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2019

Journal of Contemporary Archaeology

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tering a culture of care through attention to health and safety, and removing masculinist narratives of suffering in the field are all ways of moving toward an anarchist praxis in archaeology.

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Abstract

The organization of archaeological fieldwork often resembles a military-style campaign structured around rigid, top-down hierarchies. This is reflected in many aspects of current practice, including the ultimate authority of the site director, the use of excavation methodologies that remove the act of interpretation from field archaeologists, and the general deskilling and reification of archaeological labor in fieldwork. Though there have been several examples of resistance to this hierarchical model we maintain that a sustained critique could stem from an unexpected source: the creation of communities that model anarchist principles through the implementation of the single context methodology in archaeology. In this article we explore the potential for anarchist praxis in archaeological fieldwork and the implications of anarchist thought on the issues of authority and non-alienation of labor in a neoliberal landscape.

Keywords: collective action; methodology; neoliberalism; praxis; single context archaeology

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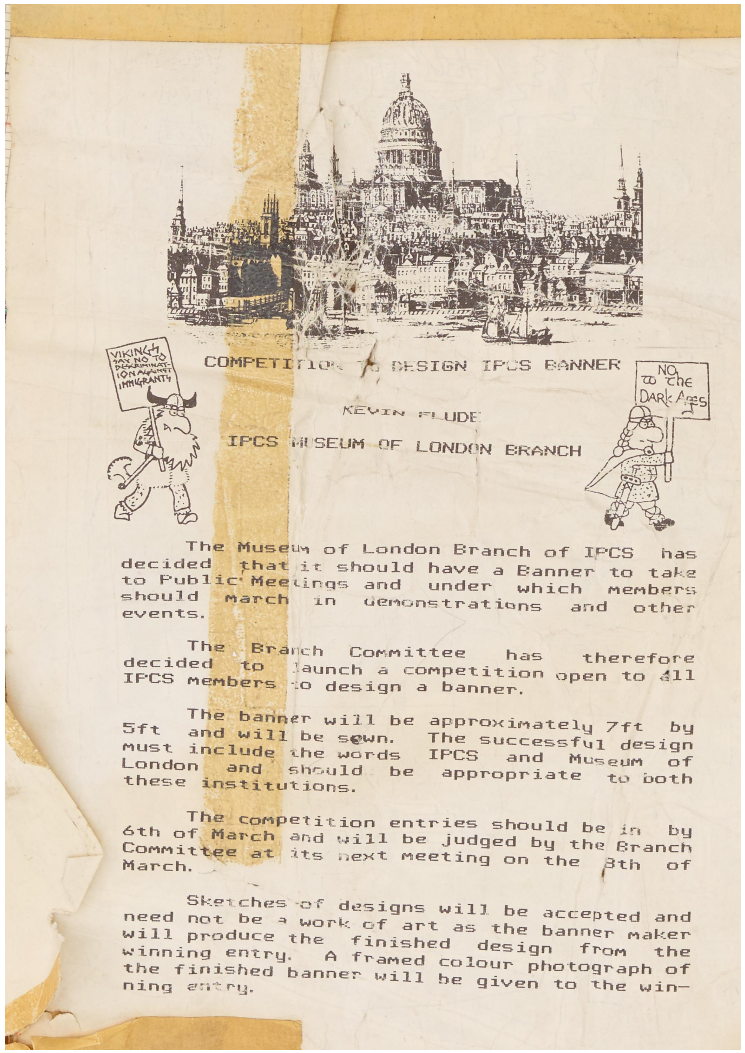
Excavation animates archaeology. It is the public face of archaeology, appearing on television screens and illustrating news articles – a golden trowel symbolizes the highest recognition of archaeological professionalism (Flannery 1982). Digging is a deeply evocative archaeological practice, yet it is the most undervalued mode of archaeological knowledge production, the least cultivated skill with fewest monetary rewards, and considered so inconsequential that non-specialist labor is regularly employed to uncover our most critical data sets. Additionally, most archaeological fieldwork remains deeply hierarchical with rigid, top-down structures of authority and varying degrees of alienation of labor in academic and professional settings.

