SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES AT THE VAN AYANIS ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

ORGANIZACIÓN SOCIAL Y PRÁCTICAS CIENTÍFICAS EN LA EXCAVACION ARQUEOLÓGICA VAN AYANIS

Yücel Karadaş
Gaziantep University, Turkey
yucelkaradas@gmail.com

Abstract

The archeological excavation in the Ayanis settlement of the Urartu civilisation, which is in today's Van district of Turkey, is one of the most long-lasting excavations in Turkey. Therefore, it indicates the excavation practice in Turkey in the academy of archeology. This study focuses on the Ayanis excavation and analyzes the organization of the excavation team, relationships between the team members, and the way they analyze their object of study. The study also handles how the relationships there are carried to the academy and how the relationships in the academy are affected by them. This study, which is an applied sociological research of archeological practice, aims to induce simple theoretical abstractions from the experiences of the excavation team, which can be seen as a narrow-scale social group. The reseach is conducted using grounded theory, which is seen as more suitable for studying small groups. As such, simple abstract concepts are induced in the light of the in-depth observation of and interviews with the participants of the excavation.

Keywords: *sociology of science, hierarchy, social organization, consensus,, theatrical rituals, archaeological excavation*

Resumen

La excavación arqueológica en el asentamiento de Ayanis de la civilización Urartu, que se encuentra en el actual distrito Van de Turquía, es una de las excavaciones más prolongadas en Turquía. Por lo tanto, es indicativo de las prácticas de excavación de la academia de arqueología de Turquía. Este estudio se centra en la excavación de Ayanis y analiza la organización social del equipo de excavación, las relaciones entre los miembros del equipo y la forma en que analizan sus objetos de estudio. El estudio también aborda cómo las relaciones en el sitio de excavación se transfieren a la academia y cómo se ven afectadas las relaciones en la academia. Este estudio, que es un proyecto de investigación sociológica aplicada que se centra en las prácticas arqueológicas, tiene como objetivo deducir abstracciones teóricas simples de las experiencias del equipo de excavación, que se comporta como un grupo social de escala reducida. La investigación aplica teoría fundamental adecuada para estudiar grupos pequeños. Como tal, los conceptos abstractos simples se infieren a la luz de la observación en profundidad y las entrevistas con los participantes de la excavación.

Palabras clave: sociología de la ciencia, jerarquía, organización social, consenso, rituales teatrales, excavaciones arqueológicas

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1. Introduction

As a science, archaeology both shares a number of characteristics with other sciences, and differs from them. The norms Merton calls the universal norms of the ethos of science, serving to build an ideal for national scientific communities, even though their exact and perfect application is virtually non-existent, apply to the archaeological community as well. Briefly put, these norms are: "Universalism, which mostly refers to the admission that any claim of truth, regardless of its origin, is to be subjected to pre-existing and impersonal criteria compliant with observations and previously verified knowledge. The acceptance or rejection of any claim raised in scientific literature is not a function of the personal or social obligations of its supporters. That is why their race, nationality, religion, class, or personal characteristics are irrelevant... Communalism, which is the second institutional imperative of the ethos of science, refers to a non-technical and extended ownership of property. The substantive findings of science are products of social cooperation, and thus should belong to the commune. Such findings build a shared inheritance where any claim of ownership on the part of individual producers of knowledge is substantially restricted... Disinterestedness refers to fundamental and structural impartiality as an element of science, as is the case with any white-collar profession. A distinctive pattern of control rules over an extensive domain of motives characterizing the behavior of scientists. Once an organization orders an impartial activity to be conducted, a scientist should ideally familiarize themselves with the bitter taste of sanctions, as well as the psychological conflict of internalizing this norm. Organized skepticism involves temporary suspension of judgments in line with empirical and logical criteria, impartial review of convictions, and a regular clash of science with other institutions. Asking questions regarding concepts and any aspect of nature and society, including potential scenarios, science may conflict with other attitudes concerning the same set of data, which are crystallized by other institutions and which are often ritualized. Research scientists do not embrace the rupture between the sacred and non-sacred, and what is accepted without criticism and what can be analyzed objectively"(Merton, 2010: 169-78). A statement uttered in a private conversation by former team leader, who served for many years as the team leader for the excavation we attended is compatible with the principles of scientific ethos; "I never took into account the religious sect or ethnicity of the candidates in the academic staff or excavation team recruitment processes. I never even looked at someone's origins. I always went for the person who deserved the job." Another statement by him is yet further evidence of this line of thinking, "If they come across some data that is in conflict with existing religious or social perspectives, the archaeologist should clearly express the fact at hand. Archaeology is a science where the potential for conflict with established perceptions, such as those of a religious, taboo, or social nature is substantial." On another occasion, he criticized another team leader who had taken part in an excavation in Van province within roughly the same time frame as his own work, on the grounds of the latter's failure to mention him at a symposium he organized and in a book he published purely due to a personal conflict. According to Çilingiroğlu, "Regardless of the amount of hatred you have for someone, the ethics of science requires that you pay due homage to their work." The lack of any ethnic, gender, religion, or class-based discrimination in the hierarchy implemented at Ayanis excavation led by Işıklı is an indicator of harmony. Indeed, the House Officer, trench supervisors, Deputy Team Leader, and Financial Officer at the excavation are from different religious sects and ethnic groups, as well as rural backgrounds. The unwritten rule requiring archaeologists to refrain from withholding any material

found during the excavations or engaging in the smuggling of historical artifacts, and publishing them instead, is yet another example of this ethos.

