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ALTERNATIVE ARCHAEOLOGIES: NATIONALIST, COLONIALIST, IMPERIALIST

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This article examines similarities and differences in the questions that prehistoric archaeologists ask and the answers that they are predisposed to accept as reasonable in different parts of the world and under changing social conditions. Archaeology is strongly influenced by the position that the countries and regions in which it is practised occupy within the modern world-system. Three basic types of archaeology are defined and examined: Nationalist, Colonialist, and Imperialist. The significance of these types for problems of objectivity in archaeology is examined briefly.

This article evolved from the editing by Ian Glover and myself of two numbers of *World Archaeology* (vol. 13, no. 2; vol. 13, no. 3) that explored 'Regional traditions in archaeological research'. It has long been recognised that there is considerable variation from one country or part of the world to another in the kinds of problems that archaeologists think it worth investigating and in what they are predisposed to regard as acceptable interpretations of evidence. It is widely believed that this variation represents the infancy of the discipline and that in due course what D. L. Clarke (1979:154) called the 'unformulated precepts of limited academic traditions' will be winnowed and consolidated to produce a 'single coherent empirical discipline of archaeology'. It may be questioned whether, in the long run, such 'coherence' would be in the best interests of archaeology or whether variability is a better guarantee of scholarly vitality and adaptability. The problem addressed in this article is rather whether it is remotely possible to achieve such unity. While the accumulation of hard evidence and the development of new techniques for interpreting these data inevitably constrain wild speculation among professionally-responsible archaeologists, it does not appear that national variations in archaeology are disappearing or even significantly diminishing as Clarke's view would imply. Moreover, our examination of variations in national traditions indicated that they were far from random, as would be the case if they were simply the result of historical accidents. Similar orientations were found in diverse parts of the world that were not especially closely connected in terms of archaeological practice or academic interaction (Trigger & Glover 1981). This suggested that something more fundamental than local idiosyncrasies and historical accident was at work and that examining this variation more closely might reveal important factors that influenced the nature of archaeological research.

As a result of these observations, I began to consider what factors might shape

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similarities and differences in the general orientation of archaeology from one country to another. This article presents the conclusions that have been reached so far. I do not claim to be able to explain all the variations of this sort or even to do summary justice to many complex issues that are involved. Doing so would involve considering factors such as differences in the funds and technical resources available to archaeologists in different countries and in the dynamism, charisma, and capacity for innovation among those archaeologists whose research sets the standard for work in various parts of the world. Yet my investigation leads me to believe that there is a close relationship between the nature of archaeological research and the social milieu in which it is practised. More specifically, I would suggest that the nature of archaeological research is shaped to a significant degree by the roles that particular nation states play, economically, politically, and culturally, as interdependent parts of the modern world-system (Wallerstein 1974: 3–11). I do not rule out the possibility that different kinds of archaeology (Palaeolithic, prehistoric, ancient, medieval, industrial) may have different social orientations within the same country, but investigating these differences is beyond the scope of this article. The emphasis is placed primarily on prehistoric and ancient archaeology, which are the two types of most general interest to anthropologists.

It is generally recognised that the development of scientific archaeology corresponds with a specific stage of social development. A systematic antiquarian study of material artefacts as a supplement to written records has been traced back to the Song Dynasty (A.D. 960–1279) in China (Chang 1981: 158–61), to the Italian renaissance in Europe (Daniel 1950: 17–18), and apparently as an independent phenomenon to the Tokugawa period (A.D. 1603–1868) in Japan (Ikawa-Smith 1982: 297–8). A less systematic and perhaps less specifically historical interest in the material remains of the past has been noted for Classical Greek and Roman civilisations and for the later phases of the still earlier Egyptian and Mesopotamian ones (Rouse 1972: 29–30). Yet the notion that the material remains of the past could be a source of information about human history independently of written records had to await the replacement of cyclical and degenerationist views of human development by the widespread intellectual acceptance of an evolutionary perspective (Daniel 1950: 38–56). This occurred within the context of accelerating technological change that characterised the Industrial Revolution in Europe (Toulmin & Goodfield 1966). It was also accompanied by the development of modern nationalism, in which a sense of the solidarity of states became focused less on kings or princes and more on its citizens as a collective group (Wallerstein 1974: 145). At least in western Europe, the leading role in the development of prehistoric archaeology was played by the middle classes, which benefited the most, economically and politically, from the social changes that were being brought about by the Industrial Revolution. It is perhaps significant that, as early as the sixteenth century in northern and western Europe, local antiquarian studies had been a phenomenon of the gentry and middle classes, even if in some areas, such as Scandinavia, they enjoyed royal patronage, by virtue of which they were also to some degree subject to royal control (Daniel 1950: 17–19; Klindt-Jensen 1975: 14–31). In various forms and combinations, nationalism, social evolutionism and the interests of the

middle class have proved to be significant variables in the development of various traditions of archaeological research.

