



# ARCHAEOLOGY

## A SOCIO-CRITICAL SCIENCE

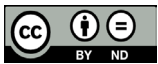
Socially relevant – *Whose past(s) do archaeologists investigate?*  
Politically significant – *Whose history do we construct?*  
Interdisciplinary in design

MARLIES HEINZ



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Marlies Heinz

Archaeology – A socio-critical science

Socially relevant – Whose past(s) do archaeologists investigate?

Politically significant – Whose history do we construct?

Interdisciplinary in design

ABSTRACT

Archaeological science is always socio-critical archaeological science. Socio-critical archaeological research is always socio-scientifically oriented historical research. This approach is explained in the present study, this is the topic of this book. As socio-critical research archaeologists, we work with things. We look for the people who created, used, and discarded these things. We look for people as individual agents. We look for people as members of social communities. We ask about the ways of life in the social communities of the past(s). We ask about the functions of things in social interaction, and we ask about the meanings of things for the success of social interaction. We conduct our research in interdisciplinary alliances. The guiding discipline for and through our socio-critical archaeological research is sociology. Sociological research has developed the knowledge of the basic conditions that must be in place for social coexistence to be successful. We socio-critical archaeologists derive from these cognitions the parameters we have to look for in order to find answers to the guiding questions of our socio-scientifically oriented archaeological research: Whose past(s) do we see and whose histories do we construct based solely on the analysis of things? We broaden and deepen our interdisciplinary approach by cooperating with those cultural studies that focus on clarifying the conditions and possibilities of successful social togetherness - among them research on representation, semiotics, communication studies, art studies, political research on cultural hegemony, and on the socio-economic framework of social togetherness. The potential of socio-critical archaeological research to elicit the desired insights into social interaction in the communities of the past(s) with a supposedly deficient source situation - things alone - is immense. Boundless is the challenge to transfer the available knowledge potential into our archaeological research and to apply it in our concrete archaeological practice.

This study shows how this can be done.

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## Part I

# Some general remarks on archaeology and on socio - critical archaeology in particular

*1.0 Instead of an introduction - A personal note in advance -*

*Why at all archaeology?*

Surely every archaeologist has at least once in his or her professional life heard the question or asked himself or herself what sense it could make to be an archaeologist in our present or in dealing with the past(s) that are and with the history that we construct. The answer is actually quite simple. Every critical-reflective question about our present inevitably leads to critical questions about the past(s). Every critical reflection of the present, every questioning of our living conditions, of our own present way of life, of the becoming of one's own present, as well as every thinking of alternatives to the existing is based on historical knowledge or presupposes that historical knowledge is available. I have the privilege of living in a society in which, at the time of my socialization, dealing with history and critical questions about social coexistence were given high priority. Because of this situation, I was able to develop an active awareness of how complexly every present being is connected to the events of the past(s), i.e. that every present cannot be understood and explained without historical and socio-critical knowledge. This seems to be a truism. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out, because it is not self-evident that this truism is actively made conscious or actively perceived in all societies and is available for socio-critical thinking. Not in every society is a corresponding consciousness awakened that would enable all members of the respective society to critically question what has led to the formation of the living conditions under which people live in their respective present, i.e. why we humans live today as we live, why people lived in the past(s) as we can comprehend them with our respective present knowledge, or why we postulate our ideas about the past(s) as we present them. Not everyone is aware of the importance of historical knowledge for the critical examination of social developments. It is this awareness of the importance and power of historical knowledge that has helped me to critically question why I live the way I do, a question in which the reference to the past(s) is already inseparable. Answers to socio-critical questions and the attempt to understand and explain the causes and backgrounds of given social conditions cannot succeed without historical knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

*In addition, the leitmotif of my socio-critical archaeological research is the following*

In accordance with my thoughts expressed above, I advocate the following guiding principle in my socio-critical archaeological research:

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<sup>1</sup> See *Excursus 1.3, The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct; V.3.1, Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

*Society/community and societies/communities, without exception, function and survive only because all members of the social entities - and each according to his or her own possibilities - are involved in their own specific way in the shaping of social togetherness.*

### 1.1 What it's all about - in the following essay

My thoughts on why I understand archaeological research as socio-critical archaeological research, and how archaeological research can be done as socio-critical archaeological research, are presented under 6 aspects {Part I - Part VI}. First, I want to think through some basics that should be given so that we can do socio-critical archaeological research at all {Part I - Some general remarks on archaeology and on socio-critical archaeology in particular}. Socio-critical archaeological research is always interdisciplinary. The focus of my essay is on considerations of how this interdisciplinary cooperation can take place and with which disciplines. I begin by outlining the possibilities for interdisciplinary cooperation with sociology, the science that is relevant to my concerns {Part II - What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?}. At the same time, I present the stumbling blocks, the challenges that we archaeologists face in this collaboration. My focus in archaeological research is on dealing with people. This may also sound like a truism, but at the same time it means that dealing with the things that are our sources in any archaeological research is for me a means to an end, not an end in itself. I refer to the things as the materialized cultural forms of expression created by the members of the social entities of the past(s). Socio-critical archaeological research is thus for me always also socio-cultural research. In the third part of the essay, I deal with this approach {Part III - Socio-critical archaeology as cultural science or: On the way from the thing to the human being seen from the perspective of the cultural sciences}. My division of society and culture into two domains is to be understood as a heuristic device only. The same is true for the deduction of the field of economy in the consideration of social togetherness. The importance of economic-critical considerations for socio-critical archaeological research, and at the same time the point that social, cultural, and economic conditions are de facto inextricably linked in every society, is addressed in the fourth part of the essay {Part IV - Economy}. Socio-critical archaeological research is critical research, as I have already indicated in my terminology. Socio-critical archaeological research is meant to enlighten, to stimulate independent thinking, to make us aware of our own present living conditions and the living conditions of the past(s) as man-made by critically questioning the emergence of every social order. I deal with this demand throughout the essay and again in more detail towards the end of my remarks, when I ask once more and in conclusion what I understand by socio-critical archaeology {Part V - Socio-critical archaeology - my reflections in conclusion}. At the end of my reflections, I encourage a look into the future with some questions: How can the present

reflections on socio-critical archaeological research be deepened? What further research approaches beyond those mentioned here might be appropriate, and what further interdisciplinary research networks should be added to socio-critical archaeological research? {Part VI - How to proceed? An outlook}.

### 1.1.1 To the contents of the principal parts in detail

#### Part I - Some general remarks on archaeology and on socio-critical archaeology in particular

My interest as an archaeologist in the past(s) and in history concerns the individual human being as a thinking, acting and reacting agent and the human being as a member of a social entity. As a socio-critical archaeologist, I do not work in an ivory tower, nor is our archaeological research that of an orchid science. On the contrary, my approach to the identification of social conditions in the past(s) is characterized by my own observations and critical reflections on the socio-cultural, socio-economic and political conditions of my present everyday life. I ask how we can determine from the static archaeological evidence the dynamic processes, events, and actions of the members of the social entities of the past(s) that led to the materialized cultural forms of expression we have at our disposal {I.2}. I observe and analyze how we humans form our social togetherness in contemporary societies and ask for the *causes* and *reasons* why we form it in the way we see it in the manifold facets of social orders. I would like to say a few words about the concepts of causes and reasons, which challenge us in two ways: These terms are related to the question of why we humans act, why we perform, why we react. There are reasons for our actions, and there are causes that lead us to act. First, let us clarify the difference between reason and cause, using an example: the reason you shovel water out of a boat is that without this action the boat would sink. The cause of the boat filling with water is that the boat has a leak. Our challenge as socio-critical archaeologists is first to recognize this difference. For both terms, cause and reason, are used colloquially<sup>2</sup> - also in this study - in the sense of "reason" when seeking answers to the question - why did the members of the social entities of the past(s) perform this or that action, make things, use things, discard things? On the other hand, the question arises as to whether - or how - we can succeed in recognizing causes and reasons for actions by means of things alone! (For a detailed and well-founded discussion of the concepts of reason and cause, see Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1969, 367 and 433ff.; Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1974, 75ff.; see also Richard Ned Lebow, 2020).

From the observation of one's own everyday life and the knowledge thus gained about the diversity and complexity of the requirements that must be met in order for living together to become possible, my questions arise both about the possibilities of social togetherness in the social entities

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<sup>2</sup> For the use of colloquial language in science, see *Excursus II.3, Colloquial language*

of the past(s) and about our possibilities as socio-critically researching archaeologists to investigate the social togetherness of that time on the basis of our archaeological sources, the things. With this approach, I am aware and make it unmistakably clear that we always approach our reflections on the past(s) from our etic point of view. I also constantly point out the need and challenge to find ways to approach the emic point of view and to answer the question - who is speaking? As a socio-critical archaeologist, I always approach the past(s) with my critical analysis of the conditions of possibility of social togetherness in the present. Socio-critical, historical-archaeological research {I.3} is therefore always also socio-political research {I.4}, which I conduct in interdisciplinary connection with political science, economics, cultural studies and social sciences, and in which philosophy as a superordinate discipline ensures the connection between the sciences mentioned. Socio-critical archaeological research starts from our everyday experiences - every curious person is welcome to engage with this line of research {I.5} and to make further considerations on how we can get from the visible and tangible finds and archaeological records [*archäologischer Befund*] of archaeological research to insights about the people "behind the things". We look for the people, we have the things and I clarify what I mean by "things" in this essay {I.6 - I.6.1}. Before we can turn to the concrete questions about the relations that the members of the social entities of the past(s) entered into with the things, we should first be explicitly clear about how we actually get to our sources, the things {I.7 - I.7.2}, what things we capture with our excavations, and what questions also arise from the circumstances that lead us to our sources. Among these are the fundamental questions of what we can know at all about the range of things that were available to the members of the social entities of the past(s), when we seek the answer to this question on the basis of the archaeological record, the statically available result of dynamic developments that, moreover, represent the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous. And again, we ask how this knowledge - or lack of knowledge - affects both our view of the past(s) and the constructions of history we create on this basis {I.7.3 - I.7.4}. We look for the people and have the things - a seemingly inadequate starting point. That this is not so, we can first make clear to ourselves by referring again to our own everyday observations. I reflect and analyze how we deal with things, how we assign meanings to things and how we deal with things in our daily social interactions. We make things constitutive elements of our social togetherness - an assertion that I make not only for our own social relations, but also postulate as valid for the social entities of the past(s) {I.8 - I.8.1.2; *Excursus I.1*}. My reflections on the possibilities and preconditions for gaining insights into ways of life in the social entities of the past(s) illustrate why we, as archaeologists doing socio-critical research, need sound knowledge about what society is and how it functions. We need this knowledge not least to be able to ask the "right" questions of our sources and to develop hypotheses and theses about the connection between things and people that are based on



generalizable insights beyond our subjective observations {I.8.2}. We obtain these generalizable insights through interdisciplinary collaboration between archaeology and sociology. Before discussing this collaboration in detail, I first clarify some terms that we know from our colloquial usage, but that are used in science with specific culminations of their meanings {I.8.3; *Excursus* I.2 - *Excursus* I.4}. Finally, I summarize my thoughts on the preconditions that should be in place for socio-critical archaeological research to take place {I.9}, and lead with this summary at the same time into my remarks on the potentials of cooperation between archaeology and sociology {*Part II*}.

*Part II - What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?*

The "sources" of sociological research are human beings. The cognitive interests of sociological research lie, in a very general sense, in the questions of what society is and how society functions {II.1 - II.2; *Excursus* II.1; *Excursus* II.2; II.3 - II.3.2.1}. Based on empirical research and the knowledge gained from empirical studies, social scientists formulate generalizable statements about the questions posed. Our cognitive interests correspond to those of sociological research. We also ask what society is and how it works. In contrast to sociological research, we have a completely different starting point in our search for answers: The sources of socio-critical archaeological research are things. Through the things we look for both the people who created these things and for ways to gain insight into the social interaction of the members in the social entities of the past(s) and the use of the things there as constituent elements for the success of this social togetherness. In *Part II* I will thus present the complexity of the far-reaching possibilities as well as the upcoming challenges that result for us socio-critical archaeologists from interdisciplinary work, here first of all from interdisciplinary cooperation with sociology {see again *Excursus* II.1; see *Excursus* II.3}. Connections that we as socio-critical archaeologists concretely seek between the things and the people, the actors in the social entities of the past(s), we pursue with questions about what groups are, how groups are formed, and what significance groups have for social interaction {II.3.3 - II.3.3.1}. We ask about the occurrence of boundaries in social interaction {II.3.4 - II.3.4.1} and about what holds society together {II.3.5 - II.3.5.4; *Excursus* II.4; *Excursus* II.5; II.3.5.5}, and we deal with the clarification of what is to be understood by realities {II.3.6 - II.3.6.5}. We deal with the phenomenon of order, asking what order is, how order works {II.3.7 - II.3.7.15}, and what role conflicts play in maintaining order and ensuring social cohesion {II.3.7.16 - II.3.7.19}. The consideration of order and cohesion becomes relevant again when we ask whether societies are social units {II.3.7.20 - II.3.8.2}. Finally, the parameters of power and rule / governance, ideology and common sense are thematized as effective forces for successful social togetherness {II.3.9. -

II.3.9.9; *Excursus II.9*; *Excursus II.10*; II.3.9.10}. Sociological research provides us with the basic knowledge we need for our "search for the people behind the things". It will be our task as socio-critical archaeologists to find out whether and how we can recognize the criteria mentioned *pro toto* as well as further aspects of social togetherness in our source situation. The upcoming challenges to overcome the stumbling blocks on our way as well as our options to find answers are discussed in the commentaries (*Own commentary and archaeological reference*), which I elaborate separately for each complex of questions. Wherever possible, I give examples of possible approaches to finding answers.<sup>3</sup>

*Part III - Socio-critical archaeology as cultural science or: On the way from the thing to the human being seen from the perspective of the cultural sciences*

Socio-critical archaeological research opens up the social via the cultural {III.1}. We start from the cultural forms of expression, the things, and find out how the social contexts of origin of the cultural can be grasped via the cultural legacies. We recognize the things, the cultural forms of expression, as constitutive elements of the social. We produce things, dispose of them as property [*Eigentum*], or simply own them (ownership)[*Besitz*]<sup>4</sup> and discard them. We present things visibly and tangibly, we display our handling of things. But there is more to presenting things - we represent with things what is invisible, what is not shown, but what is always meant {III.1.1 - III.1.1.3}. Semiotics provides the basis for our knowledge of how representation is created and what role the connotation plays in understanding human interaction, i.e. every form of communication {III.1.2 - III.1.2.3}. Every interpersonal encounter and every interaction with things is determined by the parameters of presentation, representation and nonverbal communication {III.1.3}. Every successful social interaction depends, among other things, on the fact that in communication, including nonverbal communication, the represented is understood beyond the presented. Possibilities of how we as socio-critical archaeologists are able to elicit the connotated, the represented on the basis of things, we get to know through the approaches that have been developed for corresponding questions in the science of art {III.1.4 - III.1.5}. I have already pointed out that we socio-critical archaeologists elicit the social through the cultural. The cultural is at the same time political, because the cultural decisively shapes the social. Already our

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<sup>3</sup> A subsequent study (currently - 2024 in preparation) will be concerned with showing, on the basis of precisely these case studies, where, despite attempts to find answers to our questions, our non-knowledge [*Nichtwissen*] of essential requirements that must be in place for social coexistence to succeed both directs our views of the social modes of life in the past(s) and coins, possibly also deforms our constructions of history.

<sup>4</sup> The importance of the distinction between ownership [*Besitz*] and property [*Eigentum*] for the design of one's own life as well as for the organization of social interaction is reflected in detail in chapter IV / Economy in detail - see there: More than a little difference: Ownership and property matter in the design of social interaction.

sources, which we have access to and which we can consider and name as a prerequisite as well as a result of successful social interaction, the things, the cultural forms of expression, make this socio-political significance of the cultural for every social interaction clear {III.1.6 - III.1.7}. The political power inherent in the cultural, or the power that can be exercised by those who control the cultural in a social entity, was explicitly explained by Antonio Gramsci with his model of cultural hegemony {III.1.7.1 - III.1.7.1.2; *Excursus III.1*; *Excursus III.2*}. Antonio Gramsci's reflections affect our socio-critical archaeological research in two ways. Antonio Gramsci shows how - and why - the control of the cultural in the political can be and is used to control the social. Capturing this exercise of power in the social entities of the past(s) is one of the many challenges for our socio-critical archaeological research. The control over the knowledge we have in the present about what happened culturally and socially in the social entities of the past(s) is also assumed by us as socio-culturally researching archaeologists. This means that we also exercise power with our socio-critical archaeological research! We ask ourselves if and to what extent we are cultural hegemon. With our questions and our search for the potency of the cultural, the potency of the represented, the potency of the exercise of power over the social by means of the cultural, inter alia through nonverbal communication, we as socio-critical archaeologists combine our social science and cultural studies oriented research interests. We search for the actors and circumstances that made the emergence of cultural forms of expression, ownership [*Besitz*], property [*Eigentum*], use, and also the discarding of cultural forms of expression possible and necessary in the social entities of the past(s). In this way, we want to make the concept of cultural hegemony fruitful for our socio-critical archaeological research. To do so, however, we must be aware of the stumbling blocks inherent in this concept. We encounter these stumbling blocks when we study the work of the anthropologist James Scott {III.1.7.2 - III.1.7.3}.

#### *Part IV - Economy*

That the economic is always and in all societies the decisive basis for every success of social coexistence - and thus also part of socio-critical archaeological research - can also be regarded as a truism. How the economic, the social, and the cultural are intertwined {IV.1} and what questions, challenges, and stumbling blocks arise for our socio-critical archaeological research from this fact is the subject of *Part IV*, in which I essentially draw on the studies of Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner as well as Rahel Jaeggi as a red thread through the socio-critical archaeological search for the mentioned connections {IV.2 - IV.3} and comment on them {IV.4}.

*Part V - Socio-critical archaeology - my reflections in conclusion*

I see a crucial task of socio-critical archaeological research in constantly reflecting on how and to what extent our locations, from which we conduct research, shape our standpoints, which we hold in our view of the past(s), and which are effective in our constructions of history {V.1; V.2}. It is a decisive concern of mine to have an enlightening effect with my socio-critical archaeological research {V.3; V.3.1}. I see the ideas formulated in Critical Theory for the consideration of society as a suitable red thread that can lead through every correspondingly oriented, critically practiced science {V.4}.

*Part VI - How to proceed? An outlook*

With this essay I have presented the questions and interdisciplinary collaborations that are of primary, but not exclusive, importance to my cognitive interests in socio-critical archaeological research. With different emphases in identifying social relations in the social entities of the past(s), different or expanded research collaborations may be needed. I suggest in *Part VI*, the concluding part of the essay, how these could look like {VI.1 - VI.5}. Finally, I ask about the importance of theoretical research in socio-critical archaeology {VI.6} and conclude my reflections with a review of the beginning of the essay {VI.7}.

*1.2 Once again and summarized: Socio-critical archaeological science - what is it and what are we striving for?*

Socially critical archaeological research shows how strongly the life-worlds of the present are linked to the life-worlds of the past(s). The approach of understanding archaeology as a critical socio-historical as well as critical socio-political science of man ensures that archaeological research never runs the risk of being irrelevant to the concerns of our present. On the contrary, the political nature of archaeological (and any historical) research makes it relevant and indispensable for thought and action and for a critical view of developments in our contemporary ways of life for all members of any society.<sup>5</sup> The questions we, as socio-critical archaeologists, ask about cultural forms of expression based on this understanding of archaeological research are complex, the approach we take to developing answers is holistic, and our starting point, the things from which we pursue our cognitive interests, is in many ways challenging.<sup>6</sup> Things lie before us as static expressions of dynamic social processes, in the course of which things emerge as a result of social needs and the possibilities for meeting them. Things are before us as the result of wanting, of being able, of being

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<sup>5</sup> On the political see below, I.4, *Socio-critical archaeological research and its political relevance*

<sup>6</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to I.3.3.3, *Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

allowed, of being ought, of knowing and being able, of power, of political and economic relations, and as the result of options for using the natural environment. They are ownership [*Besitz*], property [*Eigentum*]. They are used and discarded. As socio-critical archaeologists we are interested in these processes, in events as well as in actions. We are looking for the actors behind the things and we are looking for the meanings that these actors have assigned to things in social interaction and for the success of social interaction (see also Marion Benz; Joachim Bauer, 2022, 7 - 26; Marion Benz; Joachim Bauer, 2013, 11 - 24; Joachim Bauer; Marion Benz, 2013, 65 - 69). Thus, the focus of interest is not primarily on things as such.<sup>7</sup> Rather, as already mentioned, things are our means to an end for exploring the social worlds in the social entities of the past(s).<sup>8</sup>

### 1.3 Archaeology as socio-critical archaeological research or: What is actually meant by „socio-critical“?

The term *socio* refers to the core concern of socio-critical archaeology as an archaeology that deals with people in society - in the past(s) as well as in the present (see also on the term socio / society - William H. Sewell, Jr., 2005, chapter 10, 318 - 328 ). The awareness of the connection that the ways of life of every present are inseparably linked to the conditions of its past(s) enables the critical examination of the question why people - we - live the way we do.

*Critical* means that we critically engage with the social conditions of our contemporary living environments and ask how and why social orders, forms of life, ways of living develop.<sup>9</sup> Critical means always questioning, examining and presenting how and why my view of the past(s) and the history I construct turns out the way I present it with my own archaeological reports.<sup>10</sup> I look critically at the sources available to us archaeologists.<sup>11</sup> Critically, I analyze how they came into being and the implications of their emergence for our inferences about social conditions in the social entities of the past(s).<sup>12</sup> Critically, I consider the nature of our sources in terms of the extent to which we can extract from them the insights we seek into the functioning of social interaction in the social entities of the past(s). Critically, I look at the social realities I have constructed - who do the cultural forms of expression represent according to my construction, and how plausible are my interpretations of the material legacies and the constructions of history based on them? As an

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<sup>7</sup> See I.6.1, *Things - the diversity of sources which are potentially available to us for our socio-critical archaeological research*  
I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

<sup>8</sup> *The comments on sections I.2, I.3 and I.4 will also be published as part of the essay Marlies Heinz, in preparation, 2023*

<sup>9</sup> See I.4, *Socio-critical archaeological research and its political relevance*

<sup>10</sup> See V.1, *Our locations [Standorte], enlightenment as the task of the social and cultural sciences, and the relation to Critical Theory shape our socio-critical archaeological research*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>11</sup> See I.6.1, *Things - the diversity of sources which are potentially available to us for our socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>12</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

archaeologist, I critically reflect on my starting point from which I begin my research, the course of my research, the insights I gain - my own social environment from which I, as an archaeologist, see the past(s) and construct history.

#### *1.4 Socio-critical archaeological research and its political relevance*

The critical analysis of the social becoming of one's own present is one of the foundations of my attempts as a socio-critical archaeologist to develop appropriate critical analyses of the way society has become in the past(s) - which brings me to the political relevance of historical knowledge and another reason why it is worthwhile to engage in archaeology in general and socio-critical archaeology as a political and socio-critical science in particular. It is this approach of socio-critical archaeological research, the constant mutual reference to the present as well as to the past(s) of ways of life, and at the same time the understanding of archaeological research as a critical social science, as a critical research into the history of ideas and ideologies,<sup>13</sup> as a science concerned with the critical analysis of economic and political developments, which contains the inexhaustible potential to pose ever new questions to the theme - what is and how does society function and what enables or prevents successful social togetherness? In concrete terms, this socio-critical archaeological research encourages us to think critically. We encourage critical reflection on one's own life circumstances and critical examination of existing historical images. By making this approach publicly accessible through our reports on the past(s) and our constructions of history, we influence the way people think in the present. By influencing contemporary thinking, our research becomes political. Our research is political precisely because we influence people's thinking and thereby influence developments in social interaction. The perennial question of why, for what, and for whom historical research is important can be answered by considering the political significance of historical knowledge. And with this consideration of the political significance of historical and thus socio-critical archaeological research, there is at the same time a stimulating answer to the question that we archaeologists are asked again and again, why we should concern ourselves with the past(s) and with history in the present - and the answer is: in order to keep thinking "in motion"!

#### *1.5 For whom is the book intended?*

... **for all those** who ask themselves why we live the way we do today and which ways of life have shaped people and why in the past(s);

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<sup>13</sup> See V.3, *Enlightenment as a task of the humanities and social sciences - or: What socio-critical archaeology can contribute to this task in the present as a socio-critical historical science*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

- ... **for all those** who are interested in the impact of the present on the contemplation of the past(s) and the implications of this perspective for the construction of history;
  - ... **for all those** who wish to understand the significance of historical knowledge for the present and to recognize the influence of historical images on the shaping of their own everyday reality;
  - ... **for all those** who are concerned with the question of whose past(s) archaeologists are interested in, whose past(s) we are researching, and whose history we are constructing;
  - ... **for all those** who want to understand how the construction of history / historiography takes place, how images of history are created and how these affect the way we all see ourselves and the world;
  - ... **for all those** who want to understand who - and why - makes access to historical knowledge possible, enables it, promotes it, or tries to prevent it;
  - ... **for all those** who, on the basis of this knowledge, wish to intervene critically in the shaping of everyday life or to participate actively in its shaping, i.e. who understand the study of history, archaeology and culture as a means of political action;
  - ... **for all those** who are generally interested in the disciplines of archaeology, history, social and cultural sciences, as well as for students at the beginning of their studies, this essay may be a first orientation guide from which one's own approach to the contemplation of the past(s) can be shaped;
- And all those** who are already experienced in dealing with the past(s) may recognize familiar aspects in the approaches presented here and, ideally, discover something new.

*1.6 With our socio-critical archaeological research, we place the human being within the community into the focus of our cognitive interest - through the „things“ we work out the access to the past(s) life worlds*

In my socio-critical archaeological research I place the preoccupation with the human being and the social coexistence in the past(s) in the center of each investigation. Evidence of social coexistence in the past(s) are the things that have survived the period from the abandonment of the settlement site to its uncovering by our excavation.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

### 1.6.1 Things - the diversity of sources which are potentially available to us for our socio-critical archaeological research

By *things* I mean first of all objects, such as woods or stones, which we humans use as tools, today as in the past(s), recognizable by traces of use, without these woods or stones having been worked on for the corresponding use. From the concept of things as unprocessed tools, I also distinguish the concept of *artifacts*, that is, things that have been prepared for certain applications or manufactured for certain functions and uses. Although both architecture and spatial order are artifacts in the strict sense, I use the specific terms *architecture* and *spatial order* where I think it makes sense to specify what I mean. I use the term *traces* to describe the fact that visible material legacies can be the result of both human influence and natural conditions (e.g. ash residues). A further, materially graspable source category, which I do not want to call a thing, artifact, or trace, but which certainly belongs to the cultural forms of expression of social togetherness in the past(s), are burials, which I explicitly refer to as such wherever the occurrence of burials becomes relevant in my argumentation. In Near Eastern archaeology, which I represent, texts belong to our sources in some of our research areas and periods, but I treat them only marginally in the present study.<sup>15</sup> My focus is on the unlabeled things.

Where specific references to these individual categories are not concerned, but rather general descriptions of finds and archaeological records,<sup>16</sup> I use the term "things" as it is used colloquially to circumscribe these categories and also to speak of objects and material legacies. By the term "cultural forms of expression", which I will explain in detail later<sup>17</sup> and which is semantically different from all the terms mentioned above, I refer primarily to the visible evidence of the social interaction of the members of the social of the past(s), but I also have the invisible forms of thought and action of the actors of that time in mind, including the various forms of the exercise of power, of representation, and the manifold forms of nonverbal communication that people at all times and in all geographical areas use and have used for mutual understanding in their social interaction.

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<sup>15</sup> See VI.5, *Philology*

<sup>16</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>17</sup> See Excursus I.2, *What is meant by the term »cultural forms of expression«?*; Excursus I.2.2, *Cultural forms of expression - defined in concrete terms*

<sup>18</sup> See II.3.9.1, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft]. What is it and who executes it?*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*



*1.7 Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*

Crucial to the achievement of our research goals, the identification of whose life worlds we can grasp on the basis of things, are the circumstances that allow us access to the sources or prevent us from doing so. In accessing the sources, some is the result of planning and much is the result of chance. Among the factors that determine what kinds of legacies and whose expressions of thought and action in the past(s) will become known in the present are the political circumstances in the countries in which we live and in which we are given the opportunity - or not - to make socio-critical archaeological research our concern. So, first of all, our backgrounds, our educational and professional opportunities are crucial. Decisive are our cognitive interests, which run as a red thread through our research. Decisive for access to the regions and sites of interest to us are the political conditions in the countries where our archaeological research is to take place. The state of preservation of the archaeological sites, and thus the spectrum of potentially available material sources, is decisive for the possibilities of gaining insights into the ways of life in the past(s). What material legacies shape our view of the past(s), and what sources we use to create our constructions of society and history, is thus accidental, conditionally planned, and always subjective.

*1.7.1 Briefly mentioned once again - the influence of our background in making socio-critical archaeology possible at all*

The decision to devote oneself to archaeological and sociohistorical research is tied to a multitude of criteria. One's background is already a decisive factor in determining whether one has the opportunity to become an archaeologist, if one can become an archaeologist at all. This includes the opportunity to grow up and live in a social context in which access to knowledge is possible for everyone. It also includes the fact that the phenomenon of history is considered important in this society, that the study of the past(s) and history is considered meaningful - and the knowledge acquired in this way is considered meaningful and worth knowing. The existence of and access to schools and universities in which history is part of the curriculum is necessary. Further prerequisites are that those interested in the study of history and the past(s) have the financial means to be trained accordingly, and that they have the opportunity to apply their knowledge in a professional career - in the country where they live, in the country where their archaeological fieldwork and research will take place.

*1.7.2 Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*

Every decision for the selection of a research region as well as an excavation site is subjective - thus our view of the past(s) becomes subjective. Subjective is our construction of history, and subjective is the decision as to which stocks of knowledge about the past(s) we will expand in the present; subjective, but not arbitrary.<sup>19</sup> The consideration of where our archaeological work should take place, the selection of the research region and thus the choice of the excavation site, again depends on a multitude of different factors. Some of these factors we can influence to achieve our goals, others we cannot. Again, planning and chance go hand in hand. In addition to the prerequisite that the above conditions are met and that we have decided on a research region, the following factors play a decisive role in our choice of a research region as well as in the choice of a site within this region: our cognitive interests, our financial possibilities for excavation and research, and the political conditions in the region where our excavations are to take place. Once it is formally assured that the excavation can take place in the desired area and that all prerequisites have been met, we focus our cognitive interests, concretize our excavation concepts, and specify our research goals. We match the hoped-for potential of the chosen excavation site with our research interests and goals. We decide in which areas of the site to begin work in order to achieve the stated research goals, i.e., to obtain answers to our questions about the past(s). We think through the excavation methods to be used, decide on the technical tools to be used, and hire the appropriate staff. At the site, we begin our work with a survey, i.e. an analysis of the natural environment in which the site is located, as well as an examination of the site itself with regard to its potential for settlement. In connection with the survey of the site, we measure it, mark the areas to be excavated, and decide whether to work in flat areas [*Flächengrabung*] or in sondages and deep soundings [deep cut / *Tiefschnitt*], a decision that again depends on our cognitive interests. Our decision whether to work in flat areas or to start a deep sounding also influences both the range of what we can potentially see of the material legacies of the past(s), as well as the opportunities for cognition of the lifeworld conditions in the past(s). The selection of sources is thus generated, among other things, by our own activities. Even before the actual excavation begins, we receive initial information about life at the site - in the past(s) as well as in the present. What do we see before the actual excavation begins?<sup>20</sup> We see the natural space that the users of the time chose for their settlement. We perceive

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<sup>19</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to Excursus I.3.3.3, *Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

<sup>20</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?; I.8.1, What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*

their knowledge about the possibilities of using this space for their needs. We get a first glimpse of the knowledge and skills that were available to take the first steps in coping with daily life. We see the needs of the inhabitants at that time and their possibilities to shape the social coexistence.

*1.7.3 With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again:*

*What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

We open areas in the dimensions of our choice and deep soundings according to our cognitive interests and questions. We uncover the material heritage. As a result of chance as well as intentional decisions of the people who lived in the past(s), a selection has been preserved from the multitude of things that people made, used, owned, possessed, and discarded in the past(s). Some things (presumably) no longer exist, decayed, some may have been destroyed, again by chance or intentionally, and other things were consciously kept in the past(s) and made available to the memory or knowledge of the people of that time. Both intention and coincidence lead to the fact that we bring things back to light with our excavations. We see things of all kinds, spectra of artifacts made of all kinds of materials, and we see traces of events that may or may not have been human-caused (traces of fire, ash residues), but that have nonetheless manifested themselves in the archaeological record. We see the design of space by humans, we see the distribution of things in space, things in relation to each other.<sup>21</sup> We see burials and the way people dealt with death. We "see" the course of time in the stratified recorded sequence of human actions in space and time. We "see" relative chronology. Where we have made the decision to take deep soundings, we follow the course of time at that place and initially at that point, based on the sequence of layers, the stratigraphy. We see the emergence, development and decay of things, of artifacts, of architecture and spatial order, of burials. We see continuity and change. The presence of plant residues and animal bones in the site gives us insight into the nature of subsistence and economic practices. From the raw materials used locally, we extract the geographical and natural knowledge of the settlers (see Dieter Hassenpflug, 1993; Gottfried Liedl, 2022). From the use and processing of the raw materials we recognize their craftsmanship and knowledge. The settlement evidence shows us the type of living and housing, permanent, seasonal and/or mobile, not permanently site bound. We see the materialized expression of coordinated human interaction and at the same time

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*Excursus I.3.2.2, Stories about the past(s) - on what we can report; Excursus I.3.3, From the story to history - the construction of history*  
<sup>21</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?; I.8.1, What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate? with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -; Excursus I.3, The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct up to Excursus I.3.3.2, Historiography - or - construction of history*

the results of natural processes in the state of preservation of the sites and things. We see the results of human planning, of decisions and coincidences, of thought, knowledge, action and reaction in space and time. We see the development of needs and the unfolding of opportunities to satisfy those needs. As archaeologists, we uncover cultural forms of expression that have evolved over long periods of time. We record the formation, development, and decay of things. We can trace that these processes occur at different tempi. Things can remain formally unchanged for centuries, and things can change in appearance in a very short time - both within a settlement community and in neighboring settlements, simultaneously or with a time lag. Thus, we see continuity and change not only in one settlement area of our excavation site, not only in one place over time. As socio-critical archaeologists, we work comparatively. We open several areas in one excavation site, we excavate in several places in one or more regions. In this way, we may be able to see developments over time in several settlement areas of an excavation site, or in several sites that may have been located in the immediate vicinity as well as those that were founded at a greater geographical distance. Regardless of the spatial distance, we see material legacies that are comparable or even identical in these settlement areas and places. We also see exclusivity, archaeological records that are in no way comparable. Of the almost infinite variety of meanings, values, and needs that lie behind the same, different, but similar, or completely different archaeological records, I would like to cite a few examples. We are confronted with the fact that identical inventories may have had completely different meanings for producers and users, depending on the social entity, just as we are aware that different cultural forms of expression may have been given identical meanings and values by the respective producer and user circles in different places and communities. As socio-critical archaeologists we are confronted with the fact that completely different cultural forms of expression have been (and are) developed for identical needs, and at the same time we know, not least from our own experience, that similar cultural forms of expression can stand for the satisfaction of completely different needs. In any socio-critical archaeological study, we are faced with the challenge of identifying what facts we have before us. What we *see*, then, are the diverse and complex materialized, preserved expressions of socio-cultural, economic, and political realities in the social entities of the past(s). What we are *looking for* as socio-critical archaeologists is the "other" side of the material legacies. We look for the circumstances that led to the preservation or destruction of our sources. We are looking for the causes and reasons<sup>22</sup> (on causes and reasons see again Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1969, 367 and 433ff.; Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1974, 75ff.) as well as for the conditions of opportunity that led to the materialized cultural forms of expression and the functions and meanings that people in the past(s) had assigned to their materialized cultural forms of expression. We are looking for answers to the

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<sup>22</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

questions of how the cultural forms of expression came into being, we are looking for answers to the questions of why they came into being, and for whom which of the cultural forms of expression had which meanings for the realization of the desired ways of life.

#### *1.7.4 Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

With the material heritage we have before us the visible evidence of social interaction in the past(s). In the field, we document what is visible. Before we begin an excavation, while we are working in the field, and while we are documenting the things and the archaeological record, we are constantly asking ourselves the central questions of our research: Whose past(s) are we dealing with in these material remains? And whose history will we later construct on the basis of these legacies? In the course of the excavations, we discuss the question of what, if anything, has not (!) been preserved in the archaeological record of the life worlds of the past(s); we discuss whether a statement can be made at all about what has not been preserved. In connection with the discussion of the phenomena that may not have been visibly preserved in the archaeological record, we are already discussing in the course of the excavation why exactly the things, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, the burials, and the traces that we have recorded in the current excavation have been preserved.<sup>23</sup> We talk about this because we were aware of the following while planning the research, during our excavations, and in the period after the excavations: When we excavate, we can only ever see a small fraction of what has happened in the past(s). We are aware that not all thought, knowledge, and action is reflected in the material, and that not everything that could potentially be reflected in the archaeological material is preserved in the archaeological record. The material heritage that we record in our archaeological excavations is a more or less accidental accumulation of cultural goods, the accidental discovery of the material results of the social practice, thought, knowledge, and action of the people who lived at that time. We are aware of the fact that all we see with this collection is a minimal slice of a past(s), the materialized result of both unintentional events and intentional choices - both of which always lead to these highly selective transmissions of what actually happened in the past(s).

The question posed above as to whether we can say anything at all about what has not been preserved is therefore more than justified, for: A "total" of the material forms of expression of life in the past(s) is unknown to us - and it is also questionable whether there is a total of the materialized cultural forms of expression of social togetherness at all, given that society never is, but is always in the process of becoming, and that what we humans produce always also embodies

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<sup>23</sup> See I.6.1, *Things - the diversity of sources which are potentially available to us for our socio-critical archaeological research*

the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous.<sup>24</sup> Elements of the cultural forms of expression already created by the generation of parents and previous generations are always part of the currently used and newly created cultural forms of expression - in every social entity - and thus also in every archaeological record.

Ergo, we socio-critical archaeologists look at materialized cultural forms of expression, which for us are the testimonies of the past(s), but for the members of the social entities of the past(s) they consist both of the cultural forms of expression newly created in their present as well as of the cultural forms of expression already used in the past(s). In other words, the things that we socio-critically researching archaeologists see from our etic point of view as the cultural forms of expression of the social worlds of the past(s), the members of the social entities of the past(s) saw from their emic point of view both as testimonies of their present and as testimonies of the past(s) that had already been shaped by previous generations. Our view of the past(s), our etic point of view, thus corresponds to the view of the present and the past(s) as perceived from the emic point of view.<sup>25</sup>

To put it another way: old and new exist side by side in every social entity, old things are constantly being replaced and new things are being added! And so the question arises anew - what would be understood by a "total"?<sup>26</sup>

Thus, already in the course of our work in the field, we formulate a variety of considerations about the origin, use, and decay of things. We discuss that the existence of things is the result of the thinking and acting, the needs, the will and the abilities of all people in a social entity,<sup>27</sup> the result also of the conditions of opportunity that had to be given so that people in their respective contexts in the past(s) as well as today could become active as actors at all. We try to sketch first answers to a heterogeneous spectrum of questions about how people lived in the past(s) already at the "cutting edge" [*Schnittkante*] or in the course of the excavation.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See II.1, *Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*; Excursus II.6, *The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description*; VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*

<sup>25</sup> See II.1, *Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; Excursus II.6, *The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*

<sup>26</sup> See Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?*

<sup>27</sup> See I.0, *Instead of an introduction - A personal note in advance - Why at all archaeology?*

<sup>28</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?*

## 1.8 Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life

Things are an indispensable part of our lives and of all our social encounters. They are a crucial means, instrument, and medium for organizing and shaping our social interaction. I will go one step further and postulate that we use things as constitutive elements in the organization of our own lives as well as in the organization of our social togetherness. We humans relate to things. We give things a social function in our interpersonal relationships, we transform things into instruments that influence our social togetherness. Our interaction with things is an essential part of all social, political, cultural, and economic developments, and these affect us humans in many different ways. I postulate that this is true not only for contemporary societies, but also for all societies of the past(s). Thus, I consider things, the materialized cultural forms of expression, to be fundamentally suitable sources that allow us to gain insights into facets of everyday life in the present and in the past(s), in the ways of life today as they were then.

### 1.8.1 What do we „see“ in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily social interactions?

#### - An account of my experiences -

The potential of things as "informants" with regard to social conditions in social entities already becomes clear to us when we look at the things we use every day with our everyday knowledge (see also Andreas Reckwitz, 2003 on practice theory; see also <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/practice-theory>)<sup>29</sup> and ask ourselves: What insights into the economic, political, and socio-cultural conditions of the social entity in which we live can we already gain by turning to the visible and tangible features of things alone?<sup>30</sup>

When we look at things as objects in detail, we see the materials used, the shapes, sizes, and colors of things, their state of preservation. We see the range of things we use in everyday life. From the things themselves, we see whether an object could be made by one person alone, or whether the activities of several people were required, from the procurement of materials to the manufacture of the final product, and then to its distribution. From the objects themselves, the materials used, the techniques employed, and the forms in which they were made, we can discern rules and norms

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<sup>29</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>30</sup> See I.6.1, *Things - the diversity of sources which are potentially available to us for our socio-critical archaeological research*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>31</sup> that had to be followed during production. We gain insights into the concepts of order, the stocks of knowledge, the skills of the craftsmen, and the abilities of those who were involved in the procurement, production, and use of the things (on the phenomenon of knowledge types, see Tilo Weber; Gerd Antos (eds.), 2013; on the phenomenon of knowledge see Marian Füssel, 2021 and Jürgen Renn, 2022, 383 - 401; see also <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/sociology-knowledge>).

From the information we gain from the direct observation of things, in a next step we derive plausibly comprehensible indications of the socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions that interest us in our social entity. We "see" that the economic conditions for the acquisition of materials and their processing or for the acquisition of goods were given. We "see" that the political conditions allowed access to the desired materials and goods. We recognize the organizational requirements for the provision of locally, regionally or supra-regionally available materials and their processing or for the acquisition of goods, and we see their successful implementation. From the things themselves, we recognize the needs that the production of the things and their handling required or made possible, and we recognize that the options were given to be able to satisfy the corresponding needs. On the basis of things, we "see" the results of decision-making processes and decisions made. Thus, by analyzing the visible and tangible characteristics of things, we gain far-reaching insights into the framework conditions that must be fulfilled in a social entity in order to make things available. The idea that material legacies are insufficient sources for the realization of our research concerns is misleading. On closer examination, the cultural forms of expression available in material form prove to be extremely informative sources for the realization of our cognitive interests, for gaining insights into the ways of life of past societies, and for building our constructions of history on this basis.

### *1.8.1.1 Assigning meanings to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

However, the potential of things as "informants" is far more complex than what we can grasp by analyzing only the characteristics of things that are visible and tangible to us. <sup>32</sup> We make things visible. With the visible presentation of things, or with the things themselves, we also represent the invisible, <sup>33</sup> we give meaning to things. These meanings may be individual, or they may be meanings

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<sup>31</sup> See II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*; II.3.7.2, *Order, rules and regulations - parameters of vital importance for all human cooperation*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*

<sup>32</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions?* - An account of my experiences -; *Excursus I.2, What is meant by the term »cultural forms of expression«?*

<sup>33</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*



more or less shared by all members of a social entity. The invisible in the visible, our attributions of meaning have an impact on the shaping of our own lives as well as on the shaping of our social interactions. In our everyday lives, we experience daily how we draw conclusions about our social order, about status, positions, and functions - about our own positioning in our community as well as that of our fellow human beings - from our own handling of things as well as from the handling of things by our fellow human beings.<sup>34</sup> We recognize daily that - and how - we interpret this handling of things in terms of the social classification of the actors.<sup>35</sup> Through the production, the property of respectively the ownership, and use of things, we humans not only establish relationships between ourselves and things, we also evaluate these relationships, and through these relationships we evaluate ourselves as humans and our interpersonal encounters. We develop evaluative views of those who produce things, those who call certain things their property, those who only own them, or those who neither call certain things their property nor own them. We develop evaluative views of those who have access to resources and those who are excluded from access.<sup>36</sup> We associate these evaluative views with more or less status and prestige, we use things to represent social positions in our social entities.<sup>37</sup> Through the access to things we steer possibilities of identification, we make the experience that with these assignments are connected possibilities to be accepted as belonging to a socio-cultural entity or, on the contrary, these assignments mean the exclusion of belonging.<sup>38</sup> We use the things or the meanings we assign to them for the exercise of power, for the exercise of cultural hegemony.<sup>39</sup> In our daily lives, through our own actions and through our social interactions, we experience the power of our attributions of meaning to things. We experience the influence that our attributions of meaning and our evaluations of how to handle and dispose of the property of things and how to handle and dispose of the ownership of things have on the shaping of our social interaction. Through our ways of using things, as well as through the attribution of meanings, we use things, as postulated at the beginning, as constituent elements for the design and performance of our own lives, as well as for the organization of our lives in social communities. With the connotations, the symbolic meanings<sup>40</sup> that we associate with things, which we cannot take directly from the things themselves, but

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<sup>34</sup> See II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*

<sup>35</sup> See II.2.1, *Once again in advance - Own experiences - This time on the topic: What is society and how does social coexistence work? At the same time a first insight into the aspects that will occupy us as socio-critically researching archaeologists*

<sup>36</sup> See II.3.8, *Equal - unequal or different? - First considerations; II.3.8.1, Equal, unequal or just different?*

<sup>37</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*

<sup>38</sup> See II.3.3, *Groups*

<sup>39</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule/governance; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; III.1.6, The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life; III.1.7.1, The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*

<sup>40</sup> Where not otherwise noted in the following, I use the term "symbolic" colloquially and synonymously with the terms *symbol, symbolism, connotation, meaning, representation, thus differently from the way it is defined in semiotics research - see there, II Semiotics - Knowing,*

which we need to know in order for our social interaction to succeed, we simultaneously and repeatedly assign a further function to the things: We use things as media of nonverbal communication.<sup>41</sup> The complex relationships between us humans and the things with which we surround ourselves or by which we are surrounded, to which we have access or not, and the significance of the respective facts for the shaping of one's own life (access to things or not) should have been and are more or less obvious to all people, then as now, in all societies. One of the concerns of our socio-critical archaeological research is to investigate these complex relationships between people and things and the effects of these relationships on living together in the social entities of the past(s).

*1.8.1.2 Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*

We manufacture things, we acquire things, we have certain functional uses in mind when we manufacture or acquire things. The concept of function is a multifaceted one. As a heuristic device, we can distinguish between primary and secondary functions - a distinction that is not uncontroversial.<sup>42</sup> For example, a chair - as we know it in our contemporary households and in our daily use - is primarily produced and acquired as an object to sit on. Usually - or most of the time - we acquire and use things first according to these primarily intended functions for which they were made. We humans usually belong to a social entity in which we are socialized and in which our habits develop. According to this socialization, we, the members of a social entity, have more or less the same idea of the functions for which the objects we surround ourselves with were made and how to use them accordingly.<sup>43</sup> There are agreements about the primary functions of many things. In our daily routine (habitus),<sup>44</sup> the practice of living according to the conventions, rules, and values that we all more or less share leads to the transmission of our given order. Without this result of socialization, a social entity could not "function"!<sup>45</sup> At the same time, we humans do not always live according to the expectations of others, nor according to the generally accepted rules that govern our social togetherness - and this also concerns our handling of things. Instead

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*recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations up to III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*

<sup>41</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

<sup>42</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -; I.8.1.1, Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction; II.3.7.11, To think differently, to act differently - to not participate - First considerations*

<sup>43</sup> See II.3.6.4, *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge*

<sup>44</sup> See II.3.7.8, *Parameters that keep our orders going: Rituals and routines; II.3.7.14, The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected?*

<sup>45</sup> See *Excursus II.4, How does socialization work?*

of using things strictly according to their intended primary function, we can deal with them in a variety of ways, using them in ways that their producers never thought of or never intended - we use things in secondary functions. The chair now serves us as a shelf, we allow artifacts to become devices (Dirk Hartmann; Peter Janich (eds.), 1996, 37; Hans Peter Hahn; Hadas Weiss (eds.), 2013). Many reasons lead us to use things in primary and/or secondary functions. It is our handling of things that makes them multifunctional, and it is our handling of things that opens up an almost unlimited spectrum of possible uses of things (see Hans Peter Hahn, 2014). The example of how we deal with pictorial works - today as well as in the social entities of the past(s) - can be used to demonstrate how relevant our knowledge of the ways in which things are used and their meaning for the respective actors in a social entity is when we want to understand and explain whose past(s) we see in the things and whose history we construct on the basis of this knowledge.

Whether things are used according to their primary function or in a secondary function, whether a pictorial work is used as a picture, as spolia in a building, or has to be destroyed (see the handling of Assyrian pictorial works by the terrorist group IS; Marlies Heinz, 2015), depends, among other things, on the socio-cultural affiliation of the actors. This also applies to the question of who understands respectful treatment of an object (the pictorial work) in its use in its primary function or in a secondary function, and for whom which treatment of an object (the pictorial work) is considered right or wrong for shaping and securing successful social coexistence.<sup>46</sup> In the case of the pictorial work, this can be the question of why it is right or wrong for whom to keep a pictorial work as a constituent factor of social interaction visible or to remove it from visibility in order to maintain, stabilize or destabilize the social order.<sup>47</sup> The challenges that arise for us as socio-critical archaeologists from these potentials, from the manifold possible uses and attributions of meaning, are obvious. Our cognitive interests lie in drawing conclusions from visible things to the handling of things, and from the handling of things to the social implications of this handling of things, i.e., from the visibility of things to the invisible effects on our thinking that are relevant to social interaction, to our thoughts and ideas, our mental and spiritual worlds, our desires and intentions, to life in community and thus to social togetherness. These cognitive interests, among others, are central impulses for the pursuit of archaeology as socio-critical archaeological research. What we can grasp and see is relevant to the way we deal with things, relevant to the meaning we assign to

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<sup>46</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconoclasm*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>47</sup> See II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together?* - First considerations up to II.3.7.3, *How does order emerge and how does it develop*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; II.3.7.11, *To think differently, to act differently - to not participate* - First considerations up to II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconoclasm*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

things and our dealings with them, and thus relevant to our dealings with each other as members of a social entity. For the way we use things and for the meanings we ascribe to things and our dealings with them, another aspect becomes relevant - our perceptual possibilities of phenomena that influence our thinking and acting, but which we neither grasp nor see. For clarification, a short excursus!

*Excursus I.1 The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*

In our everyday life, as well as in our socio-critical archaeological work, we do not only see things, we do not only touch and grasp them, we perceive phenomena in our dealings with things, and phenomena affect us that are neither visible nor tangible, but perceptible. Perceptions we experience consciously, just as perceptions can occur unconsciously. Our perception of the social, cultural and natural environment is not (only) a biological-natural process, perception is rather a learned social behavior (see both Gerhard Vollmer, 1975, 2023<sup>9</sup>, 86ff. and Ralf Becker, 2021, 157 - 170; see also Antony Fredriksson, 2022). We consciously and unconsciously, intentionally and unintentionally integrate perceptions into our thinking and acting, and in the same way, we react to our perceptions. In both cases, perceptions affect our social interactions and influence, among other things, how we deal with things. Perception is more than seeing, seeing is only part of our perception. In our daily lives, we see and understand our dealings with things based on the way they are used by us humans. Even in our daily dealings with things, we always perceive more than what we see and understand. We perceive - consciously and unconsciously - the emotionality with which we humans interact with each other and with which we interact with things. We perceive brightness and darkness, sounds and silence, movement and stillness, change and permanence, people, animals and plants, smells. We perceive atmospheres and moods, we feel warmth and cold, wind and stillness. Among other things, perceptions are tied to our notions of reality.<sup>48</sup> In a reality where, for example, the existence of ghosts is part of the reality of everyday life, people perceive ghosts. If they do not belong to the concepts of everyday life and reality, they will not be perceived by the majority of the members of a correspondingly socialized social entity.<sup>49</sup> That is, like all results of our socialization, our seeing and perceiving is culturally shaped. Our perceptions influence our thinking, our actions, our needs, and our ways of meeting those needs. Perceptions evoke associations and awaken memories - individually and collectively. The phenomenon of perception thus also influences us as researchers, first in the planning of our research, then in the course of our excavations, in what we see, in our interpretations of the material remains, and last

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<sup>48</sup> See VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*

<sup>49</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*

but not least in our constructions of history. Perceptions have also shaped the people of the past(s) in shaping the worlds in which they live. Capturing these effects, as well as the ways in which things are used and the meanings we humans ascribe to them, is one of the challenges of our socio-critical archaeological research. Using one aspect that we consider in the direct analysis of built space, I can give some initial indications of how we, as socio-critical archaeologists, can meet this challenge. In order to understand and explain how spatial orders emerge in a settlement, we look for signs that allow us to postulate in a plausible way which invisible, immaterial, but perceptible (!) phenomena might have influenced the shaping of the material world in the social entities of the past(s). We relate the mentioned parameters such as acoustics, light, shadow and wind to the building structure of a settlement, formulate hypotheses on how and to what extent the above mentioned parameters were taken into account by the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] and the builders (those who carried out the construction work [*Erbauer*]) of a settlement, calculate how the visibility and audibility of actors was ensured for a given development, e.g. to ensure the optimal use of an open space as a meeting place for larger and smaller gatherings of people (for the virtual construction of perceptible phenomena in archaeological features see Klaus-Matthias Dürr, 2014).