The practice of excavation is what lies at the root of the unique characteristics setting archaeology apart from other branches of science. From a wider perspective, the excavation, or the archaeological "excavation" is the space where the archaeologist gathers scientific data, and develops associated interpretations. But a rather hands-on analysis reveals that it is not only about engaging in science. Besides, experiences during the excavation are highly influential in the academic domain outside the excavation site and within the university, deciding who gets a tenure and who is left out, how one performs before PhD examiners, who is awarded professorships, and how far one is respected in one's field. An archaeologist's academic success is achieved through performance and patience in excavations in which they have taken part as early as their days as an undergraduate, as well as their skills to find and interpret scientific objects, and their sustained participation and persistence in excavations. As an activity, archaeological excavation is organized around the objective of gathering scientific data. Yet, once organized, the practice phase that follows brings about a living world producing its own reality. As far as our observations go, the main pillar of this living world are the suffering endured during the excavation. Indeed, an excavation involves a large amount of people, including physical laborers, students, experts, commissars, and academic staff. Regardless of the budget allocated, the team always faces shortcomings in terms of consumables and elements of comfort. Getting a truly satisfying meal is unlikely, let alone a dessert, you have to wait in line to go to the bathroom to get a shower, internet connection may be unavailable, phone reception may not work, not to mention the "comforts" of the beds and the rooms you stay in, etc. The more remote the excavation site, the more difficult these issues become. Furthermore, organizing a large group of people towards a common goal and sharing experiences for months leads to a friendship and solidarity that is hard for outsiders to grasp. That feeling of solidarity perhaps can be found only in the military in institutional terms. Just like soldiers sharing the same barracks and eating out of the same pot for extended periods, the archaeologists develop friendships through excavations, and maintain them through their daily academic and social life as well.

Yet another important aspect of the living world of excavation pertains to its hierarchical organization. As an activity that must be executed by a large group of people in order to succeed, excavation requires a strict hierarchy. The hierarchy of the excavation makes itself felt at every square meter of the area, and in every moment of the experience. Indeed, hierarchy creates itself in the form of theatrical rituals. Such theatrical rituals recall the connection Bourdieu establishes between the hierarchy of the state and theatrical behaviors: "Describing the appearance of the state is actually describing the appearance of a relatively autonomous microcosm inside a social field, or the wider social world, where a legitimate political game based on a specific set of rules is being played out... The reference to the metaphor of the theater, or the theatrical nature assumed by the understanding, conceals the fact that there are people who actually call the shots, and that the actual struggle, as well as the actual sources of power, lie elsewhere. Investigating the appearance of the state is actually the study of a field where the policies will be duly staged and evolve into symbols, assuming a theatrical nature, and therefore, the individuals who have the privilege of taking part in the play on stage will also be entitled to appropriate a particular type of source we can call the 'universal' source"(Bourdieu, 2016: 127). In his voluminous book on the state, Bourdieu often refers to the similarities between the state and theater. Bourdieu's work can also be useful in responding to potential criticisms referring to

the problems of making an analogy involving the huge bureaucratic machine of the state, and the pretty little model of organization which the excavation represents. Indeed, Bourdieu notes parallels between the macro-level state organization and other micro-level organizations in a given society. “When we have a lineage claiming ownership of a tangible or symbolic property, which needs to be sustained forever beyond the restrictions of time –such property may be a throne for one person, a house for another– we notice that logical reasoning based on practices takes similar lines regardless of the differences in the property. The social actors, be it the King of France or a small land owner with 15 hectares, exhibit the same mode of behavior along the lines of a given set of principles”(Bourdieu, 2016: 287). It is not a wide leap to replace the residence here with an archaeological excavation in the analogy Bourdieu establishes with the state.

The success of the excavation executed by a large team is dependent on the strength of the hierarchical organization. Comparable to military structures, excavation has its hierarchy expressed through various theatrical rituals. The specific bathrooms or toilets assigned to different individuals according to their level, the sleeping arrangements, the priority in access to food inventories, seating arrangements around the dinner table, coffee breaks, and the entitlement to the best view at the excavation house are but a few of the details reminding the individuals involved of their position within the hierarchy. These details with mostly symbolic significance underline the fact that having a better position is a substantial reward. This hierarchical order prevails not only during the excavation, but also in the wider academic domain as well. Even though today this structure is less pronounced, in the past it was ever present and clearly visible due to the elite status of the archaeologists holding chairs. Against a background of extensive literature on the hierarchy prevailing in the corridors of archaeology departments, an anecdote related by Prof. Çilingiroğlu from his student days in the 1960s, about Arif Müfid Mansel at Istanbul University, is particularly interesting. According to his account, as soon as Prof. Mansel appeared to rise from the stairs to the department, all the students, janitors, academic staff –even academic staff who were not in the corridor but in their own rooms at that moment– would get in line next to the wall, and salute the grand master.

However, it is impossible to make an excavation team work through just a strict hierarchy. Indeed, what makes an excavation work is the friendship and solidarity within the overall excavation team, regardless of their ranks in the hierarchy. If one has to refer to another concept borrowed from the literature on the domain of government which the state represents, the team leader needs to organize consent as Gramsci put it, in order to make the excavation team work. A chain of command alone is not sufficient to ensure the excavation team’s compliance with hierarchy; the team leader should also exhibit leader-like qualities to organize the team and channel their efforts towards an established goal, as well as a sympathetic and consistent personality. Organization of consent makes itself felt in theatrical details. For instance, avoiding inequalities in the food eaten by different levels of the team, organizing sports and entertainment events to improve the mood of the team, or arranging excursions are good ideas.