Today archaeologists are employed in most countries or regions of the world. Since 1945, there has been a considerable expansion of archaeological research even in third-world countries where economists might consider it a rather wasteful luxury. The spread of archaeology as a locally-based activity throughout the world appears to correlate with the emergence of nation states within the modern world-system. Yet we are not witnessing parallel developments. Scientific archaeology originated early in the nineteenth century in Scandinavia and diffused from there to Scotland and Switzerland and eventually throughout Europe as a whole (Morlot 1861). Prehistoric archaeology developed in America within the context of an awareness of what was happening in Europe, while Europeans initiated archaeological research in many other parts of the world within colonial or semi-colonial settings; often carrying out the first archaeological investigations and training (as in India) the first generations of local archaeologists. The rapid spread throughout the world of technical innovations in archaeological research, such as radio-carbon dating or flotation, demonstrates the continuing interconnectedness of archaeological investigation on a planetary scale, while the leading role of certain countries in training archaeologists and supplying them to others further reinforces such ties (Murray & White 1981). It is simply not true that local traditions of research reflect the isolation of archaeologists from each other, either in the past or at present.

A final introductory observation is that, while archaeologists generally are caricatured as embodiments of the myopic, the unworldly and the inconsequential, the findings of archaeology have always been sources of public controversy. Many of these controversies have centred around conflicting claims of national priority and superiority. Indeed, Scandinavian antiquarians, such as Ole Wurm and Johan Bure, engaged in such disputes long before the development of scientific archaeology (Klindt-Jensen 1975: 15–16). Other disputes have been about matters of more worldwide interest. Archaeological evidence has played, and continues to play, a major role in the struggle between evolutionists and creationists, which in turn has a host of additional ideological implications (Grayson 1983). It is also looked to for support by those who believe in or deny the literal truth of the Bible or the Book of Mormon. The widespread belief among supporters of Erich von Däniken that professional archaeologists are wilfully concealing evidence of the existence of extraterrestrial benefactors is an extreme example of the bizarre passions that interpretations of archaeological evidence currently arouse. Further evidence of the significance of archaeology is provided by the fact that many totalitarian governments have thought it worthwhile to control the interpretation of archaeological data. A striking example occurred in Japan during the 1930's and early 1940's, when restrictions were placed on prehistoric and protohistoric research that might touch on sacred traditions concerning the origin and early history of the royal family (Ikawa-Smith 1982: 302–4). In some other countries, public beliefs and expectations have been scarcely less constraining. Such examples clearly demonstrate that archaeology operates within a social context. It is reasonable to conclude that if

archaeology is highly relevant to society, society has played an important role in shaping archaeology.

I will now attempt to distinguish three different social contexts, each of which produces a distinctive type of archaeology. I will label these contexts and the archaeology associated with them nationalist, colonialist, and imperialist or world-oriented. These formulations capture only certain broad features of very complex situations. As ideal types, they also fail to express the varying intensity with which the characteristics of each type are realised in specific cases.

Nationalist archaeology

Most archaeological traditions are probably nationalistic in orientation. The development of European prehistoric archaeology was greatly encouraged by the post-Napoleonic upsurge of nationalism and romanticism. Some of this archaeological activity was directed towards strengthening patriotic sentiments and in these cases it often received substantial government patronage. For example, Napoleon III ordered the excavation of the fortresses at Mont Auxois and Mont Réa, which illustrated Celtic life in France at the time of the Roman conquest (Daniel 1950: 110). In eastern Europe, representatives of suppressed nationalities, such as the Czechs, turned to archaeology as a means of glorifying their national past and encouraging resistance to Habsburg, Russian and Turkish domination (Sklenar 1981; 1983). After the 1880's, as class conflicts became more pronounced in western Europe, archaeology and history also were used to glorify the national past in an effort to encourage a spirit of unity and cooperation within industrialised states. In so far as it was concerned with Europe, prehistoric archaeology was regarded as a historical discipline.

