

MALTA BEYOND MALTA: THE CONFLUENCE BETWEEN PREVENTIVE AND PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY AS A NEW HORIZON *

Malta más allá de Malta: La confluencia entre arqueología preventiva y
arqueología pública como un nuevo horizonte

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ABSTRACT This paper attempts to diagnose the current situation of the model of preventive archaeology (defined here as Malta archaeology) ten years after the beginning of the global crisis. By defining its basic characteristics and how it works in this particular political and economic context, whilst also analysing the effects of the crisis, both in the structure and social dynamics of the sector, we examine its evolution and development from a self-critical point of view and propose the need for a change in the model. The new model, which we define as applied archaeology, should aspire to being radically sustainable and participative, assuming the achievements brought about by Malta archaeology in terms of management mechanisms and the socialization of heritage but opening up its field of action and integrating advances and the shift derived from the growing importance of critical studies of heritage and approaches to public archaeology.

Key words: Malta Convention, Preventive Archaeology, Public Archaeology, Applied Archaeology, Global Crisis.

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RESUMEN Este artículo trata de diagnosticar la situación actual del modelo de arqueología preventiva (definido aquí como arqueología de Malta) diez años después del inicio de la crisis global. Definiendo sus características básicas y como funciona en este contexto político y económico, a la vez que analizando los efectos de la crisis, tanto estructurales como en las dinámicas del sector, se examina su evolución y desarrollo desde una perspectiva autocrítica y se propone un cambio de modelo. El nuevo modelo, que definimos como arqueología aplicada, debe aspirar a ser radicalmente sostenible y participativo, asumiendo los logros conseguidos por la arqueología de Malta en lo que se refiere a los mecanismos de gestión y socialización del patrimonio, pero abriendo su campo de acción y asumiendo los avances de los estudios críticos del patrimonio y la arqueología pública.

Palabras clave: Convención de Malta, Arqueología preventiva, Arqueología pública, Arqueología aplicada, Crisis global.

INTRODUCTION: CRISIS MEANS CHANGE

Over the course of the last ten years, the perception which European archaeology had of itself has changed. Following a twenty-year period of stunning growth, the global crisis, which began in 2008, has undermined any self-indulgent points of view which may have existed. A brief look at the reports of the two editions of the *Discovering the Archaeologists of Europe* project makes it clear: whilst prior to 2008 the sector underwent constant growth in all countries (Aitchison, 2009a:13), in the second report, a decline could be observed in several countries (Aitchison, 2010:25-29; YAT, 2014:21). However, in the countries in which the sector continued to grow, the working conditions got worse (less stability, more job insecurity; Cleary et al. 2014). In the case of Spain, many companies (42%) have simply disappeared and unemployment in the sector has reached scandalous heights (66%: Parga-Dans and Varela-Pousa, 2014:8).

It should not be forgotten that this crisis has, above all, affected people, archaeological workers, whose working conditions have deteriorated, if not disappeared, across the board (see Everill, 2009 for a detailed ethnographic study of commercial archaeology in Britain following the onset of the crisis). The economic situation has also affected the availability of funding for the research, management and socialization of archaeology; the crisis has shattered both the traditional academic model (based on basic or fundamental research projects) and the so-called preventive or development-led model of archaeology (Schlanger and Aitchison, 2010:10). Preventive archaeology, which became established thanks to the signing of the Valletta Treaty (also known as the Malta Convention) and was endorsed by the Council of Europe in 1992 (Council of Europe, 1992; Schlanger and Aitchison, 2010:11), does not depend on strictly academic criteria (as was previously the case) but accompanies processes of modernization and development in order to avoid or minimize the impact of these processes on archaeological remains.

This model of archaeology is influenced by European policies of environmental assessment (Directive 85/337 and all of its derivatives on a European and national

level; Barreiro, 2005:467-498; Almansa, 2017:227-265), which serve as a global framework, guided by the general principle of “polluter pays”, which places the responsibility of covering the cost of damage caused to the environment on those who caused it¹. Therefore, any organism (a company or an institution) wishing to carry out an action which will affect the environment (including archaeological heritage) to a certain degree should cover the costs of adopting preventive or protective measures (when these are aimed at avoiding damage) or of palliative or compensatory measures (when the damage is unavoidable or unexpected).

It is a well-known fact that it is exactly this model of preventive archaeology which has generated the largest volume of archaeological work in recent decades in Europe (Aitchison, 2009b; YAT, 2014), due to the great number of projects concerning the planning and construction phases of various types of infrastructure (housing, transport, energy, mining, etc.) carried out in Europe in recent years, which have had a considerable effect on the landscape.

This archaeological model is currently experiencing a crisis on several fronts:

1. First of all, from *systematic pressure*: an increase can be observed in the tendency to see this archaeological model as a problem or an obstacle to development, rather than a help. This tendency has gained strength among political and judicial institutions (notably in the legal changes which are taking place in Spain: Alonso Ibáñez, 2014; García, 2014). This situation implies a double stigma for the Malta model in that not only does it lack “social utility” as “human science” but it is also a burden for activities which truly generate wealth and employment. It goes without saying that this discourse, with right-wing populism and Fascism currently undergoing constant growth, is extremely dangerous for the survival of not only preventive archaeology and human sciences in general, but also of all those disciplines related to the sustainable management of cultural and natural resources (Trump tweeted on 3rd May 2012 that “fracking will lead to American energy Independence”).
2. An *epistemological critique* is also being formed from within the discipline: In its desire to preserve and protect (to avoid direct effects on heritage, which also usually bring about high costs), Malta archaeology has left aside the matter of the production of knowledge, which would be stronger if the criteria were less protectionist and more interventionist (Willems 2008, 2014). This criticism comes from a much-loved author who played an important role in the consolidation of the Malta model. Therefore, we can refer to it as self-criticism although, in some way, it pairs up with the criticism made in the past by certain academic sectors which considered themselves (and still do) to be on the margins of heritage management. In any case, Willems

1. Even in countries where the Malta Convention was ratified very late (as is the case of Spain in 2011), the influence of the preventive archeology model that it advocates has also been felt through environmental legislation and heritage laws themselves.

does not renounce heritage management but rather advocates for a review of the policies which direct it.