The importance of excavation for the wider academic community of archaeology may be comparable to the role of experiment and laboratory work for natural sciences, or to the prominence of field research in sociology. Indeed, both the laboratory and field research entail meaning beyond the site where the scientific data is produced. The fellowship built up at the laboratory and within the social community certainly extends beyond the laboratory; in the same vein, participation and performance in field

research in sociology has an impact on academic career. In both domains of science, success in empirical research definitely influences academic reputation and career. However, the relationship between academic archaeology and excavation in Turkey has some characteristics distinct from the relationship existing between these two domains of science and empirical research. With reference to its continuity and the essential role played by the relationship between empirical research and academic space, it is comparable to the laboratory environment in natural sciences. However, once the natural scientist leaves the laboratory, he/she may go home or spend his/her time elsewhere. In contrast, at the end of the working day, the archaeologist does not go home, but to the excavation house, where socialization with fellow archaeologists continues. Furthermore, as excavations are carried out by a large team, most of the time they necessitate a much more in-depth social organization compared to that required for a rather orthodox scientific experiment–in this context, the reference is to rather extensive experiments. In sociology, on the other hand, in contrast to natural sciences or archaeology, empirical research is not extended for substantial time frames. The bond natural scientists have with the laboratory, or that the archaeologists have with excavation is simply lacking in sociology. Of course, field research is important in sociology, but such research need not go on for one's whole academic life. However, field research on the part of the sociologist may necessitate a substantial social organization comparable to that required by archaeological excavation. Therefore, the researcher leading the effort should have the leadership capabilities to secure highly reliable and valid data are obtained.

2. Methodology

The research effort covered in this paper took its concrete form in the archaeological excavation at Van Ayanis over the period July 20, 2017 - August 1, 2017. The selection of the excavation for the present piece of sociological research was based on two reasons. The first is mostly related to the academic background of the team leader, who did his undergraduate, master's and PhD studies at Ege University –an institution noted for solid archaeological tradition – and who is a faculty member at Atatürk University –an institution with strong roots and exemplary status in the field. Furthermore, the excavation facilitates the tracking of the roots of two distinct schools. The second reason stems from the fact that the excavation had been continuing without interruption since 1989, the year when it began with Altan Çilingiroğlu as its team leader. In other words, the excavation has its own institutional identity.

The method employed in the study is the qualitative-oriented grounded theory perspective. This choice does not come from the researcher's personal preferences in opposition to positivism and quantitative research and opting instead for hermeneutics. What actually set the tone for the method is the subject matter itself. Indeed, qualitative field research is the best means to analyze a small group existing and operating in relative isolation from the rest of society, which is what an excavation team is. As the study did not intend to try and validate pre-determined general concepts, and it is actually a small-scale theoretical abstraction production process, grounded theory is a natural choice.

It may be asked why ethnographic method is not employed instead of grounded theory. There are two answers to such question: first, an ethnographic study requires a longer period of time as "one of the main features of ethnographic approach is to observe people in their natural environments for a long duration"(Robson, 2015: 176). Besides, "in the traditional ethnographic studies data collection takes much time, mostly

years"(Robson, 2015: 177). Since our field observation on archeologists was limited to ten days, in terms of time it did not comply with the ethnographic approach. Second, grounded theory is more functional in the study of small groups and organizations in that though interviewing is the most widespread data collection technique it also provides the researcher with the opportunity of making use of observation and document analysis in the data collection process. Glaser and Strauss, who formed the theory, "carried their study first in organizations. Their study field was the deaths in hospitals which inspired their first methodological studies"(Robson, 2015: 183). In the ethnographic study, researchers are expected to become members of the group they study as such study depends on being in the group for a long time. Data analysis is done after the data collection. However, in the grounded theory "the researcher goes to the field to collect data, then goes to what is at hand to analyze, then back to the field for more information, and then analysis again by building correlations. It is much similar to the interpretivist dialogue process. This is quite different from the one-dimensional linear model in which you collect data first and then you analyze it."(Robson, 2015: 183). Though our study on the archeologists was limited to ten days, with its uninterrupted continuity it seems to be liable to the ethnographic model; however, since the data formed by interviews and observations are analysed daily, the study comply more with grounded theory. The data collected by way of interviews and observations in one day formed the frame of the observations and interview questions of the following day.

As a reaction to positivism, grounded theory grew in the tradition of qualitative research. Its basic claim regards developing quite modest and limited theoretical abstractions lacking generalization, based on an experience of small-scale human companionship and relationship forms, rather than starting with theoretical generalizations and concepts early on in research, and proceeding to test such concepts through the research process(Layder, 2013: 42-4; Robson, 2015: 181-4; Scott, Morisson, 2016: 286-290). The principles of grounded theory are as follows: "First of all, the advocacy of a practical research manual rather than a set of inflexible rules; secondly, an increased emphasis on analysis and description, on the part of qualitative research; ... thirdly, the development of theories through empirical research, coupled with the need to avoid ad-hoc appendices; fourthly, the need for the researcher's focus on researching with an open mind (for new theories), rather than testing the existing theories of the field; and finally, the need to avoid making clear-cut specifications about research participants"(Scott, Morrison., 2016; 287-8). The present study complied with these principles of grounded theory. Instead of starting with theoretical preconceptions and the pre-existing knowledge, the process was begun with a clean slate. Therefore, the objective was to focus on producing categories and abstractions on the basis of practical life. For instance, applying the term theater to describe the self-expression of the hierarchy prevailing at the excavation, or emphasizing the generation of consent in the work performance of the excavation team were all ideas which grew as a result of the research. Furthermore, the research was perceived as a learning process. Indeed, a flexible methodology evolving with reference to the prevailing conditions was employed rather than a methodological scheme with strict limits.

