PART VI. CONCLUSION

12. Panorama revisited

1. SUMMARY

In the first part of this chapter I wish to sum up in brief what has been exposed in this volume.

I evaluate theory as an important component of archaeology, and the locus where real scientific revolutions take place. I argue that theoreticians are a distinct specialisation in archaeology and that they need to receive the relevant training from an early stage. My definition of theoretical archaeology is not particularly broad for it does not include all methods and all ideas, but neither is it very narrow as if it were a special logical scheme. Within this notion I embrace all philosophical, methodological, logical, theoretical and in part historical problems that concern the whole of archaeology. I also make a distinction between theoretical archaeology and archaeological theory. As to the structure of theoretical archaeology I divide it into three parts: metaarchaeological, endoarchaeogical and paraarchaeological.

In defining what the subject matter of archaeology is, I had to choose from three main points: (1) Antiquities exclusively as the subject matter. If so then archaeology is merely an auxiliary discipline of history. (2) Past historical events and processes as the subject matter, which would make archaeology a kind of or a part of history. (3) Both of the fields, but raising the question whether it is one integral discipline? To me the archaeological subject matter includes material antiquities *per se*, their links and relationships in the system of culture (presumably material culture) and the regulations and causal mechanisms in the basis of all these links and relationships. Yet not causal explanations of the historical events and processes – they are the business of history, while archaeology is a source-studying discipline.

The important task of a theorist in my opinion is to define the specificity of archaeological sources since the validity of separating archaeology into a special discipline reposes on it. I hold that the specificity of material antiquities as archaeological sources consists of a double break between them and the past historical reality, breaks which must be restored by the archaeologist. The two breaks are 1) the break in the coding of information (between "the language of things" and ordinary language) and, 2) the break in tradition (antiquities are things which have no links with or in living culture). All other kinds of sources have one of these breaks but only archaeological ones have both.

As concerns the methodological nature of the discipline, archaeology as a source-studying discipline is neither pure science nor a humanity, but an applied science, although it is in working contact with the humanities. Like history it has a task to restore historical process and also like history it cannot reconstruct it in particular details. Yet for history this means that the realisation of the task is impossible without the help of the imagination, and so every historian makes his own narration, paint his own picture. Archaeology reconstructs only typical features and structures, but reconstructs them in full, reconstructs the cultural process with exact methods, yet of course not with such completeness as history, not to such level of particular realisation.

Like Clarke, one of my intentions was to axiomatise archaeology, if not to make it into an analytical machine. Yet having this in mind I soon discovered that the set of principles at the basis of the whole discipline was split in two parts, each consisting of six principles, with both sub-sets opposing each other, and both valid in archaeology! Each principle has its counter-principle, which is valid too. So contradictions are inherent in the discipline, hidden in its very basis.

On turning my attention to archaeological theory I first tried to define what empiricism in archaeology is, what its main hallmarks are. Then I listed the existing definitions of archaeological theory (the systematisation of facts, the ordered totality of concepts, a set of methods, an imposition of philosophical

theory onto archaeological material etc.) and suggested my own definition; a program for the processing of archaeological information, a program which is based on some fundamental explanative idea. By transforming the mechanism of the processing into a stereotype, theory evolves to become a method. Components of theory build a set of oppositions where 'theory' is an intermediate chain. For instance, object – theory – metatheory, or, empirical data – theory – idea, and so on.

The structure of archaeological theory in its dynamics, the way it functions, is rather complex. It is based both on the theoretical and the empirical basis, yet they serve only in the testing of theory, as hypothesis. The main path of information processing does not stem from these two premises but from the fundamental explanatory idea that is created in the conscience of a researcher, and created not by deduction or induction, but by abduction. Then a system of laws is derived from it, and using the language of theory, they feed into an operational apparatus and into a mathematical apparatus of theory. The result is then confronted with the facts and old theories etc., and finally is transformed into confirmed knowledge and a new method.

The functions of theory are a rare subject of theoretical consideration. Yet it deserves some attention since many functions are usually ignored or wrongly understood. So the explanative function in archaeology, the one commonly considered most important, is more connected with interpretation than with explanation. The predictive function is closer to the reconstructive one, for what is prediction when speaking of the past?

