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Archaeology and the Logic of Capital: Pulling the Emergency Break

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Abstract The recent (2008- present) crisis of financial capitalism is having an enormous impact on the lives of working people all over the world, but it has also hit the largest sector of archaeological activity which has been called commercial archaeology, or contract or developer-funded archaeology. Despite its detrimental effects, the situation has provided an opening for a radical rethinking and reflection on the underlying assumptions of this sector, its ethical and political premises, its long-term viability, and more importantly, the need for alternatives. Within this context, this paper aims to show that the logic of capital was embedded in the process of the constitution of modernist archaeology, right from the start. It also demonstrates the highly problematic operation of commercial archaeology for archaeologists, material culture, and the vast majority of the public. It proposes that what it needs to change radically is the foundational logic of modernist archaeology which makes it part of the framework of capital: its fetishization of things, and their treatment as autonomous objects, divorced from the relationships, flows and connections that have led to their constitution. The paper concludes by outlining briefly an alter-modern archaeology that resides in the in-between spaces, rather than on objectified, reified, and thus easily commodified entities.

Keywords Modernity · Capitalism · Commercial archaeology · Sensorial archaeology

Archaeology and the Logic of Capital: Parallel Lives

I start with a quote by Walter Benjamin from his *Arcades Project*, his unfinished magnum opus written between 1927 and 1940, a genealogical exploration of the spaces, the flows and the processes of European modernity, taking nineteenth-century Paris as a case study (Benjamin 2002, p. 415): "There are relations between department

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store and museum, and here the bazaar provides a link. The amassing of artworks in the museum brings them into communication with commodities, which—where they offer themselves en masse to the passerby—awake in him the notion that some part of this should fall to him as well." Objects neatly arranged, often behind glass cases, offering themselves to the passerby, in the bazaar, the department store, the museum. Potential private possessions, commodities, or potential commodities. Almost fetishes, the conditions of their production as modern archaeological entities, and their projection as museum objects, masked and misrecognized. Yet in most cases, museums did and do present at least some information on the archaeological context of these artifacts: we learn that these are eighth- century BCE pots from Athens, or seventh-century CE glyphs from Palenque, for example. But I am talking here about something else: the transformation of multi-temporal material traces into monochronic archaeological objects, and, very often, archaeological commodities. I am talking about the conditions and relationships of labor, the hidden transcripts of exploitation that accompany the genesis and development of professionalized, modernist archaeology in nineteenth-century Europe. It is these knowledges and relationships that are masked and misrecognized in the archaeological commodity fetishism of modern archaeology.

But let's leave Benjamin, and nineteenth-century Paris for a moment, and go to Greece, following the trail of certain archaeological commodities backwards. Enter the English architect and antiquarian, Charles Robert Cockerell, who, in the first decade of the nineteenth century, together with his associates, attempted and finally succeeded in removing sculptures from the classical Temple of Athena Aphaia, on the island of Aegina, in Greece:

> It was not to be expected that we should be allowed to carry away what we had found without opposition. However much people may neglect their own possessions, as soon as they see them coveted by others they begin to value them. The primates of the island came to us in a body and read a statement made by the council of the island in which they begged us to desist from our operations, for that heaven only knew what misfortunes might not fall on the island in general, and the immediate surrounding land in particular, if we continued them. Such a rubbishy pretence of superstitious fear was obviously a mere excuse to extort money, and as we felt that it was only fair that we should pay, we sent our dragoman with them to the village to treat about the sum; and meanwhile a boat which we had ordered from Athens having arrived, we embarked the marbles without delay and sent them off. . . . The marbles being gone, the primates came to be easier to deal with (Cockerell 1903, pp. 53–54).

Read carefully Cockerell's passage and other travelogues from the fifteenth-sixteenth and up to the nineteenth century, and you will come across an indigenous archaeology (cf. Hamilakis 2011; also chapters in Baharni et al. 2011): objects from various times, embedded in the fabric of daily life, interacted with in a fully multi-sensorial manner; these were meaningful fragments encountered when working the land, and gathered and re-installed in houses, mosques, churches. They were thus performing distinctive roles, at times apotropaic, other times healing and miraculous, and others yet as the embodiments of fierce forces. Their pillaging and appropriation by the actors and apparatuses of modernist archaeology, besides everything else, invested them with financial value (as

seen in the passage above), and initiated the process of their commodification. They were eventually relocated in the "appropriate" surroundings of western museums, and their subsequent appreciation, through the lenses of dis-embodied and dis-sensorialised aesthetics, or rather an-aesthetics, offered a refuge from naked commodification; it fostered the comforting illusion that it was their artistic information and beauty value that mattered, above any masked transactions that were required for such disinterested aesthetic admiration and reflection to happen (cf. Hamilakis 2013).