Moreover, steps of defocusing, as necessitated by qualitative field research, whereby a conscious effort is made to forget previous knowledge about the research topic, sharing experiences with group studies, engaging in and empathizing with the group, taking regular notes, and carrying out in-depth interviews through semi-structured questions, were performed. The study entailed in-depth interviews with ten individuals including graduate students and academic staff.

3. Hierarchy at the Excavation

Ayanis Excavation exhibits a division of labor where duties and responsibilities are clearly specified. The success of the excavation depends on the division of labor and the operation of the hierarchical organization based on that. The team leader's answer to the question "What is your definition of a successful excavation?" was: "Problem-free execution of the excavation; achievement of the established targets; problem-free budget; and publishing of the required texts" can be realized only through the implementation of the division of labor and hierarchy.

At Ayanis Excavation, the major duties with reference to the division of labor and the hierarchical structure in effect can be described as follows:

Team Leader: The leader represents the top level of the hierarchy. They are not so concerned with the practical aspect of the excavation. Rather, they are engaged in contacting local governments, getting funding, and public relations. From an external perspective, their position is the most comfortable one in the whole excavation. Yet, their symbolic authority makes them truly essential in terms of the implementation of the excavation. Their functions include assigning punishments and rewards, and securing justice. Any interpersonal issues which arise at the excavation site or the house which cannot be resolved by their subordinates are eventually escalated to them to be settled. Still, the number of issues they personally deal with is low, as most issues are settled by their subordinates, without getting them involved. The team leader serves a function comparable to that of the president in a state, director in an institution, or rector at a university. In academia, the team leader is at professor level.

Deputy Team Leader: The deputy is one of the two academic members of staff working at the excavation. In the present case, he is a 28-year-old male, working on his PhD dissertation. Deputies are also the de facto head of digging procedures, even though the team leader holds that position de jure. In practice, every matter of note at the excavation area is their responsibility. They settle the interpersonal disputes at the site, and decide on what to take into account in digging activities, and where to dig, etc. They handle the issues between individual trench supervisors, and those matters a trench supervisor cannot handle in a given trench. The team leader truly relies on their excavation practice. They report to the team leader.

Financial Affairs Officer: This is the most experienced person at the excavation site, save for the team leader. In this case it is a 34-year-old male working on his PhD dissertation. He does not hold an academic position at a university, for he was only recently able to meet the foreign language proficiency requirement. However, the prevailing view among the excavation team is that, among all the people waiting for an academic position to be available, he is the one that deserves it most. He has taken part in numerous excavations, and has been based at Ayanis for a long time. The Team Leader truly trusts his judgment on any matter. Even though nominally financial affairs officers handle financial affairs only, in practice, they are responsible for every aspect of the excavation, with the exception of trenches. Affairs regarding the excavation house, the arrangement of the schemes, connections with the outer world, and contacts with government officials are among their responsibilities. They do not intervene in the trenches out of respect for the deputy team leader, but their superiority in the practical hierarchy is felt widely.

Financial affairs is not actually one of the responsibilities an archaeologist needs to handle in a given excavation team. For instance, in the Van Castle Excavations, this task is assumed by a professional accountant.

Junior Financial Affairs Officer: In this excavation, this is a 28-year-old female currently working on her MA dissertation. Junior financial affairs officers work as the assistant of the financial affairs officer (FAO). In parallel with how the FAO's responsibilities exceeding well beyond financial affairs, so do their assistant's. They are the top three individuals on which the team leader relies. In practice, their rank is close to that of the deputy leader, but they make sure to stay one step behind at all times.

House officers: Both house officers here are 24-year-old women and both are currently studying for their master's degrees. House officers occupy one of the most strategic positions in terms of ensuring healthy operations. In parallel with the military, where the fighters on the front are supported by logistics operations, depending on the latter for their success, the house officers at the excavation work in the background and make sure that the daily requirements of the digging works are met. They are responsible for many matters, ranging from the cheese in the refrigerator to the dishes to be cooked, and the arrangement of the findings brought in from the site. They are responsible for every matter, save for the restoration of findings. Delivering the materials to the restoration and drawing staff, following up and recollecting the materials, general cleaning etc. are but a few of their responsibilities. Even though they are officially direct subordinates of the team leader, at times they also report to the financial affairs officer. They are appointed from among reliable individuals who have previous excavation experience. As they spend so much time with the team leader, they may enjoy certain advantages compared to trench supervisors.

Trench Supervisors: These are individuals responsible on the front line of the excavation. The trench refers to each compartment where excavation is performed. There are three trenches at the site, each with its own officer. The supervisor of Trench 1, a 28-year-old woman, holds a Bachelor's degree in archaeology, and is currently studying for her MA in Sculpture. As Trench 1 is located inside the temple, it is also the most important. This individual has previously served as a house officer, and moved to the position of trench supervisor on her own volition. She wanted to take a position within the trench hierarchy, as she is currently working on her degree in sculpture. In that context, she is working on restoration activities. She holds a respectable position before the team leader. She reports to the deputy team leader, who is the general supervisor of the trenches.

The second trench is also the second most important, and is located at the back part of the temple. The relevant trench supervisor is a 26-year-old male graduate student. He is relatively new in excavations, compared with the individuals named above. He reports to the deputy team leader.

The third trench actually has two trench supervisors. One is a 24-year-old male Master's student. He is the newest addition to the team, among all the Master's students and trench supervisors. He holds no previous dig experience. The second officer is a senior year student with experience in excavations. These trench supervisors also report to the deputy team leader.

Undergraduate Students: The undergrads serve under the supervision of the trench supervisors. Every day, a student is left as the attendant of the house, and carries out house chores and cleaning duties as assigned by the house officers. As an attendant, the student reports to the house officer, but while working in a trench, they report to the trench supervisor.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture is represented at the excavation, by an excavation commissar. The commissar oversees the excavation, to see if the applicable rules are being observed or not.