3. An *ideological critique* is also being formed from within the discipline: some authors continue to criticise the connivance of this model of archaeology with the processes of capitalist modernization (Vicent, 1991; Lull, 2008:118-123; Zorzin, 2015; Hamilakis, 2015). In general, some of these more critical voices are closer to the point of view of both “public archaeology” (Richardson and Almansa-Sanchez, 2015:203-205) and the so-called “critical heritage studies” (from the pioneers Wright, 1985; Hewison, 1987; Walsh, 1992; Lowenthal, 1998). From the point of view of the most critical sectors of public archaeology, preventive archaeology and management are seen as inseparable parts of the so-called Authorised Heritage Discourse (Waterton and Smith, 2009) due to the fact that it has generally been applied behind society’s and the communities’ backs. In other words, it has not been very “public”.
4. This internal criticism is supported, as is to be expected, although it may seem in some way paradoxical (authorised voices which advocate their own dis-authorisation), in the pressure exerted by certain social actors who question the authority wielded by experts in order to monopolize debates affecting people’s daily lives and denounce the lack of social participation in the taking of decisions (Ayán and Gago, 2012). This is related to the *crisis of legitimacy* experienced by experts, which may often be connected to the systematic pressure mentioned in the first point, when faced with a growing demand for participation from certain sectors of society as far as technical and scientific matters (so-called public or citizen science) and, of course, heritage affairs are concerned.

Faced with these internal and external pressures, in recent years institutions have published different documents on heritage policy on a European level originating from the Faro Convention, which laid out the foundations of a new heritage discourse with the aim of taking the people into account (Council of Europe, 2005). As a consequence, a series of official documents followed, leading to the Resolution of September 2015 of the European Parliament (European Parliament, 2015) which proposed an integrated approach to the management of European cultural heritage. Marking out this process, we find, for example, the conclusions of the Council of the European Union on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe (Council of the European Union, 2014a) and on the participative governance of cultural heritage (Council of the European Union, 2014b). All of this goes to prove that something truly is changing in terms of heritage policies (Florjanowicz, 2016; Barreiro & Varela-Pousa, 2017).

In spite of these institutional attempts to change the pace, it is true that the model of preventive archaeology which was consolidated in Malta is currently undergoing a profound crisis. Given the fact that crisis is a synonym of change occurring within an organism or a system, we propose taking Malta beyond Malta. We seek a different, transforming scenario in the dialectical confluence of the model which

Malta embodies and the open and participatory model which is normally defended from the point of view of critical heritage studies and public archaeology. This confluence does not contradict our proposal for applied archaeology, conceived as a form of archaeology which, irrevocably based on the production of archaeological knowledge, focuses on the production, management and socialization of heritage (Barreiro, 2013). In this way, *applied archaeology (Malta beyond Malta) would integrate the dimension of management (which, of course, includes preventive archaeology) and the dimension of total socialization (opening-up, participation, co-construction) which is implicit in public archaeology* (Moshenska, 2017).

However, in order to lay the foundations for our proposal, we believe it is necessary, first of all, to summarize the main characteristics of archaeology today, largely based on the consolidation of the Malta model and the hegemony of the preventive model. At the end of the day, a self-critical analysis of the trajectory of the discipline, in which we have been immersed for all of these years, is part of the attitude which we believe must be sustained in order to be able to speak of both a “preventive” and a “public” model of archaeology.

“However, as archaeologists, historians and indeed social scientists, we need also to be critical and reflexive regarding the *concrete* structures and institutions within which archaeological research is conducted, concrete conditions which cannot be separated from the archaeological discipline as a whole” (Demoule, 2010:17).

A SELF-CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PREVENTIVE ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology and the system

As we have already mentioned, archaeology has become consolidated in Europe (and in many other parts of the world) in the last thirty years as a specific social sector from a professional point of view and as a practice which is socially constituted and validated. All of this has taken place within the framework of late capitalist processes of economic modernization and of the constitution of archaeological heritage as a segment of reality with legal and administrative consistency.

The legislation incorporated and/or updated a whole set of rules aimed at the management of archaeological heritage. Indeed, Malta constitutes the international formalization of different national policies with the aim of conjugating development with the preservation of heritage, be it natural, cultural or historical (Howard, 2013:6-8) along with the regulation of environmental protection. As we have already mentioned, the “polluter pays” principle fed the archaeology of this period, as was the case with other disciplines relating to the environment and the landscape. As a consequence, *the Administration developed policies for action and intervention for the protection of heritage*, with differing degrees of success depending on the country. In Spain, for example, an Administration which was relatively weak from the beginning had to confront accelerated processes of growth and modernization

which were aimed at recuperating, at an extremely high price, the time lost during the Franco regime in terms of infrastructure and civil construction.

This change in the legal framework lies at the root of a profound change in the very *socio-economic structure of the discipline*, which makes it possible to state that the emergence of the independent archaeological sector responded to a legally-induced demand (Parga-Dans, 2010b; Parga-Dans *et al.*, 2016). Archaeology became an independent professional practice and made a place for itself in the market, albeit with differing degrees of success depending on the particular conditions of each country. The necessities derived from the presence of archaeologists in the economic dynamics of modernization led to initiatives being promoted with the aim of educating students in the management of heritage by means of specialized courses, postgraduate degrees, masters' degrees, etc. In the case of Spain, this modernization in the processes of higher education has only begun to take place in recent times (Querol, 2011). In some cases, it has been the professionals themselves that have created their own criteria, procedures and codes of conduct (see for example CifA, 2014a). In any case, *the immersion of archaeology in the specific processes of work enhancement of the capitalist system is implied.*

Furthermore, profound changes in relation to the *role of archaeology in society* have occurred. These changes are related to processes of the enhancement of heritage (here we refer to all the values which come into play in these processes (Barreiro, 2012; Incipit, 2014), in which archaeological work plays an important role. Enhancement is an inseparable part of heritage processes (which is not the same as recognizing an intrinsic value in objects which constitute heritage). Therefore, archaeology can be understood as a means of producing social value. This awareness of heritage processes as enhancement can also be detected on the level of the public as social demand for a greater degree of participation in the processes of heritage appropriation clearly demonstrates an increase in the appreciation of, or contempt for, certain elements of reality and in the awareness of the values (emotional, symbolic and economic) which are activated in this process of appreciation/contempt. As also occurs in the case of archaeological work, certain systematic influences are present in this activation, relating to processes of capitalist enhancement and to the use and consumption of heritage resources.