Commodification was also embedded from the start in the process of nationalization of society: national imagination produced not only nation states but also national modernist archaeologies, which, in their turn, guaranteed the continuous reproduction of national imaginings (cf. Díaz-Andreu 2007; Hamilakis 2007). Nationalism was and is a middle class project, and its magic rests on its ability to present itself as being above and beyond class and other divisions, recognizing only the division between the national self and the national other. One of its fundamental contradictions, however, as Partha Chatterjee has shown (1993), is the tension between capital and community, a tension that is also found in national archaeology: the material traces that have been constituted as archaeological objects by modernist archaeology are often worshipped as the sacred icons of the imagined community of the nation, and can even be personified as the ancestors themselves. In many (but not all) national contexts thus, antiquities have been declared the sacred relics that belong to the national community as a whole. Yet, they are at the same time invested in property relations (even if it is national property), and in various transactions, often operating as symbolic capital, hence the tension. That is why any financial or symbolic exchanges are masked and misrecognized as such (cf. Hamilakis 2007).

Moreover, many established institutional structures of modernist archaeology, including most professional organizations the world over, insist on the non-commercial nature of archaeological objects, and often oppose the private circulation of antiquities, especially from recent excavations. It is rare, however, to see an overall and vociferous opposition to the commodification of the past in museums, in the "heritage" sector as a whole, and in various sponsorship deals that archaeologists and museum professionals now forge with major corporations, some with unpalatable and dubious environmental and human rights record. Recent cases include oil corporations funding the British Museum in London, Shell and Visa acting as major sponsors of the excavation of Çatal Hüyük in Turkey (cf. Hamilakis 1999), or the mining corporation Rio Tinto funding conferences and meetings of the World Archaeological Congress (cf. Shepherd and Haber 2011).

My point is simple: before we start analyzing the fairly recent phenomenon of developer-funded archaeology which emerged under neoliberal capitalism, we will need to examine and analyze the genesis of official archaeology as one of the many collateral devices of western capitalist modernity. The logic of capital was embedded in the process of the constitution of modernist archaeology, right from the start.

Commercial Archaeology Today

Commercial archaeology and the commodification of the material past, of course, take different forms today, compared to the nineteenth century, despite some similarities.

Nationalism and neo-colonialism continue to be the dominant imagery in most parts of the world. Neoliberal capitalism may be in the process of dismantling any remaining nationalized structures of material heritage, and imposing the doctrine of the market everywhere (with a few hopeful exceptions such as in some South American contexts), but national and colonial/neocolonial imaginings are still strong and take new forms. The tensions between national community and capital continue to make their impact felt, but the forces of capital have proved that they can market, very profitably, national and colonial ideas and imageries.

Let's examine, for a brief moment, one case of commercial archaeology, the case which represents perhaps the earliest transformation of a mostly publicly funded archaeological operation into a fully commodified and commercialized entity. The commercial archaeology regime in the UK was developed as an outcome of the dominance of Thatcherism, and of neoliberalism in general in British society. Until 1990, rescue archaeology was carried out primarily through public funding, and operated by a combination of state and local authority archaeologists, and many volunteers and local association amateurs, motivated by their love of the archaeological craft (cf. Everill 2007, 2012). A state-funded scheme aimed at reducing unemployment also funneled millions of pounds into rescue archaeology, and provided training and meaningful employment to thousands of people. The scheme was abolished in 1987, leaving a funding gap that had to be covered by developers. In 1990, a new planning policy regime was implemented, postulating that developers should allow for archaeological work to be carried out prior to any development. It operated on the basis of the "polluter pays" principle: in other words, that the company that carries out the project will have to mitigate for any destruction caused, by funding the archaeological work. It is the developer, however, that is the private company, that chooses the archaeological team which carries our any archaeological or rescue work. The choice is based on competitive tendering (known as "bidding" in the US). As a result of this planning policy guidance, a number of private archaeological consultancies were created, to bid for the archaeological work prior to any development. The developer then chooses a company on the basis of cost-effectiveness for them, that is on the basis of expenditure and timing. Archaeological consultancies thus attempt to increase the cost-effectiveness of their bid by reducing costs, and promising to do the work in the shortest time possible. There is a mechanism of inspection, set up by semi-public, semi-private entities, such as English Heritage or the county archaeologists, but their remit and resources are rather limited, and their staff numbers not adequate to inspect the huge amount of archaeological activity in the country. Moreover, bodies such as these, especially English Heritage, are currently in the process of being weakened further, and becoming fully privatized and commercialized entities themselves. In accordance with the philosophy of neoliberalism, it is believed that the market, which acquires here the sentient properties of a wise individual, will regulate itself.