Denmark provides a precocious example of the development of prehistoric archaeology in Europe. Danish national pride had suffered badly during the Napoleonic period and was to receive further blows from the Germans in the course of the nineteenth century. It is not surprising that the Danes (at first largely upper-middle class functionaries but later, as they grew more powerful, the lower-middle class [Kristiansen 1981]) turned to history and archaeology to find consolation in thoughts of their past national greatness. In particular, they took pride in the fact that Denmark, unlike its southern neighbours, had not been conquered by the Romans. They were also powerfully attracted to the Viking period. Scandinavian archaeologists attempted to reconstruct what life had been like in the past and to that degree their research projected a nationalistic interest in folklore into prehistoric times. Throughout southern Scandinavia, it was assumed that ethnic continuity extended back into the prehistoric period, so that Iron Age, and possibly Bronze Age and Neolithic archaeology as well, were studying the ancestors of the modern Scandinavian peoples. Moberg (1981) has noted the continuing fascination with the Viking period and the disproportionate time and resources that are still devoted to its study.

In modern Israel, archaeology plays an important role in affirming the links between an intrusive population and its own ancient past and by doing so asserts the right of that population to the land. In particular, Masada, the site of the last

Zealot resistance to the Romans in A.D. 73, has become a monument possessing great symbolic value for the Israeli people. Its excavation was one of the most massive archaeological projects undertaken by Israeli archaeologists. For the most part, Israeli archaeologists are trained in historical and biblical research and devote much time to studying history, philology, and art history. Palaeolithic archaeology is much less important and the impact of anthropological archaeology has generally been limited to encouraging the use of technical aids in the analysis of data (Bar-Yosef & Mazar 1982).

In some countries, where the emphasis of archaeology is on the historical period, the situation is more ambiguous. In particular, Egypt and Iran tend to emphasise the glories of pre-Islamic times in periods when nationalistic and relatively secular politics prevail, but de-emphasise them in favour of the Islamic period when political movements favour a pan-Islamic or (in the case of Egypt) a pan-Arab orientation (J. A. Wilson 1964). During the latter periods, attitudes towards the pre-Islamic period can vary from lack of interest to hostility. In recent years, such shifts have been dramatically displayed with respect to the monuments of Achaemenid Persia.

In Mexico, since the Revolution of 1910, it has been official policy to encourage archaeologists to increase knowledge and public awareness of the pre-Hispanic civilisations of that country. This is done to promote national unity by glorifying Mexico's past and honouring the achievements of the native people who constitute a large part of the population. It is also intended to assert Mexico's cultural distinctiveness to the rest of the world. An important part of this policy is the development of major archaeological sites as open air museums for the entertainment and instruction of Mexicans and tourists alike (Lorenzo 1981; Bernal 1980: 160–89). To some degree, however, this policy of integrating Indian peasants into Mexican life by dignifying their past seems to have become a substitute for the far-reaching economic and social reforms that were promised by the revolution.

Despite China's size and potential political importance, its archaeology has been of the nationalistic variety. It remains so today even though the discipline's very right to exist was attacked during the cultural revolution. During that period, the view that the study of the past was itself reactionary led to the disruption of archaeological excavations and publications and to attacks on some archaeological sites. Today archaeology is extensively encouraged as a means of cultivating national dignity and confidence, though at least lip service is paid to a socialist ideology by interpreting the past in terms of a Marxist perspective and by lauding its cultural achievements as testimonials to the skills of worker-artisans in ancient times. Significantly, the interpretation of the archaeological record remains in accord with the northern-centred views of traditional Chinese historiography and centrist politics (Chang 1981; Watson 1981). The importance of southern China as an area of independent cultural development has been recognised only in recent years by some Western archaeologists and by Vietnamese archaeologists who reject the view that northern China was the only significant centre of cultural development in east Asia. The latter see in the archaeological record of southeast Asia evidence of a 'deep and solid basis' for Vietnamese culture which, despite heavy pressure,

'refused to be submerged by Chinese culture while many other cultures . . . were subjugated and annihilated' (Van Trong 1979: 6).

Although Germany had imperialist ambitions, its archaeology also never transcended the limits of a nationalistic tradition. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, patriotic German archaeologists sought to project far back into prehistoric times the ethnic continuity that historians emphasised had characterised their homeland throughout the historic period. Gustaf Kossinna (1911; 1912) sought to demonstrate archaeologically that Germany was the homeland of the Indoeuropean peoples and the centre of cultural creativity in prehistoric times. While the other Indoeuropean-speaking peoples had moved off and interbred with allegedly inferior races, the Germans alone had preserved their racial purity and hence their full powers of creativity (Klejn 1974). While such views were a powerful stimulus to nationalism and were enthusiastically endorsed by prominent Nazi leaders, they failed because of their parochial nature to attract major support among archaeologists elsewhere.