As has previously been mentioned, this increase in awareness of heritage lies parallel to the "discovery" of archaeological heritage as an economic resource of prime importance (Grefe, 1990), associated to the boom in cultural tourism and, therefore, an important part of the cultural industries of the late modern age (Barreiro and Parga-Dans, 2013). Archaeology has become ever more immersed in the processes of commercialization of heritage, which leads to positive aspects in terms of economic activation (this is another reason for which the sector has grown) but also to negative ones in terms of cultural use as the conversion of heritage into a product to be consumed implies a trivialization and banalization of both the resources themselves and the work objectified within them. We shall not go into detail here on a matter which has been the subject of much study over a long period of time (from the aforementioned pioneering critical studies of Hewison, Wright, Walsh

and Lowenthal, in the wake of Adorno and the Frankfurt School). We merely wish to add that, from our point of view, the economic environment, which integrates production relations, both as guidelines of use and the consumption of culture continues to be at the basis of social dynamics. With the crisis of the welfare state and the disappearance of Keynesian capitalism (which is more pronounced in some countries than in others), the subservience of political and legal power (which makes the existence of Malta possible) to the interests of a minority of the privileged class becomes more accentuated.

There is an undeniable (and inevitable) process of colonization of this nucleus, which has a wealth of social activations (which are not exempt from the tensions and dissensions of any kind of social life) on the part of the political and economic media of the system, which lead to it becoming objectified, ever more bureaucratic and commercialized. For some authors (Alonso, 2017), heritage constitutes a fundamental category of this process of colonization rather than being a victim of it (as the positivists would have it) or its accomplice (as its critics see it). Although we essentially share this critical point of view, we incline towards the adoption of a more pragmatic-critical position in our way of thinking (Barreiro, 2013). This is because, in the framework of neo-liberalism, one of the two systemic media (the legal-administrative aspect), in spite of all its deficiencies, still acts as a protection zone for social life. Although it never ceases to be part of the mechanisms of class dominance, the state apparatus still acts as a safeguard for public interest against the economic interests of the powerful.

Archaeology today is fully integrated into the system but it maintains a nucleus which concerns the very essence of archaeological work as far as social work is concerned: the production of knowledge based on social activity on an existing materiality, with the subsequent generation of a new materiality, a new social dynamic and new social values of transformation. In the same way, we admit that the category “*Heritage*” forms parts of the practice and discourse of capitalist modernity and we aspire to the utopia of its eventual disappearance. However, as is the case of other modern categories such as “human rights” or even “democracy”, we believe it still to be necessary.

What it could have been but was not

The self-criticism which we are practising is not at all naïve. Almost everybody knew the risks of the operation and the possible consequences of the complete immersion of archaeology into the late-capitalist system. From before Malta, the management of archaeology was subject to criticism from a portion of the academic sphere and post-processualism, which viewed it as representing the abandonment of archaeology’s principles when faced with the market’s demands and extra-archaeological interests (Shanks and Tilley, 1987). This refusal to participate in what was coming was also the object of criticism from other authors who demanded that a theory of management be put forward (Carman, 1991; Smith, 1993), and even

a substitution, within the world of management, of the predominant processual paradigm by a more politically-engaged post-processualism (Smith, 1994). For Smith, a more committed attitude on the part of Academia would have minimized the impact of archaeology coming to form part of the mechanisms of the system and its colonization by the bureaucratic and capitalist media.

At that time, Criado-Boado (1996a:22-23) pointed out the need to take steps towards adapting archaeology to this new reality: First of all, the reinvention of a model of archaeology free from ties to archaeological objects taken to be fossils; Secondly, a new attitude towards the destruction of the archaeological record by the dynamics of modernization, which did not lament so much the disappearance of objects but which concerned itself more with attributing meaning to the objects which were destroyed; Thirdly, the assumption that it was necessary to destroy part of heritage in order to enrich social life by building memory; Fourthly, the vindication of archaeology as a constructive practice of knowledge (compared with those who continued to consider archaeology as a complementary discipline to history); Fifthly, the overlapping of archaeology with a Theory of History (not on a lower level but rather on its own level of epistemological specificity) which offers interpretative models coherent with social reality. If these steps (which fit well with the recent demands of Willems 2014, mentioned above) had been achieved, preventive archaeology would necessarily have preserved the critical strength of the discipline, even within a functional and systemic context.

Furthermore, Criado-Boado also proposed the concept of a “Heritage value chain” (Criado-Boado, 1996b) as a way of integrating research and management and of reintegrating into the same strategy the different practices which operate in the field of cultural heritage, as well as promoting coordination between the diverse professional sectors involved. Over the course of recent years, a whole independent professional sector has been generated, along with a market in which professionals are subject to pressures and conflicts affecting all levels of professional practice, from the conditions of scientific production to salary and working conditions (Zorzini 2015:117-119).

So, it can be seen that the coupling of archaeology with the late capitalist system has consequences both from the point of view of the structure of the discipline and its dynamics. In other words, both *how it is* and *how it works* are influenced.

How does archaeology work?