Shanks and McGuire (1996) position archaeology as a craft, identify divisions within archaeological labor, and propose a return to a master/apprentice-based model of enskillment. Yet the proposed "master" and "apprentice" are never defined beyond an amorphous teacher/student relationship that is contrasted with a "factory model" of contract archaeology that emphasizes efficiency. That Shanks and McGuire draw from a "factory model" is significant; the construction of *worthwhile* fieldwork as primarily propping up academic enterprise can minimize the potential contribution of commercial archaeological labor to meaningful knowledge production. The accompanying class connotations also remain problematic. Importantly, while field archaeologists in the past "defined themselves in opposition to the labourers on their site" through nationality or class, current commercial archaeologists in the helmets and high-visibility vests of construction workers may "see their roots laying more squarely with the labourers of the large-scale research digs than with the educated 'gentlefolk'" (Everill 2007, 122; see also Roberts 2012). We find that the relatively egalitarian organization of labor associated with single context methodology as employed in commercial archaeology provides a significant critique of hierarchical modes of fieldwork, both in academic and commercial sectors.

A few archaeological field projects have tried to implement collectivist strategies to explore new forms of organization for fieldwork. Notably, the excavations of the Colorado Coal Field (Ludlow Collective 2001; McGuire and Reckner 2003) examined structural class inequalities and attempted to create a field school that mitigated the inherent hierarchy of archaeological site structures (Walker and Saitta 2002). They found hierarchy and authority unavoidable while teaching students on site, and were unable to effect much change other than opening up staff meetings to the students so they could see the process of decision-making. In the UK, the Sedgeford Historical and Ar-

In summary, we argue that the introduction of single context recording not only had a dramatic impact on the way in which archaeology was undertaken, but also revolutionized the way social relations on site were structured. Single context recording promotes individual empowerment of diggers, allowing them to contribute to collective knowledge construction on site. Equally, it promoted a more horizontal management structure. Removing strict hierarchical relations on site encouraged other forms of discourse and community building and camaraderie, such as trench-side discussions and improved health and safety practices. Finally, all these found a very receptive audience in the generally leftist politics of the archaeologists. While no single site was a perfect example of this, there are interesting principles at work that could help inform anarchist praxis in the current day. Incorporating an anarchist perspective on the differences between natural authority and artificial authority could combat the reintroduction of rigid hierarchies imposed by neoliberal forces on the profession. This is particularly urgent, as these same points that can be used to promote egalitarian organizations have been operationalized and used against British commercial archaeologists. For example, Zorzin reveals a bleak and dramatic shift in management practices at a large excavation in London wherein archaeologists were heavily surveilled, subject to divisive and corrosive labor contracts, silenced, and worked in a "climate of tension and fear" (Zorzin 2017, 310).

To conclude, this is a partial, necessarily incomplete picture of the complex patterns of specialization and labor in archaeology. Constructing past archaeological practice as an egalitarian ideal is not our intention; we gather the fragments and potentialities that are fostered by democratized site structures to show that it is possible to work toward an anarchist praxis in archaeology, using models that are already in place. Conceiving archaeological fieldwork as enskilled practice, encouraging conversation as a meaningful nexus of site interpretation, fos-



COMPETITION TO DESIGN IPCS BANNER

KEVIN FLUDE

IPCS MUSEUM OF LONDON BRANCH

The Museum of London Branch of IPCS has decided that it should have a Banner to take to Public Meetings and under which members should march in demonstrations and other events.

The Branch Committee has therefore decided to launch a competition open to all IPCS members to design a banner.

The banner will be approximately 7ft by 5ft and will be sewn. The successful design must include the words IPCS and Museum of London and should be appropriate to both these institutions.