As a result of these developments the number of archaeological consultancies and companies and their employees increased dramatically from the 1990s to roughly 2007, when the decline started, following the crisis in global capitalism, on which more below. Until that moment, the praise of this commercial regime was almost universal, with a few dissident voices. Even today, advocates of this market fundamentalism have

only hymns for what they see as the "golden age" of archaeology, or to use the expression by one of its most passionate supporters, the era of the "gold rush" (Aitchison 2009).

Where do they base such praise? Their major supporting argument is the increase in archaeological activity and the number of people who were and are employed in contract archaeology, under the new regime. In the decade between 1990 and 2000, for example, the number of professional archaeologists employed in the UK (the significant majority of them in the commercial sector) more than doubled, increasing from below 3000 to nearly 7000 (Aitchison and Edwards 2008). These numbers remained at such levels more or less until 2007, when the decline started; in 2012–13, the estimated number stood at 4792 (out of which 60 % worked in the commercial, developer-funded sector), a 30 % decrease since 2007 (Aitchison and Rocks-Macqueen 2013, p. 10).

The initial increase in numbers for the first decade of fully commercialized archaeology, however, was not the outcome of commercialism and of the competitive, neoliberal regime. It is rather the result of the Planning Guidance issued by the government (PPG16) in 1990, postulating that any archaeological or heritage-related traces need to be evaluated and investigated first, prior to any development. This Guidance was issued due to public pressure, and to the outrage that followed the threatened destruction of high profile archaeological finds, especially the traces of Shakespeare's Rose Theatre in London, in 1989. Moreover, as Gnecco and Dias point out in their introduction to this issue, to emphasize the increase in jobs as a positive outcome of commercialization is tautological: the jobs created were essential in order to mitigate the destruction caused by the development; but at the same time, the increase in the number of the available workforce willing to work under the specific employment conditions, perpetuates and promotes further commercial archaeology as a regime. There is no guarantee, of course, that this workforce will continue to be employed, and as we saw above, the decline in the number of jobs, following the 2007–08 economic recession, has been dramatic.

Another supporting argument for commercial archaeology is that it has elevated the standards in archaeological work, a thesis based on the naïve principle that competing companies are prone to "delivering" better "products." What has happened, in fact, is a process of standardization and homogenization, under the rubric of professionalism and professionalization. From the early years of the establishment of commercial archaeology in the UK, critics from within had raised serious concerns (e.g., Chadwick 1997; Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001; Graves-Brown 1997). Here is passage that captures the situation, 7 years after the introduction of the new regime:

> Professional archaeologists now find themselves being employed on very short-term contracts, or even on a weekly basis. Sick pay and leave entitlement are becoming rare, and there has probably been no discernible improvement in pay rates and conditions of service since 1990, whilst wages have fallen ever further behind inflation and other professions…Rather than driving pay up and improving conditions, competitive tendering and the introduction of PPG16 has placed archaeologists in a worse position than they were in 1990. The high turnover of personnel and the emphasis on cost efficiency in many contractual units can lead to excavators being regarded as little more than labourers whose opinions on site

> may be ignored by project managers. Some developers now regard the presence of archaeological deposits in a development area as a contaminant problem which archaeologists can solve by the quick, efficient and (always) cost-effective removal of this stratigraphy….One recent study of archaeological assessment procedures has even gone so far as to use a medical metaphor to describe evaluation methodologies….Does this mean that archaeological deposits should be considered as infected and diseased tissue, ultimately to be "cured" or excised? (Chadwick 1997).

In more recent years, a number of systematic and in-depth studies have demonstrated that these concerns were well founded, and that, in fact, the whole system is detrimental to both archaeological practice and to the public. These recent studies are bottom-up ethnographies, based on long-term engagement with archaeologists working in the commercial sector, not only the managers of units but also the many, often marginalized and disaffected "diggers." They have employed qualitative ethnographic methods such as participant observation and informal interviews, and not simply quantitative statistical data and formal questionnaires, as is often the case with the surveys carried out by employers' organizations and other top-down structures. Two such projects are the one by Paul Everill on the UK case, aptly entitled *The invisible diggers* (Everill 2007, 2012) and that by Nicolas Zorzin on Quebec, Victoria (Australia), and Japan (Zorzin 2011, 2014; see also this volume). The several case studies presented in this issue add to this valuable and extremely important corpus.