Archaeology has become immersed in a destructive spiral and the conditions to preserve the critical potential referred to by Criado-Boado and to transform this destruction into knowledge (and memory) have not arisen. Although the production and socialization of knowledge has increased, it has not kept up with the rate of destruction which should have brought it about (Dries, 2011:596-598; Eogan, 2010:22-24; Thomas, 2013:92). Furthermore, the prioritization of documentation over interpretation (in line with the proposals of Malta) has led to an imbalance

between production and publication (Eogan 2010:22-24; Dries, 2013:43-54). In other words, more work is done than is made profitable as far as the production of knowledge is concerned. For work to be transformed into knowledge, additional work, research, is required which the concept of “polluter pays” does not cover. Therefore, the process of social enhancement of the work invested is failing.

However, commercial archaeology does not fail due to its own incompetence, it fails because it is immersed in a network of trade relations which force it to exploit itself, or to exploit others, thereby leading to the deterioration of working conditions and the technical and scientific quality of the work. Neither the Administration (by not providing a legal framework which is more favourable to the scientist and the worker) nor Academia (by not creating flows of transfer between the productive environment and that of research and innovation) has been up to the job, as Smith stated in 1993. It is not possible to enhance the work invested in commercial archaeology if there is no structure to integrate the private and public sectors and to allow this work to be capitalized upon by the public sector (the French INRAP is a model of this proposal).

It is clear that the archaeology market has never enjoyed excellent health. This lack of structure is extreme in the case of Spain, where the sector is totally dependent on the fluctuations of the land market, in such a way that in cycles of expansion its structure is more evident, whilst in times of recession its subclasses undergo a process of impoverishment: business owners end up exploiting themselves and workers are expelled from the market (Díaz del Río, 2000; Parga-Dans, 2010a; González, 2013; Marín and Parga-Dans 2017). This weakness can also be observed in other countries, such as Poland (Marciniak and Pawleta, 2010:95) or Italy (Bitelli *et al.*, 2013).

Faced with such a situation, the solutions adopted by independent professionals (self-regulation, collective agreements, collegiality; Cifa 2014b) have not been enough (even in places where these dynamics have taken more of a hold, such as in the United Kingdom; Aitchison, 2010: 25-30) to avoid the decline in scientific quality and to guarantee job security in preventive archaeology.

However, it should be remembered that this precariousness is not exclusive to archaeology. The situations of the “management” archaeologist and that of the environmental management technician are extremely similar, as Arévalo and Díaz (1997) pointed out several years ago. This leads us to analyse the situation of Malta archaeology in its context. These are not only problems of archaeologists but rather of how procedures of environmental and urbanistic consultancy and the laws that have regulated them over the last twenty-five years have worked: falling prices, the fact of being a legal requirement (builders hire archaeologists, or other technicians, because they are obliged to by the law), the imbalances and contradictions in the legislation and the relationship of dominance within the sphere of the general Administration. What the everyday reality of archaeology demonstrates is that political power is subject to private economic interests (intensive farming methods, industry, mass tourism, urban growth and pure speculation).

The vast majority of the evils of Malta archaeology are no more than small symptoms of structural and systemic problems which require a political solution.

The configuration of the political subsystem in which archaeology is integrated (urban planning, cultural tourism, environmental protection and the management of heritage) serves the dominant economic interests. In this regard, the fragmentation of the decision-making and technical sphere into barely discernible matters (the dissociations between natural and cultural heritage, between land development and the environment, etc.) is part of the general strategy of late capitalist modernization. For this reason, our proposal, in the medium term, points towards a political reunification of decision-making, technical and scientific spheres.

However, in order to achieve this possibility, it is necessary to establish the foundations for a reintegration of a disciplinary practice which has become atomized and fragmented (Balkanized, as Güll, 2013 puts it). This requires not only a greater degree of interaction and complementarity between the sectors which emerged or became consolidated in the context of Malta (the Administration and independent professionals) but also a reunification with the work carried out in the realms of Academia, which existed before the times of Malta and which, initially (with some exceptions, as we have already seen), was opposed to or refrained from becoming involved in the model. In general, we consider that there is still a lack of a theoretical-critical perspective to establish the foundations for the practice of management on solid premises which may contribute towards alleviating, qualifying and, if possible, avoiding the effects of the immersion of archaeology in a market context.

On many occasions, the authors of this paper have argued for the need to work in this contradictory context with a view to dialectically overcoming it via a strategy combining a critical perspective with a pragmatic attitude (Barreiro 2013; Barreiro and Parga-Dans, 2013). The evolution of Malta archaeology is a fine example of this contradiction between what is accepted on paper and what people are willing to cede in reality. Therefore, advocating the fulfilment of the law (the spirit of Malta), though without renouncing its transformation, continues to be a weapon of transformation: the public sector continues to be a defensive weapon against the private interests of the powerful. If, at this stage, we have not learned that this is a battle which we cannot write off as lost, the fact is that we have not learned anything. But, if we do not reflect on what we have done wrong, neither will we get very far.

We must be pragmatic, demanding what is within our reach, which is being cut back every day, but we must also be critical, denouncing the contradictions of the model, and aim for utopia by imagining future scenarios for a truly rich, participative and sustainable archaeology².

2. This quest for new scenarios is what is being pursued by the European project NEARCH (<http://www.nearch.eu/>), in particular by one of its activities: the NEARCHing Factory, which took place in Santiago de Compostela between January and February 2017, attended by many specialists from both Europe and America. All of the information generated by this event is accessible online on the Digital.CSIC website in the NEARCHing Factory collection: <http://digital.csic.es/handle/10261/146457>

What is to be done with Malta?

We have seen that archaeology is a socially constituted practice and that its dynamics, along the lines of the Malta model, are immersed in the process of late capitalist modernization (Hamilakis, 2015:724-732). The dilemma can be posed as the choice of the means of modernization desired: A *simple* modernization focused on impetuous economic growth, in which the least relevant aspect is the preservation of what already exists and the only important thing is its transformation into a commodity, apart from when it is substituted by something new; a reflexive modernization (according to the terminology of Beck *et al.*, 1994), in which, as part of the process, environmental and cultural factors are included within a strategy oriented towards sustainability and democratization; A *socialist modernization* which implies breaking with the economic model in which the leading role is played by the free market rather than the institutions; or a clear *radical break* and a strategy of economic slow-down and the creation of autonomous spaces outside of the game between the State and the market, which has marked the development of Modernity.