The problem of fact has been tackled to a greater extent in history than in archaeology. Philosophers and historians discovered the deep structure of scientific fact. In archaeology fact also has a deep structure – it is structured according to the levels that information passes through going from the past through archaeological records to the researcher's mind. I have listed 14 levels with filters between them, information being changed in each, distorted and losing some elements, with new additions occurring too. The cognition that operates means reconversion of this information occurs.

The general research design – the research model,

research procedure, algorithm of the investigation – depends crucially on the understanding of this problem. It concerns the realisation of the multistage reconversion of information and the depth of archaeological fact. However, this is the nature of the general research design. There are three competing alternative models of research design: inductive, deductive and problem-oriented, all reliable in archaeology. All three can be reduced to the general research design.

2. VIEWS IN A WIDER CONTEXT

My theoretical views have formed over a long period, the main points chiefly in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by some expansion and restructuring later. I did not aim for sensational innovations, my intention was to obtain sound and systemic theory suitable for practical needs and based on solid grounds. I gradually find less to add and to change, not implying that I believe it is perfect, but simply that I have tried to do what I can.

When I worked out the main points of my theoretical views in the 1960s New Archaeology was in the weather. American New Archaeology searched for laws and archaeological methods to discover real systems of the past, while the British branch hoped to build an analytical machine able to process archaeological material that would lead to the past reality as the output of the system. Something of these goals and convictions entered into my system, and something grew in opposition to the ambitions of the New Archaeology.

In the 1970s a new trend evolved in the New Archaeology, marked by the Behavioral Archaeology of Schiffer, Middle Range Theory of Binford and by Clarke searching for the path of information from the past (and to the past) in his "innocence trial". In fact *this* was Post-Processual Archaeology since the attention to laws of the cultural and historical *process* was replaced by the attention to the formation of archaeological sources. Independently of these events – but not independently of German comparison of archaeological sources with written sources – I developed along the same direction.

In the 1980s another new trend was once again the focus of attention, in which three different traditions

were oddly linked together, three traditions which earlier had seemed incompatible: (a) Neo-Kantian ideas and an attractive indeterminism (in the spirit of R. Collingwood, G. Daniel and W. Taylor) as well as contextualism (of the type of Chang) grown up on this basis; (b) structuralism from C. Levy-Strauss; and (c) Western university-reared Marxism issuing from G. Lucacs, G. Markuse a.o. In this new trend, pieced together from older ones, a reliable academic wing appeared, exemplified by the creation of Ian Hodder (1982; 1986; 1987 a.o.) and a more journalistic wing, if not purely declamative, that of Shanks and Tilley (1987; 1989). Practically the whole of this trend was not post-processual but post-postprocessual, yet let us not to be too pedantic. This trend also arose mostly in the midst of the New Archaeology, this time in its British branch, as a reaction against its extremities – such as the belief in the possibility of full and absolutely objective reconstructions, the hopes upon strength and self-dependence of archaeology and its theory.

The main positive contribution of this trend, I suppose, is the undermining of the exorbitant enthusiasm of the New Archaeologists for the regular linking of material-culture elements with social and spiritual appearances of once living societies. Hodder and his followers show that ideational systems and social systems had and still have considerable freedom of choice among forms for their expression in material culture – and of course not only in it – and this introduces significant alterations into the current notions about regularities of the cultural world.

Yet Hodder's post-processual archaeology has some problems, which have already been highlighted in several known publications. What seems to me insufficiently discussed is the dismissal of archaeology as a unified subject with a unified theory, and the loss of criteria of validation.

Childe said archaeology is one. But for Ian Hodder this has turned back to front: "The idea of a unified science of archaeology, still held to in North America and briefly glimpsed in Scandinavia and Britain in the mid 1970s, is now in total disarray in Europe. The notion that archaeology should have unified theory, method and aims is widely rejected" (Hodder 1991a, 19). Hodder explains this diversification with social-political enmity in the contemporary world. For post-processualists archaeology has little means of objec-

tive cognition of the past and the investigation is doomed to dependence on worldviews and political views of the investigator, on its class position. This view is the post-processual extraction from Marxism.