### *1.8.2 An initial conclusion and a first reference to the potentials of sociological research for socio-critical archaeology*

Reflecting on our own handling of things first makes us aware of the fact that and how we assign functions and meanings to things in our everyday lives, in the society in which we live, and in the organization of our social togetherness. Our observations lead us to ask why we deal with things in the way we do every day. We ask about the conditions that have to be in place for us to produce things, to regard them as property, or just to own and use them. We ask how the conditions came to be in which we treat things accordingly. We ask how the needs we develop in connection with the use of things and the possibilities we have to satisfy them come into being. We ask who develops which needs in our social interactions, who has which options - or not, and why - to gain access to which things. Who, then, is significantly involved in shaping the socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political orders in which we live, and how, and why are they given? These are some of the fundamental questions about the functions and meanings of things that we are confronted with in everyday life - questions that concern also us as socio-critical archaeologists - and that are at the same time among the basic questions of social science research. As observers of our own actions - as well as socio-critical archaeologists - we connect this consideration with the follow-up question of how we humans develop the necessary knowledge and skills to serve newly emerging needs, connected to the equally fundamental question of how needs arise in the first place. We ask anew, as contemporaries, both as researchers and as contemporary socio-critical

archaeologists, who actually sets the norms and values according to which our "desires" for things arise, and which then guide our dealings with things. We see the complexity of the conditions under which things come into being, and we think about the organizational requirements of our social interaction so that things can be manufactured, can become property, can be owned, and can be used. Our insights are subjective, but they show us that we humans obviously integrate things as essential components in the organization of our social togetherness. In order to investigate the togetherness of people and things on an objective basis, we socio-critical archaeologists need a basic knowledge of what society actually is and how society, i.e. social togetherness, functions. We obtain this basic knowledge by turning to social science research, which pursues these questions as the core of its research.<sup>50</sup>

### *1.8.3 Terms from our everyday language and their application in this essay*

#### *Excursus 1.2 - Excursus 1.4*

Before I link sociological and socio-critical archaeological research, I will first explain some further basic terms that I will use throughout the following, some of which are colloquially known, but which I, as a socio-critical archaeologist, use in a specific sense.

#### *Excursus 1.2 What is meant by the term »cultural forms of expression«?*

Explaining what culture is could be the subject of a book in itself. Before I briefly describe what I understand by culture and which term I use to delimit or rather specify the field of the cultural in my socio-critical archaeological research, a brief remark on the relationship between the phenomena of society and culture. The cultural sociologist Matthias Junge (2009) has dealt with this topic in a very detailed, well understandable and differentiated way (see also the very informative presentation of this topic "Sociology of Culture" - <http://sociology.irese.archnet.com/sociology-of-culture/>). My basic thesis goes back to the considerations of Matthias Junge when I say that I do not regard society and culture as opposites, nor as phenomena to be considered in isolation from each other. First, I briefly explain my conception of the phenomenon of culture, and then, using the term "cultural forms of expression," I outline how I link the phenomena of society and culture.

#### *Excursus 1.2.1 Culture*

Paraphrased very briefly, by culture I mean all the expressions of life that we humans articulate, all the ways we think, create, act, behave. These expressions of life manifest themselves immaterially

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<sup>50</sup> See Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?*

on the one hand, and are reflected materially on the other. Culture is the entire stock of knowledge, skills and practices that enable us humans to shape our social togetherness visibly and invisibly, perceptibly (see also Birgit Recki, 2014, 281 - 302; see also Lyn Spillman, 2020). Culture, in my view, is everything that we, the people, do and that is expressed in the material and immaterial spheres of social interaction. Culture is "materialized" in the form of the traces we humans leave behind through our interventions in or shaping of nature. Culture is what we, the people, create. But culture is also the whole immaterial sphere of our human expressions. We give meaning and value to the things we create, just as we give meaning and value to the people we live with, as well as to our ancestors and mythical figures. Culture, then, is the totality of the materialized and immaterialized results of our being, thinking, and acting. Culture is the values, including the religious or spiritual values, the rules and regulations, the concepts of right and wrong, culture is the customs and conventions, the traditions and habits by which we, the people, live. It is the language we humans speak and the language we use to communicate. Culture is the material and immaterial result of our beliefs and feelings. It is the shaping of ways of life, of social, political and economic orders. Culture is our ability to create symbols and to give symbolic meanings and values to our actions, to things, to nature, and to people. Culture is our ability to communicate through symbols, that is, through the meanings they represent after we have given them to the world around us. It is this complex interweaving of subjects, of immaterial and material spheres of our social togetherness, and within this complex world, above all, our ability to communicate through symbolic representations, that I collectively define as culture.

From my paraphrase of what I understand by culture, it becomes clear at the same time that the field of culture defined in this way is always inseparably connected with the economic conditions and the political activities in society, i.e. with the temporally, spatially and socially specific conditions of opportunity for social togetherness, the contexts (on these aspects, see especially Wolfgang Maderthaner; Lutz Musner, 2007; Markus Gabriel, 2019). In my socio-critical archaeological research, I now link the phenomena of society and culture with the concept of cultural forms of expression, thus expressing that one cannot exist without the other (see especially Matthias Junge, op. cit., pp. 14 - 17).

#### *Excursus 1.2.2 Cultural forms of expression - defined in concrete terms*

In all human communities, the same basic requirements must be met in order for human life and human coexistence to be possible. What we have to deal with in every archaeological investigation, therefore, is first of all the fact that the essential foundations and requirements of our human life are *universal* and must be secured in order for life, coexistence, and survival to be possible. To name just a few, the possibility of reproduction must be ensured, subsistence must be secured, protection

against dangers of all kinds, be they dangers from nature or from social interaction, in this case rather from social opposition, the establishment of shared ideas of order, and understanding communication must be guaranteed.

In contrast, the way in which we humans realize and shape these basic needs is *not (!)* universal. On the contrary, the way in which basic needs are satisfied, the way in which the securing of needs is made recognizable through rules, traditions, and habits that are not materialized but effectively implemented, or are expressed in a permanently visible way through materialization, as we find it in finds and archaeological records, always depends on the contexts in which we humans are confronted with the corresponding requirements. How we deal with things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, with burials and also with traces, and what meanings we assign to things and the handling of things for the success of our social coexistence, is context- and culture-specific. I call this form of realization as the *cultural forms of expression* - and, as already mentioned, I am referring primarily to the visible and tangible evidence accessible to us socio-critical archaeologists, to things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, to burials and traces, but at the same time I have in mind the invisible forms of thought and action of the actors of that time. Thus, while all social entities are similar in their basic existential needs regardless of space and time, i.e. regardless of contextual circumstances, it is the cultural forms of expression in which they are not similar, but different.

### *Excursus 1.3 The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*

It is a truism that socio-critical archaeological research is historical research. I would like to briefly introduce how I see the process of historical research. As an archaeologist, I distinguish in my research between dealing with the past(s), telling stories, and being a writer of historical constructions.

#### *Excursus 1.3.1 Past / past(s)*

*The past is (!), past(s) are (!)* - this is shown by the material legacies that we socio-critically researching archaeologists uncover, stratified by our excavations, and which constitute the evidence that in the past(s) people lived at the place we are excavating. From my current research perspective, I see not one past, but a multiplicity of past(s). I see the materialized cultural forms of expression as the result of social events in a multiplicity of communities that have lived together in one place over time and whose actions have led to the archaeological record of the excavation site <sup>51</sup> (see also Ralf Becker, 2021, 157 - 170). When we think of our own present life situation, the variety of past(s)

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<sup>51</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*



that influence our everyday life becomes immediately understandable. How do we approach our own past(s)? The exploration of the past(s) begins for all people at the moment when they reflect on their own present and their own way of life.<sup>52</sup> We humans can be called "historical beings": The present we all share is always connected to "before - earlier - yesterday - back then", our connection to the past(s) begins with our birth. This statement can also be understood as a truism. However, the consequences of this fact for the further life of each individual are complex and far-reaching. We are born into a social environment. This social environment itself already has a variety of past(s) that become familiar to us through the generations of our parents and grandparents, both through the stories of the older generations and through the materialized, preserved cultural forms of expression. Architecture and spatial order are again the vivid, because unmistakable, examples of how the past(s) influence the present. Our first experience with the influence of the past(s) on our lives thus takes place empirically in the process of our socialization (Marion Benz; Joachim Bauer, 2022, 7 - 26; Marion Benz; Joachim Bauer, 2013, 11 - 24; Joachim Bauer; Marion Benz, 2013, 65 - 69). For the first time, we are confronted with connections to events that go far beyond our respective horizons of experience. As socio-critical archaeologists, we once again extend this encounter with the past(s) across wide spans of space and time.

### *Excursus 1.3.2 The telling of stories*

As a socio-critical archaeologist, I am aware of this: Our knowledge of the existence of the past(s) affects our thinking in the present. At the same time, our thinking in the present affects our perspective on the evidence that documents the existence of the past(s), on the cultural forms of expression.<sup>53</sup> Aware of this dialectic, I begin to engage with the material legacies, the archaeological evidence. As socio-critical archaeologists, we have at our disposal things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, burials, traces and contexts, never contemporary witnesses, often no written evidence. This means that all the immaterial, spiritual, idealistic and ideological aspects that create and shape social interaction, such as thinking, feeling, knowledge, values, to name but a few, must be deduced from the material remains of the archaeological record, from the materialized cultural forms of expression. Because of this specific source situation, I will deal separately with the aspects of storytelling and historiography.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See I.0, *Instead of an introduction - A personal note in advance - Why at all archaeology?*; I.3, *Archaeology as socio-critical archaeological research or: What is actually meant by "socio-critical"?*; I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>53</sup> See I.3, *Archaeology as socio-critical political research or: What is actually meant by "socio-critical"?*

<sup>54</sup> See I.6, *With our socio-critical archaeological research, we place the human being within the community into the focus of our cognitive interest - through the "things" we work out the access to the past(s) life worlds*; I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*

*Excursus 1.3.2.1 Stories about the past(s) or - what characterizes our storytelling?*

As excavators, we record the cultural forms of expression that have been preserved in material form on site, and on the basis of the things we find, we can already tell *stories* about what people in the place in question did in the past(s) and how they did it.<sup>55</sup> The basis on which socio-critical archaeologists build our narratives about aspects of life in the distant past(s) is thus the description and analysis of the directly visible and tangible material legacies, on the basis of which we can gain numerous insights into the living conditions of people in the past(s). Through the things, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, and the burials, we see the needs of the people. Through these material legacies, we capture the possibilities, knowledge, and skills that people must have had in order to manufacture these things, the artifacts, the architecture, and the spatial order, as well as to conduct burials and thus to meet social needs.<sup>56</sup> On the basis of the stratigraphic sequence that develops when a settlement site is used over a long period of time, we record what has happened at the site over time, what continuities and what changes have occurred there over time. By analyzing the material remains, we can deduce how people created their material world in many different ways. The stories we can tell about life in the distant past(s) can be told independently of space and time.

*Excursus 1.3.2.2 Stories about the past(s) - on what we can report*

We socio-critical archaeologists see in the material legacies of the archaeological record the visible and tangible cultural forms of expression of social life in the past(s).<sup>57</sup> We see the results of needs and ways of meeting them, the results of thought, knowledge, will, and ability, the results of action. The finds and the archaeological records are the evidence of the past(s) of life at the place that was once a settlement and that, with our present work, becomes a so-called site of discovery [*Fundplatz/Fundort*] (see as well III.1.5, finding context). We describe and analyze these materialized remains of the past(s). Based on the information we gain from our respective initial approaches to the material heritage, description, and analysis of the technical aspects of how the raw materials were handled, we can already tell a variety of stories about a variety of aspects of life in the past(s)

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<sup>55</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>56</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?; I.7.3, With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?; I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>57</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?; I.7.3, With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?; I.8.1, What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*

at the site we are exploring. We can tell stories about the ways in which people were able to provide themselves with the things they thought they needed, the things they wanted, the things they could afford (and which we have been able to uncover through our excavations). We can tell stories about the variety of knowledge that people had at that time, the knowledge of environmental conditions, the occurrence of needed goods, the opportunities to access them, the knowledge and skills to process materials. We can tell stories about the types of natural areas used, about the distribution of sites in landscapes, and thus about neighborhoods between settlements, about neighborhoods within settlements, based on the type, size, and spatial order of settlements. We can tell stories about how death is dealt with, about how the deceased are buried. All of these stories are based on the visibility of the material heritage and the information inherent in the things, the artifacts, the architecture, and the spatial order, the burials, the traces, or they are based on the information that we, the socio-critical archaeologists, take from the pure analysis of the things, the material heritage itself. So we tell stories about the activities of the people who carried them out in the past(s). Stories about what happened in the distant past(s) can, in principle, be told by anyone. However, in such cases it is difficult to determine whether what is said really happened or whether the stories are fictional, i.e. pure fiction. But "archaeological stories" are something else. We can even say that the stories that we socio-critical archaeologists create when we present the visible materialized results of the thinking, the knowledge, the skills, i.e. the actions of the people of that time, are "entirely true"! This is a bold statement, but one that is easy to substantiate. Vessels, tools, weapons, buildings and burials - to name but a few of the material remains that we excavate - simply confirm that at a certain time, people *de facto* lived in this specific place that we excavate - the material heritage is not a fiction, but a fact. It is the visible and tangible testimony of past(s) realities of human activity, of social togetherness! Nevertheless, it is also necessary to clarify the possibilities and obstacles of telling about life in the past(s), and to point out the stumbling blocks that we must take into account in our narratives. When we consider the infinite variety of events, processes, and changes that shape social life and occur on a daily basis, it becomes clear once again that no study can capture *the* past(s), and thus no history can cover the entirety of social events in one place at one time.<sup>58</sup> What we socio-critical archaeologists capture are always only "sequences" and "sections" of the past(s). For our intention to deal with the past(s), to create stories and to construct history, we have only this one and very limited moment of a past or past(s), the static moment of complex processual events. The limitation of our possibilities to gain knowledge about the ways of life of the past(s) is also due to the fact that we only have the visible remains of social interaction

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<sup>58</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that play in our daily interactions? with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*

at our disposal to tell our stories.<sup>59</sup> We are well aware of how limited this small part of a "total" is, considering that social interaction consists to a large extent of the network of invisible relationships that we humans establish with each other and with things.<sup>60</sup> We socio-critical archaeologists make this limitation very clear in our research and explicitly take it into account both in the telling of stories and in the construction of history or the construction of past(s) of social interaction. We also take into account the processes of preservation and decay of the natural and man-made world, and the fact that our source material is in no small part the result of chance.<sup>61</sup> Subjective and accidental, then, is the material heritage we ultimately use to tell our stories and elaborate our constructions of history and society.<sup>62</sup>

#### *Excursus I.3.2.3 Stories about the past(s) - versus history - what makes the difference*

Regardless of when and where the things, the artifacts, the burials, the buildings, and the spatial orders were created, we can already conclude from the direct analysis of the material conditions that the corresponding needs for their creation existed, that the possibilities for satisfying these needs were given,<sup>63</sup> and that the people had the knowledge and the ability to produce and use the things, the artifacts, the burials, the architecture, and the spatial orders.<sup>64</sup> The direct analysis of the material remains of a settlement community already allows us to grasp a broad spectrum of the social conditions in the social entity whose members created or used the cultural forms of expression, regardless of the epochs and regions of the world from which the material evidence originates. The knowledge of social conditions gained in this way is the basis on which we tell our stories. It is, among other things, the independence of space and time in which our *stories* "play" that characterizes our stories and at the same time constitutes a crucial difference from my definition of *history*.

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<sup>59</sup> See I.6, *With our socio-critical archaeological research, we place the human being within the community into the focus of our cognitive interest - through the "things" we work out the access to the past(s) life worlds*; I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*; I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>60</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; Excursus I.3.3.2, *Historiography - or - construction of history*

<sup>61</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*

<sup>62</sup> See Excursus I.3.3, *From the story to history - the construction of history*

<sup>63</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*

<sup>64</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*

Excursus 1.3.3 From the story to history - the construction of history

As socio-critical archaeologists, however, we do not just describe the things we find, we do not just tell stories about *what* people did and *how* they did it. Our cognitive interest is much broader. We are interested in how things and archaeological records come into being. At the heart of our interest are questions about *why* things came into being, *when* and under what circumstances, how and why they became part of social interaction, and what meaning they had for people living together in the past(s).<sup>65</sup> We develop hypotheses about the social events and the conditions of opportunity under which the needs and options for satisfying them arose, which led to the production, use, and discarding of the objects and thus to our archaeological record. With these hypotheses, which are already first interpretations, we now integrate things into human thought and action, which concretely took place in a certain space and in the course of an initially relatively chronologically determined time span.<sup>66</sup>

Excursus 1.3.3.1 From stories to history

Our story becomes history when we can prove that the artifacts, the architecture, the spatial order, and the burials are specific to the space and time in which they were created, used, and discarded. We call the things, the finds, and the archaeological records historical testimony at the moment when we can postulate, and we must justify such postulates with plausible and comprehensible arguments, that these things, in their specific manifestations, "did not just happen" independently of space and time, but, on the contrary, were created in the specific manifestation found, in this space and at this time, as the result of socio-cultural, socio-political, and socio-economic circumstances conditioned by space and time, of the spirit of the times, the *Zeitgeist*.<sup>67</sup> We now ask specifically about the invisible but influential factors that led to cultural forms of expression - and it is absolute dating that opens up new possibilities for our search for such factors. On the basis of absolute dating, carried out, among other things, with the appropriate scientific methods,<sup>68</sup> we can include in our considerations for explaining local developments events that occurred geographically distant but at the same time as the local developments we are studying. Absolute dating thus expands our ability to search for the cause-and-effect relationship<sup>69</sup> that led to the cultural forms of expression at certain times and in certain geographical areas, or to work out answers to the

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<sup>65</sup> See I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

<sup>66</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>67</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>68</sup> See <http://www.Landschaftsmuseum.de/Seiten/Lexikon/Datierungsmethoden.htm>; <http://archaeologische-dienste.de/datierungsmethoden-in-der-archaeologie>; <https://braf.yale.edu/teach-ehraf/relative-and-absolute-dating-methods-in-archaeology/>

<sup>69</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

questions of whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct on the basis of the material heritage at hand.

#### *Excursus 1.3.3.2 Historiography - or - construction of history*

In my socio-critical archaeological research I refer to historiography as the construction of history. The semantics of the term "construction of history" has been dealt with in detail by Udo Schnelle, among others, in his study "Die ersten 100 Jahre des Christentums" (2019, 17 - 24) in a sense that also corresponds to my understanding of the construction of history (see also Paul Boghossian, 2019; Markus Gabriel, 2019; Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1969; 1974; Hayden V. White, 1987; Kurt Flasch, 2021, 197 - 230; see also the very informative presentation of this topic "What is History" - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/What\\_Is\\_History%3F](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/What_Is_History%3F)). Historiography means, according to Udo Schnelle, >to create a coherent context of meaning< [*„einen kohärenten Sinnzusammenhang schaffen“*] (op. cit., p. 18). Through our interpretations we bring the facts, in our case the cultural forms of expression and the archaeological record, into what Udo Schnelle calls a historical narrative context (op. cit., p. 18). This also means that >in the presentation of history, fact and fiction, the given and the author's fictional work necessarily merge with each other< [*„in der Darstellung von Geschichte“ verbinden sich „notwendigerweise „Fakten“ und „Fiktion“, Vorgegebenes und schriftstellerisch-fiktive Arbeit miteinander.“*] (op. cit., p. 19) (see especially Hayden V. White, 1987 and 2008). Messages from the past and their interpretation in the present >flow together to form something new< [*„fließen Nachrichten aus der Vergangenheit und ihre Interpretation in der Gegenwart zu etwas Neuem zusammen“*] (Udo Schnelle, op. cit., p. 19). Thus, historiography is not reconstruction but, as I have also postulated, construction >not the world and life are a construction, but our views about them< [*„Nicht die Welt und das Leben sind eine Konstruktion, wohl aber unsere Anschauungen über sie“*] (op. cit., p. 20).<sup>70</sup> Like all people who do historical research, we socio-critical archaeologists approach the construction of history from our particular location [*Standort, Kontext*].<sup>71</sup> Our location influences how we see, perceive, think, behave and act, how we interpret things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, burials and traces as testimonies of social togetherness in the past(s) (see especially Paul Boghossian, 2019; Markus Gabriel, 2019). From our locations, we develop our standpoints [*Standpunkt, Sichtweise*] in our consideration and evaluation of the facts. In other words, constructing history does not mean working arbitrarily and detached from the facts. On the contrary, constructing means that we try to understand and explain social events on the basis of the facts available to us as socio-critical archaeologists; in our case, these are the materialized legacies of

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<sup>70</sup> See II.3.9, Power [*Macht*] and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] - First considerations; III.1.7.1, The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony; V.3.1, Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report; V.4, Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research

<sup>71</sup> See V.2, Our locations determine our standpoints

these social events.<sup>72</sup> We are aware that we always develop our constructions from our etic point of view. That is, it is always a construction of a dynamic event that we have understood and constructed from our present perspective - based on the static section of the dynamic processes that each archaeological record represents. Constructing history means relating our sources,<sup>73</sup> our factual situation, to the events and developments in the social interaction of the past(s) through our respective contemporary questions and cognitive interests, relationally, temporally, and spatially. Through our questions, interpretations, and evaluations of the facts as expressions of what happened in the past(s) and their effects, we construct history - and, as Udo Schnelle puts it, >something new< [„*etwas Neues*“] emerges (Udo Schnelle, op. cit., p. 19). Locations shape standpoints. Locations have a far-reaching significance in the construction of history. Locations change from generation to generation,<sup>74</sup> and so does the knowledge of researchers.<sup>75</sup> Constructions of history are themselves products of historical constellations and as such are potentially subject to constant change. Living conditions, including the present ones under which we socio-critical archaeologists work, are constantly changing. This leads us to constantly rethink our own empirically gained knowledge and insights about the causes of our being,<sup>76</sup> the consequences of our actions, and our ever-changing state of knowledge. The validity of our explanations of the causal relationships between people's thoughts and actions in the past(s), i.e., the validity of our conclusions about the consequences of those thoughts and actions in the past(s), must be constantly reconsidered.<sup>77</sup> With new sets of questions come potential new solutions that we develop to understand and explain the events of the past(s) and their consequences for our present. Insights and attempts to explain the how and why of present and past ways of life emerge in new facets with each generation - inevitably, because each generation formulates questions about the present and the past(s) on the basis of the knowledge and experience of its own present, which is already necessarily and inevitably different from the present of the next older generation. Due to the constantly changing state of knowledge, each generation thus develops new questions about the circumstances of the past(s) and the connections between past(s) and present - and above all about the possible influences of the past(s) on the present and vice versa. It is these dialectically interacting processes of reflection on the present and the past(s) that influence and shape our entire way of thinking and being. The critical analysis of how knowledge, opinions and views are formed,

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<sup>72</sup> See Excursus I.4, *To understand and to explain*

<sup>73</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*

<sup>74</sup> See I.7.1, *Briefly mentioned once again - the influence of our background in making socio-critical archaeology possible at all*

<sup>75</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*

<sup>76</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>77</sup> See II.3.6.4, *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge; Excursus II.6, The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark*

<sup>78</sup> how statements are made about the relationship between past(s) and present, and how the causes and consequences of historical development are justified, allows each generation to reflect anew on how and why it lives as it does. <sup>79</sup> The reflected re-evaluation of the past(s) from the present is therefore not the result of arbitrariness or randomness (although this is, of course, also possible if desired). It is based on changed stocks of knowledge that shape being in every generation and become the starting point of every consideration of being in the present and in the past(s). Questions about - and views of - facts change, cognitive interests change, and with these processes of change the interpretations of cultural forms of expression as evidence of social togetherness in the past(s) change. Constructions of history designed in this way offer plausible and comprehensible solutions to research problems. They are valid until new research approaches and new insights lead to modifications of the offered solution and also to its replacement and the formulation of new explanatory approaches. The changing spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*] will potentially lead to changing evaluations of sources and data - and will potentially lead to modified, changed or completely new solutions for our socio-critical research interests - >something new< [*„etwas Neues“*] emerges (see above, Udo Schnelle, op. cit., p. 19) (on this with a focus on intellectual history, Richard Whatmore, 2016). (After completing my manuscript, I became aware of the excellent study by Artur Ribeiro, *Archaeology and the Historical Understanding*, 2018, which I highly recommend on the question of the relationship between archaeology and history).

Our constructions of history understood in this way are thus subjective, but not arbitrary. They remain verifiable in their statements, as long as we present our postulates, theses, and explanations in a plausible and well-founded way, and thus make them comprehensible. That we as socio-critical archaeologists can never grasp *the* past(s) and never write or construct *the* history is common sense among all historical researchers. It goes without saying that we can never fully grasp the infinite variety of events, processes, and changes that take place in a given period of time. That is, we are aware that only a fragment of the events is always available to us. <sup>80</sup> The fragmentary nature of archaeological perception can be illustrated in several ways. Only what has been preserved and excavated in the form of objects, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, burials and traces is comprehensible. As noted above, <sup>81</sup> it is obvious that not all thought, knowledge, and action condenses in materiality. And not everything that is potentially condensed in the material world is preserved in the archaeological record. We are aware of the fact that everything we see in the

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<sup>78</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>79</sup> See I.3, *Archaeology as socio-critical archaeological research or: What is actually meant by "socio-critical"?*

<sup>80</sup> See I.6, *With our socio-critical archaeological research, we place the human being within the community into the focus of our cognitive interest - through the "things" we work out the access to the past(s) life worlds; I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>81</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*



archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*] is a minimal slice of a past or past(s), the materialized results of both unintentional events and consciously made choices - both of which always lead to the preservation of these highly selective lores of what actually happened in the past(s).<sup>82</sup> Subsumable, in the sense of being suitable for the construction of history in a larger framework, remains only what archaeologists deem worthy of observation and reporting.<sup>83</sup> This knowledge is thus indispensable for understanding what I mean by the construction of history, or for knowing how constructions of history are produced in socio-critical archaeological research.

#### *Excursus 1.3.3.3 Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

I also consider the visualization of our handling of the past(s) and our interpretations of past social events to be constitutive elements in the process of storytelling and the construction of history. Whether knowledge about events that took place far in the past(s) and far away in space can develop, which image of history reaches the consciousness of a population, what becomes visible of which past(s), is something that overcomes many stumbling blocks and survives many compromises (on the phenomenon of knowledge here especially Marian Füssel, 2021 and Jürgen Renn, 2022, 383 - 401; see also <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/sociology-knowledge>). The network of interests in dealing with the past(s) and history is complex and depends on a variety of coincidences, political decisions, economic circumstances, and individual preferences of researchers.<sup>84</sup>

Whether events of the past(s) become visible depends on what archaeologists consider worthy of observation and reporting. Decisions about whether and which past(s) will be visible involve representatives of political circles in the country where the excavation is to take place, as well as the funders who support (or do not support) archaeological research. In both cases, the respective interests of those involved determine which aspects of what and whose past(s) will or will not become visible. Those in charge of museums and antiquities administrations decide which of the "beautiful things" uncovered in excavations are considered worthy of exhibition, or which finds are relegated to the storerooms and thus withdrawn from public view. Effective interventions in the availability of knowledge are made by the actors who control the media. They, too, play a decisive role in deciding whether and which constructions of history are published and thus made

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<sup>82</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>83</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>84</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in direct engagement with the material legacies*

available to the public. They also influence the self- and world-views of the recipients who will have access to our constructions of history - or not - in the present and in the future.<sup>85</sup> The questions of who is speaking, whose past(s) are we all seeing, and whose history is being constructed, as well as the questions of who and whose ideologies are being made public with regard to the social events of the past(s), and who and whose cultural hegemony is intervening in the consciousness of all of us, shaping our view of the worlds of the past(s) as well as of our present, should therefore always be very present in every encounter with the past(s), in every narrative, and in every construction of history.<sup>86</sup>

*Excursus I.4 To understand and to explain*

At the beginning of my remarks, I referred to one of the fundamental concerns of any socio-critical archaeological research - the goal of both *understanding* and *explaining* how the ways of life in the past(s) came about, and of explaining how we socio-critical archaeologists arrive at postulates, theses, and hypotheses about the social conditions of the past(s), and at the images that we present with our constructions of history.

Birgit Emich (2006) in her study on the history of the early modern period has explained what is meant by understanding and explaining (on the topic of understanding and explaining see also Wulf Hübner; Rüdiger Welter, Dilthey, 2004, 483 - 484; Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1969; 1974; Albert Veraart, Gadamer, 2004, 698 - 699; Hans-Georg Gadamer, 1993; 2010; Johann August Schülein; Simon Reitze, 2016, 204 ff. 210 ff.; 220 ff.; see the corresponding English introduction to the topic, Martin Hollis, 1994, 183 - 201). Birgit Emich shows that there is a difference between understanding [*verstehen*] and explaining [*erklären*], but that understanding and explaining are not opposites. The difference between understanding and explaining lies rather in the fact that we look for the causes of facts<sup>87</sup> in other areas with the understanding explanation [*verstehendes Erklären*] than with the analytical explanation [*analytisches Erklären*](op. cit., pp. 82 - 95). In a clear approach, Birgit Emich has conceptually reformulated the supposedly opposing terms "understanding" [*Verstehen*] and "explaining" [*Erklären*](op. cit., pp. 82 ff.). If one transforms both terms into extended pairs of terms, namely into the terms *understanding explaining/ understanding explanation* and *analytical explaining/ analytical explanation*, as suggested by Birgit Emich (op. cit., p. 88), the terms, which are primarily conceived with regard to the cognitive possibilities of either the humanities or

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<sup>85</sup> See II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/ governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; III.1.7.1, *The Power of the Cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the Concept of Cultural Hegemony*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>86</sup> See III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>87</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

the natural sciences, become applicable to all sciences - and thus also to our interdisciplinary cooperation. Understanding and explaining what we humans do, why we do it, how we do it, the consequences of our actions, and the forms in which our intentions and actions are expressed is a concern of all scientific research, whether this concern is explicitly formulated or implicit in our scientific activities. The effort to understand and explain the possibilities of our human interaction is thus immanent in all research in the humanities, social sciences, cultural studies, and natural sciences.

Understanding and explaining is what all scientists want to do. What makes us different in our research is, among other things, the focus of our cognitive interest. We pursue different topics with different questions. Birgit Emich's reflections on understanding explaining / understanding explanation and analytical explaining / analytical explanation show how these two aspects of explaining offer the appropriate approach in the search for answers to the respective different questions.

*Understanding explaining / understanding explanation [Verstehendes Erklären]*

According to Birgit Emich (op. cit., pp. 82 f.), we use the term "understanding explanation" to describe our efforts to understand both the meaningfulness [*sinnhaft / Sinnhaftigkeit*] as well as the sense-giving [*sinnstiftend / Sinnstiftung*] of our thinking and acting.<sup>88</sup> *Understanding explanation* means that we are interested in an answer to the question why a certain action of one or more people in a certain context and under certain conditions was possible and necessary. That is, at the same time, *understanding explanation* focuses on the explanation of the individual case, the singularity. With our approach of *understanding explanation*, also called the hermeneutic method, we look for the causes<sup>89</sup> of the thinking and acting of concrete people in concrete situations in the motives, in the intentions that move the actors, in the self-understanding and world-understanding of the actors (op. cit., p. 84).

It is a matter of >understanding the meaning of human expressions< of life [„*Verstehen von Sinnzusammenhängen in menschlichen Lebensäußerungen*“] (op. cit., p. 84). We inquire into the meaning that the actors of the time ascribed to thought, action, and the things with which people surrounded themselves. At the same time, we want to trace these facts back to their causes, that is, we want to understand and explain! Human beings are not machines. The following applies to our attempts to explain human thought and action in an understandable way: We humans are always a *single human case*. Our thinking and acting, our intentions and motivations, although always influenced by socialization, by our social interaction, by contexts, always stands for an individual case in its

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<sup>88</sup> See II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>89</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about in the following essay*

execution and in its details. Understanding explanation focuses on the explanation of this single case, the singularity.

*Analytic explaining / analytical explanation [Analytisches Erklären]*

Analytical explanation, on the other hand, according to Birgit Emich, seeks the causes <sup>90</sup> of historical phenomena >in the wide field of the non-intentional< [„im weiten Feld des Nicht-Intentionalen“] (op. cit., p. 88). If, as Birgit Emich states, the intentional is at the same time personal (op. cit., p. 83), then the non-intentional event is at the same time not connected with the personal thinking and acting of the individual human being! In this approach, the causal relationships between structural phenomena and between these and the actions of individuals or groups are sought and indicated (op. cit., p. 89), i.e. the causal relationships of facts or processes that have developed or been carried out over time beyond and independently of the individual motivations and intentions of individual actors. In the process of analytical explanation, we ask about the circumstances, conditions, and contexts that actually determine, shape, and influence our actions, but which we humans are often not consciously aware of and have not intentionally shaped. (op. cit., p. 88). Analytical explanation looks for the causes in the structural conditions of human life! Structures, as Birgit Emich explains this term (op. cit., p. 88), provide the orders, relatively stable patterns, in which and according to which we live. Structures shape the patterns of relationships and long-term courses of action and prescribe processes of which most people are usually not even aware. Thus, we turn to analytic explanation when our cognitive interests are directed toward understanding the power of given structures to influence our thinking and acting, or toward eliciting how structures interact with our thinking and acting. The structures of a social community, the contexts in which we human beings live, are not primarily to be traced back to the intentions of individual human beings. They do not develop according to the intentions of a human being (regardless of the fact that we can transmit, modify or even break these structures through our thinking and acting). In the formation and existence of structures and processes, Birgit Emich continues (op. cit., p. 89), it is not about the individual case, but about the rule that can be generalized from the mass of individual cases. Whoever examines structures and processes, whoever searches for the possibility of generalizing statements, must go beyond the individual case!

*Applied to our socio-critical archaeological research and illustrated by an example, Birgit Emich's reflections mean:* In understanding [verstehend; verstehendes Erklären], we try to explain what motives led people in the past to settle in a particular region and place at a particular time. We ask what intentions were involved in the choice of this particular place, and what sense it made to these settlers to choose

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<sup>90</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

this particular place for their stay and no other. We are interested in whether the decision was made by an individual or by a group, and we see at the same time that the search for an answer to this question on the basis of materialized cultural forms of expression alone (i.e., without textual sources) presents us with no small challenge. As an archaeologist of the Near East, I also have textual sources at my disposal for the study of certain periods. The texts tell us about the decision of individual people to settle in a certain place, as well as about the reasons why this person at this time built a settlement in this place at this time. The historical veracity of such texts or statements must be decided on a case-by-case basis. (For corresponding textual evidence see Marlies Heinz, 2008, 150 - 152.)

Analytical explanation [*analytisches Erklären*] deals with phenomena and processes that go beyond the individual case, asking, for example, how village settlements become urban settlements. We ask how heterarchically organized social entities arise and how hierarchically structured societies are formed. We ask how structures and social orders influence human thought and action, the development of needs and options for satisfying them, and in which social forms of order we humans can intervene in the corresponding structures and how.

I mentioned above that we humans are not machines, a fact that applies to every human interaction, thought, behavior, and action, and thus also influences our possibilities as socio-critical archaeologists to explain the ways of life in the past(s) in an understanding and analytical way. The overwhelming majority of all members of a social community act according to the norms and values that prevail there, and thus generally behave in accordance with the expectations of their behavior that exist in their community. At the same time, *as a rule* means that it can never be said with absolute certainty that the acting person actually fulfills the set of rules and thus the behavioral expectations of his fellow human beings. Our understanding as well as our analytical explanations in our socio-critical archaeological studies are therefore always probable in their propositional content, never absolute (see Gerhard Vollmer, 1975, 2023<sup>91</sup>, i.a. p. 75). And at all times we keep in mind that the cultural forms of expression we record are always the result of human thought and action. Human thought and action is never lawful. Ergo, our thinking and acting can never be presupposed, postulated, and constructed as lawful - regular. The fact that the statements we present with our understanding and analytical explanations are *probably true* does not make them arbitrary.<sup>91</sup> As socio-critical archaeologists, we are called upon to give comprehensible reasons why we postulate the material expression of human thought and action, the cultural forms of expression, as the result of the motivations and intentions of the actors. We are also asked to provide plausible arguments for why we interpret the production and use of cultural forms of expression as actions that were meaningful to the actors and sense-giving for social interaction. Both of these issues

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<sup>91</sup> See *Excursus I.3.3, From the story to history - the construction of history; V.2, Our locations determine our standpoints*

present us with no small challenges. We explain our arguments by attributing to the structures (!) a decisive power in the development of the given archaeological record and thus to what the contemporary actors thought and acted. As with all critical research, the same applies here:

Where we search for the meaning, the sense,<sup>92</sup> that the actors of the time ascribed to their thinking, their actions, and the things they created, we ask at the same time to what extent these attributions might also be our own, i.e. those that we archaeologists have composed in our constructions of society and history.

### 1.9 Conclusion to Part I and transition to Part II, in which I deal with both sociological research and its relevance for the socio-critical archaeological research

One of my concerns, which I addressed in *Part I*, was to clarify what can be understood by socio-critical archaeological research and why socio-critical archaeological research, the study of the past(s), and the construction of history are always also a matter of political thought and action. Another concern was, on the one hand, to sharpen our awareness of the meanings that we humans assign to things in shaping our social togetherness on the basis of our own experiences in our daily dealings with things. On the other hand, I was interested in pointing out that this empirical knowledge already allows a first answer to the often asked question whether we can gain insights into the lives of people in the past(s) on the basis of things alone, and this first answer is: Yes! And also to the follow-up question of why this source situation is a highly suitable starting point for our socio-critical archaeological research, I can already answer or assert: Because people in all societies at all times and in all spaces have attributed constitutive functions for successful social togetherness to things.

In socio-critical archaeological research, the human being is the center of cognitive interest; the human being as an individual, the human being as a member of one or more social communities, the human being in society. What is meant by society and how society functions is analyzed and explained by sociologists through their empirical research and theoretical studies. This sociological research provides us socio-critical archaeologists with the basic knowledge we need to understand and explain the relational connections between the world of things and the world of people, between the visible cultural forms of expression and the social relations underlying them in the social entities of the past(s).<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> See II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>93</sup> See Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?*

## Part II

What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?

## II.1 Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research

### *Own experience*

The presentation of one's own experiences in dealing with things and the importance we ascribe to things for the success of our social togetherness reflects subjective and individually made experiences. As a contemporary and socio-critical archaeologist, I reflect on the shaping of my own life as well as on the functioning of social interaction with a focused view on the power of influence we assign to our handling of things in this process. From the approach I take to my research - *Archaeology is the science of man as a social being* - and from my initially subjective approach to observing the functions and meanings we ascribe to our handling of things for the success of our social togetherness,<sup>94</sup> it follows that we socio-critical archaeologists need knowledge about how and why social togetherness is generally possible for our correspondingly oriented research.<sup>95</sup> We need knowledge about the becoming, being, and functioning of social togetherness that goes beyond subjective knowledge. This knowledge is provided by sociological research, where sociologists ask what society is and what must be given to make social togetherness possible. In this way, they provide us with the knowledge we need to concretely search and analyze the archaeological finds and records for clues and traces of the social relations of the past(s).

### *Sociological research*

Sociological researchers are able to identify, on the basis of their sources and their methods, interviews, observations, analysis of the coexistence of people in the present, the basic requirements of social interaction and commonalities in the processes of social becoming, being and functioning. Sociological researchers have direct access to our knowledge as contemporaries, our abilities, our needs and ways of satisfying them, our desires as individuals and as members of social entities, in order to find out who lives how in a social community - which ways of life are lived by whom - and why! Starting from the direct encounter with the "object" of study, us human beings and our needs as well as our abilities to satisfy our needs, it is open to sociological researchers to dedicate themselves, on the basis of their knowledge of social interaction, also to the question of what functions and meanings we assign to things in our everyday human interaction, so that we can develop, shape and live our respective ways of life. Social scientists thus take as their starting point the thinking, acting, and being of people in societies, in order to understand and explain, among other things, the functions and meanings of things and all visible signs, as well as the ways in which

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<sup>94</sup> See I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; I.8.1.3.1,

<sup>95</sup> See II.2, *Sociology - the science that provides us socio-critically researching archaeologists with the basic knowledge we need about the being and functioning of social interaction*



we humans shape our togetherness. They identify the causes<sup>96</sup> and backgrounds that underlie the shaping of our social togetherness, turn from this knowledge to the cultural, and then try to understand and explain what role the material and immaterial cultural forms of expression play in the success of the social interaction with which they are familiar.<sup>97</sup> Social scientists thus start from the knowledge they have acquired about social events and ask why we humans make these social events recognizable and visible in the way we do with cultural forms of expression, including the design of material worlds. From the empirical cognitions of individual studies, sociological researchers develop generalizing statements. They objectify subjective experiences. Sociologists evaluate their data on a statistically sound basis, formulate theories, and are thus able to show, beyond the individual case, which preconditions in all forms of social life are indispensable for the emergence of societies or the success of social interaction. Sociologists can conduct these studies with a global orientation and pursue their cognitive interests in an intercultural way. Sociological research is thus in a position to elicit globally multifaceted cognitions about *What is - and how does society function?*, and to make them available, theoretically abstracted, to interested neighboring sciences. At the same time, it should be noted that the research of sociologists is also shaped by location. The locations of sociologists also shape the points of view that sociologists express in their research.<sup>98</sup>

#### *Socio-critical archaeological research*

We socio-critical archaeologists pursue the same interests in knowledge as sociologists - we are interested in people, in life in community, today as well as in the past(s), and in how and why people shape life in community, among other things, through the use of things! (On the relationship between sociological and historical research, see especially William H. Sewell Jr., 2005; Gottfried Stiehler, 2002). Due to our source situation, however, we start our questions about social togetherness in the past(s), about the actions of people in social togetherness and with the things "from the other end of the line of evidence" - *We have the things and we are looking for the people!* We formulate our questions and cognitive interests, which are shaped, among other things, by our socialization and the locations from which we do our research.<sup>99</sup> We then begin our analyses by studying the material legacies, the things. From a methodological point of view, we are thus confronted with the challenge of determining, by questioning the things themselves, which thoughts and actions, which intentions of people in the past(s) and which coincidences led to the

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<sup>96</sup> See I.1 *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>97</sup> See Excursus I.2, *What is meant by the term »cultural forms of expression«?*; Excursus I.2.2, *Cultural forms of expression - defined in concrete terms*

<sup>98</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>99</sup> See I.7.1, *Briefly mentioned once again - the influence of our background in making socio-critical archaeology possible at all*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*; II.3.6.4, *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

material legacies. What invisible forces were at work? Which causes and reasons (on causes and reasons see again Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1969, 367 and 433ff.; Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1974, 75ff.; see also Richard Ned Lebow, 2020) and which processes<sup>100</sup> have led to the material legacies being created in the way that we find them visibly in the archaeological record as a static expression of these invisible dynamic processes or as they have been preserved in the archaeological record in the course of time.<sup>101</sup> We are looking at the world of things, the visible results of actions, we are looking for the invisible practice in which these things became one of the constitutive elements for the social interaction of people in the past(s).<sup>102</sup> We look at things for the signs that indicate the functions and meanings that the members of the social entities of the past(s) assigned to the things we see. In order to decipher the cultural forms of expression, we socio-critical archaeologists use the cognitions of sociological research. We expand our subjectively and individually acquired knowledge with the abstract and theoretical cognitions of sociology on the parameters that underlie social coexistence, that make social coexistence possible, and that characterize society as a society.

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#### *Excursus II.1 What interdisciplinary work may and may not achieve*

The previous remarks should make it clear that socio-critical archaeological research is always interdisciplinary research. Interdisciplinary work is essential for socio-critical archaeological research.<sup>104</sup> My cognitive interests as a socio-critical research archaeologist "naturally" lead to a focus on interdisciplinary work, and this lies in collaboration with sociology (see especially William H. Sewell Jr., 2005; Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1969; 1974; Gottfried Stiehler, 2002). Before I turn to a concrete engagement with sociological research, I will explain what I think interdisciplinary work can - and cannot - accomplish. Interdisciplinary work opens up to us socio-critical archaeologists a wide range of perspectives on the finds and the archaeological record that we would not gain from an archaeological perspective alone. Interdisciplinary work therefore means, above all, to constantly expand our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and to constantly broaden the spectrum of questions for the analysis and interpretation of finds and archaeological records.

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<sup>100</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>101</sup> See I.6.1, *Things - the diversity of sources which are potentially available to us for our socio-critical archaeological research; I.7, Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?; I.7.2, Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?; I.7.3, With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?; I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies; Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct; II.3.1.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic; II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order; Excursus II.6, The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description; VI.2, Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology**

<sup>102</sup> See I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

<sup>103</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*

<sup>104</sup> See VI.1, *At the end once again remarked: Socio-critical archaeological research is always interdisciplinary oriented research*

It is especially the sociological research respectively our sociological knowledge, which is always newly acquired for the socio-critical archaeological research, that enables us to question the material legacies more precisely, in more detail and more concretely in terms of which social needs and which options for fulfilling these needs exist and have led to the specifically culturally shaped material legacies that we find in the archaeological record. Interdisciplinary collaboration allows us to develop more precise ideas about what we are looking for when we are interested in the ways people lived in the social entities of the past(s). On the basis of our broadened and deepened knowledge of the nature of social interaction, we discuss which postulates, theses, hypotheses, interpretations and statements we can formulate in a plausibly justified and meaningful way in order to be able to identify the signs in the cultural forms of expression of social togetherness, of unprocessed things, of artifacts, of architecture and spatial order, but also of burials, which allow us to understand and explain the existence of the social relations sought in the past(s). Thus, the interdisciplinary cooperation of sociology and socio-critical archaeology does not so much produce answers as questions concerning both content and methodology. Moreover, we may encounter research problems that cannot yet be solved with the archaeological methods currently available.

*A brief note on the "Own commentary and archaeological reference" columns*

The reflections that I present in *Own commentary and archaeological reference* are not intended to be final proposals for solutions to upcoming research problems, nor are they meant to be exhaustive suggestions as to which paths we can take as socio-critical archaeologists, or which methods are available to us to find answers to our questions. Rather, my aim is to concretize the challenges we face in interdisciplinary cooperation, which I will present in a focused way with the question: How can we, as socio-critical archaeologists, combine the knowledge of the social and cultural sciences with our archaeological cognitive interests in such a way that we can understand and explain the visible cultural forms of expression in a plausible way as a result of the social conditions that are invisible to us but that we are looking for. Depending on the facts that need to be explained, I will begin by providing sole insights into the challenges we face in clarifying the research question at hand. I will point out possible stumbling blocks that make it difficult to find a solution. I refer to so-called white spots or stumbling blocks, to questions and problems that we as socio-critical archaeologists may not yet be able to answer with the methodological tools at our disposal and also on the basis of given source situations. In other words, I raise questions without being able to give answers to all of them. At the same time, for some questions I develop suggestions for possible approaches to finding solutions, never blueprints for general answers. The application of these suggestions, and the examination of whether they can lead to inter-subjectively comprehensible and plausible answers, takes place rather in the analysis and interpretation of a concrete individual

find or archaeological record - and is therefore not part of the present essay. My comments reflect the questions and thoughts to which the insights of sociology have inspired me. At the same time, my comments are intended as a starting point for discussion and as a stimulus to meet the considerations presented in these comments with creative and constructive factual criticism and, at the same time, to develop one's own proposals that are suitable for answering the basic questions of socio-critical archaeological research - Whose past(s) do we see and whose history do we construct as socio-critical archaeologists? (see also Lucien Goldmann, 1971, 51 - 52). Each commentary stands alone and can be read and understood as such. This requirement leads to occasional repetition of statements. I have accepted these repetitions so that the comments remain independent units.

## II.2 Sociology - the science that provides us socio-critically researching archaeologists with the basic knowledge we need about the being and functioning of social interaction

By now it should be clear what socio-critical archaeology is and what cognitive interests guide socio-critical archaeological research. In terms of content, we are concerned with human beings as actors, with human beings as members of a social entity, and with the questions of how and why social togetherness is possible. In order to find answers to our questions, we need a detailed knowledge of what society is, what constitutes social togetherness, and what basic conditions must be in place for successful social togetherness to be possible. This knowledge is available to us through the cognitions of sociological research.

*Excursus II.2 Thomas Schwietring, Was ist Gesellschaft? Einführung in soziologische Grundbegriffe (2011) (What is society? Introduction to basic sociological concepts) The foundational work on which my following social science explanations are based*

My thinking about what society is and how it works has been influenced by many studies. However, all references to sociological knowledge in the following chapters, all my remarks on the topic *What is society and how does it function?* are a translation of the scientific study by Thomas Schwietring, *Was ist Gesellschaft? Einführung in soziologische Grundbegriffe (2011)*.<sup>105</sup> I consider this study to be an excellent introduction to the subject, written in a clearly understandable language that allows not only sociologists, but also and especially non-sociologists, to engage with the question at hand. This makes it an ideal social science textbook for interdisciplinary research. Thomas Schwietring's study

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<sup>105</sup> Translated analogously, not in the exact wording by me, M. Heinz. As a translator, I am responsible for any misinterpretations of the sociological cognitions.

provides us archaeologists with insights into the plurality and heterogeneity of the fundamental criteria of what society is, as well as into the processes that take place in society and that are necessary to make social coexistence possible. His clear and general descriptions make it easier for us archaeologists to ask the questions and seek the answers that are needed to understand and explain the social ways of life in the past(s). The knowledge provided by this sociological study enables us socio-critical archaeologists to pay more attention to the material record and to develop complex reflections on the immaterial spheres that led to the material results. (See also Wolfgang Knöbl, *Die Soziologie vor der Geschichte*, 2022; corresponding introductions in English are available with Catherine Corrigall-Brown, 2021; Nathan Rousseau, 2014).

*The knowledge of sociological research - our red thread in the search for the ways of life in the social entities of the past(s)*

As socio-critical archaeologists, we pursue a wide range of questions and interests. Sociological research provides us with a complex body of knowledge to explore these questions and cognitive interests. As complex as our cognitive interests and the body of sociological knowledge are, so are the challenges we face in seeking answers to our questions. The first step is to connect our questions and cognitive interests with the knowledge of sociology to form a red thread.<sup>106</sup> Along this red thread, the search begins for the causal connections between the existence of things as statically transmitted results of social action and the underlying dynamic social processes that led to the production, use, and discarding of things. Connected with this step is the question of which signs we can use to recognize human beings as actors, the ways of life of human beings in the social entities of the past(s), and the functioning of social togetherness in these social entities of the past(s), which and whose past(s) the things present and represent, and whose history we actually write on the basis of this initial situation.

*The knowledge of sociological research - parameters on which we base our search for the ways of life in the social entities of the past(s) {The following keywords correspond to the mentioned study by Thomas Schwietering.}*

In order to know what there is theoretically to "see", that is, what we socio-critical archaeologists have to look for when we study ancient ways of life, I first look at the sociological insights into the general question of *What is - and how does society function?* As might be expected, these insights are complex and extensive. They contain information not only about what *society* and *community* are, but also about *group formation* and the *drawing of boundaries* between social entities, as well as about *togetherness*, *identity formation*, and *socialization processes*, about *equality*, *inequality*, and *dissimilarity*, about *conceptions of reality*, about *social and medial realness*, and about processes of *sense-giving*, about *everyday*

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<sup>106</sup> See for this already the explanations under I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

*knowledge* and *communication*, about *order*, *rules* and *regulations* as well as *disorder*, about *routines* and *rituals*, about *values* and *norms*, about *positions*, *roles* and *habitus* of individual actors and groups, about *conflicts*, *protests*, *riots*, *rebellion* and *revolution*, about *power* and *governance*, about the *role of culture* and *economy* and their share in holding a social entity together. Sociological research shows how these parameters ideally interact to make social togetherness work. Socio-critical archaeological research shows, on the basis of these parameters, if and how the combination of sociological knowledge and our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists becomes possible.

I begin my reflections on the concrete requirements of social interaction by considering the organizational form in which we are socialized as socio-critical archaeologists: *society*.<sup>107</sup> I ask what it actually is that we colloquially<sup>108</sup> and on the basis of our own observations and everyday experiences call *society*, and how togetherness can function in such a complex social association as *society*. At the same time, I extend this question by considering what characterizes the social network *community* in comparison to the characterization of *society*, where the similarities of both forms of social order lie, and where they differ.<sup>109</sup> We must therefore clarify what characterizes *society* or *community*. We need to know what forces hold a *society* or *community* together,<sup>110</sup> how, despite all the heterogeneity of the organizational form of the *society* or *community*, they could each emerge and exist as a social entity. And what do we mean concretely when we speak of *communities* or *societies* in our socio-critical archaeological research?<sup>111</sup> In the course of a day, we humans belong to an ever-changing variety of *groupings*.<sup>112</sup> We form them on equally diverse bases, be they familial - kinship, be they tied to our positions and roles, be they tied to our fields of work, be they tied to our participation in sports and cultural events, and/or be they tied to our membership in religious associations, to name but a few. We can usually indicate whether we belong to a *group* - and if so, why - what constitutes that group and our membership in it, and how we stand out as a group. As the example of group formation shows: Our social togetherness does not consist only of boundless cohesion - on the contrary, we also establish *boundaries*.<sup>113</sup> Recognizing the phenomena that lead to the setting of boundaries and that separate the respective social groups from one another (see *inequality* and *segregation* below) is thus essential for the fulfillment of our cognitive interests.

In our social contexts, we both create and experience *equality*, *inequality*, and *otherness* on a daily basis.