These studies, amongst others, have shown that competitive tendering and the urge to lower the bids so as to win contracts, have resulted in rushed, poorly designed and executed projects, and in archaeological knowledge inadequately recorded, despite the heroic efforts of most contract archaeologists. Moreover, cost-cutting strategies have meant that most workers within the sector are poorly paid, with their salaries well below national average; they are also on temporary contracts, and lack any serious career prospects. As private companies and consultancies compete for work all over the country or even abroad, workers have to lead an itinerant lifestyle, away from home for weeks or even months at a time, lodging in cheap B and Bs and motels, joining thus the precariat, which some would describe as the emerging, under neoliberal capitalism, social class (cf. Standing 2011). Aside from the effects on people's lives, this also resulted in the loss of local and regional archaeological expertise, accumulated through the sustained and deep engagement with the material culture of a specific region.

Archaeology carried out as part of this process, in almost all cases, does not include funding for post-excavation analysis and study of the excavated material. The outcome in most cases is a brief technical report, the minimum requirement for the developer to proceed. Local museums are filled up with material that nobody will study, unless a student or an academic takes an interest. The most important archaeological products of this activity are the short, technical reports which will become part of the "grey literature." The only occasions when these technical reports enter the archaeological discussion is when an academic has secured funding to take time and employ assistants to plough through, make sense, and analyze the raw data recorded (cf. Bradley 2006). In the rare occasions when such synthesis is achieved, the results are very useful and informative, but it takes an initiative and funding from outside this developer-operated system for this to happen.

Due to time pressure, the archaeological process has become a technicalized and instrumentalized procedure, a homogenized and streamlined, almost Fordist production, while maintaining at the same time, as far as labor relationships are concerned, key elements of post-fordism, such as precarity and extreme uncertainty, short-termism, and fragmentation. It is revealing that the archaeologists who work on the sector have low self-esteem, and describe themselves with labels such as, archaeological technicians, "diggers," or "shovel monkeys." Their streamlined tasks of digging and form filling in this archaeological production line, and their exclusion from the analysis, study, and publication processes, have lead to a deep sense of alienation from the products of their labor and from archaeological experience overall. In fact, the sense of estrangement and alienation analyzed by Marx as characteristic of all capitalist economic relationships finds its direct, vivid, and extreme expression in contract or developer-funded archaeology (cf. Marx 1977[1059], pp. 61–74). All three forms of alienation outlined by Marx in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* can be found here: alienation from the products and outcomes of one's labor, in this case the synthetic, interpretative knowledge and understanding of archaeological contexts and sites, but also the material traces and features themselves, which in most cases are destroyed or cemented over; alienation from the process of work itself, given the instrumentalization, stream-lining and technicalization of archaeological practice; and the estrangement and alienation from "man's inorganic body" (Marx 1977[1959], p. 67), nature, natural landscapes and features which are radically altered and destroyed in the process of "development", which contract archaeology forms part of. Given this triple estrangement and alienation, archaeologists working within this sector become alienated from their own lives, as life itself "appears only as *a means to life*" (Marx 1977[1059], p. 68) but also from their fellow co-workers and from other human beings in general.

It is no wonder thus that the vast majority of archaeologists working on this sector, abandons contract and commercial archaeology after a few years, and either attempts to go back to the university or, most commonly, leaves archaeology altogether. According to the most recent data from the UK, 24 % of employees stay in the sector for less than a year, 41 % for less than 5 years, and 65 % for less than 10 years. Only 13 % stays for more than 20 years (Aitchison and Rocks-Macqueen 2013), and these are more likely to be in managerial, highly paid positions. Women seem to stay shorter in the sector, whereas ethnic minorities are almost absent (a feature of British archaeology as a whole) (Everill 2012). In the words of Paul Everill (2012), the typical employee of commercial archaeology in the UK today is a c. 38 year-old white male. Contract archaeology thus, the largest sector of archaeological activity, relies on an army of well-qualified (all graduates and many with post-graduate degrees) but poorly paid, undervalued and disaffected, alienated workers; an expendable work force which is used up and then expunged, while the "new blood," fresh out of the universities, is waiting at the gates. Commercial archaeology thus leads to the deskilling of archaeologists and to the loss of, generation after generation, qualified graduates.