The New Archaeology, especially the American family, dismissed connections of archaeology with history. In Britain however, as well as "Throughout Europe, archaeology's closest intellectual ties are with history" (Hodder 1991a, 10). Archaeology here "is fundamentally historical in emphasis, is strongly Marxsist in orientation, and is undeniably social in construction" (Hodder 1991b, VIII).

Yet Hodder's approach is eclectic; it manages to join together various, hardly conformable, traditions. Hodder writes on the self-dependence of archaeology too, "... Over recent decades ... (archaeology) has increasingly been able to define itself as a discipline independent of history and Classical studies" (Hodder 1991a, 7). And "While it is argued that archaeology should reassert its European ties with history, it is also important to see the differences between archaeology and history". He admits that "archaeology is part of history", but since written sources are created from some material substance like paper and ink, it can be added that "history is part of archaeology" (Hodder 1991c, 12).

Hodder recounts with sympathy Taylor's expression that "archaeology is neither history, nor anthropology" and David Clarke's statement that "archaeology is archaeology is archaeology". Yet to Hodder there is insufficient contextualism in Taylor, while in Clarke it is absent altogether. As to Hodder himself archaeology is distinguished from antiquarianism by the stress on the context of every object (1991c, 190f). Thus, the subject matter of archaeology according to post-processualists is things and their context. Archaeology is a historically oriented discipline on material culture, while the latter is understood foremost as a system of symbols or meanings, which one can read like a written text. *Reading the past*, Hodder's well-known book, was first published in 1986 (1991c). The problem of the "reading" of material remains is more complicated than it seems to post-processualists. Besides this, their determination of the subject matter of archaeology is realistic, although it has not actually moved very far from its position of one hundred years ago, the position of Sophus Müller.

Is archaeology not one? This is refuted by the very result of the present survey. All theories and methods, the whole of metaarchaeology, are relevant to all branches of archaeology. And in viewing the other aspect of the split, Trigger's once astonishing statement (1978, 196f) of the striking likeness between Soviet and Western archaeological discussions, inferred from reading my 'Panorama' (Klejn 1977a), today can surprise nobody. The world is no longer split into two camps, for the ideological opposition, artificial to science including archaeology, ended in natural fiasco. And archaeology as a discipline, now as well as then, is one. By the whole span of ideological divergence, by the entire variability of its schools and trends, it has the same problems and a shared set of possible solutions.

As to the issue of validation criteria my position must now be clear to the reader. Both archaeological facts and confirmed theories are criteria of validation. The idea is ascertained both from Binfords hypothetico-deductive scheme of validation and from Hodder's position. "Theory cannot be proved by means of data" says Hodder (1986, 16). He rejects the concept of Middle Range Theory proposed by Binford as it is based on presumably very regular correspondences between material culture and social behaviour. The mentality of the past people and their freedom of choice, he states, influenced the specimens created by craftsmen, specimens to be restored in the present, and this introduced uncertainty in their appearance. Besides, it also depends on how we restore them, on our theory and practice of research. In turn, they are determined and conditioned by our own ideology, and our ideas depend on our social interests and political orientations. So far Hodder and his followers.

Theory in this understanding is interweaved with practice, not only with an archaeological but also with an ideological and political one. No talks on mutual influence of facts and theory will save us from the statement that in the writings of Hodder and his adherents, derived knowledge of archaeology loses its clear dependence on facts, theory loses its dependence on proof by facts and begins to reflect simply the ideological position of the archaeologist and of his or her social milieu. Theory turns into a simple reflection of such a position. Facts as validation criteria are dropped, while confirmed theoretical knowledge (old

theories) is replaced by politics and political theories. This is a dangerous directive for archaeology. Here the followers of western Marxist intellectuals become united with the zealous and die-hard Mohicans of Marxist orthodoxy who still remain somewhere in post-Soviet archaeology. As the saying goes in Russia, we have studied this already ...