<sup>114</sup> Sociological research now shows that it is precisely these equalities, inequalities, and otherness

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<sup>107</sup> See II.3.1, *What is society??*

<sup>108</sup> See Excursus II.3, *Colloquial language*

<sup>109</sup> See II.3.2, *Society and community*

<sup>110</sup> See II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society?? - First considerations*

<sup>111</sup> See Excursus II.3, *Colloquial language*

<sup>112</sup> See II.3.3, *Groups*

<sup>113</sup> See II.3.4, *Does society have boundaries and what are according limiting factors?*

<sup>114</sup> See II.3.8, *Equal - unequal or different? - First considerations; II.3.8.1, Equal, unequal or just different?*

that form one of the crucial brackets that make our social cohesion possible. Regardless of the complexities and multiplicities we create, and despite the boundaries we set, we humans apparently manage to maintain our togetherness in a relatively stable way. According to sociological research, it is the process of *socialization*<sup>115</sup> that enables us to cope with our complex and multifaceted togetherness. It is the process of socialization in which we, as members of a social entity, become familiar with the common values, norms, and patterns of behavior and roles that apply here, act in accordance with them to a greater or lesser extent, and, again more or less consciously, develop an awareness of belonging to a social group. We learn in detail from social science research how socialization takes place, what role socialization plays in successful coexistence, on what basis ideas of belonging to a social group are formed, and how ideas about *ourselves* and *others* develop. At the same time, we learn how socialization leads not only to integration but also, as already shown in the examples of group formation and the manifestation of inequality, to segregation. Through our socialization we perceive our everyday life as the "normal" *reality*.<sup>116</sup> It is, among other things, our so-called *everyday knowledge*,<sup>117</sup> the practical knowledge with which we shape our everyday life and perceive it as our reality. Reality, the reality we humans create, according to sociologists, is always a *meaningful reality* [*sinnhaft / Sinnhaftigkeit*],<sup>118</sup> i.e. what we see, what we think, we give a name and a sense [*sinnstiftend / Sinnstiftung*]! That what we perceive as *social reality* is also always to a large extent a subjective perception of reality becomes clear when we ask others about their view of events, of life circumstances, of the constitution of the world. It becomes even clearer when we realize that it is not only in direct face-to-face exchange that we learn about the views of others. We ourselves are decisively influenced in our view of what we understand as *reality* by the media and the nonverbal or indirectly conveyed diverse views to which we are exposed daily. To a large extent, it is through *media* communication that we construct further images of reality. It is always this *medially mediated realness*<sup>119</sup> that we socio-critical archaeologists look at - and it is always our concern to causally link this medially mediated realness with the underlying social realities.<sup>120</sup> According to the cognitions of sociological research, communication, our everyday and practical knowledge, is one of the decisive "binding means" in social interaction.<sup>121</sup> So *communication* matters! Regardless of the form in which social encounters take place - between two or more people, in groups, in communities or societies, face-to-face or mediated by media - every encounter is basically governed by an *order*.<sup>122</sup> Knowledge of the *rules* and *regulations* that structure and guide the coexistence in the

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<sup>115</sup> See Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*

<sup>116</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*

<sup>117</sup> See II.3.6.4, *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge*

<sup>118</sup> See II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>119</sup> See II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*

<sup>120</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*; II.3.6.1, *What is "social realness"?*

<sup>121</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

<sup>122</sup> See II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*

respective orders, that contribute to the maintenance of order, and knowledge of the influencing factors that can lead to changes or even to the breakdown of an order, belong to the basic conditions for our social coexistence to be successful.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, it is always necessary to ask whose order we are talking about when order is broken and thus becomes *disorder*.<sup>124</sup> Conversely, whose disorder is whose order? Thus, when we think about the development, functions, and meanings of order and disorder, of rules and regulations, it is indispensable to also ask for whom these potentially community-creating parameters were meaningful [*sinnhaft / Sinnhaftigkeit*] and sense-giving [*sinnstiftend / Sinnstiftung*]. Other important elements in the development and maintenance of social order are *rituals* and *routines*, *values* and *norms*. *Rituals* and *routines*, as standardized behavior in everyday life, contribute to the accomplishment of this everyday life.<sup>125</sup> *Values* stand for what we humans desire, *norms* specify how we humans should behave in social interaction.<sup>126</sup> Whether, how, and why all these regulatory factors were followed or not, by whom, and again, for whom they were meaningful and sense-giving, are again follow-up questions to which we need to find answers. Answers that we need in order to clarify for whom the observance of these parameters promised a successful social coexistence - and for whom it did not. In the course of a day, we all perform numerous activities that become possible and necessary when we interact with others. We assume various *positions* and *roles* in a variety of functional areas and within the framework of our *habitus*.<sup>127</sup> We more or less fulfill the behavioral expectations placed on these positions and roles, we "play" roles, consciously or unconsciously. Through sociological research, we gain insight into the power that holding positions and playing roles has in shaping our everyday lives and social interactions in the social entity. Different positions and roles are associated with different *identities*, which we also embody in the course of a day. Again, it is sociological research that shows how identities are formed and explains the importance of identity formation for successful social interaction. Social order is the basis on which - and at the same time the framework within which - we humans live together in social entities. This does not mean, however, that there are no conflicts.<sup>128</sup> In her studies on the phenomena of *antagonism* and *agonism*,<sup>129</sup> Chantal Mouffe, among others, has shown very clearly that we always raise existential contradictions in our social togetherness and thus in our social orders, and what challenges these pose for our *togetherness*.<sup>130</sup> Among the forces that shape, secure, and also change the order of our coexistence are the exercise

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<sup>123</sup> See II.3.7.2, *Order, rules and regulations - parameters of vital importance for all human cooperation*

<sup>124</sup> See II.3.7.5, *Order and disorder - First considerations*; II.3.7.6, *Order - once again: Or - what is the opposite of order and what causes disorder for whom?*

<sup>125</sup> See II.3.7.8, *Parameters that keep order going: Rituals and routines*

<sup>126</sup> See II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*

<sup>127</sup> See II.3.7.14, *The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected?*

<sup>128</sup> See II.3.7.16, *A secured social order does not mean that no conflicts exist*

<sup>129</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism - Chantal Mouffe*

<sup>130</sup> See II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society? - First considerations*



of *power* [Macht] and *rule / governance* [Herrschaft].<sup>131</sup> Power, a force inherent in all our human relationships, becomes effective in every encounter between two or more people and is bound to the people who encounter each other in the way the constellation of the exercise and understanding of power proceeds. The institutionalized form of power, *rule/governance*, is then, unlike power itself, no longer bound to the ruling person, but now to the presence, the existence of the institution.<sup>132</sup> More specifically, we ask about the forms of power that have led to the need for things or to the possibilities of making, using, owning, possessing, and discarding things.<sup>133</sup> As critical researchers in social and cultural studies, we are particularly interested in the influence of *cultural hegemony*<sup>134</sup> as well as the *social practice of economic action*<sup>135</sup> in shaping social interaction and the emergence of the "world of things". This also means that I draw on the insights of other social, cultural, economic, and political science research where a deeper extension of basic sociological concepts increases the chances of finding answers to our socio-critical archaeological questions.<sup>136</sup>

### II.3 Sociology and archaeology - a first conclusion

The parameters that sociological research suggests must be in place for social interaction to be successful represent constants that characterize all social entities - those of the past(s) and those of the present. By integrating the theoretically abstracted insights of sociological research into our socio-critical archaeological research, we expand our empirically gained everyday knowledge with the necessarily generalizable insights into the nature and functioning of society. In other words, sociological research, with its expertise, provides us with the knowledge that we socio-critical archaeologists need in order to develop an idea of what there is theoretically to "see" in the archaeological record, and what we practically have to look for or find in the material legacies, the things, in order to find answers to our overarching questions - *Whose past(s) do we see, and whose history do we construct?*

In the following chapters<sup>137</sup> I present all the parameters mentioned here on the basis of Thomas Schwietring's introduction to the topic (Thomas Schwietring, 2011). In my comments on each parameter [see the columns - Own commentary and archaeological reference] I raise concrete questions that

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<sup>131</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*

<sup>132</sup> See II.3.9.1, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft]. What is it and who executes it?*

<sup>133</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations* up to II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life* up to III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>134</sup> See III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>135</sup> See IV.2, *Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner: The role of the socio - economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society*; IV.3, *Rahel Jaeggi - Economy as a social practice*

<sup>136</sup> See Part III, *Socio-critical archaeology as cultural science or: On the way from the thing to the human being seen from the perspective of the cultural sciences*; Part IV, *Economy*; Part V, *Socio-critical archaeology - my reflections in conclusion*; Part VI, *How to proceed? An outlook*

<sup>137</sup> See II.3.1, *What is society* up to II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archeological reference / power and rule / governance*

arise from the insights of sociology for socio-critical archaeological research. I explain the challenges we face in extracting social realities in the past(s) from "things". Where possible, I offer theses, hypotheses, interpretations, scenarios, and postulates for understanding and explaining the connections between social conditions - as causes<sup>138</sup> of the existence of things - and materialized cultural forms of expression - as results of these conditions.<sup>139</sup>

### II.3.1 What is society? (Schwietring, *op. cit.*, ch. 1, p. 19 ff.)

The first aspect to consider when dealing with the question - What is society? - is this: Society is not a fixed structure. There is no such thing as *the* society, according to Schwietring (*op. cit.*, p. 23). What we call society is a social entity that is constantly in motion. The composition of its members is constantly changing, not least because of the biological factors of birth and death. Mobility within societies, as well as within *communities*, spaces and regions, and migration between regions, characterize corresponding movements and fluctuations (*op. cit.*, p. 30).



#### II.3.1.1 Own commentary and archaeological reference

Sociology demonstrates that society is never static. Archaeology shows, with good reason, that the archaeological record we excavate is always static. At the same time, we know that any archaeological record in its static state is always the result of dynamic - processual - procedures of social interaction. The variety of things, the complexity of each archaeological site, and both the distribution of objects in space and their arrangement to each other in space are both the static manifestation of dynamic human activities [*Handlungen*] and the statically present result of natural processes [*Ereignisse*]. The manifold stock of things that we humans have at our disposal is and has been subject to constant change at all times and in all social contexts. Things are broken or lost, new ones are added, others are kept and often used long beyond the time when their use was possible and necessary according to an imagined primary function.<sup>140</sup> In the archaeological record, this dynamic development of social activities manifests itself as a static condition. Because of this dynamic of development over time, with any archaeological record we are potentially looking not only into the present, but also into the past(s) of those who "experienced" and used the things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, as well as the burials, but who were not necessarily those

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<sup>138</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>139</sup> See Excursus II.1, *What interdisciplinary work may and may not achieve*

<sup>140</sup> See II.1, *Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; Excursus II.6, *The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*

who originally designed them.<sup>141</sup> We are looking at the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous. This becomes clear when we look at the spatial order of the villages and cities in which we live. Their layout was designed both long before we were born and in the course of our lives. We use the spatial order that has been handed down historically as well as the spatial planning that has been created in our lifetime. We live in a spatial order that was created for a social order that may have been completely different. We use this inherited spatial order - but not necessarily in accordance with the social needs and functions on which it was originally based. Rather, we adapt its use to our current needs. At the same time, however, this state of affairs raises the question: Whose order is the spatial order of a settlement, the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous? And do we, as socio-critical archaeologists, find an answer to this question? Do we, from our etic point of view, find the signs in the materialized cultural forms of expression that allow us to recognize the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous, the phenomenon of time,<sup>142</sup> the dynamics behind the static state of the archaeological record?

This recognition - or non-recognition (whose orders do we see?) - becomes significant for our socio-critical archaeological research. It becomes particularly significant for our concern to understand and explain in a plausible way what we can say about the social conditions of their makers, owners, proprietors and users, i.e. about the social relations in the social entities of the past(s), on the basis of the diversity of the inventories and the complexity of the archaeological records. It is important to understand and explain who created and used the cultural forms of expression in the social entities of the past(s). And last but not least, this recognition - or non-recognition - becomes significant in order to be able to work out answers to our central questions - Whose past(s) do we see and whose history do we construct?



### II.3.2 Society and community (Schwietring, *op. cit.*, ch. 1, p. 25 ff.)

Sociologists make a distinction in terms and in characterization between society and *community* (*op. cit.*, p. 25 ff.). While society stands for today's complex social entities, *community* paraphrases *former societies* (*op. cit.*, p. 25), i.e. former social entities, social entities of bygone times. I will briefly illustrate how sociologists characterize the difference between these two configurations: The social

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<sup>141</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; Excursus II.6, *The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark*

<sup>142</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in direct engagement with the material legacies*; Excursus II.6, *The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon time - a remark*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics; iconography and iconology*; VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*

formations of extended families, clans, tribes, and ethnic groups, that is, entities of manageable size (op. cit., p. 26), are called *communities*. The people in such *communities* belong to the respective affiliations by descent or by birth. The basic characteristics on which so-called "modern" societies (op. cit., p. 26) develop are different. It is functions, contracts, rights and duties rather than ties of birth and origin that constitute societies.



#### II.3.2.1 Own commentary and archaeological reference

The distinction made by sociological research between the social order that characterizes a society and the social order that characterizes the *community* concerns a fundamental difference in the mode of organization of social togetherness.<sup>143</sup> The basic "openness" of the organizational mode of society theoretically allows all people to belong to this heterogeneous and complex form of social togetherness. This is in contrast to the organizational mode of community, which is characterized by clearly defined rules of membership and thus also clear rules of exclusion.

The different modes of social organization, of community and society, have far-reaching consequences for the possibilities of their members to participate in shaping their own everyday life and social interaction. For if the exclusion of certain people from belonging to a social entity is already inherent in the mode of organization of this social entity, as defined here in the example of the community, i.e. the exclusion of people who do not belong to the inner circle qua descent, the perception of all functions and roles necessary for the functioning of social togetherness is in principle not possible for all without restrictions. The dynasty system is an example of this. As a rule, people who do not belong to the community by descent cannot be installed as successors to a position of power or a ruling position in the dynasty.<sup>144</sup>

For our socio-critical archaeological research, this means that knowing - or not knowing - in which social formation the members of the social entities of the past(s) lived, in a society or in a *community*, thus has implications for answering our overarching questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct on the basis of the material heritage. We are thus faced with the challenge of clarifying whether we can find signs in the cultural forms of expression, the material legacies, on the basis of which we can determine the social organization of the inhabitants, the society or the community.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> See II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community, interests, groups, we*; II.3.4, *Does society have boundaries and what are according limiting factors?*; II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*; II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society? - First considerations*

<sup>144</sup> See II.3.7.14, *The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected?*

<sup>145</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*; I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we*

That social modes of organization are reflected in the design of settlement space as well as in settlement inventories is demonstrated by the cognitions of ethnoarchaeological research (Nabil Ali, 2016). Thus, specific modes of settlement, settlement inventories, architecture, spatial order, and treatment of the deceased are claimed by descent communities as evidence of their identity, as proof of belonging to a descent group, which consequently only members of this group may name their property respectively their possession (ownership).<sup>146</sup> The inhabitants of the settlement are formed on the basis of the common origin as a closed form of social organization, as a *community*, and shape their built environment and their world of things according to the common traditions. The sociological and geographical research on settlements and cities (Heike Delitz, 2009; 2009; 2010; Joachim Fischer; Heike Delitz, 2009; David Harvey, 2007; Henri Lefèbvre, 1991; Martina Löw, 2008; Silke Steets, 2015) shows us - and we know this from our own everyday life - that settlement paths, settlement inventories, architecture, spatial order and burials also document group membership, which is not based on descent, but on a multitude of other criteria (age, function, profession, status, etc.).<sup>147</sup> In other words, settlements were founded and inventories and cultural forms of expression developed because people from different social, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds recognized the place of settlement as suitable for their interests and decided to settle there. In this case, the inhabitants come together according to the pattern of society, that is, in the open form of social organization.<sup>148</sup>

The consequences of living in this or that social order for the possibilities of shaping one's own life and the life of the social entity are far-reaching. The consequences of recognizing or not recognizing these modes of organization for "serving" our cognitive interests, i.e. for being able to name whose past(s) we see in the material remains and whose history we are able to write, are also far-reaching.

The challenge of understanding and explaining whether, and if so how, we can tell from things whether they are made and used by members of a society or by members of a *community* is complex: Will we be able to identify signs by which we can identify and show the forms of social integration in which the things, the archaeological records we have uncovered, were made? Or are we already facing one of the stumbling blocks that I mentioned at the beginning of my reflections on

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*looking for?*; II.3.2, *Society and community* II.3.2.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community*; II.3.3.1 *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community, interests, groups, we*; IV.1, *Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other?*; IV.2, *Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner: The role of the socio-economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society*; IV.3, *Rabel Jaeggi - Economy as a social practice*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>146</sup> See II.3.8, *Equal - unequal or different? - First considerations*; II.3.8.1, *Equal, unequal or just different?*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art / pictorial works and criteria for the determination of sameness, inequality, otherness*

<sup>147</sup> See II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community interests, groups, we*

<sup>148</sup> See II.3.2, *Society and community*; II.3.2.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community*; II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society? - First considerations*

interdisciplinary research, namely <sup>149</sup> that in interdisciplinary cooperation we will always come up against (for the moment) unsolvable problems. That is to say, once again: Part of interdisciplinary research is not only to perceive the white spots that (still) limit our search for knowledge as socio-critical archaeologists, but also to point them out and explicitly name them. In our question of whether we are dealing with the materialized cultural forms of expression of an archaeological record with the results of social interaction in communities or societies, we may encounter one of these white spots. <sup>150</sup> In our search for the social modes of organization and order in which the cultural forms of expression were created, we may encounter the "not yet possible" mentioned above, that is, the situation in which we cannot yet give answers to all questions.



### Excursus II.3 Colloquial language

Colloquially, we socio-critical archaeologists refer to the inhabitants of the settlement sites we are excavating as both the *society of a settlement* as well as the *settlement community*. With this colloquial terminology, however, we do not designate aspects of the social forms of organization - society / community - that we want to explore with our socio-critical questions, but primarily only the fact that people used to live together at the place of investigation. We also speak of societies and settlement communities, using the plural. In this way we indicate that there are several settlements with their respective inhabitants in a geographical area and at a certain time. However, we do not (yet) say anything about whether these so-called societies, settlers, or communities are socio-cultural entities within their respective social forms of organization, or whether they are socio-culturally distinct social entities. <sup>151</sup> Thus, for the time being, we use the plural in a purely colloquial way.

#### II.3.3 Groups (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 2, p. 34 ff.)

We humans form social entities, our social togetherness is organized, among other things, in the form of societies and communities. In both categories there are subdivisions that we call groups (op. cit., p. 34). Sociologists define groups as social formations whose constituent members understand themselves as belonging to this human entity and identify with it. The bases on which groups form are manifold, be they, as explained above, family, relational and/or ethnic groups, professional guilds and/or occupational groups, fan groups, or groups that form ad hoc, such as passengers waiting together in the departure hall of an airport. As in societies and communities, the composition of group members is not hieratic but flexible. And just as in societies and

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<sup>149</sup> See Excursus II.1, *What interdisciplinary work may and may not achieve*

<sup>150</sup> See II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community interests, groups, we*; II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*

<sup>151</sup> See II.2, *Sociology - the science that provides us socio-critically researching archaeologists with the basic knowledge we need about the being and functioning of social interaction*

communities, the changing composition of group members does not affect the existence of a group as such. A group dissolves, however, when the reason for social togetherness ceases to exist.



### II.3.3.1 Own commentary and archaeological reference

As sociological research shows and our empirical experience confirms, groups are an essential element of social orders, potentially present in every constellation of social togetherness. The bases and reasons for the formation of groups are manifold, the composition of groups is potentially heterogeneous. The effects of groups on social interaction are multifaceted. According to the sociological definition, groups are associations of interests. People join together in groups for reasons known to them and see themselves as "we", regardless of how long a group has existed as such and what interests have led people to unite in a group. In this constellation, we define ourselves as a group from an emic point of view. But groups are also formed in other ways that deviate from this sociological definition. For example, as a researcher on social togetherness, I recognize that certain people in a social entity see themselves as a group. As a researcher, I do not belong to the group myself, but I can recognize it as such because I have grown up with the same socialization as the group members and I know the signs that make the group recognizable as a group. I can therefore identify this group as a group from an emic point of view, even though I do not belong to this group myself.

In another constellation, as a researcher, I recognize that certain people in a social entity understand themselves as a group. Again, as a researcher, I do not belong to the group and in this case respectively in this example, I do not have the same background of socialization. Nevertheless, I recognize the people's affiliation to a group and also perceive that these people understand themselves as a group. This recognition is possible for me as an outsider because, as a contemporary, I have become acquainted with the reasons for the formation of the group, on the one hand through questions and interviews, and on the other hand through the signs by which the group marks itself as a group and becomes recognizable as such.<sup>152</sup> I can understand this group as a group from an etic point of view as an observer, and in an approximation to an emic point of view through my direct face-to-face communication with the group members.

And finally, groups are also declared as groups by us, the fellow human beings, by us contemporaries, when we talk about *others*. *Others* are defined as a *group* by us researchers who look at social interaction from certain angles, depending on our research interests. Again, in these constellations, we contemporaries and researchers ourselves do not belong to the named groups. The people we have declared to be a group from the outside, from the point of view of the

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<sup>152</sup> See II.3.2.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community*

observer, may not know anything about their assignment to a group. If they did, however, it is quite possible that they would not feel that they belong to this group, would not see themselves as a *we* with the other members of the group, and would not, from their own point of view, form an association of interests with them. Such a group is therefore not an association of interests in the sense defined above by sociological research. Rather, the group represents our interests, i.e. the interests of those who constructed the association of people into a group and labeled it as such from an etic point of view. With this approach to the consideration and naming of groups, I approach the procedure that also determines our research as socio-critical archaeologists.

What do we experience in the latter approach when we assemble people into groups? First, we learn nothing about the self-understanding of the people whose social interaction we are studying, but we do learn something about our interests as researchers and our resulting view of the social interaction of the researched. It is not impossible that both views of social interaction, ours and those of the researched, may be congruent, but then this must be explicitly pointed out as a fact. Otherwise, the potential disconnectedness remains - here our view, i.e. that of the researchers - there the self-view of the researched.<sup>153</sup>

This phenomenon, that the knowledge gained in the social sciences may say more about the researchers than about the researched, that the view of the researchers, the etic point of view, remains unconnected to the self-view of the researched, the emic point of view, is also inherent in socio-critical archaeological research. In archaeological research, however, we approach the identification of groups in a completely different way, but always from the etic point of view.

### *Thing - Groups*

As archaeologists, we first group things that people made, used, had at their disposal as property, owned and discarded in the past(s). The starting point and thus the basis for the compilation of things into groups is primarily my interest as a researcher in the things and their categorization. However, the overriding interest is always to understand and explain the materialized cultural forms of expression as a result of the social interaction of people in the past(s). Thus, we are aware that today we summarize the things produced in the past(s) according to our present cognitive interests. These groups of things that we construct today as socio-critical archaeologists are thus primarily expressions of our conceptions of reality, our logic of order.<sup>154</sup> This approach to things and the way we group them according to our research interests is therefore subjective in the first place. Our grouping does not have to be, but can be, congruent with the groupings of these things that

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<sup>153</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>154</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations* up to II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*; V1.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*



may have been made by the manufacturers and users at the time. I.e., once again briefly emphasized: We are aware and have to take into account that our present-day logic and ontology are not necessarily identical with the criteria and ordering systems of the producers and users of things at that time. The order of things, the ontology of the people who created and used the things we group together may have been quite different. Our aim is to connect the *ontology of the past(s)* with the *ontology of our present*, to gain insights into the emic point of view, to check whether our group-formation and a grouping of things at that time could have been congruent. To this end, we pursue the question of whether there are (for us!) plausible arguments that would allow for a comparability in the bases of classification, in the categorizations and groupings of things then and now. If there were, and if we had the methodological means to show it, we would move from our etic point of view to an emic point of view and objectify our subjective view.<sup>155</sup> I can already name one way in which we might achieve this approach and objectification of the assignment of things to groups. It is the approach according to which we choose parameters for assigning things to groups that may have been known to the producers and users of things in the past(s) as criteria for order. In other words, parameters that are inherent to things - and were and are recognizable then and now. One such criterion would be the raw materials, according to which we and the producers and users of the time can and could classify things into groups, e.g. metal, clay, wood, stone, and so on. That the materials could have been a possible criterion according to which things were classified at that time cannot be excluded, but neither can it be excluded that this criterion, which is offered to us today, may not have played a corresponding role at that time.<sup>156</sup> We can see, then, that the definition of what one considers to be a "group" of things depends very much on what we want to achieve with our research and the questions we ask, or on what those who created, used, and arranged things wanted to achieve with their efforts to order them.

*We socio-critical archaeologists equate "thing groups" with groups of people.*

In socio-critical archaeological research, the classification of things into groups leads far beyond the study of material legacies. From the assignment of things to groups, socio-critical archaeological research develops the assignment of people to groups. In principle, this step of grouping people on the basis of things is similar to the process by which researchers today group contemporaries on the basis of things - for example, soccer fans with identical scarves or jerseys. The basis of group formation in both cases - in the archaeological context as well as in the context of "soccer" - is primarily the cognitive and research interest of the researcher, not primarily the self-perception of

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<sup>155</sup> See V. 2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>156</sup> See II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*

the people we group together as members of a group, although we can plausibly postulate this self-perception in the context of "soccer".

A possible approach to draw conclusions from the grouping of things to the grouping of people on the basis of material legacies, or to postulate this grouping of people in a way that is plausible from our etic point of view, lies in the consideration of the function and significance that shared knowledge has for the formation of groupings, here concretely the consideration of the knowledge that people have when they produce things, the skills that they must have in order to produce things. The skills they must have to work with different materials and the ability to work cooperatively.<sup>157</sup>

We analyze our archaeological records, we categorize things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, even burials. We group things together on the basis of different criteria, chosen with reason from our etic point of view. As stated, we create groups of things based on the materials used. We analyze the knowledge and skills required to produce and process certain materials. For example, the extraction and processing of metals requires highly specialized knowledge, certain craft skills, and always the cooperation of several people. It is through specialized knowledge and skills that people become specialists. We assert the existence of functionally specialized knowledge and functionally specialized people. We assert that the interaction of the above factors has resulted in the formation of functionally specialized groups working together in cooperation. The possibilities of finding clues to the social conditions in a social entity of the past(s) on the basis of things are thus potentially given, as the example of metalworking shows. The possibilities of finding evidence for the existence of groups and their functions in social coexistence, or for the success of social coexistence, vary according to the source situation available to us as socio-critical archaeologists. This should already have become clear<sup>158</sup> in the reflections on the forms of organization of society and community, and it becomes clear again where we turn to the analysis of pictorial works in search of the phenomenon of *group formation*. Where pictorial works reproduce people in contexts of action, it becomes potentially possible for us, first of all from our *etic point of view*, to recognize group formation, to name the functions of groups, as well as to show the importance of group formation for the success of social interaction in the social entities of the past(s), and to postulate these cognitions in a plausible way also from the *emic point of view*.

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<sup>157</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological research / power / relationship between craftsmen and the powerful respectively the rulers*

<sup>158</sup> See II.3.2.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community*

*The picture of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD - Groups - winning and losing* <sup>159</sup>

On the basis of a pictorial work from the field of Near Eastern archaeology, the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamia, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))), these insights into the formation and existence of groups can be demonstrated both from our etic point of view and, I postulate, from the emic point of view.

The picture on the stele shows a mountainous landscape in which an armed conflict has taken place. Two distinct groups, winners and losers, are clearly marked as such, according to my interpretation. The group of the winners can be recognized by their antiquaria (equipment, clothing), their intact weapons and standards, as well as by their orderly formation in the action and their posture. The winners approach the central figure of the action. This figure is recognizable as such by its position on the top of the mountain or at the highest point in the picture, by its size, the antiquaria, and its relationship to the actors in both groups. The labeling of the second group is quite different. There is no corresponding order in their military formation. The soldiers or fighters in this group are shown falling down the slope as injured or killed opponents, others in a gesture of submission to the main figure and looking up at him with pleading gestures - and all are depicted with broken weapons.

The existence of groups, the function of groups in a social structure, the importance of groups for the safe and successful coexistence of people in society (here seen from the point of view of the winners), and the significance of group membership for the members of a social entity were, in my interpretation, clearly demonstrated to the recipients of the stele - both to the contemporaries of that time and to us who look at the stele of *NARAMSIN OF AKKAD* today.

*A brief conclusion*

The following applies to the examples mentioned and to all studies of socio-critical archaeological research in general: it is this challenge of recognizing the actors, groups of people (if possible also individual actors) on the basis of the things or groups of things that we put together from our etic point of view, and of determining their functions and the significance of their functions for

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<sup>159</sup> *The Stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD I use it several times in this study to explain the challenge we socio-critically researching archaeologists face in our attempts to infer from the world of things to the world of people. In the course of the considerations I then also go into detail on the bases, which support my interpretations of the stele respectively the stele picture. See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; II.3.7.15, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage; II.3.7.19, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts; II.3.7.21, Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation; II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art; II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Pierce, semiotics; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

successful social coexistence, that runs like a red thread through all socio-critical archaeological studies. And what is more: one of the core concerns of all socio-critical archaeological research is to show whether and why, or why not, we can link our etic point of view with the emic point of view - and here, more precisely, with whose (!) emic point of view of the circumstances. The answer to this challenge, paraphrased with the phrase "who is speaking", has a decisive influence on the direction of our answers to the questions of whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct on the basis of the material heritage alone.



#### 11.3.4 Does society have boundaries and what are according limiting factors?

(Schwietring, *op. cit.*, ch. 3, p. 57 ff.)

It is obvious that social life is always and everywhere connected with space and time. Society, according to the first definition given above, is a social entity characterized, among other things, by its constantly changing composition. Society is thus a loose entity. At the same time, society is a familiar everyday world for us today (*op. cit.*, p. 79). How can this loose unity be recognized in its coherence and possibly in its demarcation from other social units? Are there visible indicators in time and space or unrecognizable immaterial and imaginary parameters that set constituting boundaries (*op. cit.*, p. 58)? Boundaries, then, that define society through corresponding bonds and thus at the same time make the existence of societies (!) visible? Are there boundary factors that are potentially recognizable as visible arrangements in space, that exist as temporal but invisible boundaries, and that in both manifestations form boundaries within and between societies?

According to the sociological approach, this social entity, which we call society, never has naturally given boundaries (*op. cit.*, p. 67) (Own note: But see the definition of community and the consequences that the constituting factors of a community have for our question whether boundaries limit social entities).<sup>160</sup> In fact, the establishment of boundaries is always a socially created factor, the result of interactions and decisions of people, thus a result of social processes, as Thomas Schwietring describes it (*op. cit.*, p. 67). The following examples may illustrate this assertion. In a nation-state, a person can become an associate if he or she has acquired the right to acquire citizenship in accordance with the law and legal regulations (*op. cit.*, p. 71). Whether this person will be accepted by others as a member of a we-unit is another question. The limiting factor of belonging or not belonging to a social entity is in this case, in a strictly legal sense, a juridical one. In considering what are the constitutive parameters that define a *we* and *the other*, we ask what a stranger, the other, is (*op. cit.*, pp. 71-72). To be the other is the decision of those who see themselves as the "we" and in which realm a person, the other, enters. It is primarily a social

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<sup>160</sup> See II.3.2, *Society and community*; II.3.2.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community*

decision that makes one a member of a social entity or not. The examples show that defining boundaries do not necessarily have to be materialized and visible in order to be effective - a highly relevant factor for any socio-critical archaeological research!



#### II.3.4.1 Own commentary and archaeological reference

In sociological research, one of the questions is whether it is possible to recognize population groups in the world population as self-contained social units, to designate them as societies, and thus to distinguish societies (!) from each other. As a reminder, this question poses two challenges. The first is to understand what society actually is.<sup>161</sup> The complexity of this question, i.e. what constitutes society, can already be seen in the definitions that sociology has developed in its empirical studies to characterize the social entity of society. There is no such thing as society. What we call society is a social entity that is always in motion, always in the process of becoming, always subject to change.<sup>162</sup> In addition, society is characterized by the principle of openness with regard to belonging to a society, which can result from functions, contracts, rights and duties, and thus differs from the organization of a *community* to which people belong by birth and origin. The whole set of questions related to the consideration of society would thus have to be pursued again with reference to the consideration of community. This complex of questions would then have to be extended by the follow-up question of whether we can recognize signs in the materialized cultural forms of expression that enable us to distinguish the social entity society from the social entity community.<sup>163</sup> Sociological research also assumes that there are no "natural" boundaries that mark a population group as a delimited social entity. The delimitation of population groups as a social unit, as a society, and thus also the delimitation of societies from each other, takes place according to criteria that we humans have chosen as boundary markers. In order to be able to answer both the question of what society is and the question of whether society has boundaries, all researchers interested in these questions must first clarify for each individual case study what they mean by the term society.<sup>164</sup> The parameters on which the circumscription is based must be named. It must be explained what holds the population group thus described together as a social unit,<sup>165</sup> in order to be able to derive from these parameters what separates societies (!) from one another, where and how boundaries run. We socio-critical archaeologists are also challenged to work out this

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<sup>161</sup> See II.3.1, *What is society??*

<sup>162</sup> See II.3.1, *What is society??*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*

<sup>163</sup> See II.3.2, *Society and community*; II.3.2.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*

<sup>164</sup> See II.3.1, *What is society??*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*

<sup>165</sup> See II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society? - First considerations* up to II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

clarification - in each case in individual case studies - and to overcome some of the stumbling blocks already mentioned several times (see also Johann August Schülein; Simon Reitze, 2016<sup>4</sup>, 220 ff.). These consist, among other things, in the fact that we have to work out the dynamic developmental processes of the coexistence of people in social entities on the basis of the statically available archaeological records,<sup>166</sup> and that we also have to gain insights into the ways of life in the social entities of the past(s) by means of the causal correlation of things with precisely these social circumstances.<sup>167</sup> In short, the answer to the question of whether society has boundaries, whether we can recognize the social formations of society and community as such solely on the basis of the materialized cultural forms of expression, and then distinguish the social formation of society from society, society from community, and community from community as distinct social entities also solely on the basis of the materialized cultural forms of expression, requires the clarification of a multitude of individual questions that must be worked out both by colleagues in the disciplines of social and cultural sciences and by us as archaeologists doing socio-critical research on concrete individual cases. The fact that we humans set boundaries is something we experience every day in our social interactions. The formation of groups is an example of this. While groups connect people, they also separate those group members from other, non-group members.<sup>168</sup> The setting of boundaries, both visible and invisible, is constitutive of any social interaction, be it in society, in a community, or in any other social formation. In other words: It is only because we humans set boundaries that social togetherness is possible at all. We social-critical archaeologists and our colleagues in the social and cultural sciences can not only plausibly assert that boundaries are set in every social formation - regardless of cultural space and time - and that this setting of boundaries is of essential importance for social togetherness, but we can also prove this as a generally valid fact.

An example of the visible establishment of boundaries that we humans undertake within our social entities, which have far-reaching effects on our social togetherness, and on the basis of which it becomes clear why the establishment of boundaries is necessary in every social entity, or why boundaries function as constitutive measures for the cohesion of a social entity, could be the way in which the living deal with the dead - today as well as in the past - thus in all social entities. With every measure of care that the living initiate for the dead, i.e. for those whose "departure" from the society of the living is apparent to all who remain, we visibly demarcate the world of the living

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<sup>166</sup> See II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*

<sup>167</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations* up to II.3.6.4, *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge*

<sup>168</sup> See II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*

from the world of the dead. It is this visible demarcation of the deceased's belonging to a world other than that of the living that can truly secure the social togetherness of the living for the future (among others, Hubert Knoblauch, 1999; Nathalie Fritz et al., 2018; Fiona Bowie, 2008; Kerstin P. Hofmann, Julia Gresky, 2021).<sup>169</sup>

The need for visible boundaries, boundaries as an authoritative means by which we humans are able to hold our social entity together, is thus exemplified by the care of the dead. At the same time, it becomes clear that this insight is immediately followed by the next questions. Questions that may turn out to be among the stumbling blocks that we may not yet have the means to "remove," questions that we may not yet be able to answer: Are the different forms of burial perhaps the signs we are looking for in order to recognize boundaries not only between the living and the dead, but also between social entities? Do burial customs, which we consider to reflect a strong cultural specificity and at the same time a value - conservative and long lived - tradition, not only unite those who belong to a common tradition, but also establish boundaries between social entities? And if so, what forms of social organization would be demarcated by different modes of burial - societies from each other, communities from each other, society and community from each other?



### *II.3.5 What holds us together as a society? - First considerations*

Groups, descent communities, or our individual decisions to belong to each other can be understood and explained in terms of the criteria by which we are together and the mechanisms that hold us together. But what is it specifically that holds together a socially heterogeneous society based on a wide range of different factors? This is a question that sociological research is once again exploring in detail and at length.

#### *II.3.5.1 We, the humans - and our capability to form and live in social entities*

*(Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 4, p. 81 ff.)*

We, the human beings, are essentially social beings. Our existence and survival is only possible within the framework of social entities (op. cit., p. 82). The social entity, society, community, group already exists at the time of our birth, and social entities continue to exist because humans are born into these entities and become members of them (op. cit., p. 83 and p. 85). In a reciprocal effect, we humans influence and shape our social environments, and the social environments influence and shape us as individuals.

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<sup>169</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

11.3.5.2      *However, how do we humans manage to hold a society (in the sense of the sociological definition) respectively a social entity together? (social entity - meant in the sense of people living together and in this sense used here)*

*(Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 4, p. 84 ff.)*

We humans mimic others (op. cit., p. 85), we learn from others, we get new ideas by thinking and acting with others, we are thus shaped by others and we ourselves shape others by our own reactions and actions (op. cit., p. 85). Inherited, learned and transmitted behavior, ways of acting and thinking, reflection and routine, foresighted and planned action as well as the contingency of thinking and acting constitute the cohesion of social entities, lead to the maintenance of habits, allow innovations, changes and modifications and thus the continuous adjustment of the framework of social togetherness to the needs, options for fulfilling the needs, intentions and contingencies that are effective in a social entity (op. cit., pp. 86 and 88). It is this plurality of being social, it is both the interactions and the interdependencies that make social and cultural order, continuity and change possible (op. cit., p. 86). That is, only the combination of circumstances, the >complexity of interplay< [„Komplexität des Zusammenspiels“] (op. cit., p. 87), i.e. the occurrence of emergence and complexity of the interaction of diverse factors of a system, produces new elements in the system and makes society possible. It is the interaction of and between the elements, not the elements alone, that makes our social entity work! Our ability to think and act, to react and behave, the givens of mimicry and creativity, of intentional action, of the contingency of events, and all in all the occurrence of emergence are among the most significant driving forces that have made and make social coherence possible. Language is another element in human and social evolution that plays a very important role in the establishment of social togetherness and the emergence of complex social relations (op. cit., p. 88). To communicate through >meaningful signs< [„sinnhaften Zeichen“] (op. cit., p. 88), the use of sounds and gestures to refer to something other than the sound or gesture itself (!) enables us to differentiate between what we directly perceive and what is meant by it (very good and detailed explanation of the functioning of language and its role in the maintenance of social togetherness in op. cit., p. 88 - 89). This system (as well as the development of writing) is created and constantly evolves in the daily social interactions of human beings, it is learned, trained, constantly modified and handed down from generation to generation.

11.3.5.3      *What characterizes us as „the humans“? - First considerations*

According to anthropological, sociological, and biological research (and so also our own everyday observations and experiences...), we humans are poor in instinct, but capable of transforming everyday experiences (through socialization) into learning processes and meaningful actions.



Thomas Schwietering deals with this aspect when he explicitly reconsiders the human being in its constitution as a social being - and reflects on what this constitution means with regard to the consideration of how we can exist at all as such a heterogeneous and complex constellation "society" - and within it as a member of this social entity.

*II.3.5.4 What allows us to talk about „the humans“, thus to generalize statements about the capabilities of us, the (!) humans to live together and to call us social beings? (Schwietering, op. cit., ch. 4, p. 89 ff.)*

Thomas Schwietering refers to the reflections, insights, and statements of some representatives of philosophical anthropology (op. cit., p. 90), who call humans >instinct-poor, but open-minded< [„instinktarm, aber weltoffen“] (op. cit., p. 90). Humans are biologically speaking imperfect beings. We lack instincts, we are not primarily biologically determined in our life and survival, but socially learnable and therefore most adaptable to our natural and social environment. Not only our human behavior, but our "meaningful action" (op. cit., p. 90) makes our social togetherness possible and characterizes us as social beings! Routine and tradition give rise to stable patterns of action and behavior and stable expectations - both of which develop culturally (op. cit., p. 90). Because we are "imperfect" and lack sufficient instincts to survive, we have to construct our environment, our living conditions, our ways of life in order to ensure our survival (op. cit., p. 91). Socialization and education are parts and elements of the processes that every human being goes through in every social entity (op. cit., p. 91). Both explain the worldwide plurality of social formations, habitats, traditions, routines. It is the continuous occurrence of learning, of making experiences and facing challenges, of the development and occurrence of needs and desires, of options and abilities to fulfill them, of power constellations and the occurrence of events, of confronting unfamiliar as well as familiar situations, of the diverse composition of social entities and natural environments, and of human attempts and efforts to deal with these challenges, that makes social survival possible. The constantly changing composition of social structures, the occurrence of contingencies and intentions (op. cit., p. 92), of rules and regulations as well as ambiguities can only be transformed into living forms of life by us, the actively shaping and organizing people (op. cit., p. 93).

*Excursus II.4 How does socialization work? (Schwietering, op. cit., ch. 10, p. 261 ff.)*

Socialization is the process by which a newborn human being, by living with and orienting him or herself to others, becomes an adult and capable of acting subject (op. cit., p. 261). In every society, community, and group we are confronted with a plurality of interests, a fact that leads to the question of how social order becomes possible (op. cit., p. 267). It is the process of socialization that imparts to each individual the common values, norms, patterns of action and roles that align

the actions and behavior of the individual person with the demands and opportunities of the social entity (op. cit., p. 267). However, conflicts exist in every social entity. In the process of socialization and the acquisition of adulthood, we develop our own views of the reality of our life-world, which do not necessarily coincide with the rules and regulations, the values and norms of our social environment! Every social entity has to find solutions to solve these problems, every social entity knows sanctions as well as rewards to keep the order functioning.

*Excursus II.5 How is disparity produced and reproduced? (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 10, p. 269 ff.)*

However, since we reproduce the order of our social environment by our behavior and by acting according to the rules, we also potentially reproduce the social inequalities of the social order (op. cit., p. 269), and it is considered imperative for every social entity to find solutions to potentially arising conflicts that result, among other things, from inequality. A determining factor in the production of inequality is the unequal treatment of men and women in social entities, which can be observed worldwide and throughout history (op. cit., p. 287 ff.). Gender is used to structure all social relations in every social entity. (Author's note - many other criteria could be mentioned that show inequality, including age, origin, etc.). Gender coins identity, structures social inequality, and is part of power constellations. As sociological and historical studies show, de facto all known societies use the category of gender to structure their social order, to legitimize hierarchies, to organize access to resources, to social positions, to options for realizing individual life choices (op. cit., p. 288 - 289). Obviously, people in all societies make great symbolic efforts, so the insights of corresponding sociological and historical studies, to stage the meaning of gender and the difference between the sexes, to keep the differences present (op. cit., p. 290) and to use gender to legitimate disparities (op. cit., p. 293).



*II.3.5.5 Own commentary and archaeological reference*

So how do we humans hold our social entities together? Social togetherness is created and functions through socialization, mimicry and creativity, strategy and contingency, through action, reaction, nonverbal communication and language or verbal communication, through the existence of rules and behavioral expectations that go along with socialization and the learned sets of rules. An extremely sophisticated network of conjunctions, which we humans perceive as meaningful [*sinnhaft / Sinnhaftigkeit*] and sense-giving [*sinnstiftend / Sinnstiftung*], or conjunctions that prove to be such, among them, once again, especially with regard to the social form of organization of the community, the origin and descent, keeps our social togetherness functioning and holds social entities, societies as well as communities, together.

The concrete design of these sophisticated networks and the concrete design of the measures that ensure the cohesion of a social entity are always culture-specific. What is required across cultures is that the members of a social entity experience the shaping of social togetherness and the measures to secure social cohesion as meaningful and sense-giving.

Recognizing the meaningfulness and sense-giving in the formation of social bonds that the members of the social entities of the past(s) created and participated in, and understanding and explaining how the members of the social entities of the past(s) secured their social cohesion, is the challenge that we socio-critically researching archaeologists face. As socio-critical archaeologists, we want to understand and explain in particular how the existence of things and the way they were handled contributed to the realization of these meaningful and sense-giving connections and thus to the securing of social cohesion.<sup>170</sup>

*Our archaeological records - ambivalent, if not contradictory sources for our attempt to elicit meaningful and sense-giving thought and action on the basis of things alone*

In any archaeological record we "see" the materialized expression of a variety of complex connections that members of the social entities of the past(s) have made and entered into. We see the results of knowledge, skill, learning, imitation, chance and planning, innovation and creativity, strategies for improving the results of thought and action. We see continuities, we see the transmission of the known, we find indications of the continued use of found things and given orders (see Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 below). But we also see changes and ruptures in the appearance of cultural forms of expression, we see their destruction (see Scenario 4).<sup>171</sup> So we are confronted with (apparent!?) contradictions. We ask ourselves what these (apparent!?) contradictions mean in terms of our search for the meaningful and sense-giving elements in human action, as well as for the factors that hold social entities together. Specifically: Can both the preservation and destruction of things be meaningful and sense-giving? And can both the preservation and the destruction of things ensure social cohesion?

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<sup>170</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; III.1.6.2, *Acritical reflection of Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>171</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change / Japan*

*The following scenarios, in which these seemingly contradictory facts become apparent, are potentially conceivable:*

*Scenario 1 - Preserving the status quo - pragmatism as a source of sense-giving and safeguarding social cohesion*

At a settlement site, objects that are found continue to be used, and orders that have been established are maintained. The continued use of these cultural forms of expression may not have occurred because they corresponded to the historically established tradition of the users.<sup>172</sup> Rather, there may have been purely pragmatic reasons for continuing to use what was found.<sup>173</sup> In this case, pragmatism made sense and provided meaning, and pragmatism ensured social cohesion.

*Scenario 2 - Passing on the traditional as a meaningful and sense-giving act that ensured social cohesion*

Contrary to the postulate mentioned in Scenario 1, the continued use of traditional cultural forms of expression occurs precisely because the actors are part of the tradition, because they ensure the cohesion of the social unit by handing down the traditional, and because they experience the preservation of the traditional as meaningful and sense-giving.

*Scenario 3 - Passing on the traditional - a potential factor for conflict: creating meaningfulness and sense-giving versus preventing a meaningful and sense-giving way of life*

However, we also know from our everyday experience that preserving continuity, handing down the traditional, and preventing change can also be experienced as a measure directed against the interests of the members of a social entity.<sup>174</sup> In this case, the perpetuation of the familiar does precisely not serve those members of a social entity who would have wished for change in order to shape their way of life in a meaningful and sense-giving way or to maintain social cohesion.<sup>175</sup>

*Scenario 4 - Breaking with the status quo or destroying it as a meaningful action and a sense-giving measure to consolidate social coexistence*

In every archaeological excavation, we see not only the continuation of the known, but also archaeological records that are characterized by changes and ruptures in the material legacies, or by their destruction. In such archaeological records we recognize the modification of - as well as the

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<sup>172</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*

<sup>173</sup> See II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community; inherited spatial order of the villages and cities in which we ourselves live*

<sup>174</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*

<sup>175</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*

rupture with - previously given cultural forms of expression. In certain contexts, changes, ruptures, and destructions of cultural forms of expression represent absolutely meaningful and sense-giving actions. A social entity in which the composition of the members changes as a result of generation and immigration, the ideas of what is considered meaningful and sense-giving in thought and action, and thus also in the visible cultural forms of expression of thought and action, change. Change, rupture, and destruction of the familiar can thus express the meaningful and sense-giving adaptation to what has changed in social interaction. The destruction of materialized cultural forms of expression is also an expression of the transmission of the customary. This can be seen, for example, in the ritual of destroying crockery >broken pieces bring good luck< [*Scherben bringen Glück*], which the guests of a bride and groom in Germany celebrate on the eve of the wedding [*Polterabend*] in front of the house of the future spouses, in order to secure the happy future of the bride and groom with the destruction. The ritual of temple destruction in the Japanese village of Ise ([https://religion-in-japan.univie.ac.at/an/Bauten\\_Shrine/Ise](https://religion-in-japan.univie.ac.at/an/Bauten_Shrine/Ise)),<sup>176</sup> in which the shrine complex of Ise-Jingu is completely demolished every 20 years and then rebuilt on the same site, is a deliberate, meaningful, and sense-giving destruction of the ordinary as a measure to preserve tradition and thus ensure social cohesion. Thus, it may be precisely the visible changes that ensure the cohesion of a social entity. In these cases, it is precisely the change, the rupture and/or the destruction of the materialized cultural forms of expression that are perceived as meaningful and that have a sense-giving effect. At the same time, this postulate inevitably leads us back to the situation that I have already addressed in Scenario 2 with reference to the opposite - the visible preservation and uninterrupted transmission of tradition as meaningful and sense-giving action. So what does - according to the scenario outlined there - change, rupture, or destruction of visible cultural forms of expression mean in terms of meaningful and sense-giving thought and action for those members of a social entity who would have preferred to preserve the traditional?<sup>177</sup> The complexity of the described facts represents a multilayered starting point for our search for answers to the question of the meaningfulness and the sense of thinking, acting, wishing and desiring, of the needs and the possibilities of their fulfillment as means that guarantee the social cohesion of a social entity, which we want to answer on the basis of the results of these human activities, i.e. on the basis of the materialized cultural forms of expression, the things. The question as to for whom in the social entities of the past(s) which handling of cultural forms of expression is meaningful and sense-giving, represents the right means to ensure social cohesion, and why, whose (!) expression of meaningfulness and sense-giving we can thus see in the materialized cultural heritage,

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<sup>176</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change / Japan*

<sup>177</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

is basically an almost social-philosophical question, which hardly allows unambiguous answers to be expected. For, as the scenarios have shown, every action, every thing, every handling of things can potentially have a meaningful and sense-giving effect and convey meaningfulness and sense-giving to every member of a social entity, but it can also have exactly the opposite effect. The search for answers to the questions of what were meaningful and sense-giving actions and outcomes for whom in the social entities of the past(s), and thus what holds a social entity together, remains a complex challenge. A possible approach, however, by which we can understand the actions and results of actions both from our etic point of view and plausibly justifiable from the emic point of view as cross-culturally meaningful and sense-giving community actions, lies again in the consideration of funeral rites.<sup>178</sup> Here answers can be found - at first hypothetically, but already plausibly comprehensible - to the questions in which way, for whom and why certain actions and results of actions can be regarded as meaningful and sense-giving also for situations in the social entities of the past(s) - and as such would have served to secure social cohesion. The ways of dealing with death as a value-conserving visible expression of social conditions, of order, of routines, rituals, values and norms play a special role in the meaningfulness and sense-giving power of thought and action (also) in the social entities of the past(s), a statement in which we socio-critically researching archaeologists rely not only on our own experiences, but once again especially on the cognitions of the sociology of religion, religious studies, ethnology and social anthropology.<sup>179</sup> As an expression of value-preserving traditions, dealing with death has the power to convey the meaningfulness of social interaction by preserving tradition, among other things, through boundary setting as one of the means by which we humans are able to hold our social entity together<sup>180</sup> and to generate the sense-giving necessary to ensure the cohesion of social entities, especially after the rupture in social order that the death of each individual represents for a social entity (Scenario 2). Nevertheless, we also find in the archaeological record: The looting of tombs, the destruction of tombs, changes in burial customs, changes in the way of dealing with death, a break with the burial customs previously known in a place (Scenario 4). Now the question arises: If continuity and homogeneity in dealing with the deceased represent for all members of a social entity the meaningful and sense-giving transmission of common traditions, how is it to be understood and explained that, despite this existential importance of continuity and homogeneity, the destructive attacks on the burial grounds and the changes or ruptures in the burial customs occur? (Scenario 3 (?) and 4)? For whom were they meaningful and sense-giving (see Scenario 3)? And who, on the

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<sup>178</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*

<sup>179</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries; see there as well literature references*

<sup>180</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries; II.3.7, What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations; II.3.7.8, Parameters that keep orders going: Rituals and routines; II.3.7.10, Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*

other hand, experienced them as the destruction of a meaningful and sense-giving order? <sup>181</sup> By analyzing the socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts and conditions of the respective events, we as socio-critical archaeologists should try to find out in individual case studies which circles saw the continuation of the familiar (Scenarios 1 and 2), the destruction of the familiar (Scenario 4), the conscious turning away from the familiar to the other, or the other way of dealing with death without knowledge of the old familiar on the spot. And once again as a reminder: as in all our attempts to understand things, cultural forms of expression as a result of the social, we as socio-critical archaeologists are also challenged to present arguments with which we can justify our postulate that the perception of meaningfulness and sense-giving by some could have been the opposite for others, as a plausible and intersubjectively comprehensible explanation.



### 11.3.6 What is social reality? - First considerations

We human beings always experience our everyday world individually and subjectively. Thus, in all social encounters, there are always multiple subjective perceptions of everyday life and social reality, because perception is learned social behavior. <sup>182</sup> All members of any social entity, then and now, share culturally specific modes of perception. An actual fact, which constitutes a further facet of our challenge to understand and explain the ways of life of the past(s): our own perception of our own social reality constitutes another major influencing factor in every interpretation that we socio-critical archaeologists make of our "facts", of the visible, materialized heritage of the past(s). <sup>183</sup> Reflecting on one's own everyday life, everyone at some point becomes aware that as a generation living today, one has a very different view of the world than that of one's parents and grandparents. The spirit of the times and the contexts in which we live have to be reconsidered as decisive factors if we want to understand and explain how world views emerge, how they are continuously maintained, or how they undergo significant changes. <sup>184</sup> What do we "really" know about our everyday lives, about the background, about the causes of why we see the world the way we do? <sup>185</sup> What is everyday knowledge? <sup>186</sup> What is our idea of *normality* and how does it come about? Our everyday knowledge is not abstract knowledge, it is the knowledge we use, consciously or

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<sup>181</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and Enlightenment - a personal experience report*

<sup>182</sup> See Excursus I.1, *The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*

<sup>183</sup> See V.1, *Our locations [Standorte], enlightenment as the task of the social and cultural sciences, and the relation to Critical Theory shape our socio-critical archaeological research*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>184</sup> See Excursus I.3.1, *Past / past(s)*

<sup>185</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>186</sup> See II.2.1, *Once again in advance - Own experiences - This time on the topic: What is society and how does social coexistence work?*; II.3.6.4, *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge*

unconsciously, to make sense of our everyday lives.<sup>187</sup> But what is social reality - or is there - a (!) social reality at all?<sup>188</sup>

### II.3.6.1 What is „social realness“? (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 5, p. 95 ff.)

Sociologists raise the question of whether it is important to know what *realness* is or whether it is more important to ask what people consider to be realness (op. cit., p. 95). We face the difference when we ask, for example, an economically rich person living in a village in Germany and an economically poor person living in a mega city in India what realness is - the answers should be worlds apart. Realness, realities, materiality, the natural environment, the fabric of meanings - every human being lives simultaneously in an abundance of realities (op. cit., p. 96). We activate knowledge about the social world of our fellow citizens the moment we meet people in our everyday life (op. cit., p. 97). But what kind of knowledge is this? It is a knowledge that helps us to orient ourselves in our daily encounters, that seems to be "there" and that is obviously missing when we are moving in an unfamiliar social and cultural context. The relevant (unconscious) knowledge is what sociologists call >common or everyday knowledge< [„Alltagswissen“] (op. cit., p. 97). That is to say, we evaluate situations, people, activities that we are confronted with on a daily and ad hoc basis on the basis of previous experiences, we typify them and transfer the characteristics of a situation that we consider typical to other and apparently similar situations of our respective existing circumstances. What we regard as obvious and existing in a social entity is, according to the insights of sociological research, de facto what we already know about social togetherness (op. cit., p. 98).