The crisis of Malta archaeology is the distance which separates desires from reality. The model implemented in Malta, in accordance with the paradigm of ‘sustainable development’, claims to integrate archaeology into processes of modernization as if it were a reflexive modernization. The reality is that modernization is, and has always been, simple. Everything else has acted as a legitimizing discourse of a reality in which archaeology has been an accomplice of the process of expansive urbanization with an unstoppable constructive/destructive dynamic (Parga-Dans, 2010a:45-54; Aitchison, 2010:25; Dries *et al.*, 2010:55; Parga-Dans and Varela-Pousa, 2014; Marín and Parga-Dans 2017). This has not been by chance as the constant transformation which has always characterized the model of capitalist development (embodied in the myth of Faust, as illustrated by Berman, 1982), has also been the great motor of economic growth in industrial countries (infrastructures, industrialization) and post-industrial countries (the reconversion of spaces, the growth of the tertiary sector) in the last third of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, as was suggested in the past by Lefebvre and his “production of space” (1974) and Harvey (inspired by Schumpeter) and his “creative destruction” (1985).

Following the first impact of the crisis, in 2008, the vast majority of European countries adopted measures to revitalize the economy by the massive investment of public money in the construction of great works of infrastructure. These initial measures led to a mitigation of the immediate effects of the crisis in archaeology, a sector which is dependent on the construction industry (see, for example, Aitchison, 2010:27; Schlanger and Salas-Rossenbach 2010:76). This was nothing more than self-deception which dealt, soon after, a much greater blow to the sector. The failure of the plans to stimulate the economy suddenly closed the door to all the sources of funding which had allowed the sector to remain afloat.

The great dilemma is, then, knowing all of this, what can be done? Is this collusion of archaeology with the creative destruction of the land constitutive of the discipline (the old leitmotiv of “destruction in exchange for knowledge”) or is

it cyclical, only concerning preventive archaeology? Any philosophizing on a future sustainable scenario for archaeology must consider the political and economic contexts in which we move and in which our ability to transform these contexts lies, acting in each of these spheres we have analysed (simple or reflexive modernization, socialism and rupture).

As long as there is room for manoeuvre, the opportunities which exist for introducing vectors of change in terms of political, administrative and economic action must be taken advantage of. If necessary, the spaces which have been usurped by practices which do not correspond with the discourses which supposedly legitimize them should be reclaimed. And if there is no room for manoeuvre, it is because these spaces must be built from the beginning. In both cases, it is essential to come out of the strictly professional and disciplinary realm in order to position ourselves in an openly political field of relations, which connects us with more inclusive perspectives of public archaeology; those which place more emphasis on the social component rather than on administrative aspects (Almansa, 2017:116).

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION: THE UTOPIA OF DEMOCRACY AND THE REALITY OF TECHNOCRACY

The problems faced by experts are not restricted to technical or methodological matters, but are directly anchored in politics. This is so much truer in the case of archaeology and heritage, as has been expressed by public archaeology over a long period of time (Richardson and Almansa-Sánchez 2015). Although the conventional labels which describe it (archaeological, architectonic, historical, ethnographic, etc.) allude to the scientific disciplines which make its study, management and socialization possible, *the fact of heritage is an eminently political fact.* It is society which decides to identify, protect, study and/or value a particular segment of its reality. Therefore, our aspiration, as experts, should be to fully open up the field of heritage to an interaction which reaches beyond knowledge, bringing non-cognitive values which emerge in heritage into play (existential, ethical, aesthetic values).

It is the expert world which interferes with the relationship between social appropriation and heritagization processes. This interference is, abstractly, an apparent inversion of the original relationship. It is not society which creates heritage from a segment of reality *via* its management mechanisms, but rather it is these mechanisms which acquire a *de facto* autonomy which inverts the terms of the relationship. Thus, social agents perceive the actions of their own Administration to be those of an agency which is independent of them, as an imposition from the realms of power. In this consists bureaucratization and technocratization (which are specific phenomena of Weberian rationalization, so wildly portrayed by Kafka).

It is clear that this situates the issue on political terrain and in the real workings of our technocratic societies, far beyond the question of heritage and of people's needs. Into this dynamic is inserted the hegemonic fetishist perspective regarding heritage resources.

These resources, as objects (material or not) of the world, become the axis of heritage policies and the focus of preoccupation of managers. Technocratization is the essence of what has come to be known as Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). Indeed, archaeologists have played an important role in its consolidation (see, for example, Waterton and Smith, 2009). Under the principle of “preservation by recording”, it was believed that the merely technical management of resources constituting heritage (their identification, inventory, inclusion in planning orders and environmental assessments) was enough to consider their socialization as being fulfilled. However, it is not enough to transform destruction (or the risk thereof) into data for the archives: this is not knowledge, much less its socialization (Dries 2012:51; Willems, 2014).

Some signs that something is changing in terms of policies and AHD should be highlighted. In 2012, the United Kingdom revised its National Planning Policy Framework to include a section on Historic Environments, in which a change of philosophy can be detected: archaeology must “provide a public benefit, in the form of new knowledge and understanding, rather than simply an archive and a technical report” (Thomas, 2013:92; see Zorzin, 2016, based on a participant observation research in an excavation managed under the new model, showing how the ‘public benefit’ has been diverted one more time towards the developer interest). On the other hand, in recognized texts such as the Faro Convention (2005), which has already been ratified by seventeen countries, an evolution from within AHD can be appreciated (Barreiro and Varela-Pousa 2017). This can also be appreciated in the publication of several institutional documents relating to the need to integrate demands for greater social participation with the protection and management of archaeological heritage. In spite of this, it should be remembered that Faro supposes an opening-up of this heritage discourse which was previously reserved for experts, although this is not the type of radical opening-up which is often proposed from the area of public archaeology and, particularly, from *community archaeology*. In this regard, the differing contributions included in Florjanowicz (2016) are revealing, as they are extremely inclined to opening archaeology up to society, albeit always under the watchful eye of the expert.