Another group involved are the general laborers. They are paid staff members usually hired from surrounding villages/towns, and carry out the physical rough work at the excavation site. Where a finer approach is needed as a find is revealed, the digging is taken over by the students and archaeologists, who are considered the true members of the team.

The excavation is dominated by a very clear hierarchy. That hierarchy makes itself felt in every aspect of the activities, from the layout plan to the shared facilities, from the seating arrangements on the dinner table to seating in coffee breaks, and even to the individual who takes the front seat on the minibus when going on an excursion.

The excavation house is composed of four sections. The first compartment is comprised of four prefabricated containers overlooking the road to the excavation house where undergrads stay, and is often a bare-bone arrangement. The second and the third compartments are the essential structures constituting the excavation house. The second compartment is actually composed of three sections, and contains the public spaces of the excavation house – the kitchen, the computer room, the room where the finds are kept and where the drawing work is carried out. The third compartment contains the rooms where the 'senior' members of the excavation team reside, and constitutes the left wing of the structure. This compartment starts right next to the drawing room. The first room is used by the Excavation Commissar, the second by the Financial Affairs Officer, the third by the Deputy Team Leader, and the final by the Team Leader. The Team Leader's room occupies the best part of the excavation house, in terms of space as well as the view. Next to that room is a small coffee table, accompanied by two chairs on both sides. This part of the house is used for a coffee break now and then, has a nice view of Mount Süphan and Lake Van, and is reserved for the use of the Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader, Financial Affairs Officer and Junior Financial Affairs Officer, the Excavation Commissar, and important guests. To the left of the coffee table is a chair with a pillow, reserved for the team leader only. Throughout the 10-day period in which the study was carried out, that chair was occupied exclusively by the team leader, and the former team leader. The comforts and the access to beautiful vistas are scaled back as one moves down the ladder of the hierarchy. The fourth compartment is a smaller building standing apart from the original excavation house complex, and contains three rooms to the left. This building is home to female graduate students taking part in the excavation.

Approximately 30 meters away from the excavation house, to the right, are the toilets and the bathrooms. Among the four toilets/bathrooms, the one to the left is reserved for female students, while the one next to it is reserved for male students. The third is reserved for the PhD student Financial Affairs Officer, and the one to the right is reserved for the Team Leader, Excavation Commissar, and other faculty member guests.

The dining tables in the kitchen are arranged in a U shape. On the right-hand side of the U sit the undergraduate students. On the left end of the table is the seat of the Team Leader, facing the Financial Affairs Officer. Next to the Team Leader sits his Deputy. The Junior Financial Affairs Officer sits next to the Financial Affairs Officer. Next to the Deputy Team Leader, the house officers are lined up, whereas the seats next to the Junior Financial Affairs Officer are reserved for the trench supervisors. The seat of the Team Leader is left unoccupied when he is not at the site. If he is at the

site, no one starts having dinner before he arrives. He is the one who starts the dinner procession. During the study, only the Team Leader was observed to occupy the seat of the Team Leader. The rations get smaller and the options get poorer, albeit very mildly, as one moves down the hierarchy from the Team Leader to the undergrads.

In front of the excavation house is a space where the team members enjoy recreational activities and drink tea after dinner. In one corner of this space comprising two extended tables and seating arrangements sits the Team Leader's chair with a pillow (the only chair with a pillow there). He is surrounded by the Financial Affairs Officer, the Deputy Team Leader, the Commissar, and the Junior Financial Affairs Officer. Then come the house officers, trench supervisors, and at the opposite end, the undergraduate students.

After the dinner, every member of the team, with the exception of the Team Leader takes his or her dish to the washing site. During breakfast and other tea services, the cups of the team leader and his immediate circle (Financial Affairs Officer, Deputy Team Leader, and the Junior Financial Affairs Officer) are filled by the house attendant, while the other members of the team fill their own cups. Turkish coffee is made by someone good at preparing it, for the Team Leader and the second tier of the hierarchy. It is seen as rude to chat around the Team Leader, or to extend one's legs when sitting near him.

All these rituals based on detail impose a theatrical nature on the life at the excavation site. These rituals may look silly to the outsider; however, they are necessary to ensure the operation and efficiency of the hierarchy at the excavation site. Indeed, the competition between the excavation team expresses itself in the struggle over such details. For instance, sitting one's chair closer or farther from the Team Leader, compared to one's usual spot during the dinners or coffee breaks attests to a change in one's position in the overall hierarchy. As the academic domain outside the excavation is shaped against the context of excavation, the position one acquires at the excavation may have direct consequences on one's future academic career. In the past where archaeology academics had a certain influence over politics, one's reputation at an excavation had an impact on not only one's academic career, but also on any career options available to archaeologists, such as positions within the Ministry of Culture.

4. Suffering and Consent within the Organization

Another phenomenon observed at the Ayanis Excavation and confirmed in in-depth interviews carried out is the suffering faced. The excavation environment is marked by suffering, even when previously noted funding problems are not experienced. The distance of Ayanis Excavation from the provincial center of Van, as well as from any major settlement (the nearest settlement being a small village named Alaköy) makes the excavation a tough ordeal. Indeed, the excavation house lacks any internet connection; the mobile phone reception is shaky at best. Access to the city is limited, and thus it is difficult to get supplies for one's personal needs. Ordinary consumption goods feel like luxuries and so on. The excavation site's menu consists of a diet of cheese, olives, bread and jam, which might not appeal you at all in your normal routine. The likeliness of having eggs for breakfast is low. Any special kind of dessert or drink is simply unavailable. One could easily add more and more items to this list. As the Financial Affairs Officer put it in our in-depth interview, the excavation site is not dissimilar to the TV show Survivor. In other words, it is a struggle to survive.