### II.3.6.2 Social and „medial realness“ (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 5, p. 98 ff.)

Sociological studies of communication and behavior, action and reaction, are intensively concerned with the role and effects of the media that people use to come to an understanding. The guiding question is how people, that is, we, interact in our daily personal encounters and what influences, beyond personal encounters, the various existing media have in informing us about events that are outside our own experience (op. cit., p. 99). The media, however, report on news that has already been filtered, selected and prepared by people whom we usually do not know. Their interests and many other hidden interests of a political, economic and religious nature influence the range of news that is considered newsworthy - or not. It is thus those who have the media at their disposal who influence us, the people in our imaginations of roles, functions, socially relevant actions, news and events (op. cit., p. 99) - and what we think we know about daily local, regional and global

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<sup>187</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; VI.3, *Action theory / Practice theory*

<sup>188</sup> See II.3.6.1, *What is "social realness"?*; II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*



events. Through the media, we are thus confronted or brought together with people and actions that we do not personally know. Is it a difference whether we gain our knowledge through our own experience or through the media, and if we receive information through the media, is it experience? In both cases, according to sociological research, the information structures our expectations as well as our perceptions (op. cit., p. 99). Sociologists therefore say that the most important thing is to know where we, the people, get our knowledge from, and whether this knowledge refers to a world, a realness, and a social entity that we have experienced ourselves in our daily encounters, or whether the mediated information comes entirely from a realness that we have never experienced outside the media, that is, in our own daily lives. So what do we humans have in common with medially transmitted realness? What is the difference between personal experience and information transmitted through the media (op. cit., p. 100)? Medially conveyed knowledge naturally changes the daily common knowledge of people, extends the information about events beyond our daily encounters (op. cit., p. 100). Information conveyed by the media prejudices our perception of realness far beyond the influence that our personal daily experiences exert on us. Information transmitted by the media consequently influences our thinking, our expectations in our daily encounters, our actions, our desires, and thus influences our daily lives (op. cit., p. 101). What we, the people, consider valuable, the meaning of things and events, is not only shaped by our daily experiences, needs, options, expectations and desires, but also to a large extent by the media that surround us and influence our attitude to the world. Social realness is thus a very diverse realness, to some extent as diverse as the people who live together in a social entity, who have a diversity of daily experiences, and who are reached through the diversity of a multitude of media and their messages. According to sociological research (op. cit., p. 101), we can no longer say: things are the way they are! They are, inter alia, as people see them, evaluate them, consider them important or not - and thus, to a certain extent, most varied. Once again the question arises how social entities can nevertheless secure their social togetherness, be bound together and function together as social units!<sup>189</sup>

*II.3.6.3 Realness, the social world and {once again} sense (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 5, p. 109 ff.)*

Realness, reality "made" by us, the people, the sociologists argue, is always a meaningful reality (op. cit., p. 109), that is, what we see, what we think about, we give a name and a meaning! Common-sense knowledge and the rules of social togetherness that result from this knowledge exist, according to the sociologists, because we, the members of social entities, know them, and they are

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<sup>189</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

valid because we live according to them (op. cit., p. 110). We live according to the rules even when we transgress them, so the sociologists, because transgressing a rule means that a rule seems to be valid! The daily encounters and practice of acting and behaving according to common sense rules, that is, according to rules that we know but do not have to explicitly memorize every day, to explain to each other every day, is comparable to the use of our mother tongue. We learn our mother tongue and are able to use it in a way that makes understanding possible, but as a rule most of us do not explicitly know the grammatical rules according to which our mother tongue is structured and functions (op. cit., p. 111 - 112). So, according to the sociologist, knowledge does not illustrate realness, it constitutes realness, our common sense creates a lifeworld (op. cit., p. 112), a living environment, and with the expansion of our stock of knowledge we expand our realness!

11.3.6.4      *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 5, p. 112 ff.)*

Everyday knowledge is usually not deeply reflected, but "unstudied" implemented knowledge. However, it is not "naturally" given. On the contrary, it is bound to the spirit of the time and the context. We are talking about knowledge that each of us acquires socially and learns through socialization. Thomas Schwietring presents the characteristics, roles and functions of everyday knowledge with the valuable reference to Edmund Husserl and his phenomenological philosophy (>phenomenology of everyday knowledge< [*Phänomenologie des Alltagswissen*]; Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 5, p. 112, 113), an approach that turns out to be very helpful for both sociological and archaeological studies. The aim of this approach is to find out how we, the people, become aware of our reality (op. cit., p. 113). An essential idea or insight is that we can only perceive our reality / our realness through experience and through our consciousness (op. cit., p. 113) (but see Gerhard Vollmer, 1975, 2023<sup>9</sup>). Following this conception, sociologists ask what we humans really know about our reality. Edmund Husserl coined the term >lifeworld< [*Lebenswelt*], which subsumes all aspects of our social realities, of our everyday knowledge in their processes of emergence and functioning, i.e. in their entire complexity. The term expresses the various kinds of and interdependencies between our knowledge, our daily routines, our readings and explanations of issues that constitute our everyday knowledge (op. cit., p. 113). The issue of lifeworld outlines the reality / realness with which we are familiar, which gives us a feeling of "normality" (op. cit., p. 114), a state of life that under "normal" circumstances we do not question, but take for granted. Our everyday knowledge, our *Lebenswelt*, consists of a texture of self-evident facts or leads to expectations (op. cit., p. 116). *Lebenswelt* comprises the knowledge of typical everyday situations in which we act and to which we react in a context-specific manner. However, the question of what is a contextually appropriate action or reaction has to be clarified with regard to the people who

are acting. We humans develop routines. Routines enable us to carry out our daily business, our daily life and our social life, routines reinforce our unreflected perception of "normality". We act on the assumption that the conditions of our life-world are "normal", and we realize that this is only an assumption at the very moment when this "normality" and our routines are challenged by disruptions (op. cit., p. 117). Everyday knowledge is thus not primarily the abstract knowledge that serves to explain the complex relationships of cause and effect (op. cit., p. 118 - 119), it is not the knowledge that is used to explain how the world works. Everyday knowledge is rather the knowledge that enables us to cope with our daily routine, our supposed "normal life". It is shared knowledge, and it is this shared knowledge, among other things, that ensures our social togetherness (see also Andreas Reckwitz, 2003 on practice theory; see also Gottfried Gabriel, 2020<sup>4</sup>, 9 - 87 on epistemology).



#### II.3.6.5 Own commentary and archaeological reference

##### *Social realness - medial referred realness - everyday knowledge and sense*

Our notions of social realness in a social entity are always to be thought in the plural.<sup>190</sup> As a member of a social entity, every human being lives in a multiplicity of social realities. We first perceive this multiplicity directly and subjectively in relation to our own function, position, status, age, gender, and origin, which determine, among other things, our own being in a social entity. Our perceptions are shaped by the diversity of everyday life, the multiple facets of social realities, by our experiences, by shared knowledge, by our habitus and routines, in short, by the respective socialization that we human beings experience in the contexts in which we grow up and live.<sup>191</sup> But these parameters do not only determine our view of our own social realness. They always shape our view of the social realities of others, our contemporaries, and they also influence our ideas about the social realities of the members of the social entities of the past(s).<sup>192</sup>

The perception of our social realness as the "normality" in which we live also includes our daily interaction with things, artifacts, our stay in buildings of various kinds and our orientation in the spatial orders that make up our places of residence, our knowledge of how to deal with the dead and the rules according to which they are buried. The things, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial orders, the burial customs, the visible cultural forms of expression of our social actions are among the constituent elements of our successful social interaction, also in their function as media

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<sup>190</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*

<sup>191</sup> See Excursus I.1, *The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*; I.7.1, *Briefly mentioned once again - the influence of our background in making socio-critical archaeology possible at all*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?* II.3.7.8, *Parameters that keep orders going: Rituals and routines*; Excursus II.7, *Rituals and routine - a remark*

<sup>192</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

through which we communicate nonverbally.<sup>193</sup> As media they present the medial realness, as medial realness they represent the multifaceted richness of the manifold social realities - in the present as well as in the past(s).<sup>194</sup>

I am reproducing an (almost) truism when I refer to it: As socio-critical archaeologists, we search for this multifaceted social realness always on the basis of the no less multifaceted medially transmitted realness. All our attempts to gain insights into the multifaceted social realness of the past(s), all our reflections on the meaningfulness and sense-giving in the lifeworlds of the past(s),<sup>195</sup> and all our efforts to understand the everyday knowledge of the social entities of the past(s) are based on our preoccupation with medial realness as an expression of social realness. In other words, and quoted here again as a reminder: The red thread of socio-critical archaeological research is our constant search for the people behind the things. We search for the social realness that is not visible to us on the basis of a media reality that is visible and tangible to us. What sociological research describes as *social realness* is presented and represented by *medial realness*, which we socio-critical archaeologists describe by the question - whose past(s) (social realness) do we see in the cultural forms of expression (medial realness) that are available to us in materialized form. Basically, the entire socio-critical archaeological research, or rather the entire overriding cognitive interest of socio-critical archaeological research, corresponds to this search for the social realness behind the medial realness. Every analysis of things, of artifacts, of architecture and spatial order, of burials, is an analysis of a medial realness as a representation of a social realness.<sup>196</sup> We are constantly asking whose past(s) the materialized cultural forms of expression present and represent. We are constantly searching for approaches, methods and ways to find answers to this question through the analysis of things, the medially conveyed social realities. We are aware that any medial realness present in an archaeological record can only reflect a part of the wide spectrum of social realities given in the past(s). Can we find answers to our questions in this situation of sources? My answer to this question is - limited yes! The factors that lead to this limited "yes" can be shown, for example, in the observation and analysis of monumental architecture. The limited "yes" becomes clear when

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<sup>193</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

<sup>194</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions? with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily social interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>195</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

<sup>196</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

we examine the question of who commissioned the construction of the buildings whose social realness in the social entities of the past(s) was represented by the construction of monumental architecture.

*Whose social realness represents the medial realness "monumental architecture" in the social entities of the past(s)?*

In a settlement, we record one or more monumental buildings and ask who needed this monumentality. We ask who were the initiators of the construction of the monumental architecture. We ask who actually carried out the construction work after the decision was made to build one or more monumental buildings. We ask whether the initiators who made the decision to build came from different social circles than those who built the buildings, or whether initiators, the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] and the builders (those who carried out the construction work [*Erbauer*]) belonged to the same social context. We ask whose social realness led to the medial realness, that is, to the monumental architecture.<sup>197</sup> Three hypotheses about the social contexts seem possible. Before I go into these hypotheses, it seems appropriate at this point to explain the following terms, which have already been mentioned several times:

*Theses and hypotheses, interpreting, postulating and stating*

I use the term *thesis* in the sense of an assertion for which numerous further considerations must be made in order to test, verify, modify, or falsify it. I use the term *hypothesis* in the sense of a probable possibility that still needs to be thought through, but which is based on considerations that are already more mature than those I used to formulate a thesis. By *interpretations* I mean my rather subjective reading of a fact, supported by further evidence, which seems plausible to me and should be intersubjectively comprehensible on the basis of the evidence given. When I *postulate* a fact, I assume that this postulate will also be plausible upon further investigation - similar to a hypothesis. To *state* a fact, then, is to make a statement in the sense of a conclusion that is based on more solid evidence than a thesis, a hypothesis, and an interpretation. My attempt to explain these terms shows at the same time that the transitions from one term or its semantic content to another are not always clearly definable.

*Hypothesis 1 - The initiators for building the monumental architecture were members of the economically and politically powerful circles*

The social reality of those who erected a monumental building {= *medially transmitted aspect of social realness*}, who carried out the construction work [*Erbauer*] with a great deal of work, organization

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<sup>197</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

and cost is likely to have been potentially unequal to the social reality of those who commissioned this building and declared it to be their property [*Eigentum*] or took possession of it (ownership) [*Besitz*]. Both groups - the builders (those who carried out the construction work [*Erbauer*]) on the one hand and the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*], owners or proprietors on the other - represent members of different social groupings with different possibilities of both shaping and medially transmitting their respective social realities, i.e. of developing different ideas as well as perceptions of social reality and normality.<sup>198</sup> The initiators of the construction of monumental architecture are considered to be the economically and politically powerful circles.

*Hypothesis 2 - The initiators for building the monumental architecture were the political rulers (rule/governance) [Herrschaft]*

The social reality of those who erected a monumental building {= *medially transmitted aspect of social realness*}, who carried out the construction work [*Erbauer*] with a great deal of work, organization and cost is likely to have been potentially unequal to the social reality of those who commissioned this building and declared it to be their property [*Eigentum*] or took possession of it (ownership) [*Besitz*]. Both groups - the builders (those who carried out the construction work [*Erbauer*]) on the one hand and the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*], owners or proprietors on the other - represent members of different social groupings with different possibilities of both shaping and medially transmitting their respective social realities, i.e. of developing different ideas as well as perceptions of social reality and normality. The initiators of the construction of monumental architecture are considered to be the political rulers.

*Hypothesis 3 - The initiators for building the monumental architecture were the members of the social entities of the past(s), the community*

I take a completely different view, almost the opposite approach, with my hypothesis 3. My argument here is as follows: It cannot be excluded that monumental buildings were desired as community buildings, planned in community work, erected as communal property [*Eigentum*] and ownership [*Besitz*] with the participation of all capable members of the social entity, and used by all members of the social entity. I.e., with the construction of a monumental building {= *medially transmitted aspect of social realness*}, with the design of the space and with the communal appropriation in the sense of property and ownership of building and space, people from the context of a jointly represented and experienced social reality have medially transmitted their social realness!<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> See Excursus II.5, *How is disparity produced and reproduced?*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

<sup>199</sup> See Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*

The archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*], i.e. the medially transmitted aspects of social realness on which these considerations are based, is the same. The respective social realness from which the actors in question would have carried out spatial planning would have been fundamentally different in the constellations mentioned.

I come back to the question of whether it becomes possible for us to find answers to our questions about the social realities out of which medial realities have been created. We can approach a first answer via a process of exclusion, if we succeed in making the following plausibly argued statement: At the time and in the socio-cultural environment in which the monumental architecture was created, there could not (yet) have been any institutionalized power, i.e. no rule / governance and thus no rulers [*Herrscher*]. If we succeed in providing plausible arguments for this assertion, we could at least rule out hypothesis 2. Using the example of Göbekli Tepe, a site in Turkey, in southeastern Anatolia, constructed in the course of the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (see inter alia Klaus Schmidt, 2007; Metin Yeşilyurt, 2014) and the monumental stone pillar buildings erected there in conjunction with considerations of the exercise of cultural hegemony, I will address this possibility.

<sup>200</sup> What remains to be done is to find solutions to hypotheses 1 and 3, i.e., to seek answers to the questions of under what general conditions and in what socio-political forms of organization the erection of monumental buildings is possible or necessary at all, and, more concretely, who were the initiators of the construction of monumental architecture? The clarification of these questions will be decisive for the answers we can give to our fundamental questions about whose past(s) we see in the material heritage and whose history we construct on this basis. Ways and approaches to the elaboration of proposals for solutions should become apparent when we examine in detail, again in individual case studies, the insights of sociological research into group formation, <sup>201</sup> the development of social inequality, <sup>202</sup> the development of power and rule/governance, <sup>203</sup> the need for representation <sup>204</sup> of locally valid orders, <sup>205</sup> and the significance of the economic order and its influence on the shaping of cultural forms of expression. <sup>206</sup>



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<sup>200</sup> See III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>201</sup> See II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community interests, groups, we*

<sup>202</sup> See Excursus II.5, *How is disparity produced and reproduced?*; II.3.8, *Equal - unequal or different? - First considerations up to II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*

<sup>203</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*

<sup>204</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*

<sup>205</sup> See II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations up to II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*

<sup>206</sup> See Part IV, *Economy*

### *11.3.7 What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? -*

#### *First considerations*

All considerations of what society is and how social coexistence can succeed at all, how we as individuals can live in our social environment, how we function as groups, the individual in the group, the group in society and in a community, are subject to one constant - the fact that all thinking and acting, the being and doing of the individual, as well as all social coexistence, regardless of how many people come into contact with each other, takes place in orders.

#### *11.3.7.1 So what is order? Own experience*

We all develop habits throughout our lives. We practice these habits more or less consciously, we change them, we discard them, and we adopt new habits. Our habits allow us to create routines and structure our daily lives. Practices and routines shape our habitus, the characteristics of which are significantly influenced by our social environment. In our daily interaction with our fellow human beings, we experience that this interaction is subject to certain rules and that these rules are connected to values and norms. In the course of our socialization, we learn the rules and how to live according to them, and in terms of appropriate behavior, we generally behave according to the expectations of our fellow human beings. But this also means that the members of a social community must be familiar with these rules in order to be able to live together "successfully". Our thoughts and actions, our perception of functions and our performance of roles are thus consciously and unconsciously aligned with these rules in our "habitual" ways of living. However, no two people in a society behave identically, and our rules, regulations, and social order are not static. We are all constantly modifying them, changing them with each individual behavior, even as we behave according to the rules, thus maintaining the principles of the order. Thus, rules are modified, adapted to changing circumstances, rules are abandoned, broken, and new rules are made. By developing these rules and regulations, we create order and establish a structure within which we operate. We, the people, create and establish the framework of our living worlds. With our daily routines and behaviors that we practice in our social life, we reproduce the order we create and at the same time we react to this self-made order. Thus, we act in and react to our self-made framework of life. All social entities at all times and in all regions are characterized by their diversity. It is the diversity of the needs and the possibilities of satisfying these needs that we manifest in a social community, it is the diversity of the differences that occur in a social entity, and it is the diversity of different expectations of the social entity that on the one hand constitutes the richness of every social interaction and on the other hand is always inherent in the potential for conflict. All these events take place in orders.



We must succeed in integrating the multitude of different customs, routines, habitus, rules, values, and norms into the establishment of order, so that social togetherness becomes possible. It is sociological research that provides an objective basis for these subjective experiences.

*II.3.7.2 Order, rules and regulations - parameters of vital importance for all human cooperation (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 2, p. 34 ff.; see as well Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 7, p. 157 ff.)*

Order, rules, and regulations are ambivalent phenomena - they both guide and constrain our actions and behavior. With order, rules, and regulations, we establish conventions, and these conventions relieve us of the pressure to find and evaluate the right behavior for each and every situation in life (op. cit., p. 37 - 38). The phenomenon of language illustrates this (op. cit., p. 37). Only grammar, i.e. the rules and regulations, ensure that words are arranged in a sequence and thus create an order that leads to a comprehensible message. Order, rules and regulations include and correspond to expectations. Knowledge of the conventions and expectations that must be shared, and the willingness to accept them, is a prerequisite for the functioning of a group, a community, and a society (op. cit., p. 38). Order, rules and regulations must therefore have a minimum dimension of intersubjective validity, and they must be intersubjectively binding, otherwise they will not function (op. cit., p. 43). However, rules and regulations, and thus order, are never universally or timelessly valid, but develop culturally and context-specifically (op. cit., p. 39ff.). Their validity is always relative, there are expectations that can be fulfilled and there is the opposite (op. cit., p. 39). At no time do they form a system to which all members of the social entity agree in all aspects. On the contrary, every order and every set of rules and regulations is subject to disagreement (op. cit., p. 39 - 40). These disagreements are due, among other things, to the constantly changing composition of social entities, which leads to and results in changing circumstances, changing needs, changing ways of satisfying these needs, and changing expectations. As social entities change, so do the order, rules and regulations, which are therefore never static (op. cit., p. 40).

Order is thus the result of the highly complex interaction of a multitude of factors. Order is never static. Without order, social coexistence is impossible. The following questions, among others, arise from these facts How does order emerge and evolve? How is it possible to create order according to ever-changing needs in ever-changing social contexts? Sociological research has also developed answers to these questions.

II.3.7.3 *How does order emerge and how does it develop (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 2, p. 43 ff.)*

The development of order, rules and regulations begins and progresses, on the one hand, through random behaviors, through activities that develop into routine. Routine behaviors and activities solidify in their sequences, are slowly transformed into rules and regulations, and accumulate in the emergence of a certain order. This order, in turn, creates expectations about the course of activities on the part of those who participate in the events. One could say that order, rules and regulations, as well as expectations, emerge from contingencies (op. cit., p. 43). On the other hand, our daily political experience shows that rules and regulations are also intentionally established. Social order is constructed and social systems of order are structured. These structures influence the arrangement of all elements in our social interaction. Order, rules and regulations are therefore part of the immaterial components that make social interaction possible. What sociological research has made clear, however, is that social structures do not function solely through isolated human activities, nor solely through the resulting order, rules and regulations. It is not the characteristics of the individual elements that make social structures functional, but rather the combination of all parameters that results in the emergent order, which we then call society (community, group) (op. cit., p. 44).



II.3.7.4 *Own commentary and archaeological reference*

*Order [Ordnung]*

Order is the basis of all social interaction in any social entity. No social entity, no interpersonal interaction can function without order. Among all the criteria that make social interaction possible, order is an indispensable, one might even say an alternativeless one. What is order is understood both subjectively - the order of some is the disorder of others<sup>207</sup> - and shared by the members of a social entity in collectively held ideas. Without the latter, the former, successful social coexistence, would not be possible. To live with one another in an orderly way, we need to know the respective order specifications of the community in which we live. We learn this through our socialization and we experience order as an orientation in life. As a rule, we human beings behave according to the prevailing order. We realize and transmit this order in our daily actions and reactions. At the same time, we all know from our daily practice - we modify the rules of the valid order, sometimes we do not follow the rules of order, we break them. When a valid order is perceived as disorder, it can lead to community-destroying disorientation. The search for order, for the orders in which

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<sup>207</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

members of social entities have lived, implicitly and explicitly constitutes a red thread through any socio-critical archaeological research. When we ask whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct, we implicitly ask whose ways of life and thus whose social, cultural, economic, and political order we can determine on the basis of the cultural forms of expression that are present in materialized form. The order we are looking for is de facto always an interplay and interlocking of numerous orders that develop in the manifold relations of the members of a social entity. As socio-critical archaeologists, we gain insights into this multiplicity of orders, which only in their interrelationship make successful social coexistence possible, through an equally diverse orientation of our approaches to the determination of orders.

The meaning of order, both for the organization of individual life and for the organization of all social interaction, has been clarified by sociological research. Our own experiences with the meaning of order, which we make in everyday life, are in accordance with the sociological cognitions. To derive the social order of the social entities of the past(s) from the order of things is our concern as socio-critical archaeologists. The realization of this concern presupposes, first of all, that we can plausibly show, on the basis of things, in what way things embody orders. With this concern, we face complex challenges in each individual case study. We ask how we can deduce the social relations, the social orders in social entities, on the basis of things alone. We ask whether and how we can make visible not only social belonging, but also the social valuation of belonging, solely through the property [*Eigentum*], the possession (ownership) [*Besitz*], or disposal of things.<sup>208</sup>

We thus begin our socio-critical archaeological research with the question of whether and how we can recognize orders in the materialized cultural forms of expression from our etic point of view, or whether, how and to what extent we can bring our view of the order of things, the etic point of view, and the view of the members of the social entities of the past(s) on their material environment, the emic point of view, closer together. Only when this preliminary work has been done can we turn to the overriding question of whose (!) orders we see in things and whose social orders they represent.

*The order of things - we see it - we investigate it and we construct orders with our socio-critical archaeological research*  
In the materially present cultural forms of expression we *see* orders (I/a, *natural space and designed space*). We *elicit* orders by analyzing the things (I/b, *analysis of the constitution of things; stocks of knowledge; craftsmanship*). In the context of our preoccupation with materialized cultural forms of expression, however, we do not only see and elicit orders. We also *construct* orders - in part by categorizing things and judging them according to criteria that are relevant and plausible to our worldview (I/c, *type formation, grouping of things*).

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<sup>208</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

*I/a) We see orders (natural space and designed space)*

From our etic point of view, we see orders, or first of all so-called arrangements [*An-Ordnung*], already at the first inspection of the natural environment in which our excavation site is located. We see arrangements in the distribution of settlements and burials in the natural area, potentially also in their relation to each other. Within the settlement, we see the arrangement of buildings, burials, paths and squares in the settlement area and their ordering in relation to each other. Arrangements can be seen in the installations in and on the buildings, in the orthostats, in the wall coverings, which often serve as relief-decorated picture carriers,<sup>209</sup> in the stoves, storage vessels, etc., which were installed in the rooms, courtyards, and open spaces of the settlement. Arrangements can be seen in the distribution of objects, artifacts in the designed space as well as in the natural space, or in their arrangement among each other.<sup>210</sup>

Arrangements, then, we see on the basis of formative interventions in these spaces. They are the arrangements made by the members of the social entities of the past(s) themselves (and where we can exclude the random constellation of things with plausible arguments).<sup>211</sup>

*I/b) We elicit orders (analysis of the nature of things; stocks of knowledge; craftsmanship)*

We elicit criteria of order from our etic point of view by analyzing artifacts, architecture, and spatial order, as well as burials. We elicit order, understood by us as rules that the members of the social entities of the past(s) have set up, established, and followed, where we can identify the stocks of knowledge and craftsmanship that were necessary for the production of things, for the making of pictorial works,<sup>212</sup> for the construction of buildings,<sup>213</sup> and for the construction of burials.<sup>214</sup> Rules, i.e. requirements for order, we elicit on the basis of the materialized, available cultural forms of expression, where, for example, the same materials were regularly used for the production of

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<sup>209</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Orthostats*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>210</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

<sup>211</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*

<sup>212</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*; see as well my commentaries on the use and impact of pictures; see as well II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community interests, groups, we*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

<sup>213</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

<sup>214</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*

the same artifacts, where the same forms appeared again and again on objects of the same kind. Finally, we elicit rules or order specifications [*Ordnungsvorgaben*] where the members of the social entities of the past(s) designed architecture in a formally homogeneous way or where they regularly emphasized singularly shaped buildings, and where we recognize that burials were laid out according to a repetitive pattern or were also singularly formally emphasized. In the creation of the materialized cultural forms of expression, we observe that the members of the social entities of the past(s), consciously or unconsciously, habitually and routinely followed rules that they themselves had created as a framework of order for their actions.

*I/c) We construct orders (type formation; grouping of things).*

The third constellation of order to be considered and observed for our socio-critical archaeological research is different: Now it is not the members of the social entities of the past(s), but we, the socio-critical archaeologists, who first create order specifications and then construct order systems for the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s) within these order specifications.

*Order specifications that we socio-critical archaeologists create - first, a review of what has already been said*

Even before we turn concretely to the cultural forms of expression in our archaeological records, we have already created order specifications in which our preoccupation with the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s) takes place. I would like to remind you once again how we construct these guidelines with which we socio-critical archaeologists create the framework conditions under which we then carry out all further steps in the search for the orders of things as well as for the social, cultural, economic, and political orders in the social entities of the past(s).<sup>215</sup> Every archaeological record is a designed and thus ordered space, an order that we socio-critical archaeologists partly construct ourselves. This means that all of our observations, analyses, and constructions of order take place under framework conditions that we socio-critical archaeologists have to some extent created before the actual excavation begins. Through our surveys and excavations, we influence to no small degree what we see, what spatial order we claim as the reality of the past(s), and what image of a social order we construct on this basis.<sup>216</sup> For our excavation

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<sup>215</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?;* I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?;* I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>216</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?;* I.7.1, *Briefly mentioned once again - the influence of our background in making socio-critical archaeology possible at all;* I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?;* I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?;*

we choose a certain region, determine there a place for our excavation and in this the areas in which we carry out our investigations. In this way we create the order in which all the following observations on the phenomenon of "order in the social entities of the past(s)" take place. This first construction of order influences all our subsequent research steps and cognitive possibilities, both our possibilities to see, to elicit, and to construct orders at all, and to develop answers to our questions, whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct on the basis of the material heritage. That our preliminary decisions about the spaces in which we will work also lead to stumbling blocks in terms of our cognitive possibilities, I have explained in detail elsewhere.<sup>217</sup> Because of the importance of the recognition of order for the realization of our cognitive interests, i.e. for the answer to our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct, I would like to briefly point out some of the aspects that can limit our cognitive possibilities because of our approach. Coincidence and intention determine the regions of the world in which we conduct our surveys and excavations, determine which distribution of settlement sites in space, as well as their arrangement in relation to each other in the space we record. The spatial order we see is thus shaped both by the needs and possibilities of satisfying these needs in the settlement behavior of the ancient settlers - as well as by the needs and possibilities of satisfying these needs in the research interests of the scientists. In addition, the natural conditions at the settlement site have a decisive influence on the preservation and decay of things at the settlement site. Our view of the arrangement of things, artifacts, and burials in space is subject to similar influences. By chance as well as due to the intentions of the settlers of that time to produce artifacts, to build architecture, to arrange spatial order and to lay out burials, to place artifacts, architecture and burials in space and to relate them to each other, and to preserve the things, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, and the burials and their order, the archaeological records were created, which we, by chance or intentionally, uncover in the given section with our excavation. Coincidence as well as our intention as archaeologists to uncover the selected section of a settlement area lead to an excerpted picture of a spatial order from a potentially larger settlement area than the one we cover with our excavation.<sup>218</sup> Had we chosen a different section of the excavation, we might have "seen" a completely different order of space in the same settlement. So what we see and what we recognize as orders of space and orders in space is always at the same time an order that we

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*I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>217</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?; I.7.3, With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?; I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>218</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies; Excursus I.3.3.2, Historiography - or - construction of history; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

construct! Thus, it is both coincidence and intention on the part of those who lived in the past(s) on the one hand, and those who are exploring the past(s) today as socio-critical archaeologists on the other, that have led to the available cultural forms of expression and thus to the sources that offer both options and limitations for our concern with exploring conceptions of order, exploring ways of life in the past(s), and constructing history.

*The next step in our construction of orders takes place when we pay attention to the things themselves, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, the burials*

We construct orders from our etic point of view when we proceed to categorize cultural forms of expression.<sup>219</sup> If we take the example of the orders we create with ceramic vessels, this step is easy to understand. We see the shapes, sizes, colors, and materials of things, here the vessels. We see if and how these vessels are decorated. We analyze the way the vessels are made, whether they are handmade or thrown on the wheel. All the parameters taken into account can either be seen directly on the vessel itself, or can be deduced from our analysis of the craft requirements for making the vessel. We group the vessels according to criteria that seem plausible to us as socio-critical archaeologists. We create typologies. We, as socio-critical archaeologists, thus create orders in the materially present cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s) on the basis of criteria that we can reconcile with our notions of order that are plausible from our etic point of view.

*From the etic point of view to the emic point of view - reflections on possibilities of approximation*

Thus, as socio-critical archaeologists, in our search for ways to gain insights into the social orders of the social entities of the past(s) from the order of things, we resort to conceptions of order that have emerged in quite different ways. We ask ourselves whether our conceptions and designations of order, which we make from our location,<sup>220</sup> from the etic point of view, are compatible with the emic point of view, that is, with the conceptions of order of the members of the social entities of the past(s). Do we see how they had arranged the material cultural forms of expression of things, how they had represented with which (!) order of medial reality whose (!) order of social realness?

<sup>221</sup> Did the members of the social entities of the past(s) possibly see or create orders in the things for which we socio-critically researching archaeologists may not have seen any signs in and on the

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<sup>219</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*

<sup>220</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; V.1, *Our locations [Standorte], enlightenment as the task of the social and cultural sciences, and the relation to Critical Theory shape our socio-critical archaeological research*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>221</sup> See II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*

things at all? <sup>222</sup> Will it be possible for us, especially in our search for order, to clarify and explain (!) whether and to what extent we can also gain insights into or approaches to the *emic point of view* of the members of the social entities of the past(s), starting from our *etic point of view* and from our understanding of order? The clarification of this question of the location (etic or emic), from which we derive the cultural forms of expression as indicators of order, is thus also decisive here and again for the clarification of our questions, whose past(s) we see, whose social order the order of things is, and whose history we can construct on the basis of these sources and on the basis of this site-specific knowledge. <sup>223</sup>

*From the etic point of view to the emic point of view - hypotheses / postulates for approximation*

I now dare to suggest that the emic point of view and our etic point of view on the arrangements we saw (*I/a, natural space and designed space*) as well as on the rule-based orders we elicited (*I/b, analysis of the constitution of things; stocks of knowledge; craftsmanship*) might well have corresponded with a view to the resulting orders. The designed environment was created by the settlers themselves (*I/a, natural space and designed space*). The order of this shaped environment, the results of their formative interventions in the natural space, which they made with the construction of settlements, was also seen by the settlers of that time. The rules for the proper execution of handicraft work as well as for the organization of the settlement area (*I/b, analysis of the condition of the things; stocks of knowledge; craftsmanship*) were also created by the members of the social entities of the past(s) themselves and must have been implicitly, if necessary also explicitly, known to the performers as criteria of order to be followed. Thus, according to my postulate, the orders that manifested themselves in the design of the cultural forms of expression must have been potentially just as obvious to the members of the social entities of the past(s) as they are to us, the present-day observers of the finds and the archaeological record. On the basis of these postulates, we could therefore "dare" to develop theses or even hypotheses about the social orders of the respective social entities of the past(s).

*The stumbling block - or: Doubts arise - the challenge concretized*

It becomes more complex when we express doubts as to whether the orders we have constructed (!), the order of things according to criteria we have defined (*I/c, type formation; grouping of things*), "actually" correspond to the views of the members of the social entities of the past(s), i.e. the point

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<sup>222</sup> See Excursus I.1, *The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*; II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*; II.3.6.1, *What is "social realism"?*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

<sup>223</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*; V.1, *Our locations [Standorte], enlightenment as the task of the social and cultural sciences, and the relation to Critical Theory shape our socio-critical archaeological research*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*



of emic view, or whether completely different views of ordering criteria existed at the time. Criteria according to which we create the order of things may not have been relevant as ordering criteria for the members of the social entities of the past(s). Where we have used the visible features of things to create order, the members of the social entities of the past(s) may have based their conceptions of order on ideal criteria that are potentially invisible to us as socio-critical archaeologists.<sup>224</sup> Vessels, for example, could have been typologized according to ideal values and arranged into groups of types that do not correspond to our typologies, groups, and thus orders of things.<sup>225</sup> So when we infer aspects of the social order of the members of the social entities of the past(s) from our order of things, we may be basing this inference on medial realities or orders that had nothing in common with those of the members of the social entities of the past(s) and that had nothing in common with their association of an order of things and their social order. Whose order of things and whose social order would we have constructed if we ordered things from our etic point of view and postulated aspects of the social order based on this order, while the approach to the emic point of view was not possible for us?<sup>226</sup> Whose past(s) do we see then? Whose view of things and of the organization of social togetherness in the social entities of the past(s) are we presenting with the construction of our history? Who is speaking here? In our attempt to clarify these questions, we are confronted with a not inconsiderable stumbling block. I pointed out at the beginning that we humans need to know the orders in which we live in order to understand each other. As socio-critical archaeologists, we are confronted with precisely this stumbling block, this challenge, again and again in every investigation. We want to know whose social orders are expressed, among other things, in the objects we have before us. In every single case study we are confronted with this concern. In every single case study we have to clarify: Who is actually speaking when we turn the order of things into the social order of the social entities of the past(s)?

#### *Looking back affects the present*

With the drafts of order that we socio-critically researching archaeologists state, postulate, and construct on the basis of the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s), our research becomes at the same time an instrument with which the conceptions of order in the societies of the present are shaped! Our archaeological work turns into such an instrument at the

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<sup>224</sup> See II.3.7.9, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / rituals / routine*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*

<sup>225</sup> See VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*

<sup>226</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.2.1, *Once again in advance - Own experiences - This time on the topic: What is society and how does social coexistence work? At the same time a first insight into the aspects that will occupy us as socio-critically researching archaeologists*; II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

moment when interested people (you, who are reading this text right now) refer to our research and adopt the ideas of order presented there, that is, our view of the past(s) and our constructions of history.<sup>227</sup> Thus, every time we present our research results, we intervene in aspects of contemporary social orders. One way we do that is where we change the respective valid orders of knowledge with our excavations and publications.<sup>228</sup> That the engagement with the past(s) thus leads not only to the construction of history, but also to the exertion of influence on contemporary orders, in this case on the orders of knowledge, and thus has a potentially politically powerful effect on contemporary social orders, should be made clear once again by this reminiscent reflection on archaeological research.<sup>229</sup>



### II.3.7.5 Order and disorder - First considerations

In all societies, order serves as a means of orientation and makes social interaction possible in the first place. In connection with the perception of order and disorder, two phenomena occur that are also relevant for the consideration of ways of life in the past(s): On the one hand, the prevailing order in which people have led a good life and which has given them orientation in life is threatened by the disruption of its order. For these people, the order becomes disordered. On the other hand, members of a social entity may not consider the prevailing order to be the order that enables them to orient themselves in everyday life and lead a good life.<sup>230</sup> Rather, these people experience the prevailing order as disorder. These members of a social entity could at the same time be those who experience the disturbance of the prevailing order, the cause of the above-mentioned disorder, as the way to the order in which the good life becomes possible for them.

The challenge that this ambivalence poses for our socio-critical archaeological research is obvious. It lies in recognizing or plausibly justifying the signs that point to one or the other perception of order from both our etic point of view and the emic point of view.

### II.3.7.6 Order - once again: Or - what is the opposite of order and what causes disorder for whom? (Schwietring, *op. cit.*, ch. 7, p. 151 ff.)

Sociology is concerned with the general principles according to which social orders emerge, not with the precondition of one or the (!) social order, which as such cannot exist (*op. cit.*, p. 152). In

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<sup>227</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to Excursus I.3.3.3, *Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

<sup>228</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life*; V.1, *Our locations [Standorte], enlightenment as the task of the social and cultural sciences, and the relation to Critical Theory shape our socio-critical archaeological research* up to V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>229</sup> See III.1.7, *The power of the cultural - the cognitions of the social and cultural sciences*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*

<sup>230</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

other words: Sociological research takes into account that societies encompass several forms of social order, depending on the composition of their groups and communities (op. cit., p. 152 ff.). Order exists, and order is needed to ensure social togetherness. At the same time, sociologists point to the need and reality that orders change and that it is necessary and possible to break them (op. cit., p. 153). Where there is order, we, the people, also have an idea of what we consider disorder. It is this very fact, perhaps more than any other, that illustrates the extent to which our views are tied to our standpoints (op. cit., p. 153). According to sociological research, order is highly situational. The order of action and behavior in a church follows different rules and is connected with different expectations than a visit to a sports arena. In times of peace, the rules and regulations of action and behavior are different than in times of war and upheaval. The idea of what order is (op. cit., p. 154), or how order can be defined, is presented by Thomas Schwietring in a very revealing characterization as follows: >Only that (!) circumstance can be orderly which has the potential to become disorderly! A circumstance, a matter which we call order, must be composed of solitary elements, and these must be disparate and diverse!< [„Geordnet kann nur sein, was das Potenzial hat, auch in Unordnung zu geraten. Es muß aus Einzelnem zusammengesetzt und die Einzelheiten müssen ungleichartig und vielgestaltig sein.“] (op. cit., p. 155). The idea of order is usually associated with harmony, coherence, and lack of conflict, which means that any change or innovation is seen as a threat! A very different approach to what order is dissolves this apparent opposition of order and chaos and yields a different characterization (op. cit., p. 156). Order, so the respective characterization, is not constantly threatened by disorder and chaos, but is constantly changing according to the needs of a social entity (op. cit., p. 156). The development of order, according to this approach, can be initiated by any event that triggers the next event. A process begins that then accumulates, an order emerges that can be both planned and unplanned, that comes about by chance.

*Excursus II.6 The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark*

A brief comment on the above approaches to what constitutes order or disorder for different members of a social entity is given below: The individual experience of both continuity and change in our lifeworlds [*Lebenswelten*] may well correspond to the sense of chaos, loss, and disorientation when fundamental values and norms cease to be valid. This is what happens when our routines are disrupted and our entire social, natural, and cultural environment is affected, either by the continuation of an order that some members of a social entity experience as structural violence, or by changes that challenge or even dissolve established securities. In this context, the question also arises as to which concepts of time we socio-critically researching archaeologists work with (for the following considerations, I was inspired by the explanations on the phenomenon of time by Willi

Oelmüller, 1979, XXIX, as well as the studies on time by John Urry, 2006, 105 - 130 and Wolfgang Knöbl, 2022). As socio-critical archaeologists, we grasp the phenomenon of time in the changing materiality of the archaeological record, the sequence of earth layers, and the things in the layers (see also Brian Morris, 2022, 62 - 63, but see also Graham Harman; Christopher Witmore, 2023). We look at the archaeological record from the perspective of our *historical-cultural time*. That is, we view the archaeological record from the perspective of our respective present, in which anything older than the present moment is already "past(s)" from our point of view. On the one hand, we ask whether the archaeological record, and here the phenomena of continuity and change, has covered the period of a *human lifetime*, i.e., to think of it as *biological time*. In other words, did an individual perceive the continuity/change that we socio-critical archaeologists see in the archaeological record during his or her lifetime? We also ask whether the archaeological record reflects a period of tradition, a period that lasted for generations, i.e., whether the generations perceived the continuity or change that we may be recording in the archaeological records as such.

<sup>231</sup> For our cognitive interest in understanding who perceived an archaeological record that we "saw" as an expression of continuity or change, eliciting and reflecting on the time systems from which we start our considerations is one of the foundations for understanding and explaining the circumstances under which who (or which events) and for which reasons ensured continuity or change in the systems of order of the social entities of the past(s). The study of time systems also becomes important when we look for clues as to who experienced which state, continuity or change, as the order that made meaningful orientation and the leading of a so-called "good life" possible - or, on the contrary, prevented it.



#### II.3.7.7 Own commentary and archaeological reference

##### *Order and disorder*

What order is, how we socio-critical archaeologists come to designate an archaeological record from our etic point of view as *the order in* the archaeological record or *the order of* the archaeological record, I have explained in previous chapters. <sup>232</sup> In the following, it will be a matter of clarifying what disorder is, what criteria we use to label an archaeological record from our etic point of view

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<sup>231</sup> See on this also the phenomenon "simultaneity of non-simultaneity" - I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies; II.1, Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research; II.3.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic; . of sociological research; II.3.1.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic; II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics; VI.2, Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology

<sup>232</sup> See II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order

as *disorder in* the archaeological record or *disorder of* the archaeological record, and whether or how it will be possible for us to approximate our etic point of view to the emic point of view.

### *Disorder*

The sociologically coined definition of disorder, in the shortest form, is that any state that humans recognize as order can become disordered. The definition and thus the recognition of order or disorder is always subjective, because the order of one can mean the disorder of another.<sup>233</sup> From our etic point of view as socio-critical research archaeologists, we identify damaged objects and destroyed settlements, i.e. disturbed archaeological records, quasi ad hoc as the visible consequences of "destroyed" order.<sup>234</sup> The destruction of things and spatial orders, however, can be perceived and evaluated in many different ways, according to the explanations above.<sup>235</sup> Destruction that is carried out as an intervention in a valid and generally accepted order and is thus seen as disorder, which can also lead to social disorientation, is one of the possible perceptions. The destruction of a given or prevailing order can be understood both as a newly established *own* order and as the restoration of a previously valid order, and can be experienced as a "liberation" from an order experienced as structural violence.<sup>236</sup> That is, those who attack a given or dominant order destroy the order of *others* and thus create a new order of their own or restore an old order. By eliminating the *order of others* and creating or restoring *one's own order*, one simultaneously establishes or restores the possibility of orientation in one's own social togetherness.<sup>237</sup> Destruction of order is also practiced as a symbolic measure to maintain order. In this case, destruction therefore constitutes a means of perpetuating order. Destruction, understood in this way, also takes place to ensure the orientation of the members of a social entity acting accordingly.<sup>238</sup> As a reminder: In the Japanese city of Ise, the Ise-Jingu shrine complex is completely demolished and rebuilt on the same site every 20 years.<sup>239</sup> Everything had to change {in the materialized cultural

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<sup>233</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.7.2, *Order, rules and regulations - parameters of vital importance for all human cooperation*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconoclasm*

<sup>234</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>235</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

<sup>236</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*; II.3.6.1, *What is "social realness"?*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; Excursus II.9, *Violatory power respectively structural violence*; Excursus II.10, *Ideology and common sense*; III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

<sup>237</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*

<sup>238</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

<sup>239</sup> See [https://religion-in-japan.univie.ac.at/an/Bauten\\_Shrine/Ise](https://religion-in-japan.univie.ac.at/an/Bauten_Shrine/Ise)

forms of expression} so that {in the social interaction} everything could remain as it was. Thus it becomes clear that order, which all members of a social entity recognize and acknowledge as order and to which they orient themselves in social interaction, is indispensable for successful social togetherness.

At the same time, however, it becomes clear that what constitutes disorder or order can be perceived very subjectively. The possible diversity of views regarding which indicators are understood by whom in a social entity as signs of disorder or order allows for potentially diametrically opposed perceptions and interpretations of one and the same archaeological record - by the members of a social entity as well as by us socio-critical research archaeologists.<sup>240</sup>

The broad spectrum that allows for the perception of "destroyed" as order as well as disorder poses a complex challenge to us socio-critical archaeologists if we want to elicit the emic point of view on cultural forms of expression solely on the basis of the objects or the state of preservation of the objects. The question of who perceived what - and why - as disorder in the social entities of the past(s) cannot, in my opinion, be answered in its entirety with this approach (Marlies Heinz, 2016, 107 ff.; 156 ff.).

If, however, we change our approach to the analysis of cultural forms of expression and look not at the state of preservation of things, but at the themes of pictorial works, then this approach opens up the possibility of gaining insights into the notions of disorder and order in the social entities of the past(s) - and this plausibly, both from our etic point of view and from the emic point of view. It opens up the possibility of finding answers not only to the question of what was understood by disorder and order in the social entities, but also by whom and why which social conditions were seen accordingly and made permanently visible by means of the pictorial works. I pursue these considerations on a pictorial work, again the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Naram-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamien, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))).<sup>241</sup>

*The picture of the stele - order and disorder - and what can be seen from the etic point of view*<sup>242</sup>

The picture of the stele shows the result of a conflict fought with weapons in the mountainous area. On the left side of the picture, seen from the viewer, are the representatives of a military

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<sup>240</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>241</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>242</sup> See III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

formation, equipped with various antiquaria (equipment, clothing), standards and weapons. Arranged in rows one behind the other, they are marching uphill, looking towards the top of the mountain. There is a person depicted differently from all the other protagonists - differently in terms of his placement in the picture, differently in terms of his integration into the presented action, differently in terms of his size, his importance, his posture, his antiquaria, and the activity he is carrying out.<sup>243</sup> (The text fragments preserved on the stele permit the identification of this person with the Akkadian king NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory\\_Stele\\_of\\_Naram-Sin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory_Stele_of_Naram-Sin).) From the viewer's point of view, on the right side of the picture, there are more actors, fighters, who can be distinguished by their different postures. They are lying on the ground (dead, injured, subdued!?), one fighter is hit by a lance / spear (and killed?), one fighter is lying under the foot of king NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, other fighters (injured, dead?) are falling downhill, others are standing at different places in the area, their arms raised, they also have the view directed to the mountain top, their weapons are broken. (A short note on the historical truth of what is shown: whether the event shown took place, whether the result of the armed conflict was as shown, whether the winners did not have to mourn any casualties and deaths, whether the defeat was as complete as figuratively claimed - we as historically and socio-critically researching archaeologists cannot give an answer to this as long as we do not have pictures and reports made and written by the "other side". The above-mentioned fragmentary text passages written at the time of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD do not help in this search either. Like the picture itself, the texts are always to be understood as propaganda, which does not have to correspond to a real reality, which is always also the representation of the ideology of those who designed the picture and the text).<sup>244</sup>

*The formal design of the picture - interpretable as a representation of order and disorder (!?)*

The formal design of the left side of the picture, the structured composition of the picture and the correspondingly designed depiction of the military is clearly different from the design on the right-hand side of the picture, on which no correspondingly structured arrangement of the actors in the picture was made. The "structured presentation of structured actions" on the left side of the

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<sup>243</sup> For more in-depth descriptions of the stele and for additional considerations and interpretations of what is shown see my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; II.3.7.15, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage; II.3.7.19, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts; II.3.7.21, Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation; II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art; II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Pierce, semiotics; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices

<sup>244</sup> See II.3.9, Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.1.1, Representation; III.1.2, Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations up to III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Charles Sanders Pierce, semiotics

picture, the interrelated and regulated togetherness, here in the military association, I interpret as the means chosen by the initiators of the stele, with which the visible was to be linked to the representation of the ruling order in the social entity in which the stele was made and exhibited.<sup>245</sup> It is the ruling order, according to my interpretation of the ideology and propaganda of the initiators, which brought victory in the armed conflict without any recognizable losses, neither injured nor dead people are to be found in these ranks. Disorder would correspond to the opposite of regulated interrelations, the unstructured reproduction of activities, the unregulated coexistence of actors, isolated action, as shown on the right side of the picture. Disorder, according to my interpretation of the concerns that the initiators pursued with this form of presentation, stands for defeat. The losers of the armed confrontation are marked as such by their depiction as pleading, as injured and as dead, as actors with broken and therefore no longer usable weapons. Disorder, according to my further interpretation, stands for chaos, while it remains "unsaid" whether disorder in the ranks of the losers was not only the result, but possibly even the cause of their defeat and should be shown as such.

*Is the etic point of view on the picture and on the events shown compatible with the emic point of view?*

All previous statements - the description and formal analysis of the pictorial design and the interpretation of the formal as an expression of order and disorder both in the events depicted and in the order or disorder in the social entities of those involved in the armed conflict - are made from my etic point of view as a socio-critical archaeologist. The question of whether an approach from the etic point of view to the emic point of view is possible in the observation and interpretation of both the formal design and the content of what is shown can be answered in the affirmative.<sup>246</sup> This affirmation can be plausibly explained with knowledge of the order of military units. In all armies, soldiers act in the functions assigned to them and take their place in the order of the army. The individual is identified in his function by insignia. The structure or order of the units becomes visible through the cooperation of all the soldiers. At the same time, the dissolution of the order becomes unmissable where this structure no longer exists.<sup>247</sup> The knowledge of what the order of a combat unit looks like and what the dissolution of the order of a combat unit looks like, I postulate, is available both to soldiers from their own experience with the course of war and the organization of military operations, as well as to the members of the social entities of the past(s).

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<sup>245</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life* up to III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>246</sup> See III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

<sup>247</sup> See II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; II.3.9.1, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft]. What is it and who executes it?*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*



By means of the picture analysis that we, as socio-critical archaeologists, carry out from our etic point of view, we can thus develop a concept of order and disorder as it was developed from the emic point of view in the social entities of the past(s). And even more: It is also possible to postulate whose ideas of order and disorder the picture on the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD reflects. With this postulate, at the same time, further indications arise as to whose past(s) we see in the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s), and whose history we construct on this basis.

*Whose ideas of order and disorder were manifested in the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD?*

The answer to the question of who had thematized the phenomena of order and disorder with the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD is (almost) a truism: the order to produce the stele probably came from the ranks of the victors - whether from the ranks of the military, from influential circles in the environment of power, from the rulers or from the so-called "center" of the population cannot be decided on the basis of the stele alone. Potentially, all of the groups mentioned are possible candidates.<sup>248</sup> Regardless of the lack of precision in determining the initiators of the stele, its creation shows: At least for some members of the social entities of the past(s) it was possible, if not necessary, according to my interpretation, to show their ideas of order and disorder and their social effects and to record them in a permanently visible way.

*However, what led to the necessity of capturing the ideas of order and disorder in the picture and making them permanently visible to the members of the social entities of the past(s)?*

Sociological research, as well as our own everyday experience, show: Order serves as a meaningful [*sinnhaft / Sinnhaftigkeit*] and sense-giving [*sinnstiftend / Sinnstiftung*] orientation in one's life.<sup>249</sup> There is no alternative to order in shaping social interaction. Successful social interaction that is accepted by the majority promotes identification with the prevailing order. A prevailing order that is accepted by the majority is used by the powerful and the rulers to legitimize the order and their function in it.<sup>250</sup> On the basis of these sociological cognitions, but also on the basis of our own everyday experience of the function and the meaning, of the importance of order for a successful social coexistence, a further postulate arises with regard to the question of why concepts of order and

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<sup>248</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture; nonverbal communication, initiators and power*

<sup>249</sup> See II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>250</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life up to III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

disorder have been pictorially recorded in the social entities of the past(s) (and not only then, but also in today's societies!) and have become unmissable.

*So why this picture on the stele of NARAMSIN of AKKAD and this presentation of order and disorder? Another interpretation*

With the depiction of the victorious army, the initiators of the picture are unmissable at a glance: The prevailing order is the victorious order, or vice versa: the victorious order is the prevailing order! And it is the prevailing order that guarantees the security of the social entity. With this message, the prevailing order was positively connoted and potentially legitimized. Identification with this order was stimulated, if not ensured - who would want to reject the protection (...) of a victorious army in the social entities of the past(s)!? At the same time, the explicit depiction of disorder has the power of a warning - a warning to those who oppose the prevailing order. Potential resisters are shown what they have to expect. In addition to the first general question of why showing what is order and what is disorder became important for a social entity and for the influence of the powerful and ruling on social coexistence, there is the question of the political contexts that made the making of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD respectively this permanent visualization possible or necessary. Two scenarios are possible: The picture was created in a situation of political strength, in which the initiators of the stele wanted to show the power and/or rule of their circles by depicting the victory. Or: The picture was created in a time of political weakness, in which a picture that thematized the strength of the powerful and ruling was intended to make this weakness invisible. Contexts matter! Another challenge that we, as socio-critical archaeologists, have to face in the analysis of individual cases is the search for the constellations that may have triggered the commissioning of the respective pictorial works.

