to biological and cultural evolutionary ideas lay the foundation for the emergence of similar concepts in the analysis of international relations. In the following paragraphs, we will examine the emerging perspective in selected international relations literature, particularly in the context of the war in Ukraine, regarding the use of the concept of *spheres of influence*.

One influential school of thought in international relations is known as *realism*. According to a classic text on the subject (Wight 1966), realism depicts states as the smallest units of analysis and emphasizes their pursuit of self-preservation. In the struggle for survival, there is no higher authority to which states can reasonably or effectively appeal, such as a normative or moral order as perceived by alternative critical and constructivist theories of international relations (see, e.g., Wendt 1995). This does not mean that agreements cannot be made or norms followed in the "realist world," but these actions are driven by instrumental motives to ensure survival, as the alternative of all-out confrontation would be strategically worse (Bull 1977). In fact, Hobbes also argued that instead of remaining in a state of natural war, humans may form instrumental alliances to restrain hostility for mutual advantage, as peace would bring greater benefits than pervasive fear and destruction.

Realism directs our attention to the concept of *spheres of influence* (Hast 2016; Jackson 2020). The international relations literature acknowledges that the concept has rarely been strictly defined (see, e.g., Buranelli 2018). Nevertheless, the basic idea is that according to realist analysis, states often create and assert their own sphere of influence, which encompasses a geographical area and may include smaller independent or semi-independent states that the great power dominates, to the exclusion of other great powers. As described by a recent foreign relations theorist, spheres of influence typically involve

> "some amount of *control* over a given territory or polity by a foreign/outside actor, especially as regards third-party relations, and *exclusion* of other external actors from exercising that same kind of control over the same space." (Jackson 2020: 255; emphasis in the original)

Conceptually, a sphere of influence is therefore similar to a geographic territory in a biological sense, representing an exclusionary safe zone where the dominant power can exert cultural and political hegemony and exploit resources. The earliest known uses of the term "sphere of influence" date back to the 19th century when imperial powers negotiated the extent of their territorial possessions around the world (Jackson 2020: 256).

The parallels between realism, spheres of influence, and the theory of evolution are not coincidental (for an explicit case made in the foreign relations literature, see Thayer 2004). Darwinian evolution recognizes survival and reproduction as intrinsic human drives, with territoriality playing a crucial role in that context. Similarly, influential scholars in international theory, like Wight, often employ biologistic terms such as "survival" to describe international affairs. Likewise, in the context of the war in Ukraine, there is talk of an "existential threat" purportedly posed by expansionist Russia or posed by Russia to its neighbouring nations. The imagery employed is heavily biologistic.

In one of the most comprehensive studies on the concept of spheres of influence in international relations, Susanna Hast (2016) examines the various aspects and stages of the concept's existence. Among other things, she critically notes the association of the concept in the literature with a certain notion of "necessary" order, with the Hobbesian state of chaos conceived as the only alternative. That is, the organization of the international order around recognized and respected spheres of influence held by great powers often appears as a necessary prerequisite for a sustainable order, to the extent that Hast observes that it is seen as "far more important than humanitarian protection or minority rights" (Hast 2016: 3).

In this context, Vladimir Putin is interpreted as attempting to reestablish the Russian sphere of influence, disregarding humanitarian protections and the rights or desires of the nations that happen to fall within Putin's conceived sphere of influence. As historians and international relations scholars Clifford Gaddy and Fiona Hill state:

> "[a]s he [Putin] defines Moscow's sphere of influence in this new arrangement, that sphere extends to all the space in Europe and Eurasia that once fell within the boundaries of the Russian Empire and the USSR. Within these vast contours, Putin and Russia have interests that need to be taken into account, interests that override those of all others." (Hill and Gaddy 2015: 393)

A similar perspective was presented by international relations analyst Michael Kofman, who stated that "Russian elites hold a rather classical great-power view of the international system in which small states don't have full sovereignty" (Kofman 2018). Similarly, Hast argues that "[i]t is not particularly difficult to prove that there is an image of Russia trying to consolidate a sphere of influence within the post-Soviet space" in the international relations literature (Hast 2016: 15). In his recent speeches, Putin has drawn comparisons between himself and past Russian imperial rulers, such as Peter the Great,[1] who historically annexed territories in Finland and the Baltic States (see also Dunn and Bobick 2014).

In this context, one of the central elements of Russian propaganda, as analysed in ongoing EU anti-propaganda projects such as EU vs Disinfo,[2] has been the idea that NATO and the "expansion of the West" pose an "existential threat" to Russia (see also Sarotte 2021). Some commentators dismiss this as pure opportunism and propaganda from the Russians. However, others, including the well-known American foreign affairs analyst and "realist" John Mearsheimer (2014, 2022), argue that claims to spheres of influence are "realistically" legitimate and Russia was provoked to intervene in Ukraine due to encroachment by the West into its sphere of influence. Mearsheimer and the realist school of thought are controversial in the international relations literature, but realism remains one of the main, and perhaps most influential, schools of thought in the foreign relations literature of the 20th and 21st centuries (Korab-Karpowicz 2017).

Nevertheless, in the biological analogy, an existential threat can be understood as a reduction in the ability of an organism to provide for itself if its territory, sphere of influence, and hegemony are diminished. In this context, what represents the "Russian organism"? Putin's Russia has been described as an illiberal mafia state, where a strong civil society, free media, and an educated and prosperous middle class pose an existential threat (Harding 2011). This is why Moscow has responded forcefully to liberal "orange" or "colour revolutions," such as those in Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2013, and Belarus in 2020. A highly hierarchical political economy centred around Putin and his inner circle (Zygar 2016) might not survive similar developments in Moscow.

In archaeological contexts, the term "spheres of influence" can indeed be found. It is unclear whether a cultural evolutionary conception of territoriality underlies these uses (in some cases cited below, clearly not). However, they appear in the context of studies on social complexity, the formation of hierarchies, and similar topics (see, e.g., Arnold 1995; Glatz 2009; Pitts 2010). There are instances where the term is employed to describe the influence of regional centres on their hinterlands, such as in the Andes and Mesoamerica (Blanton 1975) or in the context of *Fürstensitze* (Knipper et al. 2014; Veit 2015). Nevertheless, there is no dedicated development of theory on spheres of influence in archaeology. Especially in the European Iron Age, it is often used synonymously with territory. It is possible that the term has become part of common language, where no specific evolutionary or conceptual background is necessarily implied by its use.

It appears evident, however, that hypothetical scenarios, such as the one we mentioned earlier regarding demographic expansion and the resulting violent encounters in the Central European Neolithic, and specifically the idea that evolutionary advantage could be gained through the formation of expansionist groups prepared to confront and inflict violence, align conceptually with the thinking behind spheres of influence and the underlying "realist" worldview. The difference, however, lies in the fact that in the context of prehistory, we seem to have no particular doubts, perhaps due to temporal distance, about the perceived necessity of violence in human affairs. In contemporary contexts, on the other hand, we can rightly be outraged when violence is employed as a solution or continues to be part of political and diplomatic processes.

More significantly, there exists a further contrast between contemporary and archaeological perspectives on spheres of influence. In archaeology, the struggle over territory and resources, over spheres of influence, is viewed as driving human civilization forward. In the examples mentioned earlier, demographic expansion and technological advancements coincide with geographic expansion – an imagery of a flourishing human society. However, in

1 New York Times, 9 June 2022; https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/09/world/europe/putin-peter-the-great.html. Last viewed 30.8.2023.

2 See, e.g., https://euvsdisinfo.eu/kremlins-tightrope-walk-between-fear-and-bravado/. Last viewed 30.8.2023. The EU vs Disinfo website is a project of the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force of the European Union.

the context of the war in Ukraine, Russian expansionism is perceived by many as anything but a case of societal or civilizational progress. It is seen as a longing for past glories, a regression rather than a flourishing.

Most importantly, the notion that humans should struggle for spheres of influence, that it is natural to do so as it aligns with certain premises of biological evolution and flourishing, appears central to the archaeological perspectives mentioned earlier. That the world should be divided in spheres of influence appears as something of a necessary, natural, and sustainable order parallel to how we saw "realists" about international relations view it. In contrast, regarding the Russian expansion of its sphere of influence today, many do not consider it a natural inclination at all. It is regarded as a deeply political process reflecting not biological necessities, but rather imperialist and expansionist fantasies with deeper cultural roots.

Ethnicity

Given the history of archaeology and its close historical connections to nationalist thought concerning "blood and soil" (notable from the work of Gustaf Kossinna; see Furholt 2018), it seems necessary to briefly address this topic. An integral part of the biologistic, evolutionary imagery is the notion of kinship and ethnic ties. Anthropology generally recognizes that a strictly biological concept of kinship relationships cannot be seriously maintained (see, e.g., Kuper 2000). However, evolutionary theory is inherently based on the idea of a biological transmission of favorable traits, which evokes a kinship context of some kind.

In Putin's thinking, we encounter the notion that alleged kinship and ethnic ties cement Russia and Ukraine together. In his notorious speech in July 2021, Putin spoke of

> "the wall that has emerged in recent years between Russia and Ukraine, between the parts of what is essentially the same historical and spiritual space [...] to divide and then to pit the parts of a single people against one another [...] Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians are all descendants of Ancient Rus, which was the largest state in Europe. Slavic and other tribes across the vast territory – from Ladoga, Novgorod, and Pskov to Kiev and Chernigov – were bound together by one language"[3]

In this sense, Putin conceives of Ukraine as "an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space", as he stated in the speech in the run-up to the invasion of Ukraine on 21 February 2022.[4]

Engaging in a factual debate with Putin's partial and selective account of prehistory would be both futile and misguided. It is evident that Putin and his speechwriters do not aim to produce an accurate interpretation of history but rather one that serves their present-day political objectives. Such accounts often reach back in time but conveniently halt at an arbitrary point designated as "the beginning" to which the present should supposedly adhere. Moreover, even if such a "beginning" existed, why should contemporary borders and generations of Ukrainians, Estonians, members of other Baltic nations, Finns, Poles, and many other affected nations conform to what may have been in the past?

In this regard, a more intriguing question arises: how is identity, tradition, and a shared past being constructed and shaped here? We suggest that one aspect of this narrative is the recognition of the power of biologistic explanations (compare Arponen et al. 2019).[5] The natural sciences and biological explanations are prominent examples of "hard" causal explanations, and therefore, if one's political, socio-cultural, and other "soft" accounts of the human condition can somehow evoke elements of these processes and forces, they may appear to gain additional authority. Appeals to shared ancestry, rooted in the cohabitation and transmission of a common and evolving socio-cultural and biological heritage, invoke a basis in "hard" science, lending an aura of incredible credibility to our political narratives.

3 http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181. Last viewed 30.8.2023.

4 http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828. Last viewed 30.8.2023.

5 Michel Foucault's concept of biopower denotes the broad concept of power deriving from the normative definition of biological or other natural normalcy (see, e.g., Foucault 1990, 1991).

Personalist Authoritarianism

One last aspect we wish to highlight and discuss in the context of the war in Ukraine pertains to the nature of authoritarianism and the models of *individualistic* political systems circulating in archaeology and anthropology.

To begin with, in the international relations literature on authoritarianism (predating the war), a distinction is often made between two forms: *collective authoritarianism* and *personalist authoritarianism* (Frantz 2018; Geddes et al. 2018). Personalist authoritarianism refers to an authoritarian form of government centred around an individual or a small group at the top, while collectivist authoritarianism refers to a broader-based form, such as party-centred authoritarianism. The Chinese Communist Party has been cited as a paradigmatic example of collectivist authoritarianism (although there has been a notable shift towards personalism under Xi Jinping; see, e.g., Shirk 2018; So 2019). Over the years, the government of Russia under Vladimir Putin has increasingly taken the character of a personalist authoritarian system.

The military, organizational, and logistical failure of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has starkly highlighted the weaknesses of personalist authoritarianism.[6] Known issues with personalist authoritarianism revolve around the implementation and monitoring of policies, which by definition require a broader group than the personalist apex to execute, which requires the apex to receive accurate information about what is going in the field (Geddes et al. 2018: 129). Indications suggest that the reforms introduced by the Putin regime in the Russian military (such as the promotion of Sergei Shoigu to Minister of Defence in 2012; Zygar 2016) were undermined by pervasive corruption within the lower echelons of the system, resulting in a discrepancy between the intended operability of the newest Russian army units and hardware and their actual capabilities. Reports from various media sources, including the story of the deserted Russian soldier Junior Sergeant Pavel Filatyev,[7] reveal that information flow from the army regarding training and other processes was routinely distorted by lower levels of command to present a favourable image to the top, which the apex itself was unable to verify. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that once the initial spearhead attack aimed at capturing Kyiv failed – built in part on the false belief that Ukrainians were essentially Russians who would willingly submit to new masters – the Russian army became increasingly entangled in logistical difficulties in sustaining the war effort. On higher political and diplomatic levels of government, similar dysfunction was recently described by the former Russian Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Boris Bondarev (2022): "[t]he war shows that decisions made in echo chambers can backfire." Complex events can never be attributed to a single cause, but these and other examples can be cited to illustrate the challenges personalist authoritarianism faces in the flow and implementation of information.

It is worth noting that many political commentators, including former insiders, observed a similar dysfunctional dynamic in the Trump presidential administration, where Trump's personalist leadership led him to surround himself with "yes-men" (Wolff 2018; Wright 2019; Woodward 2020). These individuals created an information bubble that reinforced his biases, obsessions, and misconceptions, while suppressing any corrective inputs.

The interpretation of collective and personalist forms of authoritarianism in archaeology and anthropology is an ongoing and important question. As highlighted by Oka et al. 2018, as quoted earlier, human history is often portrayed as a progression from egalitarian beginnings to increasing social complexity, with the development of hierarchies seen as essential and perhaps inevitable (Price and Feinman 2010). Within this narrative framework, the concept of a personalist leader, such as the Bronze Age alpha male warrior, finds a seemingly easy fit and use (Kristiansen and Larsson 2005; Earle and Kristiansen 2010c; see also Tobias L. Kienlin's critique in 2018).

For instance, Earle and Kristian Kristiansen (2010b) describe the emergence of a warrior aristocracy, characterized by personalist rule supported by displays of elite warriorhood. This aristocracy is believed to have controlled trade with the Mediterranean, engaged in metal production and distribution, and buried their leaders in prestigious barrows. Similarly, the Corded Ware culture is marked by single grave burials interpreted as powerful individuals, potentially associated with a militaristic inclination evidenced by the presence of battle axes. The rise of burial mounds is equated with the emergence of chieftains, as described by Vandkilde (2006a). These characterizations

6 https://ecfr.eu/article/lessons-for-the-west-russias-military-failures-in-ukraine/. Last viewed 30.8.2023.

7 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/17/they-turned-us-into-savages-russian-soldier-describes-start-of-ukraine-invasion. Last viewed 30.8.2023.

emphasize the individualistic and personalist leadership of the "free man," as highlighted by Earle and Kristiansen (2010a: 17): "The barrow ritually defined the free man, his family, and his property, and it defined the male warrior as chieftain." The individualism of the male warrior supposedly manifests in archaeological evidence of grooming instruments, developments in fighting techniques, and subjective experiences of warriors, drawing analogies with phenomena from the 20th century (Warnier 2011; Horn 2022).

Elsewhere, the concept of *Kriegergefolgschaften* among the Germanic tribes has been proposed to have existed during the early Medieval period, with potential roots dating back to the Bronze Age. These ideas present a similar imagery of a successful political system based on personalist leadership (e.g., Harding 2011). For example, the discovery of a hoard containing multiple spears and just a single sword (Kaul 2003) has been interpreted as evidence of a sword-bearing leader and their associated group, known as a *Gefolgschaft*. The qualities of the leader are believed to lie in their ability to project military might and accumulate prestige. However, the specific leadership qualities or potential of such a personalist leader are not thoroughly discussed in these interpretations.

Such individuals, often referred to as strongmen (Rachman 2022), are believed to have ruled Bronze Age Europe through their personal authority, which was underpinned by personal bonds rather than written agreements, within decentralized power networks (Kristiansen 2014: 9). Some argue that clan-related feuds with personal motivations emerged during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (Peter-Röcher 2007: 187–190; cited in Meller 2017). While these claims are easily made, it is worth considering what kind of leadership these individuals provided and the basis of information upon which they operated. Modern knowledge of personalist systems leads us to question their abilities in both respects. Interestingly, full-fledged armies under the strict rule of a class of "princes" have been envisioned for Early Bronze Age Únětice societies (Meller 2017), suggesting that such systems operated with relative ease and few constraints.

Moreover, personalist-looking elites are often seen as efficient organizers of communal activities, such as construction projects. For instance, in Neolithic Ireland, ancient DNA studies have been interpreted as evidence for the existence of a closely-knit, hereditary elite who even practiced endogamous marriage. They are believed to have commanded labour power, enabling them to construct massive ceremonial sites such as Newgrange (Cassidy et al. 2020). Generally, there is no consideration given to the idea that such personalist elites may have been inefficient in their endeavours; instead, the prevailing view is that they were highly effective.

This imagery of the personalist leader appears to be a generalized hypothetical figure that can be applied to various prehistoric contexts. They are portrayed as aggrandizers, individuals who aggressively pursue their own self-interests, and have been suggested to constitute a small but highly influential element in all populations. They are believed to have played a significant role in driving cultural transformations over the past 40,000 years (Hayden 2014: 17). Once again, the power of a biologistic explanation is being invoked, as aggrandizers are seen as embodying behavioural patterns that provide evolutionary advantages.

However, the Russian failures in the war in Ukraine, particularly if we view them as failures of personalist authoritarianism, should make us reconsider. These contemporary events prompt us to reconsider the actual power of individualism to achieve the kinds of historical transformations that are often attributed to it.

All that being said, some archaeologists recognize the potential drawbacks of personalist authoritarianism. For instance, David Fontijn (2021b: 91) recently offered a critical perspective on the "current emphasis on the rise of individual power in late prehistory," citing examples such as the princely graves of Hallstatt or the elite interpretation of rich warrior burials in monumental Bronze Age graves. Similarly, Kienlin and Klára P. Fischl (2020: 103) argued that Carpathian Bronze Age tell sites were "home, supposedly, to some kind of functionally and politically differentiated population composed of peasants, craft specialists – and those in charge of all this," a model that, however "involves considerable extrapolation from the archaeological record [and] resulting narratives are catchy, but the underlying assumptions are problematic." Joanna Sofaer, Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and Magdolna Vicze (2020: 163) observe that "[r]ather than investigating the data, the tell narrative has further consolidated assumptions about hierarchical societies in which leaders and their followers exercised control." Further, as Christian Horn (2022: 3) remarks "[...] warriors are often portrayed as relatively unproblematic for past societies [...]." Drawing an analogy to modern times, one might question what leadership qualities such individuals bring to the table and what kind of information they have access to when making decisions.

More broadly, the current geopolitical situation prompts us to critically question the concepts of spheres of influence and personalist authoritarianism, as well as the underlying biologistic worldview that we have discussed and its applications in archaeology. As a colleague, who will remain anonymous, aptly remarked, reading the literature on Bronze Age leadership gives the impression that there is "a Putin on every hilltop." This further emphasizes the main point of this paper, which is that our scientific understanding of the evolution of human societies often relies on imagery that not only has political implications for the present but also may conflict with our thoughts and feelings about contemporary world events.