At the same time, and as several contributors to this special issue have noted, the commercial sector itself with its power of numbers and monetary capital, exercises immense pressure on archaeology as a whole, including on university teaching. One consequence of this pressure is the transformation of the curriculum into a field skills-based one, providing, in other words, training for the work force to be employed in commercial archaeology. And this, despite the fact that only a small minority of

archaeology students, in the UK at least, wish to work in commercial archaeology or even pursue a professional archaeological career (cf. data and discussion in Hamilakis and Rainbird 2001). This pressure has had some impact in making archaeological curricula more instrumentalized, a set of technical homogenized skills, and the archaeological education as a whole a process of mechanical knowledge transfer, as opposed to an exploratory, critical, reflexive, and life-transforming experience (cf. Cobb and Croucher 2014; Croucher 2010; Hamilakis 2004; Hamilakis and Rainbird 2001; and articles in the on-line journal, *Research in Archaeological Education*). The instrumentalization of archaeology teaching, of course, is the outcome of additional, but related and similar processes, such as the dominance of the neo-liberal paradigm in British academia as a whole, and the commodification and bureaucratization of student-teacher relationships, as a result of various auditing procedures (cf. Shore and Wright 1999; Strathern 2000). These developments mirror in some ways the changes in commercial archaeology, but also the changes in British and other western societies as a whole.

In most, if not all cases, archaeological work within the commercial sector takes place away from the eyes of the public, in fenced off and boarded up locales. There is little public and community involvement thus, either with the process itself or with the reports that come out of it, despite some recent efforts. Moreover, archaeology due to its connotations of preservation and environmental values can operate as the "fig leave," the green pretext, and the environmental alibi for major, destructive and highly contentious projects such as road works and airports.

How is this operation justified, however, as far as the material traces of the past are concerned? The fundamental principles upon which this system is based are the in-situ preservation, and the so-called preservation by record. This last principle pre-dated commercial archaeology, but it was under it that it became a supreme idea. As is well-known however, the in-situ preservation of immobile material traces, at a location of a planned major development, is in most cases difficult or impossible, since the development itself takes priority. The features themselves will be either covered by concrete, never to be seen again, if not completely destroyed in the process, or, in rare occasions, they will be preserved if it is believed by the developer that they would add to the commercial value of their project, by operating as a tourist attraction, for example. In most cases, however, it is "preservation by record" which is the operating principle: this is a euphemism, of course, for the complete destruction of the material traces themselves, to give way for the shopping mall or the airport, with the pre-text that their archaeological recording on paper and on digital form will ensure their preservation.

As noted earlier, these dramatic changes in rescue and field archaeology have been described as a process of professionalization, a concept that has been invoked by many and diverse groups and agents, often with very different, if not opposing meanings. In the early years of the commercial archaeology regime, the term was often meant as a call to employ qualified and formally trained archaeologists, as opposed to amateurs and volunteers. In more recent years, the term has been invoked by low-paid, non-managerial employees to denote the need for fair pay, appropriate to the skills and qualifications of the employees, and proper career prospects, as well as high standards of archaeological recording (cf. Everill 2012). Yet it seems that in the current regime, "professionalization" has rather resulted in a homogenized, streamlined process of training, work and production, stifling innovation and creativity (cf. Lucas 2002).

This "professionalization," however, allows neoliberal capitalism to function, while workers/diggers are constantly shifted around under a regime of the utmost casualization or "flexibility." Moreover, Edward Said (1994) has reminded us that "professionalism" may mean competence, but may also take other, sinister meanings: not only hyper-specialization, but more problematically, reluctance to question the structures and regimes of truth and authority you find yourself embedded in, the hesitation (or even the inability, through contractual, legal or other means) to be an independent and autonomous cultural producer with his and her own voice. In that sense, Said would praise "amateurism" as the embodiment of care, affect and love for one's work, and for the material things, environments and entities we engage with (cf. Shanks and McGuire 1996). It is this amateurism, the one close to its etymological roots, which is actively discouraged in the current commercial archaeology regime.