*A look back at the cognition: The (!) order does not exist. The order of some can potentially turn out to be a disorder for the others*

The depiction of the events, as they are presented here, primarily follows the perspective and intentions that, according to my interpretation, the initiators (the winners) pursued with the depicted - the presentation of their self-image as winners as well as the exercise of cultural hegemony (and this to this day with success!). The insights of sociological research, but also our own everyday experiences, now make us aware of the ambivalences that arise when we try to recognize what is experienced as order or disorder by different members of a social structure, and that a prevailing order can be experienced both as an order that creates meaning and as structural

violence that destroys meaning.<sup>251</sup> With our knowledge of these ambivalences, we could also look at the picture of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD in a completely different way, namely from the point of view of the losers on what is shown. According to this other reading, the focus and the desired connotations with the shown would be: The prevailing order embodied by the winners had been experienced by the losers of the armed conflict as structural violence and thus as a disorder that had prevented the successful good life in their ranks. In this case, the "worthwhile reason" for the military conflict would have been the fight against this disorder, even if it was accompanied by high losses and ultimately ended in defeat. From the point of view of the losers, the defeat would have confirmed the background of the conflict: The order of some prevented the good life of others! So far only a possible view, this thesis would have to be pursued in a single case study as well, and we would have to check whether we find indications on the basis of which we can plausibly justify this view of events.

*Finally, three remarks*

So far, we socio-critical archaeologists do not have an answer to the question for whom a destruction in the archaeological record (!) or destroyed artifacts (!) is an expression of order, an expression of a re-established order through the elimination of disturbing elements, or of a newly created order, or for whom these destructions were an expression of disorder. We do not yet have an answer to the question for whom leaving and abandoning a settlement was an expression of order or an expression of disorder.<sup>252</sup> Whose order had become disorder when the inhabitants of a settlement had abandoned it as such, or whose disorder had become order when the inhabitants of a settlement had left that place!?

What we can say, however, is this: Picture analysis has already proven to be a constructive approach to gaining clues as to whose past(s) we see in the material heritage and whose history we construct on this basis. Pictorial analysis makes it possible to gain insights into the ideas of what was understood by order or disorder in the social entities of the past(s), from our etic point of view as well as from the emic point of view.



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<sup>251</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*; Excursus II.9, *Violatory power respectively structural violence*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts / the lie*

<sup>252</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*

II.3.7.8 *Parameters that keep orders going: Rituals and routines (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 7, p. 158 ff.)*

A ritual, according to the basic sociological definition for such activities in our contemporary lifeworlds, constitutes a cultural enactment (op. cit., p. 158), for example the enactment of greeting rituals among teenagers (op. cit., p. 159). Unlike in traditional societies, such everyday rituals do not hint at spiritual worlds behind the actions or at transcendent meanings. And unlike in traditional societies, sociologists do not see the respective ritual actions as enactments shaped and performed by institutions, but as part of private ritualized actions. Everyday rituals of this kind are performed to express an attitude, a belonging, a distinction. They aim to provide orientation, to create order in action. As such, a corresponding everyday ritual and routine also merge (see also op. cit., p. 159).

*Excursus II.7 Rituals and routine - a remark*

Slightly deviating from Thomas Schwietring's explanation (op. cit., p. 158f.), I differentiate more strongly between rituals and routines, being aware that any ritual can become a routine and that a routine can be transformed into a ritual. However, I see rituals, both in our everyday events and in institutionalized forms or when performed by institutionalized actors, as standardized, regulated and normatively effective actions that are consciously performed. Rituals, so my thesis here, function as instruments of sociopolitical relevance and are more than routines performed to consolidate the coherence of a social entity.



II.3.7.9 *Own commentary and archaeological reference*

*Rituals and routines - parameters that keep orders going*

When we, as socio-critical archaeologists, deal with the phenomenon of ritual in the above mentioned sense as well as with routines, we are dealing with dynamic processes that take place in the encounter of two people, in groups, communities, and societies, that is, regardless of the social formation, in potentially all situations in which we humans communicate with each other. We are dealing with actions that are performed in a standardized and normatively regulated manner, that have the goal of providing orientation, and that achieve this goal by creating order through the standardization of the course of action. In ritual, we are dealing with actions that can remain invisible beyond the actual action itself. That is, we perform rituals without needing things and artifacts. At the same time, the exact opposite is true. Rituals are also performed with things and artifacts, and even more, artifacts are explicitly made for their use in ritual. Potentially, anything, any artifact can be used as a part and element of a ritual. One thing is already clear at this point: in socio-critical archaeological research, insights into the course of action, the dynamic process of a

ritual remain closed to us. However, the analysis of things and their embedding in their contexts offers us the possibility to provide well-founded arguments that rituals took place in the social entities of the past(s). The methodological challenge of showing that (!) rituals took place can be elicited from the use of the things and artifacts themselves. We can meet this challenge by turning once again to burials,<sup>253</sup> the type of archaeological record that we can practically always associate with the practice of rituals, according to our own life experience as well as to the empirical cognitions of the social and cultural sciences. The postulate that burials were ritualized in all social entities at all times can be justified by the borderline situation that death creates for the survivors in all societies (Philippe Ariès, 1995; Pamela Stewart; Andrew Strathern, 2021).<sup>254</sup> Death (like birth) is one of the most basic liminal situations experienced by all human beings. Both lead to a change in the composition of social togetherness, both interfere with the usual order, both cause unrest in the groups affected. For both events, ethnological, anthropological and sociological studies have shown that in more or less all known societies, these are the situations in which rituals are performed, and in which rituals are the helpful instrument that we humans use to overcome the attack on the stability of social togetherness. Here we have the classic situation in which the order of social togetherness has become disorder for the relatives of the deceased. Here we have the classic situation in which the normatively regulated ritual, here the funeral ritual, provides orientation and paves the way out of disorder into a new order. In the analysis of the grave goods that we find in the burials, as well as in the analysis of the burial customs themselves, lies the possibility of recognizing objects and artifacts that were used in the ritual. It is also possible to pursue the question of whether there were objects and artifacts that were produced exclusively for burials, and to add to this question the thesis, which at first glance seems quite plausible, that they were also produced exclusively for use in rituals. This thesis of exclusivity results first of all from the archaeological record, in which we can show that objects and artifacts were deposited in the burials that we cannot find in any other context of the associated settlement. However, there is a stumbling block in the way of verifying the thesis that the members of the social entities of the past(s) would not have used the said objects and artifacts in any other context: We cannot determine, i.e. exclude, actions with and on things before they were added to the burials, and actions with and on things in other contexts - e.g. in settlement areas that we have not yet explored with our excavations. This problem remains inherent in the thesis as a weakness that cannot be remedied.

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<sup>253</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*

<sup>254</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries / burials*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

Another phenomenon that can possibly be attributed to ritual acts should also be mentioned. "Extraordinary" archaeological records [*archäologischer Befund*], i.e. the localization of objects and artefacts which, according to their so-called primary function could not have had this primary function in the respective context of their discovery, may also be regarded as the result of ritual actions (for example, the construction of pits at several corners of a house, in which vessels were placed, see Marlies Heinz, 2016, 225 - 226; today - utensils of any kind, which are placed in a capsule at the request of a commissioner during the laying of the foundation stone under a house, but which, according to the primary functions of a house, do not belong functionally - structurally to the actual construction of the house).

I interpret the "conspicuous" of the archaeological record, as well as the burials and the grave goods found in them, as the materialized expression of the ideational aspects behind the action, of the goals with which people of that time (and often also we people today) perform rituals, and which lie in making social togetherness meaningful and our human actions a sense-giving orientation in social togetherness, in transmitting the valid order and thus stabilizing it.



*II.3.7.10 Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 7, p. 159 ff.)*

The emergence and functioning of order is also shaped by values and norms (op. cit., p. 159). However, these can be shared by small groups as well as by larger social entities within a society. Values illustrate what people want (op. cit., p. 159 - 160) and what we consider valuable in each specific social constellation, while norms, which are just as diverse in their content and impact as values, provide us with more precise permissions for our actions (op. cit., p. 160). Values and norms, like rituals and routines, serve as a means of orientation in life. At the same time, however, they can stir up order and lead to conflict when they clash within groups, communities, and societies.<sup>255</sup> Why and how do we, the people, accept or reject the respective dominant values and norms in given orders (op. cit., p. 161f.)? We, the people, according to the sociological insights, go along with the values and norms if they allow us or give us the means to achieve our goals and to cover our needs within the respective social environment. When conditions and/or our position in a social entity prevent us from doing so, we may try to find other ways to realize our needs and intentions. We may become creative and invent new values and norms within the given framework of law and order. However, when the realization of desires and needs in a social entity becomes futile, people often only superficially follow the expected behavior or even relapse into apathy. We

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<sup>255</sup> See II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*

may also actively oppose the rules and regulations, the ruling order and the dominant values and norms, step outside the valid framework, act against the dominant values and norms, rebel against the entire social order and overthrow it (op. cit., p. 162 ff.). We are all familiar with such scenarios from our daily experience - namely, that values and norms are only partially valid for specific groups. However, where different groups live together, generally valid values and norms are needed. Why is this the case, and how does the generalization of values and norms become possible? Sociological insights into the development of large and complex social entities suggest that the social coherence of such social complexities requires, among other things, values and norms that are accepted by and valid for more than one group within the society. Universal values and norms are needed to make a complex social entity work (op. cit., p. 162), to harmonize potentially antagonistic perceptions of what rules and regulations should underlie our social encounters. The development of such universal values and norms, according to sociological research, requires the influence of institutions (op. cit., p. 165). Sociological research defines an institution as a permanent, fixed pattern of social relations and human actions that are considered legitimate or socially enforced, and that are realized by us, the people, through our daily activities and routines (Schwietring, op. cit., p. 165). But who or what represents these institutions? It is, in very general terms, the >conceptual structure, the constructed reality that consists of knowledge, beliefs, and customs<. [„gedankliche Struktur, die konstruierte Wirklichkeit aus Wissen, Überzeugungen und Gewohnheiten“] (op. cit., p. 165). Such institutions provide opportunities for orientation and incentives for goals and aspirations. One such institution that was and is known and influential in most societies is religion! Religions provide orientation (and also arouse opposition) for a wide variety of individuals, heterogeneous groups, and versatile communities or societies. Values and norms are thus an essential part of any order, influencing how we think and act, and whose characteristics we in turn shape through our actions in social interaction. Among other things, through the functions we assume in a social entity and through the roles we "play," we perceive ourselves in a function according to our own behavioral expectations as well as according to the expectations of others for the performance of roles, and we stabilize the valid orders again when the expectations are fulfilled.

#### II.3.7.11 *To think differently, to act differently - to not participate - First considerations*

In the reflections on order, I have already referred to the subjective way in which a state of affairs or a condition in social interaction can be perceived as order or disorder, depending on who perceives the situation in terms of whose needs and options in life. This subjectivity in viewing

situations, facts, and behaviors brings me back to the sociological question of how and why one can think and act "differently" from others.

*11.3.7.12 To think and to act differently (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 12, p. 313 ff.)*

People have different ideas about appropriate behavior in different circumstances. While the majority of members of a social entity may have standard behavior in mind when thinking about appropriate manners, others may consider their behavior to be appropriate if it does not conform to people's regular expectations. Sociological research distinguishes between deviant and delinquent behavior and social protest (op. cit., p. 314) when analyzing this type of deviation from expected behavior. Whether an action is considered appropriate or inappropriate depends on what we expect as behavior in a given situation, on our values, social norms, and rules that regulate our social interaction (op. cit., p. 315). Thus, the same behavior can be considered appropriate or inappropriate depending on the context of the action and the people who judge its appropriateness! The questions that arise when dealing with appropriate or inappropriate behavior are why we behave differently from what the majority of people would expect and consider appropriate behavior (op. cit., p. 316). Why do others consider our behavior to be correct or not, i.e., what are the parameters that define correct behavior, and who are the ones who set the agenda for appropriate or deviant behavior? How do parameters of correct and deviant behavior emerge, and why these and not others? Values and norms vary from society to society throughout history, as do expectations of what is or was proper behavior (op. cit., p. 316). As mentioned above, sociologists distinguish between deviant and delinquent behavior (op. cit., p. 317). Actions and behaviors in social entities may be deviant, for example, may violate the morals of people, but do not violate the law. Social sanctions may follow such behavior, but not criminal prosecution. Other deviant activities, such as delinquent behavior, violate the law and are therefore punished by conviction (op. cit., p. 317). However, to consider one or the other behavior as deviant or delinquent is again very subjective. Even if deviant or delinquent behavior is against the law, e.g., stealing, many people will not consider the act of stealing a piece of bread in times of abject poverty to be an act that should be prosecuted (op. cit., p. 318). Deviant behavior as described so far, namely as a dysfunction, has a somewhat negative connotation. However, deviant behavior can also be the first step to innovation, to social change from which the entire social entity can benefit (op. cit., p. 312). Deviant behavior can be a solution to social problems, an expression of changed moral values (op. cit., p. 321). Deviant behavior is thus not (necessarily) a sign of an absence of socialization, but the result of a different socialization (op. cit., p. 325), a "normal" component of social togetherness, since no society is based solely on harmony and conformity. On the contrary, conflict, rivalry, and quarrel are regular elements of every social entity (op. cit., p. 333).



Excursus II.8 Antagonism and agonism - Chantal Mouffe

A social order is never pursued without conflict. Chantal Mouffe's sophisticated and nuanced reflections on the antagonistic and agonistic elements in our interpersonal relations have highlighted this relationship (2013; 2014; 2018, 101 - 105).<sup>256</sup> Every social order is always an expression of a hegemonic practice.<sup>257</sup> The formation of social order is an interest-driven construction. (op. cit., p. 101 - 105). That means at the same time that the construction and formation of every social order always takes place on the exclusion of alternative orders. The basic question on which basis every social togetherness is based has been stated by Chantal Mouffe in her 2018 study as follows. In every social entity there are both antagonistic and agonistic interpersonal relations. Antagonisms, according to Chantal Mouffe, are to be understood as situations of struggle between enemies (op. cit., p. 104). In agonistic relationships, on the other hand, opponents face each other who hold different world views and do not see each other as enemies, but at most as opponents in spirit (ibid.). One will never resolve the contradictions that belong to every human coexistence. The goal of social togetherness is rather to make togetherness possible in spite of these contradictions.



II.3.7.13 Own commentary and archaeological reference

*Norms, values and deviant behavior*

Norms and values are elements of the social, cultural, economic, and political order in any social entity. Norms (see above) give us more precise allowances for our actions, values illustrate what people want and what we consider valuable in each specific social constellation. Behavior that conforms to norms and values supports and stabilizes the locally valid or prevailing order.<sup>258</sup> Accordingly, deviant or criminal, i.e. punishable, behavior and antagonistic or agonistic actors would have a disruptive effect on the local order, potentially destabilizing or even destroying it (which can be perceived as positive-creative or negative-destructive, depending on the point of view of those affected). In my reflections on the phenomena of order and disorder,<sup>259</sup> I have made clear that it can be very subjective what members of a social entity understand by order or disorder. The ambivalence - the order of some can be the disorder of others and vice versa - also applies to the perception of norms and values, of behavior conforming to norms and values, respectively of

<sup>256</sup> See <https://www.theorieblog.de/index.php/2014/12/antagonistischer-agonismus-anmerkungen-zu-chantal-mouffes-buch-agonistik/comment-page-1/> {since 2023 no longer accessible}

<sup>257</sup> See II.3.9, Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations; III.1.7.1, The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony

<sup>258</sup> See II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change

<sup>259</sup> See II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order; II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change

deviant behavior. For our socio-critical archaeological research it is therefore important to find out whether and how we can take from the materialized cultural forms of expression available at first indications of what was then observed in the social entities of the past(s) as the valid norms and what was considered as values. This search is immediately followed by two other questions. On the one hand, will we succeed in showing whose norms and values we recognize on the basis of things? And on the other hand, will we be able to show, on the basis of things as static expressions of dynamic action, who in the social entities behaved in conformity with norms and values or deviated from them, and why in each case? If we succeed in finding out whose norms and values were visibly expressed in the material legacies, and who in the social entities of the past(s) behaved in conformity with or deviated from the norms and values, we would gain further clues to answer our overarching question of whose past(s) we see in the cultural forms of expression, and whose history we construct on the basis of these insights. At the same time, the use of the subjunctive already suggests this: Stumbling blocks are to be expected!

*Norms and norm-compliant behavior - recognizable by things*

What was considered normative in the social entities of the past(s) can be plausibly justified by the craft requirements that were necessary for the production of things. In order to make artifacts, to design architecture and spatial order, and to create burials, knowledge of craftsmanship and craftsmen must be available, rules must be followed, and norms must be observed. A truism!<sup>260</sup>

*Behavior that conforms to norms - ... and who behaved - and why according to the norms*

Another truism that I would like to express is the statement to the actors who behaved according to the norms. They are the ones who did the manual work. And the reasons I give to answer the question of why they behaved in accordance with the norms can certainly be called a truism. They behaved in this way because the demands of the craft and, according to my thesis, the adherence to the customs and traditions prevailing here, made this behavior necessary. Although the insights gained can be described as truisms, they give us a first answer to the question of whose past(s) we

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<sup>260</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life up to I.8.1.2, Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic / society versus community interests, groups, we*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations up to II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.5, *Order and disorder - First considerations*; II.3.7.6, *Order - once again: Or - what is the opposite of order and what causes disorder for whom?*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*

see in the material heritage - it was the craftsmen who contributed decisively to successful social coexistence through the production of things and here through the observance of normative behavior.

*Values - making them visible with things, "asserting" value-compliant behavior with things*

The value that people and things have for us, the esteem that we have for people and things, we can make visible for a limited time, limited to the direct encounters between us as contemporaries, through our speaking and acting, visible for the moment of acting also through our handling of things and also through our behavior in space (*for example, by behaving differently in a church than in a soccer stadium*). The value we place on things can also be very individual. We know this from our own experience with everyday objects: We humans value things that we use every day and that we value as functionally helpful in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. We value everyday things for idealistic and emotional reasons, without this value being based on external characteristics of the things, i.e. on formal peculiarities, and without it being recognizable or explainable by them. This form of appreciation is extraordinarily (!) relevant for social togetherness and for the success of social togetherness and, accordingly, must also be postulated for the social entities of the past(s). For us socio-critical archaeologists, this appreciation of formally inconspicuous cultural forms of expression is hardly comprehensible and therefore potentially represents another stumbling block in our search for the values of the time. However, a possible first step in gaining insight into this phenomenon might be to address the question of who - and why - then (as now) repaired things or continued to use defective things in secondary use.

At the same time, however, we also make our appreciation of things permanently visible, precisely through the design of things.<sup>261</sup> According to my thesis, we make our appreciation of things visible where we make an exceptional effort to produce them, to produce artifacts, to construct architecture, to design spatial order, and also to construct burials, to make them stand out as "extraordinary" from the mass of cultural forms of expression. "Extraordinary" was, for example, the construction effort that went into building the pyramids in Egypt.<sup>262</sup> "Extraordinary", according to the above thesis, was the esteem given to the people buried in the pyramids (as we know from contemporary texts) and made highly visible through architecture. The socio-cultural competence of the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] to make their own norms and values visible and

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<sup>261</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions? with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily social interactions? - An account of my experiences -*

<sup>262</sup> See [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramide\\_\(Bauwerk\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramide_(Bauwerk)); II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art / burial expense*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

thus to present their own behavior as conforming to norms and values had become unmistakable. Last but not least, the economic power of those who had the buildings erected (commissioner [*Auftraggeber*]) became visible. In order to clarify whose norms and, above all, whose values were made visible by these monuments, it is necessary to clarify in whose name the pyramids were built. As commissioners, potentially all members of a social entity come into question,<sup>263</sup> provided (and this is certainly also a truism, which I would like to mention anyway) that they had the economic power as well as the socio-cultural and political competence to initiate such a construction.<sup>264</sup> In order to clarify whether and how we, as socio-critical archaeologists, can determine who commissioned the architecture on the basis of the architecture alone, individual case studies are necessary in which we take up this challenge. As mentioned before: In the case of the Egyptian pyramids, texts inform us that the building orders were given exclusively by and for members of the politically powerful and ruling circles. These social groups were thus able to make their norms and values - and, implicitly, their norm- and value-conforming behavior - unmistakable through the special attention they paid to the buried and the design of the graves, and to present themselves as those who, through their norm- and value-conforming behavior, ensured the successful social coexistence of the living with the deceased.

Through the analysis of things, concretely through the analysis of the handling of things, it is thus plausibly justified and potentially possible to postulate what the applicable norms and values were or what should be regarded as such, to state behavior that conforms to norms (handicraft), to postulate actions that conform to values (monumental architecture), and to give indications of the circles from which the respective actors came and to postulate why they behaved accordingly in each case. These cognitions, which at first seem certain, are at the same time limited when we think about what "destruction" means, i.e. the state of preservation of cultural forms of expression and settlements that characterizes every archaeological record!

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<sup>263</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>264</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community, interests, groups, we*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.9, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / rituals / routine*; IV.1, *Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other?*; IV.2, *Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner: The role of the socio-economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society*; IV.3, *Rabel Jaeggi - Economy as a social practice*

*Destruction of cultural forms of expression - the result of acting contrary to norms and values or acting to protect norms and values?*

Every archaeological record presents destruction. A settlement has been abandoned, buildings have been given up, the spatial order has been destroyed, artifacts have been broken, graves have not been maintained, or the dead have not been cared for. So what does the abandonment of a settlement mean, including the extent of the destruction of cultural forms of expression, with regard to the question of whether the members of the social entities of the past(s) who left the settlement and abandoned their property or possession acted in conformity with norms and values or in violation of norms and values? <sup>265</sup> Had the settlers, by abandoning the settlement, violated and abandoned the prevailing norms and values? <sup>266</sup> Or, on the contrary, had they abandoned the settlement because the norms and values of the members of that social entity demanded the abandonment of the settlement - and this possibly due to the fact that the prevailing norms and values had been disregarded in the settlement? Did the abandonment of the settlement serve to preserve norms and values? Was the abandonment of a settlement therefore not the result of an action directed against norms and values, but a measure to secure the local order? <sup>267</sup> The clarification of this question, and even more so the clarification of this stumbling block, is to be approached again in an individual case study, with a focus on ritual research, which deals with corresponding questions about the aims and purposes of the destruction of things. <sup>268</sup>

*A heterogeneous source situation and multifaceted insights into the world of norms and values - a first conclusion*

We socio-critical archaeologists thus gain diverse insights into the significance of norms and values for the regulation of social coexistence and into the richness of facets in which the handling of norms and values manifests itself through the variety of sources available to us for our research, the variety of things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, and burials. Indications of how we as socio-critical archaeologists determine what was understood by norms and values, or whose ideas

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<sup>265</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconoclasm*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>266</sup> See II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

<sup>267</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; see for example the demolition and reconstruction of the temple complex in the Japanese city of Ise, here II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

<sup>268</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*, see as well the demolition and reconstruction of the temple complex in the Japanese city of Ise, here II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*;

of what should be perceived as valid norms and values, who behaved according to norms and values, and why, can be plausibly justified and comprehensibly demonstrated for a number of constellations, in this case for the craft sector (although it should be noted that these statements may be truisms). Also, clues about what was valued and how we elicit this valuation can be obtained, plausibly justified, by analyzing and interpreting things, here carried out on the example of monumental architecture. According to my interpretation, the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] of the pyramids demonstrated that their appreciation of the prevailing norms and values and their visible implementation ensured successful social coexistence, especially in times of disorder and instability that death brings to a social entity. Moreover, when we look at the state of preservation of things or abandoned settlements, it becomes clear that one and the same archaeological record can be both an expression of normative behavior and an expression of the exact opposite. Our insights into the richness of facets in which the handling of norms and values becomes apparent, and the spectrum of possible insights into social relations in the social entities of the past(s), are expanded once again when we turn to the analysis of pictorial works. In addition to the possibilities of recognizing what were considered norms and values to be followed by whom in the social entities, and who behaved in accordance with norms and values - and why - we also potentially gain clues from the analysis of the pictorial works that people simply did not behave in accordance with the valid norms and values - and why not! This increase in knowledge that the analysis of pictorial works offers us is, however, at the same time hindered by a number of stumbling blocks. In particular, where a picture shows people in contexts of action, it is necessary to ask whether what is depicted has actually happened, whether what is depicted represents a historically "true" fact, and even more: whether it really (?) happened in the way (!) depicted. These questions, whether the initiators of a picture have captured the "truth", have presented pure fiction, or could have "lied", are closely related to a methodological and a further content-related question: Can we find an answer to this question from our etic point of view and only on the basis of the analysis of the picture - and depending on whether an answer becomes possible or not - how relevant does one or the other option become for the clarification of our questions about the valid norms and values of the time?

*Expanding the heterogeneous source situation - and gaining a broader, multi-faceted insight into the world of norms and values*

The analysis of pictorial works offers us the possibility of expanding our knowledge beyond what has been said and recognized so far. We gain additional, possibly different insights into what was understood by norms and values in the social entities of the past(s). We learn not only what the recipients of pictorial works should understand by norms and values based on their examination

of pictorial themes, but also what one understands or should understand by behavior that conforms to norms and values and also by behavior that violates norms and values. We ask whether we can find indications in the pictorial works as to whether and to what extent the recipients at the time, as well as we today, see in what is presented the "truth," a purely fictional narrative, or a "lie. Insights into the phenomena addressed will be possible for us, potentially and despite the stumbling blocks mentioned, in a further analysis and interpretation of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamien, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))).<sup>269</sup>

In order to find out what was considered to be valid norms and values in a social entity of the past(s) and by whom, we look for the aspects of social interaction that, according to the initiators' ideas, should become recognizable as norms and values for the recipients of the stele with the picture of the stele. At the same time, this search raises the question of what signs we use to postulate what was presented and represented as norms and values from our etic point of view. We ask what behavior the initiators of the stele presented as conforming to or deviating from norms and values, who were the actors who, according to the initiators' ideas, behaved conforming to or deviating from norms and values. We also have to explain here, on the basis of the signs we postulate from our etic point of view, which behavior the initiators for the stele had presented as conforming or deviating from norms and values. We ask for the reasons why actors should behave according to norms and values, but also why actors should behave contrary to norms and values, or why the initiators of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD considered it necessary to represent both norm- and value-consistent behavior as well as behavior contrary to norms and values. In my interpretations I give first hypothetical answers to these questions. In order to be able to name whose ideas of norms and values or of conforming and non-conforming behavior we have in mind, we look for the initiators of the stele. At the same time, we ask about the circumstances under which the stele could or had to be created, and we also want to clarify the above-mentioned stumbling blocks, i.e. whether the events depicted in the picture corresponded to a historical "truth", whether they were fiction, or whether the recipients at the time, as well as we today, were deceived by a "lie".

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<sup>269</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*; see also II.1, *Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research - and there my explanation on the repetition of statements in the sections "Own commentary and archaeological reference", which also concerns repetitions of statements on the stele of NARAMSIN*

In answering these questions, we are also answering the question of whose view of the self and the world we are looking at with a pictorial presentation of events and contexts of action, whose past(s) a pictorial presentation represents or should reflect in the sense of the initiator of a picture, and whose history we are writing when we focus primarily on the analysis and interpretation of a pictorial presentation.

*The stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD - again a brief description of the picture* <sup>270</sup>

Both the subject matter - conflict, struggle, winners and losers, the identification of the actors as winners and losers, as well as the spatial localization of the events - winners and losers face each other in a mountainous landscape - are clearly recognizable from our etic point of view and could also have been seen accordingly from an emic point of view. <sup>271</sup> This also applies to the recognition of the main figure in the action, as such, marked by his posture, his equipment with antiquaria and his position in the action, as well as clearly formally marked as the main figure in the picture by the placement and scale of meaning [*Bedeutungsmaßstab*], his body size. In addition to this main figure, who is to be thought of as such in the events depicted as well as formally indicated by the composition of the picture, there are actors, military men, whose activities are obviously organized in an orderly fashion respectively depicted as thoroughly organized groups. The order of this formation is based on the standardized rules according to which military units are structured and according to which the military acts: <sup>272</sup> Each individual, acting according to his function, ensures the orderly coexistence and thus the functioning of the whole, here first of all of the army. As explained elsewhere: "In all armies the soldiers act in the functions assigned to them and through these functions take their place in the order of the army". <sup>273</sup>

At the same time, the order in the ranks of the opponents, who are unmistakably depicted as such and at the same time presented as the losers of the battle, is clearly in the process of disintegrating. Actors without leaders are shown, actors who are undifferentiated in their antiquaria and at the same time homogeneous in their defeat. Their weapons are broken, the posture of the losers corresponds to the gesture of supplication, the naked bodies refer to the death of the actors. An

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<sup>270</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>271</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological research / order and disorder / change*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

<sup>272</sup> See II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations up to II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological research / order and disorder / change*

<sup>273</sup> See II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological research / order and disorder / change*



inscription originally placed on the stele, preserved in fragments but still legible, reads > Naram-Sin the Mighty.... Sidur and Sutuni, princes of the Lulubi, gathered and waged war against me.< [*„Naram-Sin der Mächtige... Sidur und Sutuni, Fürsten der Lulubi, versammelten sich und führten Krieg gegen mich.“*] (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamia, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))).

*Presentation and representation - one of the possible interpretations ... and a preliminary remark*

As I have already stated several times in a similar way, I would like to emphasize it here once again: I understand the approaches I have mentioned as first steps in the search for solutions to the challenges at hand, as a selection from the possibilities that we socio-critical archaeologists can access in order to find initial indications, based on our hypotheses, of how we can approach answers to the questions we are looking for. The attempt to find concrete answers then begins in the respective detailed studies.

*Which aspects of social coexistence should be made recognizable as norms and values with the picture of the stele, respectively which signs do I interpret from my etic point of view as presentation and representation of these norms and values?*

According to my thesis, the initiators of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, i.e. those who determined the theme of the picture as well as its formal execution, realized which aspects of social togetherness should be propagated as valid norms and values in two ways: they presented their ideas through formal criteria as well as through the nonverbal message of the picture's content, the connotation.

Formally, the initiators of the stele presented their ideas of what the recipients should recognize as norms and values, on the one hand with the presentation of the person who was taller than all the others, standing upright on the mountaintop, thus localized in the event, as in the picture, at the highest point, and by both factors, size and location, towering over all the other actors in the event. The presentation of the main protagonist, the demonstration of functional differentiation and, implicitly, of social differentiation, represented, according to my thesis, the normative order of social togetherness, the norms and values that were valid locally, thus as they should be seen according to the view of the initiators.

*Behavior that conformed to the norms and values - presented from the perspective of the initiator, interpreted from the etic point of view*

The initiators also conveyed their idea of what the recipients should understand by normative and value-consistent behavior, both formally and in terms of content.<sup>274</sup> On the one hand, they did this again with the formal reproduction of the main protagonist, now on the basis of his posture and the presentation of his behavior towards the *others*. This presentation, so my thesis continues, was intended to shape the recipients' expectations of normative behavior on the part of those who held corresponding positions. On the other hand, the initiators of the stele used the presentation of the victorious army to convey how recipients should view norm- and value-conforming behavior and to show who, in the initiators' view, had behaved in conformity with or contrary to norms and values during the armed conflict. With this presentation and the representation of what is not shown but meant, they suggested to the viewers of the stele at the same time a causal and positively connoted connection between norm-conforming behavior in social interaction and the victorious outcome of the armed conflict. The subliminal suggestion that there was a causal relationship between order, normative behavior, and military victory was intended to anchor in the viewer's consciousness the order shown and the norms and values presented as essential and decisive for successful social coexistence.<sup>275</sup> The reason implicit in the depiction of the victorious army for why one should behave in accordance with norms and values was the connotation intended by the depiction: behavior that conforms to norms and values ensures order, order in armed conflict leads to victory, orderly coexistence and behavior that conforms to norms and values guarantee the protection and security of one's own social entity. The prevailing order is worth appreciating. Representatives of these positively connoted norms and values were not only the victorious actors depicted in the picture. Among the representatives of the successful, which is another implicit message of the stele that can be plausibly postulated here, were also the initiators of the stele itself.

*People also behave contrary to norms and values: Why the initiator's view of deviant behavior had to be presented to the recipients.*

The aim was not only to evoke an appreciation of the prevailing order. The goal was also to evoke fear when viewing the event. The initiators achieved these ambivalent connotations by showing not only the results of following the normative order, the victory in the armed conflict. They also show what threatens those actors who do not adhere to the norms and values of the prevailing order, who turn against the prevailing order and thus manifestly do not value it. The consequence

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<sup>274</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological research / order and disorder / change*

<sup>275</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.7, *The power of the cultural - the cognitions of the social and cultural sciences*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*

of this deviation from the prevailing norms and values is made unmistakably clear in the picture - recognizable, I would argue, for observation from both the etic and emic points of view: The deviation from the prevailing norms and values may have been the cause of the apparent breakdown of order and the disintegration of the cohesion of the fighting group, but in the view of the initiators of the stele, it was certainly the consequence of the deviant behavior. Whoever deviates from the norms and values of the winners and does not appreciate them, according to the message, will experience disaster.

*Presentation and representation of the prevailing norms and values - an interim conclusion*

With the visible presentation of the event and, as postulated here, the intended representation, the connotations that the recipients were to associate with what was presented, the initiators of the stele would have made it unmistakably clear which aspects of social interaction they understood as proof of the applicable norms and values, or what the recipients of the stele were to understand by the applicable norms and values. They had also indicated who should be regarded as the representatives of these norms and values by presenting the main character and the victorious army as those who had behaved in accordance with the norms and values, and, I further argued, they had inserted themselves into this circle. We see the ideas of the initiators (another truism?) of the prevailing norms and values, or their ideas of how the recipients of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD should see them.

*But who were the initiators?*

We look at the worldview of the initiators. We do not yet know who they were, but we already assume that they belonged to the social entity of the victorious actors. We want to know, and should know, who exactly were those who used the stele to express their ideas about the prevailing norms and values, or their ideas about what the recipients should consider as such. We want to and should clarify who were those who made visible in this way their ideas of what should be considered normative and value-consistent behavior. By identifying the actors or groups of people who were able to have a normative influence on the shaping of social interaction, we also identify the groups of people who were able to exercise cultural hegemony in their social entity through this access to the media. By naming the initiators of the stele, we would thus gain further clues as to whose past(s) we are looking into with this knowledge, who in the corresponding social entity had access to which means of power, and whose history we are constructing with these insights. If we do not succeed in this identification, we will have to find out at the same time how our knowledge of this "not knowing" affects our presentation of our insights into the past(s) and our constructions of history.

As with any production of things, all members of a social entity are potentially eligible to commission pictorial works, members of the politically powerful and ruling class as well as members of the population.<sup>276</sup> So who could have been the initiators of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, and what did they intend with the production and presentation of the stele, what was their goal? To this end two hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1 - The people who commissioned the stele came from the political and military circles of power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] (This attribution is also implicitly subject to the detailed interpretation above.)*

With the visible presentation of the picture theme and the formal design of the event, the initiators from the politically powerful and ruling circles - here interpreted with regard to the aspect of norms and values - on the one hand pursued the intention of bringing their view of the prevailing norms and values, or their idea of what should be regarded as norms and values, into the public sphere, or of initiating what should be regarded as behavior conforming to norms and values.<sup>277</sup> On the other hand, they pursued the goal of promoting their normative view of the social order, legitimizing their own position by addressing the presented norms and values in a positive way, stabilizing the prevailing socio-political conditions in this way, and permanently anchoring the entire presentation with its corresponding connotations in the minds of the recipients.

*Hypothesis 2 - The stele was made on the initiative of the local population*

Through the choice of theme and the formal design of the picture, the representatives of these circles expressed their loyalty to the ruling order and their recognition of the prevailing norms and values. By visibly documenting their agreement with the ruling order, they claimed to be in harmony with the power and ruling circles and the army leadership. Triggering the connotations postulated above may also have been the goal of these initiators in their choice of subject matter.

*Is the subjective view presented with the hypotheses - the interpretation from the etic point of view - objectively realistic?*

Both the suggestions of possible initiators for the stele as well as the postulate of the different intentions and goals they had pursued in commissioning the stele with one and the same picture are initially subjective. This subjectivity can be put on a more general footing by incorporating the expertise of cultural studies, art studies, social sciences, and Ancient Near Eastern philology. Cultural, artistic, and social science studies support the view postulated here of the intentions and goals of initiators recruited from the environment of political and military power. The studies show that and why self-perceptions and images of the world, ideas of order, references to the causal

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<sup>276</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

<sup>277</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological research / order and disorder / change*

connection between norm-compliant behavior and the positively connoted consequences of adherence to appropriately regulated social coexistence were and are mediated by pictorial works from circles close to power and rule / governance (Jonathan Haas (ed.), 2004; Pierre Clastres, 2008; Murray Edelman, 1995). Ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions, moreover, document corresponding views of the appropriate norms and values that made successful social coexistence possible in the first place (Benjamin R. Forster, 2009; Horst Steible, 1982). The hypothesis that the initiators' goal is to visibly support the prevailing order and the prevailing norms and values can also be plausibly substantiated. On the one hand, with our everyday knowledge about the latest activities in this field (see always up-to-date on the internet under the keywords *Erinnerungskultur / Gedenkstätten*). On the other hand, also here with the help of the texts from the ancient oriental societies, which report about corresponding activities of the population (Hans Neumann; Susanne Paulus; Karl Hecker; Steven Lundström, 2011). Thus, the research results of the neighboring sciences support the proposed hypotheses about the intentions and goals that the initiators of both groups could have pursued with the creation of the stele. At the same time, they make it clear that both postulated groups are possible as those who could have commissioned the stele. I.e., with this state of knowledge, there is no plausible reason why one of the two groups should be preferred or excluded as the initiator. In other words, our search for the concrete identification of the initiators turns out to be another stumbling block in our socio-critical archaeological research, for which we must again seek solutions in individual case studies. The importance of knowing or not knowing who were the initiators of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD for the clarification of our epistemological interests in the ways of life in the social entities of the past(s) I have already addressed with the question of the circles that had access to power (cultural hegemony).

*"All lies...?" - also a possible interpretation*

The stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD to be interpreted as presented here respectively to defend the hypotheses mentioned above can be plausibly justified. If the approach to the interpretation of the stele is taken as it has been done here, this approach is implicitly subject to the thesis that the presentation, in the way it was chosen by the initiators, as it was to be understood by the contemporary recipients, and as it can still be seen today - the victory of those who acted according to norms and values and the defeat of those who acted against norms and values - should be understood as a truthful presentation of a historically and politically real event, not as the presentation of a fiction and not as the presentation of a lie. Everything shown on the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, the presentation of victory and defeat, the look at the ruling order and the prevailing norms and values, and the positively connoted result of the norm- and value-consistent behavior would have been correct according to this interpretation made from my etic point of

view. Thus, everything would have happened exactly as it was depicted: The figures depicted in victory had defeated an enemy, and the initiators of the stele commemorated this glorious event with the picture. (See later - *semiotics* - and the sign categories defined by Charles Sanders Peirce, here in particular the sign category "iconic".)

But what if we, as socio-critical archaeologists, were to assume in our interpretation that the initiators of the stele had wanted to conceal facts and events with the picture, that they had lied with the presentation on the stele? What would our view of the stele, of what is visibly shown, look like if a further interpretation were based on the assumption that the initiators had suppressed essential aspects of their own actions and thinking? Based on this view, which intentions and goals would we ascribe to the initiators, which they had pursued with the creation of the picture? Which connotations would we, from our etic point of view, ascribe to the contemporary recipients? In this regard, a few thoughts on the phenomenon "lie" in advance.

*Behaving in conformity, thinking in opposition - hiding deviations from prevailing norms and values*

Deviation from the generally accepted norms and values of a social entity and its underlying social interaction need not be visible in behavior or in the results of behavior and action.<sup>278</sup> Opposition to the valid norms and values can at first "only be thought", exist only in the wishes and ideas of members of one's own social entity as well as of members of other social entities, without this opposition having to manifest itself in visible and tangible cultural forms of expression, or without us socio-critical archaeologists recognizing the corresponding signs of an existing opposition to the local order. At the same time, however, it is a well-known phenomenon that one can "lie with things". To recognize this ambivalent situation and to clarify the respective facts is one of the major stumbling blocks to the success of our socio-critical archaeological research.<sup>279</sup>

*To "lie" with things*

To "lie" with things can therefore mean: Deviation from or opposition to the prevailing norms and values is kept invisible. The deviants or opponents behave - visibly - in accordance with the norms and values, in that they also outwardly observe the valid system of norms and values in the design of the visible environment, the things, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, and the layout of burials, although they de facto strive to overcome it.

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<sup>278</sup> See II.3.7.11, *To think differently, to act differently - to not participate - First considerations*; II.3.7.12, *To think and to act differently*

<sup>279</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

*Conceal, cover up, lie - why?*

The anthropologist James Scott<sup>280</sup> and the philosopher Rahel Jaeggi,<sup>281</sup> who works in economic sociology and social philosophy, both analyze why and how the dissenters or oppositionists act in this way. Both point to the emergence of ambivalent behavior. Both studies show that there are situations in which it seems advisable to behave in a way that is visibly in line with the "prevailing" norms and values, and not to reveal one's own ideas about norms and values that contradict the prevailing ideas about acting in accordance with norms and values.<sup>282</sup>

Were the initiators of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD perhaps telling a lie? Two hypotheses and an interpretation of the intentions and aims of the initiators of the "lie" will be presented.

*Hypothesis 1 - The people who commissioned the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD came from political and military circles of power and rule and "lied" with the presentation.*

The initiators of the stele had lied about the real causes of the armed conflict. It was not the losers of the struggle who had attacked the norms and values of the social entity. Rather, the defeated were those who had defended the norms and values in force but had lost their struggle. Those who had broken the prevailing norms and disregarded the prevailing values - that is, those who had behaved contrary to the norms and values - would have been the winners. The winners were also the initiators of the stele. They were able to conceal the "true" causes of the armed conflict and present the exact opposite as the "true" facts with the stele.<sup>283</sup>

*Hypothesis 2 - The people who commissioned the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD came from the local population - and "lied" about the presentation*

With the choice of the theme and the presentation of the event, the initiators feign harmony with the prevailing norms and values, as well as their loyalty to the representatives of these norms and values, pretending "as if" (see the reference to James Scott and Rahel Jaeggi).<sup>284</sup> De facto, their attitude towards local norms and values is different. The different attitude, the opposition to the prevailing norms and values in one's own ranks, must not (yet) be known at the time of the creation of the stele, and therefore cannot (yet) be shown at that time.

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<sup>280</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985; III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>281</sup> See IV.3, *Rahel Jaeggi, Economy as a social practice*

<sup>282</sup> See Excursus III.2, *Consensus between the authorities(rulers) and the population - fact or ideal? Visible or not in the materialized cultural forms of expression?*

<sup>283</sup> Since 2022, the current example of a corresponding twisting of the facts is clearly in front of our eyes with the Russian propaganda about the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

<sup>284</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985; III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

*The lie - Intentions, goals, connotations - possible interpretations*

The intention and goal of the initiators from the political and military power and ruling circles to lie with the picture was to hide their political and military weakness in times of social and political instability and this with the goal of making the opposite of the "real" social and political conditions credible with the "lie". The initiators withheld from the people the revelation of their dissenting attitude to the norms and values prevailing in their social entity, with the aim of making them recognizable only at the time when their circles had become strong enough for the realization of their ideas.

However, the same action of the initiators to "lie" with the picture could also be interpreted as a sign of strength. In times of weakness, the initiators had (!) to "lie"; in times of strength, they could afford to conceal the "truth" or to choose the moment when the "true" would be shown.

In any case, the initiators had to succeed in credibly anchoring the intentions and goals they pursued with the picture as a connotation in the minds of the recipients.

*"Lie" or "truth" - can we, as socio-critical archaeologists, find an answer to this question?*

James Scott and Rahel Jaeggi<sup>285</sup> have convincingly shown in their studies that the timing of the decision to spread truths or lies, to behave in accordance with prevailing norms and values or to oppose them, to conceal the oppositional position or to make it visible, depends decisively on the respective situations in which the actors act.

Using this approach, individual case studies should also be conducted to investigate the socio-cultural and political conditions under which it seemed advisable to conceal realities or to present the reproduction of an event as a "historically true" success story. With the help of individual case studies, the question would now have to be clarified in which socio-cultural, political and economic contexts the order for the stele was necessary or possible, or what the initiators "really" wanted to say with the picture on the stele of NARAMSIN of AKKAD. The implicit stumbling block in these individual case studies is the challenge to show whether, or how, and by means of which signs it becomes possible for us to recognize and interpret what is shown in the picture as an expression of "truth" or "lie" in the action and thought of the initiators. The clarification of the question of whether we are looking at a "lie" or at a historical and political "truth" or the possibility of not (yet) being able to give an answer to these questions decisively influences our answers to the question of whose past(s) we see when we look at the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, which socio-cultural and power-political relations we postulate for the social entity for which the stele was made, and

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<sup>285</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985; III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony; IV.3, Rahel Jaeggi, Economy as a social practice*



what construction of history we are writing (see Chris Harman, 2016; Howard Zinn, 2007; 2012; 2015). In order to illustrate the challenges we are facing and to realize our goal of removing this stumbling block, it may be helpful to consult the studies and insights of ideology research,<sup>286</sup> namely where it deals with the question of in which socio-political contexts truth or lies represent the "appropriate" behavior, how it is possible to gain insights into the historical "truth" of political statements, or how it is possible to unmask political statements as lies.<sup>287</sup>

It remains to be said: As in any scientific research, in socio-critical archaeological research too, there will always be unanswered questions, i.e. answers cannot yet be given with the methodological possibilities currently available. The identification of these open questions is a crucial part of our socio-critical archaeological research. Significant because by naming the unresolved challenges we reveal white spots, and the knowledge of these white spots, that is, our knowledge of our "not-knowing," is indispensable for assessing the validity of our views of the past(s) and our constructions of history. One of these (still) unanswered questions should already be asked here: If everything on the stele of NARAMSIN of AKKAD was a lie, what were the norms and values of that time?

*Finally, a reminder of a challenge we face in all of our socio-critical archaeological research:*

As socio-critical research archaeologists, we create theses, we use them to make claims, and we use our hypotheses to formulate assumptions about facts. With our interpretations we present our view of facts, pictures (and texts). In all cases, it is the way we socio-critical research archaeologists, from our etic point of view, look at the archaeological record we create with our archaeological excavations.<sup>288</sup> We use terms that are not always clearly distinguished from each other, but are also used colloquially as synonyms.<sup>289</sup> This makes it all the more important to constantly reflect on whether the statements we make about the social entities of the past(s) reflect only our etic point of view and what this fact would mean for answering our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct on the basis of the material heritage, or whether our cognitions also allow approaches to the emic point of view.

Relevant to all of our socio-critical archaeological research, then, is the question, or the answer to the question, that we keep asking ourselves: Who is speaking when we comment on the cultural

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<sup>286</sup> See Excursus III.1, *Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*

<sup>287</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.6, The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life up to III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony; Excursus III.2, Consensus between the authorities (rulers) and the population - fact or ideal? Visible or not in the materialized cultural forms of expression?*

<sup>288</sup> See III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

<sup>289</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / on the definition of basic terms - monumental architecture*

forms of expression of the members of the social entities of the past(s)? Who speaks when I, as a socio-critical archaeologist, look at things, at pictorial works, here specifically at the stele of NARAMSIN FROM AKKAD, and who spoke in the past(s) when this stele was created and received? Whose view of the norms and values of the social entities of the past(s) do you, the reader, have at hand with the present consideration, analysis and interpretation of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD? The point of view of the socio-critical archaeologist, the etic point of view or the point of view of those who had the stele made at that time, the emic point of view? In other words, did all those who see or have seen the pictorial work see the same thing? - Both in the circles that looked at the picture from an emic point of view, and in those of us who look at the stele today from an etic point of view? Do we associate the same connotations with what is presented to us from our etic point of view, and do we have the same representation in mind as the members of the social entities of the past(s)? The clarification of the questions - who spoke and who is speaking, knowing thus who is speaking has a direct impact on the answers that become possible to our general questions - whose past(s) do we see and whose history do we construct?



*II.3.7.14 The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected? (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 7, p. 166 ff.)*

As has been explained many times, we humans live in structured social orders, and our thinking and actions develop, among other things, through our socialization in correspondingly structured living spaces and orders. Sociologists explain how the structure of our social environment and our actions in that environment are interrelated. Our social interaction in a complex social entity is structured by the positions we take in our working lives as well as in our private and family lives (Schwietring, op. cit., p. 166). To these positions, rather than primarily to the people who hold them, we first direct certain expectations and ask, for example: How do chief physicians behave? In other words, we expect chief physicians who work in a hospital to behave in a certain way. It is irrelevant whether we know the doctor personally or not, because we are not (yet) directing our expectations at the person as a human being, but at the position of "chief physician". But when we speak of the performance of a role, we mean that now we observe how the concrete person who occupies the position of chief physician behaves, how he or she "plays" his or her role as an individual. Each person in a group, in a community, in a society always occupies several positions and always plays several roles, depending on the current context in which we are acting (doctor, mother, father, friend, housewife). The structure within which we act, the position we hold, and the role we play in a given situation are thus interconnected, not least by the expectations of others!

Another formative force, the habitus, controls our thinking and acting, which, however, is not primarily shaped by the expectations of others, but by our individual internalization of values, norms, and ideas (op. cit., p. 167). Our habitus is the result of our social origins, of our socialization, of our life experiences (op. cit., p. 167). Habitus thus functions as a kind of built-in social structure (op. cit., p. 167). This incorporation shapes our view of the world, the way we act in our life-world, articulate expectations of positions, play roles, and how we perceive reality. According to Pierre Bourdieu (Schwietring, op. cit., p. 168), who popularized this concept, we reproduce the habitus with our thoughts and actions and thus contribute to cementing social orders and, among other things, to stabilizing social imbalances.



#### II.3.7.15 Own commentary and archaeological reference

The formation of positions and roles is likely to occur potentially in any social entity organized on the basis of the division of labor, in which the realization of complex work processes has as an indispensable prerequisite the existence of complex and specific stocks of knowledge and complex and specific manual skills. We, socio-critical archaeologists, cannot only postulate that the corresponding preconditions were given in the social entities of the past(s). We can state their existence where we have a wide range of things, artifacts, architecture, spatial arrangements, and burials at hand with the materialized cultural forms of expression. We analyze the corresponding material legacies in terms of the knowledge and skills that were required to procure or produce them, to construct buildings, to design space, and to create burials. As a result of our analyses it turns out: Natural-geographic knowledge was needed to locate the sources of needed raw materials. Political-social knowledge was needed to determine whether access to the needed resources was possible. Knowledge of the economic and military capabilities of all parties was needed to ensure that the desired resources would be available. Technical - craftsmanship knowledge was required to produce things and to build architecture, religious - spiritual knowledge was required to perform burials according to the rules. Knowledge of the local social order and the possibility or necessity of making this order visible or keeping it invisible was required in order to design the spatial order accordingly.<sup>290</sup> It is plausible, supported by the knowledge of the social sciences<sup>291</sup> as well as by our everyday experience, that functional specializations develop in accordance with the specialized

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<sup>290</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

<sup>291</sup> See II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together?* - *First considerations*; II.3.7.1, *So what is order? Own experience*; II.3.8, *Equal - unequal or different?* - *First considerations*; II.3.8.1, *Equal, unequal or just different?*

knowledge and the specific craftsmanship required for the production and procurement of the broad spectra of cultural forms of expression - and which the members of the social entities of the past(s) also had at their disposal, as evidenced by the things. It is also plausible that specialists develop for the performance of specialized work and that in the course of the development of specialization, positions are formed in the various fields of work. In the field of craftsmanship, for example, these are the positions of experienced craftsman (master; [*Meister*]), apprentice (trainee; [*Lehrling*]), and unskilled craftsman (helper; [*Helper*]), the existence of which I postulate for the social entities of the past(s) as well. As explained at the outset, positions are associated with behavioral expectations that each holder of a position is expected to fulfill to a greater or lesser extent in the performance of his or her role. How the masters, apprentices, and unskilled craftsmen actually performed their roles cannot be determined from our knowledge of the knowledge and skills of the members of the social entities of the past(s). The analysis of the knowledge and skills of the members of the social entities of the past(s) alone does not provide sufficient evidence to answer the question whether the functional differentiation and the development of specialization can also be seen in the sense of a social hierarchy, whether unequal positions were linked to unequal social status and different powers. On the other hand, the analysis of pictorial works becomes informative for these questions, here again the analysis of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamien, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))).<sup>292</sup>

*Looking once again at the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD - Positions, Roles and Functions*

The stele depicts conflict, battle, victory and defeat. Two groups, both belonging to the military, can be recognized - the victorious and the defeated army. The fact that members of the social entities of the past(s) had assumed positions, how they had shaped their roles as holders of positions, and that different positions were associated with social hierarchization, unequal social status, and different powers, can be shown by the stele picture and there pars pro toto by the presentation of the person who is highlighted among all the actors in terms of size, placement, and antiquaria. This prominence, formally presented in the picture, represents, according to my thesis,

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<sup>292</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups; II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; II.3.7.19, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts; II.3.7.21, Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation; II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art; II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices

a functionally specialized and prominent position <sup>293</sup> in the military organization. <sup>294</sup> According to my interpretation, the way this position was to be filled, the expectations and ideas about the role behavior in such a position that existed at least with the initiators of the stele, can be seen in the reproduction of the posture - despite or precisely because of the conflict-laden situation in the upright victor's pose - and in the direction of the gaze - looking over the defeated. The reproduction of the reaction of all the (still living) actors in the event - both the defeated and the members of the victorious army - all looking up to the singled out person - may have been chosen, according to my interpretation, as a confirmation of the "correct" role behavior. The cognitions of representation research <sup>295</sup> as well as our everyday knowledge about the structure of military units and the social evaluation of top positions (not only) in military units make the thesis plausible that the position shown respectively the holder of this position did not only stand at the top of a hierarchically ordered grouping and had far-reaching powers, but that this position also represented the social hierarchy of the social entity for which this stele was made. This also means that positions and roles could or had to be made visible in order to represent, among other things, the prevailing ideas of order as well as the norms and values from the point of view of the initiators of the stele. <sup>296</sup> However, the extent to which the named actor internalized the expectations of the position he assumed with or through the execution of his role, and the extent to which these expectations could have become part of his habitus, is not (yet) clear to us socio-critical archaeologists, given our source situation and despite the many insights we can gain from picture analysis.