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Introduction

Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis

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Introduction

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Archaeology, Nation, and Race: Confronting the Past, Decolonizing the Future in Greece and Israel (Cambridge University Press, 2022; henceforth *ANR*) was conceived in the wake of an undergraduate seminar conducted jointly by the authors at Brown University in 2020. Our initial, recorded conversations at the end of the course were transcribed and formed the basis of a manuscript which was expanded, incorporating new research and ideas. Emerging from the dialogue between ourselves and with our students, the published work, also in dialogic form, is intended primarily as a stimulus to further discussion among archaeologists, anthropologists, classicists and anyone concerned with the way archaeology impacts the public imagination.

From the outset, we sought to go beyond what each of us had done individually in our critique of the two national imaginaries of Greece and Israel (e.g. Brown and Hamilakis 2003; Greenberg and Keinan 2007; Hamilakis 2007, 2008; Greenberg 2009, 2015; Hamilakis and Ifantidis 2016), and take the discussion to areas neither covered by previous writing on the social and political contexts of archaeology in Greece and in Palestine/Israel nor included in the burgeoning literature on decolonial archaeology in the region and across the globe. We therefore pursued a comparative approach that would highlight commonalities and differences between two "Holy Lands" which, we argue, should be recognized both as "ground zero" for imperial and colonial archaeologies and as fundamental building blocks of Western moral, cultural and political entitlement (i.e., "birthplaces" of democracy and the Judeo-Christian ethos). Alongside conceptions of nationhood, the two other crucial threads were coloniality (viewed both as an epistemic and as a political project) and race, both instrumental in bringing about and shaping racialized, capitalist modernity.

Viewing both cases from within, as engaged members of Greek and Israeli collectives, but also as partial "outsiders" based in universities abroad and/or actively participating in the international discussion, our first dialogue focuses on the forging of the two modern national projects and their ancient imaginaries within the 19th and 20th century colonial matrix. The second dialogue treats the extent to which the two nations and their archaeologies remain in the thrall of a crypto-colonial narrative, which establishes each country as a western outpost and as a buffer between Judeo-Christian Europe and an Islamic East. Our third dialogue dwells on modernist archaeology as a logic of purification and on the practical archaeological measures taken to ensure the delivery of purified pasts for the modern nation-state and our fourth on the racial implications of the cooptation of Greece and Israel by narratives of whiteness and indigenous exceptionalism. These narratives are often supported by the terms in which ancient DNA research is conducted and presented to the public. Our concluding dialogue dwells on the possibility and potential for pursuing decolonial archaeologies in each setting, drawing on our current and on-going projects of the contemporary archaeology of border-crossing and refugee camps (e.g. Hamilakis 2022) and of destroyed Palestinian villages (Greenberg 2022; Greenberg and Sulimani 2023).

The timing of this discussion is, of course, not accidental: we have both been engaged in the discipline-wide discussion and critique of archaeological complicity in national and trans-national instances of oppression and injustice and in field-projects that question the core values of archaeological practice in the contemporary world (e.g. Hamilakis 1999, 2009; Hamilakis and Duke 2007; Greenberg 2021a, 2021b). Moreover, in the year of massive Black Lives Matter protests and the coronavirus pandemic, we were both deeply affected by the vigorous, profound discussion and exposure of the reach and impact of racism and of white supremacy within our discipline (Blakey 2020; Carruthers et al. 2021; Flewellen et al. 2021; Jurman 2022; Reilly 2022). *ANR* is thus a response to the call of many colleagues for self-reflection, for epistemic reorientation, and for archaeological un-disciplining (sensu Haber 2012). It is also call to archaeologists who have been constructed as white to problematize the processes of racialization that constituted their scholarly apparatus and their disciplinary identities and to confront the privileges that such an acquired status has conferred on them. It is even, we would like to hope, a tentative step toward reparation and epistemic, if not social, justice.

As our dialogue covers a broad field of archaeological entanglements in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, and with each of us drawing on their own set of historical, aesthetic, and political-philosophical sources, it was clear to us from the get-go that *ANR* would be an open-ended product, with many strands that could be taken up with a wide range of interlocutors. Our engagement with colleagues thus began, even as we wrote, in conferences, round tables, and virtual meetings conducted with colleagues from Europe and North America, as well as Greece and Israel; and it has continued after the book's publication, first in English and then in Greek (Hamilakis and Greenberg 2022; a Hebrew version is contracted for publication as well). These engagements revealed to us the extent of the need for a reckoning felt by archaeologists across the Global North, as well as the anxieties induced by a questioning of bedrock assumptions in the discipline.

In the Fall of 2022, two incisive discussions of *ANR* and the issues that it foregrounds took place, the first in the Graduate Center at City University of New York (CUNY), and the second at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Overseas Research (ASOR) in Boston MA. These form the core of this special section. Between the two venues, our conversation with colleagues from the worlds of classics, literary and political theory, anthropological archaeology, art history, and West Asian archaeology ranged across many of the matters covered in our book, while delving deeply into a few and forcing us to confront some of their contradictions. At the same time, it expanded the discussion into new areas that need to be tackled more systematically in the future.[1]

In the essays that follow, historical sociologist Despina Lalaki and literary and political theorist Bruce Robbins take contrasting approaches to the values at stake in the discourse on modernity and our critique of archaeology's contribution to it, the former calling for the adoption of a "southern standpoint" characterized by "a critical engagement with the dominant knowledges", and the latter querying whether we are justified in making modernity, and the prestige it confers on the past, "the villain in the piece". Matthew Reilly, an anthropologist and archaeologist of the Atlantic world, questions whether archaeology can or should be completely detached from post-colonial nation-building, where it often serves a purpose that we would otherwise view as laudable. Allison Mickel and Lynn Swartz Dodd, anthropological archaeologists who have worked in West Asia, expand on the de-centering of Western conceptions of purity and anthropocentrism in archaeology, with Mickel exploring the various kinds of "messiness" inherent in archaeological work and Dodd reflecting on how an illusion of purity can be used to mask ongoing injustices in ancient Jerusalem/Silwan. Art historian Erhan Tamur underscores the imperial endurances in archaeological scholarship, particularly calling into question the Western notion of "discovery", and lastly, south Levantine archaeologist Ido Koch illustrates possible avenues of decolonial archaeological practice in Iron Age Israel and a 20th century Palestinian village. Following up on these matters and more, we respond with further thoughts and questions of our own.

We are grateful to all commentators and to the editorial board of FKA for this opportunity to expand the reach of the dialogue across disciplines, in the expectation of more conversations to come.

1 The essays were submitted in March–April 2023, with final revisions completed in September 2023.

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Hellenism, Hebraism, and the Ideological Underpinnings of Modernity

Despina Lalaki

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Hellenism, Hebraism, and the Ideological Underpinnings of Modernity

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Following the authors' lead I would like to introduce my commentary on the book *Archaeology, Nation and Race: Confronting the Past, Decolonizing the Future in Greece and Israel* (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022) with a short autobiographical note explaining my way into and out of the field of archaeology. I am a sociologist working in the areas of historical and cultural sociology. My first degree, however, from the University of Athens is in archaeology. It is still unclear to me why I chose to study the subject, but I am convinced that it had something to do with the Indiana Jones franchise that was popular in Greece at the time and the fact that I wasn't that good in math. If that was the case, I would have probably become an architect. At the university I quickly developed an interest in prehistoric archaeology. Moving beyond the formalism of classical archaeology that still dominated the discipline, the "anthropological" questions raised in the field of the Greek Bronze Age – questions about culture, social and political organization and so on – were rather intriguing.

Up to this point I think my trajectory sounds much like what Yannis Hamilakis describes in the book as his experience. In my case however, realizing that I would have to build a career studying pots and pans from all possible angles, measuring, photographing, drawing, cataloguing, and comparing them with similar objects to neatly fit them into categories without raising any bigger questions, did it for me, and I left archaeology to study first some art history and then sociology. Had books like *The Nation and Its Ruins* (Hamilakis 2007) been published or had I been exposed to the theoretical inroads that anglophone scholarship was making in archaeology at the time, I might have followed a different academic path. In retrospect, archaeology seemed to me like a straitjacket, limiting and detached from any social realities. It certainly appeared disconnected from politics. The little that I knew! First loves never die, however, and today I do what one could describe as sociology of archaeology and the archaeology of the state, exploring the role that the American political imagination has played in the formulation and transformation of some of the foundational ideas and cultural schemes of the modern Greek nation-state. I investigate the ways in which Americans engaged with modern Greek political culture as they searched for Greek antiquity.

What I am trying to say with this short autobiographical and self-referential introduction is that books like the one in discussion, *Archaeology, Nation and Race: Confronting the Past, Decolonizing the Future of Greece and Israel* by Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis are an oasis in the field of archaeology that still, to some extent, looks like a desert of sherds and ruins waiting to be catalogued, organized and some of them exhibited for their aesthetic value. Trying on the other hand to unravel, as Michael Herzfeld (2002) suggests in his book endorsement, the ideological underpinnings of global modernity is thrilling and certainly not a small task. Doing it in such a way also that is engaging and accessible to a broad audience of non-specialists, that's also a big achievement. The book is also deeply political, directly addressing current issues of race, territoriality and cultural hegemony. It will be extensively debated and will inevitably find itself at the center of public controversies, some of them already simmering.

I have the honor to be part of a collective called *Decolonize Hellas*. On the occasion of the celebrations for the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution, we held an international conference with the objective to examine the founding of the Greek nation-state in the context of/in a background defined by the colonial legacies of white supremacy, nationalism and racial capitalism. The notion of Greece as a crypto-colony (Herzfeld 2002) over the years had gained acceptance – in Greece at least, because in Israel, as Raphael Greenberg suggests, it never had

much traction, as the attention has been on the fact that Israel is first and foremost a settler colonialist state itself. However, to explore notions of race and nation, going back to the time of the Greek state's inception and applying decolonial theory developed mainly in the Americas, was not very well received, at least not by everyone. Slaves and plantations were not part of the Greek historical record after all, and Greece had never been a colonial power. The accusation is that we are applying methodologies and theoretical approaches that can't be grounded in the Greek experience. I am sure that in many Israeli quarters one would hear the same regarding Israel understood or studied as settler colonial state. How do we respond to these criticisms? How can colonial theory help us to better understand the history of Greek and Israeli nation-states and what is the relevance of colonial history? These questions are also at the heart of the book *Archaeology, Nation, and Race*.

To this day, the legacies of colonialism are felt around the globem while neocolonial practices perpetuate long standing relations of inequality and hierarchies of power. The entanglement of Greece and Israel with British colonialism in the Eastern Mediterranean and American postwar imperialism in the region call for a closer examination. Conventional Greek historiography tells the story of the Greek state – but also of the state of Israel – as one of victimization and manipulation at the hands of the 19th century Great Powers, United States, or primordial enemies like Turkey for Greece or the whole Arab world for Israel. At the same time, there is no engaging with the histories of other groups or nations which have similarly suffered the effects of imperialism, capitalist exploitation and outright violence. Victimhood has played a central role in driving xenophobia, racial hatred and other nationalistic attitudes. Instead, what we should call for – and that is something that Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis do alongside scholars coming from a post- and anti-colonial perspective – is a radical critique from what is identified as the "southern standpoint". This is not a point of essentialist identities but of marginality, a particular social position within national and transnational hierarchies of power. That is the direction, I think, that Greenberg points to at the end of the book where he calls for a close collaboration of Israeli and Palestinian scholars/archaeologists. Such an approach will also allow for a systematic analysis and understanding of Greece's and Israeli's position within imperialist circuits of capital, fields of knowledge and cultural production but also networks of collective struggles and emancipatory politics.

A few words to further qualify the "southern or subaltern standpoint" (Bhambra 2007; Santos 2014; Connell 2016; Go 2016) are needed. The argument is not that we should be looking for a pristine space of "non-Western" indigeneity – this is definitely what Hamilakis does not argue for when he talks about "indigenous Hellenism" – but a kind of postcolonial thought that emerges from the colonial space through a critical engagement with the dominant knowledges imposed upon that space. While analogous to the critical race and feminist standpoints, our approach should give primacy to geopolitical hierarchies and social positionality, the point where the colonial engages with the West, unraveling in the process subjugated knowledges, legacies of marginalization and colonial domination. Our conceptualization of the "southern standpoint" should be understood in conjunction with what has been described as "postcolonial relationism," an approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness and fluidity of social interactions and the mutually constitutive relationships between colonized and colonizers (Go 2016). Both concepts should be central in our efforts to interrogate the imperial episteme. Here one would locate the centrality of classical scholarship, biblical studies and archaeology, and bring also social theory – a body of thought that embeds the standpoint of empire – and postcolonial thought – an anti-imperial project – in dialogue. From a "southern standpoint" one can explore the forceful Hellenization of ethnic and religious minorities in Greece, for instance, or the colonizing power of biblical archaeology in Israel, yet not from a space that allegedly exists outside the European thought or theoretical traditions but in relation to them.

It is imperative that we foreground the ambivalent and reciprocal relations between the Greek and Israeli nation-states and western colonial and neocolonial genealogies (Lambropoulos 1993; Gourgouris 1996). Liberal capitalist democracy, for instance, lies at the core of the postwar western civilizational onslaughts and the classical Greek heritage as well as the Judaic tradition remain central in narratives about civilizational clashes and the end of history. To this day, the "cradle of democracy," a Cold War construct which carries the imprints of modernization theory and American and European hegemonic hierarchies, conditions our cultural dispositions and political imagination. Israel also projects itself as such, in a sea of autocratic and dictatorial regimes. In that sense, Israel and Greece serve as buffers against the onslaughts not only of brown Muslim bodies ready to invade the borders of the Christian West at any given time, as the book explains, but also as the last frontiers of democracy, a metonym for western civilization.

These social and political significations invested in Hellenism and Hebraism have developed into internalized structures of domination, coherent identities which perpetuate durable inequality. The inability to perceive alternative modes of political and social organization are intrinsically connected and closely intertwined with identities that are far from immanent or as primordial as they appear. They are, instead, socially and historically grounded on configurations and events that date back to the 19th century but also, and I would argue predominantly, to the 20th century; they constitute responses to the American and European Cold War order, fierce anti-communism, transatlantic militarism and free market economy (Lalaki 2012).

Critical and historical anthropological and sociological positions that capitalize on meaning, cultural codes, and systems, much like what this book does, can better illuminate the trajectories of nation-state, Greece and Israel in this case, and empire, the American or British empires, for instance – an empire that resides at the outskirts as much as at the heart of these nations. Studied in conjunction with international and transnational processes, the political agency of the "Hellenic" and the "Judaic" can be better understood.

Greek classical and biblical archaeology have undergone a series of transformations, being repositioned repeatedly within multiple metanarratives about race and cultural evolution even as aesthetic preoccupations continued alongside questions of ethnic origin. Greek and Judaic antiquity, appropriated in various ways by the nation-states of the West, have been written up as the unquestionable progenitors of Western civilization against which other cultures were to be measured, most often to be found less developed, less sophisticated or less complex. Colonization and the increasingly imperialist domination of the West over the rest of the world was cushioned on a civilizing rhetoric inadvertently exposing both the shortcomings of the Enlightenment's universalistic tendencies and Romanticism's darker side of cultural particularisms. Archaeology has not just been part of the wider battle for cultural hegemony. It defined the nature of the battlefield itself.

The comparative approach of Greek and Israeli archaeology is also very timely as civilizational discourses have made a comeback to couch the emergent Islamophobia of the early 21st century, and one can look at the relationship between the two from many different angles. In a religious pilgrimage I followed a few years ago in the Holy Land, I became very aware, for instance, about the role of Christianized Hellenism in the Israeli settler colonial project. As the second biggest landholder in Israel after the state of Israel itself, the Greek Orthodox church has been directly involved in the Zionist statehood project. One can also look at the ways that the Hellenic and Judaic traditions have been recently employed to legitimize the antagonisms over fossil fuel extraction in the Eastern Mediterranean, possibly fueling new rounds of conflict along with capital accumulation. The relation of archaeology and capitalism run in many different directions, in addition to that of tourism and the monetization of cultural heritage. The most recent agreement between the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Greek government and the collector of illicit Cycladic antiquities, Leonard Stern, is only one case in point (Hamilakis 2022; Koutsoumba 2022).

I would like to conclude with a couple of images from two separate state visits in Greece, one of Netanyahu in 2017 and the other of the American president Barack Obama in 2016. Netanyahu met with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades, after the three countries had signed a joint declaration in Tel Aviv the previous April, to promote construction of what is known as the EastMed pipeline. Netanyahu stressed the shared economic interests between the three countries, spoke of Jerusalem and Athens as the "two pillars" of our modern civilizations, and further grounded the relationship on their alleged democratic traditions: "There's a simple fact with Cyprus, Greece and Israel that brings us very close together. We are all democracies – real democracies [...] and when you look at our region… that's not a common commodity" (Kantouris 2017).

The previous year, in his final overseas trip as President, Barack Obama visited crisis-stricken Greece, and against the carefully selected background that featured the Acropolis and the Parthenon, he affirmed the U.S. commitment to transatlantic ties and NATO. The ancients, the Founding Fathers and President Truman featured prominently in a speech that meant to endorse liberalism and capitalist democracy, in face of the challenges that austerity economics, the "waves" of refugees from Middle East and Africa and the ensuing rise of the extreme-right posed.

The above appear like cliches, rather predictable statements, which, however, point to one of the important conclusions that the book offers: "The elites in both national projects, in an act partly of self-colonization and partly of expediency, still hark back to […] this modernist and humanistic heritage, seeing it as an emancipatory project

worth celebrating. […] Yet these laudatory performances conceal the racial and colonial grounds of such edifices" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 182). When it comes to the question of how to cope and counter these self-congratulatory civilizational narratives Greenberg and Hamilakis are quite to the point: let's "forge alliances with the colonized 'others'" (2022: 182).

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Modernity as the Villain of the Piece

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Modernity as the Villain of the Piece

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I read this book (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022) with enormous excitement and admiration. I also read it with a strong feeling of solidarity as I tried to imagine the resistance the authors must have faced from some of their fellow archaeologists in their respective countries. I feel honored to be given a chance to express my feelings, unprofessional as they are. Still, speaking as a person with zero expertise in the field of archaeology and, what is worse, as an unrepentant modernist, I also feel an obligation to do some conceptual quibbling from the sidelines, and that's what I'll do.

To begin with, I want to underline a point that is made in the book, but is not underlined there, perhaps out of disciplinary wariness or personal modesty. It's a point about archaeology's object of knowledge, the distant past, or (more precisely) about what allows archaeology to establish itself as a discipline based on that object: the prestige that is accorded to the distant past. As the book abundantly illustrates, the prestige of the distant past has been weaponized for nationalist and racist purposes. But the fact that the prestige of the distant past has been weaponized doesn't mean that the distant past doesn't deserve its prestige. It doesn't mean that archaeologists are wrong to benefit from that prestige. The question remains open of what value we do or don't want to ascribe to that distant past – whether we want to see it as a modern myth or a vestige of theological reverence that should be erased, or something quite different, like a chapter in Fredric Jameson's "single great collective story" (1981: 19). In the field of literature, the danger of presentism is matched, as I have argued, by a danger that is symmetrical although it usually goes unnamed: what might be thought of as *pastism*, the substituting of reverence for the past *as such* for explicit arguments about the value and values for us now of the old texts that we are asking our students and readers to appreciate. What is also missing when reverence for the past is hard-wired in is explicit discussion about the continuity or discontinuity between our time and theirs, a discussion that seems mandatory in the sense that even absolute discontinuity, today's default setting, cannot be taken for granted. In short, it seems to me that, for all our shared suspicion of origins, the question of the meaning the deep cultural heritage ought to have for us remains unanswered.

