International Journal of Historical Archaeology, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1997

Views and Commentaries

Archaeology and Development: A Difficult Dialogue

A. Marliac[1]

Archaeology and development are considered here from the point of view of the relevance of archaeological results to the problems of development, those being mainly questions of identity in this case. The weight of archaeological contribution is emphasized, as well as the basic problem caused by the association of the peoples' conceptions of their own history with the definitions provided by archaeology. In effect, here are two kinds of knowledge different by constitution: one scientific, the other not. This unavoidable fact, whether it occurs in historical syntheses or in ideological manipulations, must be taken into account by pluridisciplinary research.

Archéologie et développement sont envisagés ici sous l'angle de la pertinence des résultats de l'archéologie pour les problèmes posés par le développement, essentiellement en l'occurence problèmes identitaires. L'importance de la contribution archéologique est soulignée en même temps que le problème de fond que soulève l'association des conceptions que les peuples se font de leur propre histoire avec les définitions fournies par la discipline. En effet une différence de nature sépare ici deux modes de connaissance: l'un est scientifique, l'autre ne l'est pas. Cet état de fait incontournable qu'il s'agisse de synthèses historiques ou de manipulations idéologiques, doit être pris en compte par la recherche pluridisciplinaire.

KEY WORDS: scientific knowledge; traditional knowledge; pluridisciplinarity; identity.

[1]ORSTOM (Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement en Coopération), 213 Rue La Fayette, 75480 Paris, Cedex 10, France.

INTRODUCTION

Common knowledge, everyday knowledge, even just plain knowledge, involuntarily brings the two terms, archaeology and development, into conflict. If the first one evokes research that is quite free and academic, and follows in the footsteps of Indiana Jones with a scent of adventure, the second evokes problems of famine, deforestation, floods.[2]

These images, however stereotypic, express a general opinion against a useless science and for a useful science which springs to mind when one is concerned with solving the serious problems mentioned previously. Often, we are reproached, as are our cousins in ethnology, sociology, and linguistics, for being useless and expensive. To resolve problems of development, only exact sciences and engineering sciences are of any use; the others, including the social sciences, to which archaeology belongs, offer only a constantly renewed discourse whose usefulness is debatable. Science, or sciences, is judged today on the progress that it is supposed to bring about. What can archaeology claim to do in our particular case with regard to solutions or improvements to the problems of developing countries? For the decision-makers, not much. So much so that our discipline rarely appears in important sponsored projects. Our discipline must often hide under the umbrella of the natural sciences in order to benefit from international generosity. Alternatively, it flourishes in privileged places where one plays at involving oneself in cultural activities or in large-scale restoration, as in acts of charity, with one eye on tourism. A case in point is the museographic/exotic facet of archaeology that acts as a kick-start. If, as we thought, our discipline has its place in the development process, this place poses problems for development that may be underestimated. I look at them in accordance with the following two axes,

- What is development for an archaeologist, or what questions does development pose for archaeology? and
- What is the nature of archaeological knowledge in itself and with regard to other sciences (those, of course, concerned with history)?

so as to see if, finally, archaeological results are really applicable to the development problems previously defined. If yes, how are they applicable to the different levels of sociopolitical experience, and which route should be taken to justify this collaboration scientifically?

[2]We do not ask the question, "What is development?" considering the term in its vaguest meaning that designates the whole of the processes that try to lead certain countries (say, the Third World) toward the situation of Western countries and Japan.

IDENTITY AS A DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM

Development, need it be repeated again, is not only about improved cultures, victories against large-scale endemics, and famine or malnutrition. Nor is it only about schooling or big dams. All these efforts are made for and by men, societies, and people who possess an identity and a history with which they live and as a result of which they plan, or do not plan, a future. This identity is under pressure from a more or less strong acculturation. Because actually, if development operations are translated as an improvement of the standard of living, they also involve extremely varied sociocultural transformations according to the degree of acceptance of the receiving societies. These sociocultural changes can be directly related to this or that intervention or, less visibly, can also follow from all the "cultural load" voluntarily conveyed or not conveyed by this intervention. For that matter, imported knowledge, the mode of knowledge called "science," also figures in the "cultural load."

These identities have a more or less complex history and can be more or less profound. History can be reconstructed with the help of oral traditions and sometimes texts. From the angle of scientific research, as soon as texts and traditions disappear, archaeology is supposed to take over, although from a scientific viewpoint, this involves a completely different way of "making history." I return to this subject later.