The competition entries should be in by 6th of March and will be judged by the Branch Committee at its next meeting on the 8th of March.

Sketches of designs will be accepted and need not be a work of art as the banner maker will produce the finished design from the winning entry. A framed colour photograph of the finished banner will be given to the winning entry.

chaeological Research Project (SHARP) was a long-running excavation that incorporated democratic principles after an acrimonious dispute in its first year (Faulkner 2000, 2009). Though the site maintained a hierarchical structure, paying volunteers were able to advance through this structure and were encouraged to provide feedback regarding their placement in the excavation (Faulkner 2000, 32). Later, a board of local Trustees attempted to wrest control of the project from the archaeologists and what had been a participatory democracy was codified into a representative democracy that required "representative bodies, clear rules, and tight control" (Faulkner 2009, 59–60).

Research strategies in archaeology that rely heavily on the unskilled labor of students, community members, or workmen may be fatally flawed to engender a truly emancipatory archaeology; it is outside of the purview of this short article to address this pernicious, systemic issue in archaeology. The two examples from the US and the UK above cannot fully encompass the multitude of working conditions in archaeology, including working on short term contracts, in the Global South, or in postcolonial contexts where employing unskilled manual labor can be required by the local government. Still, we find great inspiration from the efforts of the Ludlow Collective and SHARP, and continue to view the subsequent contributions of members of these initiatives essential to radically rethinking the organization of archaeological labor.

We build on experiments in archaeological fieldwork such as these to inform a collectivist strategy that draws from anarchist theories of authority and the single context methodology employed in British commercial archaeology, specifically that of the Department of Urban Archaeology recording system used by the Museum of London. While seemingly an incongruous pairing, the correct implementation of the single context methodology distributes knowledge production on archaeological sites and relies on "natural" authority – that of expertise developed over many years rather than the artificial

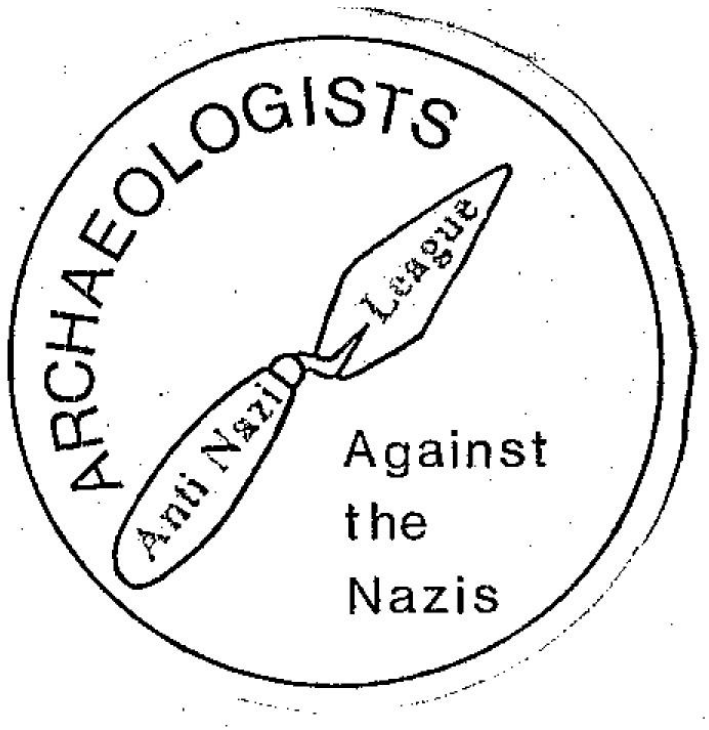
authority enforced by hierarchical structures such as universities. Bakunin discusses an anarchist view of authority thus:

> Does it follow that I reject all authority? Far from me such a thought. In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or the engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a *savant*. But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the architect nor the *savant* to impose his authority upon me. I accept them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism and censure. I do not content myself with consulting a single authority in any special branch; I consult several; I compare their opinions, and choose that which seems to me the soundest. But I recognize no infallible authority […]. (Bakunin 1970 [1882], 32)

Following Bakunin, Angelbeck and Grier (2012, 552) differentiate between "natural authority (those sought for their knowledge, skill or experience) and artificial authorities (those imposed by institutions)". In his response included in the same article, McGuire suggests that a radical practice of archaeology might be best served by "giving up the artificial but not the natural" (McGuire 2012, 575; see also McGuire 2008, 60-61). Though imperfect, we maintain that single context methodology reinforces this natural authority and can lend itself to more egalitarian ways of structuring archaeological labor.

Single context methodology as developed in Winchester and implemented by the Department of Urban Archaeology of the Museum of London evolved under the specific conditions of archaeological fieldwork in the 1970s. Spence (1993) provides

A later edition reports the DUA marching against "government cuts, their implications for the social wage and unemployment, and the Governments Employment Bill" (*Radio Carbon* 1980). This is also reflected in the very fabric of the previously cited Billingsgate Harris Matrix; on the reverse of the matrix is a printed call for entries to design a banner to be displayed during political demonstrations (Figure 3). While only a brief review of the rich, diverse, and storied history of the participation of archaeologists in political activity, these leftist sentiments underpin a more receptive attitude to egalitarian organization of labor on site.



an excellent review of this fascinating history; important to his article are the requirements of the system for each archaeologist to correctly interpret the sequence of deposition on site and to connect this sequence with those constructed by other archaeologists working in surrounding areas into a Harris Matrix. This emphasized the importance of the skill of individual excavators who were "expected to define, plan, record and excavate their own contexts" (Spence 1993, 25; see also Berggren and Hodder 2003; Leighton 2015) and demanded that the archaeologists then combine their expertise to create a collective interpretation of the site.

While this system is noted to increase efficiency in recording archaeology and contributes to greater comparability between sites, it is significant for the current study that "this approach to recording consequently resulted in the establishment of a non-hierarchical staffing structure" (Spence 1993, 26). With the single context recording system, each excavator could be a wholly independent and equal contributor to a collective effort to interpret and record the archaeological site. Further, Leighton links this to both a higher degree of trust in the skill of the archaeologist to make interpretations, and the assumption that the excavator is "a *more* authoritative knower than someone who only looks at the textual record, because knowing objects *both* materially and archaeologically is a complex process that requires *tactile* interaction (Leighton 2015, 83, emphasis in the original).

Since Spence's (1993) publication there has been a continual degradation of egalitarian structures through the unrelenting pressure of capitalist and neoliberal forces on archaeology (as noted in e.g. Everill 2007; Zorzin 2017). Without pandering to an idealized past, we here explore these aspects of egalitarian labor to inform an anarchist praxis in archaeological fieldwork, with a focus on issues of authority and non-alienation of labor in a neoliberal landscape. The adoption of the single context recording system does not completely explain the tendency to-

ward flat organizational structures on some British archaeological sites; there are several contributing factors that promote egalitarian approaches to archaeological labor. These include the focus on the skill and autonomy of the individual excavator and their active contributions to collective knowledge building (see also Leighton 2015), the discourse fostered by informal discussions on the edge of the trench, a culture of care fostered through rigorous health and safety practices, and the generally leftist political background of archaeologists on site.