While awaiting an answer to that question, we might decide, pragmatically, to weaponize the symbolic capital of the distant past ourselves, but to point that weapon at different targets. That's what I tried to do, in a minor way, in the early 1990s, at the height of the Culture Wars, when a right-wing think tank in North Carolina invited me to defend what they saw as a turn away from teaching the Great Books. Journalists, and some scholars themselves, were pretending that Homer and Shakespeare were no longer being taught, that syllabi were filled with nothing but Chinua Achebe and Alice Walker. This was blatantly untrue, of course, but something did need to be said in defense of changes in the curriculum that were indeed happening. I told my hosts that the humanities' recent interest in the victims of colonialism and of lives lived in what was then called the Third World was just a continuation of ancient Greek cosmopolitanism, which queried the habit of according greater moral value to the lives of fellow citizens than to the lives of distant strangers. I wrote Diogenes's name on the blackboard. In Greek (Διογένης). I can't say it pacified my listeners, but it did at least give them pause.

If I understand *Archaeology, Nation, and Race* correctly, the book sees the exaggerated, even theological value ascribed to the distant past not as a genuine attribute of that past but as an invention of modernity. It ought to

be possible to admit this without presenting modernity as the villain of the piece, as I think the book tends to do. Modernity, for Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis, wants to impose continuity on a history that is in fact radically discontinuous. Let me say two quick things about that scenario, if indeed I'm getting it right. One: modernity can also enjoy seeing itself as *dis*continuous with the distant past – think of someone like Steven Pinker, exemplary champion of modernity though not, I think, a nationalist. He is more enthusiastic about capitalism than about nationalism. The point is that modernity contains both, and much more besides. For that reason, modernity doesn't need continuity; it can happily embrace discontinuity (this is what the book acknowledges, I think, when it identifies modernity as a theory of temporal break). The contradiction is especially obvious if you think of the exemplary agent or representative of modernity as capitalism rather than as the nation-state.

My second quick point: can you really see modernity as the villain while also embracing Bruno Latour (1993), who says that we have never been modern?

There is something strange about the way modernity is discussed here. It's treated as a real phenomenon, not (in Latourian fashion) as a mere ideological illusion. But its reality is presented as if it were composed exclusively of bad things. The one modification that's offered to Latour's famous "we have never been modern" dictum is that Latour "erases historically situated processes such a colonization, capitalist commodification, and racialization, with their specific ontological and epistemic grounding on progress, hierarchy, and civilization" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 87). Let me pause on this sentence. Here the only processes that are associated with modernity, the only processes that Latour forgets, are extremely undesirable ones: colonization, capitalist commodification and racialization. Those undesirable processes are grounded on other undesirable things, also uniquely modern: progress, hierarchy and civilization. This is not accurate history. It is highly moralized history. Or if you prefer, it is undialectical history. Is it plausible that nothing good has come out of modernity at all, only colonization, commodification and racialization? Is it plausible that any historical period can be properly associated only with bad things? What about, to take a pertinent example, the sensibility exemplified by Hamilakis and Greeenberg? Surely they would not want to claim that their perspective on archaeology would have been possible at any point in the past. Surely they would admit, if only under duress, that there are positive aspects of modernity that fed into their own scholarly and political perspective, indeed made it possible. This is not a personal point: the same question could have been asked (I'm sorry we no longer have the chance to do so) of the recently departed Latour or David Graeber. To me, the idea that modernity has given us only colonization, commodification, and racialization seems no more plausible than it would be to suggest that there was no colonization or ethnic cleansing in classical antiquity, propositions that I'm sure the authors would properly and indignantly reject.

Can we have another, more serious think about the terms progress, hierarchy, and civilization? Among other things, these terms don't fit well together. However skeptical we may be about progress, are we ready to deny that modern democracy achieved some measure of progress, and did so, indeed, precisely by colliding head-on with "hierarchy," the signature blood-based hierarchy of feudal and pre-feudal society? The fact that, under conditions imposed by capitalism, democracy has created new hierarchies of its own, a fact that cannot be doubted, does not erase the real differences that the achievement of formal political rights has made in, say, the life chances of women and people of color. Everyone knows this, but it remains more acceptable than it should be to speak as if these aspects of modernity were merely complacent ideological fantasies.

In much the same contrarian spirit, I also object to the mainly unarticulated skepticism that surrounds references to the concept of civilization. Everyone quotes Walter Benjamin's endlessly useful line: "There is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (Benjamin 2007 [1940]: 256). Not everyone chooses to notice that that line does not try to dispense with the concept of civilization entirely (nor the fact that – I thank my erudite friend Christian Thorne for the reminder – Benjamin's reference in the original German is to "Kultur," not to "Zivilisation," a difference about which more might be said). The fact that there is barbarism within civilization doesn't mean that there is no such thing as being civilized. One mark of being civilized is to recognize that, as C. P. Cavafy (1975 [1904]) said in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, "Those people were a kind of solution." The inhabitants of the city were afraid of a threat that they had themselves constructed, and that had served their purposes – including the purpose of hiding the city's truth from itself. The barbarian was a construct. To recognize that the barbarian is a construct, as educated common sense in the modern period tends to recognize, is one way of being civilized. If that's what educated common sense teaches, then to that extent civilization is real, and it is a verifiable aspect of modernity. As is democracy, however imperfect and imperiled. If that were not true,

we would be forced to hold that the passionate democratic values that clearly inspire this book come from some other planet. Ditto for the abolition of slavery, equal rights for women, consciousness of what Edward Said called Orientalism (1978), and the rest of the litany of what, to me, are quite real accomplishments – accomplishments without which the writing of a superb and necessary book like this one would have been inconceivable.

I understand that in some ways a critical view of modernity is a convenient premise for the discipline of archaeology, even when that discipline is working in its most self-critical mode, as it is here. Still, a less one-sided view of modernity would have certain advantages. For one thing, it would allow for the possibility of a *non-nationalist* appropriation of the distant past, an argument that (say) might serve present purposes without subordinating itself to the instrumentality of nationalism, as in the Greek and Israeli cases examined here. One obvious example would be *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, by Graeber and David Wengrow (2021), a book that renews our sense of the open-endedness of history and yet cannot be accused of flattering the origins of anyone's modern nation-state.

What *The Dawn of Everything* could perhaps be accused of, at least in the eyes of some critics, is idealizing the pre-modern, indigenous cultures that preceded the modern nation-state. This is another danger to which a one-sided view of modernity leaves archaeology's self-critique vulnerable. How celebratory ought modern archaeology to be of "indigenous archaeologies practiced by ordinary people as well as scholars […] long before the arrival of official, authorized archaeology" (Graeber and Wengrow 2021: 89)? It can sometimes seem as if taking any critical distance whatsoever from the ways antiquities were treated by "ordinary people" in the pre-modern period "would be to reproduce the colonial distinction between the 'West' (in its various forms) which possesses science and scholarship, and the 'rest' which possess custom, ethnological interest, and folklore" (Graeber and Wengrow 2021: 90) as well as "beliefs" about the supernatural power and agency of these antiquities (Graeber and Wengrow 2021: 91). Here, as in other arenas, it seems to me a mistake to assume that oppression confers on the oppressed a decisive epistemological advantage, and that the professional archaeologist is duty-bound to defer to it. The virtuous self-effacement of the modern archaeologist, under threat of seeming to further the work of colonialism, is not more edifying than the spectacle of colonialism itself.

One no doubt unintended effect of the recent generalization of the concept of colonialism, and the accompanying imperative to decolonize, an imperative that this book embraces, is the extension of colonialism to cover, or appear to cover, *all* nation-formation. As the authors are well aware, colonialism does not apply equally to Israel, where it is so glaring a fact that no sentient observer could fail to acknowledge it, and Greece, where it can indeed be applied (most flagrantly, to the 1919 invasion of Asia Minor). In the case of Greece, other and later instances would need some hard arguing, and would bring Greece closer to the case of the newly independent nations that resulted from twentieth-century anti-colonial struggles. Even there, speaking of colonialism is not a self-evident mistake: many of the indigenous peoples that have joined together as an international movement in the past decades would claim to have been colonized by people who had themselves been colonized. But recourse to the concept of colonialism hides an ambiguity that needs to be exposed. The intended object can be to restore a collectivity whose oppression has been neglected, as when (for example) the Vietnamese or Cambodians are accused of mistreating the indigenous population of the Cham or the Algerian Arabs are accused of mistreating the Berbers/Amazigh. But the emphasis can also fall not on the fact that the colonized (by the Europeans) were and are themselves colonizers (of their own indigenous peoples), but rather (again) on the Europeans as the source of all evil – that is, the way in which European powers inspired and controlled the archaeological project in Israel and Greece from above and outside, turning that project to their own purposes.

It is this second emphasis that seems to follow from Michael Herzfeld's (2002) concept of "crypto-colonization." I listened in recently to a zoom conference in London commemorating the "Great Catastrophe" in Smyrna in 1922, a hundred years ago. From one perspective, it's the anniversary of an atrocity in which thousands of Greek and Armenian Christians were killed and many tens of thousands more were expelled. From another perspective, it's the anniversary of the emergent Turkish republic, overthrowing the Ottoman Empire and kicking out the European armies that were trying to carve Turkey up. The speakers were Greek and Turkish historians. How did they manage to find common ground? They did find common ground, as against their respective nationalisms, but as I saw it they did so only by giving the lion's share of the agency to the European powers that were manipulating the fate of both their nations. That is, they found common ground by seeing themselves as colonized, or crypto-colonized – by rediscovering the not so hidden secret that they had both been pushed around by the European powers. There

is a certain convenience in the label. But as with modernity, it works only by concentrating all the villainy in one place. And it permits a certain evasion of national responsibility.

Both authors are careful to present their nations as colonizers as well as colonized, and as I've said in the Israeli case there is no possible quarrel with that. But I worry a bit that Herzfeld's term crypto-colonization undoes some of that good work. "Crypto" puts the emphasis on hidden or secret. I wonder whether it might be better to use something like "semi-colonialism," as I understand has been used in the case of China. That would take the emphasis off the hiddenness and put it more on the *partialness* and – I think this is in the spirit of the book – the fact that, as with China, the colonized also has to be seen as a colonizer. I don't know how far we want to go in this direction; I can imagine an extreme argument that *every* nation-state is a colonizing power, that there is no effective difference between imperial conquest and nation-formation. That would be a mistake, I think, if only because it would erase whatever critical power remains to the term colonialism and because it would erase a significant difference between nation-states and empires. Empires were forced by their defining dynamic to conquer other territories. The rough estimate is that Alexander the Great was responsible for something like 500,000 deaths, a higher proportion of the world's population in his day than was killed by the Nazis in theirs. That doesn't let the Nazis off the hook; it doesn't let modernity off the hook. But it does suggest that we need better meta-narratives linking the present to the distant past. I am very grateful to the authors for inspiring me to go in quest of such narratives. Their book is a major step in that direction.

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Decolonize Whom, What, or When?

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Decolonize Whom, What, or When?

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The book of Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis (2022) comes at a time when archaeology could be said to be at an inflection point. For many of the reasons outlined in this book, it is less and less possible to undertake business as usual as we recognize the politically charged nature of our work and the absolute necessity of engaging with communities and the public more broadly. I therefore want to focus on two pressing archaeological themes that emerge throughout the text, namely the archaeology of coloniality (or the coloniality of archaeology) and archaeological epistemology.

Reading this book was a refreshing reminder that antiquated temporal and geographic siloing is no longer hindering valuable archaeological scholarship. It's the tethering of temporalities that allows for pivoting from the Bronze Age, to the Ottoman Empire, to the contemporary to be fruitful in understanding how sites that date to antiquity play a role in (often contentious) claims of national identity and belonging. Archaeology is never neutral or apolitical. This point is now widely accepted within the field, but it bears repeating for the heightened role that the past, or perhaps a perceived past, is playing in the present.

This moment of archaeopolitical reckoning allows us to reflect on previous archaeologies of comparative colonialism while simultaneously grappling with a newer brand of coloniality within archaeological science. It was roughly two decades ago that comparative colonialism took hold as one of the most prominent archaeological endeavors (Lyons and Papadopoulos 2002; Gosden 2004; Stein 2005). This was in part sparked by the postcolonial turn, which later became more explicitly theorized within the field (Liebmann and Rizvi 2008; Lydon and Rizvi 2010). Clamoring for vocabulary, models, and processes to put imperial projects of the past in dialogue with one another, archaeologists thought critically about the convergences and divergences of Romanization, the Assyrian Empire, and the expansion of European empires into the Americas. Such projects are less popular than they once were, though Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis inspire a reflection on comparative coloniality from a different perspective.

The authors are quite careful in articulating that Greece and Israel represent spaces that did not go through more violent or geopolitical forms of colonialism as did regions like Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and South Asia. They also point out how the crypto-colonized, borrowing from Michael Herzfeld (2002), can become the crypto-colonizer. Perhaps this represents a spectrum of coloniality, though I imagine they wouldn't put it so tepidly. Still, I wonder what such a spectrum might mean for a comparative approach to colonialism in the midst of ardent calls for decolonization. As anticolonial thinkers from colonized regions mentioned above have proclaimed for generations, there's hardly anything cryptic about colonial violence and forces of White supremacy. Do we therefore need to reconsider how we analyze colonial pasts, or do we need to be more careful in how approaches to archaeological decolonization are deployed?

Parsing or typologizing colonial pasts may prove to be a hinderance to the kind of anticolonial or, more specifically, decolonial project that Greenberg and Hamilakis espouse. Despite its wide usage across the field, archaeologists have yet to fully unpack decolonization as a conceptual framework, methodological tool, or practice. It has of course been used metaphorically, though our authors are explicit that it must also be practical, methodological,

political, and active. In response to the swift ascension of decolonization, Nigerian philosopher Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò recently published *Against Decolonisation: Taking African Agency Seriously* (2022). The author, while at times essentializing the broader scope of the decolonial mission, makes compelling arguments for how current uses of decolonization can unconsciously erode the revolutionary efforts of anticolonial movements. For one, he sets boundaries between what he refers to as decolonization 1 and decolonization 2, the former being the geopolitical work of ridding the colonial territories of their colonial overlords, the latter being the ongoing struggles to eradicate the social, political, economic, and cultural colonial leftovers. Táíwò also cautions against colonialism carelessly being used synonymously with related yet distinct tropes like modernity, the West, White supremacy, and capitalism. Finally, he notes that in the frenzy to sever the colonial, whatever it might mean, we run the risk of erasing the agency of those who labored under the forces of colonialism to produce something novel in terms of thought, practice, and resilience. For the latter point, Greenberg and Hamilakis should be commended for taking such a charge seriously, noting throughout the text the alternative forms of what we might consider "archaeology" bubbling below the surface for centuries.

To return to the troubling terminology, is crypto-colonialism a useful framework for explicating the colonial nature of archaeological epistemes? With careful attention paid to the subtleties that separate colonialism/crypto-colonialism or colonizer/colonized, how might we avoid ambiguity and simultaneously draw careful lines between discursive projects from the real and persistent violence of colonialism? Uzma Rizvi masterfully articulates that, "This epistemic decolonization is not a new name for epistemic critique: decolonization is an active and purposeful undoing and un-disciplining that we acknowledge as required" (2019: 158). Rizvi's embrace of the speculative is the kind of disciplinary humbling needed to make the shift from archaeological studies of the colonial to a wide-eyed awareness of the coloniality of archaeology. What must follow is figuring out where that leaves us in terms of archaeological futures and what we can offer the communities we serve and broader publics who consume the knowledge we produce. This brings us to archaeological epistemology.

Our authors refer to a colonial ideology that's responsible for the kind of purification efforts at work in both Greece and Israel; I'm here referring to their treatment of site sanitation, cleansing, and mythic pasts of whiteness. Despite such ardent efforts to scrub eons of interaction and social ties across supposed "racial" groups, our authors demonstrate that the patina of multiple temporalities proves difficult to wash away, if only we care to look. Yet, as is made clear, some temporalities and materials speak, as it were, louder than others. This has serious implications for how we typologize the archaeological record and for how such interpretations reach public audiences.

Archaeology has long had a troubling relationship with the pots-to-people analogy. It's a 19th-century inheritance, often associated with the likes of Gustaf Kossinna, that found primacy in the culture-history school of archaeological thought. Well over a century later, the habit proves hard to break, with critiques of typology referencing how lingering dangers of overdetermination can often seep into archaeological interpretation/translation. Ceramic and site typologies are now joined by the science of ancient DNA to serve as material or biological markers of group identity. While the book highlights how the cases of Greece and Israel are cautionary tells of the dangers of pots-to-people, sites-to-people, or DNA-to-people, anticolonial struggles have often harnessed such power to reclaim, or even decolonize.

Are there geopolitical moments in which nationalistic agendas for archaeology are to be celebrated and others when they should be condemned? Perhaps the dichotomy isn't productive, as political shifts can dramatically alter how archaeological paradigms and individual sites are interpreted or remembered, but it's worth considering the work being done in the name of building national industries of archaeology and heritage. For instance, in a famous example from the Sub-Saharan world, an anticolonial shift in Rhodesia in the second half of the 20th century breathed life into a national identity tethered to archaeological heritage, birthing the nation of Zimbabwe, named after a magisterial medieval urban center. As Shadreck Chirikure has recently articulated, Great Zimbabwe "provided inspiration for the struggle for African independence" (2021: 6). Chirikure is careful to frame his anticolonial argument as an indictment of colonial violence and the erasure of African pasts rather than an embrace of postcolonial nationalism, but the hard-fought battles in the name of geopolitical decolonization can nonetheless to tethered to new forms of archaeological knowledge put into the service of nationalism.

As Greenberg and Hamilakis frequently point out, the press often misrepresents archaeology through soundbites and click-bait headlines that serve vitriolic nationalistic agendas. Such an acknowledgement highlights not only

the warping of archaeological knowledge but also how the public perceives our field and what they believe is its utility. Many archaeologists may not be comfortable with it, but the public has come to expect and rely upon quick and dirty "facts" from archaeology. Archaeogenetics is the latest confirmation of this state of affairs. As DNA testing continues to come under scrutiny, including with more attention being paid to what Alondra Nelson (2016) has called the social life of DNA, how should archaeologists approach a fallible science?

Greenberg argues that "[DNA] is being bandied about and used in such loose ways that undermine almost everything that we try to do in the archaeology that we practice, which talks about identity being a construct, something that is imagined, negotiated and re-evaluated" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 143). While I don't disagree, it's worth asking: of what utility is such an approach in moments of heightened political fractures and social catastrophe? If we are to denounce, as we should, the sensationalizing headlines of population replacements and the antiquity of racial "belongings" to specific landscapes, what can archaeology offer in its place? Rebuttals that simply point to the complexity and messiness of the human past may not do the trick. Even if the majority of archaeologists denounce bad science and the determinism of archaeogenetics, such protestations may not prohibit the return of race science (Saini 2019).