*II.3.7.16 A secured social order does not mean that no conflicts exist  
(Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 7, p. 168 ff.)*

Order is not exclusively the framework for harmonious action. Order can also stir up opposition and become the reason and background for conflict. Moreover, conflict situations themselves can develop into a form of order, hardening and structuring the entire way of life of social groups in which positions and roles are established (op. cit., p. 168). Order is thus paraphrased as a stable and enduring structure - be it a structure that evolves in peaceful or conflictual situations. {See also the thesis, popularized by Chantal Mouffe, that the phenomena of antagonism and agonism

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<sup>293</sup> See Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*; Excursus II.5, *How is disparity produced and reproduced?*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description*

<sup>294</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological research / order and disorder / change / picture description*

<sup>295</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*

<sup>296</sup> See II.3.6.1, *What is "social realness"?*; II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*

characterize all social encounters. Conflicts, therefore, do not necessarily destroy society. They are part of our constant efforts to resolve existing antagonisms and agonisms and to find solutions for peaceful coexistence.} <sup>297</sup> (See as well Schwiwring, op. cit. p., 169.) Conflicts can structure our entire life (living in civil war or war situations), can be the basis of careers (army), can be the permanent source of income (arms production) (op. cit., p. 169). Thus, the perpetuation of conflicts is a matter of interest for more than a few; conflicts are the result of different interests. They do not have to be destructive, but can also be constructive (women's rights) and can stabilize society (labor laws) (op. cit., p. 169). Whether conflicts can ever be solved or only managed remains an open question.

### II.3.7.17 Unmissable forms of conflict - First considerations

Conflicts, as mentioned above, are the result of differing interests. <sup>298</sup> Differences of interest become particularly obvious or conspicuous when we humans experience them in the form of public protests [*öffentliche Proteste*], in the form of uprisings [*Aufstände*], rebellions [*Rebellionen*], and revolutions [*Revolutionen*]. Sociological research has paid special attention to these forms of conflict. As socio-critical archaeologists, we also deal with this topic, again extended by the question of whether - and if so, on the basis of which signs - we recognize corresponding actions of people in the social entities of the past(s).

### II.3.7.18 Protest, riot, rebellion and revolution (Schwiwring, op. cit., ch. 12, p. 332 ff.)

Protests, riots, and rebellions against the holders of power [*Macht; Machthaber*] and rulers (rule/governance; [*Herrschaft*]), as well as against social situations that were no longer tolerable and acceptable to those who opposed them, are known throughout history and from a wide variety of social entities (op. cit., p. 334). Corresponding actions of deviant behavior were directed against inconveniences within the respective ruling orders, but not against the order itself. This, according to sociological research, was and is the case with revolutions, which were and are explicitly aimed at overthrowing the ruling order and replacing it with a new form (op. cit., p. 334) of social and political order. Society, according to sociological research, is never completely conformist in its thinking and acting (op. cit., p. 332). Rather, social entities are characterized by both harmony and conflict, homogeneity in some areas and heterogeneity in others, cooperation and concurrence, peace and conflict - this should be considered as a form of normality in all social entities (op. cit., p. 333).

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<sup>297</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism* - Chantal Mouffe

<sup>298</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism* - Chantal Mouffe



II.3.7.19 Own commentary and archaeological reference

A stable social order is, among other things, the result of successfully managing the antagonisms and agonisms<sup>299</sup> that underlie all social interaction. In other words, there is no social interaction without conflict. Any social interaction can change from more or less peaceful to conflictual if the social constellations in which people live develop into an unbearable one-sided burden for individual members or groups of a social unit. Conflict is part of everyday life in all societies. Conflict is a universal social phenomenon. Certain manifestations - forms of invisibility and visibility - of conflict are also universal. We know from our own life experience and from sociological research that neither antagonisms nor agonisms have to turn into openly visible conflicts, protests, riots, rebellions, uprisings. We can consider every conflict as a potentially initially invisible phenomenon, as a "head issue".<sup>300</sup> People deal mentally with situations that they perceive as conflicts in the circumstances in which they live. In this way, conflicts are reflected and debated only in the minds of individuals or in the shared views of groups, without these debates manifesting themselves visibly in materialized cultural forms of expression.<sup>301</sup> Conflicts become visible where they are acted out, for example, in physical attacks. This visibility can be limited to the place of the current event and to the moment and duration of the controversy. Even this conflict does not have to express itself in a materialized and thus permanently visible way. James Scott, among others, has shown in his studies in Malaysia under which circumstances conflicts remain invisible in the material environment.<sup>302</sup> But the fact that, for example, the quest for power explicitly demands that conflicts be made visible, we can also state on the basis of our own life experiences as well as on the basis of the conflict and power studies of sociology.<sup>303</sup>

The occurrence of conflicts is universal, as are the possibilities of keeping the occurrence of conflicts invisible or making it visible. The situation is quite different when we ask who understands what concretely by conflict. Sociologists, ethnologists, and anthropologists have shown in their studies that what we humans perceive as a conflict situation is both a distinctly culture-specific matter and strongly dependent on the individual attitude that a person takes toward the aspect of conflict. Thus, the understanding of what constitutes conflict is not universal, although this fact does not preclude the possibility that in different socio-cultural contexts there may be overlaps in

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<sup>299</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism* - Chantal Mouffe

<sup>300</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>301</sup> See III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*; III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia* - James Scott, *The weapons of the weak*, 1985

<sup>302</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia* - James Scott, *The weapons of the weak*, 1985

<sup>303</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft]* - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*

conceptions of what was understood as conflict. For our socio-critical archaeological research, in which we are constantly engaged with the lifeworlds of others, this does not only mean that the attempt to identify what was considered conflict in the social entities of the past(s) is challenging. Here, too, it is difficult to discern, on the basis of things alone, to what extent the material legacies - if at all! - are related to the occurrence of conflict. Specifically, the question arises as to whether and how we can use the analysis of things alone to determine whether and to what extent their occurrence is to be understood as a cause or a consequence of conflict. A recent example illustrates how material conditions can be both a cause and a result of conflict: So-called refugee shelters are built because the people who are to be housed there had to leave their homes due to conflicts. The construction of refugee shelters is therefore a result of the conflict. People protest against the construction of shelters in their neighborhoods. Thus, the construction of refugee shelters is also a source of conflict. Because of the protests, the shelters are closed again. The abandonment and departure of the shelters is again the result of the conflict.

The culturally specific definition of what is meant by conflict, and the still unanswered question of whether the occurrence of conflict can be proven solely on the basis of things, or whether things are the cause, trigger, or result of conflict, make conflict research in socio-critical archaeology a complex and challenging matter. Many questions stand at the beginning of the research. First of all, the extension of the basic question already posed above: From our etic point of view, do we recognize in the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s) the signs by which we can relate them to the emergence of conflicts? Do we find clues to the causes and reasons for the emergence of the conflicts? (On causes and reasons see again Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1969, 367 and 433ff.; Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1974, 75ff.; see as well Richard Ned Lebow, 2020). Do we recognize what triggered the conflicts and how the conflicts evolved? Are we able to show who dealt with the conflicts and how? Are we able to understand and explain who resolved and ended conflicts and how? Can we name the winners and losers of the conflict constellations (picture analysis)? And finally, can we find evidence that there was no conflict? Against the background of the realization that the phenomenon of conflict is always culturally specific, the question of whether we can bring our etic point of view closer to the emic point of view becomes virulent again. In other words, if there is no universal understanding of what is meant by conflict, then the signs by which one recognizes the occurrence of conflict may not be universal either.<sup>304</sup> I have already explained my reflections on this challenge, on the ambivalences that potentially become visible in every interpretation of the materialized cultural forms of expression, on the occurrence of

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<sup>304</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak*, 1985



stumbling blocks in this search elsewhere and under a different indicator.<sup>305</sup> I present these considerations here again because they already contain a first answer to the question of whether and how we can recognize to what extent the materialized cultural forms of expression can be named as a cause or as a result of conflict.

The making of artifacts, the construction of architecture, the design of spatial order and the creation of burials, as well as their destruction, can have their origins in conflict, can have caused conflict in the first place and can be the result of conflict. From our own everyday knowledge of political events in the present and in the recent past(s) (see above the recent example of the "refugee shelter"), we are familiar with the above scenario - and in our search for connections between the materially present cultural forms of expression and the phenomenon of conflict in the social entities of the past(s), we have to think about: settlements are founded as a response to previous conflicts, the foundation of settlements causes protests, settlements are abandoned because of conflicts. Our view as socio-critical archaeologists at our archaeological record, at the remains of an abandoned settlement, at destroyed artifacts, at destroyed architecture and spatial order, and at destroyed burials, initially leads us to think of conflicts as the triggers that caused the specific condition of the material legacies. At the same time, we know:<sup>306</sup> Not every broken artifact, not every destroyed house, not every physical injury must have been the result of a conflict.<sup>307</sup> There may be other factors involved in the destruction or injury, such as misfortune, coincidence, a ritual that caused the destruction, the opening of a tomb to move the dead, or the abandonment of a settlement for ritual reasons. At the same time, we are aware that well-preserved material remains and largely intact features do not necessarily mean that they are the result of conflict-free social interaction. The question of whether conflict or other factors led to the production of objects, their abandonment, and their state of preservation in the archaeological record, as well as the abandonment of a settlement, cannot be answered in a generalized way by analyzing only the material remains mentioned above. Rather, answers to our questions about the connections we are seeking must first be sought for each individual case. For these individual case studies, the studies of conflict research that deal with specific types of conflict and the question of to what extent

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<sup>305</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

<sup>306</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>307</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; see for example the demolition and reconstruction of the temple complex in the Japanese city of Ise, here II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

which conflicts have left which visible traces in materialized cultural forms of expression will prove informative. The cognitions of the archaeological research, which are already available on the subject of conflict, are already very informative (see Jesse Millek, 2017, 2018, 2018, 2019, 2019, 2020, 2020, 2021, 2021, 2023).

A brief comment on the above "assertion" that we cannot make generalizing statements about whether conflict or other factors have shaped the archaeological record before us. I am referring to two situations that modify and again limit this assertion, to two exceptions to the rule, in which the destruction of cultural forms of expression or the disruption of social togetherness is due neither to man-made conflict nor to consensual action within the social community. Such circumstances exist, for example, when destruction is caused by earthquakes. We recognize this relationship of cause and effect with relative certainty in the archaeological record. In addition, we can postulate the occurrence of epidemics as a trigger for the abandonment of a settlement and thus for the disruption or interruption of a hitherto existing social coexistence, and we may even be able to prove this where we have burials in sufficient numbers for paleoanthropological-medical investigations. Thus, while general answers to the question of whether an archaeological record can be causally linked to the phenomenon of conflict are still pending, answers to this fundamental question, as well as to the other fundamental question of who in the social entities of the past(s) understood what by conflict, may emerge when we return to the analysis of pictorial works. From our etic point of view, we are now looking for signs of whether and how the phenomenon of conflict as a relevant theme of the time was captured and made visible in the pictorial works. In this search, too, we are reminded of the fact already mentioned: what people concretely perceive as conflict is culturally specific and individually shaped - the search for the emic point of view is therefore as significant as it is challenging. On the other hand, what underlies all conflicts, the emergence of conflicting interests, is a universal characteristic of conflict.<sup>308</sup>

Every way of dealing with conflict, every attempt to reach an agreement or balance between conflicting interests, involves the exercise of power. On the one hand, the exercise of power in the sense described by Max Weber >The exercise of power is a deliberate act to enforce one's own will against the objections and even the resistance of others. < [„*Machtausübung ist eine bewusste Handlung, um den eigenen Willen gegen die Bedenken und sogar gegen den Widerstand anderer durchzusetzen*“].<sup>309</sup> The exercise of power can be peaceful, even when it meets resistance. However, it can also take the form of *power to act or the power to injure* [*Aktionsmacht oder Verletzungsmacht*], as explained by Heinrich Popitz.<sup>310</sup> The fact that the assertion of power can also lead to the exercise of violence was also

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<sup>308</sup> See II.3.7.16, *A secured social order does not mean that no conflicts exist*; II.3.7.17, *Unmissable forms of conflict - First considerations*

<sup>309</sup> See II.3.9.5, *Power [Macht] and rule / governance [Herrschaft] - according to Max Weber*

<sup>310</sup> See II.3.9.9, *Types of power [Macht] according to Heinrich Popitz and rule/governance [Herrschaft] according to Michel Foucault*

statet by Chantal Mouffe in her comments on the aspect of antagonism. Antagonistic constellations, according to Mouffe, are to be understood as situations of struggle between enemies.<sup>311</sup>

The stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, which has already been looked at a number of times, depicts the exercise of *power against resistance*, the exercise of *power to act and to injure*, and the result of a battle fought with arms (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamia, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))).<sup>312</sup>

*The stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD - shown in the picture (!), recognizable in the picture (!?) - how conflict is thematized*

The theme deals with the result of a violent confrontation between two parties, one of which is portrayed as the winner and the other as the loser of the event. It is shown in detail that and how people attack their fellow human beings with direct physical violence, respectively the effect of this exercise of action and injury power. We see how the initiators of the stele had designed the clash of interests, the handling of it and the solution, the removal of the divergences according to their ideology. From my etic point of view, I postulate that all participants in the events perceived the armed confrontation as a conflict. To state: The handling of the conflict, the exercise of the power to act and to injure, the course of the conflict and the "resolution" of the conflict were experienced by all participants themselves as conflict actions - and with very different impressions - some as winners, others as losers. The fact that this view of events was also taken by the contemporary recipients of the social entities of the past(s) from their emic point of view, i.e. my thesis that here we can bring our etic and emic points of view closer together, is plausibly supported by the insights of violence and conflict research. According to this research, an attack on a person is experienced as a conflict in all social entities, independent of space, time, and socio-cultural background. The exercise of physical violence is therefore not culturally specific, but to be understood universally as a form of conflict (a truism?). And another "but" ....: We must also consider the fact that initiation rites, for example, can be accompanied by the exercise of physical violence. Whether these attacks on physical integrity were then experienced as violence and thus as a conflict, and if so, by whom, remains to be clarified in each individual case.

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<sup>311</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism - Chantal Mouffe*

<sup>312</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

In contrast to the previously presented analysis of non-pictorial things, the analysis of pictures opens up the possibility of showing that and how conflict could or had to be made visible as a relevant theme of the time (and this regardless of whether what was shown depicted a real, historically true event, whether the initiators of the picture had spread a "lie" with this depiction, or, another possibility, whether a ritual, a game was depicted - with which the theme - the exercise of violence - was to be demonstrated). Causal connections between pictorially depicted events and the knowledge of the occurrence of conflict at the time can thus not only be postulated, but also plausibly substantiated. However, even with this approach it is not possible to determine, or rather it remains one of the challenges for socio-critical archaeological research, to find approaches that allow us to demonstrate what was culturally understood as a conflict at the time, beyond a figuratively depicted conflict. Insights into the backgrounds and causes that led to conflict remain as well closed to us. The knowledge of the concrete cause that led to the depicted battle shown with the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD remains inaccessible to us. We also do not know why the initiators of the stele could or had to claim, with the choice of the theme and the presentation of the theme, that there had been a conflict which had to be settled by force of arms.<sup>313</sup> And last but not least, we do not know whether displaying the stele itself might have caused conflicts, for example, protests.

Thus, on the one hand, the analysis of pictures proves to be a thoroughly informative approach when we, as socio-critical archaeologists, deal with the phenomenon of conflict in the social entities of the past(s). On the other hand, pictures remain ambivalent sources. I would like to remind again that it is possible to "lie" with things and thus also with pictures.<sup>314</sup> This means that even pictures that from our etic point of view appear to depict peaceful scenes of social coexistence are not necessarily testimonies to correspondingly conflict-free social constellations. Rather, it is possible to deliberately hide and negate the existence of conflicts with appropriately chosen pictorial themes. In our excavations (in the field of Near Eastern archaeology), we record corresponding pictorial works that depict seemingly conflict-free events, such as construction activities and gatherings (*See Votive relief of Ur-Nanshe, king of Lagash, with his sons and dignitaries. Limestone, Early Dynastic III (2550 - 2500 BC)* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ur-Nanshe>; see Banquet plaque, Tell Agrab, Main Shara Temple, Early Dynastic period, 2700-2600 BC; [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Banquet\\_plaque,\\_Tell\\_Agrab,\\_Main\\_Shara\\_Temple,\\_Early\\_Dynastic\\_period,\\_2700-2600\\_BC,\\_limestone\\_-\\_Oriental\\_Institute\\_Museum,\\_University\\_of\\_Chicago\\_-\\_DSC07369.JPG](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Banquet_plaque,_Tell_Agrab,_Main_Shara_Temple,_Early_Dynastic_period,_2700-2600_BC,_limestone_-_Oriental_Institute_Museum,_University_of_Chicago_-_DSC07369.JPG)). We ask: Can we demonstrate with plausible arguments if, that, and why the events shown were "really" free of conflict? Are there really no signs of conflict in the issues presented? Or do we, from our etic

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<sup>313</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>314</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior / lie*

point of view, fail to recognize the signs of conflict that are immanent in the picture and that were surely seen and understood by the senders and recipients of this nonverbal communication, i.e. from the emic point of view? And once again, there is a consideration worth being followed in an individual case study. Did the production of the pictorial works and the choice of themes for the pictures provoke conflicts in the first place? Could pictorial works thus be provocations in the social entities of the past(s)? A white spot in our knowledge, a stumbling block in our research, a challenge to be addressed in our respective individual case studies.

Finally, two further considerations. In their studies of conflict, social scientists have distinguished types of conflict such as protest, riot, rebellion, and revolt. In order for us socio-critical archaeologists to be able to search for these types of conflict in the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s), it is basically necessary to answer the above-mentioned open questions, which are to be pursued in individual case studies. However: A preliminary answer to the question of whether we can also find indications of the occurrence of specific forms of conflict in material legacies can be considered if we turn to the conflict form of revolution. Can we assume that revolutions took place in the social entities of the past(s)? Revolution, defined as a form of resistance that does not seek changes within the prevailing order, but rather the overthrow, the total break with the prevailing order, combined with the goal of establishing a completely new order. It is therefore necessary to clarify both whether such a form of conflict is conceivable in a so-called traditional society, a community, i.e. in a social entity whose principle of order is that of descent, and whether<sup>315</sup> and how we can recognize this form in the materialized cultural forms of expression. I venture a first thesis: The emergence of a revolution in a so-called traditional society, a *community*, was rather unlikely. An alternative to the ordering principle of origin and descent does not exist in the so-called traditional society according to the above definition.<sup>316</sup>



#### II.3.7.20 *Are societies social unities? (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 7, p. 170 ff.)*

Sociologists ask about the parameters that lead us to speak of society (op. cit., p. 170) and whether or why we consider this social entity as a unity. In considering the aspect of unity, there are two main parameters to consider – integration [*Integration*] and differentiation [*Differenzierung*] (op. cit., p. 171). Speaking of integration, sociologists reflect on the aspects of coordinated action, the role of people's confidence that their expectations in life will be fulfilled on the basis of the prevailing order, and that social relations within this order are stable (op. cit., p. 171). Corresponding considerations are made in models of >social integration< [„Sozialintegration“] (op. cit., p. 171).

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<sup>315</sup> See II.3.2, *Society and community*; II.3.2.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community*

<sup>316</sup> See II.3.8.1, *Equal, unequal or just different?*

Another approach is based on theories of social differentiation. These theories explain the stability of social orders on the basis of structures that are independent of the behavior and actions of individuals in a social entity and are referred to as theories of >system integration>. [„*Systemintegration*“] (op. cit., p. 171). An example given by Thomas Schwierting (op. cit., p. 171) illustrates the difference between the two approaches. Policy instruments can lead to sustainable economic growth and at the same time to a reduction of the labor force. System integration can therefore lead to problems of social integration! Thus, the maintenance of a system does not necessarily mean that all members of a social entity benefit from this situation (op. cit., p. 171). When we speak of social entities, we speak of people, groups, communities, societies, i.e. we speak of difference, in the present case of different forms of social entities. As sociologists say, >the unity of a society is the result of its differentiation< [„*die Einheit einer Gesellschaft ist das Resultat ihrer Differenzierung*“] (op. cit., p. 172). Sociologists identify four types of differentiation that characterize the structures of societies. A simple form is the *segmental differentiation* (1) (op. cit., p. 172), where people, groups live next to each other, using together a larger territory, but being more or less self-contained. *Center and periphery* (2) is another indicator of differentiation, where one element gains more importance than others. Interconnections between center and periphery, according to the insights of sociological studies, usually ensue via the center, not primarily between the groups living in the peripheries (op. cit., p. 172 - 173). *Stratified differentiation* (3) (op. cit., p. 173) means that all spheres of social togetherness are shaped and characterized by social inequality. Every known form of social togetherness knows social inequality. However, the basis, means and opportunities for overcoming social inequality are culturally specific and may be based on the origin, age, gender, function, position and roles of the members of each social entity. Among the differentiations mentioned, sociologists further emphasize *functional differentiation* (4) (op. cit., p. 173 - 174) as the formative type in today's societies, where positions, roles, and thus functions in society strongly coin the chances of individuals to be able to shape their own way of life - or not.



#### II.3.7.21 Own commentary and archaeological reference

With its studies of social orders and the factors that hold societies, communities, and even groups together, sociological research points to the fact that these are characterized by heterogeneity and differentiation, and that social units function and persist not in spite of, but precisely because of their differentiated composition.<sup>317</sup> The effective power of social integration can be plausibly demonstrated for the social entities of the past(s), where we deal with the parameters of order,

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<sup>317</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*

norms and values in socio-critical archaeological research.<sup>318</sup> The focus of the following considerations is directed to the effective power of system integration and here again to the question of whether and how we can grasp system integration as an effective power for the cohesion of the social entities of the past(s) on the basis of things alone. Virulent for our analyses of the social conditions in the social entities of the past(s) is therefore the challenge of whether we can plausibly postulate or even state that social entities do not remain together as a respective social composite despite the manifold differences in societies, communities, and also in groups, but that it may have been precisely the heterogeneity and differentiation that ensured cohesion.

Thus, I initially take the cognitions of sociological research on the differentiations that, according to social scientists, characterize all social associations as a plausible assumption also for the characterization of the social entities of the past(s). However, in the attempt to prove the existence of all the types of differentiation mentioned in the social entities of the past(s), we encounter not insignificant stumbling blocks.

*Functional differentiation* (see Thomas Schwietering, 2011, 173 - 174)

First of all, however, we can demonstrate the occurrence of functional differentiation on the basis of the material remains in a comprehensible manner and without any insurmountable stumbling blocks. Functional differentiation becomes visible with our direct analyses of the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, the burials, and also the analyses of specific constructions in space, such as furnaces or smelting installations. With good reason - and I have already plausibly presented this reason in earlier sections<sup>319</sup> - we can assume that the functional differentiation is not only recognized from our etic point of view, but was also perceived from the emic point of view. We recognize the complex knowledge and craftsmanship that were necessary to produce the things and also to be able to use them.<sup>320</sup> We can plausibly argue that this complexity required the cooperation of different specialists, i.e. that specialization developed. The necessary cooperation of specialists and the necessary interlocking of diverse knowledge and specific craft skills can be illustrated by the example of metalworking. What was (and still is) required here is the cooperation of individuals who, among other things, have knowledge of the occurrence and procurement of

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<sup>318</sup> See II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>319</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage / diversity of specialized knowledge and craft skills*

<sup>320</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage / diversity of specialized knowledge and craft skills*

raw materials,<sup>321</sup> who know the requirements and possibilities of raw material processing, and who have mastered the crafting skills needed to produce the desired artifacts from a raw material.<sup>322</sup> According to these insights into the production processes, heterogeneity and differentiation are indeed, as stated by social science research, prerequisites for the fulfillment of the needs of the members of the social entities of the past(s) and for successful social coexistence.

*Stratified differentiation* (see Thomas Schwietering, 2011, 173)

Sociological research further states that all spheres of social interaction are marked and characterized by social inequality, i.e. that stratified differentiation is to be expected in all social entities.<sup>323</sup> This insight can also be used to characterize social interaction in the social entities of the past(s) and to explain the occurrence of *stratified differentiation*, social inequality, which is also plausibly justified by functional differentiation, among other things.<sup>324</sup> This succeeds, if we turn again to the pictorial works and here again to the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, which has already been mentioned several times (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamia, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))).

*And once again a view on the stele of NARAMSIN of AKKAD*

The stele depicts, among other things, the order of military units - both with the formal and functional (as well as social) highlighting of the main character of the event, and with the presentation of the military of the victorious army.<sup>325</sup> My thesis is that the social differentiation of the different functionaries goes hand in hand with the different functions assumed in the armies, which are shown on the stele of NARAMSIN of AKKAD by the differentiated presentation of the actors.<sup>326</sup> This statement - different functions in military units go hand in hand with social differentiation and with both functional and social hierarchization, i.e. with the stratified differentiation of their functionaries - applies to all armies, to today's as well as to the military formations of the social entities of the past(s) (see Matthias Rogg, 2003, 190 - 216; see also

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<sup>321</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*

<sup>322</sup> See II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage / diversity of specialized knowledge and craft skills*

<sup>323</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism - Chantal Mouffe*

<sup>324</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture / social realness / social differentiation*

<sup>325</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>326</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military\\_organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_organization)). The occurrence of functional and stratified differentiation also in the social entities of the past(s) can thus be postulated, if not stated. <sup>327</sup>

*Center and periphery* (see Thomas Schwietering, 2011, 172 - 173)

Less clear are the statements that we, as socio-critical archaeologists, can make about the existence of centers and peripheries in the past(s). Centers and peripheries as such do not exist. What constitutes a center and what constitutes a periphery depends on the chosen parameters by which we characterize a space as center or periphery, parameters that in turn depend on the focus of our cognitive interest. The stumbling block: our "cognition" of a historical reality, of a center-periphery relationship, becomes, upon closer examination, an interest-driven, subjective "construction of a historical fact". We construct a geopolitical and socio-economic center-periphery relation between two or more regions from our etic point of view - and with the parameters we have chosen quite plausibly justified - of which we cannot know whether this view of neighborly relations between settlements ever existed for the members of the social entities of the past(s). The emic point of view on whether the members of the social entities of the past(s) ever thought in terms of center and periphery, or if so, how they characterized a center and what would have constituted a periphery, is not comprehensible from our sources, nor is it possible here to approximate the emic point of view on the basis of the material legacies. <sup>328</sup> A brief comment on this: Why is the emphasis on the etic point of view and on the emic point of view so important to me in this topic? In my area of research, the Near East, but not only there, our archaeological knowledge is constantly being used as a political tool. <sup>329</sup> The question of whether I am representing my interest-bound etic point of view in my constructions of history or whether I am able to provide insights into the emic point of view is, I think, not insignificant. Especially in this topic of socio-economic and geopolitical views of the past(s), the question arises as to how these, and especially our view that regions in the past(s) were connected to each other in a center-periphery relationship, can be instrumentalized for today's political interests. And in the same way, this theme in particular points to the importance of our question or the clarification of our question - Who is speaking? - that is, to make clear whose reality we are dealing with and whose reality we are presenting with our constructions of history. <sup>330</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>328</sup> See II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community, interests, groups, we*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; on the challenge of determining the emic point of view regarding the existence of center and periphery

<sup>329</sup> See Excursus I.3.3.3, *Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*; II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*; V.3, *Enlightenment as a task of the humanities and social sciences - or: What socio-critical archaeology can contribute to this task in the present as a socio-critical historical science*

<sup>330</sup> See I.2, *Once again and summarized: Socio-critical archaeological science - what is it and what are we striving for?*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference /*

*Segmented differentiation* (see Thomas Schwietring, 2011, 172)

We also face another challenge, perhaps still an insoluble one, where we want to provide evidence for the occurrence of segmented differentiation, i.e. for the way of life "where people, groups, live side by side, sharing a larger territory but being more or less self-contained" (see above). This definition poses the following challenges to our efforts to demonstrate segmented differentiation also for the social entities of the past(s): How can we, as socio-critical archaeologists, determine, if at all, whether or not people lived side by side? And how can we determine, if at all, whether they lived more or less self-contained? The fact that people lived side by side in groups, communities, or societies in the past is documented by the results of our surveys. We document the occupation of a region and can potentially show that neighboring settlements were used at the same time.<sup>331</sup> The question of whether the inhabitants of these settlements were more or less self-contained may be one of the questions we cannot answer at this time. However, we can consider some approaches to finding a solution. Potentially, the analysis of the natural environment and our focus on the natural potentials of a region and a settlement site for self-sufficient subsistence offers the possibility to capture corresponding ways of life. The challenge for our socio-critical archaeological research is to prove that the settlers lived self-sufficiently. The analysis of the settlement inventories with regard to the type of cultural forms of expression and the composition of the inventories, as well as the comparative analysis of the burial customs - similar or not, but each explicitly locally characterized - potentially offers the possibility of finding evidence for segmented differentiation and a more or less self-contained way of life. Again, the subsequent challenge is to interpret the insights and plausibly justify why we point to which signs as indicators of the phenomena of "segmented differentiation and a more or less closed way of life".<sup>332</sup> The steps necessary to elicit the ways of life we seek become even more complex when we devote ourselves to exploring the invisible, ideational cultural forms of expression, the search for the rules, norms, and values, the customs and traditions that can build bridges between neighbors as well as delineate neighboring communities of settlers.<sup>333</sup> And last but not least: human beings never live completely self-sufficiently. So, first of all, we have to clarify what is to be understood concretely by a more or less self-contained way of life, in which areas we assume and postulate self-sufficiency, what we have to look for concretely in our search for signs of segmented differentiation, i.e. for the way of life

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*monumental architecture / nonverbal communication; V.2, Our locations determine our standpoints; VI.2, Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology; VI.5, Philology / who is speaking*

<sup>331</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?; I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>332</sup> See II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*

<sup>333</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

"in which people, groups, live side by side, using together a larger territory, but being more or less self-contained" (see above).

#### *A brief conclusion*

The differentiations recognized by the social sciences and which occur in contemporary societies and communities can in some cases only be shown conditionally or not yet, in others plausibly justified, in others demonstrably also for the social entities of the past(s). The insight of sociologists that social coexistence was and is possible not in spite of heterogeneity but precisely because of it, can be transferred to the relations in the social entities of the past(s) by means of socio-critical archaeological research. It is the relations and dependencies between the functionally and socially different groups, the interdependence and complementarity of differences, that make this cohesion possible and necessary. And it is, once again, these cognitions, postulates, and statements that we use to answer our questions about whose past(s) we see in the material legacies and whose history we construct on the basis of the information thus obtained.



### *11.3.8 Equal - unequal or different? - First considerations*

In our complex society, but also in communities, in groups, even in nuclear families and as couples, we are connected to each other by a multitude of parameters that make social togetherness possible. Our social orders therefore need to be structured - stable and flexible at the same time - in order to be able to meet the diversity of needs and options that we as human beings unite under one roof, so to speak, through our social togetherness. Inequality, then, is the real characteristic of every social community! But what does inequality mean in concrete terms for social togetherness, for establishing and living in a common order? What does it mean that we are equal and unequal, similar and different at the same time?

#### *11.3.8.1 Equal, unequal or just different? (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 8, p. 177 ff.)*

According to sociological research, inequality is a structural feature of every social togetherness, of every social entity (op. cit., p. 177). Sociologists ask what kinds of inequalities exist, how and why inequality arises, and how and why it is reproduced. Inequality is a matter of access to and distribution of resources and opportunities. Inequality is often associated with power differentials and thus with unequal opportunities to shape one's own life (op. cit., p. 178). Inequality is the basis for hierarchical social structures, which are often experienced as social inequality. The latter aspect leads, among other things, to the question of whether a hierarchically ordered society makes social mobility possible (op. cit., p. 179) and thus offers the possibility of transforming the subjectively

perceived or objectively given inequality in the value system of the social entity into a just social order. Inequality is thus, on the one hand, the result of the unequal distribution of material and immaterial resources and thus of opportunities to fulfill one's own needs and desires. On the other hand, the way we feel, experience, and evaluate social inequality depends very much on what we define as our needs and desires, so it is also a highly individual matter. Inequality structures societies, but the evaluation of what inequality means can be very different for each individual. When we talk about social inequality today, this means, among other things, that we consider equality to be potentially socially desirable and achievable (op. cit., p. 181). However, the idea of social equality as a desirable state is a relatively modern view, as Thomas Schwietering points out in his historical consideration of this idea, an idea that first emerged in the wake of the French Revolution (18th century) (op. cit., p. 181). Inequality was, and still is, judged as injustice! Before the Enlightenment, people's positions were considered to be determined by their origins - and social orders were considered to be given by the gods. People recognized that they were unequal, that their positions in social interaction were different, but that this was by nature, willed by God, and therefore unchangeable (op. cit., p. 182). Of course, there were conflicts based on inequality and social protests against social conditions. However, they were not directed against the system as such, but against circumstances in which the rules of the system were violated by representatives of a group or community (op. cit., p. 182). In contemporary societies, according to sociological research, the existence of inequality must be legitimized, whereas in pre-modern societies this legitimization was provided by the acceptance of the existence of a natural order given by the gods (op. cit., p. 183).

One question that sociologists ask, among others, is under what circumstances we, the people, can label or accept inequality as unjust (op. cit., p. 186), or who in a group, community, and society perceives which forms and conditions of life as just or unjust, and why? An important factor in the perception of fairness or unfairness is the evaluation of what is considered desirable in a social entity (op. cit., p. 187). Which goods are considered to be rare, or are in fact rare, but desired and desired by whom (op. cit., p. 188), and why? The naming of social inequality is thus a matter of comparison. In order to explain how and why we, the people, perceive a social situation as just or unjust, we have to consider with whom we compare our own living conditions. Related to the study of inequality is the question of what poverty is (op. cit., p. 191). Two aspects are discussed: A person is definitely poor if he or she has neither enough to eat nor a place to live. However, further considerations of when a person is to be characterized as poor also depend on what a social entity defines as poverty beyond the above characterization (op. cit., p. 192). Furthermore, unequal distribution of goods and access to resources is possible in any social entity. Sociological research examines the determinants that cause structural inequality and why this is the case (op. cit., p. 194).

In many societies, for example, origin and gender (and, personal note, age) are among the factors that determine access to certain resources, such as education, and thus, among other things, social advancement and the opportunity to shape one's own way of life. Issues such as a certain origin or being a woman or a man are initially only expressions of difference. Differences as such, however, become signs of inequality only through our social evaluation, i.e. only through our, the people's, evaluation of difference (op. cit., p. 194)! The social processes, structures, rules and regulations that characterize a social entity can solidify the evaluation of social differences as inequalities that affect life chances and thus determine the chances or prevent equal participation in the social life of a group, community and society (op. cit., p. 195). In sociological research, social inequality is divided into categories. Traditional societies, according to sociological research, know the so-called >ranked society< [*Ständegesellschaft*] (op. cit., p. 197). The rank to which one belongs is given by birth and origin, and it is the rank that above all determines the way of life of its members.

An opposing category of the social order is the so-called >class society< [*Klassengesellschaft*] (op. cit., p. 200), in which above all material inequality causes the differences between people (op. cit., p. 199). The term was popularized by Karl Marx, who defined the social order in 19th-century European societies as consisting of the capitalists and the working class, the proletariat (op. cit., p. 199). Although Thomas Schwietering points out that he presented both categories from a historical perspective, sociological research nevertheless counts them among the classifications of social orders that can also be recognized in a variety of contemporary societies (op. cit., p. 201). In a corresponding contemporary context, the term ranked-society would rather circumscribe cultural and symbolic differences, while the term class-society would suggest differences in material relations (op. cit., p. 201). Another category to characterize the order of social entities focuses on >social stratum< [*soziale Schicht*] and >social status< [*sozialer Status*] (op. cit., p. 202). The parameters for naming social inequality in these orders are again different from both the class-society and the ranked-society. The detailed definition is that a social stratum is a group to which people of comparable social status belong (op. cit., p. 202). Status is defined (especially for contemporary societies) as being based on the level of education, the level of income, and the prestige of the occupation held (op. cit., p. 203), thus focusing very much on occupational activity and on the privileges, the public standing of individuals. The models of social order discussed so far agree that societies are hierarchically structured and that we, the people, occupy rather clearly defined places. However, we humans always live in several contexts simultaneously, and our social situations and lifestyles vary, sometimes considerably, even if we belong to the same social stratum and social status groups (op. cit., p. 207ff.) with which we compare our lifestyles. The last model to be presented here is the habitus concept popularized by Pierre Bourdieu (op. cit., p. 211). Habitus means the way we, the people, behave. The way we behave, our likes and dislikes, according to

Pierre Bourdieu (see here, reference in Thomas Schwietering, op. cit., p. 212), depend essentially on the social context in which we are socialized. The material circumstances and symbolic values that make up our social context shape us, our worldview, and as we live in this habitus, we simultaneously carry the condition of our habitus. Habitus, then, is that which is structured and structuring, and, as we have said, habitus is the incorporated social structure (op. cit., p. 212). In conjunction with the habitus concept, Pierre Bourdieu developed the model of "varieties of capital" (op. cit., p. 212 - 213). According to this model, we have not only economic capital, but also cultural capital, i.e. our formal education, our behavior, our manners, as well as our social capital, personal ties, membership in and access to certain social circles. Social and cultural capital can be accumulated. We can pass it on to our children, and we can potentially transform it into economic capital (op. cit., p. 213), which, of course, can be accumulated and increased as well as transformed.



### 11.3.8.2 Own commentary and archaeological reference

Sociologists show through their research that the complexity of social interaction in all societies, communities, and other social associations is always determined by the *sameness* (equal), *inequality* (unequal), and *otherness* (different) of their members. Sociologists explore the ways and forms in which sameness, inequality, and otherness manifest themselves. They ask their contemporaries about the criteria by which they identify sameness, inequality, and otherness. Why then are fellow human beings perceived as equal (*sameness*), unequal (*inequality*), or different (*otherness*), how does this differentiating perception come about? With their research, sociologists can already point out: The criteria by which members of a social entity divide their social community into equal, unequal, and different people are always culture-specific, and the perception of contemporaries as equal, unequal, or different is always both group-specific and individually shaped. The sociologists are further investigating the question of how respondents evaluate the classification of their contemporaries into socially equal, unequal, and other, different members of their social community, whether they consider these differentiations to be just or unjust, fair or unfair, "normal" and unchangeable, or socially constructed and thus changeable. Here, too, the answer is that the evaluation of sameness, inequality, and otherness is always culturally and group-specific as well as individually shaped.

In our socio-critical archaeological research we are interested in the same social phenomena. The challenges for us socio-critical archaeologists to find answers to these questions and to gain insights into these aspects of social interaction are again at least as complex as the social phenomena themselves. We too are searching for the ways and forms in which sameness, inequality and otherness appear. We too look for the criteria by which the members of the social entities of the

past(s) determined social sameness, inequality and otherness, and we too ask how the members of the social entities of the past(s) evaluated the occurrence of social sameness, inequality and otherness in their circles. The insight of sociological research that the naming and evaluation of social sameness, inequality, and otherness is always culture- and group-specific, as well as individually shaped, challenges us once again to find approaches that bring our etic point of view closer to the emic point of view.

*We have the things - we are looking for the people - how do we proceed?*

In each of our excavations, we uncover things. We compare things, we analyze them. With each analysis of artifacts, architecture, spatial order, and burials, we categorize them. On the basis of object types (containers, equipment, buildings), on the basis of shapes, colors, materials, sizes, and production methods, we determine, among other things, to what extent the things, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, and the burials are similar or even identical to one another,<sup>334</sup> whether they are dissimilar but nevertheless comparable and similar to one another, or whether there are cultural forms of expression that are (completely) different and thus not comparable. Thus, we do not only see or determine that individual objects, artifacts, architecture, spatial orders, and burials are similar to each other, but we also see that things differ from each other in details, i.e., that they are dissimilar or even (completely) different. We group the categorized single objects according to the mentioned criteria of order into ensembles, into groups of things. We document the spatial and numerical occurrence of the same, unequal or (completely) different ensembles and record the same, unequal or (completely) different room inventories and spectra of objects in graves. Our differentiations, our categorizations and groupings of cultural forms of expression into equal, unequal and different, we have made from our etic point of view (... truism) according to our cognitive interests, our habits of creating orders, and according to criteria whose choice we can plausibly justify. What we see as socio-critical archaeologists is our categorization of things, an expression of our etic point of view, subjective but not arbitrary.

On the basis of the categories of things we have formed, we search for possibilities to draw conclusions about the social relations in the social entities of the past(s). But before we, as socio-critical archaeologists, can begin this search, we must first answer the following question: Can we assume that the order of things established from our etic point of view corresponds to the ideas of order of the members of the social entities of the past(s), i.e. to the emic point of view? Can we assume that the members of the social entities of the past(s) have organized their materialized cultural forms of expression into categories that correspond to those we have constructed from

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<sup>334</sup> See II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*

our etic point of view? <sup>335</sup> Superficially, this question can (at first!) be answered in the affirmative, and quite plausibly so. Where we make our classifications of things as equal, unequal, or (quite) different according to externally visible criteria, that is, according to criteria that potentially everyone can and could perceive, these could potentially also have been used by the members of the social entities of the past(s) to order formation. Potentially, the alignment of our etic point of view with the emic point of view in the categorization of things would be possible - and our concern and approach to draw conclusions about the social relations in the social entities of the past(s) on the basis of these categories would be plausibly justified. However, this seemingly plausible starting point is hindered by a not insignificant stumbling block on the way.

### *The stumbling block*

The perception of phenomena, including the perception of things and people as equal, unequal, and different, is always culture-specific, group-specific, and sometimes individual. With regard to the order of things, this means that the order of things may have been made - culturally determined - by the members of the social entities of the past(s) according to criteria that were not based on external signs that are directly visible to everyone, but on ideal signs that are not readable on the things themselves. <sup>336</sup> Criteria, then, that were known to and perceived by the members of the social entities, but which, since they are not directly visible on the object itself, remain invisible to us as outsiders who do not belong to the socialization community of the members of the social entities of the past(s) (Marian Füssel, 2021, 108 - 109). <sup>337</sup> This possibility, then, of classifying things as equal, unequal, or (completely) different on the basis of criteria that are not visible in the thing itself, and therefore not comprehensible in archaeological research across cultures, means potentially: It cannot be excluded that our view of things, our etic point of view and the view of the members of the social entities of the past(s) on the materialized cultural forms of expression, the emic point of view on things, simply did not (!) correspond to each other, precisely because the view of the members of the social entities of the past(s), as well as our view as socio-critical

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<sup>335</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*, I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions? with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*

<sup>336</sup> See II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>337</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations up to II.3.6.2, Social and "medial realness"*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations up to II.3.7.10, Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations up to III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics / iconographical description*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*



archaeologists on the things, on the artifacts, on the architecture and spatial order, on the burials, is culture-specific and in this sense subjective.

This stumbling block, which we cannot (or not yet completely) remove with the current methodological state of research, the fact that we may not (yet) be able to bring our etic point of view and the emic point of view closer together, has far-reaching consequences for the gain of knowledge in our socio-critical archaeological research, which I would like to illustrate with two examples.

### *Tombs in Egypt*

The pyramids of Egypt can be arranged into groups of similar tombs on the basis of visible formal criteria, including shape and size, which are initially defined as such from our etic point of view ([https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramide\\_\(Bauwerk\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramide_(Bauwerk))).<sup>338</sup> However, the pyramids also show differences in shape and size, so they are comparable, similar to each other, but not equal, they are unequal. (Completely) different are the tombs that were built underground without any visible pyramid superstructure ([https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haus\\_der\\_Ewigkeit\\_\(Altes\\_%C3%84gypten\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haus_der_Ewigkeit_(Altes_%C3%84gypten))). The formal differences in the burial customs mentioned from my etic point of view are and were obvious at the time of the origin and use of the tombs. Accordingly, my thesis is that they were also seen from an emic point of view. The criteria for distinguishing between equal, unequal and different graves are and were, according to my thesis, also for the members of the social entities of the past(s), on the one hand the size and shape of the graves and on the other hand the principle of visibility or invisibility of the graves. The thesis from which I am starting here, that the perception of the graves from our etic point of view corresponds to the perception also of the members of the social entities of the past(s), i.e., to the emic point of view, and that we can thus make all the inferences about the social relations in the social entities of the past(s) on the basis of our perceptions and the categories formed according to them, seems plausible - and yet we are confronted with the above-mentioned stumbling block in this consideration.

This assumption, that we could draw the said conclusions more or less "without doubt" from our etic point of view, seems to be definite. But precisely because this assumption seems so sound, it is especially important to remember that "everything could have been completely different". People in the past(s) may have defined sameness, inequality, and otherness according to very different criteria, and thus may have seen cultural forms of expression quite differently than we do today.

I use the example of Egyptian burial customs *pars pro toto* as a suitable object of investigation in order to explain in more detail in which ways or on the basis of which questions we might find the clues that allow us to potentially transform the "seemingly certain" assumptions into "actually valid

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<sup>338</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior / pyramids*

arguments". That is, clues that allow us to postulate the approximation, if not the equation, of our etic point of view on materialized cultural forms of expression with the emic point of view in a plausibly justified and intersubjectively comprehensible way. Clues that allow us to correlate our conclusions, postulated from our etic point of view, about the social conditions under which the respective distinctions were possible or became necessary, with the emic point of view. And last but not least, clues that allow us to gain insights into the valuations of sameness, inequality, and otherness at that time. In order to find out whether our present view of the tombs and the categories formed from our etic point of view could have corresponded to the ideas about the conceptions of sameness, inequality and otherness of the members of the social entities of the past(s), i.e. to the emic point of view, we should start this research again as a single case study. So we should first look at each individual case study for indications of the so-called spirit of the times.<sup>339</sup> Thus, we should try to clarify the political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural contexts in which the construction of the equal, the unequal, and the very different tombs became possible or necessary. This search for the contexts, for the social conditions of those who were buried in these tombs and of those who built them, leads us to a wide range of other questions that complement and extend those already raised in sociological research on the phenomena of sameness, inequality and otherness.<sup>340</sup> What has led to the materialized present cultural forms of expression that we have, from our etic point of view, plausibly justified as equal, unequal, or different cultural forms of expression? We search for the causes and reasons that might have led to the sameness, inequality, and otherness of the tombs as we initially see them from our etic point of view. If we succeed in eliciting these frameworks, then we use these cognitions as the basis for our categorization of things and our indications of the social relations under which sameness, inequality, and difference have become possible and necessary. We use this knowledge to develop plausible reasons for our reflections on why the emergence or designation of things and people as well as social relations as equal, unequal, and different in the social entities of the past(s) became necessary for whom, who in the social entities of the past(s) evaluated them, and how - this with a view to the effects that corresponding assessments had on people's social interactions. By means of contextual analysis, we try to gain insights into the social circumstances of the past(s), which, last but not least, allow us to plausibly justify the approximation of our etic point of view and the emic point of view. Thus, we want to investigate which social, economic and political conditions of the deceased and their social environment were possible and necessary preconditions for access to which kind of burial customs. We ask who had which economic resources and which political power to make these resources visible through monumental architecture and spatial order, and for whom it was possible or

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<sup>339</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / the spirit of the times*

<sup>340</sup> See II.3.8.1, *Equal, unequal or just different?*

necessary to avoid making them visible.<sup>341</sup> In this context, we also ask for whom among the members of a social entity visibility and invisibility might have had what meaning in dealing with death. Did the affiliation to a certain social class as well as the social status of the deceased and the people left behind play a role in the choice of burial customs? Thus, we ask what effects the presence of - and access to or exclusion from - the tombs, which we perceive as expressions of equal, unequal, and different burial practices, had in the respective social entity on social interaction, on the perception of the members as belonging together or as distinct groupings within their social entity (assuming that these would have been seen accordingly from an emic point of view and that we would be able to show this emic point of view).<sup>342</sup> We ask not only how the members of the social entities of the past(s) would have evaluated access to and possession of equal, unequal, and different burial practices, or exclusion from these possibilities. We also ask how the occurrence of sameness, inequality, and otherness of both the things and, if they were also considered in the social entities of the past(s), the tombs, and the potential social sameness, inequality, and otherness associated with them were evaluated in general. If the members of the social entities of the past(s) had also considered the burial customs thematized and categorized here as equal, unequal, and completely different, the question follows: Did the members of the social entities of the past(s) consider sameness, inequality, and otherness as "normal" and acceptable, or as socially desirable and changeable, as fair or unfair with regard to the shaping of their own way of life and the shaping of a successful social coexistence? And further, were such considerations at all part of the criteria by which the social conditions "at the time of the pyramids", here represented by the tombs, were evaluated? In order to be able to answer these questions, to be able to assume that our etic point of view can be correlated with the emic point of view, and thus to be able to remove the stumbling block that (still) stands in our way, we again resort to interdisciplinary cooperation with sociology. We use the knowledge gained there on the formation of order, on the formation of groups, and on the importance of norms and values for the design of cultural forms of expression as well as for the making of successful coexistence. We deal with the use of things - as media of nonverbal communication - for the purpose of representing socio-political intentions, with the use of visible cultural forms of expression for the exercise of power and the implementation of cultural hegemony. We draw on sociology's insights into these aspects with the aim of elaborating causal

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<sup>341</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; IV.1, *Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other?* up to IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>342</sup> For more archaeological examples of burial modes and burial rites and their interpretation, see as well Marlies Heinz, 2016, 135ff.; see <https://freidok.uni-freiburg.de/data/155245>; see <https://kamidellozarchaeologicalproject.org>; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.1, *Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research*; II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? of sociological research*; II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations* up to II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

connections between our reflections on the design of the "world of things" and our interpretation of social relations in the social entities of the past(s). Our goal is to develop the thesis that our etic point of view on the phenomena of sameness, inequality, and otherness in the world of things as well as in the world of people corresponds in a plausible way to the emic point of view, and thus to be able to remove the aforementioned stumbling block.<sup>343</sup>

The clarification of whether we can connect our view of the tombs, our perception of equal, unequal, and different, and the conclusions we draw from this perception of the visible, materially present cultural forms of expression, to the social relations in the social entities of the past(s) concerned with the emic point of view, the possibility of being able to remove the aforementioned stumbling block - or not - has far-reaching consequences for our presentation of the past(s) as well as for our construction of history. If we do not succeed in this approach, and if we base our reflections on the materially present cultural forms of expression as well as our conclusions about the social conditions solely on the categorizations of the tombs into equal, unequal, and completely different, which we have made from our etic point of view, a new spectrum of questions arises at the same time, which now again concern the epistemic value of our socio-critical archaeological research itself: Whose view of the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s) do we socio-critical archaeologists present, whose connotations do we represent, and what do our conclusions about the social relations in the social entities of the past(s) mean if we draw them solely from the perceptions we have gained from our etic point of view? Who is speaking when the emic point of view remains closed to us, what do we see, what do we elicit, what do we construct?

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#### *Equal, unequal, different - what pictorial works reveal*

The analysis of pictorial works reveals further facets of the complex challenge of gaining insights into the occurrence and forms of sameness, inequality, otherness, recognizing the criteria by which categories of sameness, inequality, and otherness are determined and evaluated by the members of the social entities of the past(s) in order to shape and order social interaction, and thus bringing our etic point of view and the emic point of view closer together. As an example of this approach I consult again the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-

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<sup>343</sup> See II.3.3, *Groups*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together?* - First considerations up to II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft]* - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.1, *Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication* - First considerations; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life* up to III.1.7.1.2, *Cultural hegemony - how does it thus in a concrete and practical way work?* - and a short summary

<sup>344</sup> As in the research of Near Eastern archaeology, texts are available to researchers in Egyptology that are helpful in finding answers to some of the questions raised. <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheops-Pyramide>

Sin, König von Akkad, Mesopotamien, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin \(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))) respectively address the analysis of the theme of conflict, struggle, winner and loser.

*Meanwhile mentioned and described several times, the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD<sup>345</sup> - forms and functions of rendering differentiation*

As viewers of the stele today, we recognize the phenomena of sameness, inequality, and otherness, which, according to my thesis, were also recognized by the recipients at that time. One can see and has seen that some of the members of the victorious army were presented as formally equal to each other, others not, but similar and comparable, with regard to the main character of the event even formally different.<sup>346</sup> The visible formal differentiation into equal, unequal, but similar, and different, presents and represents the functional differentiation of the military actors, which in turn was a prerequisite for the victorious action of the army.<sup>347</sup> This presentation of functional differentiation, in turn, is closely related to hierarchically structured social differentiation. Heterogeneity and differentiation, formal sameness, inequality and otherness represent the status of the functions, the positions and the holders of the corresponding activities.

My interpretation is also that the depiction of the losers is quite different: here the actors, as far as they are still recognizable from the state of preservation of the picture, are depicted as equal or similar to each other. What is missing - or not recognizable, according to my thesis - for us as socio-critical research archaeologists, thus for today's viewers, is a visible presentation of inequality or otherness in the portrayal of the actors on the losing side. Here, it is precisely not on the basis of externally visible characteristics that the actors are presented as functionally differentiated and thus as unequal or different, and here there is no inherent reference to the representation of social differentiation in the presentation.

In my opinion, the thesis that the members of the social entities of the past(s) also saw both the presentation and the representation of the sameness, the inequality and the otherness of the actors on the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD from their emic point of view can be evaluated positively.