What is true is that, until the present time, the disconnection between the work of preventive archaeology and society has been almost complete. By worrying so much about heritage resources, we had forgotten what it is that justifies their management: the people. *Preventive archaeology has hardly faced up to what public archaeology has been demanding all this time.*

In any case, although we share many of the critical points of view in this regard, we aim to situate our arguments beyond matters which we consider to be effects rather than causes. The problem is not the monopoly on the truth which, until now, the experts have held over the common people, but rather the conditions which have made this one-way and technocratic relationship possible.

First of all, these conditions have to do with the hegemony of the concept of ‘knowledge’ in the processes of heritage creation. On the one hand, it should be remembered that not all knowledge has to be scientific knowledge. However,

in heritage processes, many more dimensions intervene apart from the cognitive dimension (ethical, aesthetic, symbolic, economic, etc.). We believe that many of the problems faced by Malta archaeology come from the fact that this is not recognized: *politicians must take decisions, although they base themselves, to a greater or lesser degree, on expert opinion and on the opinions of other agents.* The problem is not in the realm of decision-making (which must be political), but rather in the anti-democratic and perverse way in which politics functions in the late capitalist system.

Here, we move on to the second and most important instance of the working conditions of the discipline. As our sociological and anthropological research in the Museum of Altamira have revealed (Programa Altamira 2014:257-258), the majority of the population understand that the criteria which should predominate when it comes to managing heritage are expert, rather than political, criteria (which is understandable) but also that the power to take decisions should also fall upon the experts. The degree of depoliticization in our societies has reached the point in which the people do not identify with politicians and delegate decisions which should correspond to them (albeit via delegation) to spheres in which they cannot intervene. In other words, epistemic populism (thinking that subordinates, the people, are always right) is not only a questionable ideological option (Grosfoguel, 2008) but it also contradicts the empirical data: *most people, when asked outside of their comfort zone, usually refrain from formulating value judgements on subjects of which they have no knowledge. So, then, the issue is very basic: information should be given to the people if we want them to participate in the decision-making process.*

In general, the work of preventive archaeology has lacked the possibility to use spaces for dialogue and participation (not to mention cases of open and massive popular opposition to certain projects). The political framework in which preventive archaeology has been developed is quite undemocratic, if not completely opaque to the public. Therefore, it is difficult for those of us that form part of this opacity to succeed in socializing our work and our results.

As Pellizzoni points out, the key question is: What conditions would make dialogue between civil society and institutions, science and community, experts and public not only possible but also productive? (Pellizzoni, 1999:118). It goes without mention that the existing conditions, in which AHD not only attempts to impose its rules but that these rules end up being subjected to other political wills in which heritage does not play a relevant role, are not the most suitable for this to occur. Furthermore, this sentence is exercised in a non-transparent manner and resorts to falsely transparent instruments as far as the general public are concerned (impact declarations, administrative files, etc.).

However, we believe that AHD should still work as a mediator in heritage processes. In as much as it is still a sub-discourse of the hegemonic discourse and the degree of depoliticization and disinformation of society remains high, AHD is our precarious guarantee against neo-liberal practices and against a hegemonic discourse which aims to use AHD itself at its own convenience and which, in the context of crisis, does not hesitate to cut back its capacities. *Awareness of this ambiguity should*

allow us to depend on the professional sector embodied in AHD and make it an accomplice in the struggle to generate these spaces for inter-subjectivity, dialogue, the collaborative production of knowledge and heritage as part of a wider-reaching political struggle.

First of all, in the short term, we believe that it is necessary to generate these spaces for dialogue which permit, even in this context, a tendency towards a reintegration of the discipline (as suggested by Mizoguchi 2015:13) and its opening-up to society. At the least, this should contribute towards minimizing the effects of the fragmentation and atomization caused by technocratic policies. Neither should we ignore the fact that citizen participation, as social technology, has come to form part of these political dynamics, referring to a “cosmetic” use of participation and its use on the part of a certain regime of heritage (see Cortés-Vázquez *et al.*, 2017 the presentation of three case studies in Spain: the Natural Park of Cabo de Gata-Níjar, the Mosque of Córdoba and the Cave and Museum of Altamira).

Therefore, part of our proposal is to investigate how this participation can be produced effectively and what means we must activate in order to avoid converting it into just another element of the opaque and obstructed practice which we aim to subvert. It is necessary to recuperate lost connections and, above all, to generate those which have never come into existence. The latter is another sphere in which the experience of public archaeologists has a lot to contribute.

However, as we have seen, the problem of participation (which is at the basis of the current crisis of the system of representative democracy which has reigned in Europe for decades) is not only a problem of education and information. In other words, the problem of education and information does not lie in the absent practice of formal means via which the communication free of ‘systemic noise’ is made possible (in the way in which Habermas would have it) but in the impossibility that this type of communication can be produced in a society affected by media and technological strategies, which are supported by favourable infrastructural conditions: it is the exploitation of workers and the manipulation of consumers which make up the late modern means of alienation (as Debord pointed out in 1968 with his concept of the *Society of the Spectacle*).

THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION: THE UTOPIA OF SUSTAINABILITY AND THE REALITY OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM

Malta archaeology has become part of the economic policies adopted in Europe over the course of the last thirty years. This is one of its most characteristic features, one which contributes most towards differentiating this model from the previous approach to archaeology, restricted to an internally competitive, yet subsidized academic setting.

It cannot be denied that the model reflected in the Malta Convention responds to the paradigm of reflexive modernization and, specifically, to that of *sustainable development*. In broad terms, this concept attempts to maintain economic growth

within certain limits which guarantee future life. The first official document of the theory of ‘sustainable development’ is entitled ‘*Our Common Future*’ and is known as the Brundtland Report: “Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future. Far from requiring the cessation of economic growth, it recognizes that the problems of poverty and underdevelopment cannot be solved unless we have a new era of growth in which developing countries play a large role and reap large benefits” (UN Documents, 1987:49).

