

**Session title: EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND MARXISM:
PAST AND FUTURE**

Organizers: Francesco Iacono, University College London, UK
Gabriel Moshenska, University College London, UK

Time: Saturday morning

Room:

Session abstract:

In the last decades a number of archaeologists have stressed the politically laden nature of creating archaeological knowledge. If this is the case, then in the modern "globalized" Europe any attempt to resurrect the ghost of Marx in any field of scholarship may appear at a first sight unnecessary if not offensive or harmful. Yet, almost twenty years after the fall of the Berlin wall, the time appears to be ripe for a reappraisal of the role Marxism played, and to a more limited extent still plays, in the dialectic of archaeological discourse in European countries. The aim of this session is to address this topic. Naturally any reevaluation of this influential stream of scholarship in archaeology cannot avoid taking into consideration the different historical contingencies as well as the different modalities and conditions in which the various Marxist archaeologies operated. As a result, a first segment of the session will be more historically oriented, devoted to a reconsideration of how and to what extent Marxist approaches in archaeology managed to cope with these different conditions. The second half of the session will be dedicated to an overview of current trends and possible future developments of Marxist archaeology and, more broadly, of any archaeology inspired by Marxist perspectives either from a theoretical or methodological point of view.

Paper abstracts:

MARX, ENGELS AND PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN SERBIA

Selena Vitezovic, Belgrade

This paper will give a historical overview of Marxist influence on Serbian prehistoric archaeology in the second half of the 20th century.

New Marxist ideology, old traditions - especially those of so-called "German school" - and the peculiar political situation resulted in a new, specific approach in archaeology, which was not entirely Marxist, and not ideologically coloured by Marxism, but was significantly influenced by works and ideas of Marx and Engels.

The questions of chronological sequences, relative chronology and typological classifications remained major themes in Serbian prehistoric archaeology. But, Marxist influence introduced also new questions of social organization, social development and economical issues, especially those concerning introduction of new technologies, such as domestication of plants and animals, first plough, technologies

for metal-working, etc. Marxist models were dominant in explanations of these questions.

Influence of Engels' work was especially strong and it is visible in almost all analyses of social structures, labour division, and social development through exploitation of surplus production.

However, these inspirations did not result in a new theoretical approach. After initial impulse for studying socio-economic aspects, Marxist explanations were accepted without further debates.

A PIONEERING EXPERIMENT: “DIALOGHI DI ARCHEOLOGIA” AND MARXISM IN ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGY FROM 1967 TO 1975

Francesco Iacono, University College London, London, UK

The end of the sixties and beginning of the seventies in Italy were a period full of enthusiasm and contradictions. The birth of the journal “Dialoghi di Archeologia” is to be placed in those by now almost mythical days of youth protest and growth of the middle class, of social modernization and political stagnation.

This outstandingly innovative editorial project, which merged together historical and archaeological research with civil protest and activism, saw the light firstly as a social experiment deliberately (as well as openly) inspired by Marxism. Beyond this project were the “Amici”, a group of people encompassing both “enlightened” established academics and younger scholars.

In this paper I will explore the social and political context in which Dialoghi di Archeologia emerged tracing the history of the journal as well as that of the group of the “Amici” from 1967 when the journal was established to 1975 when “Dialoghi” abandoned its political dimension reframing itself as one of the many purely academically oriented archaeological journals.

MARXISM IN POLISH ARCHAEOLOGY: THE ENFORCED METHODOLOGICAL TURN AND ITS UNEXPECTED CONSEQUENCES

Stanisław Tabaczyński, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

There are two essential parts of Marxism: communism (anachronic, vulgar, dogmatic) and intellectual tradition (immanent element of the European culture). The imposition after 1945 of the “enforced methodological revolution” aroused mixed feelings. In many people it provoked a decisive rejection, while others seemed to adopt a tactic of “domestication of Marxism”. They saw only some arbitrary selected “positive” aspects of its methodology as an alternative to the dominating naïve positivism (Millennium Project; “study of the History of Material Culture” at the universities; formation of the “Institute of the History of Material Culture of the PAS”; collaboration with “Annales School”).

In 1956 the oppressive political regime lost its ideological teeth. In consequence this meant the disappearance of drastic form of political pressure and ideological indoctrination and on the other hand – the disappearance of the psychological

syndrome of rejection. Scholars were now able to perceive the intellectual values of Marxist thought, freed from heavy-handed propaganda. It was only in such conditions, that a new type of Marxist archaeology was practiced by Polish scholars which could be seen as a real predecessor of the processual approach.