Calling identities into question entails reactions (a complete or partial, verbal or written rejection) and claims which take the form of an identity quest and claims in the form of a collection of identities, with the frequent return to traditions or to what seems traditional, research of rooting and of the most profound filiations possible. This quest presents itself in the form of a request at different levels of institutionalization. We have experienced it on individual grounds, diffused, explicit, or biased by different kinds of knowledge extracted from manuals, magazines, or radio broadcasts. It appears as a declaration of scientific policy on the administrative levels involved: university departments and research institutes. It is revealed in the media as an integrated part of development problems. In the end, it won the domain of the discipline itself when certain African archaeologists recently said, "There is no future for a discipline whose research findings cannot be applied to sociocultural development efforts." Explaining further, they said that these sociocultural efforts are conducted "for purpose of identity, self-confidence and the like" (Odak, 1980, p. 721). The history of identity(ies) as a matter of ethnic identity or of another larger national or continental identity is, in this manner, lodged henceforth in the heart of development problems. And since archaeology rebuilds past so-

cieties as neither history nor ethnology can do, its intervention in development is clearly solicited.

The social or institutional request that is sometimes urgent, and that is made into a rather questionable ideology by current strategies, is expressed for archaeology in two essential questions:

- What is the identity of the people concerned in the long term? and
- how do these people identify themselves to themselves? How do they integrate scientific data, in this case especially archaeology, into this identification?

These questions categorically define the relation between archaeology and development inasmuch as development is for the people and the individuals a modification of being (negative or positive) and inasmuch as archaeology deals with the historic being of societies or people, among others.

Of Ethnic Identity

If it is the "being" of people, their way of living, and, consequently, their identity, that is the problem of development for which archaeology appears relevant, the reality of the identities of people from developing countries can be discussed in itself, as well as their makeup and their durability during the course of history (moment of equilibrium between a past and a future) and can partially answer our first question. But for now only the immediacy of the problem is envisaged. The individuals and groups with which we are concerned declare their membership to a group with flexible and fluid outlines but which is well identified since the people refer to it to distinguish themselves from neighboring and similar groups. That is not to say that the individuals that make up this identity are not aware of the constituents of their identity of belonging or of the avatars of its evolution in time and space (the tangle of the individual's and family's histories). We will say that the analytical knowledge that they can have, or that which the reductionist enterprise of the researcher can provide, is not contradicting the community's assertion of the ethnic group. The individual can be defined at two levels of equally relevant organization: in relation to his filiation (and alliances) and in relation to the ethnic group as the first level of autoorganization of individuals sharing a certain number of institutions and cultural traits beyond kinship and alliances. Without subsiding into the substantivism of the ethnic group, one becomes aware of the fact that, again and again, reality reconstitutes itself and questions us (Marliac and Langlois, 1994, pp. 420–456). To convince oneself of this, one

must see how certain anthropological enterprises of mitigating this concept, that is, those that go beyond the level of reductionist analysis to deny any existence of the ethnic group, cannot fail to grasp the reality they study, to the need to name the groups as well as creating new ones no less vague. In this way, the will to overtake the concept of ethnic groups leads critics to the reification of other groups for which the scientific basis is not any better: the poor, the young, the misfits, the migrants (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1991, p. 33).

Of Traditional Knowledge

Knowledge that individuals, groups, or ethnic groups have about themselves and their autoidentification delves into global, inherited, pragmatic knowledge that the members of the group share about their own subject: "the methods used to know the past differ from those of the 'objective science of archaeology'" (Ward, 1980, p. 724). It is an immediate knowledge, real and useful, a traditional knowledge loaded with potential of values and steeped in analogy, symbolism, and myth. It questions so-called knowledge claimed by social scientists in their analytical methods of studying identities, that is, objectivist and reductionist knowledge. This "natural" knowledge constituent of the existence and historicity of ethnic groups overflows the supposedly true knowledge that we claim to have. For that matter, its function is completely different from the pure explicative function extolled by sciences. It is normative, and organizing. It "says" what "is" and "what should be." If we move from the field of ethnic groups to a broader one but one which is even more vague, of nations, of political or state demands, an even more complex global knowledge confronts us. All of Africa, for example, is riddled with occasionally violent global identity claims, most often brought forward by intellectuals, diverse organizations, or parties.