Yet, time and again it has been shown that, archaeologists who work in this sector put up with such adversities because they love what they do, and because they have developed a camaraderie, based on the physical process of digging (they are the self-proclaimed diggers, after all), and all the harshness that goes with it. This explains the reaction by some of them when criticism is directed towards commercial archaeology, especially when this comes from academics. Some have internalized a false divide between the academic and the commercial sector, a divide that is homologically linked to that between theory and practice, and between mental and manual labor, and they have chosen to embrace the latter. This is a false consciousness that masks the huge inequalities and the exploitation within the sector itself — not all commercial archaeology employees are "on the same boat," and managerial salaries are much higher than a "digger's" salary. Furthermore, academics who are critical of the commercial regime have either themselves spent years working within the sector itself, and they have thus had first hand knowledge and experience of the processes they describe, or they have critiqued and fought the commodification of the university as well, adopting an anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist position. Instead of recognizing this political critique as such, and attempt to establish alliances with academia against neoliberal capitalism, archaeologists in the commercial sector often treat this criticism as factional warfare between academics and "diggers," and chose to close ranks behind their professionalized identity. It is forgotten that academia offers still a temporary breathing space for reflection and analysis, a space itself under attack by the market. Not the secluded space, the mythical ivory tower from which to throw stones at colleagues in the field, but rather another battleground which still —but for how long— provides an element of freedom, and encourages critique, something which is almost impossible within the commercial sector itself.

These observations mostly derive from the case of the UK, perhaps the most commercialized archaeological sector in the world, and one with an extremely weak protection legislation. It is worth emphasizing that the Policy Guidance adopted in 1990 (PPG16), the text which signaled the development of commercial archaeology in the country, was not a heritage-specific document but regulated mostly planning and development processes. Moreover, it was not even a legal act, it had no statutory power. Since 2010, this has been replaced by a series of similar guidance and advisory documents (the latest one, in 2012) along similar lines. The most recent ones attempt to include landscape and other features in the whole process, not just isolated monuments or archaeological sites, but the basic philosophy is the same as before: the main entity is

the "heritage asset," a terminology which is revealing of the mentality of instrumentalism and commodification, mentality that underpins the entire heritage protection discourse and the associated practices.

Yet, there is a general perception, even amongst archaeologists who work within the commercial sector, that the commercial archaeology is in deep crisis (cf. Schlanger and Aitchison 2010; Everill 2012), and more so since 2007–08, the beginning that is of the financial downturn. As note above, this downturn has resulted in a 30 % decrease in archaeology jobs, the vast majority of them in the commercial sector. Nearby Ireland, which in the years of the so-called "Celtic Tiger" had witnessed the number of archaeologists increase from 650 in 2002 to 1700 in 2007, experienced an even more dramatic drop: a 82 % reduction in the number of commercial archaeologists, from July 2008 to January 2009 (see <http://www.bajrfed.co.uk/archive/index.php/t-1702.html>). Anecdotal evidence indicates that in the last year or so, some parts of the UK (London and the South) experience an increase in construction activity, and thus a renewed demand for archaeology positions, but this is unlikely to offset the major decline. Moreover, thousands of qualified and experienced archaeologists may have already left the sector, leading to the further de-skilling of British archaeology.

An interesting outcome of this crisis is the re-opening of the discussion on the alternatives. Everill (2012), for example sees as the only solution for the UK the creation of a national—in the sense of public—archaeology service, funded by a developer's tax. The idea for such a tax has been put forward by both, practitioners of commercial archaeology and academics (Cumberpatch and Blinkhorn 2001; Everill 2012). It advocates the maintenance of the "polluter pays" principle, while the archaeological operation becomes independent from the developers. The tax is not tied to a specific contract but it is used instead to fund archaeological activity in an area, activity that is carried out by an independent entity, an archaeological unit, perhaps operating at a regional level, as part of the local government, or as part of a national archaeological service. In that way, archaeologists maintain their autonomy: they are not chosen by the developers, they are not subjected to their pressure, and are not accountable to them. They are rather accountable to the public, via the public local, regional, or national authority that co-ordinates archaeological work. Regional expertise is maintained, and archaeological units can devise long-term plans, and divert funds to the analysis and study of the archaeological material, as well as open up archaeological work to the public. In the present climate in the country, however, with the neoliberal mentality dominant both in academia and the commercial sector, such ideas find very few supporters, even amongst archaeologists. Moreover, even if these changes were to be implemented, are they going to succeed in breaking the link between (modernist) archaeology and the logic of capital, given the long genealogy of such an association?

Perhaps a quick look at a different case may help us answer that question. Greece is a national context where such a state-operated system is still in place, although it has come under attack recently, and plans to semi-privatize parts of it, especially the major museums, have been initiated. Partly due to the extremely important role of archaeology in the national imagination (cf. Hamilakis 2007), attempts at overt commodification are resisted, despite the fact that covert financial transactions, and explicit symbolic exchanges have taken place since the nineteenth century. Overall, however, and comparatively speaking, Greek archaeology has managed to assert its authority over developers, and prioritize the rescue of the material traces of the past at the expense of

profit. It is compulsory for developers to fund archaeological work, but the choice of the archaeologists, the duration of the project and the kind of work needed, are decided exclusively by the archaeological service. Archaeologists have thus, especially in large infrastructure projects, been able to devote the time needed for the work, and to divert some of the funds to the analysis and study of the material. While "preservation by record" is a principle that, here too, all too often finds an application, in several occasions archaeologists were able to preserve material traces and incorporate them into the completed project, or even divert the route of a road, or a railway line, in order to rescue and preserve antiquities.