As used by the Museum of London, the single context system is designed for large-scale open-area excavation, in which sections play a subsidiary role in maintaining stratigraphic control. Instead, greater emphasis is put on the skill and experience of individual excavators to define, record, and excavate deposits in plan. Each deposit and negative event is recorded individually, in contrast to systems that remove arbitrary amounts from 1 × 1 m units or excavation by locus (for further discussion see Berggren and Hodder 2003; Leighton 2015). As noted above, archaeologists are responsible for recording each stratigraphic relationship in an excavation area, and these contribute to a site-wide Harris Matrix. The hand-written matrices for large archaeological sites excavated before the widespread use of computers are incredible to behold. The Harris Matrix for Billingsgate, a large excavation in central London in 1983, is 1.4 × ~3 m, comprised of several sheets of paper stuck together, and covered with annotations in varied handwriting, with many changes, long lines of white correction fluid, and erasures (Figure 1). These materialize the process of collective decision-making and interpretation through the inscription of stratigraphic relationships on paper. Individual archaeologists are able to meaningfully contribute to the site-wide narrative, though post-excavation write-up is still often the purview of one or two individuals. The construction of a record of the stratigraphy of the site as a coherent whole is undertaken by archaeologists in conjunction with those working around

> now. No shoring, loose spoil heaps on the edge of extremely high and vertical sections and I could go on. […] Not only would any accident have serious repercussions for the project, but more importantly some of the people who are working there I consider my friends and I don't want to see them put in harm's way. (Regan 2007)

These diary entries demonstrate the culture of care fostered by attention to health and safety procedures by the experienced British field archaeologists at Çatalhöyük. That their concerns were ultimately not addressed is perhaps unsurprising; though the research goals of Çatalhöyük included multivocality and reflexivity (Hodder 1997), it was essentially a rigidly hierarchical academic research project.

Finally, there is a prominent inclination toward leftist thought amongst archaeologists from many different countries; British archaeologists have taken part in social movements since at least the 1970s. *Hobley's Heroes* (http://www.hobleysheros.co.uk), a website that documents the lives of archaeologists who worked for the Department of Archaeology in London, hosts a series of informal publications written by the archaeologists in the 1970s and 80s. These publications, which also include *The Weekly Whisper* and *Radio Carbon*, combine information about recent archaeological finds, comics, how-to guides, poetry, and other commentary that provides insight into the political inclinations of the diggers. In the October 1978 edition of *Radio Carbon*, members of the Department of Urban Archaeology are described as having shown the department's "solidarity against the Nazis on the 'Carnival 2' march organized by the Anti-Nazi League" (Figure 2).

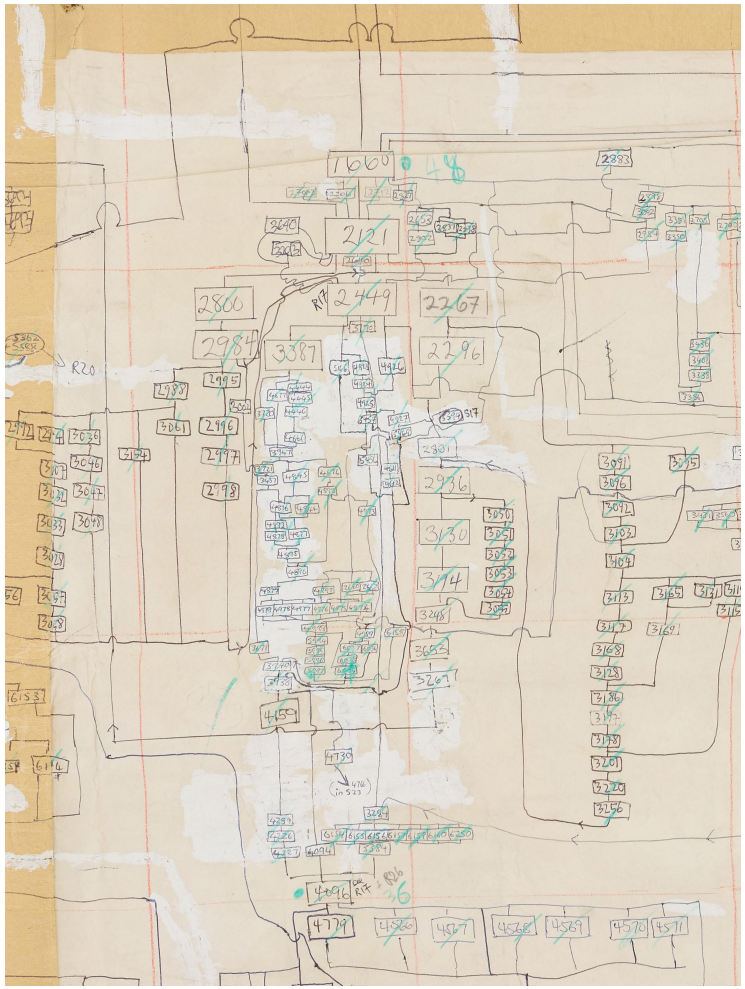
with a rigid hierarchy and these discussions are heavily surveilled, they move from a casual, yet productive exchange between equals to a more cautious, bounded, recitation of the stratigraphy.