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<sup>345</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>346</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*

<sup>347</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

Every army is characterized by the functional differentiation of its soldiers.<sup>348</sup> Functional sameness, inequality, and otherness are the necessary prerequisites and conditions for the functioning of armies. The members of the social entities of the past(s) must have known this, according to my postulate, and the recipients of the stele also recognized and perceived this. Thus, I think it is plausible to assume that our etic point of view and the emic point of view have more or less coincided with regard to the victorious actors in the battle. It is also plausible that we can draw initial conclusions from this order about the social relations in the social entity for which this stele was made. The perception of the actors on the losing side is different. Do we socio-critical archaeologists perhaps fail to see in the picture of the stele signs that were clearly before the eyes of the members of the social entities of the past(s) when they looked at what was depicted? Were there no signs of the inequality or otherness of the actors in this military compound in the depiction of the losers, or do we not recognize them as "outside" viewers, that is, from our etic point of view? This is where the stumbling block mentioned at the beginning comes up again, and in this case, too, we may not (yet) be able to completely eliminate it with our current knowledge and the methods we have at our disposal. As a solution approach, it would be conceivable to consider why it was advantageous for certain circles on certain occasions not to show phenomena that actually existed in reality. Did the initiators of the stele deliberately suppress functional equality, inequality and otherness in the depiction of the enemies, and if so, why?<sup>349</sup>



### II.3.9 Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations

Living together is a challenging endeavor, creating and maintaining order in the face of the diversity of requirements, needs, and options that we human beings demand of social togetherness and that we want to see secured by social orders. Several aspects of what holds society and social orders together have already been discussed.<sup>350</sup> Two further decisive factors, which occur in every interpersonal relationship and in all forms of institutionalized social interaction, must be considered: power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft].<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance / change*

<sup>349</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*; IV.3, *Rahel Jaeggi - Economy as a social practice*

<sup>350</sup> See II.3.7.8, *Parameters that keep orders going: Ritual and routines* up to II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep order going: Values and norms*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>351</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism - Chantal Mouffe*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life* up to III.1.7.1.2, *Cultural hegemony - how does it thus in a concrete and practical way work? - and a short summary*

*II.3.9.1 Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft]. What is it and who executes it? (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 219 ff.)*

One focus of social science research on social togetherness is how power [*Macht*] and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] function (op. cit., p. 219). Power and rule/governance are omnipresent phenomena (op. cit., p. 220), relevant in all spheres of our social togetherness. Sociologists explore how the exercise of rule/governance over people is possible at all, and why we put up with others exercising power over us (op. cit., p. 220). Related to both aspects are the questions of what and who legitimizes power and rule/governance, why and why not, and how power and rule/governance emerge and can be sustained (op. cit., p. 221).

*II.3.9.2 What does it mean to exert power [Macht]? (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 221 ff.)*

To exercise power [*Macht*], according to the sociological explanation, means to be able to prevail over the intentions of another person (op. cit., p. 221). The exercise of power becomes acute at the very moment when two people, each with his or her own intentions, come into contact with each other and a balance between two factual intentions becomes necessary (op. cit., p. 222). This means and clarifies: Power is not a personal quality of an individual, but a social relationship (op. cit., p. 222).

*II.3.9.3 Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - from a sociological point of view (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 222 ff.)*

When groups, communities, and societies develop, power [*Macht*] and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] do not follow. Social entities emerge primarily as constellations of power [*Machtverhältnisse*] and rule/governance relationships [*Herrschaftsbeziehungen*] (op. cit., p. 222). That is, as sociological insights show, social entities can only exist because corresponding constitutive forces are at work.

*II.3.9.4 Power [Macht] or rule/governance [Herrschaft] - what is it about? (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 223 ff.)*

Both power [*Macht*] and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] can be characterized as hierarchical social relationships. According to Max Weber, power is based on a variety of factors, but is always tied to a specific situation and actors (op. cit., p. 223). In contrast, rule/governance is an enduring relationship, not limited to a specific situation. Rule/governance potentially encompasses a larger set of actors who obey the rule/governance, including a well-organized administrative organization and personnel, without which rule/governance cannot function. One could thus speak of

rule/governance as institutionalized power (op. cit., p. 223). While power, according to Max Weber, is only a situational and thus ephemeral phenomenon, rule/governance would require the stable willingness of people to be kept under control (op. cit., p. 223).

*11.3.9.5 Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - according to Max Weber (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 224 ff.)*

*Power [Macht] - after Max Weber*

A more detailed rendering of Max Weber's definition of power points out that exercising power means forcing through every opportunity to do so, even against the reluctance of other persons, and by whatever means the opportunity is given (op. cit., p. 224). To be in power means to be able to enforce my will, especially in those situations where others would rather follow other intentions, but have to submit to my will (op. cit., p. 225). To have power, on the other hand, is merely to have the possibility of actually exercising it, but never the guarantee of successfully getting one's way.

*Rule/governance [Herrschaft] - after Max Weber and the question, why people obey*

Rule/governance is then the opportunity to give an order to a group of assignable persons and to find obedience (op. cit., p. 226). Most important for this definition is that those who follow the order obey more or less voluntarily. That is, the motivation to obey, according to Max Weber (op. cit., p. 226), lies in the motivation of those who obey, who are willing to accept the rule/governance. The question sociologists ask, however, is why people legitimize the rule/governance in question, thus what is the motivation to obey? To obey is a form of active action, of coming to a decision (op. cit., p. 226). Why, for example, does an employee follow the instructions of his or her superior? Usually, it is because the employee considers the order to be legitimate in the workplace, and this is his or her motivation to follow the superior's instructions. However, the relationship between giving orders and obeying will only work in this specific context of the workplace - not beyond! This obeying in everyday contexts characterizes the phenomenon of rule/governance according to Max Weber. Rule/governance is not the same as violence. If rule/governance could only be exercised through violence, this would simply be violence, but never rule/governance in the sense of Max Weber's definition (op. cit., p. 229).

*11.3.9.6 Rule/governance [Herrschaft] and more detailed reflections on the motivations of obeying - according to Max Weber (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 230 ff.)*

As we have seen, Max Weber was most interested in understanding and exploring the motivations for obedience. He defined four types of motivations that would make people obedient (op. cit., p.



230). Purposeful rational motives [*zweckerationale Motive*] (op. cit., p. 231) lead people to obey because they see their obedience as beneficial to themselves. Obedience here would be a cost-benefit consideration. Value-rational motives [*wertrationale Motive*] make obedience possible because the person in question is convinced that submission is necessary and important in the specific situation, regardless of whether or not obedience will then be of personal benefit to the one who obeys. Traditional motives [*traditionale Motive*] mean that a person obeys more or less as a matter of routine. Affective motives [*affektuelle Motive*], according to Max Weber's definition, are more specific; they result from an affective relationship between the obeying person and the one who exercises control (op. cit., p. 231).

### *11.3.9.7 Three types of legitimate rule/governance [Herrschaft]: Why legitimate - and again - why obey? - according to Max Weber (Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 231 ff.)*

Rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] must be accepted as legitimate in order for us to obey. Max Weber distinguishes three types of rule/governance (the following definitions present Max Weber's so-called ideal types [*Idealtypen*]; for details on this concept of ideal types, see Max Weber, 1976,<sup>5</sup> 1, 4, 10; Oswald Schwemmer, 2004, 175 - 177).

#### *Type 1 - traditional rule/governance [Herrschaft] - a definition and why people accept and obey the order*

Obeying and accepting a traditional rule/ governance is based on the conviction that the established rule/governance is part of the true and rightful order of the world, or of one's own reality and life-world. The legitimacy of such an order is given, inter alia, by its descent from the past(s) (op. cit., p. 232), and additionally by the "fact" that the gods have established the ruling order and the rule/governance (op. cit., p. 233).

#### *Type 2 - charismatic rule/governance [Herrschaft] - a definition and why people accept and obey the order*

Accepting charismatic rule/governance means: Those who follow and obey a particular person and accept his or her rule/governance are convinced that he or she is the right person in the right position and is believed to be, as an individual and *ad personam*, the one in charge of the rule/governance. Charismatic rule/governance is thus tied to the person as an individual, not to the office or officeholder. Charisma is constituted by the people who trust the individual, but not by any particular competence or capacity of the person trusted (op. cit., p. 234).

#### *Type 3 - legal or bureaucratic rule/governance [Herrschaft] - a definition and why people accept and obey the order*

The basis of legal or bureaucratic rule/governance, on the other hand, is not tied to individuals or traditionally transmitted values, but to rules and regulations established to organize social

togetherness. Compliance with these rules and regulations takes place against the background that people believe in and accept the legitimacy of the corresponding legal system (op. cit., p. 237).

#### II.3.9.8 Why people enter into power constellations [*Machtverhältnisse*] - according to Heinrich Popitz (*Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 241 ff.*)

Power [*Macht*] is the result of a social constellation or configuration (op. cit., p. 241), the reasons why someone is in power are unlimited. But why is a person or group able to exercise power against the will of others? Heinrich Popitz answers this question, among others, with the following examples (op. cit., p. 243) Solidarity [*solidarische Gruppe*] is a strong strategy for being successfully powerful (op. cit., p. 243), the solidarity of several individuals who form interest groups and fight together for their common interests against others who are not correspondingly united. The division of labor [*Arbeitsteilung*] in the pursuit of common interests and goals, and thus the sharing of the workload, pressure and responsibility by focusing on one and the same goal is another supporting and beneficial approach to the successful exercise of power, according to the sociological analysis (op. cit., p. 244). A third aspect considers the configuration of established circles [*Kohäsion der Etablierten*] (op. cit., p. 245), which unite against newcomers in a social entity. The established have well-functioning means of communication, are familiar with each other, know each other and therefore trust each other. All these aspects characterize the cohesion of established groups (even if these groups belong to obviously different social circles) and at the same time lead to the displacement of newcomers. Thus, it is social relations in their various forms that constitute power.

#### II.3.9.9 Types of power [*Macht*] according to Heinrich Popitz and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] according to Michel Foucault (*Schwietring, op. cit., ch. 9, p. 246 ff.*)

Heinrich Popitz (op. cit., p. 246) defined and distinguished four types of power [*Macht*]. While Max Weber assumed that the exercise of power is an intentional act to enforce one's will against the concerns and even the resistance of others, Heinrich Popitz approached the definition of power from an even broader perspective (op. cit., p. 246). On the one hand, he also dealt with the fact that people use violence to achieve their goals, which Max Weber also considered, but with a different solution (see above, "Rule/governance is thus not equivalent to violence; if rule/governance could only be exercised by violence, this would simply be violence, but never rule/governance in the sense of Max Weber's definition (op. cit., p. 229).") The corresponding violent behavior is called by Heinrich Popitz the power to act or the power to injure [*Aktionsmacht*

oder *Verletzungsmacht*] (op. cit., p. 246). The second type of power for Heinrich Popitz is the so-called instrumental power [*instrumentelle Macht*] (op. cit., p. 246), which means that someone is in charge of defining the rules and regulations of general validity according to which we have to act. While both types of power arise from intentions and are thus comparable in their cause and background to Max Weber's approach that the exercise of power is an intentional act, the two other types of power defined by Heinrich Popitz are grounded and function in a different way. Authoritative power [*autoritative Macht*], according to Heinrich Popitz (op. cit., p. 246), means that we, the people, want something that is imposed on us from outside, while we consider it our own intention and need. In this case, we have internalized the rules and regulations set by others. This is a passive action or reaction that could be described as the result of socialization and seen as an expression of our habitus! The fourth type of power is defined by Heinrich Popitz as the power to fix data or the power that is conveyed by making people dependent on objects [*Macht des Datensetzens oder die objektvermittelte Macht*]. Today we are more or less dependent on the use of computers and certain programs that run on these computers, we are dependent on the infrastructure that provides us in today's societies with electricity, with water, to name just a few examples that represent this form of power.

One last definition of power will be given briefly, it is Michel Foucault's definition of power called governmentality [*Gouvernementalität*] (op. cit., p. 249) (which I consider to be in the sense of Max Weber's definition of rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] as well as comparable to Heinrich Popitz's definition of authoritative power [*autoritative Macht*]). Michel Foucault asks the question of what quota power takes in the development of our subjectivity (I refer here to the excellent presentation of Michel Foucault's approach by Thomas Schwietering, op. cit., p. 249 - 250; see also <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governmentality>). According to Michel Foucault, the exercise of governmental power would lead to us being shaped by that power, to our inner life being shaped by it. Again, this would mean that we would have internalized the goals of the rules and regulations and the images of right and wrong set up by each rule/government, and would constantly consult ourselves as to whether we are conforming and complying with the set demands (op. cit., p. 250). The theme of this approach is not repression versus freedom (op. cit., p. 250), but the phenomenon of self-control and unconscious acting according to internalized rules and regulations set by others.

#### *Excursus II.9 Violatory power respectively structural violence*

The peace researcher Johan Galtung (1971, 55 - 104) (see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan\\_Galtung](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan_Galtung)) has expanded the concept of power [*Macht*] with the term "structural violence" by a decisive aspect or a new point of view on the exercise of power and here especially on the power to act or to injure [*Aktionsmacht oder Verletzungsmacht*], as defined by Heinrich Popitz. In Heinrich

Popitz's definition, the power to act or the power to injure is the >power to inflict harm in an action directed against it < [„die Macht, in einer gegen sie gerichteten Aktion Schaden zuzufügen”] (see above and Heinrich Popitz, 1986, 68). In Johan Galtung's definition, the power to harm is not solely or primarily attributed to individual members of society. For Johan Galtung, the power to injure lies primarily in the structures that we humans have created, the rules and frameworks of our social interaction. This form of power to injure, thus the power to act or the power to injure [*Aktionsmacht oder Verletzungsmacht*] - is what Johan Galtung calls structural violence [*strukturelle Gewalt*]. >Structural violence is the avoidable impairment of basic human needs or, more generally, of life, which reduces the actual degree of satisfaction of needs below what is potentially possible < [„Strukturelle Gewalt ist die vermeidbare Beeinträchtigung grundlegender menschlicher Bedürfnisse oder, allgemeiner ausgedrückt, des Lebens, die den realen Grad der Bedürfnisbefriedigung unter das herabsetzt, was potentiell möglich ist.”] (Johan Galtung, 1971, 55 - 104).<sup>352</sup> Where the rules of coexistence prevent individuals from fully developing and realizing their life chances, Johan Galtung sees the effective power of structural violence. Here, norms, values, traditions and concepts of order interfere with the development and realization of human life plans and prevent those affected from realizing them. Structural violence, in contrast to the power of action, is not directly and immediately visible in its instruments, but in its extent of obstruction and injury it is potentially even more far-reaching than direct violence (apart from homicide as a direct consequence of the power of action in the form of violence). Structural violence can thus occur in every form of power constellations [*Machtverhältnissen*] as well as in rule / governance relationships [*Herrschaftsbeziehungen*].

#### *Excursus II.10 Ideology and common sense*

The fact that ideology, like structural violence, can impede and prevent the realization of people's interests, and that these restrictions on the possibilities of action and development of those affected, like structural violence, are propagated as conforming to the prevailing norms and values, orders and rules, connects both phenomena of power, the exercise of power as power [*Macht*] and the exercise of power as rule/governance [*Herrschaft*], even if they are brought to bear with different instruments. Ideology becomes powerful as an interest-based worldview. It communicates opinion as knowledge, and value-setting opinion as "truth" [*Wahrheit*] (Marlies Heinz, 2008, 25 ff.).<sup>353</sup> Following a Marxist approach, ideology can be described as "a system of ideas that explains and legitimizes the actions and interests of the dominant classes" (Meredith B. McGuire, 1982, 185).

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<sup>352</sup> See III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life up to III.1.7.1.2, Cultural hegemony - how does it thus in a concrete and practical way work? - and a short summary*

<sup>353</sup> See III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life up to III.1.7.1.2, Cultural hegemony - how does it thus in a concrete and practical way work? - and a short summary; Excursus III.1, Ideology and Hegemony - what is the difference?*

This aspect is also emphasized by Teun A. van Dijk (1998, 49) when he describes ideology as "those general and abstract social beliefs, shared by a group, that control or organize the more specific knowledge and opinions (attitudes) of a group." and links this to social implications: "Whenever a group has developed an ideology, such an ideology at the same time defines the basis of the group's identity." (op. cit., p. 118; quoted in Marlies Heinz, 2008, 25). Value-neutral describes the sociological definition Peter V. Zima's ideology as a >partial system that articulates collective orientations and interests, but at the same time claims general validity< [„ein Partialsystem, das kollektive Orientierungen und Interessen artikuliert, aber zugleich Allgemeingültigkeit beansprucht“] (Peter V. Zima, 1989, 32) (Marlies Heinz, 2008, 25). That power is inherent in ideology is likely to have been shown by the definitions. In the network of all power relations, i.e. in all social relations, it is advisable >to pave the way for the development of the respective ideologies towards *common sense*< [„den Weg zur Entwicklung hin zum „common sense“ zu bahnen“]. It goes without saying that it is also advisable to find ways to make ideologies >attractive to as many members of the non-dominant groups of society as possible< [„attraktiv für möglichst viele Mitglieder der nicht dominanten Gruppen der Gesellschaft machen“] in order to increase power (Marlies Heinz, 2008, 26).<sup>354</sup>

#### *A brief summary*

Max Weber, Heinrich Popitz, Michel Foucault, Johan Galtung and Chantal Mouffe have dealt with the phenomena of power [*Macht*] and rule / governance [*Herrschaft*] from different angles, asking what is to be understood by these phenomena, how they function, who is able to exercise power [*Macht*] and rule / governance [*Herrschaft*], and why we humans submit or adapt to power constellations [*Machtverhältnissen*] and rule / governance relationships [*Herrschaftsbeziehungen*] by following the rules given there.

Max Weber characterizes the phenomenon of power, or the exercise of power, as a situational matter that can be seized by any person (as does Chantal Mouffe, who presents power constellations as the basis of every interpersonal encounter). Rule/governance, according to Max Weber (see here II.3.9.7), requires a structural framework, the apparatus, the economic-political administration, the military. In contrast to the situational exercise of power, rule/governance is designed to be permanent, structurally anchored in the social entity, not tied to a person but to an office and function, and Max Weber also referred to it as institutionalized power. According to Max Weber, each form of rule/governance as defined here is bound to different contexts of origin and impact mechanisms [*Wirkungsmechanismen*], as well as to different criteria of legitimation. Max

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<sup>354</sup> See III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life up to III.1.7.1.2, Cultural hegemony - how does it thus in a concrete and practical way work? - and a short summary*; Excursus II.10, *Ideology and common sense*

Weber also posed the question of why people obey the powerful and the rulers, i.e., why we obey the rules set by these actors. For him, the motivation to obey lies in the motivation of those who obey. He distinguishes four motivations that underlie all obeying (see here II.3.9.6).<sup>355</sup>

Heinrich Popitz answers the question of why we humans enter into power constellations at all with reference to three criteria (see here II.3.9.8). According to Heinrich Popitz, entering into power constellations promises advantages to the actors in certain situations, both through the perception and implementation of power and through the effects of the power constellations.<sup>356</sup> Heinrich Popitz has also dealt in detail with the phenomenon of power and the exercise of power. He distinguishes four types of power, which he differentiates from each other both in terms of the basis for their emergence and in terms of their effects on cooperation in social entities (see here II.3.9.9).

Michel Foucault coined the term governmentality. Governmentality [*Gouvernementalität*] (see above for the correspondence with the phenomena of rule/government; authoritative power) means that we have internalized the goals of rules and regulations and the images of right and wrong set up by the rule/government in question.

Johan Galtung speaks less of power and rule/governance as in the definitions mentioned so far, but uses the concept of structural violence [*strukturelle Gewalt*], the power to act or to injure [*Aktionsmacht oder Verletzungsmacht*], which arises primarily through the structures, rules and framework conditions of our social interaction that we humans have created. Due to the respective framework conditions, it is not possible for all members of a social entity to perceive the same options for the realization of a so-called good life. Structural violence can become effective in all forms of power constellations and rule/governance relations.

...and a conclusion

The terms and definitions show that there are overlaps between the different conceptualizations, such as the equation of structural violence [*strukturelle Gewalt*] (Johan Galtung) as form of the power to act or the power to injure [*Aktionsmacht oder Verletzungsmacht*], as such potentially occurring in every form of both power constellations [*Machtverhältnissen*] and rule / governance relationships [*Herrschaftsbeziehungen*] or governmentality [*Gouvernementalität*] (Michel Foucault) with authoritative power [*autoritative Macht*] respectively with rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] as well as with the phenomenon of ideology.<sup>357</sup> Power [*Macht*], rule / governance [*Herrschaft*], structural violence and

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<sup>355</sup> See III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia*, James Scott, *The weapons of the weak*, 1985

<sup>356</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism* - Chantal Mouffe

<sup>357</sup> See Excursus II.10, *Ideology and common sense*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia*, James Scott, *The weapons of the weak*, 1985

ideology thus represent and depict relationships. Power constellations [*Machtverhältnisse*] and social relations are interdependent and within social relations power [*Macht*], rule / governance [*Herrschaft*], structural violence and ideologies have a regulating effect on >relations of interaction< [*Interaktionsbeziehungen*] and >coordination of action< [*Handlungskoordination*](Ansgar Nünning, 2005, 134). Where power [*Macht* and here as well *Machtverhältnisse*] is not recognized in these relations in one way or another, power [*Macht*] acts as violence - as direct as well as structural violence and also through the ideology of those who "have the say". The acceptance of power constellations [*Machtverhältnisse*] does not necessarily mean that they are recognized as legitimate. This, according to Ansgar Nünning, >is reserved for power relations in which power is exercised within the framework of institutions.< [*„bleibt Herrschaftsverhältnissen vorbehalten, bei denen Machtausübung im Rahmen von Institutionen erfolgt.“*] (op. cit., p. 134).<sup>358</sup>



#### II.3.9.10 Own commentary and archaeological reference

As socio-critical archaeologists, we, like social scientists, are concerned with the question of what power [*Macht*] and what rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] are. We can answer these first questions immediately with Max Weber's definitions, which I will briefly mention here as a reminder: The exercise of power [*Macht*] consists in the possibility of enforcing one's own wishes and will even against the wishes and wills of others. It is a social relationship that is always bound to a specific situation. The exercise of power is >in each case bound to a concrete situation and to specific actors< [*„jeweils an eine konkrete Situation und an bestimmte Akteure gebunden“*] (see Thomas Schwietering, 2011, 223).

In the context of our everyday experiences, this means: All our human relationships are power constellations [*Machtverhältnisse*]. All people - then and now - exercise or obey power in every interpersonal encounter. On the one hand, power has a tangible effect in subliminal practice, which as such is not necessarily visible, but nevertheless effective.<sup>359</sup> The exercise of power becomes situationally, potentially fleetingly visible in our daily interactions with each other, potentially permanently visible through the translation of power constellations into materialized cultural forms of expression. We exercise power both intentionally and consciously as well as unconsciously, willingly as well as against our own will.<sup>360</sup>

<sup>358</sup> See III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia*, James Scott, *The weapons of the weak*, 1985

<sup>359</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak*, 1985

<sup>360</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism - Chantal Mouffe*

The exercise of rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] on the other hand, is precisely >not limited to individual situations< and also >potentially extends to a wider circle of actors< [„*nicht auf eine einzelne Situation beschränkt (...) potentiell auf einen weiteren Kreis von Akteuren erstreckt*“] (op. cit., p. 223). Rule/governance is a permanent constellation of power. The exercise of rule/governance presupposes the existence of generally accepted and followed rules, a structured order. The exercise of rule/governance requires an administrative staff (op. cit., p. 238). >One could therefore define rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] as institutionalized power< [„*Man könnte Herrschaft daher als institutionalisierte Macht ... betrachten*“] (op. cit., p. 223).

The (ideal-typical) categories in which social scientists define power and rule/governance can be used in our socio-critical archaeological research as constructive tools to structure our research. I will briefly review the types of power as defined by Heinrich Popitz and the types of rule/governance as defined by Max Weber.

Heinrich Popitz defined the four types of power (cf. Thomas Schwietring, 2011, 246 and here II.3.9.9) - the power to act or the power to injure [*Aktionsmacht oder Verletzungsmacht*], instrumental power [*instrumentelle Macht*], authoritative power [*autoritative Macht*] and the power to fix data respectively the power conveyed by making people dependent on objects [*Macht des Datensetzens oder die objektvermittelte Macht*].

Max Weber summarized the types of rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] into three categories (cf. Thomas Schwietring, 2011, 232 - 237 and here II.3.9.7), the traditional rule / governance [*traditionale Herrschaft*], the charismatic rule / governance [*charismatische Herrschaft*], and the legal / bureaucratic rule / governance [*legale/bürokratische Herrschaft*]. These categories, according to Max Weber, implicitly contain the reasons for the legitimation of rule/governance. Max Weber also addressed the question of why we humans obey. He answers this question by defining and distinguishing four types of obedience motivation or action orientation (Thomas Schwietring, 2011, 230 - 231 and here II.3.9.6) - the purposive rational motives [*zweckerationale Motive*], value rational motives [*wertrationale Motive*], traditional motives [*traditionale Motive*], and affective motives [*affektuelle Motive*], which he at the same time calls the motives of wanting to obey [*Motive des Gehorchens*] (op. cit., p. 231).

Starting from these type formations of power and rule/governance, or from these types or categories of motivations for obedience, we socio-critical archaeologists ask first of all whether, from our etic point of view, we recognize in the materialized cultural forms of expression the signs that point to the exercise and the result of the exercise of power, rule/governance, and obedience or action orientation.<sup>361</sup> Specifically, we ask whether - and if so, on the basis of which signs - we can recognize the respective types of power and rule/governance in the materially preserved

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<sup>361</sup> See I.8, Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life up to I.8.1.1, Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction



cultural forms of expression,<sup>362</sup> and whether it will be possible for us, given our initial situation, to find precisely those things, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, and the burials that will allow us to distinguish between the exercise of power [*Macht*] as a situational action and the exercise of rule /governance [*Herrschaft*] as institutionalized power? Do we recognize who in the social entities of the past(s) had which possibilities to exercise power and rule/governance in which way and why?<sup>363</sup> And can we determine the motives for wanting to obey, and thus the orientation of action, on the basis of things alone and from our etic point of view, and answer the question of who obeyed whom and why, or who acted in what way and why?

*The cultural forms of expression as indicators of the exercise of power and of obedient behavior*

As socio-critical archaeologists, we see the exercise of power and the obedience associated with the exercise of power, or the orientation of action, in all material legacies, in every archaeological record, in artifacts, in architecture and spatial order, and also in the layout and execution of burials. To a limited extent, it becomes possible to use things both to causally relate the exercise of power to the types of power identified by Heinrich Popitz and to show connections between material legacies and the motivations for obedience and action orientation postulated by Max Weber.

*Concrete - the world of things as a result of the exercise of power and obedience*

We see the successful exercise of instrumental power [*instrumentelle Macht*] (Heinrich Popitz), the power that sets the norms and rules in a social entity, where we see, through things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, and burials, adherence to the norms and rules underlying their production.<sup>364</sup> It is almost a truism, and yet it should be mentioned - as underlying motivations for obedience [*Gehorsam*] and action orientation [*Handlungsorientierung*] (Max Weber), for following the norms and rules, we should postulate the rationality of purpose, the purposive rational motivations [*zweckrationale Motive*] (Max Weber), the advantage for all participants that lies in ensuring the functionality of things by producing them according to the given rules. Inherent in this action, I further postulate, is the following of value rational motivations [*wertrationale Motive*] (Max Weber) and traditional motivations [*traditionale Motive*] (Max Weber), the habitual following of rules in the production of artifacts, architecture, and spatial order: One does it this way because one has always

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<sup>362</sup> See II.3.9.5, Power [*Macht*] and rule / governance [*Herrschaft*] - according to Max Weber; III.1.7.1, The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony; III.1.7.2, A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia, James Scott, *The weapons of the weak*, 1985

<sup>363</sup> See IV.2, Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner: *The role of the socio-economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society*; IV.3, Rabel Jaeggi - *Economy as social practice as social practice*

<sup>364</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / society versus community interests, groups, we*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*; II.3.7.1, *So what is order? Own experience*; II.3.7.2, *Order, rules and regulations - parameters of vital importance for all human cooperation*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

done it this way, it is the right thing to do. And especially in the handling of funerals, the affective motives [*affektuelle Motive*](Max Weber), the emotional attachment of the bereaved to the deceased, are likely to have become powerful.<sup>365</sup>

The materially present cultural forms of expression also refer to the exercise of data-setting or object-mediated power, thus the power to fix data or the power conveyed by making people dependent on objects [*Macht des Datensetzens oder die objektvermittelte Macht*] (Heinrich Popitz). The material legacies show this: The powerful - and in each case it is important to determine who they were and from what social circles they came - provided the infrastructure, the equipment, and the instructions necessary for successful social coexistence. It is potentially inherent in this constellation of power that people become dependent on this powerful group or person precisely because this person or group has control over access to things, artifacts, architecture and spatial order, and over the handling of burials.<sup>366</sup> Such dependencies arise both from the bottom up and from the bottom down.

#### *An example*

Whoever in the social entities of the past(s) was able to process metal into weapons, for example, possessed knowledge relevant to power [*Macht*] and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] and possibly decisive for war.<sup>367</sup> Knowledge and skills thus potentially formed the instruments of the power of data fixing or the power conveyed by making people dependent on objects [*Macht des Datensetzens oder die objektvermittelte Macht*] (Heinrich Popitz) exercised by the craftsmen. In this case, the powerful and the rulers were dependent on the power of the craftsmen. At the same time, depending on the prevailing order, the craftsmen were dependent on the powerful and the rulers for access to the raw materials they needed and, if necessary, for access to craft knowledge. In this context, obedience is likely to have been based on purposive rational motives [*zweckrationale Motive*] (Max Weber) on both sides. If the described coexistence of power and obedience had worked, this relationship could have potentially developed into a win-win situation.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> See II.3.7.8, *Parameters that keep orders going: Rituals and routines*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*

<sup>366</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*

<sup>367</sup> See II.3.6.4, *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>368</sup> See II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*

*A brief interim conclusion ...*

The analysis of materially transmitted cultural forms of expression thus already provides a variety of insights into the phenomena of the exercise of power [*Macht*] and obedience [*Gehorsam*] or action orientation [*Handlungsorientierung*] (Max Weber).

The examples should have made clear what power is - every interpersonal relationship - and in which forms or types of the exercise of power this power constellation can express itself, or by which signs we socio-critical archaeologists recognize this power constellation. Power can be exercised by anyone in a social entity - this statement is implicit in the definition of power. The given example clarifies this statement and specifies the answer with reference to the functional specialization and the plausibly postulated social differentiation between those placed in a power constellation here. Power is exercised by the craftsman through his special knowledge, power is exercised by the politically powerful or rulers through their position in the social structure. Thus, it is the functional specialization, recognized by the complex handicraft requirements in the production of the artifacts and the necessary stocks of knowledge to be presupposed for the entire production process, and the social differentiation and hierarchization that I postulate in this example as a factor of the "bottom up / bottom down" power constellation. It also becomes clear who obeyed whom in this power constellation. What was necessary, according to my postulate in the example, was the mutual obeying, the acceptance of the mutual dependencies, the realization that only the acceptance of the power constellations would lead to the desired result. Sociologists, including both Heinrich Popitz and Max Weber, have pointed out the advantages of entering into power constellations as well as the advantages of obeying each other or accepting the given relationships.<sup>369</sup>

*...and looking ahead to the next challenge*

But can the material legacies also reveal the signs that point to the exercise of power [*Macht*] in the form of rule/governance [*Herrschaft*], rule/governance as defined by Max Weber, which is characterized, among other things, by the presence of a structured order, an administrative staff, and thus an institutionalized framework? And do we find further indications that it was not the person himself who was decisive for people to have obeyed an order, i.e. to have shown obedience, but the office, the function that a person had exercised in this structured order, and the position that a person had assumed in the institutional framework that required obedience and made action orientation possible?<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> See I.3, *Archaeology as socio-critical archaeological research or: What is actually meant by "socio-critical"?*

<sup>370</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.9.9, *Types of power [Macht] according to Heinrich Popitz and rule/governance*

*In addition, a short excursion from the research field of Near Eastern Archaeology to the research field of Ancient Near Eastern Philology*

That in the societies of the past(s) institutions and offices were created, that power [*Macht*] was manifested in institutions and transferred into rule / governance [*Herrschaft*], that among other things the creation of monumental buildings as the seat of the rulers took place on the instructions of the office holders, that materialized cultural forms of expression can therefore be the signs for the existence of institutionalized power, i.e. of rule / governance, is proven by the cuneiform texts from Mesopotamia (*today's Iraq*), among them since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. the Sumerian building and votive inscriptions (Horst Steible, 1982). They also show how rulers legitimized themselves and what forms of rule/governance they adopted or exercised.

*... and back to the material legacies and their inherent stumbling blocks*

That the existence of rule / governance [*Herrschaft*] cannot be inferred from things alone without textual evidence - in more than a few cases - I have explained and demonstrated using the example of building activities and spatial order: On the one hand, lavishly designed monumental buildings can be built in a cooperative community effort, by agreement of all participants within a social entity, i.e. without the involvement of institutionalized rulers. On the other hand, such buildings may have been constructed at the behest of institutionalized rulers. Both scenarios are and have been possible.<sup>371</sup> Thus, the challenging question remains whether we socio-critical archaeologists, despite this stumbling block, will be able to identify evidence in additional materialized cultural forms of expression on the basis of which we can postulate, perhaps even state, the existence of institutionalized power, i.e. rule/governance, in a plausibly justified manner.<sup>372</sup>

*Other cultural forms of expression - can these also be indicators of the exercise and effects of rule / governance [*Herrschaft*] and obedient behavior towards functionaries/officials?*

In the search for answers to these questions, the analysis of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamien, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad)))<sup>373</sup> with its themes of struggle, violence, victory, and defeat is again revealing.

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[*Herrschaft*] according to Michel Foucault; Excursus II.9, Violatory power respectively structural violence; Excursus II.10, Ideology and common sense; III.1.7.1, The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony

<sup>371</sup> See II.3.6.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony

<sup>372</sup> See III.1.2, Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations

<sup>373</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; II.3.7.15, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage; II.3.7.19, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts; II.3.7.21, Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation; II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols;

*The stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD - already described, discussed and analyzed several times*

I have described, questioned, and analyzed the stele in terms of various cognitive interests, several times also in terms of the organization of the military units represented in the picture as parties to the conflict. Briefly to the memory: The stele depicts the result of an armed conflict. The victorious military unit, which I have interpreted and designated as an army, is depicted, as well as the losers of this military conflict.

*An army - its structure and the organization of its members. A brief explanation*

Every army is hierarchical, i.e. ordered in a strictly structured way. Every function, every position has its fixed place in the structure. While the functions and positions in an army are filled by changing people, the structure remains unchanged. That is, people come and go, functions and positions remain independent of the people who occupy them as structural elements in the order of the army. The organization and structure of the army determine the direction in which the implementation of cooperation in the military alliance, i.e. the concrete exercise of power [*Macht*] respectively rule / governance [*Herrschaft*] (see below), is carried out and regulated. In the army, orders are given from the higher positions to the lower ones. Of primary importance for the possibility of exercising power is the position a commander occupies in the structure and hierarchy of the army; of secondary importance is the person who exercises power with command authority. This form of exercising power - structurally anchored, not person-bound but function- and office-bound (see above) - could therefore be addressed as - in the military order existing form of rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] according to Max Weber's definition.

Accordingly, and in accordance with the hierarchical structure of functions and positions of commanders in an army, those lower in the hierarchy must obey the higher functionaries. Thus, one obeys primarily the incumbent, the functionary, and not the person as such. Obedience is and has been an indispensable part of successful military interaction. Without obedience in the form described, the functioning of an army is not possible.

*Back to the picture of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD: What can be postulated, what can be stated with regard to the determination of rule/governance [*Herrschaft*], obedience and the legitimization of rule/governance?*

The exercise of power [*Macht*] (Heinrich Popitz) and the development of power constellations [*Machtverhältnisse*] (Heinrich Popitz) in an army can be plausibly described as the exercise of rule / governance [*Herrschaft*] (Max Weber) based on the structured order, the institutionalized framework of social interaction, and the adherence to accepted rules. Within the framework of institutionalized

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*picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

power, the rule / governance, different types of the exercise of power are possible. In the pictorial reproduction of the conflict on the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD we see, from an etic point of view as well as, as I argue, from an emic point of view, the exercise and the effects of the power to act respectively the power to injure [*Aktionsmacht oder Verletzungsmacht*] (Heinrich Popitz) by those<sup>374</sup> who - at least according to those who commissioned the picture - have obviously won the conflict shown. At the same time, we see the actors on the losing side, whose exercise of power consisted, among other things, in resisting the opponent. Again, we see the exercise of the power to act or the power to injure [*Aktionsmacht oder Verletzungsmacht*] - here in the act of resistance - and the effect - the resistance becomes visible in the defeat.<sup>375</sup> We see the result of instrumental power [*instrumentelle Macht*] (Heinrich Popitz). The military administration had obviously functioned, the structured order of the army had been respected, the rules in force had obviously been followed, the army had emerged victorious from the conflict.<sup>376</sup> We also see the successful exercise of the power to fix data or the power conveyed by making people dependent on objects [*Macht des Datensetzens oder die objektvermittelte Macht*] (Heinrich Popitz). The victorious army was equipped with the necessary infrastructure, with the equipment and weapons required for battle and, in my interpretation, with the devices necessary for the presentation and representation of the victory, the standards. The question remains unanswered, as does the consideration of whether it will be methodologically possible for us to answer the question of the extent to which the actors acted voluntarily or were coerced (and thus obeyed, cf. Max Weber), and whether or to what extent authoritative power [*autoritative Macht*] (Heinrich Popitz) came into play.

With regard to the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, I dare to say that, with a view to the pictorial display of an event, the recognition of rule/governance is potentially possible. Thus, I am making a statement here that differs from what I have said about our ability to distinguish between the exercise of power and the exercise of rule/governance on the basis of things alone, a statement that I made there, but with a focus on artifacts, including architecture and spatial order, as well as burials, which do not contain pictures.

*To rule - to legitimize rule / governance [Herrschaft] - and - again - to secure obedience - but how?*

Max Weber's definition of the three types of rule, traditional rule/governance [*traditionale Herrschaft*], charismatic rule/governance [*charismatische Herrschaft*], and legal or bureaucratic rule/governance

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<sup>374</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*;

<sup>375</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*

<sup>376</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

[*legale/bürokratische Herrschaft*], includes the justification of the legitimacy of rule (see here II.3.9.7). With the definition of the types of action orientation, also defined by Max Weber, he also presents the motives of obedience, purposive rational motives [*zweckrationale Motive*], value rational motives [*wertrationale Motive*], traditional motives [*traditionale Motive*], and affective motives [*affektuelle Motive*] (see here II.3.9.6).

The legitimation of rule/governance in the army is anchored in the structure of the army itself, i.e. it is legitimated quasi immanently in the structure.<sup>377</sup> An army can only function with a structured order and the observance of rules. Functionaries in the army derive their legitimacy to rule/govern from their position in this structured order and institutional framework. They thus act within the framework of traditional rule/governance [*Herrschaft*], in which the given order - here in the military sphere - and thus the rule / governance in this order is generally considered legitimate both by the members of the army and, beyond that, by the members of the social entity (see also Thomas Schwietring, 2011, 232). The fixed set of rules according to which social interaction, and thus rule/governance, takes place in the army also corresponds to the characterization of legal or bureaucratic rule/governance [*Herrschaft*], which is exercised on the basis of fixed rules and laws.

The stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD shows the formal prominence of a person whom I have already described in the previous interpretations of the picture<sup>378</sup> as the main character of the events. It cannot be excluded that not only the function led to this prominence, but that this prominence also stood for the charisma of this person - and that the charisma was part of the legitimation of the rule/governance [*charismatische Herrschaft*].

The assurance of obedience [*Gehorsam*] according to Max Weber's definitions (see here II.3.9.6) can also be derived from the structure and order of the army. In any army, individuals will obey according to purposive rational motives [*zweckrationale Motive*], if only to avoid punishment for disobeying orders. Less a reflection of everyday life than a habit, my thesis continues, the actors' action orientation and obedience in the events shown are based on traditional motives [*traditionale Motive*]. Obedience to traditional rules and customs, i.e. the transmission of traditions, is also one of the motives that inspires fighters - even in traditional *communities* - to join a combat action, i.e. to initiate action and to practice obedience. The phenomenon of *structural violence* [*strukturelle Gewalt*], as described by Johan Galtung (see Excursus II.9), may also have had an impact on the obedience of the members of the army. And also the internalization of the rules, the governmentality

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<sup>377</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*

<sup>378</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological research / order and disorder / change / picture description / see as well the own commentaries on the use and impact of pictures*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture topics*

[*Gouvernementalität*] according to Michel Foucault (see here II.3.9.9), as well as the effective power of the ruling ideology might have led to not (any more) questioning the hierarchical relations in the army, i.e. to obeying! There is, however, a stumbling block in all these considerations, which affects all considerations about the reasons for obedience in the social entities of the past(s): Was it at all possible in the *communities* of the past(s), in the so-called traditional societies, to refuse to participate in military activities, not (!) to join the army and thus not (!) to obey? And another consideration arises: Would the members of the social formations of the past have embarked on this dangerous "adventure" - joining the army - alone or above all out of solidarity [*Solidariät*] with their *community* (see here, II.3.9.8, Heinrich Popitz)?

In every army, there are always members who derive the meaningfulness of their existence, and thus of their actions, from their membership in the army. If the soldiers in the victorious army or the fighters on the losing side were convinced of the meaningfulness of their fighting commitment, the value-rational motives [*wertrationale Motive*] would also have been the basis of their obedience to the rulers. We look again at the stele of the Akkadian king NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (the attribution of the stele to this king is possible due to the textual tradition, as already explained elsewhere).<sup>379</sup> Loyalty to him, NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, and thus affectionate motives [*affektuelle Motive*], could also have guided the participation in the events and the obedience of the actors.

*Again, let me begin by concluding briefly ...*

Facets of the exercise of power [*Macht*] (according to the definition of Heinrich Popitz) within the framework of rule / governance [*Herrschaft*] (according to the definition of Max Weber), the exercise of power in the form of rule / governance can thus be shown, plausibly justified on the picture of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD. Also, who was able to exercise power [*Macht*] and in what way - the exercise of power in the form of rule / governance [*Herrschaft*] and thus qua position in the power structure - can be explained by the structure of an army. This, as well as the hierarchical order of an army, makes it easy to understand who obeyed or had to obey whom - and why!

*...and then a brief summary and outlook on how to proceed in our search for signs of rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] and obedience*

My frequent use of the subjunctive in the above remarks, especially when considering the motives for obedience, highlights another major challenge for any socio-critical archaeological study. This challenge lies in the identification of motives for action (!), including the search for the motives underlying obedience. Again, this challenge is linked to the requirement that our socio-critical archaeological research plausibly demonstrate why our claims about motives for action and

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<sup>379</sup> See II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior



obedience, made from the etic point of view, also correspond to the emic point of view. In other words: How can we determine motives which, while influenced by the social situation, by the context in which decisions are to be made, by the respective habitus of the actors, are always initially a "matter of the head" [*Kopfanliegenheit*] of the individual? <sup>380</sup> So if motives correspond to completely invisible thoughts, which can then lead to decisions or possibly visible results of actions, we are faced with the challenge of determining these invisible motives for actions and also finding the invisible motives for obedience on the basis of the corresponding visible results.

Whether answers to this question can be found is currently an open question. But pursuing this question is a creative, complex, and necessary challenge. Necessary because answering it has far-reaching implications for our overarching questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct: Whose decisions underlay the shaping of the cultural forms of expression handed down with each archaeological record? Which and whose motives were behind the creation, use and abandonment of cultural forms of expression in the social entities of the past(s)? Who obeyed whom - and why - and thus contributed to the creation and shaping of the materialized cultural forms of expression? The search for answers is interdisciplinary and begins with consultation of the social and cultural sciences, which analyze social relations and cultural forms of expression of the social with these very questions: What are the signs of rule/governance, the exercise of rule/governance, the effects of rule/governance, the motives for action, and the motives for obedience in contemporary societies? On the basis of the corresponding cognitions of social and cultural scientists, we then try to derive from these insights into the realities of contemporary societies indications as to whether and where we can potentially count on signs in the material legacies of the social entities of the past(s) that point to the existence of the phenomena we are looking for, here power [*Macht*], rule / governance [*Herrschaft*], obedience [*Geborsam*] and action orientation [*Handlungsorientierung*] (Bernd Belina; Boris Michel (eds.), 2007; Heike Delitz, 2009; Heike Delitz, 2010; Joachim Fischer; Heike Delitz (eds.), 2009; Henri Lefebvre, 1991; Murray Edelman, 1995; Paula Diehl (eds.), 2007; Egon Flaig, 2003). <sup>381</sup>



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<sup>380</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>381</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*; II.3.7.14, *The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected?*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations* up to III.1.2.3, *The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function? One possible perception*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

II.3.9.11 *Sociology and the socio-critical archaeological research - or: So what does sociological science offer us socio-critically researching archaeologists?*

The interdisciplinary cooperation between socio-critical archaeology and sociology sharpens our view on the cultural forms of expression as testimonies of social relations in the social entities of the past(s) in two diametrically opposed directions! The cognitions of sociological research on the questions of what society is and how society functions offer us one of the foundations from which we can construct plausible answers to our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct. Answers that are always to be regarded as provisional and developed only for the respective individual case. At the same time, our interdisciplinary collaboration makes it unmistakably clear that socio-critical archaeological research is always also a science of creative NOT-KNOWING (Marlies Heinz, ongoing research since 2023). The stumbling blocks we encounter when we try to gain insights into the social relations of the social entities of the past(s) solely on the basis of the cultural forms of expression available in material form are unmissable.

In any socio-critical archaeological research, we encounter two categories of stumbling blocks: stumbling blocks that occur in any socio-critical archaeological study, and specifically concretized stumbling blocks that occur with specific cognitive interests (see Marlies Heinz, 2023).

Basically, in any socio-critically oriented archaeological research we have to deal with the opposition of a dynamic and a static state. I.e., we are always faced with the challenge of explaining - how and whether we can recognize from our source situation, the static archaeological records, the dynamics and processual sequences of events and actions that led to these archaeological records [*archäologischer Befund*].

Basically, we are always working with the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous. When we analyze our archaeological records, we are always confronted with the question of whose present and whose past(s) we are actually looking into!

Basically, we are always working with the medial realities to determine what the social realities were like in the past. We are always doubly concerned with understanding nonverbal communication. So we always have to first get clear about our own nonverbal communication with the artifacts. The next step is to understand how actors in the past(s) have used objects as media of nonverbal communication.

Basically, we - but not only we as socio-critical archaeologists - are confronted with the question: Who is actually speaking? *We* - or *the actors of the time*? In other words, we must constantly ask ourselves whose point of view we actually take when dealing with the past(s), or whose point of view we then present in our reports: Our point of view - the etic point of view - or the point of view of the actors at the time, the emic point of view? And again and again we have to clarify whether it is possible for us to answer this question at all.

Our specific NOT-KNOWING becomes clear where we pursue concrete cognitive interests, as presented in the texts of the "*Own Commentaries ...*". Open questions or stumbling blocks arise where we ask, for example, whether we can recognize the social form of organization of society/*community* on the basis of things alone. Where we ask, whether it is possible to elicit memories, to uncover lies, to recognize the ideas of order and value systems of the members of the social entities of the past(s) on the basis of things alone. Do we recognize the time systems of the members of the social entities of the past(s) from the objects alone? Do we recognize from the state of preservation of things (destruction or well preserved condition) and the archaeological record (abandonment of settlements) the causes and reasons that led to the respective state of affairs? Can we elicit what the members of the social entities of the past(s) perceived in their natural and social environments and what, if anything, led to action? Can we discern the motivations for action, especially the motivations of individual actors? Will it be possible for us to grasp phenomena that could potentially have been "head matters" [*Kopfsangelegenheiten*] alone, that need not have been visibly reflected in the material and thus cannot be perceived from our etic point of view? What knowledge, then, that sociological research deems necessary and indispensable for understanding and explaining what society is and how it functions, can we archaeologists elaborate with our sources, the things? And what impact does our NOT-KNOWING have on answering our core questions about how we see ways of life in the past(s), what images, what conceptions we create of ways of life in societies or *communities* in the past(s), and what constructions of history we make? (see Marlies Heinz, 2023)?

At the same time, our NOT-KNOWING contains an incalculable creative potential. Of interest now are the conceptual problems that arise when we consider archaeology as a historical social science. Answers are sought to the questions of where the limits of our current knowledge lie and how, if at all, we can overcome our knowledge limitations. How do we construct realities of the past(s)? How do we arrive at well-founded knowledge about the past(s)? Under what historical conditions do knowledge and cognition emerge? A new field of research is opening up. It is now promising for socio-critical archaeological research to expand interdisciplinary research to include collaboration with philosophy, and to make the questions of ontology [Whose realities do we grasp?] and epistemology [How do we arrive at justified knowledge?] which are posed there as fruitful for our own socio-critical archaeological research. (In preparation 2023, an extended study on the topic of NOT-KNOWING: Marlies Heinz „*Socio-critical Archaeology as a Science of Creative NOT-KNOWING* [*Nichtwissen*]; see also here VI.2, Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology.)

## Part III

# Socio-critical archaeology as cultural science

or:

On the way from the thing to the  
human being seen from the  
perspective of the cultural sciences

### III.1 Socio-critical archaeology - also a cultural science

#### *The sociological perspective*

The object of our research and our sources make socio-critical archaeology both a social science and a cultural science. As socio-critical archaeologists, we are concerned with questions of what society is and how society functions, what constitutes our social togetherness, how our social togetherness is possible, and what conditions must be met for us to live together and with each other. Based on this knowledge, we seek solutions to analyze things and their contexts in order to gain insights into the social togetherness of people in the social entities of the past(s).

We question the things, the artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, as well as the burials, i.e., the finds and archaeological records that we uncover in our excavations, about who created the materialized expressions of past communal life, whose needs and whose options for fulfilling these needs are before our eyes with these cultural forms of expression, whose past(s) we "see" and whose history we construct. Through what is visibly presented, we search for what is invisibly represented. Through things we communicate nonverbally with the past(s).

#### III.1.1 Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: *communication - First considerations*

#### *The cultural studies perspective*

While I have used the term "society" and followed Thomas Schwietring's study (2011) to refer in the broadest sense to the universal basic needs that characterize human life and coexistence and to the possibilities of realizing the success of social togetherness,<sup>382</sup> the turn to a cultural studies approach to cultural forms of expression changes both the focus of consideration and the spectrum of interdisciplinary collaboration. I extend the latter through cultural-sociological research (especially Matthias Junge, 2009; see also the very informative English-language presentation of this topic „Sociology of Culture“ - [http:// sociology. iresearchnet.com/sociology-of-culture/](http://sociology.iresearchnet.com/sociology-of-culture/); see as well Birgit Recki, 2014, 281 - 302 ; as well as Lyn Spillman, 2020) and cultural studies research (especially Andreas Reckwitz, 2011; see as well <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/practice-theory> ). As archaeologists doing research in the field of cultural studies, we now focus our attention on things and their use for successful social togetherness less on the search for who dealt with things and how, but rather on the questions of what connotation and representation are and what significance the effect and power of connotation

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<sup>382</sup> See Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record; Thoughts on the topics of representation, semiotics and nonverbal communication, I have previously thought through and published in a related version in Marlies Heinz, 2019. I thank the publishers for the printing permission.*

and representation have for successful social togetherness {see *Representation*}. We also ask how connotations and representations are produced in the first place, and whether or how we are able to recognize the signs that lead us from the visibly presented to the invisibly represented {see *Semiotics*}. We are also concerned with the essential importance of communication for any social interaction. What must be given so that communication and especially, as relevant in our case of socio-critical archaeological research, nonverbal communication can succeed in the sense of all participants {see *Nonverbal communication*}? Last but not least, we use the method of iconographic and iconological analysis and interpretation developed by the science of art in order to approach and implement the complex concerns of our cultural-scientific observations in a clearly structured way {see *Science of Art*}. The cultural studies perspective thus both focuses and expands our field of vision on social togetherness in the social entities of the past(s).

*Representation* {see *Representation*, III.1.1.1 - III.1.1.3}

In all our actions, in addition to the visible action and the visible results of the action, there is the invisible, the represented. We cannot achieve successful social togetherness if we do not understand the connotations of our thinking, speaking and acting, the represented in the presented.

An example:

Any handling of things means perceiving and using them not only in their primary function - a jug serves to hold liquid,<sup>383</sup> but also to make us aware that things represent something and that this representation,<sup>384</sup> the invisible in the visible, has an effect on social togetherness. In addition to the primary functions we ascribe to things - a jug serves to hold liquid - we humans ascribe secondary functions, meanings, to things, to our property respectively to our ownership of things and our dealings with things. A vessel that is locally unique in form, type, material, and ornamentation, and extraordinary in its production and procurement, advances to become a luxury good. The proprietor respectively the owner receives a special social status in the social entity, a different status than the members of the social entity, who do not have access to luxury goods. Visibly, the jug is presented. Invisibly, the jug as a luxury object represents the social status of the proprietor or owner.<sup>385</sup> So we are dealing with the phenomenon of representation, because every visible thing has this "more" of invisible meanings, because this occurrence of the invisible in the visible has a considerable influence on our social togetherness. We socio-critical archaeologists have to look for or find this invisible in the visible in order to understand and explain whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct. It is the meanings that we humans ascribe to our

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<sup>383</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*

<sup>384</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*

<sup>385</sup> See II.3.8.1, *Equal, unequal or just different?*

immaterially expressed behaviors and actions, as well as to the materialized cultural forms of expression, the connotations and the phenomenon of representation, which become effective in all interpersonal relationships and in all dealings with things, which, as elements of every communication, have a decisive effect on the shaping of our social togetherness, and thus, in our social togetherness, have a decisive effect on our sense-giving orientation.<sup>386</sup> This, according to Matthias Junge >is the great achievement of culture< [„*ist die große Leistung der Kultur.*“] (op. cit., p. 11).<sup>387</sup>

*Semiotics* {see *Semiotics*, III.1.2 - III.1.2.3}

But how does it come about that connotation and representation are essential parts of our thinking, speaking, and acting? How do we humans come to see things as, among other things, signs for something that "communicates more" than the visible alone shows? How and why do we humans, in our relations to our social, cultural and natural environment, ascribe to them the said connotations, meanings, in addition to the so-called primary functions?<sup>388</sup> Researchers in *semiotics* are concerned with these questions.<sup>389</sup> As socio-critical archaeologists, we turn to the cognitions of semioticians for answers to our questions in this regard. Of particular interest for our socio-critical archaeological research is that branch of semiotics which investigates the sign character of things, which divides things into the categories of the iconic, the indexical, and the symbolic,<sup>390</sup> and which with this categorization first of all confronts us with the challenge of recognizing these categories at all in the materialized cultural forms of expression. We are concerned with semiotics because semiotics, by pointing out the importance of recognizing and understanding sign categories from a broader perspective, clarifies for us the importance of understanding representation for the success of social interaction, and further points out the importance that this understanding of sign categories and their expressive possibilities has for our understanding and explanation of social interaction in the social entities of the past(s). We are aware of the challenges presented to us by

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<sup>386</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions? with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; Excursus I.4, *To understand and to explain*; II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society? - First considerations*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*; II.3.6.4, *The phenomenology of everyday knowledge*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description*; III.1.7, *The power of the cultural - the cognitions of the social and cultural sciences*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>387</sup> See Excursus I.2.1 *Culture*; Excursus I.2.2 *Cultural forms of expression - defined in concrete terms*

<sup>388</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*

<sup>389</sup> See III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations up to III.1.2.2, Semiotics and language - Ferdinand de Saussure*

<sup>390</sup> See III.1.2.3, *The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*

the insights of semiotics, including the recognition that the various categories to which things can be assigned provide or prevent, to very different degrees, the possibilities of grasping what things represent on the basis of things alone. Semiotics thus points out to us socio-critical archaeologists the challenges we face when we want to extract from our sources exclusively things, their connotations and what is represented, knowing that we need this insight in order to be able to elicit an authoritative element of communication of the time and a powerful factor in shaping social interaction in the social entities of the past(s) and to be able to work out answers to our questions, whose past(s) we see in the materialized cultural forms of expression and whose history we construct.