These claims, regrouped under the terms "nationalism" or nationalisms (Robertshaw, 1990) in opposition to colonialism, whose end we ritually celebrate, depend as the latter, according to Martin Hall (1990, p. 77), to political ideology as "the means whereby the contradictions within a social formation are obscured or redefined."[3] We have all experienced these two facets of identity demands coming from individuals or groups, the two meeting in ideologies which, from the latest rehashing, are "afrocentrism,"

[3]This researcher seems to distinguish between the two verbs, a positive activity and a negative activity of ideology, which could not exist except in relation to an extraideological Truth, that is, probably, for him, "scientific."

but other examples have been confirmed elsewhere, in further defending the existence and the value of a way of knowledge which is nonscientific. For example, "the Inuit Cultural Institute has developed the concept of 'Inuit research' using traditional methods of interpretation which are different from but just as valid as those of 'White Research'" (McGhee, 1980, p. 720).

We do not judge it here. But remember that in their diverse forms, they often appeal to archaeology as a "touchstone" of truth and they all tend to present a "transcendent identity," be it ethnic, national, or continental, if not sometimes racial.

Historical Ideologies

The idea that people have of themselves cannot be dispelled. This idea is an integral part of their identity in the form of an informative, mythical–legendary, and justificatory discourse. It is a social representation that permits groups as well as individuals, in a world where ancient identity security is discouraged more and more, to increase one's standing as such, that is, to provide oneself with identical references marking out time according to a "chronicle" of events having affected the group and/or individual. It fills the triple function that F. Bourricaud (1980) granted to ideologies: it fills a requirement, it is projective and strategic. Actually, by his backward-looking idealization, it fills a gap by designating good and bad. It projects hate and love on symbolic objectives. Finally, it legitimately and intellectually arms this or that power strategy. If religions are the places of identity claims which are often "national" in the modern sense of the word, as it was called in a recent debate at ORSTOM, historical ideologies provide the arguments for this identity quest.

Of Interference of Ways of Knowledge

In the two cases evoked and separated here for convenience (individual identity claims and group identity claims), we are faced with a way of knowledge that is in essence alien to the scientific way because its objective is not the same. This traditional way of knowledge is, however, never purely apprehended. Besides the fact that it is composed of "analytical reasoning" a posteriori, it is more and more often permeated by this "scientific culture" glorified by its amazing technical results. And this ideological identity discourse of which we have been speaking dips into archaeology. Compared to this investment of traditional discourse in science, we have an investment

of certain scientific discourse in ideology. Some archaeologists don the robe of the prophets for whom it is not "God" but "Science" that serves as the ultimate reckoning. These definitions and archaeological results have an aura of science and of irrefutable facts. If that is the case, what are they? How should they be integrated into definitions that people have already drawn up elsewhere?

ABOUT IDENTITY IN ARCHAEOLOGY

We do not leap into an exhaustive presentation of the discipline, recalling how numerous the definitions are, either starting from its object or by the limits suggested by its name (what is before history), or by whichever objective (Leroi-Gourhan, 1988; Bonte and Izard, 1991). We choose to define archaeology as "the science of artifacts and relations between artifacts conducted in terms of the concept culture" (Dunnell, 1971, p. 116).

Archaeological Units

If such a definition seems abstract and remote from the usual definitions, it permits us to bring the second question posed at the beginning of our account into the discussion. It seemed important to move away from the most general definition possible, in order to underline the point that seemed most important: the nature of the units that the archaeologist produces as such, that is, quite bluntly: lists, catalogs, typologies, tables, histograms, graphs, diverse classes that fill the pages of his or her publications. Which interpretations are given that can answer the questions previously posed?

At the time of excavation, the archaeologist identifies, among incomplete groups, artifacts as phenomena possessing physical characteristics that can be attributed to human activity. "Phenomenon" is used here in a very broad sense, for it can also be an event. Next, he or she classifies attributes and artifacts according to different methods. He or she then interprets these classes and groupings using the concept of culture in the sense of ideas shared with all the subdivisions imaginable of the concept itself. In this way archaeologists "create units" of different sorts. He or she uses models of domestic, architectural, cynegetic, agricultural, commercial activities, and also models of institutions such as religion and marriage to explain these units. Are there archaeological units that would reveal, at least partially, the identity of groups, or ethnic groups?