The primary function of nationalistic archaeology, like nationalistic history of which it is normally regarded as an extension, is to bolster the pride and morale of nations or ethnic groups. It is probably strongest amongst peoples who feel politically threatened, insecure or deprived of their collective rights by more powerful nations or in countries where appeals for national unity are being made to counteract serious divisions along class lines. Nationalistic archaeology tends to emphasise the more recent past rather than the Palaeolithic period and, in particular, to draw attention to the political and cultural achievements of ancient civilisations or other forms of complex societies. There is also, as Daniel Wilson (1876, 1: 247) noted long ago, a tendency to glorify the 'primitive vigour' and creativeness of peoples assumed to be national ancestors.

Colonialist archaeology

By colonialist archaeology I mean that which developed either in countries whose native population was wholly replaced or overwhelmed by European settlement or in ones where Europeans remained politically and economically dominant for a considerable period of time. In these countries, archaeology was practised by a colonising population that had no historical ties with the peoples whose past they were studying. While the colonisers had every reason to glorify their own past, they had no reason to extol the past of the peoples they were subjugating and supplanting. Indeed, they sought by emphasising the primitiveness and lack of accomplishments of these peoples to justify their own poor treatment of them. While history and the specialised social sciences, such as economics and political science, studied the accomplishments and behaviour of white people in Europe and around the world, the study of colonised peoples, past and present, became the domain of anthropology. Modern native peoples were seen as comparable only to the earliest and most primitive phases of European development and as differentiated from Europeans by possessing no record of change and development and hence no history.

The oldest and most complex example of colonialist archaeology was that which developed in the United States. Long before the beginnings of significant

antiquarian research in the late eighteenth century, native people were regarded as being inherently unprogressive and incapable of adopting a civilised pattern of life (Vaughan 1982). Hence, from the start, archaeologists assumed that their work would reveal little evidence of change or development in prehistoric times. Past and present were not seen as qualitatively distinct and much effort was expended using local ethnographic knowledge to interpret the archaeological finds for a particular region (Meltzer 1983: 38–40). When cultures that were strikingly different from those known in historical times and seemingly much more elaborate were discovered in the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys beginning in the late eighteenth century, it was fashionable to assign these to a lost race of Moundbuilders who were distinct from the North American Indians and had been either destroyed by the latter or driven out of North America by them (Silverberg 1968). Archaeology thus identified the Indians not only as being unprogressive but also as having wilfully destroyed a civilisation; which made their own destruction seem all the more justifiable. Where cultural change was obvious in the archaeological record, it was assumed to reflect not internal development but one static tribe replacing another as a result of warfare or the aimless wanderings of peoples on a large and thinly populated continent. In the absence of satisfactory chronological data, it was widely accepted that elaborate artefacts had been made by the Indians only after they had obtained the metal tools and inspiration necessary for doing so from white intruders. Finally, while some archaeologists sought to discover a North American equivalent for the Palaeolithic period, convincing evidence was not forthcoming until the 1920's; in part as the result of a general reluctance to believe that native people had been established in North America that long (Meltzer 1983).

After 1910, American archaeology became chronologically-orientated and it also became obvious that internal changes had taken place within native cultures. Yet, until the 1960's, these changes generally were attributed to cultural diffusion. Moreover, all the major innovations that loomed large in the archaeological record, such as pottery, agriculture, and burial mounds, were habitually traced to a point of origin outside of North America, either in Mesoamerica or in eastern Siberia. This suggested that, while North American Indians were flexible enough to adopt innovations coming to them from abroad, they were not capable of innovating on their own. Throughout what has been called the culture-historical period (1910–1960), major changes continued to be attributed to diffusion and migration (Willey & Sabloff 1980: 109–21; Trigger 1981).

Archaeology began later and, until recently, was practised on a much smaller scale in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand than it was in the United States. Canadian anthropologists argued that because of the limited funds that were available for research, it was more important to record the vanishing customs of living Indian peoples than to excavate their prehistoric remains, which it was wrongly thought would survive in the ground for centuries (Jenness 1932: 71). Yet the history of archaeology in these countries has much in common with that of American archaeology. In Australia, the image of the 'unchanging Aborigine' (fostered by social anthropologists, by the evolutionist belief that hunter-gatherers possessed the simplest of human life-styles, and by an apparent lack of

evidence for a high antiquity of human occupation) discouraged the archaeological study of changes in cultural patterns and ecological adaptations. W. B. Spencer interpreted all differences in the form and function of Australian tools as synchronic responses to raw materials and local conditions and it was thought that a harsh environment rendered the stratigraphic interpretation of deeply buried materials hazardous. The building of chronologies and a more dynamic view of Australian prehistory had to await the 1960's (Mulvaney 1981; Murray & White 1981).