JAN ŹAK, ONE OF THE GREATEST POLISH ARCHAEOLOGIST OF THE SECOND HALF OF 20TH CENTURY, AND HIS MARIXIST INSPIRATIONS

Adriana Ciesielska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

Professor Jan Źak, 1923 – 1991, was one of the founders of the Institute of Prehistory at the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. He started his studies at the Poznań University in the end of academic year 1948 / 49 and finished it in 1952. In Poland it was the peak of communist area.

Jan Źak's broad scientific interests included also the study of theory and methodology of archaeology. In this field he is thought to be the pioneer. He strongly opposed the positivist archaeology in its evolutionist – diffusionist version. This attitude probably was one of the major reasons why he directed himself to Marxism in the version known to the Poznań methodological school. He lived in time when Marxist theory was the only alternative to positivism.

The aim of my presentation will be the description of the main concepts of Poznań methodological school and its influence on Jan Źak's work and his publications. I would like also to answer the question why Jan Źak's papers remain important today and in what way they still inspire young Polish scholars.

CRAFTSMANSHIP AND ECONOMIC SPECIALIZATION IN ARCHAEOLOGY: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

José Andrés Afonso Marrero, Juan Antonio Cámara Serrano, University of Granata, Spain

The concept of specialization has been a key for explaining the development of social complexity. Often craft and specialization are used synonymous concept related with the technical division of labour, so they were the result of the need of ordering the work process to diminish costs and improve benefits and returns. This kind of specialization, which is identified using only techno-economic criteria, is usually defined as incipient specialization. The identification of this sort of specialization in societies where the community equality had begun to be destroyed had two conceptual consequences. First, the craftsman-specialist could exist no matter if there is not economic specialization. Second, specialization is a continuum, that goes from the production developed by independent agents (independent craftsmen), to specialized work control by institutions or guild. So, specialization is not a technological phenomena but a social one in which are involved different economic and social aspects related to the work process organization with the aim to warrant the control of political economy. On the contrary, craftsmanship means the skill to

transform different raw material into products by mean of standardized work processes.

MARXISM AND AGENCY IN PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Alberto Cazzella, Università La Sapienza, Rome, Italy

Giulia Recchia, Università di Foggia, Italy

Some proposals of the Marxism, if we take them into consideration in a flexible way, could be still useful to direct the research, as regards basic aspects of Prehistoric Archaeology, as the analysis of the processes of transformation. During the last twenty years agency theory aroused some interest in that field of research. Authors wonder whether those theoretical trends to explain change in past contexts without writing are to be considered compatible or alternative.

THE CONCEPT OF SURPLUS VALUE AND ITS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Vicente Lull, Rafael Micó, Roberto Risch, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, and Cristina Rihuete-Herrada, Fundació-Museu de Son Fornés, Mallorca, Spain

One of the central issues in Marxist theory of history – Historical Materialism – has been the concept of *Mehrwert*. The emergence of surplus and its historical development is understood as the crucial economic mechanism accompanying individual appropriation of social production, social exploitation, and, ultimately, the emergence of class society. After Marx analysed the mechanisms of surplus production under Capitalism, the concept has been used widely in Marxist as well as non-Marxist oriented archaeology and social sciences in general. Thereby, its meaning has become manifold, if not confusing when it is understood in a purely economic sense to describe production increase, or when different social and political connotations are attached to it. Ultimately, such confusion allows again to avoid discussing or, simply, to hide the economic basis of social exploitation in historical explanations.

Our aim is to analyse the original use of the concept of *Mehrwert* in Political Economy and Marx, and to clarify its implications for the analysis of social production.

SITUATING PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

Antonio Gilman, California State University-Northridge, USA

Juan Vicent, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, Spain

Marx and Engels were delighted to find ethnological support for primitive communism, capitalism's dialectical opposite, in Morgan. Following Engels, Marxian anthropologists have regarded some or all ethnographically attested foraging societies as representatives of the earliest stage of human evolution. Most anthropologists have disagreed, mainly because the variety of social organization among recent foragers suggests the mutability of egalitarian social institutions. These

exist when environmental circumstances require pooling of risks. Outsiders are normally excluded from risk pooling, as insiders may be if production security permits it. Thus, exclusion of outsiders from the benefits of cooperation presages the exclusion of insiders: communal institutions were subject to dissolution. The Upper Palaeolithic falls within the modern range of forager production and social organization: effective foragers with some internal differentiation in burials and consumption and regionally differentiated style zones suggestive of mutually exclusive ethnicities. Prior to the Upper Palaeolithic, however, there are no regional style groupings and no signs of social differentiation within groups. We will examine evidence for pre-Upper Palaeolithic social organization and develop the argument that limited foraging capabilities did not permit exclusion of outsiders. The unconditional pooling of risks by these relatively unequipped foragers would be the original locus of primitive communism.