Among the classes or groups that the archaeologist constructs, some will be interpreted according to a particular anthropological concept designating the whole of the traits shared by a group that differs from the other possible units that are closed in time or space or social organization. That is what sometimes translates in a subtle way the personality of a group compared to that of other groups that can elsewhere share the same customs of social organization, religious behavior, or economic subsistence (Leroi-Gourhan, 1988, p. 280).

In anthropology, this unit is called culture or sometimes civilization. It is this concept or this particular use of the term that is most relevant here. Borrowed from anthropology, where it has this meaning, the concept of culture appears in archaeology as a copy of the ethnic concept. Parallel with anthropology, archaeology tends to outline this or that grouping of attributes, the most subtle ones, those resulting apparently from free choice, to decide the existence of an ethnic identity at a given time in a given place.

Of Their Historical Continuity

For the target of relation, if not filiation of ethnic groups or present people with past cultures, archaeology uses this kinship culture/cultures to connect the units/classes of artifacts in time and space with cultures or civilizations of the present (Marliac, 1994). However, this relationship is far from being acceptable. The contents of the two notions are not actually directly superimposable, if the ethnic group seems graspable through the style which would be like the personal mark of a group on the units of cultural attributes largely shared by several ethnic groups (languages, rites, customs, techniques). In prehistory, one rarely has the prehistoric styles at one's disposal. When one thinks that the elements have been isolated, nothing can prove that they do not depend, possibly at the same time, on constraints that are technological, ecological, supracultural, transcultural, etc. For that which is of the temporal connection between people of the present and people of the past, archaeology sometimes uses a coverup of the historic chronicle of an ethnic group or of several groups and the dating of archaeological units, or the covering-up of a series of objects. But in this case, it is always ethnology, thanks to the concept culture, that permits the link.

Incommensurability

We have focused our basic interrogation here on the notion of "culture/ethnic group" as far as it seemed to be the first social and state de-

mands of developing countries. If it permits the comparison, there is a hiatus among the result of archaeological work, its formulation of phenomena, and their explanation in anthropological terms (it could not be anything else) since, compared to anthropology, none of the verdicts of those principally concerned transcribed by anthropologists are ever disposed of.

As to people's opinion in search of their roots, it is difficult to see how to adapt graphs and typologies, catalogs and scalagrams, except by a series of clarification steps where science loses its science. Actually, it is about radically different knowledge. Besides, "How many people in the Western world can make head or tail of Whallon's mathematical forays into spatial analysis or Clarke's analytical archaeology. Precious few I dare say" (Riley, 1980, p. 723). As A. C. Adams (1980, p. 715) notes about the Hopis, "Archaeology has no role in their culture (most native American cultures are not materialistic-oriented)." One notes, then, that if, by its plural and directed nature, "a society may already have several ways to 'look at the past'" (Derricourt, 1980, p. 716), the traditional discourse, common or political, takes the form of an individual chronicle, ethnic or national, a chronicle that has a mythological basis. The archaeological discourse does not do the same. As far as it tends toward scientificity, it leans to the contrary, on a single analytical point of view, which is reductionist, completely separating the systematic identification of data and its explanation. Where else can the dialogue be situated if "the main objective is to make the relation of archaeology to development meaningful"? (Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1980, p. 716).

DIALOGUES AND KNOWLEDGE

The brief conclusion we reach here is to report that diverse orders of knowledge apply to human phenomena in their temporal evolution (history of societies, culture history)—myths, traditional knowledge, diverse scientific knowledge—to which archaeology belongs, and that these "orders" are possibly incomparable, and not to be substituted for each other. In particular, we have opposed traditional knowledge of the mythologic–symbolic order to scientific knowledge. Besides the fact that these orders are all absolutely necessary, even inevitable, we make them collaborate to our historic constructions even more, as the individuals and the groups concerned do it for their own needs, in their day-to-day life of individuals or groups. In fact, on the fringe of academic meetings, with or without development, history makes itself and undoes itself, is improvised, lives, and is reinvested in the present, projected into the future, manipulated, cut up, popularized, mediatized, apparently without too much concern for the scientific condi-

tions of existence which preoccupy us. This history "in the making," as we have pointed out, is that to which we, archaeologists, are called to contribute, be it in the academic or the popular domain. What is the nature of this collaboration? What status should be given to this treatment of information to which archaeologists and all users of archaeological results abandon themselves?