Prior to 1950, such archaeological work as was done in New Zealand tended to be focused on whether or not the prehistoric 'Moa-hunters' were related to the historic Maori. It was generally assumed that everything else that needed to be known about the Maori could be learned from ethnology and oral traditions. Although oral traditions conveyed an awareness of historical events, New Zealand archaeologists did not develop an accompanying sense of change in material culture that would have stimulated the archaeological investigation of Maori (i.e., post-Moa-hunter) prehistory. Culture change was attributed almost entirely to migration (Gathercole 1981).

During the colonial period, archaeologists and ethnologists regarded the so-called tribal cultures of sub-Saharan Africa as a living but largely static museum of the past (Clark 1969: 181). They also tended to underestimate the technological, cultural and political achievements of African peoples past and present and to attribute such accomplishments as were recognised to diffusion from the north. The role that was assigned to prehistoric Hamitic peoples in transmitting to sub-Saharan Africa a smattering of more advanced traits that were assumed to be ultimately of Near Eastern origin bore a striking resemblance to the civilising missions that European colonists were claiming for themselves (MacGaffey 1966). There was also a tendency for European archaeologists to devote a larger share of attention to Palaeolithic archaeology than to studying the Iron Age. While there 'were few incentives to study cultures that were considered to be "native" or "recent"' (Fagan 1981: 49), Palaeolithic ones were valued because they seemed to be ancestral to European societies no less than to African ones. Later phases of African history were generally regarded as ones of stagnation that were of little general interest (Posnansky 1982).

The most spectacular example of the colonialist mentality operative in African archaeology is provided by the controversies surrounding the Zimbabwe ruins. Early white investigators of these monuments, beginning in 1868, saw them as proof of ancient white settlement in southern Africa, by Sabaeans or Phoenicians. Cecil Rhodes appreciated the propaganda value of such speculations. When, in 1904, the archaeologist D. Randall-MacIver dated these ruins to the second millennium A.D., he so angered local whites that it was almost twenty-five years before serious archaeological research was again carried out there. Although Gertrude Caton-Thompson confirmed Randall-MacIver's work and the Bantu origins of Zimbabwe in 1930, amateur archaeologists kept alive the notion that Zimbabwe was the work of foreign invaders, merchants, or metalworkers. For white settlers, such claims served to deprecate African talents and past accomplishments and to justify their own control of the country.

Extraordinarily, in 1971, P. S. Garlake was forced to resign as a Rhodesian Inspector of Monuments because he was unwilling to interpret Zimbabwe to the satisfaction of the white settler government of the day (Fagan 1981: 45–6; Posnansky 1982: 347).

In post-colonial Africa there has been a considerable re-orientation of archaeology. As Posnansky (1982: 355) points out, African archaeologists are not necessarily interested in the same problems as are foreign scholars. They tend to be concerned more with recent prehistory than Palaeolithic archaeology and with problems that relate to their national history. These include the origin of states, the early development of trade, the evolution of historically-attested social and economic institutions, and relations among ethnic groups that live within the boundaries of modern African states. There is also an interest in the excavation of famous sites and monuments that relate to the national past. At the same time, anthropology is not well regarded and archaeological research is being increasingly aligned with history, just as ethnological studies are being redefined as sociology (Ki-Zerbo 1981). In our terms, the archaeology of post-colonial Africa is being transformed from a colonialist into a nationalist type.

Colonialist archaeology, wherever practised, served to denigrate native societies and peoples by trying to demonstrate that they had been static in prehistoric times and lacked the initiative to develop on their own. Such archaeology was closely aligned with ethnology, which in the opinion of the general public also documented the primitive condition of modern native cultures. This primitiveness was seen as justifying European colonists assuming control over such people or supplanting them. In Africa and elsewhere where native peoples have regained control of their own lands, archaeology is now severing its connexions with anthropology and is being transformed into a branch of history. The situation for archaeology in countries where native peoples have been largely or wholly supplanted by European colonists is considerably more complex and involves new ways of either symbolically coopting or continuing to ignore native people in changing social conditions.

Imperialist archaeology

Imperialist or world-orientated archaeology is associated with a small number of states that enjoy or have exerted political dominance over large areas of the world. As one aspect of this hegemony, such nations exert powerful cultural, as well as political and economic, influence over their neighbours. The archaeologists in two of the three cases we will be examining engage in much research in other countries, and play a major role in training students who find employment abroad (this is also true of some nonhegemonous countries). Through their writings, archaeologists in these countries also exert a disproportionate influence on research throughout the world.