To a certain extent, all interpretations and comments made around the concept of ‘sustainable development’, even the most revisionist of them, are indebted to this definition, whose success cannot only be attributed to the fact of being the first but also to its calculated ambiguity, in the sense of a Lampedusian “change everything so everything stays the same”; in other words, to propose a development model without touching the basic structures of the industrial model (Cuello, 1997).

In the same way, many of the ideas which have arisen since then on this topic are hinged on the contents of the Brundtland Report, which diagnoses the unsustainability of the current model of development, based on continuous growth (“The survival of capitalism in the long run depends on the capacity to achieve 3 per cent compound growth”; Harvey, 2010:130) and which proposes a broad reconstruction of this model in an attempt to bring together economic and ecological interests in a single strategic manoeuvre.

One of the first criticisms made of the Brundtland Report concerned the fact that it identified development with growth in an, apparently arbitrary manner. The criticism is so evident that, in the subsequent evolution of the concept of ‘sustainable development’, this ambiguity was eradicated and the term ‘growth’ was never associated with ‘sustainable’ again. However, the term ‘growth’ still remains the *leitmotif* of the policy. At this point, there is a first and insurmountable contradiction which explains the crisis of Malta archaeology: *it is not possible to be sustainable whilst being part of an economic context which is not.*

Any kind of future proposal for a model of preventive and public archaeology (the kind of archaeology that we have formulated) must choose between the different transformative options which exist with regard to the concept of ‘sustainability’, going beyond the mere modernization of neoliberalism:

1. Those who believe that the direction set out by Agenda 21 (the road map of ‘sustainable development’) and its national derivatives marks a progressive transformation towards higher levels of social development. This would be a position linked to the principles of social democracy and would strive for a reflexive modernization.
2. Those who believe that, for ‘sustainable development’ to be a viable practical alternative, the capitalist global hegemonic economic model must be substituted by an alternative model which aspires to be just as hegemonic. This would constitute a socialist modernization.

3. Those who do not believe at all that ‘sustainable development’ is the solution to the problems of humanity and do not believe that there is a valid alternative within the social and economic models which have arisen from the Modern Age (neither capitalism as a reality, nor socialism as a project). This would constitute the radical way, breaking with the status quo, being one way of doing it the opting for the degrowth movement, for example (but this could be an option even within a socialist system).

For the first and second options, a dialectical vision of reality is a key principle. What this means is that the principle is assumed that all changes are latent in the structure to be changed. This supposes assuming the idea that Modernity is not exhausted and that its principles must continue to guide actions in these postmodern times.

1. From this point of view, option 1 requires openness and inclusivity to be the basic characteristic of the public sphere, as pointed out by Matsuda in reference to Habermas (Matsuda, 2004:70).
2. Option 2, on the other hand, rejects the idea that this openness and inclusivity can take place within the framework of capitalist social and economic relations and makes change dependent on real political work, from archaeology, in order to subvert the hegemonic values of capitalism (Zorzin, 2015).
3. For option 3, emancipatory projects such as real socialism would continue to be part of the structure which is at the root of all evils: the myths of power which sustain western culture and its most recent derivatives, such as the Enlightenment. This revolutionary vision is supported by the classic text of Horkheimer and Adorno (Dialectic of Enlightenment, 1944) and is more in line with current theories of decline and coherently against any development model associated to economic growth (Taibo, 2009). This is also related to the categorical criticism of capitalist modernity based on the Marxist deconstruction of capital (Jappe *et al.*, 2009; Macías, 2017) for which real socialism does not cease to encourage an economy aimed at growth and global recovery, although the means of production are controlled by the apparatus of the State.

The dialectic option (either in its social democratic or socialist version) implies that it is feasible to provoke the evolution of Malta archaeology within the paradigm of ‘sustainability’, from which it emerged, and transform it into *preventive public archaeology*. The revolutionary option implies that it is necessary to propose a radical change in the model in order to be able to implement a truly sustainable archaeological and heritage policy and to abandon Malta forever.

What has changed following the crisis is that we are now more aware of the fact that there is no sustainable development or archaeology, not only within the neoliberal economic paradigm but also within the global capitalist order.

It is clear that one of the characteristics of human beings is their ability to modify their surroundings. However, it is also obvious that this ability, under industrial and post-industrial capitalism, has surpassed all limits of sustainability. What is perhaps less obvious is the role that archaeology, and any other discipline related to heritage, has played in this process. What are initially perceived as braking and self-correcting mechanisms (planning, environmental and heritage laws) are nothing more, from this point of view, than one more device in the process of the creative destruction of the land associated with capitalism (which is in line with the vision of ‘heritage’ as a specific category of capitalist modernity; Alonso, 2017).

Under contemporary capitalism, the process of urban growth has become generalized on a worldwide scale. It is the only way in which the system of production can succeed in maintaining the necessary rate of growth (3%) in order to avoid the global economic system as a whole becoming paralyzed (absorbing the excess capital of other activities and creating the necessary infrastructures in order to continue growing. This recycling of excess is the *sine qua non* of capitalism but in order to be able to recycle this excess into long-term investments (infrastructure, housing, etc.) it was necessary to create the necessary conditions for financing. This is what has been in process since the 1970s with the end of the Bretton Woods model and the beginning of the neo-liberal age (Varoufakis, 2011). From this moment on, States themselves (with Reagan and Thatcher in the unthinking lead) facilitated the beginning of the mortgage borrowing dynamic, the hyper-growth of the real estate market and the creation of the derivatives markets in order to spread the risk for investors, acting as the ultimate promoters of the creation of new spaces, which implied both the construction of new infrastructures and the reconversion of old ones (Harvey, 2010). Thus, the industrial era gave way to the post-industrial age by way of deindustrialization (bringing to mind the struggles of the British miners in the 1980s), the conversion of previously industrial spaces into service spaces (the Guggenheim Museum and Bilbao being one of the best examples found in Spain, although there are many cases in Europe and around the world) and the gentrification and increase in tourism in historical towns and certain rural areas.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that our role in all of this is not only rooted in the productive aspect. In other words, we have not only contributed to generating this merchandise-show which is heritage but, often, we have consumed it. We have played a double role in the processes of tertiarization and post-industrialization of the economy, as both producers and consumers of culture.