Camel spiders, known as “omar” by the locals, accompany the archaeologists at all times. Sheep dogs are simply hazards in one’s vicinity. Each and every member of the excavation team feels like an island in the ocean of locals as they come from different regions. The team needs to keep its communications and relations with the locals warm at all times. It is also necessary to avoid taking sides in local disputes, to learn to cope with many problems concerning excavation site denomination demands or illicit excavations, etc., all the while keeping relations with local government officials warm.

This need to endure the inevitabilities of archaeological life has evolved into an essential part of the living environment at excavations. Indeed, suffering have evolved into a mechanism that separates the wheat from chaff in the context of recruitment for archaeology and other employment opportunities. Regardless of the class one belongs to (and it is an undisputed fact that, until very recent decades, archaeologists in Turkey, as well as the wider world belonged to the elite), failure to cope with the tough environment will lead to elimination. As is the case with military units, sufi orders, or monasteries, archaeological excavations see the endurance of difficulties as a measure of whether one belongs to the group. A most telling anecdote is available on this matter. The current team leader made an agreement with Tuşba Municipality and had a cobblestone pavement laid on the road to the excavation house, brought along the containers currently inhabited by the undergrads, and had solar panels installed to provide hot water. During our time at the excavation site, the first thing, the former team leader complained about during his visit was the comfortable state of the excavation house and the cobblestones on the road to it. According to him, the difficulties at the excavation site were a necessity, and comfort was detrimental to the order and discipline at the site. During his time as team leader, hot water would be produced by leaving five-liter plastic water bottles under the sun, with each individual being allotted only two bottles. Dirty clothes would be hand-washed on a Sunday, and hung on the bushes nearby to dry. This was the case for all the excavation team as well as any guests, local or foreign. A substantial part of the excavation team–the lower tiers of the hierarchy in particular– stayed in tents. The tents become unbearable in Van’s hot summer days. Having taken part in the excavation as a student back then, the current deputy team leader described the sleeping arrangements as consisting of bunk beds set up on bare earth.

The social organization of the excavation is based on a consent arrangement operating in tandem with the hierarchy. Voluntary contributions to meet the demands of the excavation, and the will to endure suffering can be possible only through the fundamental pillar of consent. In this context, consent is enhanced through internal group solidarity and the feeling of friendship. The team leader plays a strategic part in the development of consent. The team leader should earn the affection of the team, and make sure that the required works are carried out on a voluntary basis, even though a hierarchical chain of command is always present and available. The main point shared in all in-depth interviews is the emotional affection towards the team leader. The duties in the excavation are performed not only as a requirement, but also for the ‘sake’ of the team leader. Regardless of one’s position, any request is considered just that, and not as an order. Indeed, when coping with the suffering, the feeling of solidarity and friendship developed among the ‘survivors’ serve, in a sense, as an equalizer among the whole team. For instance, in one of the in-depth interviews, it was noted that the team leader ate the same food as the rest of the team, and that this was a behavior drawing true respect. It was also stated that in some excavation projects, the team leader had better quality food compared to the rest of the team, or

ate out, which was not beneficial in terms of generating feelings of equality. The rule prohibiting having food outside the excavation house, at a restaurant for instance, applies to the whole team. For instance, in an incident the researchers witnessed during their time at the site, two student members of the team had to go to Yüzüncü Yıl University in the province center, to take an exam. The team leader repeated the rule they should abide by a few times, and told them to not go to the city center and return to the excavation site as soon as the exam was over. The warning served to prevent them from having food outside the camp.

In another example regarding consent, a female member of the team who was the junior financial affairs officer, who had been taking part in excavations with the team leader for quite some time, and who was a member of his trusted circle, asked for leave to handle some business in the province center on a weekend, but the team leader did not grant the leave. Even though the team member made her disappointment and sadness very clear, the team leader managed to put the incident to bed, without alienating or offending her.

A good example of how consent operates in addition to hierarchy in excavation work is a pathological case observed during the excavation. Such pathological cases can, at times, make it possible to get a better understanding of the operation of social organizations. The case discussed in this context took place in the past. A research assistant in the excavation team issuing orders to other team members –without building consent in the first place–and imposing his will arbitrarily on the affairs of others led to a crisis in the excavation, and caused major problems in the rest of the excavation season.

Another indicator of the affection for the team leader can be observed in the experience of a student who studied for his Bachelor's degree at Dokuz Eylül University. Interested in animal bones, the student applied for the relevant departments of both Ege University and Dokuz Eylül University to get courses on bones, but was denied. On the other hand, the Team Leader of Ayanis Excavation made sure that such courses were offered at Atatürk University, and referred her to an expert working on animal bones. During the interview, the student voiced her gratitude for the Team Leader, and said that he came to Erzurum from Izmir, just to do his graduate studies with him.

The fact that major decisions about Ayanis Excavation are discussed and decided on by the Team Leader and 'responsible' team members through a democratic process is one of the factors contributing to the development of consent. The interviews often noted that such a democratic approach did not occur in past excavations or most of the current ones. Therefore, securing the involvement of the excavation team in the decisions taken encourages the embracing of further responsibilities regarding the operations.