The first imperialist archaeology developed in the United Kingdom. Scientific archaeology was introduced there from Scandinavia in the 1850's, at a time when the British middle class were fascinated by technological progress. Britain had become the 'workshop of the world' and industrialisation promoted by

individual enterprise had greatly strengthened the middle class both economically and politically. By offering evidence that such progress was the continuation of what had been going on more slowly throughout human history, prehistoric archaeology bolstered the confidence of the British middle class and strengthened their pride in the leading role that Britain was playing in this process (Trigger 1981: 141–2). With the development of Palaeolithic archaeology, beginning in 1859, archaeology became more than ever the science of progress in prehistoric times. It is no accident that British archaeologists and geologists played the leading role in winning scientific recognition for this new field (Grayson 1983). The populariser John Lubbock, whose book *Pre-historic times*, went through seven editions between 1865 and 1913, assured his readers that progress was inevitable and benefited every facet of human life. He asserted that, as a result of technological progress, future generations of humanity would be wiser, healthier, happier, and more moral than are present ones (1913: 594). Yet in order to counteract anti-evolutionary arguments, he adopted a position that was similar to, and reinforced, that of colonialist archaeology. He believed that technologically less evolved peoples were also intellectually and emotionally less advanced than were civilised ones, to the extent that the most primitive groups could never catch up with more advanced ones and because of this were doomed to extinction as a result of the spread of civilisation. The study of prehistory was seen as proving that, among European peoples, culture had evolved rapidly, while elsewhere it had either developed more slowly or remained static. Through this version of cultural evolution, prehistoric archaeology was linked to a doctrine of European pre-eminence. Lubbock's formulation, which was not conceived in a narrowly chauvinistic fashion, but rather sought to explain the expanding world-system that was dominated by western Europe with Britain at its head, had appeal far beyond Britain itself and served to integrate much archaeological interpretation. Above all, it was echoed in the unilinear evolutionary views of Gabriel de Mortillet in France and provided a broader perspective and greater intellectual respectability for colonialist archaeology, especially in the United States.

By the 1880's, growing economic competition abroad, the proliferation of slums and discontent among the lower classes, and the incipient challenge of working-class political movements caused many middle-class intellectuals in Britain and elsewhere in Europe to have grave doubts about the inevitability of technological progress or its beneficial effects (Trevelyan 1949, 4: 119). British archaeologists grew increasingly uncertain about the creativity even of Europeans, doubted that there was a fixed order to history and explained cultural variation to an ever greater degree in terms of biological differences. All this encouraged increasing belief in diffusion as a mechanism of change.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, British archaeologists accepted the view of the Swedish archaeologist Oscar Montelius that the prehistoric development of Europe had been stimulated by the diffusion of culture from the Near East. Their reactions to this view were deeply influenced by the understanding of more recent British history, when successive waves of invaders and settlers were portrayed as having brought fresh ideas to Britain which in the long run accounted for British pre-eminence in world affairs. They did not, as

Kossinna had done for Germany, attribute national greatness to their ethnic and cultural purity (Rouse 1972: 72). The achievements of ancient Near Eastern civilisations were appropriated for western Europe by claiming that western Europeans rather than the people who lived in the Near East today were their true spiritual heirs. British archaeologists also stressed that Britain was located where several streams of cultural influence from the Near East had converged; hence Britain, and especially England, had been able to develop more rapidly than its neighbours (Myres 1911; Childe 1925). Thus, despite growing pessimism about human creativity, they continued to stress the capacity of Europeans, and especially of the British, to use innovations creatively. One is tempted to see these developments as evidence of a shift towards a more nationalistic archaeology and this in turn as a reflection of the growing insecurity of the British middle class.

The second archaeology with a world mission was created by government decree in the Soviet Union beginning in 1929. Prior to that time, many Russian archaeologists had continued the nationalistic approach of the Czarist period. While stressing the spectacular achievements of the inhabitants of Russia in prehistoric times, they hoped that because they studied material culture their work would satisfy the new political order. In 1929, existing theories and methods were subjected to severe criticism and pronounced to be unacceptable. Archaeologists were called upon to explain change not simplistically in terms of technological development, as the disciples of Montelius had done, but within the context of social organisation. They were required not only to describe archaeological remains but also to reconstruct the society that had produced them. This involved defining its mode of production and determining as much as possible about its technology, social organisation, and ideological conceptions. Changes were to be seen as coming about as a result of the development of contradictions within societies between different social classes and ultimately between the forces and relations of production (Miller 1956: 79).