Academic Collaboration or Academic Tinkering?

For the moment, the scientific discourse, metalanguage, permitting the connection among historic, archaeological, linguistic, and other data depends on that which E. Balibar (1993) calls "scientific ideology," that is, the space of knowledge that surrounds and conditions science, the whole of the explicative systems borrowing from science without satisfying its strict norms.

Schematically, it can be said that in this space, we navigate between the different "schools of thought" or political ideologies that occupy the disciplines of history, ethnology, and anthropology in general, in the sense of social sciences. We are not emphasizing the paucity of scientificity in the strict sense of this space. That would be both ridiculous and counterproductive. It would be ignoring that it is often in this way that science is made in general, as Feyerabend (1979) conclusively showed for the subject of Galileo and in his support of Copernican theories, a support that held its ground due more to its rhetorical strength than to the facts that were graspable and subjected to practical demonstrations at the time. We wished, however, to underline the problem of passage to a level of significance (the domain of archaeological science with its language—admitting that archaeology is a science) to a different level (the domain of anthropological, historic, and sociological sciences). The difficulty is measured by trying to interpret, for example, "the archaeological units" with the help of definitions from the *Dictionnaire de l'Anthropologie* by Bonte and Izard (1988).

For a long time, archeology in the broad sense has treated relevant problems for certain aspects of development. In participating in the reconstruction of the paleoenvironments and of their dynamics, for example, archaeology provides the anthropological point of view permitting the study of the multimillenial relations between environments and societies. In historic reconstruction, where the contribution of archaeology to history and to ethnohistory and the well-known attempts at collaboration among linguistics, geography, and archaeology, are not worth remembering. The explicative hypothesis forged by archaeologists to explain ways of production and to distinguish one from another are also well-known.

However, is it possible in these reconstructions, in particular, historic ones, to evaluate the contribution of archaeology? Is it possible to describe the "building" to which it participates in historic reconstruction, to "weigh" the scientificity of its reconstructions? All this in the specific environment that constitutes development so as to measure its scope (scientific or ideological) and to ponder its solutions?

The theory that permits the association and manipulation of data from the different scientific fields concerned, in view of an explanation, is not only implicit but extremely vague. It belongs to a "general anthropology" without being very embarrassing, as this explanation is often small-scale. It participates in the "scientific ideologies" of most practitioners. Archaeological units previously reported are transferred into anthropological units during the interpretative process, then into units in the common sense by a shift in meaning that is easier because social sciences do not have their own language but always operate on the fringe of natural language. These "units of common sense" correspond to the transformations of which D. Miller (1980, p. 710) speaks: "In fact, so radical are the differences in the structures of the societies themselves that for archaeology to impinge upon the national consciousness and to achieve integration and relevance, it must be transformed to fit the individual country." Neither Ward (1980) nor Miller (1980) questions the nature of this transformation and the means of its success, which is the basis of the problem.

Collaboration or Manipulation?

How do diverse people, sociocultural groups, political parties, castes, sects, and governments, use archaeological knowledge? If, as it is recognized, archaeology should transform itself, what is this transformation? It depends on the desired target. It is easy enough to set right the examples that, in our own time, practice these transformations under the illusion of modern archaeology as long ago the colonialists interpreted the archaeological discoveries in Africa, such as Great Zimbabwe, the "White Lady," and so forth.

Concerning the work of Robinson and Summers in South Africa, M. Hall (1980, p. 64) says, "They, like others before them, avoided many potential clashes with settler ideology by using highly technical framework for conceptualizing and reporting their results." Hall effectively evokes here the problem that we have already explored: the nature of "archaeological units" compared to the nature of units expressed in other domains. But this does not result in positive consequences. In the case he cites, the passage from "very technical definitions," to "cultures" in the archaeological

work in question, to the "definition" concerning the Bantus is unexplained. Nothing is less scientifically easier. How is the word "Bantu" defined? Is it comparatively "very technical"? Yes, if it refers to its linguistic origin, but not if it is more prosaically "partially ideological."