Perhaps we as archaeologists can spill less ink over ontology and engage more seriously with epistemology. The expansive critique of purity and purification that runs throughout the volume is an essential contribution in the battle to eradicate epistemic violence from the field and denounce the influence of White supremacy in how archaeology has been practiced and publicly interpreted. We should be cautious, however, in such pursuits if the historical construction of whiteness becomes synonymous with that of White supremacy. Philosopher of whiteness Linda Martín Alcoff has warned that, "The left-wing push to abolish whiteness is not based in denying racism or the power of white identity so much as it is motivated by a fatalism about the ability of whiteness to disentangle itself from white supremacy" (2015: 150). This disentangling might be crucial for recognizing the mutability of whiteness and eschewing the fool's errand of charting purity. Archaeology is well-positioned for such an endeavor (see, for instance, Epperson 1997; Orser, Jr. 1998; Hall 2000; Paynter 2000; Bell 2005; Matthews and McGovern 2015; Reilly 2022), but it means thinking carefully about what we can meaningfully say about the construction of race in the past through the material record.

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Purification in Practice & Dialogue

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Purification in Practice & Dialogue

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YH: …*Purification was sanitation exercise as well as an epistemic, aesthetic, and ideological exercise*.
(Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 93)

Archaeology & Purification

Across contexts as disparate as the United States, Australia, China, Japan, India, Russia, Spain and Europe more broadly, concepts of national identity are deeply intertwined with racial "purity" (Segal 1991; Weiner 1995; Dikötter 1997; Ang and Stratton 1998; Collins 1998; Tolz 2007; Goode 2009; Ghoshal 2021). Scientific rhetoric and technologies, from phrenology to genetics, have often been co-opted into shoring up myths about homogeneity and purity, and archaeology is no exception (Díaz-Andreu 1995; Epperson 1997; Arnold 2006; Challis 2013; Hakenbeck 2019; Pai 2020). What Rafi Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis add to this discussion with their book *Archaeology, Nation, and Race* (2022) is a deep consideration of the myriad ways in which the metaphor of purification shows up throughout archaeological practice. Their discussion invites a consideration of what it is about archaeology in particular that lends it to arguments about the salience of nationalist racial categories and homogeneity.

One of the clearest examples of how archaeological practice pursues purity is a temporal sort of purification – the division and classification of layers and structures according to their time period. In trying to tell a story of a site through time, archaeology necessitates determining what deposits and stones belong to *what* time, exactly. Layers are assigned to ages or phases, and as Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis point out, decisions around heritage management often pursue the presentation of a clean, uniform period of time. At the Athenian Acropolis, this has meant erasing traces of pre- or post-classical occupation (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 95). Between the 19th century demolition of the medieval Propylaea and the 2021 pouring of concrete over much of the surface, there has been a refusal of multitemporal mixture and instead, an embrace of an idealized "masterpiece representing one point in time" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 97). Greenberg points to a related historical project in Israel, where "the very first archaeologists would have been saying that they've got to get beneath the layers of Ottoman filth," and where the British mandate government determined that any artifacts or monuments dated later than AD 1700 would not be considered antiquities (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 79). This designation established a pure binary of before and after – worth researching and protecting versus easily discarded as refuse.

Archaeological methods more broadly carry through principles of purification. Stratigraphic excavation, identifying and removing "clean" layers, and avoiding "contamination" by later periods or animal burrows, are essential to the scientific process of excavation but are also means by which archaeologists confer purification – however imperfect – upon the archaeological record. Greenberg makes this point in *Archaeology, Nation, and Race*, adding that even the act of delineating the boundaries of a site and laying a Cartesian grid "is all about reducing the chaos of the archaeological site into an order that we can control" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 77). Hamilakis furthermore discusses the photographic conventions of Félix Bonfils, who intentionally took photographs of

Classical Greek monuments during times with minimal human presence (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 19), calling to mind the traditional archaeological practice of taking photographs of stratigraphic layers, features, and sites with all tools removed, footprints brushed, and even shadows of human bodies out of frame (Fotiadis 2013; McFadyen and Hicks 2020). Documentation and photography are additional archaeological methods that concretely impose ideals of purity.

In *Archaeology, Nation, and Race*, Greenberg appeals to Bruno Latour for a theoretical understanding of archaeology's relationship with purification. Archaeology has been entwined with the same project of modernity that Latour describes, looking for dichotomies – in particular of nature and culture – rather than acknowledging and interrogating the messy hybrids that actually shape the conditions of life, according to Latour (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 76). By this explanation, the material ways that archaeological methods tie into the pursuit of purification are no accident. Instead, this linkage is a reflection of the underlying logic underpinning archaeological knowledge production.

Archaeology is additionally bound to principles of purity in its relationship with hygiene and "sanitation discourse." From the earliest days of archaeology in Greece, the presence of animals, and more to the point – animal waste – was framed as a toxic intrusion that needed to be cleared. This concern reached a practical expression in the Athenian Agora project of the 1930's, which was as much about aesthetics and epistemology as it was about sanitation, clearing the site of dirt, contamination and disease (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 93). In recent years, archaeologists and heritage practitioners have continued to express grievances with the presence of birds, dogs, insects and animal dung at monumental sites such as the Acropolis. In Israel, ancient water reservoirs function as a locus for anxieties about tainted water. Through these periods and contexts, archaeology has served as a reliable mode of the requisite clearing and cleaning.

With all of these attachments and affordances in mind, archaeology's connections to racial purification hardly seem random. Archaeology isn't just any science; it is a science dedicated to sorting, categorizing, and cleansing. Its theoretical underpinnings and its suite of methodologies lend themselves to this project, and the logic not only molds typologies and time periods but contemporary communities as well. If animal waste is polluting, it is a short leap to labelling people (and their waste) as polluting as well. If later periods are denoted as intrusive or contaminating, certainly the same can be said of people living on archaeological sites today, the latest period of all. Greenberg and Hamilakis (2022: 76) offer the specific example of Silwan, where city authorities justify the removal of makeshift houses in al-Bustan neighborhood on the premise that they are built upon the biblical Kings' Gardens. I am reminded too of Petra, Jordan, where in 1985, Bedouin communities were removed from living in the caves and tombs and relocated to a village outside of the park. The rhetoric for doing so was the same principle of archaeological purity – that having these contemporary residents inhabiting the stones would be anachronistic to visitors and would defile the stones (Bille 2012). The pursuit of purity and sanitation that suffuses archaeological theory and methods thus carries through to the decision-making around management of archaeological sites and the spaces around them.

Why Is This, When Archaeology Is So Messy?

As much as archaeology is bound to concerns about hygiene and cleanliness, archaeology itself is anything but clean. Field archaeology, in particular, is dirt under our fingernails, the mix of sweat and dust caking our eyelids, the clothes that never quite return to their original color, no matter how many washes. Digging in the dirt means encountering insects and spiders, worms that wriggle and roots that ooze. Research team members numbering in the dozens or hundreds share toilets and showers where they wash unshaven faces and unpeel greasy hair from tangled ponytails or braids. Archaeological excavation entails intimacy with sand and soil, with stickiness and stink. Breathing, beading, bathing, bleeding bodies brushing up against each other necessarily means that these bodies break down, get sick. Contrary to "sanitation discourse," viruses and bacteria invade our excavations. Indeed, illness and disease have directly shaped the development of the discipline for centuries. At Khorsabad, for instance, in 1843 Paul Émile Botta fell ill with malaria. Khorsabad at the time was also called "Khastabad" – translatable as "a place where illness dwells." As a result, he decided to build a dig house and plan the excavation

schedule around the weather and mosquito cycles in the area (Genç 2019). The house, however, aroused tensions with village residents, causing many stoppages and changes to the excavation plan.

Bruce Kuklick's (1996) *Puritans of Babylon*, which tells the story of American expeditions to Nippur at the turn of the 20th century, is as much a medical history as it is a history of archaeology. At the time of these expeditions, cholera, typhus, malaria, and ague were sweeping the region. The American researchers documented their bouts with these illnesses, as well as with locusts and cutaneous leishmaniasis, a scarring dermatological lesion caused by sandfly bites (Kuklick 1996: 47). Team member after team member needed to return home because they became ill (Kuklick 1996: 50). In 1894, Joseph Meyer – who had been responsible for overseeing and documenting the excavations – became so sick he could no longer fulfill those duties (and later died). Kuklick links this explicitly to the archaeological record produced by this excavation, discussing the poor quality of the reports and the photographs produced by Meyer's substitute (Kuklick 1996: 71).

Illness has been as constitutive of the nature and practice of archaeology as has hygiene and health. Sickness and disease have determined not only who participated in expeditions and who didn't, but furthermore the rate and pace of excavation, the seasonality of excavation, relations with local residents, and the content of the documentary record. All of this has fundamentally shaped what we have found, what we have written, and what we know about the past.

The professed alliance between archaeology and hygiene in examples like the Athenian Agora project is accordingly an uneasy one. Field archaeology necessitates compromises in cleanliness, confronting bodies with pathogens and pests. This is something I imagine most excavators would agree with – many even proudly! Still, many of the same people who cherish the memory of their dirtiest dig might also remain committed to principles of purification in archaeological methodology. Yes, we as excavators may still be shaking sand from our socks months after the field season has ended. But our stratigraphic control couldn't be faulted. We excavated pits and fills with precision. We photographed and recorded each layer removed, and drew nicely-labeled elevations. Certainly, people make occasional mistakes, but in general our methodology remains sound and *clean*.

Perhaps, though, there is something to be gained from continuing to pick apart the tight bind of archaeology with purification by challenging this inherent ideal. Does archaeological knowledge production always benefit from a commitment to purification? What about archaeological photography? Oftentimes, the most helpful photographs are the uncleaned, unplanned photographs, the candid photos of work in progress or even a funny moment. In the background of the photo, there is a particular artifact *in situ* or the last remnants of a particular soil deposit, verifying whether it was cut, or cut by, or abutting another. It is not simply that there are some aspects of archaeological practice that we must compromise and allow to be a little dirty, sometimes. Rather, I argue that there are many aspects of archaeological practice that are best served by embracing mess, chaos and impurity.

For one thing, a pursuit of purification is ultimately a pursuit of something that never existed in the first place. Archaeological sites have always been in flux – from construction and use to abandonment and decomposition. And, as Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins (2019) demonstrates in her book *Waste Siege*, trash and mess are especially good at evading control. Waste grows and seeps and besieges us in ungovernable ways. Landfills leak and contaminate and pollute, watersheds mix and systems of reuse and disposal are unpredictable. This unpredictability and leakage was true for the people we study through archaeology and for the places we delineate as archaeological sites in order to study them. And if all of the power and resources of the modern state are not enough to keep pathogens and garbage in line, surely even our most precise archaeological methods will fall short as well.

A methodological and interpretative commitment to purity is furthermore a denial of the power of the palimpsest. Archaeologists like Geoff Bailey (2007) and Gavin Lucas (2010) have used the metaphor of the palimpsest to talk about archaeological landscapes and to introduce nuanced approaches to thinking about temporality in archaeology. One exception to archaeology's methodological adherence to purity over palimpsest is the pedestrian survey. In pedestrian survey, the palimpsest becomes the mode of inquiry – thinking of all the people who have occupied a particular place over time and seeing evidence of them all at once. It is ironic, perhaps, that Greenberg and Hamilakis see the themes of purity so vividly in Greece and Israel – two areas where pedestrian survey has been so essential and so widely practiced. Something happens between pedestrian survey and excavation or

heritage development – an about-face, away from the palimpsest as a guiding metaphor and instead an objective to clinically sort and streamline the archaeological landscape.

While such temporal purification can be aesthetically pleasing and instructive in some ways, it can also represent an epistemic *loss*. For example, Eric Gable and Richard Handler (1996) have pointed out the ways that Colonial Williamsburg is not a fully accurate portrayal of what life in 18th century Chesapeake would have been like, but is rather a reflection of 1930s ideas about what life in 18th century Chesapeake would have been like. The paint colors would not have existed in the 1770s and the gardens are not quite right. Many of the furnishings are ahistorical. Gable and Handler discuss this, though, as a negotiation – that yes, there is overall a desire to correct misrepresentations and to portray as accurate a picture of colonial America as possible. But at this point, Rocke-feller's image of Colonial Williamsburg is nearly 100 years old itself. Is there not some value, from a historiographic perspective, in preserving a 1930s idea of the 1770s? Ultimately, embracing this messy historiography was one way that Colonial Williamsburg responded to what Gable and Handler termed the "too-clean critique" (1996: 570) – the argument that the park was too clean to be an accurate representation of history. Viewed in this way, temporal purification represents a loss.

In reality, archaeology and purification are uncomfortable bedfellows. Archaeology itself is hardly hygienic, and neither its methods nor its analytical approaches are (always) best served through clean classification and separation. Loosening and teasing apart the supposed cohesion of archaeology and purification perhaps lays the groundwork for disconnecting archaeology from the rhetoric of racial and national purity, which archaeology is so often stolen to serve. Turning to public policy rather than archaeology for a moment, intentional integration remains one of the most effective strategies for actually dismantling the systems of stratification that protect and preserve myths of an eternal uniformity, myths about who belongs. When people of different racial and class backgrounds share the same local infrastructure (same trash pickups, same bus lines, same sewer and water systems), when their children attend school together, material inequality and xenophobia appear to decrease (Massey and Denton 1988; Orfield 2005; Vaughan 2007; Mishra and Mohanty 2017; Ayscue and Frankenberg 2022). Perhaps a parallel effort on the part of archaeology – to reject purification and instead seek out the entangled, the commingled, the mixed-up – would lead to a more complex and nuanced science. Perhaps an archaeology disentangled from principles of sorting, hygiene, and cleanliness would be an archaeology less useful to myths of national and racial supremacy. How can we build that kind of archaeology?

Let's Write More Impurely

In addition to writing *about* what archaeology stands to gain from embracing its messiness, the dialogic format of *Archaeology, Nation, and Race* illustrates the affordances of writing in ways that mimic the mess and nonlinear experience of archaeology. The book is written as a longform conversation between Greenberg and Hamilakis. Standard archaeological writing – particularly monographs – proceeds generally from literature review to conclusions, or, in the case of site reporting, from site overview to methods to results. Normally, headings and paragraph breaks help the reader to navigate the text. But *Archaeology, Nation, and Race* has little of this. There are chapters, but the authors speak at length about some topics and only briefly about others. They do not signal in advance where the discussion will wind up. They repeatedly open a topic, then state that they want to return to it later. And there is plenty of room for tangential asides, even minor ones, that might otherwise seem distracting (if there was an organization to distract *from*). Who would expect, for instance, a book about archaeology's role in nationalism to reference the 1898 invention of cosmetic surgery (to correct the "Jewish nose"), as Greenberg mentions briefly on page 113? Such a digression, however, would seem entirely natural in a casual academic conversation. This is how we talk; this is how we think. But it is not, very often, how we write.

Greenberg and Hamilakis's text is, of course, not the only example of this. Others have experimented with dialogue as a novel form of writing that would more accurately capture the ways that archaeologists form ideas and create new knowledge (e.g. Bapty 1990; Tringham 1991; Bender 1998; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1998; Hodder 2006). Such experimentation, though, peaked in the 1990s and remains relatively uncommon. Part of the project of disentangling archaeology from principles of purification – from theory to practice – will necessitate more impure, disorderly, unpredictable forms of writing that more closely resemble what archaeology is and what it feels

like. What will it mean to write in unsanitized, untidy ways? How can we write in ways that disrupt the idea that archaeological work is solitary, pre-planned, and linear? How can we write to convey that archaeology does not actually allow an easy, clean recognition of discrete populations in the past – and therefore has nothing to do with arguments for displacement and segregation of communities in the present? I have argued in the past not only for dialogues, but furthermore for fictive writing on the basis of the freedom to "mess" with traditional structures and orders of archaeological writing (Mickel 2012). But if we are to extricate archaeology from purity politics, we will need to continue to seek out more ways of writing that represent the ruptures of our work, the unanswered questions, the creeping and seeping and leakage, the fact that even when we close out a project, our ideas about the past are anything but neat and compl

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The Discussion of Who or What Matters

Lynn Swartz Dodd

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The Discussion of Who or What Matters

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Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis argue for archaeology's revolutionary potential, borne of its ability to see what is hidden by typology, process and projection. I admire the project that these scholars advance in their individual life's work which includes actions of professional commitment, archaeological expertise, and activism that draws others to enhanced awareness. Their interchanges, as captured in *Archaeology, Nation, and Race* left me newly aware of potentials and responsibilities for me as an archaeologist, as an agent engaging in activities that span pasts and presents. I particularly appreciated their willingness to lay bare the possibilities for an archaeologist to do better in understanding and even untangling, rather than reproducing, structures of power and advantage. The maneuvers that diminish those who experience systemic limits on their access to knowledge, opportunity and narrative control are more apparent to me following my engagement with these interpretations of Israel and Greece. I am prompted to consider anew the processes of typologization, of defining archaeologies as plural, and also allowing space for concern with *things* which may possess "sentient, affective and emotive properties" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 91).

Archaeologies are redefined as discourses and practices involving things from another time (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 89). If I take seriously the narrative limitations that emerge from my acts of categorization, of typologization, of my assigning value, I am drawn to think toward dismantling or radically expanding my bounded concepts of "who" matters, which can emerge from limiting concepts of race and which may be understood as "a technology of power and control" (Osanami Törngren and Suyemoto 2022: 2; Lentin 2020). I am drawn to consider "what" matters, too, both to me as an agent, actor, empathetic being in the world and archaeologist. In this, there is considerable new terrain to explore, which Hamilakis and Greenberg engage as they define archae-ologies and the project of understanding crypto- and overt colonialism. One domain of expansive thinking looks toward the genius and scientific ideas that are embedded in certain indigenous ontologies about which I am informed and updated by culture bearers fairly regularly (personal communication, June 2022, Cindi Alvitre, Craig Torres). In Los Angeles, where these exchanges occurred, the expression of relatedness among animals, plants, land, water, trees is lively and potent, with responsibilities and reciprocity expected and expressed. When the archaeological project stands in opposition to the interests of all, that is, when archaeology is not living up to its potential to deliver benefits with justice, widely for all, I find myself feeling diminished about my contribution and the outcomes, and wondering what community investment is even possible to redress such an imbalance among those with whom I can consider myself to be related. I may envision myself related to everyone, for we all have a place on the Tree of Life and all species of *Homo* are members of the biological kingdom known as eukaryotes, with humans standing alongside animals, plants, and fungi in a conceptual relatedness that grows out of our shared morphological evolution. We all possess cells with a membrane-isolated nucleus (Woese et al. 1990). Likewise, scientists such as ecologist Suzanne Simard identify adaptations among plants and fungi that sound eerily human, such as defense signaling and kin recognition, yet these occur in underground forest communication networks (Simard 2009, 2021). Eduardo Kohn (2013) opens a rich conversation on nature of agency and interrelatedness for the Runa, a people whose perceptions of their forest, animals and themselves in it, are expressed in ways that we might speak of other people in a city. A wider conception of relationality prompted Tim Ingold (2021) to think through relationality and relatedness with beyond-humans, whether earth, wind, sky or materials with which a doer does things, as constitutive of being alive, affected, connected and thus (my interpretation) co-diminished when these other relationships are

not noticed, embraced, attended to by one seeking to fully live. Greenberg and Hamilakis reflect on inter-species interactions, *Homo* or otherwise. Entities which we designate as other, as not us, as not in connection with us may be agents or affective nonetheless, and so there are values in deciding to accord respect, notice and reciprocity, as well as necessities for limiting them, too. Post-humanism thinking takes seriously the ways in which subtleties of mobilizing socially constructed categories (e.g., race, consciousness) are pathways in discourse and viaducts for parsing out rights and respect. The potential of beyond-human relationality is obvious to those already enmeshed in such an ontological framework, and it is typically equally strange to those who see distinctions and separations. However, there is a history of crossovers in the realm of policy that at least hint that, even within a logico-positivist conceptualization of the world, there may be levers and linkages within and between realms of life, and that these can become visible or indirectly mobilized. One case relates the unhappy irony of child protection laws in the UK, where it was possible to advance laws to protect animals from abusive treatment, and then only secondarily to use those laws to finally extend protections to children. Concepts of property and hierarchy gave way somewhat to allow for the limitations of non-majority.