For example, in the past couple of years, a battle is raging in Thessaloniki, the second Greek city, between archaeologists and the company that constructs the city's metro system. Upon encountering an amazingly preserved section of the Medieval ("Byzantine") phase of the city, the company proposed to dismantle and transport the unearthed structures elsewhere, threatening to abandon work on the specific station and on the project as a whole, otherwise. It even won the support of many in the Ministry of Culture, including the Central Archaeological Council and sections of the archaeological leadership of the country. The decision was taken to dismantle and reassemble the antiquities elsewhere at a later stage. But associations of archaeologists and others managed to mobilise the city council, and launch a national and international campaign involving specialists and laypersons alike. They have thus succeeded in stopping the dismantling, at least temporarily. A plan for in-situ preservation, and incorporation of the finds into the metro station is increasingly winning support.

Even in this national context, however, the logic of capital manages to assert itself through various means. National archaeology was after all, as with the national project as a whole, a middle-class endeavor, and it was the new forces of capital that embraced it, since the nineteenth century (cf. Díaz-Andreu 2007; Hamilakis and Duke 2007; McGuire and Walker 1999). The commodification of the past is today expressed through the entrance fees to museums and archaeological sites, the special privileges that rich private collectors and their museums enjoy, and the increasing destruction of historic landscapes and sites to make way for "fast-track" tourist and other "developments," a tendency that has accelerated since the onset of the most recent financial crisis. Moreover, the entire archaeological structure relies on a small number of permanently employed and relatively secure staff, which is paid slightly above the current national average (but is currently hard hit), and a vast army of contract employees, who are as alienated from the products of their labor as archaeologists in Britain or Ireland. Here is an extract from a protest speech they circulated at an academic conference in Thessaloniki, on March 21, 2013:

> We are the contract archaeologists with an expiry date, the archaeologists [who excavate] material they never study and analyze, and who never see their names in publications. We are the expendable archaeologists who are fired overnight, together with workmen and guards, so that they can be replaced by others who cost cheaper and who are willing to sign new contracts….We are the young graduates of archaeology who, without a post-graduate degree, have no hope for work. We are the holders of postgraduate titles who do not have a fighting chance for even a 2-month contract. We are the holders of a doctorate who cannot find a job. We are the ones who studied for 10 years, to work only for 60 months. We

> are the not-so-young archaeologists who have to change job. We are your students, and we are angry…. [We should add] that the company that carries out the project for which we currently work, has prohibited the archaeologists who still work there to be present at this conference, and hear the scientific papers on the finds they and their fired colleagues have excavated (Statement of SEKA, Association of Temporary Archaeologists, posted on their Facebook page.)

Pulling the Emergency Break? A Sensorial Archaeology of Flows

It is thus clear that more than cosmetic changes are needed, and more than the implementation of a national archaeology service. So what is to be done? I started this article with a quotation by Walter Benjamin. It is to him I return, as I draw this article to a close, and attempt to offer some thoughts on how we can disentangle archaeology from the logic of capital. The passage that follows is from an essay entitled *Paralipomena to* "*On the concept of history*," and was written in 1940: "Marx says that revolutions are the locomotive of world history. But perhaps it is quite otherwise. Perhaps revolutions are an attempt by the passengers on this train—namely, the human race— to activate the emergency brake" (Benjamin 2003, p. 402). By invoking the powerful metaphor of the passengers in a moving train, a metaphor often used in the political discourse to describe the great march of progress, Benjamin delivers here a blow to the foundations of the modernist metanarrative of development. Not only the mythology of the inevitability of capitalism, but moreover, the inevitability of "development" as a continuous process of the transformation of the earth by humans, mostly achieved through the continuous destruction of natural and anthropogenic landscapes.

The Anthropocene has been recently proposed as the most appropriate term to replace the Holocene as our current geological era. The advocates of this change aim at highlighting the immense and increasingly detrimental impact of humans upon the earth. Others critique the use of the term on the grounds that it arrogantly elevates the role of one species, at the expense of all others (cf. Klingan et al. 2015; for some archaeological explorations of the concept see *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology*, 1(1), 2014). Accepting thus, at least for a moment, the rubric of the Anthropocene for the sake of argument and expediency, Benjamin's statement rings the alarm bells. He asks us to achieve a rupture, and engender a truly transformative and revolutionary event (cf. Zizek 2014), rather than continue being the sleepy passengers on the moving train called "development".