This transformation to a post-industrial society does not imply the disappearance of workers, neither in their archetypical image nor in their many variations, but it does mean that production has multiplied, diversified and become more complex. Great infrastructures require workers of all kinds, whose subjective interest is the prosperity of the projects of modernization, which (precariously) guarantee their jobs. On the other hand, there are all kinds of workers and citizens whose way of life is altered or destroyed by the very same projects (abandonment of the rural environment, environmental deterioration, gentrification, the privatization of services, etc.; see by instance Marín and Parga-Dans, 2017). With the Malta model, we archaeologists (and

other specialists in the production of new spaces and products) are in the middle. Our objective interest does not lie purely in the prosperity of modernization projects but in their scientific profitability (knowledge through destruction).

What occurs with the subjective interest of archaeological workers who, indirectly, reside in the prosperity of the construction of infrastructures? Is it not true that many archaeologists in Europe are now unemployed due to the fact that their environment of production has disappeared? What should these workers expect? A return to unsustainable growth in order to reabsorb this mass of unemployed labour? *The dilemma is a complex one but it seems reasonable to think about working on different present and future scenarios.*

TOWARDS A MODEL OF PREVENTIVE PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY?

As far as we are concerned, we propose that the first step is to demand that the laws which cost so much effort to put into place be fulfilled. For Agenda 21 to be fulfilled, in which culture must play a significant role (UCLG, 2004, 2016), for the different national constitutions to be fulfilled, for workers' agreements to be fulfilled, along with environmental and heritage laws. This must be achieved in order to, then, act and work in accordance with these laws which, day after day, are infringed by the economic and political elite.

Neo-liberal policies are succeeding in ensuring that the “polluter pays” principle is relaxed and made more flexible (see, in this regard, the legal changes taking place in Spain; Barreiro and Varela-Pousa, 2017). However, without falling into the ingenuity of believing that this is an ideal tool for sustainability or a solution for the future, we must demand, as a tactical strategy, that the law is maintained and applied rigorously. *We do not hope for a model of archaeology which is satisfied with controlling, with full guarantees, the processes of destruction of the territory occurring all over the place but we cannot remain on the side-lines waiting for new economic models which are neither predatory nor destructive to be put into practice.*

In order to achieve this, it is essential to resort to the concept of public archaeology and all it connotes: archaeology accompanying society in the quest for new political and economic models. Until now, as we have seen, preventive archaeology has remained on the side-lines. At the most, its results have been disseminated and socialized in some way or another. *But preventive archaeology, if we want it to be a truly sustainable practice, must also be public.* This does not only imply that it be controlled from public institutions, either in a more effective way via strong complementary public investment (as is the case in France, Demoule, 2002), or in a looser way (as is generally the case in Europe). Rather, it implies that these institutions should provide a new framework for relations, one in which archaeologists working in preventive archaeology are not subject to the direct power of the most powerful economic interests (the construction sector, tourism, etc.) but are committed to the interests of society as a whole. It is clear that this process is not exempt from conflict, given that majority social interests respond to a hegemonic

logic, often being accomplices of the interests of the oligarchy. However, if anything is clear at this stage, it is that the way of politicizing social agents is to make them players in decision-making processes which affect them.

For all of these reasons, *our approach should be to apply the principles and criteria which orient the practice of a more inclusive public archaeology to the contexts in which preventive archaeology has always worked.* For this to occur, an alternative political will is necessary, one which is impossible without a broader political process which aims for a real transformation of our social and economic structures.

Malta archaeology and the management of archaeological heritage is not an island of reality at the centre of this crisis, neither are they its innocent victims. They have been part of it and, therefore, the only way out is for them to become part of the solution. We believe that this can be achieved by continuing to work tactically in the world of modernization, in the methods of rationality which currently guide it (technical or scientific-technical rationality) and in the way of capitalist production. Our analysis of the current situation provides us with the bases to formulate some questions which require further research:

- Can archaeology participate in these methods of rationality and production whilst simultaneously contributing to their transformation into something different, broader and more in accordance with a horizon of reflexive, or even socialist, modernization?
- Can preventive archaeology contribute, as a techno-scientific practice regulated by public institutions, to extending an unobjectified awareness of heritage and, therefore, to formulating a different kind of rationality which anticipates and lays the foundations for an alternative social and economic model?
- Can preventive archaeology recycle and reconvert all the qualified workers (an enormous human capital) who have emerged over the last twenty-five years to work for and in a context closer to that of public archaeology?

If the answer is no, our position in the aforementioned framework is extremely clear: we are revolutionaries and do not contemplate any pragmatic action within the system. Let us abandon Malta and forget about (the official version of) Heritage.

If we believe that the answer is yes, then we still preserve hope for the transformation of the system. It would still be necessary, then, to fight for Malta archaeology and for the pursuit of pragmatic objectives as far as working conditions and the dignity of the profession and the discipline are concerned. However, we must do this in a self-critical way, reflecting on what mistakes have been made and “de-authorizing” heritage discourse and practice when they are associated with a social relationship of dominance and subordination. Therefore, it is essential to count on the people, involve the people and work with the people. In the end, this is what appears on paper in countless technical documents which tell us how we have to carry out an environmental assessment. The struggle to integrate segregated dimensions (society and environment, environment and culture) is part of the same struggle.

Only in this joint project between experts and society will we be able to foreshadow utopian scenarios, which will function as our horizon, scenarios which foreshadow an archaeological practice free from the influences of Malta archaeology and heritage policies, scenarios in which we will be able to produce meanings and places distant from the needs for economic growth, scenarios in which the adjective “preventive” and the noun “heritage” will not be necessary because these abandoned words will only bear witness to an age in which, without them, the world would have been even poorer than it is now.

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