In a somewhat similar vein, Chiara De Cesari (2014) explains that the ancillary interest in nature and cultural heritage provided the needed traction for an Israeli High Court in a case concerned with the protection of the archaeological site of Battir from the route of the wall. In this instance, perhaps in a situation of reverse advocacy, heritage was an agent for human benefits when arguments founded on human rights had lost their discursive and persuasive force.

Greenberg and Hamilakis mention that "archaeology was a part of the project of acquiring the land through studying it, mapping it and quantifying it." These processes, too, entrain value through "the on-going dynamic of crypto-colonizing (and being crypto-colonized), which is tightly entangled and interwoven with the on-going nationalizing process" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 44). Meanwhile, we are able to see "the national making and remaking of the country through its archaeologization [as] an on-going process, not an old and nearly forgotten story" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 24). In Jerusalem, this process of national narrative making occurs partly through people's moving through a space given psychic charge for tourists or pilgrims, whether internal or from abroad. These are seductions (come to Jerusalem!) that require transformations via movement and story, as well as through a deft, planned and vast overcoming of the archaeological status quo, both overtly and covertly.

Fig. 1. An annotated aerial image © Maxar Technologies from Google Earth dated January 2022. The image shows the relationship between the Haram el-Sharif / Temple Mount (on left) and the City of David excavation and tourism development area within the Silwan neighborhood (on right). The tunnel system not seen in the image links up to the Siloam Pool which itself lies adjacent to the large area (parcel 46 & 47). The southeastern parcel is shown being excavated rapidly in this video (https://bit.ly/DiggingUpSilwan) and in Fig. 2.

The focus is an Israel in which the visitor sees themselves and their aspirations. Archaeologists have been hard at work refashioning places for such experiences to unfold, as many spent their pandemic years contributing to massive changes in the subterranean realities of East Jerusalem under the Muslim quarter, the Western Wall Plaza, near the Temple Mount, across the City of David (Silwan) and under the Old City and Its Walls. Most of this took place invisibly, underground. This process also was ongoing above ground on a day in February, 2023 when I happened to visit Siloam Pool. Over the course of approximately an hour, two large mechanical excavators continued their multi-day moving of thousands of square meters of soil, uprooting olive and citrus trees on a plot of land at the southern tip of the Silwan neighborhood that has been recast in the past 60 years as the City of David. Their project is reconfiguring the space adjacent to the slim Siloam Pool perhaps to test or prove the estimated size of the pool based on Bliss and Dickie's estimate back in the 1800s when they visited the site that, even then, was filled with layers of accumulation.

A short film of this clearance underway is posted at this location: bit.ly/DiggingUpSilwan. See Fig. 2 for a still photograph taken at this same location, at the southern end of the City of David, a section of East Jerusalem that extends down the spine of the hill southward from the Haram el-Sharif or Temple Mount and Ophel. A map (Fig. 1) depicts the location of the pool and the land that was officially taken possession of in December, 2022. The sliver of the Siloam pool and its steps that currently comprise the southern end of the City of David, play a role in which Israel stages its narrative of Iron Age nascent nationhood for visitors from near and far. Also, the location of Siloam Pool is traditionally associated with the story of a blind man's healing by Jesus in the New Testament.

Fig. 2. Image of earth moving equipment at work in the approximately 500 square meters of land directly adjacent to the Siloam Pool, formerly owned by the Greek Patriarchate (Orthodox Church). Photograph by author dated 20 February 2023.

Purportedly, a long term lease or purchase of this plot transferred control of the property from the Greek Patriarchate and their leaseholders, the Sumarin family (Terrestrial Jerusalem 2022). Its transformation was intended to uncouple it from its former identity. It had been an orchard and garden on property owned by the Greek Patriarchate, a Christian church, and apparently leased to a Palestinian family. The site managers – the El'ad settler organization – hoped it would become the southern half of a grand Siloam Pool that would enable people to experience a time when the temple was still accessible.

Images that are posted in various locations throughout the City of David depict this pool. For example, in this video: https://youtu.be/FdhvksoXGvI?t=770 the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque are depicted atop a pilgrim road that is constructed from archaeological data, contemporary details and historical reconstruction. It is noteworthy that a different version of this image shows the Second Temple at the top of the pilgrim road. However, I did not see it used in the City of David site or tunnels where it would have been visually incongruent with reality as well as potentially inflammatory: https://bit.ly/pilgrim_road_2nd_temple. Even though Church lands are not necessarily subject to the same antiquities regulations as state land or other property owned by private parties, archaeology and archaeologists play a constitutive role in making the experience as well as the conduits in which they unfold.

Thus, while the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) seeks to work collaboratively with such institutions (churches and other religious entities, such as the Western Wall Heritage Foundation), it is not always certain that usual, required procedures of professional archaeological work are being followed. So, I wondered what was known about the cotents of the soil located there in this large plot of land. The archaeologists with whom I visited the site were not able to tell me who had done or was doing the archaeological assessment there in advance of the soil removal. Legally, an archaeological test should have been done once the church no longer owned the property. The IAA archaeologist involved in the assessment required to be undertaken in advance of the earth clearance reports that publication of the results of the investigation is forthcoming (personal communication Nahshon Szanton). The underlying excavation records should exist on file with the IAA. For the sake of discussion, we may assume that the assessment was done, and that significant remains predating 1700 CE were not found. Had they been located, these would have required archaeological documentation or protection in accord with expected professional practices. The rapid clearance of soil that I witnessed would be unremarkable if this area had been deemed not to have been of any archaeological importance, in accord with Israel's antiquities laws and practices. Obviously, while we may not categorize remains as "archaeology" from a legal perspective (not pre-1700 CE), there is certainly much that an archaeologist or historian could learn about a half-dunam plot of land at the southern tip of such a sensitive site (the City of David). In the 323 years since 1700 CE, the world has witnessed the making of modern nations, a global history of colonialism, a local imperial collapse (Ottoman), two world wars that left traces often curated in other states, and other wars associated with the establishment of the State of Israel and of Palestine in their current configurations. The Israel Antiquities Authority delegated to the backhoe operator, through its relationship with the El'ad organization, the permission to ignore those possible stories in order to reveal (or create) the envisioned width of the Siloam Pool.

This feature is to become a part of the recreated pilgrim's ascent through tunnels which penetrate an underground mélange of materials that derive from the Hellenistic (Hasmonean) through Ottoman periods (see imaginative reconstruction at this URL: https://bit.ly/siloampool_reconstruction). Details shared at the site and in publications suggest that this pool was used in Hasmonean times and later as a purification site for the faithful on their approach to the temple precinct. In preparing this purification experience, the soil containing whatever it may contain is removed. In accord with the ideas of Greenberg and Hamilakis, the purification tool is the bucket of a backhoe. Greenberg's (2019) 'digwashing' is apropos here, as the process is excavation amid a massively funded complex of being-revealed archaeological spaces resulting from entrepreneurial activity within underground tourism complexes that are being developed by El'ad, the East Jerusalem organization which works in collaboration with Atheret Cohanim and other settlers. A range of archaeological traces, from nearly every period post-dating the Hasmonean period, have been revealed by archaeologists tunneling up to and around the Haram el-Sharif or Temple Mount and extending beneath the Old City and Its Walls, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Greenberg's and Hamilakis' critique of the project of purification seems particularly apt in view of the millions of shekels being committed to this project annually. The entire experience unfolds within a Palestinian neighborhood which has no access to the benefits of the tourism development. The City of David experiences enable the visitor

to avoid interactions with anyone except the members of their tour group, their guide, the staff at the City of David and people who smile their 2-D smiles from images attached to the walls (Kletter 2020: 8). This is a highly curated experience in which the tourist never needs to be aware of divided Jerusalem, of second-class citizens or need to see a single face that is not involved in the creation of the tourism experience (Greenberg 2009: 44–45; Hasson 2011; Mizrahi 2012; Kletter 2020: 55). Disputed Jerusalem is overcome by Desired Jerusalem in which pilgrimage and purification is again possible, using both archaeologies and "archaeology's therapeutic reputation as healer of ruptured memories and supplier of salutary pasts" (Greenberg 2018: 375).

Another kind of purification is at issue under the Western Wall plaza where ever-enlarging tunnels have uncovered walls blooming with green algae resulting from light encountering ancient (and possibly modern) sewage seepage underground in close proximity to sacred space. The structures of the state intended to protect antiquities were subordinated to tourism access and service needs and, thereby, antiquities, people and their alimentary processes became conjoined in direct proximity (Kletter 2020). This alliance speaks to a vast and thorough transformation of audience understanding, now not for those seeking purity but rather relief, now not for those arriving in ritual obedience but in search of spectacle and story, each of them contributing to the narrative of a nation colonizing disputed and occupied territory to recreate a period of time in which the forebearers whom the narratives recall were themselves subjected to occupation, a story neither old nor forgotten but whose remains leave lessons to be learned.

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The “Discoverer” and the “Informant”

Erhan Tamur

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The “Discoverer” and the “Informant”

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The first object that was accessioned by the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the Louvre Museum was a statue of the ruler Gudea (c. 2120 BC) from Tello (ancient Girsu) in southern Iraq (Fig. 1). When one looks at the hands of this statue closely, signs of damage and restoration can easily be discerned. In fact, the earliest photographs published in the excavation reports show this statue without its hands (Fig. 2). This absence was interpreted by the Louvre curator André Parrot as an ancient act of iconoclasm carried out in the late third millennium BC, after the time of Gudea: “By breaking the hands, the vandal believed to annihilate more completely the effectiveness of the statue erected in the Eninnu [temple of Ningirsu]” (Parrot 1948: 162).

Fig. 1. Statue of Gudea, ruler of Lagash, c. 2120 BC; from Tello, Iraq. Musée du Louvre, AO 1. Photos: Musée du Louvre.

Yet, if we combine the few existing sources in western languages with a variety of local sources from that period, including the documentation in the Ottoman Imperial Archives on the construction and maintenance of telegraph lines between Baghdad and Basra, it becomes clear that a French telegraph inspector named Juilletti was led to this statue by an unidentified local person in early 1876. Juilletti then broke the statue’s hands, took them with him to Baghdad, and sold them to a local antiquities dealer (most likely Michel Marini), who then resold them to the British Museum curator George Smith that same year. The hands of this statue were kept at the British Museum until 27 May 1958, when they were brought to the Louvre to be reunited with the rest of the statue in a ceremony

celebrating the friendship between the two nations. However, the related publication (Rey 2019) did not make any mention of how these hands got to the British Museum in the first place. This, then, was not an act of ancient iconoclasm, and the ancient "vandal" was a modern French telegraph inspector. In fact, I do not believe that the statues of Gudea were subjected to iconoclasm in the late third millennium BC at all – a topic upon which I elaborated elsewhere (see Tamur 2022).

Fig. 2. Statue of Gudea, ruler of Lagash, c. 2120 BC; from Tello, Iraq. Musée du Louvre, AO 1. From Sarzec and Heuzey 1884–1912, Pl. 9.

I decided to begin with this example because it seems permissible today to publish comprehensive books on Mesopotamian archaeology or on the history of excavations without citing a single source in local languages. This neglect concerns not only the Ottoman Imperial Archives or 19th-century local accounts but also modern scholarship that has been produced in the region. For instance, half a century after the bylaw of 1869 was discussed by Ahmet Mumcu (1969), and later published in full by Halit Çal (1997), there are still prominent western scholars who argue that the earliest Ottoman regulations on the protection, excavation and export of antiquities date to 1874 (e.g., Bernhardsson 2005: 39; Dalley 2021: 31). The issue here is not only a matter of leaving out five critical years, during which these two starkly different laws helped shape the convoluted path of the institutionalization of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, but it also has to do with the politics of citation[1] and is the symptom of a deeper theoretical and methodological flaw. The systematic neglect of sources in local languages, coupled with established citation practices, serves to sustain asymmetrical power relationships in academia.

Rafi and Yannis (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 64) very eloquently speak of that sense of exceptionalism felt by the local scholar working in the crypto-colonies, who sometimes derides the foreigner who does not speak the local languages. Although I understand that sentiment, I do believe in the necessity of scholars and students learning not only the ancient but also the modern languages of the region. It is important to push universities, research institutions and museums to make modern language instruction an integral part of their professional training, as well as an employment prerequisite. As I noted, it is first and foremost a matter of correcting major empirical fallacies upon which ancient and modern historical narratives are founded. However, I do agree that the situation

1 Magnus Bernhardsson's source for this information is Wendy Shaw (2003). Stephanie Dalley cites Matthew Ismail (2011: 87), who, in turn, provides a single reference, namely the aforementioned book by Shaw.

at hand requires much more than correcting empirical fallacies. Let me bring in another, recent example, this time from a museum context.

The British Museum recently organized a touring exhibition titled "Ancient Iraq: New Discoveries," one of the stops of which was the Great North Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne (7 March–2 August 2020). A virtual tour of the galleries has been made available online.[2] One of the highlights of the show is a partially preserved standing statue of Gudea which was taken by the British geologist William Kennett Loftus in 1850 from a site called Tell Hammam in southern Iraq. After mentioning that the statue was "discovered" in 1850, the label, titled "A Battered Survivor," continues as follows:

> "Made of dolerite and showing a life-size worshipper with clasped hands, it lost its head and limbs a long time ago. In recent times it was hacked at by local tribesmen who believed it concealed gold – which it didn't – and was also used in target practice by local warriors! It was the first Sumerian sculpture to reach Europe […] The archaeologist who found the statue was William Kennett Loftus, who was educated at the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle."

If we look at how Loftus himself described the "discovery" of this statue, we read that it was only after his "new guide Mahmud […] mentioned the existence of a large statue at a ruin named Hammam" that Loftus decided to visit and explore that site (Loftus 1857: 113). Once there, Mahmud told Loftus that the statue was recently used for target practice by "the Arabs" and also attacked by the Sabaeans who work in iron. However, Loftus found this unlikely as "it is not their [Sabaeans'] custom to travel with large implements of their trade" and that "the fractures bore evidence of having been effected at an earlier period than my informant [Mahmud] admitted" (Loftus 1857: 115).

Whether or not the statue actually suffered in the hands of local populations is impossible to ascertain – it might well have. My point here is how that possibility, one that Loftus himself doubted, is given in a museum label today as an unquestioned "fact." Additionally, although this is one of those rare occasions that the local person who guided the western archaeologist to the monument was named in the original source, the "discovery" is again entirely attributed to Loftus himself. It is astonishing how the temporal-logical contradiction this attribution leads to goes unnoticed in such narratives. How can a statue that is documented to have been known by local populations prior to the arrival of Loftus be regarded as "discovered" by him in 1850? The putative singularity of the moment of "discovery" is negated even within the same label. Finally, one expects to see one sentence or a separate wall text concerning the socio-political settings that made this statue "the first Sumerian sculpture to reach Europe." Instead, the narrative that is offered in this label in 2020 is akin to the tired glorification of how Europeans "saved" antiquities from oriental ignorance and superstition. I would argue that the disappearance of Mahmud and the "pre-discovery" histories from this museum narrative is another form of what Rafi and Yannis (Greenberg and Hamilakis: 75–108) called purification – the adherence to a single, linear, academic narrative of "discovery" at the expense of one that is complex, multitemporal, and open to non-academic forms of knowledge.

Further, the generic designations that have been used to describe local populations are part and parcel of that process of purification. Loftus, as we saw in the aforementioned quotation, used the word "informant" when referring to Mahmud. Others, such as the British Museum curator Wallis Budge, asserted that the French diplomat Ernest de Sarzec who led the excavations at Tello "questioned the *natives* in the district as to the possibility of finding an untouched site" (Budge 1925: 197, my emphasis). Although this statement implies that local populations were more than just a passive backdrop or a cause of disturbance, the use of the collectivizing term "natives" effectively denamed and defaced them. Similarly, Sarzec's excavation photographs further perpetuated this tendency by categorizing local collaborators as his "escort" (Sarzec and Heuzey 1884–1912: Pl. 63; see Fig. 3). Such rhetoric is still perpetuated today. A case in point is Paul Collins's otherwise brilliant recent book, where the same people are referred to, without any serious engagement, as "local informants" (Collins 2021: 43).

On the other hand, a closer analysis of a diverse set of local sources makes it clear that Wallis Budge knew by name all of those people whom he called "natives" in his book. He had met many of them in person and bought various types of ancient objects from them. Elsewhere (see Tamur 2022), I visualized the intricate relationship between such individuals and institutions in a social network graph, which demonstrates the existence of a world of local and international relationships that remained concealed behind the narratives of "discovery" glorifying the

2 See https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/visit-us/virtual-tours-ancient-Iraq. Last viewed 28.9.2023.

individual, European excavator. Then the use of the collectivizing terms “informants,” “natives,” and “escorts,” as well as the nature of the power relationship implied by the act of “questioning” (see the aforementioned quote by Budge) do not derive from ignorance; they are intentional elements of a broader narrative informed by a distinct colonial logic that regards these lands as *terra incognita*. Rafi and Yannis note similar processes taking place in Greece and Israel as well.

Fig. 3. “Ernest de Sarzec and his escort.” From Sarzec and Heuzey 1884–1912, Pl. 63.

Finally, I would like to return to the issue of “discovery.” If it is not Loftus, then who is the “discoverer” of this statue? Is it Mahmud? Someone else? What happens if we go further back in time, say to the 10th century AD, when an Iraqi judge and collector of stories named Al-Muḥassin ibn ʿAlī al-Tanūkhī (939–994) noted the existence of:

> “[…] a statue of a man made of smooth black stone, of vast size, known to the people of that region as Abu [Father] Ishaq […] The inhabitants state that they have heard their elders calling it by that name from time immemorial […] On its chest, back, and shoulders there was ancient writing inscribed, in an unknown character.” (Margoliouth 1930: 368)

Al-Tanūkhī continues with another story of a “square stone of great size” that bore “images and engraving” at a place called Tell Hawār, which was known as “an ancient site, containing relics of antiquity” (Margoliouth 1930: 368). Already in 1931, Tell Hawār (or Tell Ḥawwāra) was proposed as the Medieval name of Tello by Yaʿqūb Sarkīs, one of the most prominent local historians of Iraq (see Sarkīs 1948: 293–301, 1949). However, his

arguments on the etymology of Tello as well as his works in general have never been taken into consideration in western scholarship.[3] By drawing on classical and modern Arabic sources on the history and historical geography of lower Mesopotamia as well as recent archaeological surveys and excavations, I was able to further identify several other key geographical markers mentioned in Medieval texts and trace both of Al-Tanūkhī's stories to the vicinity of Tello. In other words, it is highly likely that the sculptures mentioned by Al-Tanūkhī were statues of Gudea. Finally, Al-Tanūkhī added that several people tried to move the statue named Abū Ishāq, but the local people "came crying" and requested the statue back. Stressing that their village "was its [the statue's] home," they stated: "We come to it for company at night, and the wild beasts keep off us when we are near it, as they approach nothing which resorts to it for protection" (Margoliouth 1930: 368).