5. Excavation and Theory

In Turkey, from the earliest archaeological excavations and up until recently, archaeology was an activity associated with the elite. The class origins of archaeologists may probably have influenced their scientific practices as well. Indeed, one can argue that due to such class associations, archaeologists often dig the remains of palaces, temples, or the dwellings of the wealthy, and do not focus much on the settlements of the ordinary people(Karadaş: Demir, 2013). An exception in the past can be found in Abbasoğlu's Perge Excavation(Arsebük, 2003: 282). Ayanis

Excavation is yet another example. During the era when former team leader led the team, archaeologists joining from the US explored the settlements of the ordinary people outside the citadel (the settlement inside the castle, where the ruling class and the priests lived), and published their findings(Stone, 2001; Stone & Zimansky, 2003). The focus on non-wealthy classes in excavation sites is a result of a tendency arising in the US, and may be an indicator of a change in the class origins of academic archaeologists, evolving into a more populist profession in Turkey, as well as in the wider world. In another excavation on the Urartu people, led by Erkan Konyar, the Van Castle Excavation entailed trenches outside the citadel, and found a temple. In our interview, former team leader noted the intent to learn about the village life among the Urartu living outside the cities as the reason to dig a trench in Dilkaya Mound.

Even though some publications with a substantial capacity for theoretical abstraction predate the Ayanis Excavation, today, the relationship between the excavation team and the theory is rather weak. This observation suggests that the distance between academic archaeology in Turkey as well as various parts of the globe and social theory remains significant. In one of the interviews, the Master's student involved related the story of how he told the team leader he did not want to take part in the excavation, and how he received the response that it was impossible for him to graduate by just reading books, and that he had to take part in the excavation (this is not a reference to the redundancy or futility of reading books, but to the impossibility to carry out this process by just reading books).

A reason for a distant outlook towards social theory can be found in the sustained 'theoretical gap', a state of affairs unique to Turkish archaeology. Yet another reason lies in how the positivist tradition is reflected in sociology, which focuses on applied field research while putting the theoretical research on the back-burner, leading to an archaeology discipline where the descriptive analysis of the excavation and the findings revealed are prominent, while theoretical debates are completely ignored. As a matter of fact, this situation is not specific only to Turkey. Gavin Lucas, while discussing the effect of Thomas Khun's paradigm concept on archeology, argues that the paradigm concept did not apply to the epistemologic function but to the historiografic one(Lucas, 2016: 3). Thus, the critical approach to paradigm did not problematize the production of scientific knowledge. Lucas proposes an outlook for the production of archaeological knowledge. He refuses Binford's idea that archaeology deals with the past whereas anthropology with the present. "Binford suggested that the archaeological record encompasses long time spnas, whereas the ethnograpic record was simply caught in the present moment. As I argued, this was a false representation of the present, which is, in fact, multitemporal and encompasses multiple timescales... However, this does not mean, there is no difference between the ethnografic and archaeological record. The problem is, Binford presupposed the archeological record to lie exclusively in the past... But the archaeological record is all around us, it is always in the present –sometimes buried, sometimes visible, sometimes undisturbed, sometimes a living part of our daily lives. The difference between the ethnografic and archaeological record is one of primary orientation; in the case of ethnography, this is to other people, in the case of achaeology, to material culture"(Lucas, 2005: 120). He claims that archeological knowledge does not only represent the past; it also represents the present experience of the archeologist and their social-historical context. "While analysing the archeological records until the mid-20th century, he discriminates between artifact and ecofact, and claims that until the 1950s archeology dealt mostly with artifact and ignored ecofact. However, the distinction of ecofacts from artifacts is a little spurious – seeds and bones have

in many cases been used by humans and even modified (i.e. domesticated), and more generally, almost all such remains have been influenced by or are associated with human action in one way or another; otherwise, archaeologists would not be interested in them. Indeed, the artifact-ecofact distinction is really a manifestation of a deeper culture-nature dichotomy which has been under constant critique for decades...Certainly, in the nineteenth century, many archaeologists did retrieve what we would call ecofacts today, such as animal bones and seeds. But equally, the range and diversity of such ecofacts have undoubtedly increased, especially since the 1950s, under the influence of environmental research in archaeology, not to mention ecofacts becoming a more integrated and standard part of retrieval policies(Lucas, 2012: 11). This situations meant ignoring everyday human experience and focusing only on the description of the artifact object, isolating it from the humans working on it. After the middle of the 20th century, ecofact and everyday human experience began to gain importance. However, Lucas does not see this shift of focus adequate. He states that archaeology should go beyond focusing on the human only and begin to focus on the social space surrounding humans. “I think archaeology always will and should be, first and foremost, about people, not things. The more relevant question is how people are treated in archaeological narratives vis-a-vis other things”(Lucas, 2012: 261). In his words, a posthuman archeology should arise: “Societies are real, material assemblages composed of people, stones, plates, and horses; they are not transcendent entities which only exist through human individuals (e.g. as rules, beliefs, dispositions, structures). In this sense, archaeology is, then, about the social more than it is about the human; we can call it posthumanocentric if we like, posthuman even, but only in the sense that we are studying a world after humans have entered into it. The social is the posthuman in this sense”(Lucas, 2012: 265).

In contrast to many previous excavations, the Ayanis Excavation has embraced a different style in this context. Even though these publications employed certain theoretical concepts (e.g. division of labor, Asiatic Mode of Production, production style), the weakness of the associations with social theory, which could have provided depth into the topic studied and enabled the perception of various aspects of it, stands out as a shortcoming. The efforts on the part of a few team members, including but not limited to the Financial Affairs Officer, to explain the characteristics of Urartu economy and state with reference to Asiatic Mode of Production, as noted during our research at the excavation site, are noteworthy (yet, one should remember that Asiatic Mode of Production is, politely put, no longer in the immediate focus of social theory). A significant observation we made during our research at Ayanis was that the team members did not read any books or articles outside the time they spent for excavation (two exceptions were the Team Leader and the Financial Affairs Officer). Indeed, this is one of the major complaints the Team Leader voiced during our interview. The unwillingness of the team members in terms of reading around their own field (i.e. archaeology in general and Urartu history in particular), social theory, or even novels, make it difficult to ascribe wider social context to the materials unearthed.