The philosophical and political preferences of an archaeologist are reflected of course in his scholarly production. Large trends in archaeology are undoubtedly conditioned not only by accumulation of facts and by the logic of scholarly discoveries, but also by social shifts in the surroundings, which influence archaeologists. However, scholarly cognition is distinguished from other spheres of production by the presence of its disciplining rules of proof and self-proof, of control and self-control, by its strict methods, by means to reveal and eliminate the subjective component and biases, be they individual or collective ones. Theory is, of course, present in facts, and biases stick fast in our heads, but that we are aware of this is exactly the point. We are scholars exactly because we are aware of this and can cope therewith. And we are scholars to the extent that we do cope therewith. The only necessary stipulation is that for coping therewith we should not need to know each bias by sight and to be able to see its roots, which would be interesting in other respects, but we do need to have a regular filtering mechanism which screens any bias in general.

3. SELF-IDENTIFICATION

During a series of lectures that I gave in Turku (Åbo), I wanted to confront my attitude with that of Hodder's. Having in mind his "Reading the past", understood as 'reading the monuments', I decided to call my philological lecture on the Homeric epic "Digging the Text", for I applied typically archaeological methods (typification, stratification, correlation) to the philological analysis of the Iliad. I must admit this was not only in opposition to Hodder but at the same time in support of him in some respect, since a matching between the two fields was nevertheless present. Although my attitude in this case was precisely the contrary to Hodder's.

It may seem from this discussion that my main op-

ponent is Ian Hodder. The illusion is produced only by the time aberration; his works are the closest in time to my course of lectures that led to the publication of this book, so I should stress the differences between us (and especially my criticism of the writings of Shanks and Tilley). But Hodder, as well as Binford, or Taylor, or Montelius, are in a broader sense just as much my collaborators as they are my opponents. This is all the more, that in my own system of theoretical views there are both agreements with ideas of New archaeology, Behavioral Archaeology, Post-Processual Archaeology, etc., as well as there are oppositions to them.

I reiterate that I am not only in opposition to Hodder, but simultaneously in support of him, as some ideas of his are equally important in my own work. During a session one day I sharply criticised a young Moldovan archaeologist for a typically post-processual dissertation he had written, entitled "Archaeology of freedom", and I suspect he had not read Hodder before. He objected, claiming that his main ideas were derived from me. After raking back through my own work, I observed that there were indeed some points in it that strongly resembled post-processual archaeology. As early as in my "Archaeological Typology" of 1981, which means I cannot say that I was influenced by Hodder at that stage, the main idea was that it was impossible to crush archaeological material into small particles and then, uniting them with the help of correlation, to obtain reliable cultural types. The ultimate step would be to arrive at cultures. I insisted that the route must be just the reverse: to grasp the sense of cultures first, then to reveal types in them, and only then to divide the types into attributes for checking the whole picture. It was of course a post-processual idea.

Then I came to the idea of dialectics of principles, located at the basis of all of archaeology. Most surely a post-processual idea. First I advanced with this idea in my First Clarke Memorial Lecture, Cambridge 1993, which I read by invitation from Ian Hodder. He was very kind in general and looked very happy with the lecture. Now I realise that the content of my lecture at the time might well have been to his liking. Yet the post-processual ideas do not determine the general outlook of my work. And neither do Structuralist or Post-Structuralist ideas, though they also are present. I have already indicated that I borrowed some ideas from Marxism but even early on I became critical in my attitude to its cardinal failings. In this sense my own position was Post-Marxist. However, this negative term, like all 'post-' types, indicates nothing except the time and the departure. It does not reflect my own positive ideas, and neither does the term Post-Processualism. For Post-Processualism means that in its armoury one cannot suggest some remarkable idea that is new and determining. Contextualism was no candidate for it had been around earlier. Post-Processualism searched for a new and determining idea but in vain.

When I wrote "Attainments and Problems of Soviet archaeology" (1982, later revised as "Phenomenon of Soviet Archaeology", 1993), I called my position "Echeloned Archaeology", with the implication that the path of archaeological investigation must be methodically divided into subsequent steps, none of which can be dropped. I had in mind precocious historical conclusions typical then of some Soviet archaeologists. This path of archaeological investigation however is too general a feature. Now after working on my "Principles of Archaeology" I am inclined to call my system of views Dialectical Archaeology, for inherent contradictions and paradoxes were the features I always tried to reveal, beginning with "Archaeological Sources", 1978. I know that there are already some Marxist archaeologists that call their works Dialectical Archaeology, but to me Marxism and Dialectic are different things. Yet the label is usually coined by adversaries or historiographers. If indeed there were something to hang the label on!