Such accounts refute one of the major arguments against restitution and repatriation as espoused by James Cuno and others, namely that local populations had no relationship whatsoever with these ancient monuments prior to the arrival of the European "discoverer" (e.g., Cuno 2007: 11–12, 2008: 146). Yet I believe that the aim should not be to reverse that narrative by replacing the name of one "discoverer" with that of another, but to dispense with that kind of logic altogether. The fundamental problem with narratives of "discovery" is how they strip the object or concept in question of its surrounding context and deny it any existence prior to and independent of the moment of "discovery." In other words, its "history" begins with its modern "discovery."

While countering these narratives by expanding the range of sources is imperative, a critical engagement quickly reveals that many of the sources resist any inherent classification into the fixed categories of "indigenous" or "European." Further, the prevailing discourse of "discovery" often pervades the literature of the time regardless of such categorizations. For example, the Assistant Director of the Ottoman Imperial Museum, Halil Edhem Bey (1897: 106) claimed that the site of Zincirli in southern Turkey was "discovered" by the Director of the same institution, Osman Hamdi Bey, although Osman Hamdi Bey himself noted that members of the local Kurdish population had already unearthed the sculptures of Zincirli prior to his arrival at the site (see Eldem 2010: 51). Similarly, Ferruh Gerçek, a modern, Turkish historian who wrote a comprehensive book on the history of museology in Turkey could write that "Nineveh was discovered by Carsten Niebuhr [1733–1815]" (Gerçek 1999: 28), while the tenth century geographer Ibn Ḥawqal had already noted how the ruins of Nineveh [Nīnawā] were easily discernable from the city of Mosul (see Johnson 2017: 264).

Instead, the emphasis should be on the entanglement of the past with the present and on the temporal plurality of artworks and landscapes. Yannis, in particular, has been stressing this point for many years now, and this emphasis is also reflected in the discipline of art history with the recent shift from the negatively connotated "anachronism" to the productive capacity of the "anachronic." In that sense, as with the issue of sources and the politics of citation, I find the critique of the notion of "discovery" to be an integral part of a decolonial project. Only then, perhaps, would modern histories of Mesopotamian "discovery" no longer begin with the account of Benjamin of Tudela from the twelfth century, and local sources from across the centuries, which have generally been relegated to myth or tradition, would be critically read and integrated into our narratives.

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3 Instead, the name of Tello has generally been explained as meaning the "mound of the tablets" in Arabic – "tell" (تل) meaning "mound," and "lawḥ" (لوح) referring to a writing board. This explanation goes back to the French orientalist Charles Henri-Auguste Schefer (1820–1898) as noted in Sarzec and Heuzey, 1884–1912: 1: 8, n. 1.

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The Study of the Ancient and Recent Past in Israel: The View from Tel Ḥadid

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The Study of the Ancient and Recent Past in Israel: The View from Tel Ḥadid

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In recent years there has been growing scholarly interest in the social context of archaeology in Israel. As amply demonstrated, ideologies, politics and religions have been entangled with the practice of archaeology in the southern Levant since Ottoman times, and they form the foundations of common current approaches. True, interpretive frameworks and methodological approaches gradually changed in response to studies of the history of scholarship during the 1980s and 1990s, as well as exposure to critical archaeological studies, and the perspective of archaeologists educated in recent decades differs from that of their predecessors, but many still adhere to paradigms and concepts that developed and crystallised almost a century ago by agenda-driven scholars. Accordingly, this contribution joins the call for a reflective discourse – which is needed now more than ever. It deals with the entanglement of the ancient, the recent and the present, as reflected in the ongoing work at Tel Ḥadid, a multilayer mound in central Israel, following Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis' (2022) call to "demystify" the ancient and imagination and consequently our scholarly approaches.

Studying the Ancient in a Contemporary Context

During the 2019 season of archaeological fieldwork at Tel Ḥadid,[1] a hand grenade was found just below the surface. Work was halted for several hours, and as the team waited for a police bomb squad to come and dismantle the threat, they could identify the grenade as an artefact dating back to the days of British rule over Palestine (1917–1948).

This was our team's introduction to the first full season at Tel Ḥadid, during which we invested our efforts in four main areas, three of which yielded significant remains dating to the Iron Age II (primarily 7th century BCE), the Hellenistic period (2nd–1st centuries BCE), and the Byzantine period (4th–7th centuries BCE). Our initial aim had been to investigate the Iron Age II, a context already explored at the site in the 1990s (Brand 1996, 1998; Beit-Arieh 2008; Koch and Brand Forthcoming). Specifically, we were intrigued by the remains of a community of deportees who were forcibly relocated and settled in the region by the Neo-Assyrian empire in the late 8th century BCE (Naʾaman and Zadok 2000; Koch et al. 2020). These remains offered us a rare opportunity to explore this historically well-known yet archaeologically understudied episode in the history of the region (Koch 2022).

We began the exploration with questions on the transformative capacity of 'uprootedness' – the forced relocation of communities from their homelands or habitual surroundings. Such questions included:

- What would the uprooted take with them on their journey?
- How would they adapt to the local climate, flora and fauna of their new homes?
- What would the nature of their interactions with their new host society be?

1 The project is co-directed by the author and by James Parker (Baptist Theological Seminary of New Orleans).

As work progressed and with the discovery of new contexts, new questions came to light, yet the Iron II remains constitute the main attraction of the site in the eyes of the scholarly community and the general public. The proximity of the site to the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, its elevation, towering above the neighbouring communities, and its development as a leisure site by the Jewish National Fund all make it a popular site with the public. Tel Ḥadid and its surroundings host hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, especially in the summertime. Naturally, the sight of our black excavation tents and equipment, alongside the sound of tools (and our team's vocal enthusiasm) attract visitor attention. We decided, therefore, from the beginning, to adopt an inclusive approach by collaborating with local communities and visitors and regularly sharing our thoughts and plans with them. Many visitors would approach us and ask questions, most frequently about the Iron II or, more accurately, about the biblical period. As all our staff members can testify, one of the most common questions was: "Have you found proof of the Bible?"

Our staff members, most of whom are Tel Aviv University students, engage in such conversations daily and present their own perspectives. Here, however, is when things can get tricky, and where we must tread with care, since the entanglement of archaeology with politics, ideologies and religions is at the core of our field in Israel. Such views derive from the colonial origins of earlier scholarship and the nationalistic archaeology of the first decades of the State of Israel that have evolved to become the legacy of modern scholarship (see, among others, Silberman 1993, 2003; Shavit 1997; Kletter 2006; Feige and Shiloni 2008; Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022, esp. 24–28). Even nowadays, decades-old approaches dictate research questions, methods and interpretations. News media and politicians often cherry-pick the latter, which are harnessed as "proof" of their views and sacralised as part of a political agenda (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 103–105, 144).

To counter such insidious entanglements, we highlight the need to maintain the independence of the analysis of material remains from the tyranny of texts and their scholarly interpretations. The prioritisation of data over paradigms is essential if we are to release the Iron Age archaeology of the southern Levant from its *biblicised* past and protect it from the threat of manipulation in the name of nationalist agendas. Following Greenberg and Hamilakis (2022: 162–163), archaeologists must engage with the public and discuss the roots of the myths, the complexity of interpretation and the production of alternative narratives.

The work at Tel Ḥadid has exposed yet another entanglement between the past and the present. Each visitor to the site, armed with their own mindset, interests, beliefs and political views, passes through hundreds of olive trees, organised in plots framed by crumbling fences and prickly-pear cacti. Some would engage in conversations on the ancient past and its contemporary context under the shade of Tel Ḥadid's serene, aged olive orchards. Those who climb the mound to see the panoramic view of the Lydda Valley and the Tel Aviv metropolitan area are probably unaware that when they reach the summit, they are standing on top of a cemetery. Just behind them lie the ruins of houses, blending in with the vegetation, covered by thick underbrush under a canopy of trees planted in the past 50 years. These are the sparse remains of the Palestinian village of al-Ḥaditha that was destroyed on 12 July 1948.

These paltry remains of the village have shaped the direction our research was to take. The grenade of the 2019 season was a vivid illustration of the site's violent past during the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. It became clear to me that the study of uprooted communities in the ancient past could not continue without creating the space to consider the nature of *our* current role in the story of this place and its recent episode of uprootedness. Thus, a new collaboration was co-initiated with Prof. Yoav Alon (Department of Middle Eastern and African History, TAU) to study the village of al-Ḥaditha and its remains. Together we intend to investigate the village through a detailed archaeological analysis of material remains and a thorough historical inquiry.[2] As such, the project underscores the promise embodied in historical-archaeological investigations into Israel's recent past, illuminating unknown aspects of recent material culture and shedding light on under-studied communities that leave few conventional records of their experience.

2 The project is funded by the Israel Science Fund, Grant No. 1316/22.

Our Academic Location: At a Turn in the Archaeology of Israel's Recent Past?

As we began to plan the project, we faced a well-known challenge. In contrast to the established scholarly community of Israel's modern history in all Israeli universities, institutes and departments of archaeology have few members who study and teach the archaeology of the Ottoman and British Mandate periods. Thus, while historical archaeology is a vibrant discipline in Europe and North America (Orser, Jr. 2002; Majewski and Gaimster 2009), Israeli archaeology has contributed little to the field, even though material remains from recent centuries are found in abundance throughout the country.

The roots of this phenomenon date to the early archaeological explorations of Ottoman-period Palestine (1517–1917), which focused on Judeo-Christian remains alone. At first, this was due to the (generally negative) Western colonial perception of the "Orient" and its people. This was compounded by the British Mandate Antiquities Ordinance (1920), which decreed that only remains predating 1700 CE should be considered antiquities. This same perspective of past remains was later endorsed by Israeli lawmakers and archaeologists (Melman 2020; Baram 2009; Kletter 2006).

Although the remains of Arab villages from the Ottoman and British Mandate periods have been uncovered in many salvage excavations (e.g., Ustinova and Nahshoni 1994), only a few projects have focused on the rural sites from these periods. These include Glock's study of Ti'innik (Ziadeh 1995; Ziadeh-Seely 1999, 2000) and Hirschfeld's excavations of the village of Umm el-'Aleq (Hirschfeld 2000). Other studies have explored burial practices (Simpson 1995) and objects, predominantly smoking pipes and drinking vessels (Baram 1999; Simpson 2002). Nevertheless, and despite the well-established field of historical archaeology, no sub-discipline for the archaeology of the modern era in the southern Levant has emerged. In Baram's (2000: 139) words, "for a land which has been overturned in nearly every corner with the archaeologist's spade, the recent past is the least understood archaeologically."

This situation has improved in recent years. First, the significant and extensive development of Israel over the past three decades generated salvage projects that focused on the modern era. Some of these projects involved historical-archaeological studies, primarily in Jerusalem and Jaffa (e.g., de Vincenz 2015; Arbel 2021), but also in other regions (e.g., Majdal Yaba: Tsuk et al. 2016; Kafr 'Ana: Arbel and Volynsky 2019; al-Muzayri'ah: Taxel and Amit 2019). Second, an outreach project in Lydda promotes the study of the city, specifically during the Ottoman and British periods (Daʿadli 2017; Shavit 2022). Third, the material remains from these periods have been subjected to detailed analyses, the results of which illuminate local trends in economic activity and consumption during times of increased exposure to European material and technological innovations, followed by political domination (Walker 2009; Shapiro 2016; Vincenz 2018; Arbel 2019; Daʿadli 2019; Shehadeh 2020). Finally, there has been an increased exploration of the political context of modern Israeli archaeology, including the role of Israeli archaeologists in demolishing pre-1948 Arab villages (Kletter and Sulimani 2016; see also Kletter 2006: 48–81).

University-based fieldwork (distinct from salvage excavations) complements this growing interest in the recent past. Such projects include Tell eṣ-Ṣâfi (Horwitz et al. 2018), Bureir (Saidel et al. 2020), and Tell el-Hesi (Saidel and Blakely 2019) in the southern coastal plain, as well as rural sites in the Western Negev (Saidel et al. 2019). To these one should add the study of the village of Qalunia, west of Jerusalem, which is based on a reanalysis of past salvage excavations (Wachtel et al. 2020; Kisilevitz et al. 2021). The most recent development is the project at Qadas, located in the Upper Galilee close to the Israeli–Lebanese border, co-directed by R. Greenberg and G. Sulimani, which endeavours to study the village and its destruction following the conquest in 1948 (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 176–178).

Lastly, such an interest is reflected in special issues of peer-reviewed journals, which hitherto did not deal specifically with these periods (Saidel and Erickson-Gini 2021). This recent momentum of archaeological interest in Israel's recent past provides a new context for our project and allows us to explore aspects of past and present societies as well as consider the role of archaeology within this discourse.

Al-Ḥaditha: A Historical–Archaeological Study of a Depopulated Arab Village

The archaeological study of the recent past involves sets of data that provide high-resolution details unknown in the study of more ancient periods. First is the wide range of written sources and photos from various archives and contemporary press reports as well as oral testimonies: some are already available online, and others are compiled from al-Ḥaditha communities in Ramallah and Amman. The archival work is carried out by Alon, assisted by two postdoctoral fellows, one of whom is a native Arabic speaker responsible for communicating with the al-Ḥaditha communities in the West Bank and Amman.

A fundamental component of our project is the collaboration of the al-Ḥaditha Association (Jamʿiyyat al-Ḥaditha) in al-Bireh, Ramallah. We are trying to enable the refugees from al-Ḥaditha and their descendants to play an active and integral role in the project rather than a passive one (cf. Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 159). For instance, within the framework of the interviews, we encourage active participation, asking questions such as: do you have any inquiries we can explore in our excavation of your village? We plan to maintain open communication with the al-Ḥaditha community throughout the project and hopefully into the future. Focusing on narrative transmission and preservation, we ask community members to document their stories of the village – which will then be translated into English and Hebrew in our publications.

At the same time, we are aware that we should not ignore those who have lived next to Tel Ḥadid in recent decades. Inspired by the framework of community archaeology (Tully 2007; Marshall 2009; Moshenska and Dhanjal 2012), we have engaged with the regional council and called for its collaboration. In this context, we have talked to local residents and asked them for input on the site's place in their landscape. Special attention is accorded to the senior members of these communities, who first settled at the foothills of Tel Ḥadid in the early 1950s and remember the site with its ruins before the planting of the park by the Jewish National Fund in the 1970s. In addition, we have joined classes in the neighbouring elementary school and guided them to/around the site as we listened to their stories about Tel Ḥadid – stories that will also be included in our publication.

Based on the historical sources, we have built our second data set, which integrates the GIS application of historical photos and a survey of the village and its environs. This allows us to incorporate all the information amassed into a detailed digital map of the village, reconstructing its immediate agricultural surroundings and tracing land usage in the vicinity. To this end, we work on converting historical aerial photos of al-Ḥaditha and its environs into orthophotos (top-down photos stretched to scale and placed on a coordinate system), facilitating the comparison of sources from different periods. The collected data will be cross-referenced with the high-resolution survey data and archival documents (pertaining to land ownership) to create a holistic view of the village and its environs.

The third (and archaeologically more "conventional") data set would be the excavation of al-Ḥaditha's built-up area, which will commence in the summer of 2024. The excavation team will work following the insights provided by the historical research during three seasons of excavation of the village (2024–2026), and ongoing analysis of the material remains will be framed in comparison with the historical evidence. This excavation will involve the detailed documentation and removal of ruins to study destruction processes, followed by the excavation of underlying habitation levels. We initially planned to conduct the digging of two sections along the slope and one wide area in the village's core. However, as we continue the interviews with the al-Ḥaditha community, our final excavation plans will be amended in line with their questions and approval.

We aim to publish a comprehensive presentation of the project and its components as an open-access edited volume in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. The main contributors to this volume will be the project's PIs and staff members, along with former residents of al-Ḥaditha and their descendants.

Our consultation on the final storage location of the unearthed objects is another facet of this project. According to the Israeli Antiquities Law, the excavation director is responsible for handing over all excavated finds to the state authorities. However, since the recent date of the finds excludes them from the law, it is the excavators' responsibility to decide how to process them. We plan to work with the community and conduct consultations to determine

how the recovered objects are to be treated regarding their display in museums or exhibitions, their preservation and storage, and their eventual return to the descendants of their former owners.[3]

The project's final phase (to take place in the summer of 2026) will consist of a reflective discourse on the collaborative effort to uncover the story of al-Ḥaditha. We will convene for a summary workshop to present the results of the project and our conclusions on theory, methods and practice. Alongside the need to discuss disciplinary boundaries that should be at the very least revisited and perhaps revised, there is the fact that both Alon and myself are Jewish Israelis and thus must be aware of the need for a self-reflective component in the project, as it directly relates to Israeli and Palestinian history within the context of the Arab–Israeli conflict.

As I am writing this contribution after concluding the first year of the project and after some years of studying uprootedness in the ancient past, I wonder how my personal experience has shaped my research. Ever since I was a child, I have heard the stories of my grandparents – holocaust survivors who lost their families, were uprooted from their homes, migrated to Palestine in 1947 and built a new life while joining the war. What elements of these stories and the details I have collected during the years became part of my research? And how much of my grandfather's stories on his participation in the 1948 War are lying in the back of my mind as I read the testimonies of the people of al-Ḥaditha?

Indeed, this is only the beginning, and I look forward to the ultimate results of this project. I already feel, however, that although our task is not easy, we are not alone. We have colleagues to consult with, the willingness and generosity of the al-Ḥaditha community, recent awards of generous funding for our research, and the support of a passionate and kind-hearted student community eager to join the project. It is my hope that more projects like this will be developed in the future.

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3 I am grateful to Rafi Greenberg for his advice on this matter.

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Archaeology, Coloniality and Modernity: A Response

Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis

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Archaeology, Coloniality and Modernity: A Response

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RG: So, Yannis, having read and reread the essays, I thought we might exchange a few impressions and respond to some of the challenges that have been offered in them, whether directly or indirectly. One of the first things that struck me, both in this set of papers and in other reactions to *ANR* (published, online and in academic settings), is how varied and "undisciplined" they are: each response seems to spin off in a different direction! I know that it was our intent and hope to engage a diverse readership, but I began to wonder whether there is true communication, as Despina Lalaki suggests there should be, or if we are talking to ourselves and past each other. I'm also thinking of the eye-rolling reproach that I often encounter, not least from colleagues within the profession, of those who would prefer that we 'stay in our lane,' do what we do best and what we are paid public money to do; that is, dig, publish and tell stories about the past. Why trouble the world with our half-baked meditations? And now we have gone and lured more well-intentioned, mostly young scholars to join us in this pointless exercise!