6. Conclusion

The Ayanis Archaeological Excavation provides some insight into the general social organizations effected in Turkey for excavations, and its associations with social context, academic archaeology, and the informal criteria for getting a tenure track and promotions. Furthermore, the excavation reflects, to some extent, the social personality of the Team Leader and team members. For instance, the Team Leader stated

that the members of the team were more respectful and obedient, as they were from the Black Sea, Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions. Such a social distribution among the team leaders is an indicator of the change in the structure of the human resources pool that had hitherto dominated academic archaeology, signaling a move away from the urban elites mostly from Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and the areas surrounding these centers. All but one of the graduate students who took part in the team, with the potential to get an academic position in the future, are from the Black Sea, Eastern Anatolia, and Southeastern Anatolia regions. In line with the diversity of the population of the region, the people who assumed important responsibilities in the excavation included Kurds as well as Turks, Alevis, women with or without headscarves, and so on. During our interview with the team leader, he told it was difficult to supply gender equality in the team. However, our observation did not discern any gender discrimination in the excavation. But we cannot generalize this situation to all excavation experience and academic archeologist community in Turkey.

Yet another reason for this composition is the fact that the Team Leader is a faculty member of Erzurum Atatürk University, and that he gathered his team from among the students of his department. Furthermore, the modest family background of the Team Leader may also have something to do with the hiring of individuals from different social backgrounds.

Ayanis Excavation bears the traces of not just the current team leader, but also the former team leader. Having spent his childhood in the region as his father was for many years a tax officer in Van, he has a strong understanding of the people of the region, and is capable of empathizing with them. That attribute played some part in sustaining the excavation for extended years, without any problems. Furthermore, it allowed the inclusion of the people from the surrounding areas in the team, leading to the eventual employment of some of these team members in academic positions. His past as a political dissident in his early student years may have also played a part in assuming a stance distinct from that of an orthodox academic archaeologist. Indeed, he stated that during his studies at the university, he took an active role in the Protests of 1968. One can argue that Istanbul University, which had been at the epicenter of this movement, produced a new generation of archaeologists such as Halet Çambel, Mehmet Özdoğan, and Altan Çilingiroğlu, who are characterized by an investigating and dissident perspective. The fact that Ayanis Excavation employs a higher number of individuals who are more interested in social theory, compared to the teams in other excavations, may be a consequence of this. Furthermore, the context described above and the influence of American archaeologists may also have something to do with the excavation covering ordinary laborer settlements as well, reaching beyond the citadel.

Ayanis Archaeological Excavation presents certain codes required for a successful excavation in Turkey. A hierarchy imposing a clear division of labor to enable a large team to perform a certain work requiring substantial efforts is necessary. However, hierarchical chain of command is not, by itself, sufficient to motivate the team members. For the team leader to achieve such motivation, the consent of the team members should be obtained.

In addition, the lifestyle observed at the excavation, and the ability to cope with difficulties, also play their part in academic life outside the excavation. Indeed, with specific reference to archaeology, one can argue that the academic domain is mostly shaped by the practice of excavation. Former team leader, mentioned a case where, along time ago, he gave a reference for a student who wanted to take part in the Troy

Excavation, but as the student left the excavation site after a while without notifying anyone, it lead to a permanent resentment plaguing his relationship with the German archaeologist who led the team at Troy. In other words, the negative or positive performance of a student at an excavation has consequences for the academic reputation of the reference provider. However, as new departments have been opened all over the country in recent years, leading to an increase in the number of academic archaeologists, the number of academic archaeologists who are not appointed to an excavation has also grown. As a result, an "armchair archaeologist" model who spends more of their time on theoretical aspects of the discipline is in the making. Moreover, the influence of the higher echelons of the archaeological community over the careers of those in the lower echelons is now rather limited. The consequences of such limitations on the hierarchy at the excavation site, and the students' willingness to take part in excavations are obvious. In the interviews with the participants including the new and the former team leaders as well, the application of the hierarchy at the excavation site is noted to be associated, in a sense, with a system of rewards and punishments. The greatest reward, again, is a tenure track position at a university, or a position at the Ministry of Culture or a museum. As the academic archaeologists' influence in terms of determining who gets the benefits of these two career opportunities, and as the influence of the political power grows, the excavation as an institution is naturally affected. The increasing importance of political power in determining career outcomes has enabled a generation of archaeology graduates who do not have any excavation experience, to reach the positions of academic staff and museum curators. This naturally has its repercussions on the qualities of the archaeologists employed. Even though it is now abolished, the Academic Staff Training Program (ÖYP) had effectively minimized the role of academic archaeologists in terms of appointments to academic career positions. A solution proposed to remedy this situation, by current team leader could sustain the influence of the archaeologists, as well as the implementation of a centralized screening system: "Today, in contrast to the past, everything is not about the professor. The reward for hard work at an excavation is a position in a university or a museum... But not everyone involved in the excavation gets appointed. But getting a good position, enhancing your reputation is possible through excavation. When you apply for a job, you are required to submit a CV. So you can check which excavations someone has worked on and who they worked with. In the past, this was more important. The professors had a stronger reputation. Now, people who have not seen a single excavation can be appointed. The master-apprentice system implemented at the excavation is crucial... The ÖYP system should be applied as the initial stage. The candidate from the ÖYP system should then be trained within a framework where the professor is more effective. The professor should have more say over the final assessment."

7. References

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