This is particularly apt in the context of the present debate. Our "event" will be nothing less than the re-constitution and reinvention of the field of archaeology, not simply, commercial archaeology, but archaeology overall. Our rupture will be to resist becoming another facet of "development," the archaeological fig leaf that leads to the acceleration of the destruction of the earth. The on-going decolonial processes of genealogical, reflexive and political nature are, of course, important: the exploration of the political economy of modernist archaeology, and the exposure of class inequities, and gender, age, and other hierarchies; the historicization of its constitution as a professional and autonomous discipline within colonial and national imaginings in modernity; the exploration of alternative forms of archaeology, developed prior to

western capitalist modernity, or despite of and in the margins of it, such as the various forms of indigenous archaeologies; the attempt to reform the structure of commercial archaeology today, by implementing measures such as the ones referred to above such as a developer's tax, a state-run but fully public and communal archaeological service, and so on.

All this is good and useful, and perhaps the first, initial step, but not enough. I have argued above that is the foundational logic of modernist archaeology that makes it part of the framework of capital: its fetishization of things, and their constitution as autonomous objects, divorced from the relationships, flows and connections that have led to their constitution; its reliance on a linear conception of time, as a developmental, irreversible process, which has resulted in the usual schemes of cultural evolutionism, the discourses on civilization, progress, and development, and the naturalization of the present status quo; its anthropo-centrism, which has denigrated and undervalued the role of other sentient beings in the co-shaping of history, and has rendered them exploitable resources; above all, however, its elevation of things as primarily objectifiable and quantifiable, commodified entities, which can be circulated, traded and exchanged as embodiments of monetary, national, or aesthetic value, or replaced by and transformed into immaterial informational entities, equally commodifiable, especially in today's world of info-capitalism; in other words, the transformation and metamorphosis of things into equivalences.

A reconstituted, alter-modern archaeology, however, an un-disciplined discipline (to quote Haber 2012), valorizes process, as much as, if not more than outcome, countering thus instrumentalism. This is a process of collaborative, collective engagement with, reworking of, and care for things, environments and landscapes of diverse times. Such an endeavor sees the archaeological process as a mnemonic practice, as a deeply affective experience, which can result not in abstract information, but in various kinds of experiential knowledges, some discursive, other sensorial, tacit and embodied, and thus not easily translatable into words and narratives. This archaeology is not exclusively about the past, nor about the present, but about multiple, simultaneously co-existing times; it is a multi-temporal archaeology; it is the properties of matter and its mnemonic effects that embody duration and temporal simultaneity. Such an archaeology valorizes things as well as environments and landscapes, and does not allow them to be reduced to quantifiable and commodifiable information; it objects thus to the reduction of things, environments and landscapes to a paper or digital record, prior to their obliteration, to make way for the specific "development." It objects to the "preservation by record" as operated within commercial archaeology which is neither rescue, nor archaeology, in the sense of the embodied engagement with the material traces of various pasts. Mnemonic experiences need the concreteness, the physicality, and material and sensorial diversity of things and environments and landscapes in order to be experientially activated. The obliteration of the material traces through the euphemism of the preservation by record, deprives us from these on-going and multi-faceted mnemonic experiences.

At the same time, however, this counter-modern archaeology, while accepting the vibrancy and agentic qualities of matter (cf. Bennett 2010), does not treat things as autonomous, almost fetishistic entities, which can easily slip into the state of commodities. I have argued elsewhere (Hamilakis 2013, 2015), and I want to reiterate here that such an archaeology relies on an ontology not of things, but of sensorial flows and

movements; not of bodies but of corporeal landscapes, of trans-corporeality; not of single actions but of continuous movement and inter-animation. This shift from the body and thing to the sensorial field and the flow, makes the mind/body and the subject/object dichotomies redundant: the sensorial field and the sensorial flows encompass material substances, airwaves, rays of light, gestures and movements, as well as discourses, affects, memories and ideas, which, as far as sensoriality is concerned, are of equal ontological status. It is thus an archaeology that resides in the in-between spaces, rather than on objectified, reified and thus easily commodified entities. This alter-modern, undisciplined archaeology of flows, of affectivity, care, and of the in-between, will be continually resisting the logic of capital.

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