I think that what does bind these responses – and our own work – together is something that we mention in both the introduction and conclusion to our book, and that is the sense that many of the things that we were born into, whether economically, politically or disciplinarily, have reached a breaking point: we can no longer continue to do whatever it was that we were doing before. Neither our discipline nor any related to it can continue to run along the same tracks, based on an economy of incessant extraction and founded on violence and tremendous imbalances of power and privilege. Moving forward thus calls on each of us to look inward, personally and intellectually, and stake out a position, as each of our interlocutors has done, whether explicitly or implicitly. And by looking inward, each naturally focuses on what is nearest to them or most immediately affects them. So while they are each reacting, knowledgeably and thoughtfully, in a different idiom, they are resonant. More specifically, that resonance is founded on a discomfort with the continuing, troublesome ideological link between self-serving visions of biblical and classical antiquity and Western modernity (Robbins, Reilly, Koch), archaeology and coloniality (Tamur, Lalaki), or disciplinary purity and ethnic/racial supremacy (Mickel, Dodd). Archaeology – and especially that of the two countries that have been so fundamental to the Western world view – has too many real-world consequences to be allowed to preserve the fiction that nothing we say really matters, and that we bear no responsibility for people who are displaced, histories that are ignored, or racial inequalities that are rationalized or naturalized through our complicity. It is completely our business to understand the history of our discipline and the political and intellectual contexts in which it was formed, and we have much to learn from those who join us in this quest.

In the months that have passed since we published *ANR*, the linked political, environmental and ideological crises that were its very prominent accompaniment have only increased, as has the weaponization of "neutral" or "scientific" archaeological discoveries by racist and nationalist actors. Yet many colleagues cling to a belief that they should have no impact on the way we ply our craft. I think what these essays are telling them is that they are in for a rude awakening: the old ways of archaeology will not long be tolerated. Where our interlocutors do not agree – and what might leave any reader at loose ends – is what should be done about it. Lalaki and Tamur seem

to advocate most forcefully for the adoption of "a southern standpoint", but how far should that affect our praxis? Mickel and Koch (and I think Dodd as well) are suggesting various modes of reform in how we go about our business, with the former pushing for a more radical unlearning (but how radical can it get, without losing sight of our craft?), while Reilly and Robbins perhaps play devil's advocate by inquiring if there is something to be salvaged – or even unabashedly embraced – in emancipatory aspects of modernity and nation-building.

Getting to the heart of the matter, do you think that we have argued that archaeologists are complicit in some sort of conspiracy that "western modernity" has imposed on the world, and that this requires us to tear down our discipline and condemn all the work that has been – and continues to be – put into the discovery and interpretation of the material past? Or should we in fact cherish aspects of modernity and 'civilization', as Robbins suggests, as well as the empowering qualities of post-colonial nation-building, as Reilly implies?

YH: Well, let's first say how grateful we are for these engaging and deeply insightful responses. They add to the reviews already published (Rizvi 2022; Bowman 2023; Gazi 2023; Havstad 2023; Lambropoulos 2023; Nakassis 2023; Papagiannopoulos 2023) and to the passionate engagement that I have experienced during public presentations of the book in Greece. If, twenty or thirty years ago, a discussion on the politics of our discipline was a niche matter, today, as you say, it is seen as essential and existential not only for archaeology, but well beyond it. Archaeology cannot continue its business as usual, with a few modifications here and there. Neither can it adopt an opportunistic attitude, adapting to the new conditions and benefiting from the current crises, a kind of archaeological disaster capitalism. What is needed is its drastic refoundation as an undisciplined discipline, no longer a servant of colonialist and nationalist narratives and of commodifying practices.

Our book was deliberately broad ranging, and it is no surprise to me that the responses here follow diverse directions. Yet there are certain shared themes that run through them. For example, the theme of purification which is central in Mickel's piece can be also detected in Dodd's contribution, when she emphasizes the need to re-establish relational connections with the messy world of non-human beings and entities, and in Tamur's response reminding us of the need for epistemic justice, also central in Mickel's article. Tamur problematizes the neat and sanitizing narratives of official archaeology which foreground discovery as a story of adventurous feats of white, western (male) archaeologists. Another example: the themes of polychrony, anachrony or multi-temporality surface in many contributions, notably the ones foregrounding the archaeology of the contemporary (primarily Koch) but also the ones that challenge the highly problematic, arbitrary divisions of time, imposing a time mark on when "real archaeology" starts. I see a real dialogue here, taking different paths but motivated by similar concerns.

As to the points raised by Reilly on the certain benefits of nationalism and the objections posed by Robbins that we present a flattened and rather unfair view of modernity, much can be said. Briefly, I do not deny that in certain contexts nationalist archaeology has fueled anti-colonial struggles. The case of Great Zimbabwe was mentioned. The site became a national symbol, but it mostly served to show that great feats were indeed the work of local, African people, not Mediterranean or European colonists. I see such a narrative, supported as it was by strong empirical evidence, as an example of decolonial archaeology, not so much of a nationalist one, although I would not deny that such narratives could take (and indeed, have taken occasionally) nationalist overtones. The notion of strategic essentialism is often presented as an argument here, the deliberate use, by subaltern groups, of essentialist narratives to describe themselves in order to advance anti-authoritarian or anti-colonial goals. While we all agree that nationalism is an essentialist concept, it can have at times strategic benefits, the argument goes. But even Spivak, who has been the proponent of this concept, has disowned it in an interview as it "simply became the union ticket for essentialism" (Danius et al. 1993: 35). So no, we should insist that nationalism is a derivative concept, sharing the same ontological and epistemic principles with colonialism, they are both different strands of an overarching regime of coloniality. In *ANR* we presented several examples of such a convergence, and we have spoken at length about the colonizing work of nationalism, its violence over bodies, territories, local/indigenous cultures and traditions.

Reilly also urges us to consider the critique of Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò (2022) who has argued that, from an African point of view, the recent drive towards decolonization denies African people's agency, and their ability to creatively adopt institutions and practices of European modernity. There is much to agree with in his book, and we would certainly concur with the thesis that we should not "define the colonised strictly by the colonial experience" (Táíwò 2022: 183). There is also much to disagree with, and while in our book we have engaged in the careful, historically

situated, and contextually specific analysis he is urging us to do, giving due agency to the non-metropolitan cultures we are analyzing, we should rather concur with other African and Africa-based scholars and intellectuals in showing the intricate connection and mutual constitution of western modernity, colonization and racialization (cf. Mbembe 2017).

As for Robbins's strong but fruitful objections to our thesis, I feel that they are partly an outcome of different disciplinary traditions. We never intended to embark on a wholesale assessment of modernity or to produce a balance sheet of its positive and negative qualities. Our critical use of concepts such as progress and civilization was deliberate, as these are some of the most loaded terms in modernist archaeological narratives, often connected to discourses of cultural evolutionism, so popular with much of western archaeology since the 19th century. The critiques of such models, on both empirical and theoretical grounds, have been plentiful and systematic, with the most recent being David Graeber and David Wengrow's *The Dawn of Everything* (2021; for a critique see Hamilakis 2022). I feel that when we utter terms such as progress or civilization, we and Robbins conjure up different images, we hear different things: we have in mind these teleological and hierarchical narratives, often with racist undertones; he perhaps hears a story of gradual improvement, with echoes of the 20th century, political emancipatory narratives. After all, in the political vocabulary of the Left, progress is still a future horizon to be achieved, a path full of possibilities, along the lines of a linear and developmental conception of time.

But beyond these disciplinary misunderstandings, I feel that there are genuine differences of perspective here which we should not attempt to conceal. Let's consider only a couple of points. "[T]he fact that the prestige of the distant past has been weaponized doesn't mean that the distant past doesn't deserve its prestige", he writes, but in our book we wanted to complicate the notion of pastness, arguing that it is inscribed in a specific modernist conception of temporality, while also pointing to the selection process at play, to the insistent foregrounding of certain pasts at the expense of others. Colonialism existed before modernity, he claims, but without wishing to idealize any period, no serious scholar would equate ancient colonization with that of European modernity despite some formal similarities; the latter was grounded on a specific construction of Anthropos as a white, male superior human being, entitled to "civilize" the world through conquest and plunder.

Moreover, Robbins seems to adopt here the liberal narrative of continuous progress of "humanity", despite the odds. We take it he does not subscribe to a teleological understanding of progress, and, like us, he would agree that these positive, emancipatory developments (the abolition of transatlantic slavery, the universal right to vote in elections, the right of workers to unionize?) were the outcome of often ferocious and bloody struggles. Nonetheless, Western modernity is worth rescuing, Robbins seems to argue, since, along with its horrors, it left us many good things. As we mentioned already, we are not in the business of producing a balance sheet of modernity but rather examining its specific entanglement with archaeology and with Hellenism and Judaism. And we would concur with scholars such as Lisa Lowe (2015) or Sylvia Wynter (2003), amongst others, that an examination of the emancipatory developments in western or European modernity cannot happen in isolation, since they were often achieved at the expense of the Others of Europe and of the West, at a serious cost for the colonized non-white beings. Can we really afford to discuss the French Revolution without examining and reflecting on the lessons of the Haitian Revolution at the same time? Or can we continue referencing the abolition of the Atlantic slavery without discussing its connection to the mass displacements of the colonized from China and South Asia as indentured labor, due to the associated labor shortage (Lowe 2015: 5)? In other words, to use Robbins's own argument elsewhere (Robbins 2017), we, the privileged of the Global North, need to accept that we are the beneficiaries of the long histories of extractive colonization of the rest of the world.

RG: I think, Yannis, that we can be even more specific: If we allow the methodological and technological advances in archaeology to be wielded without any accounting of the manner in which they are the wages and gratifications of coloniality and whiteness, then we invite not only the continuation of stark global (North-South) disparities in the practice and consumption of archaeological knowledge, but also the naturalization of modern ethnic and cultural categories and the inevitability of the late-modern order in our interpretation. Just as archaeologists universally recognize that using outdated excavation methods will lead to unreliable results, so should they accept that thinking with colonial categories will result in a pervasive, violent structuring ideology that colors every interpretation, beginning with material typologies and ending with "state formation" and "world systems" (Omilade Flewellen et al. 2021; Reilly 2022). It is an ideology that inhibits understanding no less than the crude excavation methods of the colonial looters of the past.

Thinking, along with Mickel, Dodd, and Koch, about what we might need to unlearn in the way we practice archaeology in the field and teach it in universities, we might be hesitant and uncomfortable with, for example, Mickel's call for "messiness." Does this imply relinquishing the care and precision upon which we often pride ourselves in the field? Are we turning our backs on the very nature of our "craft" (*sensu* Shanks and McGuire 1996)? I think not. Just as contemporary medicine has turned away from the absolutes of complete isolation from "germs" or the utter separation of mind and body in achieving physical wellbeing, so do archaeologists need to recognize the advantages of uncertainties and multiplicities, including those which occur at "the trowel's edge." The moment of understanding might not occur in tandem with that of maximum "cleanliness", but perhaps in relation to a failure to distinguish, or to a juxtaposition of incompatible observations (Greenberg 2022), or as Dodd suggests, at the moment of decentering the human agent. In fact, as in the cases both of the Silwan orchard described by Dodd or the hand grenade described by Koch, the "intrusion" of the present can be the moment of the most profound understanding.

Implicit in Koch's program of integration of the study of the contemporary ruin of al-Haditha in what would traditionally be termed a "biblical" excavation is the possibility of radical changes in both research paradigms and teaching curricula in Israeli academia, but we are very far from that objective, which would require a thorough restructuring of archaeological departments and the consequent loss of political clout, prestige and privilege that are attached to "Biblical" and "Near Eastern" archaeology. It will not be enough to merely "add diversity and stir." This is how I read Tamur's contribution as well: once the theme of "discovery" is removed from archaeological narratives (imagine the void in our online feeds, absent "discovery"!), and with it the themes of exploration and adventure that are so central to the current marketing regime of archaeology, what will replace them? I suspect that as the terrible cost of the extractive ideologies of capitalism and colonialism continues to manifest itself in our world, there will be an ever-growing demand for both a deeper understanding of the contemporary condition and the potential histories and political imaginaries encoded in pastness. This is how I understand the reverberation of books like *The Dawn of Everything*, or of our own discussion. Perhaps we are on the threshold of a new archaeological regime of care and healing (hooks 2009).

YH: Your comments, Rafi, bring up an issue which should be central to a discussion such as this one, and to any discussion on the politics of archaeology and of the material past in the present. For some time now, I have been uncomfortable with the compartmentalization of the critical debate in archaeology. It takes place mostly amongst two discrete camps: the "theory crowd" which is currently engaging in debates on ontology, on assemblage thinking, on relationality or the Anthropocene, and the "politics crowd" which is currently dealing with decolonization, whiteness and white supremacy. The two crowds often publish in different fora and go to different meetings, as if the topics are unconnected, while this division also carries implications for teaching. This, of course, is explainable and speaks of the divergent histories in archaeological thinking. It is also related to the political naivety of some of the mainstream archaeological thought, and the philosophical naivety which is often seen in the political discussion in archaeology. In our book, and in previous work, we have tried to bridge this gap, and this set of comments advances this cause further. In several commentaries and most notably in Dodd's, decolonization is also an ontological struggle, a matter of decentering the Anthropos of racialized modernity. Our efforts on decolonization cannot really succeed if they fail to confront not only the colonial conceptual and epistemic regimes but also the colonial bodily and sensorial apparatuses (cf. Hamilakis 2023); the cultural evolutionist thinking was not simply a false narrative on the past and the present, with no empirical grounding but with clear power effects. It was also an anaesthetic regime of panopticism, lacking the sensorially activated affectivity that is central to any relational connection, past and present. In addition, it was a temporal regime of linear progressivism and "development", a mode of thinking that is not unrelated to the current and on-going climate catastrophe.

But to echo your final sentence on care and healing, let's finish on a positive note: there are signs, here and elsewhere, that the landscape of critical archaeological debate is slowly and gradually changing. It is now much more diverse in terms of both practitioners and ideas, it is no longer dominated by a few "big men" of theory (situated in two or three centers in the global and mostly anglophone North), while an activist and openly political archaeology attempts to bridge the ontological, the epistemic and the political terrains, striving towards an affective archaeology of care. We hope to have collectively shown that in this pertinent moment and in this bridging effort, the materially and historiographically rich contexts of Greece and Israel, and the critiques of the foundational narratives of modernity such as Hellenism and Judaism, will need to be prominently present. They offer the potential to dismantle colonial and Eurocentric epistemic and political regimes from within, revealing at the same

time their internal logics. Furthermore the indigenous worlds of the Eastern Mediterranean, issues of potential essentialism and idealization notwithstanding, can teach us much on alternative sensorial and bodily states, on other relational understandings and temporalities.

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Activating Archaeology: Commentary on the Theme Issue “Archaeology as Empowerment: For Whom and How?”

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Activating Archaeology: Commentary on the Theme Issue "Archaeology as Empowerment: For Whom and How?"

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We live in a paradoxical world in which humanity has accumulated more wealth than ever before – but we have distributed it less equitably than ever before (e.g., Christiansen and Jensen 2019). This is not a new insight. Most archaeologists, at least since the Processual – Post-Processual debates, acknowledge that they work within inequality. As Gabriel Moshenska (p. 49),[1] quoting Collingwood puts it: "I know that all my life I have been engaged unawares in a political struggle, fighting against these things in the dark. Henceforth I shall fight in the daylight." This quote nicely encapsulates the intent of this important *Archaeology as Empowerment* theme issue that marks the 10th anniversary of *Forum Kritische Archäologie*. Archaeology is well-positioned to recognise the materiality of inequality in the past – and also in the present and potentially the future through a lens of climate change, war, poverty, and by utilising broad-scale social and technological innovations from the past (e.g., Boivin and Crowther 2021). We are perhaps the only field of enquiry to study human history in all of its facets (because we 'steal' or creatively repurpose so many insights and technologies from others, which can have its issues). But, as Nicolas Zorzin (p. 74) points out, our intervention can range from being a 'prefix archaeology' add-on to a 'scientific' project to a whole-hearted reorienting of archaeological work to empower people other than ourselves. However, there is a paucity of guidance on the 'middle range' and day-to-day actions we can take – and this theme issue offers 19 authored pieces with diverse themes, case studies, actions, and geographies tied to 'activist' archaeologies, including:

> Land ownership, murder, violence, dispossession, forcible removal (Acuto), personal and group safety, exiles (Dezhamkhooy), making unofficial histories known (Cruz), climate change and natural disasters, massacres, distinguishing 'participatory' from 'activist' work, fair wages, official and subaltern heritage (multiple contributors), bad teaching (Davidovic-Walter), state control, dam projects, being morally unqualified, saying 'no' to projects as protest, exporting pollution (Dezhamkhooy), museums as sites of protest, grief and healing (excluding acceptance) (Durgun), anarchism, teaching as reproducing hierarchies, feminism, precarity of employment (Hahn, Koch and R. Müller), revolution's materiality, heritage, tourism and GDP (Mickel), redeploying existing archaeological techniques (Jungfleisch and Reali), whiteness, profiling, female participation, sexual harassment, positionality, citation as exclusionary/hegemonic practice, nine-point plan of action, (Marín-Aguilera), identity, tourism, crime, fieldwork decisions and monies (Mickel), countering populism, calling out falsehoods (Moshenka), normalising activism, research based on social rather than scientific need (U. Müller), Indigenous re-centring, ethics, law (Porr and Piezonka), healing, kindness, heart-centredness, radical care, (Rizvi), museums, 12 possible remedial actions (Tamur),

1 All references in a name/page format refer to the set of comments in *Forum Kritische Archäologie*, "Archaeology as Empowerment", 2023.

critiques and counter critiques of activism, activist vs scientific archaeology, code of conduct, legal vs ethical, sensitive data (Wilts), prefixes, raising false hopes, e-waste, (Zorzin), academic discourse as incomprehensible (J. Müller), five points for activists to consider (FKA Editorial Collective).

Fig. 1 is a basic text analysis of the volume's content and reveals that we are still very much research-focused while being aware of political threats and Indigenous possibilities and guidance. 'Communities' (65 mentions), 'heritage' (64) and 'museums' (60) also show a turn toward archaeology-as-heritage and community facing (sometimes as yet an ideal rather than a reality).

Fig. 1. Text analysis of *Archaeology as Empowerment* theme issue with words like 'archaeology/ist' and 'activist/ism' excluded. Most common words: 'research' (175); 'political' (140); 'social' (110); 'knowledge' (108); 'Indigenous' (102). Generated by Voyant.

Similarly, a spatial positionality exercise shows that the issue's authors, where known – the FKA Editorial Collective is not listed to individual contributor level – live and/or work in: Argentina, Australia, Africa, England, Egypt, Europe, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Iran, Iraq ('Mesopotamia' and 'Persia' are also mentioned in an historical context), Middle East / West Asia, Mozambique, the Global South, North America, São Tomé & Principe, Taiwan, United States of America (Fig. 2). Many of these places of work are either active conflict zones or adjacent to them.

This impressive thematic and geographic range is not to be celebrated in the usual sense because it shows on how many fronts we think our intervention is needed. Since this issue was released, the war[2] in Gaza has erupted with catastrophic loss of life and heritage. This tragedy was ominously presaged by this theme issue with about a third of the contributions focusing on West Asia. Archaeological work and conflict are both widespread and global, and so at times they will overlap. Archaeologists thus have to be prepared to have a 'Plan B' for working in such zones to keep all participants safe, not to lend legitimacy to questionable regimes, and where possible to alleviate suffering. One advantage is that we have practitioners and their local and global networks in place globally to advocate

2 I recognise that words like 'war', 'conflict', and 'genocide' are not neutral and have differing legal ramifications. Specific terms can expose or mask whether it is a political, resources-based, religious, drug or other conflict. There are more than 110 'armed conflicts' in the world today (Geneva Academy 2023).

for human rights and cultural heritage protection should conflict break out. However, most of us lack training for such eventualities, and we need to build these competencies from an undergraduate level; also to deal with issues like climate change, harassment, political interference, and the like. Even in regions at peace, inequality exists, and from almost any moral or ethical stance, it is untenable for archaeologists and allied workers, who typically consume public money and resources, not to be 'activists'. But before understanding 'how' to do this, we must consider what 'activism' is.