Yet Marxist archaeologists had to labour under some severe ideological constraints. A belief in psychic unity was reasserted and with it a unilinear scheme of socio-economic formations or stages of development that was loosely derived from Friedrich Engels's *The origin of the family, private property and the state*. No criticism of this scheme was possible. Under the influence of Nicholai Marr, a linguist turned prehistorian, all discussion of diffusion and migration was suppressed in favour of the belief that each ethnic group had evolved spontaneously in its historical homeland from earliest times to the present. Finally, too much concern with typology and chronological detail was likely to be viewed as evidence of lingering anti-Soviet attitudes (Bulkin *et al.* 1982: 274–6).

Soviet archaeology presented a world scheme which, while not denying creative powers to any ethnic group, implied that the Soviet Union represented the direction in which all other societies were evolving, thus giving it preeminence in a world-historical sense. Despite the limitations under which it laboured, early Soviet archaeology was innovative in many ways. By directing the attention of archaeologists to studying how ordinary people had lived in prehistoric times, it pioneered the careful excavation of settlements, campsites

and workshops. Archaeologists were also encouraged to try to explain cultural change internally in terms of the development of social systems, rather than to attribute it to diffusion and migration. In addition, an interest in the processes of labour encouraged the development of use-wear analysis.

In the period prior to and following the second world war, the external threat to the Soviet Union produced a strong emphasis in archaeology on tracing the origins of the various national groups that made up the Soviet federal state and in particular on lauding the prehistoric achievements of the Slavic peoples. This attempt to counteract German archaeologically-based propaganda had much in common with the nationalistic archaeologies of central Europe (Miller 1956: 107–56; Klejn 1977: 13–14). In the post-Stalin era, Soviet archaeology has reacquired a more distinctively Marxist orientation but Soviet archaeologists have rejected the excesses of the 1930's. Unilinear views of cultural evolution have been muted, diffusion and migration are accepted as historical realities and there is increasing emphasis on the formal analyses of archaeological data and on ecology. Soviet archaeologists see these developments as making archaeological findings even more useful for a Marxist analysis of history (Bulkin *et al.* 1982).

Soviet archaeology counts as a world archaeology not only because it has influenced archaeological practice in countries allied to the Soviet Union but also because it offers a view of the significance of archaeological data that, both directly and through the works of western archaeologists such as A. M. Tallgren and V. Gordon Childe, has influenced archaeological research far beyond the Soviet sphere of political control.

American archaeology remained colonialist in orientation until the advent of the New Archaeology in the early 1960's. By stressing internal change and adaptation, the New Archaeology eliminated the previous tendency of American archaeology to stigmatise native peoples by failing to recognise their creativity. Yet the New Archaeology took no more serious account of native peoples than earlier versions of American archaeology had done. The goal of the New Archaeology was not to understand prehistory but to use archaeological data to establish universal generalisations about human behaviour that would be of practical value in modern society (Martin & Plog 1973: 364–8). That it studied data produced by native peoples was a matter of only incidental concern. The New Archaeology's emphasis on generalisations in part reflects the low prestige accorded to historical studies by American social scientists. It may also reflect a general tendency in American society to prefer knowledge that has specifically utilitarian applications (Gardin 1980: 178).

In a more general sense, however, the New Archaeology can be seen as the archaeological expression of post-War American imperialism. Its emphasis on nomothetic generalisations implies not simply that the study of native American prehistory as an end in itself is trivial but also that this is true of the investigation of any national tradition. By denying the validity of studying the prehistory of specific parts of the world, the New Archaeology asserts the unimportance of national traditions themselves and of anything that stands in the way of American economic activity and political influence. Of the three imperialist archaeologies we have examined, the American is the only one that is also explicitly anti-national. Lest this seem too strong a claim, one may point to the

aggressive American promotion after the second world war of abstract expressionist art as the dominant international style, apparently with financial support from the American government as well as from private foundations. As a result of this activity, many national or regional artistic traditions were suppressed or trivialised (Fuller 1980: 114–15; Lord 1974: 198–214).

The impact of the New Archaeology throughout the western world and in particular in Britain has been very considerable. In recent British symposia, it has become fashionable to invite leading American exponents of the New Archaeology to pass judgement on the proceedings; which usually involves their pointing out to what degree British archaeologists, despite their good intentions, have failed to live up to the exacting standards of the new 'international archaeology' (Renfrew & Shennan 1982; Hodder 1982). Yet, in Britain and the rest of Europe, the New Archaeology has not succeeded in dissolving the sense of an important relationship between past and present and hence of a historical perspective as a significant part of archaeology.