Though imposed by government regulations, the health and safety procedures on British commercial archaeological sites foster a community of care amongst site participants. Risk-taking such as digging in deep, unshored trenches, without proper protective equipment, or other unsafe working procedures, is seen as unacceptable and amateurish. Archaeologists with more experience and training in recognizing risks on site take it upon themselves to impart their knowledge to less-experienced diggers. There is a feeling of responsibility to ensure the safety of all participants on site, and some train to become a "first aider" – an archaeologist trained to deal with emergencies. Risk assessments and health and safety briefings are routine; violations of good practice are discussed with shock and disgust. For example, when a deep sounding was cut through the West Mound at Çatalhöyük, there was an outcry amongst British commercial archaeologists employed at the site:

> I have worked on many sites over the years, primarily, though not exclusively, in the UK. Throughout this time I have always been trained to believe, and practice, that health and safety is THE single most important priority on any groundworks operation, archaeological or otherwise. In my opinion this trench fulfills none of the criteria of safe practice which I believe should be the norm. (Taylor 2007; see also Taylor 2008)

> The safety issue is one that I should have raised earlier when I first saw the deep sounding, basically it was dangerous then and is even more dangerous

them without the direct oversight of a manager. In this way the single context system fostered a model with similarities to anarcho-syndicalism, wherein a small, non-hierarchical group works together towards a common goal, side-stepping more formalized authority.



Empowering archaeologists with the recording and interpretation of the deposits they excavate resulted in another component of more egalitarian site archaeology – that of the trench-side chat. In his ethnography of a British excavation, Edgeworth (2003, 112) notes that interpretations of material evidence are never the product of an individual, but come through conversations between two or more workers on site. These conversations are complemented by co-operative labor, in which archaeologists work alongside each other at a given task, such as cleaning large areas (Edgeworth 2003, 113) or helping each other define the edge of a ring ditch (Edgeworth 2003, 118). In one example, Edgeworth sketched the section of a cremation burial, but after speaking with another excavator, altered the sketch to reflect his changed understanding of the stratigraphic relationships created through this conversation (Edgeworth 2003, 252–253).

The interpretive discourse described by Edgeworth reflects the experience of the authors; unsurveilled archaeologists often wander over to a fellow archaeologist's area and ask them what is going on. What then commences is a discussion wherein the archaeologists discuss the stratigraphic relationships in the trench and possible interpretations of the deposits. This conversation, often animated by gestures, is a form of narrative ekphrasis, a rhetorical exercise that involves verbal description and bodily performance interpreting the physical remains of the past. Through continual narrative building about the archaeological record using dialog and performance, the archaeologists come to a collective interpretation. Archaeologists with less experience listen to these discussions and learn to perform their own. Importantly, these trench-side chats are non-hierarchical exchanges of insight based on experience; a very different exchange occurs when a non-involved site director or specialist periodically appears to query or challenge the excavator's interpretation (Hamilton 2000). When single context recording is mapped onto a site