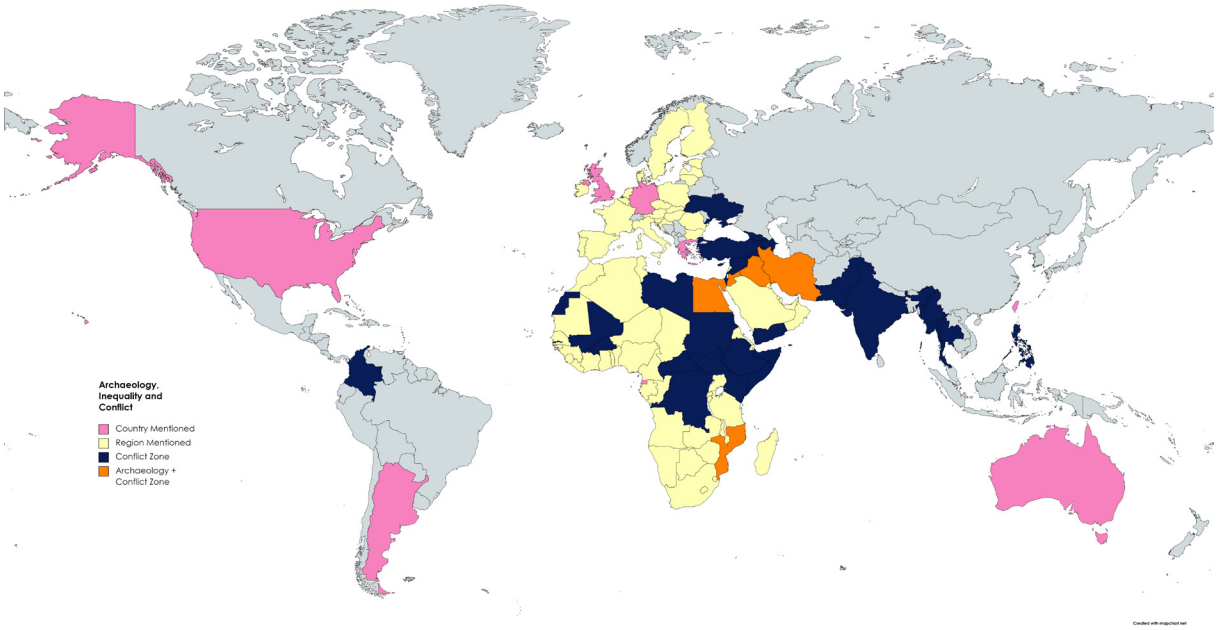

Fig. 2. Countries in which authors live and/or work and current conflict zones. Pink = specific country mentioned. Yellow = general region mentioned. Blue = conflict zones as determined by the Geneva Academy. Orange = overlap between archaeological work area and conflict zone.

Activism and Activating Archaeology

This volume has many strengths but one gap is, in everyone's eagerness to be 'activists,' we may not fully understand what 'activism'[3] is, or how doing so can make us susceptible to manipulation and inadvertently cause harm, as Geesche Wilts articulates (pp. 69–73). The FKA Collective (pp. 81–85) provides an invaluable grounding that builds on earlier insights like those contained in Jay Stottman's edited volume (2010) and Larry Zimmerman's work (2014). These works have provided a sounder grounding for my practice (thank you), which was previously more or less made up as I went along. Now, I calibrate work against Bill Moyer's (1987) formulation of four types of activists: citizen, rebel, change agent, and reformer. This theme issue aids self and disciplinary reflection both on why we want to 'activate' and from whence we are coming ideologically, geo-politically, and historically. Radically, we need to consider whether archaeology is, in fact, compatible with activism. As Tonia Davidovic-Walter observes: "Archäologie und Heritage scheint zwar eine Affinität zu konservativen Narrativen zu haben, etwa in ihrer Verwendbarkeit zur Behauptung einer historischen Kontinuität von nationalen Strukturen, Herkunft oder Abstammung oder in der Nutzung zur Verhinderung des Ausbaus erneuerbarer Energien"[4] (pp. 14–15); to which Erhan Tamur adds: "Efforts towards decolonization should render the constitutive colonial structures transparent

3 Similarly the word 'empowerment' can mask iniquitous power relations, create the impression that archaeologists have the power to empower, and assumes that those we seek to empower want us to do so.

4 "Archaeology and heritage seem to have an affinity for conservative narratives, for example in their use to assert a historical continuity of national structures, origins, or descent or in their use to prevent the expansion of renewable energies" (author's translation).

and decentralize and diversify both those structures as well as the narratives that they produce. Whether these objectives are meaningful in a discipline that is inherently a product of colonialism and racism is still under debate" (p. 66). In parallel, several contributors draw from Anibal Quijano's forward-looking understanding of 'coloniality' to demonstrate that issues with "a colonial origin and character can be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix they were established" (Quijano 2000: 533). This spotlights our default positionality as 'outsiders' especially in community and Indigenous work. Indeed, the word 'Indigenous' remains productively problematic as we seek to ally our 'scientific' expertise to service social and environmental needs (Supernant et al. 2020). I share an unease with the view that archaeology can be decolonised. However, if this is possible, do we not need to augment this deficit model of somehow removing something (coloniality) by replacing it with something (like cosmopolitanism)? 'Activating' our different archaeologies – always balancing the scientific with our social license to operate – seems unarguable – but how do we do this?

Plans of (In)action

The stakes of activating[5] archaeology – and archaeologists – vary enormously. One litmus test is whether you or those you work with can suffer harm as a result of your work. We risk our physical, mental and cultural safety in the field – and can suffer reputational loss and diminution at our place of employment and surrounding society. For example, in 2009 the World Archaeological Congress held its Inter-Congress on "Structural Violence in Ramallah." I spoke on comparing South Africa's Apartheid state's use and abuse of archaeology with that of the Israeli state. Both states were founded in 1948, and I found this a serendipitous convergence intellectually for two problematic and militarised regimes that both used extreme manipulations of archaeology and the past to legitimate their rule. Israel was also a leading sanctions-buster to Apartheid South Africa, especially with regard to exchanging military technology and armaments. I did also intend to provoke but was unprepared for the extraordinary difficulty both in attending this conference and the subsequent and enduring sanctions. The latter involved visa delays and misdirections, multiple failed attempts to enter Ramallah over two days, interference from the Israeli Antiquities Authority and their Head (who was also a general in the Israeli Defence Force) in the content of my paper (they declined to attend the conference to witness the content firsthand), complaints to my employer, and being declared *persona non grata* (Hole 2010). There is a very real risk to enthusiastic but inexperienced students and colleagues wanting to do good but, in doing so, suffering harm and disillusionment. Should we then consider establishing guidelines for what constitutes activist work and how it is best practised? Or is this, as anarchist-aligned Marieluise Hahn, Anna Koch and Raphaelle Müller imply, subjugating ourselves to a controlling structure? The most radical action is to do away with archaeology altogether (cf. Hutchings and La Salle 2021). Or to keep it but not always activate it. As Maryam Dezhamkhooy points out, sometimes the best action is not to do any archaeology because it can endanger people's lives and living, or because it is an unwanted distraction from more pressing issues: "As an independent group in Iranian archaeology, saying no has been sometimes our most effective resistance It does not necessarily mean passivity and inactivity but rather responsibility about the outcomes of decisions" (p. 17). Doing 'nothing' or working slowly can also have the benefits of contributing to degrowth (e.g., Zorzin 2021) and of using the laborious and time-consuming techniques of archaeology as a form of therapy (e.g., Schaepe et al 2017). Inaction and action can thus exist in contrapuntal relation and there are actions worth exploring. Appetite for this approach is shown among three contributors – Beatriz Marín-Aguilera, Erhan Tamur, and the FKA Editorial Collective – who offer guidelines, which I summarise and supplement in Tab. 1.

5 I use 'activating' rather than 'engaging', which can imply an external action rather than something that springs from within archaeology and archaeologists.

Action	Resources
General Principles	
Be clear to ourselves and partners what 'archaeology' is and what it can and cannot do.	Zorzin, this volume
Acknowledge our bio-geographical and other positionalities.	FKA Editorial Collective, this volume
Acknowledge past wrongdoing, challenge problematic practices, and foster learning, apologising, care, healing, and repairing.	Marín-Aguilera & Rizvi, this volume
Diversify the archaeology workforce, especially allowing younger, diverse, and Indigenous participants, and let them shape 21st century practice.	Zorzin, this volume
Co-design and deliver projects with clear roles, values, and outcomes, articulating broader project impacts on climate change, sustainability, identity, etc.	Acuto, this volume
Archaeology is primary evidence of past and present lives, so we can work in any temporality but should focus on the marginal and subaltern.	Acuto & FKA Editorial Collective, this volume
Use multiple voices/perspectives, including radical and non-academic forms of knowledge and knowledge-keeping.	Supernant et al. 2020
Ability to process contradictions from partners who are opposed to values such as democracy, BIPOC and LGBTQI+ identities, or concepts such as evolution.	Dezhamkhooy, this volume
Foster long-term engagements with project partners and socialise students and colleagues into a participatory mode of work.	Cruz, this volume
Understand the history and impacts of words, ideas, technologies (archaeology uses a lot of military-derived technologies such as mapping, GPS, dating, etc).	Jungfleisch and Reali, this volume
Safety	
Ensure the cultural, mental, physical, reputational safety of partners, employers, funders, and ourselves.	Dezhamkhooy, this volume
Funding	
Due diligence check**s** on employer and funder reputations, agendas, expectations and claims to our work, with equitable legal, ethical, and ICIP conditions.	Porr and Piezonka, Wilts, this volume
Encourage a minimum quantum of project funding/skills/in-kind to go to partners and local economies to prioritise the well-being of local scholars and students, the protection of sites, and the dissemination and application of results.	Tamur, this volume
Account for the carbon footprint of all of our work (fieldwork, lab analysis, conference travel). Build in budget offsets to at least attain carbon neutrality.	Throsby 2019
Create micro-funding of and teaching opportunities for students and early career colleagues.	Black Trowel Collective n.d.
Fieldwork and Conferences	
Cater for all physical and mental abilities, ensure adequate accommodation, sanitation, privacy, and meals.	Phillips et al. 2012
Hold conferences at/near fieldwork locations and/or in locations where our help/presence can be of benefit. Consider a local and distant fieldwork model.	Editorial 2022
Mandatory outreach during fieldwork and encourage local, paid participation in work. Train students and colleagues in science communication.	Tamur, this volume
Teaching, Training and Engagement	
Encourage and reward both **critical** AND **orthodox** thinking, foster two-way learning and the expression of multiple perspectives and alternative ontologies.	Durgun and Wilts, this volume
Learn project partner's languages and encourage employers to make language instruction part of professional training and an employment prerequisite.	Tamur, this volume
Utilise immediate, tangible recognition of learning and prior learning through instruments like skills passports.	ANCATL et al. 2021
Let younger colleagues teach what they want, how they want, and ensure recognition of this work.	Davidovic-Walter, Hahn et al., this volume

Research and Dissemination	
Reconfigure ‘authorship’ not just to include junior and other colleagues, but also project partners, collectives, and more-than-human participants.	Ouzman 2023
Always ensure open access to at least a version of research, unless it is harmful to any participants.	Eve and Gray 2020
Use language carefully and avoid problematic words like ‘prehistory’ / ’mankind’, and dispense with notions of ‘discovery’, ‘informants,’ and the like.	Tamur, this volume
Work against chronocentrism and promotion of ‘deep time/oldest’ narratives by also encouraging ‘shallow’ time narratives to communicate the full sweep of human history.	Bernbeck and Van Dyke 2015
Avoid citing cliques and seek out work of local scholars and scholars who publish in other languages.	Marín-Aguilera, Tamur, this volume
Acquire science communication skills to deal with diverse stakeholders, opponents, and pseudo-science mendacity.	Moshenska, this volume
Reconfigure ‘establishment’ authority spaces such as museums to present, for example, co-curated displays, which then have reception studies, and are integrated into school syllabi, government policy, tourism, and the like. Use these as truly public spaces for debate and action.	Durgun, this volume
Use media and social media in collaboration with partners (or not, if they so decide), and check that media platforms do not subsequently own your work.	U. Müller, this volume

Tab. 1. Provisional guidelines for activist archaeologies.

A concerted but not necessarily coordinated set of such actions challenges us to apply our core competencies in new ways, rejuvenating – even decolonising – the field. For example, Dong-Yo Shih’s practitioner-citizen work on materialising underground and socially invisible e-waste in Taiwan using archaeological and sociological methods helped galvanise larger societal and government action (Zorzin p. 75). We should also reflect on past practice and how we could have done better, as Johannes Jungfleisch and Chiara Reali did by positing an imagined set of actions during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution where “archaeologists could have helped with the systematic geo-referenced photogrammetric documentation of street art and its integration into a diachronic open map of protest” and “archaeological documentation of weapon fragments could have been the starting point for tracing the trajectories of weapon exports to Egypt” (p. 32). For myself I have found what I initially considered a project ‘by-product’ rather than core activity now exist in contrapuntal relation to each other. These activities include: two-way learning and accreditation with a ‘Skills Passport’ (ANCATL et al. 2021), getting Indigenous people and partners out on Country (which is regarded as a living and reciprocal partner in human life), thereby improving mental and physical health; using fire as a pro-active and collaborative tool to manage heritage in bushfire-prone eras;[6] and conducting local fieldwork to minimise carbon footprints and engage an urban populace. What becomes tricky, without falling victim to Strathernian ‘audit cultures’, is how to measure whether such actions have meaningful ‘impacts’ for us, the people we work with and for – and to convince employers that this is part of the ‘core business’ of an archaeologist.

Home Truths

Returning to the introductory point of inequality existing everywhere, even in wealthy countries (indeed, especially in wealthy countries), I end this commentary from my location on unceded Noongar/Nyungar land in colonial Australia, where the recent referendum to recognise constitutionally Aboriginal Australians and their ‘voice’ was rejected by 60.1% of 15.68 million mostly non-Indigenous voters (AEC 2023). What frustrates many ‘yes’ voters were the ‘relative truths’ and outright falsehoods disseminated (Australia has no law requiring truth in electioneer-

6 For example, simply knowing where archaeological and heritage sites are – as identified by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants – enables fire planning to avoid these areas or conduct on-ground hand burns by Rangers. The very activity of cultural burning maintains Country and people’s relationship with it and has done so for a long time (cf. Pascoe 2014 and commentaries to this productively provocative book) to the degree that there is no ‘wilderness’ separate from humans (cf. Fletcher et al. 2021).

ing). As June Oscar, proud Bunuba woman and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission, succinctly puts it:

> "The referendum and the merciless politics around it have underscored a harsh reality: it is increasingly challenging, if not impossible, to engage in reasonable and safe public discussions in today's political and media climate [especially with] … those in the political sphere who wish to pathologize our cultures, to dismiss the harms that colonisation has wrought, and to deny us the realisation of our rights as Indigenous peoples." (Oscar 2023)

This referendum comes on the back of the 2020 destruction of the Juukan Gorge cultural landscape by Rio Tinto aided by a complicit State government's '*Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.' This Act was replaced in 2023 by the '*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2022*' – which lasted for two months before it was repealed after pressure brought to bear by a concerted and partisan media scaremongering campaign, fuelled by sectional interests and a weak State government. This continues Quijano's 'durable colonialism' by manipulating democratic processes that are underpinned by an extractive capitalist economy to perpetuate long-term silencing and refusal of recognition.

So, does it then matter if we tell our 'truth' or do activist work? Of course it does, but we should probably acquire better skills to tell it. It is more than useful to conduct this truth-telling after upskilling in what are often called 'science communication' programmes. Here, you typically first acknowledge your 'opponent'; hear them out, posit your view, invite response, and then decide whether to continue the conversation or to stop because the conditions of possibility for accepting all or part of the others' viewpoint do not exist and that to continue conversing would legitimise their position (e.g., Kappel and Holmen 2019). We can work both within and beyond 'the system'. For the former, taking inspiration from W. E. B. Du Bois' tactic of 'using master's tools to dismantle master's house' we can: "use the platforms and resources of colonial institutions to shape public discourse and to change public opinions on both individual and mass scale" (Tamur, p. 68). In this spirit, colleagues use the growing recognition that heritage is an inalienable human right (e.g. Donders 2020) and quantify in monetary terms what the impact of heritage destruction and denial through war and climate change is to human health, by using what the insurance industry calls 'non-market values' (e.g., Throsby 2019; see Manero et al. 2022 for specifically Indigenous values valuation).

But the urgent and existential threats that are climate change and war mean that we also have to work outside of even our own norms by, for example, being undemocratic in not engaging with obdurate opponents. Just as no-one over 40 should be in politics, as everyone should have to live with the consequences of their decisions, so we need to create secure positions of responsibility for young and diverse archaeologists to empower them to shape a 21st century archaeology that is scientifically excellent, socially responsive – and urgent. Here curator Maria Isabel Garcia's formulation of 'ragency' as "the anger and agency we carry within ourselves and bring with us to the museum. There are many issues to be angry about in our world and in museums" (cf. Durgun, pp. 22–23). Using rage as a means of dialogue adds passion and consequentiality to show the publics we serve that there are short and long-term consequences of our work. (but see Rizvi, this volume for another view). And, of course, while telling our truths we do need to call out falsehoods as a matter of principle. As Félix Acuto articulates: "A good science, one which produces strong theoretically and methodologically informed arguments and solid evidence, serves to categorically rebut the discourses of the powerful, driven by their political and economic interests." (p. 5) while not hiding "under the cloak of conspicuously political, radical, and critical archaeology … with limited pragmatic results" (Cruz, p. 6). Pseudoarchaeologies – often state-sponsored – are on the rise, and we need to counter their mendacities and their consequences (Moshenska, p. 50).

Concluding Commentary

To conclude commentary on this timely theme issue – thematically summarised by Johannes Müller's pithy advice to "think long term, act short term" (p. 80) – I offer some forward-facing thoughts that take seriously our understanding of temporality and change. Humanity is in the unique position of being both self-aware and heading toward extinction. If evolution is valid, we will either all die out completely or evolve into one or more other organisms. We are in a unique position both to negotiate our demise and to hand over to our biological successors, which should include more-than-human entities. This may sound odd, but when the 'Anthropocene' was mooted, it elicited a far left-wing suggestion for a coalition of humans and more-than-humans to save the planet

from ourselves – an approach that resonates with many youth (Spannring and Hawke 2022). It is noteworthy that Indigenous First Law, which was not extinguished by colonial invasion and subsequent European-derived legal systems, is typically not given parity to 'western' invader's law, thereby gagging the more-than-human rather than letting it/them speak (but see Martuwarra River of Life et al. 2021). We already do some of this by acknowledging the agency if not the sentience of artefacts and landscapes. Likewise, classic anthropological host-guest obligations can be extended to all the actors in the world around and within us. Finally, and responding to this issue's sub-title *for whom and how?* – this issue provides multiple 'how' case studies – but each practitioner will have to craft their own bespoke set of 'how-to' deal with their specific circumstances. More broadly, activating our diverse archaeologies will both give names and dimensions to inequality, which can then inform and focus what equalising actions we can take.

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