Within American archaeology, interesting developments have taken place in the 1970's. The New Archaeology was primarily a technical innovation concerned with what archaeologists should do and how they should do it. Its view of humanity in relationship to a broader context was provided at first by neo-evolutionism; an anthropological paradigm that expressed an optimistic view of technological progress, well suited for a period of economic prosperity and unchallenged political power. During the 1970's, however, this view gave way to a pessimistic and even tragic version of cultural evolution that sees population growth and other factors constraining cultural change to take place along lines that most people do not regard as desirable. The development of food production and urbanism, which previous generations of archaeologists interpreted as desirable products of humanity's ability to solve problems and make life easier and more fulfilling, is now widely viewed as a response to forces that are beyond human control and which throughout history have compelled the majority of people to work harder, suffer increasing exploitation and degrade their environment. In place of the belief that most important changes took place in a slow and gradual fashion, catastrophic reversals are now seen as common occurrences. Humanity is imagined to be the victim of forces that lie beyond its understanding or control. There is more than a hint in this eschatological materialism that the future is likely to be far worse than the present and that humanity is moving from a primitive Eden, filled with hunter-gatherers, to an atomic hell (Trigger 1981: 149–51).

This cataclysmic evolutionism is all too clearly a reflection of the growing insecurity of middle-class Americans, who have been troubled since the late 1960's by deepening economic crises and the increasing ineffectiveness of American foreign policy. More specifically it has been influenced by the key expressions of this anxiety: fear of catastrophic environmental pollution, fear of unchecked population growth and fear of the depletion of non-renewable resources. It is significant, however, that American archaeologists, and the American public, do not treat these problems as national ones that they can debate and solve politically. Rather they situate them within a universal context. Hence cataclysmic archaeology has become part of the imperialistic formulation

of American anthropology, with a willing audience amongst the insecure middle classes of other western nations. This surely reflects the strength of America's conception of its international mission, even in the midst of a serious internal crisis.

Conclusion

The classification I have proposed is not without its problems. Israeli archaeology might be classified as being of the colonialist type, were it not that Israelis claim substantial historical roots in the land they are occupying. Mexican archaeology might also be thought of as an example of colonialist archaeology, as archaeology clearly is in many other Latin American countries. Yet this view does not accurately take account of the complex political and social realities of modern Mexico. German archaeology of the Kossinna school had some of the characteristics of an imperialistic archaeology and these features would undoubtedly have become more pronounced had National Socialism been militarily successful. Yet this archaeology was nationally too specific and its treatment of the evidence too obviously biased to command respect abroad. It is also clear that nationalistic themes have been strong at certain points in both British and Soviet archaeology. These characteristics tend to blur the distinction between different types of archaeology and serve to remind us that we are dealing with ideal types. On the other hand, the rapid transition of American archaeology from a colonialist to an imperialist type or of African archaeology from a colonialist to a nationalist one do not pose problems. Instead, they show the utility of these concepts.

There are also clearly unanswered problems. Why has a country as nationalistic and proud of its past and possessing such important sites as the Republic of Ireland shown relatively little interest in its prehistoric archaeology (Clark 1957: 256–7)? Why does archaeology in India, in spite of its impressive development, continue to appear so foreign to India and so attached to its European origins (Chakrabarti 1982)? In both cases, religion may provide part of the answer. The present model requires many kinds of elaboration and clarification. Nevertheless the regularities that have been noted provide evidence that archaeology does not function independently of the societies in which it is practised. The questions that are asked and the answers that appear reasonable reflect the position that societies occupy within the modern world-system and change as the positions of countries alter within that system. It does not appear likely that the present diversity of views represents merely the immaturity of archaeology or that in the future an objective and value-free archaeology is likely to develop. Instead the past will continue to be studied because it is seen to have value for the present; the nature of that value being highly variable.

This does not mean that archaeologists should abandon the search for objectivity. The findings of archaeology can only have lasting social value if they approximate as closely as possible to an objective understanding of human behaviour. But such understanding requires not only paying scrupulous attention to archaeological and other relevant sources of information but also a deeper awareness of why archaeologists ask the questions and seek the kinds of

knowledge that they do. This in turn necessitates investigating the behaviour of archaeologists not simply as individuals but as researchers working within the context of social and political groups. Understanding of this sort at the level of the world system is both a point of departure and the ultimate synthesis of such research.

NOTES

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