And to his great vexation about not being able to establish a policy on archaeology, Hall (1990, p. 73) says, "There was no attempt to make the new archaeological synthesis accessible either to challenge settler consciousness or to serve black nationalist aspirations." He is obliged to add, "It would be logical to expect that the new understanding of the Iron Age, directly contradicting apartheid history, would become important in Black Consciousness philosophy, but instead an abstract, utopian vision of the precolonial past developed."

Further on, P. Robertshaw (1990, p. 93) himself falls into the trap when, speaking of East Africa, he says, "In using the term nationalist archaeology I have not wished to imply that this archaeology is in some sense not 'true' archaeology." So, is it that it is true or only "more true" than another? Which one? How? Why?

One cannot better illustrate the difficulties of the transfer of results from the domain of a science into the domain of experience. "Archaeology's place in the school syllabus is a broader issue: it can be positive development but is far from free of ideological context of nationalism, ethnicity, religion and the conflict of external patterns of knowledge and tradition" (Derricourt, 1980, p. 716).

Of Pluridisciplinarity in General

In conclusion, we have thought it beneficial for what concerns us, in any case, to return to the root: Of what does one speak of, with what does one work when one is an archaeologist and when one declares to "make history" clad in a scientific toga? How does one use the data created in this way? From classic pluridisciplinarian work right up to elaborations, including political ones? Who uses them and when? One can, in this way, relativize the declarations stressed in "science" and facing the obstacle of designing the fields to be explored so as to master it.

In fact, the objective is to bring these different points of view together. So, first, one needs to work on the research objects where different scientific language can be combined and not juxtaposed. So it is a question, at best, of defining a new scientific field with its own language or, if not, then justifying in the discussion the use of two different scientific languages. It is at this price that one can advance the theoretical solutions to the exchanges between disciplines. Next, one needs to confront the scientific

point(s) of view to the ways of knowledge brought together here under the term "traditional knowledge," in regrouping magic, mythology, and symbolism. None of the authors who critiqued Miller's (1980) article addressed this issue, which is, I believe, of central importance. Confront and not replace (Atlan, 1986), since one must fertilize the other. The traditional way of knowledge, with its rationalities, true experience, and universal values, will in fact play the role of stimulant for the scientific mode in subjecting scientists to problems to resolve. For archaeology and the associated disciplines, this will be translated into an effort of conceptualizing the real: definition of new scientific objects, of new fields of research, and new languages. Inversely, the scientific way of knowledge will submit the intuitive knowledge, "natural," and global knowledge to the constant pressure of its epistemological and methodological requirements.

FROM SCIENCE TO KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE TO DEVELOPMENT

The couple archaeology/development is only one of the illustrations of the couple science/development where scientific knowledge confronts the others in a dialogue of which the most noisy episodes occur between the North and the South, while waiting for the next ones, which are just as boisterous, to contrast the North with the North. In the North, development is no longer spoken of since it came true a century ago at a price we already know. This couple is itself only an historic avatar of the opposition between science and myth. Archaeology finds itself in the position where biology was found. The latter has been summoned to provide the answers to the politicomoral decisions that societies have to make. The former is called up to provide the argument to this or that policy.

This dialogue, identified, for example, in our function of formation, most often consists of replacing antique knowledge with scientific knowledge. It is a shaky and distressing replacement where the attachment to the flesh of a people's history is sometimes held in derision by the very ones who should respect it: the scientists and those interested. These rifts remind us of what Europe has lived through since the eighteenth century, with the beginning of the Age of Reason, which decimated masses of so-called misguided and retrograde peasants who, a century later, provided the great workers' battalions.

This dialogue is the continuation of the one which, within the scientific enterprise itself, tries to correlate, on the one hand, the desire for total and complete knowledge with, on the other, the requirements of science, which are as yet unrealized for the object in question. For our concern, it

opposes the total traditional knowledge answering to a fundamental need, to a knowledge attempting to be scientific.

If, on a small scale, archaeology brings data that make civilizations relative and replaces them in the context of equal or unequal exchanges (for example, domestic plants, animals, and techniques) throughout centuries, if it destroys at the root all politicohegemonic claiming or culpability in resituating this or that discovery in time, space, and cultures, the problem remains unanswered. In effect, the scientific validity of historic reconstructions that it authorizes is always subjected, in archaeology, to the variety of interpretations and to the incommensurability of the elements of these reconstructions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This text benefited from the comments of Isabel Amato, and Alain and Therese Beaudou, whom we thank.

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