*Communication {see Nonverbal communication, III.1.3}*

The real challenge in our search for the invisible in the visible, for the connotations that the members of the social entities of the past(s) had, among other things, associated with the visible materialized cultural forms of expression, for the signs that indicate to us what is represented in what is presented, lies in our specific communicative situation from which we socio-critical archaeologists make contact with the past(s). As socio-critical archaeologists, we come into contact with the past(s) only through things. We "communicate" with the members of the social entities of the past(s) only indirectly and nonverbally. This communicative situation is challenging: We see something, we perceive something, and we search for something we can neither see nor perceive - the invisible behind the visible, the connotations, behind the presented the represented, the people behind the things, the social. Through the realities conveyed by the media, we seek insights into the social realities of the past(s).<sup>391</sup> I have already mentioned the importance of communication to the success of any social interaction at several points in this text - here is a short version as a reminder: The relationships we humans develop among ourselves and with each other we develop through our speech as well as through our actions, through our behavior, through our body language, our facial expressions and gestures, through the things and artifacts, the architecture and spatial order, and the burials with which we surround ourselves. We turn to each other and to things. We communicate from person to person - directly and indirectly, visibly and invisibly, verbally and nonverbally. We communicate through things and artifacts, through architecture, spatial order, and burials. We use these to successfully shape our social togetherness. We communicate through the meanings we assign to our actions with each other and our behavior toward each other. We communicate nonverbally through our interactions with things and artifacts. To understand and explain what has to be given for us as socio-critical archaeologists to be able to understand the nonverbal communication of the members of the social entities of the past(s) at all,

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<sup>391</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations* up to II.3.6.3 *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*



and on the other hand to explain how our own nonverbal communication with the past(s) is possible on the basis of the things alone, we pursue the question of how nonverbal communication works in general, or what has to be given for nonverbal communication to be successful in the sense of all participants.<sup>392</sup>

*Science of Art {see Science of Art, III.1.4}*

The *cultural*-scientific focus of our cognitive interests is as complex as our *social*-scientific focus. The methodological approach of *iconographic* and *iconological* analysis and interpretation developed in the science of art respectively in art history is helpful in order to be able to carry out the analysis of cultural forms of expression as results of social interaction in the social entities of the past(s) in a clearly structured way.<sup>393</sup> It shows us how we can potentially arrive at possible meanings, at representational statements, in particular from pictorial works of art, how, starting from things alone, we discover the invisible in the visible, how we are able to decode signs, and how, despite the stumbling blocks that lie in the way of our search from this starting position, we also arrive at the insights into the social relations of the social entities of the past(s) that we are looking for through nonverbal communication. We are concerned with the science of art because the method developed there of obtaining indications of what is represented, what is not shown, but what is always meant, from the analysis of pictorial works in particular, also helps us to substantiate our initially subjective interpretations of cultural forms of expression as plausible and generally valid explanations and, through this potential possibility of generalizing our explanatory approaches, to bring our etic point of view closer to the emic point of view.

*A brief summary and a question*

The brief introduction to the cultural studies approach to things presented on the previous pages is intended to provide an overview of the potentials that this approach to things offers for our socio-critical archaeological research. Specifically asked and summarized: What then does this way of looking at things offer us for our socio-critical archaeological research? The cultural studies perspective broadens our view of the importance of connotation and representation for the success of social interaction. It sharpens our awareness of the importance of recognizing (!) what is represented for the success of social interaction in any social entity. It sharpens our awareness of how relevant this recognition is for the realization of our central cognitive interest in socio-critical archaeological research, i.e., for the possibility of finding answers to our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct - and, at the same time, of establishing in these

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<sup>392</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

<sup>393</sup> See III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

answers a rapprochement between our etic point of view and the emic point of view. It makes clear that every naming of things, every assignment of concepts is a construction, that each and every thing (as well as every human encounter) has the character of a sign, and that beyond what is visibly presented, the represented is always inherent in each and every thing. And last but not least, the cultural-scientific approach to cultural forms of expression makes it clear once again that we social-critical archaeologists gain our insights into the ways of life in the social entities of the past(s) solely through nonverbal communication with things, and that we succeed in understanding and explaining social realities only by analyzing the realities transmitted through the media. The short introduction served as an overview. In the following detailed elaborations, I will deepen the insights gained and explicate the questions and cognitive interests that guide research in the areas outlined above. I will address the potential gain in knowledge that we can expect if we extend the cultural science approach to the analysis of the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s) (see III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference). At the same time, I will point out where and how we will have to reckon with further stumbling blocks in this kind of interdisciplinary cooperation.

#### III.1.1.1 Representation

I have already explained <sup>394</sup> how important representation is in every social encounter and for every form of communication, including the nonverbal communication that we socio-critical archaeologists carry out with the materialized cultural forms of expression, and how important the understanding of representation and the represented is for the success of any social interaction. In response to the opening question of what representation is and how it works, I would like to provide a brief but detailed answer.

Representation, the process by which meaning is constituted, functions through referencing and substitution [*Verweisen und Ersetzen; Verweisung und Vertretung*], creating ambiguity and change. To consider representation as a process of constituting meaning is thus to consider the existence of a so-called secondary meaning, the connotation [*Konnotation*]. Every object is always connected to a broader field of meaning. These meanings are no longer necessarily shared uniformly, even by people of the same culture. <sup>395</sup> Rather, the connotations that an object evokes depend very much on people's knowledge, ideology, desires, and needs. As the findings of semiotics show, the act of representation thus produces something neither visible nor tangible, namely a mental image (with

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<sup>394</sup> See III.1.1 Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations

<sup>395</sup> See Excursus I.1, The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things; I.8.1.1, Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction; Excursus II.4, How does socialization work?; II.3.3.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups; II.3.6, What is social reality? - First considerations; III.1.1, Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations; III.1.2, Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations

regard to semiotics I refer to the relationship between signifier and signified) and the meanings of the second level - connotations. This process unfolds in the minds of each of us as individuals and is always influenced and shaped by the cultural conditions, the contexts in which representations arise. Applied to things or to any materialized cultural forms of expression, but also to any human action, this means: Every materiality (every human action) can stand for something that does not exist as such, but exists in the minds of those involved. In the moment in which we human beings act and come into contact with things, every materiality and every action is always potentially more than mere material or mere action.

Theoretically, according to these considerations, representation can only be understood discursively, through verbal communication, through the reading of corresponding statements and/or through the encounter with the practice of dealing with things - according to the perspective of cultural studies.

The challenge for our socio-critical archaeological research of extracting the represented from the materialized cultural forms of expression created in the social entities of the past(s) becomes clear once again with this explanation: it is a challenge to recognize and understand the invisible in the visible if one does not belong to the circle of those who are socialized together and communicate with each other. A challenge to our search for the represented is the fact that representation is created in the minds of the communicators, and a challenge is the fact that the multiplicity of communicators allows for an unlimited variety of what is communicated and represented.

### *III.1.1.2 Representation and „language“ - language, understood not only in the sense of spoken language, but also as written texts, pictures, objects and activities.*

The remarks of the cultural scientist Stuart Hall on the phenomenon of representation are of interest to us socio-critical archaeologists in several respects. Focusing on some of these remarks, I extend my own reflections on representation by adding Stuart Hall's thoughts on the subject, and I also address Stuart Hall's explanations of Michel Foucault's thoughts on discourse.<sup>396</sup> In his seminal study on representation (Stuart Hall, 2013), Stuart Hall refers to the special role and power of language in the production and dissemination of meaning, describing language as "one of the privileged "media" through which meaning is produced and circulated is *language*" (Stuart Hall, 2013, XX). The role of language in this context is therefore to communicate this meaning to others. Alongside mental representation, language thus functions as "the second system of representation" (Stuart Hall, 2013, 14). At the same time, however, Stuart Hall extends the term "language" beyond the phenomenon of the spoken word to the category of "sign systems" when he says:

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<sup>396</sup> See III.1.1, *Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations; III.1.1.1 Representation; III.1.2.1, Semiotics - the world of signs*

"Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning." (Stuart Hall, op. cit., p. 45). In other words, according to Stuart Hall, not only language, but all sign systems, i.e. also things, human actions and our behavior, are powerful as "media" of representation (op. cit., p. XVII). Implicitly, Stuart Hall relies on the conclusions of semiotics and sociological research,<sup>397</sup> which state, among other things, that language, words, things, and all of our social interaction function as signs. All sign systems are socially created, follow a socially shaped code, and are the result of social conventions. These insights also provide the basis for Stuart Hall's further considerations, with which he draws attention to the significance of the contexts in which human action takes place, in which representation is generated and decoded (op. cit., p. 133ff.). Contexts matter! Both aspects, on the one hand the statement to understand language not only as spoken language and written text, but to extend the concept of language to pictures, objects and activities, and on the other hand the emphasis on the importance of contexts, contexts in which representation takes place and contexts from which representation can be deciphered, are also significant in our socio-critical archaeological research. We socio-critical archaeologists use things to search for the connotations, the representations, the invisible "images" that the members of the social entities of the past(s) associated with the visible things. Our archaeological records [*archäologischer Befund*] are the contexts in which the representations took place in the social entities of the past(s).<sup>398</sup> Our position as researchers corresponds to the context from which we try to elicit these representations.

But Stuart Hall is not only concerned with the question of what representation is and how representation works. He also explores the question of why representation works! Everyone has concepts and perceptions of the world in their heads. This mental representation, according to Stuart Hall, "organizes the world into meaningful categories." (op. cit., p. 14).<sup>399</sup> Our coexistence and understanding of what is presented and represented in a social entity is possible because in every social entity there exists a common, generally valid set of cultural and social conventions. This allows us to develop our individual representations implicitly at first, to integrate them into the shared concepts, ideas and images and thus to make them understandable to us.<sup>400</sup> That is, the functioning of representations in groups and larger communities, in societies, is possible, among other things, because people who belong to one culture, according to Stuart Hall (implicitly following sociological research on the subject),<sup>401</sup> more or less share those social conventions with

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<sup>397</sup> See III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations*

<sup>398</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description / context of use*

<sup>399</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>400</sup> See I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*

<sup>401</sup> See II.2, *Sociology - the science that provides us socio-critically researching archaeologists with the basic knowledge we need about the being and functioning of social interaction*; II.3.1ff, *What is society?*; II.3.3, *Groups*

which they can express (not only) linguistically a common set of concepts, images, and ideas.<sup>402</sup> When we are socialized together, we share roughly the same view of the world, interpret the world, and express our views in ways that make sense to those with whom we live (op. cit., p. XVIII) - in short, we understand each other. But at the same time, this ability to share a set of concepts, pictures, and ideas does not mean that we all share the same opinion respectively the same perspective. It simply means that the views and how to express them are understandable to those belonging to a particular society. It is these phenomena, among others, that we socio-critical archaeologists look for when we ask whose past(s) we see in the material remains of the archaeological record, and whose history we construct from that source situation.<sup>403</sup> Looking at the complex process of how designations and the content of meanings arise in people's minds, it is obvious that deciphering the meaning of things is a correspondingly complex process.<sup>404</sup> The production of meaning, according to Stuart Hall, "depends on the practice of interpretation, and interpretation is sustained by us actively using the code - *encoding* (as such, the result of social conventions, own note), putting things into code - and by the person at the other end interpreting or decoding the meaning." (Stuart Hall 2013, 45).<sup>405</sup> This is an almost perfect paraphrase of the challenge we socio-critical archaeologists face in our efforts to capture the invisible but effective representation of what is not shown, but also meant, through the presentation of visible cultural forms of expression.

### III.1.1.3 Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research

Michel Foucault, according to Stuart Hall, contributed to "a novel and significant general approach to the problem of representation" (Stuart Hall, 2013, 27 - 28). Discourse, according to Stuart Hall, was understood by Michel Foucault as "a system of representation" (op. cit., p. 29). "What interested him (Michel Foucault, own note) were the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements (*knowledge*, own note) and regulated discourse in different historical periods." (op. cit., p. 29).<sup>406</sup> That is, Michel Foucault's concept of discourse, and thus of representation, is likewise not purely linguistic, but includes language and practice. Or, as Stuart Hall explains, "all social

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<sup>402</sup> See I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*

<sup>403</sup> See II.3.8, *Equal - unequal or different? - First considerations*; II.3.8.1, *Equal, unequal or just different?*

<sup>404</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*; III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

<sup>405</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>406</sup> See III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; V.3, *Enlightenment as a task of the humanities and social sciences - or: What socio-critical archaeology can contribute to this task in the present as a socio-critical historical science*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

practices entail *meaning*, and meanings shape and influence what we do - our conduct - all practices have a discursive aspect" (op. cit., p. 29).<sup>407</sup> Discourses (*the rules and practices that produce knowledge...*) are influenced by - and in turn influence our ideas in a time, our thinking and acting, it regulates our human behavior and sets limits of talking. Michel Foucault, continues Stuart Hall in his presentation of Michel Foucault's thought, "thought that in each period discourse produced forms of knowledge, objects, subjects, and practices of knowledge which differed radically from period to period, with no necessary continuity between them." (op. cit., p. 31). Knowledge, according to Michel Foucault, is always historically and culturally specific, and thus could not have "meaningfully existed outside specific discourses" (op. cit., p. 32). If we understand discourse as the formation of all the above-mentioned elements, which at a certain point in time constitute the then and only then "true reality" (at least for those speakers who lead the discourse), then discourse is to be understood as the most complex system of representation. As expected, our attempt to use the archaeological records [*archäologischer Befund*] to determine the contexts and the spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*] that were at work in the social entities of the past(s) as a framework for the formation of discourses and representations also becomes complex. The medium of language remains completely inaccessible to us! Foucault's thesis that the words, ideas, actions, and things of each specific historical discourse formation thus stand for the reality that (at least) the discourse spokespersons consider and present as the valid truth<sup>408</sup> stimulates us in our socio-critical archaeological research to think again about whose past(s) we see in the cultural forms of expression, whose social reality the medial reality represents, which we have before our eyes with the finds and archaeological records, and how we are able to find out whose ideas are behind what is presented, in what is not visible but meant, in what is represented - and always to ask both: Who was speaking then - and, in terms of our presentation of our knowledge, to ask the question at the same time: Who is speaking today?

### III.1.2 Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations

It is sociological research that sets out what the phenomenon of "something visible, touchable, audible, sensible counts for something else" means for any social togetherness, and why representation is one of the main forces that holds society together.<sup>409</sup> It is the research of semiotics

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<sup>407</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*; I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*.

<sup>408</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*

<sup>409</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*

that explores this phenomenon of connotation, of representation, of invisible meanings in detail and explains how this phenomenon of something *visible, touchable, audible, sensible* stands for something else. (Ludwig Jäger, 2010; see as well Marlies Heinz, 2018). Successful communication, both verbal and nonverbal communication requires the ability to recognize, read and understand the unspoken, the invisible signs behind what is presented, the representation. How and why understanding and communication work in the concrete, how and why our communication always contains explicit denotations as well as unspoken and invisible connotations, which are at the same time indispensable for our understanding, has been studied in particular by semioticians. On the one hand, they have been instrumental in clarifying, how concepts [here meant - *Begriffe*] come into being how things get their names, how spoken communication takes place, and how understanding works. In particular, they have drawn attention to the functioning of nonverbal communication. For us as socio-critical archaeologists, for our cognitive interests and our source situation, the branch of semiotics developed by Charles Sanders Peirce is of particular importance. Charles Sanders Peirce has shown that and how we humans create sign categories and sign systems to ensure our understanding. This insight into our handling of signs leads us to the question of how our handling of signs and sign categories enables unambiguous - or, more precisely, non-unambiguous - communication. What are the meanings of the different categories of signs, and what are the possibilities and preconditions for decoding the meanings and connotations of the different categories of signs? These are the questions to which we socio-critical archaeologists seek answers when we turn to the social realities of the social entities of the past(s) on the basis of the analysis of the materialized cultural forms of expression.

### III.1.2.1 *Semiotics - the world of signs*

Semiotics, very generally speaking, is the science of signs (Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 39 - 49). Without going into the details of the history of science, both the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 - 1914) (Helmut Pape, 2004; see also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Sanders\\_Peirce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce)) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 - 1913), the Swiss linguist (Ludwig Jäger, 2010; see as well [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand\\_de\\_Saussure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_de_Saussure)) should be mentioned as the "founders" of what is today the broad field of the science of semiotics. Of course, mentioning three other authoritative researchers is obligatory. The German philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1874 - 1945) contributed to the theory of symbols with his idea that humans create their world through the process of perception and that all perception is always symbolic (Ernst Cassirer, 1953; Ernst Cassirer; Julia Clemens, 2010; see as well [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst\\_Cassirer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Cassirer)). Roland Barthes (1915 - 1980), the French philosopher (Gabriele Röttger - Denker, 1997; see as well [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland\\_Barthes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland_Barthes)), is best known for his work on the symbols and

myths of everyday life, and the Italian semiotician Umberto Eco (1932 - 2016) is perhaps still the most popular scholar in the field of semiotics (Umberto Eco; Jürgen Trabant, 2002; see as well [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umberto\\_Eco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umberto_Eco)).

### III.1.2.2 Semiotics - and language - Ferdinand de Saussure

It was Ferdinand de Saussure who undertook extensive language studies and analyzed language and the system of communication under the heading that the relationship between words and the "something" they designate must be seen as an arbitrary construction, a matter of convention within societies and cultures (Ferdinand de Saussure; Charles Bally; Albert Sechehaye, 1959; Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 41; Ludwig Jäger, 2010). According to Ferdinand de Saussure, language can be described as a system of signs and these signs as expressions of notions [*Worte/Begriffe*] (Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 40). The recipient of the word, which is announced by the speaker with a specific meaning, must be able to imagine the "something", the meaning, associated with the word in order to understand and follow the intended communication and exchange of ideas. Many people have experienced how difficult it is to understand a lecture given in a language other than one's native tongue. If the meaning of the key words is not understood, the speech remains unintelligible. The thoughts behind the words, what is meant by the word, cannot be discerned by the receiver. Ferdinand de Saussure developed a concept that differentiated between two parts that constitute the system of language, the *sound-image* and the *concept* (Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 40). The *sound-image* is the word (for example: chair), the *concept* is the mental imagination when hearing the word (that is - the object "chair", shape, size, color, material appears before the inner eye of the listener). Instead of *sound-image*, the term *signifier* (the word for "chair") is also used, while the *concept* is referred to as the *signified* (thus the "something" meant by the word, here the object "chair" imagined by the listener). Ferdinand de Saussure thus developed the two-part model of a relation between the word and the imagination (the "something"). What was exciting and new about his model was his aforementioned statement that this relationship was merely a matter of convention (Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 41). The above given example of the listener following a speech in a foreign language pointed out the problems that arise when trying to decode the correlation between the word and the concept, the meaning of the word, thus the connection between signifier and signified. The structure respectively the system underlying languages is valid for all languages, independent of time, space and culture. However, the meaning of the signifier, the word, the term that evokes the image and names the signified (the thing, the object), the concept of imagination, can and does change over time and according to the contexts in which it is used. The meaning of the signifier is not inherent in itself. Its meaning is derived, on the one hand, from the fact that each signifier is characterized as being different from another, that is, it is only this difference that makes meaning



possible and rational. On the other hand, the specific context of meaning of each signifier is created by the community using the respective language. Language can be learned and the relations between signifier and signified can be reduced to an intelligible variety. Words are ordered by grammar. Grammar structures messages. It ensures that a sequence of words makes sense, it forms the basis and the framework of a message and thus makes the meaning of the message understandable.

### *III.1.2.3 The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*

However, decoding and understanding messages sent on the basis of materiality is a different challenge than dealing with texts. No grammar places materiality, the things that surround us, the objects we deal with, in a general and prescriptive order comparable to the grammar of a language. The formation of things in a context and their resulting functions and meanings do not per se follow standardized rules. Of course, every society and culture has rules about how to arrange certain things in certain situations in order to use them - for example, how to set the table. By knowing the customs, one is able to use the crockery and cutlery correctly. However, even without knowing the customs (table manners), the meaning of the order of things, as well as the rules for using them, it is possible to sit down at a table, use the "things" and eat. Thus, as Hans Peter Hahn exemplified in his study of material culture (Hans Peter Hahn, 2005; see also Hans Peter Hahn; Hadas Weiss (ed.), 2013), it is largely practice that determines how materiality is used and how (and which) meanings are assigned to materiality. The order of things is not the order of a grammar, and in this respect materiality cannot be read like a text. Grammar is fixed (at a certain moment of use), practice is contextual (at a certain moment of its performance). The semiotic approach to things, that is, the attempt to understand signs as means of communication, must therefore be different. It was Charles Sanders Peirce who pursued the problem of how nonverbal communication, i.e. communication based on materiality and gestures, works (Charles Sanders Peirce; Charles Hartshorne; Paul Weiss; Arthur W. Burks, 1998). His thinking led him to see the need for a more detailed differentiation of what signs and their meanings are, recognizing the wide range and plurality of possible meanings of materiality in the communicative process. While Ferdinand de Saussure "discovered" the difference between the signifier (the word) and the signified (the "something" named, the concept of the imagination), Charles Sanders Peirce recognized that in order to understand the messages and meanings of things, one must distinguish between different types of signs as such, distinguished by their relations to what they denote (Helmuth Pape, 2004; Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 44). According to Charles Sanders Peirce, only one mode of nonverbal communication functions in a way comparable to verbal communication, in which the relationship between sign and materiality, between signifier and signified, is determined by agreement, by convention, as Ferdinand de Saussure stated for the functioning of verbal communication. Some

of today's road signs function accordingly, worldwide. Charles Sanders Peirce calls this kind of communication - communication by means of symbols, respectively the kind of sign in question - a *symbol*. It is thus pure convention, the connection of an abstraction of an idea and a message with materiality, that characterizes this so-called symbol. The second mode of nonverbal communication defined by Charles Sanders Peirce functions with the help of icons, signs that are understood by their similarity to what they denote. The icon, the signifier, is an image [*Abbild*] of the signified, similar to the signified original, but not exactly identical. The icon works best, of course, when the similarities between what is shown and what is meant, the signifier and the signified, occur in an adequate context, that is, in a context that, by its specific character, supports the message. The airport and the signposts with schematic illustrations of ascending and descending airplanes, directing users to either the departure or arrival hall, is an example of a context that supports the legibility of icons. It goes without saying that in this mode, too, understanding presupposes a common "language" between the communicators. The third mode of nonverbal communication, according to the model of Charles Sanders Peirce, works through the presentation of a causal context, a cause-effect relationship, the sign, which Charles Sanders Peirce called the index, again according to its mode of operation. The signifier in this case is the result of the signified, such as the footprints of an animal on snow-covered ground, or smoke as an indicator of fire.

*When communicating with things, a variety of connotations are possible.*

The thinking of Charles Sanders Peirce helps to channel the variety of possible meanings of materiality and explains how a message transmitted on the basis of materiality and sent with a certain intention by the sender can be understood more or less in the intended sense by a recipient. Charles Sanders Peirce's models also make clear that decoding and understanding the message requires a wide variety of skills and knowledge, depending on the mode in which a message is transmitted. It can be taken as a rule that materiality, a thing, an artifact, always! contains more messages and meanings than were originally intended when the thing was produced or used for a message or served as a medium for a message.<sup>410</sup> In other words: Does the thing, the signifier, embody an unlimited number of meanings, messages, and thus connotations, "the cultural meanings and myths" (Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 47) associated with the specific "thing"? It depends on the user of the materiality which spectrum of possible signified meanings (as well as functions) the materiality comprises. It is the user of materiality who ultimately decides what to do with things

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<sup>410</sup> See I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / nonverbal communication*

in practice and how to understand their meanings. The meanings of materiality (as well as the handling of things, thus their function), according to Hans Peter Hahn in his above-mentioned study on material culture (Hans Peter Hahn, 2005), depend on context, custom and practice. As Arthur Asa Berger summarizes, "a semiotic approach to material culture involves searching for the way these objects function as signs and generate meaning to others. From a semiotic perspective, nothing has meaning in itself; an object's meaning always derives from the network of relations in which it is embedded" (Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 45), that is, context, knowledge, and practice. And while the previous considerations already point to the enormous challenges that await us archaeologists who deal with things as media of nonverbal communication and, as such, of social togetherness, another "complication" should be mentioned, postulated by Umberto Eco as the "theory of the lie" (cited by Arthur Asa Berger, 2009, 46 with reference to Umberto Eco, 1976, 7) "Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands for it. Thus semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie. If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth; it cannot be used „to tell“ at all. I think that the definition of a „theory of the lie“ should be taken as a pretty comprehensive program for a general semiotics." <sup>411</sup>

The cognitions of semiotics are important for socio-critical archaeological research in two ways. The language studies of Ferdinand de Saussure (Ferdinand de Saussure, 1959, 2016; Ludwig Jäger, 2010; see also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand\\_de\\_Saussure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_de_Saussure)) illustrate the importance that the choice of terms has for controlling the statements and connotations of what is said. This cognition, translated into socio-critical archaeological research, points us to the far-reaching effects that our choice of terms in naming things and describing archaeological records has on our presentations and representations of the past(s) and our constructions of history. In addition, Charles Sanders Peirce's exploration of signs [*Zeichenkunde*] (Charles Sanders Peirce, 1998; Helmut Pape, 2004; see also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Sanders\\_Peirce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce)) shows us the stumbling blocks that lie in the way of socio-critical archaeological research if we elicit solely on the basis of materialized cultural forms of expression whose past(s) we see in things and whose history we construct on this basis. With Charles Sanders Peirce, we can see where the limits of interpretability lie with regard to this initial situation - things alone serve us as the basis of the interpretable - and where we as socio-critical archaeologists are faced with challenges that still need to be solved.

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<sup>411</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description / translation*

### III.1.3 Nonverbal communication – what is it and how does it function: One possible perception

Nonverbal communication is possible both in the presence of the communicating parties, in face-to-face constellations, and in constellations in which the communicating parties are separated in time and space. The sender, the sender's context and goals, the materiality and its message, the receiver, and the context in which nonverbal communication takes place are the most relevant parameters (see Hans Peter Hahn, 2005, 115 ff.; Michael Tomasello, 2006; Michael Tomasello, 2010; Jürgen Trabant, 2002; Martin Baltes; Philippe Marchand, 2002; Judith A. Hall, 2013).<sup>412</sup> In order to participate intelligibly [*verstehend*] in this communication, both the sender and the recipient of the message should share a common repertoire of cultural knowledge and codes. This is usually the case when the sender and recipient have been socialized in the same context. Context thus plays a significant role in the success of (not only) nonverbal communication - the social and cultural context from which the participants originate and the social, cultural and spatial context in which nonverbal communication takes place and has taken place. If the sender and recipient come from the same social and cultural context or habitat (Pierre Bourdieu, 2013), nonverbal communication should function largely without major problems, apart from the general potential for misunderstanding inherent in any form of communication, whether verbal, gestural, or nonverbal through material.

However, the possibility or danger of divergent understanding - or even misunderstanding - potentially increases when the sender and recipient have different repertoires of characters or codes at their disposal. This is the case when both come from different social or cultural contexts, have undergone different forms of socialization, within the same society or community, or in different social contexts. When sender and recipient attempt to communicate nonverbally across social or cultural boundaries, synchronically or diachronically, the risk of misunderstanding increases. One of the characteristics of nonverbal communication is that the medium conveying the message is not necessarily a person communicating through body language, i.e. gestures and facial expressions, but it can also be material, i.e. nonverbal communication takes place with the help of things. As mentioned above, this means that communication can take place even if the sending and receiving parties are spatially and temporally separated. The separation of sending and receiving a message implies that the sender can no longer determine the circle of recipients of the message once the materiality has left his or her control. This possibility of producing and sending a message separated in time and space from receiving and decoding it increases the risk of misunderstanding: While the goals and intentions of the producer or sender of a message, encoded in materiality, thus the

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<sup>412</sup> See III.1.1, *Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations*

denotations of the message, are fixed at the time of composition, the connotations potentially change with every change of the participants and contexts involved in the communication, be these changes synchronic and diachronic, socially or culturally determined.<sup>413</sup> It was already Max Horkheimer, in his seminal study "*Traditional and Critical Theory*" (2011<sup>7</sup>), who emphasized the significance of the human imagination, as well as the contexts (and thus also the changing contexts) of perception and the standpoint and life experience of people for their perception of the world and thus for their ways of communicating (see as well [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max\\_Horkheimer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Horkheimer)). The success of nonverbal communication then depends on the compatibility of various parameters. The cultural knowledge of both the sender and the recipient determines whether the latter will be able to decode the materialized message in the sense intended by the former. In addition, the context of message production, the context in which nonverbal communication takes place, the practice of dealing with materiality as a medium of a message, and the discourses of the time each play a crucial role in successful nonverbal understanding. What has been said should have implicitly and repeatedly conveyed the challenges we socio-critical archaeologists face in decoding the materialized cultural forms of expression at hand with regard to the messages they convey.

#### III.1.4 Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology

In his search for the unsaid, the unshown and yet meant, the search for the connections between presentation, intention and connotation, Erwin Panofsky (Erwin Panofsky, 1939) developed the system of *iconographic* and *iconological* picture observation and analysis, which is discussed in an extended form in the study by Roelof van Straten (Roelof van Straten, 1989; see as well [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erwin\\_Panofsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erwin_Panofsky)). The system of viewing, questioning and analyzing the interpretation of pictorial works in four stages (Roelof van Straten, 1989, 28), first the *pre-iconographic* and the *iconographic description*, followed by the *iconographic* as well as the *iconological interpretation* applies to the search for *ways to understand pictures in their themes*, in the *intentions of the picture-makers* and in the *ideas of the recipients*. With this objective, the search for answers to the question of how we can grasp, understand and explain the invisible in the visible,<sup>414</sup> this branch of picture science meets the objectives of representation research,<sup>415</sup> semiotics,<sup>416</sup> the study of nonverbal communication<sup>417</sup> and our concern as socio-critical research archaeologists to grasp,

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<sup>413</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconological interpretation, step four*

<sup>414</sup> See Excursus I.4, *To understand and to explain*

<sup>415</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*

<sup>416</sup> See III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations*

<sup>417</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

describe, analyze, understand and explain the meanings and functions of the cultural forms of expression that have been handed down in materialized form.

### *Iconography / Iconology*

In his studies of iconography and iconology, Erwin Panofsky (1892 - 1968) in particular was concerned with the challenge of how to elicit what is unsaid but always meant, the connection between presentation, intention, denotation, and connotation/representation (Erwin Panofsky, 1939). He was interested in the methodological possibilities of approaching a pictorial work with these goals in mind, of grasping the denotations and connotations of the picture. Erwin Panofsky wanted to understand and explain how we, as viewers, can gain insight into both the intentions of the picture makers, which they pursued in creating the picture work, and how we, as recipients of the picture works, take messages from these objects or project them into the picture works! These are questions and cognitive interests that we socio-critical archaeologists also pursue.<sup>418</sup>

### *Art history and the Science of Art*

Art historians and art scholars (or their exponents Aby Warburg, 1866 - 1929; Erwin Panofsky, 1892 - 1968; but also to mention the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, 1894 - 1945 and, as already shown, the most influential forces of the time, Ferdinand de Saussure, 1857 - 1913 and Charles Sanders Peirce, 1830 - 1914) were the first to integrate the available knowledge about the functioning and meaning of representation into the study and analysis of the material heritage, or "art" and cultural forms of expression. They have all dealt with and considered ways and means of approaching cultural forms of expression in order to gain their meanings or to find an answer to what cultural forms of expression represent accordingly. Like social, cultural, and archaeological studies, art history and science of art deal with the phenomena of the visible and tangible sphere as well as with the immaterial manifestations in pictures, sculpture, architecture, spatial design, and other fields of "art". However, while the focus of sociological and cultural studies research has been to document how and to what extent the phenomenon of representation enables humans to create an understandable environment in which human encounters can unfold, it is in art history and science of art, by contrast, that methods have been developed to apply these insights of social and cultural studies and thus to show how to approach an artifact in order to gain its meanings or to find an answer to what an artifact represents.

Iconographic and iconological studies constitute, for the art sciences as well as for our socio-critical archaeological studies, a way and a method of understanding and explaining the several spheres or

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<sup>418</sup> See II.3.9.6, *Rule/governance [Herrschaft] and more detailed reflections on the motivations of obeying - according to Max Weber* up to II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*

levels that cultural forms of expression potentially have. Roelof van Straten (1989), to whom I will mainly refer in the following, has written a very thoughtful exemplification of the topic - and who, of course, bases his reflections on the benchmark studies of Erwin Panofsky.

According to Roelof van Straten, the analysis of an artifact, e.g. a pictorial work, begins with its *pre-iconographical description*, the naming or listing of the elements that the contemporary researcher sees in the picture, thus establishing the level of *denotations* that can be captured. Such denotations should lead to statements about the artifacts that can be agreed upon by the recipients - and that may even correspond to the denotations the artifacts had in the past(s). The challenge of finding the appropriate terms for objects that people in the social entities of the past(s) would have used (emic point of view) is one of the constant challenges of our socio-critical archaeological work.<sup>419</sup> The next step is the *iconographical description*. It is the effort to find the meaningful connections between the single elements of a pictorial presentation that establish a logic of the topic.<sup>420</sup> The result of this next step should lead us to the naming of the theme of the picture. Establishing meaningful connections between the elements of a pictorial work presupposes that the researcher has an insight into the cultural knowledge valid at the time when the picture was created. On the one hand, knowledge of the rules and regulations governing the handling of objects and the practice of action, and on the other hand, knowledge of the traditions governing their presentation.<sup>421</sup>

A more in-depth analysis of the invisible spheres of the topic follows with the *iconographical interpretation*. It is this step with which we, or in general the recipients, try to grasp the meaning of an artifact, a pictorial work, the connotations intended by the producer, the represented in the presented.<sup>422</sup> In order to find out the meanings, the invisible statements intentionally given and connected to the elements visibly presented in the picture, the recipient, if coeval with the producer, can ask him or her what the theme represents in addition to its denotations. If a direct interview is not possible, it may be possible to refer to written evidence in which the producer explains his or her intentions. The *iconographical interpretation* aims at capturing the meanings that the producers and users of things at that time knowingly, if not intentionally, attributed to their materialized culture. What did things, pictures, elements of pictures, to name but a few, mean beyond their mere materiality, embodied form, and illustration? A good example are the vanitas still lifes of 17th century painting. The depiction of wilting flowers, skulls, or broken glasses all point to transience. As symbols of mortality, they signify the meanings behind the embodied forms. The educated

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<sup>419</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics / iconographical description / appropriate terms*

<sup>420</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*

<sup>421</sup> See III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>422</sup> See III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations; III.1.2.3, The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*

recipient of the time recognized this message or could have asked the painter. Today's scholars of the genre look to the written explanations of the time to decode the intended meanings and messages. To find out what people wanted to communicate with their material heritage, what the intentions of the producers of such paintings were, more information is needed than just the painting itself.

It is both the familiarity with each circumstance, gained through the socialization of contemporaries, and the recorded knowledge of a time, which leads to corresponding insights, that enables people to grasp the idea behind things, the idea that is not directly visible, but that can be known, provided one has the "appropriate tools" for decoding! Beyond the personal intentions of an artist, there are hidden but known meanings of things and themes that reflect the general knowledge, the discourses of a time,<sup>423</sup> an area and its population.

To grasp the connotations, the meanings, the representation of something, the representation of the meaning that the elements and the theme, the subject of a pictorial presentation stood for in an epoch, is an even more challenging step that is undertaken with the *iconological interpretation* of a pictorial presentation.

The *iconological interpretation* asks why the genre, the theme of a painting, the style, the rendering was chosen in the first place. Not the intentions of the producers, but the trends of the spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*] are of primary interest, reflections on what influenced the painters, without them necessarily being aware of these influences. This influence on culture is the subject we are interested in when we turn to iconological interpretation. Capturing the spirit of the times, or the influence of the spirit of the times on the development of material culture, requires knowledge of the cultural, social, political, and economic conditions of the time. Contexts matter! Knowledge of the particular circumstances under which a thing was produced is necessary to recognize and decode the cultural developments that can be attributed to the particular spirit of the times influence.



### III.1.5 Own commentary and archaeological reference

I summarize the previous remarks on the consideration of socio-critical archaeological research as cultural studies research in a pointed way:<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological research / order and disorder / change / picture description / see as well the own commentaries on the use and impact of pictures*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes*

<sup>424</sup> See III, *Socio-critical archaeology as cultural science* up to III.1.4, *Science of art - Iconography / Iconology*



Socio-critical archaeological research is always communication - concretely - it is always nonverbal communication with the things, the cultural forms of expression of the members of the social entities of the past(s).<sup>425</sup> As socio-critical archaeologists, we are always (also) looking for the signs<sup>426</sup> by which we can recognize what is represented in what is presented, what is always also meant but not explicitly said, respectively what is not explicitly shown.<sup>427</sup>

Semiotic researchers have shown that we always communicate more with things (see Charles Sanders Peirce) and with words (see Ferdinand de Saussure) than with what we make visible with things and audible with words.

One way in which the search for the invisible in the visible, the unheard in the said, the represented in the presented can be approached in a structured way is shown by art historical research with its iconographic and iconological approach to things, including pictorial works.<sup>428</sup> For us socio-critical archaeologists, who approach this search solely on the basis of materialized and visibly present things, the research results of semiotics and the broadly diversified source situation of iconographic and iconological research constitute both a great enrichment and a complex challenge in this search. In contrast to us socio-critical archaeologists, art scholars can rely on both the analysis of objects and texts to answer their questions. In addition, they can ask contemporaries what connotations and associations they attached to the things they used, and what representations in the visibly presented they associate with pictorial works or pictorial themes. In other words, this source situation allows art historically oriented researchers of iconography and iconology to include questions in their analysis of things, to gain insights into the connections between people and things, and to provide answers to the questions posed that are not possible for us in our socio-critical archaeological research. The questions that iconographic and iconological research raises, the insights that it generates (as semiotics has already done), and the answers that it develops broaden our range of questions and perspectives on the cultural forms of expression, including pictorial works, and expand our range of criteria with which we analyze in particular the pictorial works of social entities of the past(s). Like any interdisciplinary research and any widening of the spectrum of interdisciplinary cooperation, our involvement with iconographic and iconological research also creates new stumbling blocks to which we must respond.

The complexity of the opportunities and challenges that arise from our interdisciplinary cooperation with art historical, art science and semiotic research leads to the no less complex

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<sup>425</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

<sup>426</sup> See III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations*; III.1.2.3, *The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*

<sup>427</sup> See III.1.1, *Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations up to III.1.1.3, Discourses and representations - according to Michel Foucault, explained by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>428</sup> See III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

attempt in the following to make suggestions as to how we, as socio-critical archaeologists, can implement this interdisciplinary cooperation in the analysis of materialized cultural forms of expression. I would like to briefly outline the opportunities and challenges we face as socio-critical archaeologists and then discuss them in detail in the following remarks.

The very first question that iconographic research poses in the analysis of pictorial works {step one}, the question of the elements that can be seen in a picture, confronts us with one of the fundamental challenges that the cognitions of semiotic research raise for us: Do we socio-critical archaeologists find the "right" terms for the things we have before our eyes in a picture, right in the sense of the terms given to things by the members of the social units of the past(s)? (See the research of Ferdinand de Saussure on this subject).

In a next step {step two}, iconographic research is devoted to the question of whether or how the viewer of a picture can recognize the theme of that picture. With this question, which we also pose in our socio-critical archaeological picture analysis, we are faced with a further challenge, which also arises specifically from the insights of semiotics. Can we plausibly argue that pictorial elements are to be understood as iconic, indexical, or symbolic (see Charles Sanders Peirce's research on this), and that this categorization enables us to name the theme of a picture? Or do we already have to reckon with a not inconsiderable stumbling block in the attempt to categorize the pictorial elements accordingly, which can mislead us in the naming of the pictorial elements and subsequently in the naming of the pictorial theme? As mentioned before: The starting point of the iconographic research {step three} allows the researchers to talk to the artists themselves, to ask the question of what intentions the individual artist had in creating the picture and in choosing the theme of the picture. Concretely, the question is what the artist wanted to communicate beyond what is visibly depicted, what connotations he or she associated with the subject, what for him or her individually constituted the depicted in the depicted, the invisible in the visible. These questions, or rather the answers to these questions, also become relevant in our socio-critical archaeological research. In our search for answers, however, we again encounter a not inconsiderable stumbling block, which arises from the following question: Can we, as archaeologists doing socio-critical research, fathom the motivations of an individual person?<sup>429</sup> Can we deduce from the things alone what connotations an actor, the initiator of a picture, individually associates with the picture or the theme of a picture in the social entities of the past(s) beyond what is depicted in the picture? Can we recognize an individual as an actor from the things alone?

In the next and final step, {step four}, iconological research returns to the same concern, but now from a different perspective. The focus is now first on how and why a particular pictorial theme is chosen in the context of a particular spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*]. This is followed by the question

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<sup>429</sup> See II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*

concerning the connotations that "one", i.e. as a rule all recipients of a picture, associate with the picture or the theme of the picture. It is a question of the spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*], i.e. the socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political context in which a picture and a picture theme were commissioned, the spirit of the times that influenced both the choice of the picture theme and the spectrum of associations and connotations of the viewer. This perspective of iconological research now challenges us, as archaeologists doing socio-critical research, to rethink and specify how we grasp contexts or what we mean by "context" in socio-critical archaeological research. The question of what we socio-critical archaeologists understand by context turns out to be a highly complex and not entirely straightforward research issue, both in actual archaeological fieldwork and in the evaluation of the archaeological record. I address this concern in detail in scenarios 1 - 4, which I present in step four. However, we are not only concerned with what constitutes context in the social entities of the past(s). We are also concerned with the contexts from which we socio-critical archaeologists conduct our research, and the effects that research contexts have on our research results. These considerations about our research contexts are therefore also, and especially here, related to the question of how the spirit of the times, our present research situation, from which we undertake our observation of the cultural forms of expression of the past(s),<sup>430</sup> shapes our view of things and influences our possibilities of grasping what is invisibly represented in things, among other things in pictorial themes, with regard to the emic point of view. The fact that we (have to) pursue all questions raised exclusively on the basis of nonverbal communication with things should be mentioned here once again, even if it is a truism by now.<sup>431</sup>

*The iconographic and iconological view of pictorial works - or: A four-step approach to getting from things to people {step one to step three - pre-iconographical-, iconographical- and iconological description, step four - iconological interpretation}*

**Step one - The pre-iconographical description, the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, two stumbling blocks and a brief reminder of the results of the semiotic research of Ferdinand de Saussure**

*Step one - The pre-iconographical description - naming the individual picture elements*

The first step in the art-scientific approach to pictures (to be extended by us in socio-critical archaeological research to the observation, analysis, and interpretation of things, artifacts,

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<sup>430</sup> See III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research; V.1, Our locations [Standorte], enlightenment as the task of the social and cultural sciences, and the relation to Critical Theory shape our socio-critical archaeological research up to V.4, Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>431</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

architecture, and spatial order, as well as to burial rites) seems at first to be a simple one.<sup>432</sup> Superficially, this first step in looking at a picture or an archaeological record is only about naming all the individual elements that can be seen in a picture or an archaeological record. To illustrate this first step, I draw again on the stele of the NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamia, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))).<sup>433</sup>

*Step one - the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD*

We see people, we see antiquaria (equipment, clothing), hair and beard, costume, we see things that people carry with them and that we name more concretely with terms like weapon, standard. We see the reproduction of landscape, plants, as well as pictorial elements (at the upper edge of the stele or picture), for which we do not (yet) have a more concrete name and which I describe with the term graphic elements. This first step in approaching the pictures or the archaeological record, however, already contains two stumbling blocks, two methodological challenges, which arise for our socio-critical archaeological research as well as for any historical research.

*Step one - stumbling block 1 - Things - and the challenge of finding the "right" terms to name things*

We name elements that we see in the picture, in the archaeological record, with terms that we know and use for elements that look the same in our everyday world today, in the culture in which we are socialized as socio-critical research archaeologists. Our terms, e.g. chair, knife, palace, or - with reference to the picture of the stele of the NARAMSIN OF AKKAD - our designations of some objects as weapons, others as standards, already imply functions and uses or possibilities of use for the named elements, as well as assignments of meaning up to connotations that imply cultural and social orders.<sup>434</sup> The challenging question to which we seek answers is: Are we naming things with the "right" terms? Right in the sense that the terms we choose and the connotations they carry for us also correspond to what the members of the social entities of the past(s) would have associated with the things and their naming from their respective emic points of view? And: Can we find an answer to this question in our source situation, which is exclusively things?

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<sup>432</sup> See III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

<sup>433</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>434</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

*Step one - stumbling block 2 - Graphical elements - or: How to deal with things whose functions we do not recognize and for which we therefore have no terminology to name the functions and ways of using them*

Elements can be found on pictures and in archaeological records, objects that we do not (!) recognize with our current knowledge, that are not part of the culture in which we socio-critical archaeologists were socialized. Objects that we do not (!) know, that we do not (!) recognize in their function and possible use, for which we do not (!) have specific terms. Are there possibilities to learn more about things or pictorial elements that are not familiar to us from our everyday life - in this case about the functions, the meanings and also the "correct" naming of the graphic elements that can be seen at the upper edge of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD?

The challenges of finding the "right" terms, as explained here, I have already implicitly referred to in my exploration of the research of semiotics. Here, it is primarily Ferdinand de Saussure's research on the connection between word and thing that has drawn our attention to the challenge of recognizing things unknown to us, here pictorial elements, or of naming them with the "right" term. The "right" term - as explained above - in the sense that the term chosen by our etic point of view could potentially correspond to the designation also chosen by the emic point of view, and thus also to the assignment of functions and meanings that the members of the social entities of the past(s) had allocated to these things. Realistically, however, the knowledge of the members of the social entities of the past(s) about the relationship between signifier and signified remains de facto closed to us in view of our source situation: We only have things at our disposal, but no texts. Yet, in order to reaffirm the importance of knowledge of this relationship between signifier and signified and at the same time to remind us of the significance of semiotic research for our socio-critical archaeological research, I would like to return (at the risk of repeating myself) once again to the research of Ferdinand de Saussure.

*Step one - cognitions of the linguistically researching semiotics - Ferdinand de Saussure and the relevance of his cognitions for our socio-critical archaeological research* <sup>435</sup>

The insights of linguistic semiotics (especially Ferdinand de Saussure) that the naming of a thing is a human construction, that this naming can also be understood as an expression of the spirit of the times, and that it is possible for us humans to change the word for a thing, i.e. the signifier and the "image before our inner eye", the thing associated with the word, the signified in their relationship to each other, represent a challenge for all historical research and thus also for all socio-critical archaeological studies. Semioticians have explored the relationship between word/concept and thing. They have shown how and why this relationship is conventionally and initially culturally specific and language-bound. They have shown that the relationship between concept and thing

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<sup>435</sup> See III.1.2.2, *Semiotics and language - Ferdinand de Saussure*

can also be used regionally and supra-regionally, and that it is useful for understanding across cultural boundaries. They also point out that identical terms can have different meanings, different connotations in different social and cultural contexts. Furthermore, semiotic research points out that a once established relationship between signifier (word) and signified (thing) does not have to remain timeless in its original meaning, but is subject to change, as are all social relations and cultural conditions. The cogitations of semiotic linguistic research present us socio-critical archaeologists with some challenges, but they also provide us with a "guideline" for thinking about the terminology we use. Signifier (word) and signified (thing) are constructed in their relationship. As socio-critical research archaeologists working exclusively with things, we cannot, as mentioned above, determine the relationship between signifier (word) and signified (thing) that the members of a social entity of the past(s) have set. In other words, we socio-critical archaeologists who work exclusively with material cultural forms of expression cannot grasp the semantics of the term we use today in the sense of the members of the social entities of the past(s) on the thing itself. We do not know whether there was ever an expression corresponding to our term for a corresponding connection between the cultural forms of expression or the term we use for things and for the socio-cultural order (see below, my example of this connection, shown at the term "palace"). Even in the past(s), the word and the thing that the word designates may have experienced multiple interpretations and multiple changes. These processes, this possible change in the relationship between the word (the signifier) and the thing (the signified), which were just as relevant for the users of the things at that time as they are for us today, cannot be grasped by us socio-critical archaeologists on the basis of the things alone. Thus, when we socio-critical archaeologists write our texts and name a thing with our contemporary terminology, this can potentially lead to a very different assignment of function, meaning, and connotation of the thing than originally thought by the members of the social entity (see as well Reinhart Koselleck, 1992, 107 - 129).<sup>436</sup> I refer again to the use of the term "palace": in my contemporary view, the term "palace" implies a very specific social and political order of a society, an order in which a king/queen is at the head of the society and is to be thought of as the proprietor and/or owner of the palace. In my reflections on who in the social entities of the past(s) can be considered as the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] and builders (those who carried out the construction work [*Erbauer*]), proprietors, owners and users of monumental buildings,<sup>437</sup> buildings that we in archaeological research call "palace" because of their placement in the site, I have postulated and documented that monumental architecture, "palace

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<sup>436</sup> See II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>437</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

architecture", was also built in "societies without a king".<sup>438</sup> Also, the use of the term "standard" to refer to some of the objects shown on the stele of NARAMSIN of AKKAD requires reflection. Were there appropriate terms used in the past(s)? Did the term "standard" used by me, here as a term for field emblem, insignia of a unit in the army, emblem of sovereignty, describe the same in the social entities of the past(s)?<sup>439</sup> And how do we find the "right" terms for things whose functions and uses we do not (yet) recognize from our present etic point of view? Here, then, are stumbling blocks and challenges that we cannot (yet) eliminate. One of the problems here results from the phenomenon of translation: translations, in this case from the language of the present into the naming of things from the distant past(s) (see as well Reinhart Koselleck, 1992, 107 - 129),<sup>440</sup> potentially always harbor the risk of "falsification", as the examples show. Today's terminology is contextualized and may therefore just not (!) be suitable for grasping or recognizing an object that was produced in the distant past in its former terminology and thus also in the variety of functions, uses, meanings and connotations that were applied to it at that time.<sup>441</sup>

We are confronted with the above-mentioned stumbling blocks, which we become aware of in particular through the insights of semiotic research. It is precisely because of these challenges that we cannot overestimate the enlightening significance of semiotic research for our socio-critical archaeological research. It lies above all in drawing our attention to this state of affairs, the construction of the relationship between signifier (word) and signified (thing). The point is to make us aware of the need to be critical of the use of concepts (the relationship between the signifier and the signified) and to reflect on their effects, because the concepts we choose have effects on our own view of the past(s), on our constructions of history, on the understanding of historical facts by contemporaries, and thus on your view as a reader at the moment when you are dealing with our accounts of the past(s).<sup>442</sup> Thus, as socio-critical archaeologists, we are challenged to continually engage with the development of language.<sup>443</sup> We should explore both whether and, if

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<sup>438</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>439</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*

<sup>440</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*; VI.5, *Philology*

<sup>441</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*

<sup>442</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?* up to I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*; Excursus I.3.3.2, *Historiography - or - construction of history*; III.1.1, *Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representations - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>443</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*; VI.5, *Philology*

so, how our terms have changed in their semantics over the past(s) centuries, as well as how our use of terms in our contemporary context of socialization is currently being used in other local, regional, and global contexts (Reinhart Koselleck, 1992; 2006). However, despite the stumbling blocks we encounter in our search for the "right" terms for things, as well as for ways of identifying things that are (still) unknown to us, and despite the fact that I have explained in detail that and why no solutions (yet) seem to be possible for the "problems" mentioned, I encourage all those who are interested to take up the challenges at hand and to search for ways of finding answers to the questions at hand.

*Step two - The iconographical description, the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, a short reminder regarding the results of the research in semiotics by Charles Sanders Peirce, another stumbling block, the challenge to find signs for cause / effect and spatio-temporal relations - approached on one of the pictures from the time of the Assyrian Tiglath-Pileser III., two more stumbling blocks and a short summary concerning the sign categories*

*Step two - The iconographical description - search for the theme of a picture*

The second step involves the attempt to show connections between the elements of a picture, and the attempt to approach the definition of the picture's theme by exploring these connections. According to my approach, the theme consists of the denotations, what is visible in the picture, what is presented and what is not to be seen but (also) meant, the connotations, the representations linked to what is presented. We are looking for clues as to how we can connect our view, the etic point of view, with the emic point of view with which the initiators for the pictures and the recipients of the pictures in the social entities of the past(s) saw what was presented, recognized the theme of the picture and understood what was represented. We look for clues as to whether and how we recognize the categories of signs defined by Charles Sanders Peirce in the pictorial works. We pursue the question of the significance of the different categories of signs or our recognition of these categories for our naming of the pictorial themes.

Why is the recognition of pictorial themes, and especially the approximation of our etic point of view to the emic point of view in the determination of pictorial themes, so important for our socio-critical archaeological research, i.e. for our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct on the basis of the cultural forms of expression that lie materialized before us? To determine what is to be made permanently visible in a society means to be able to exercise socio-politically relevant power, to practice cultural hegemony. This applies to the relations in the social entities of the past(s) - who determined which pictures should present which themes? This applies to our socio-critical archaeological research today - who determines, and with what arguments, which themes are to be recognized (apparently? / certain?) in the pictures of the social entities of



the past(s)? Who in the social entities of the past(s) determined which themes were to be permanently remembered? And who determines today in the socio-critical archaeological research - on the basis of the selection of pictures to be shown and the "claim" to have recognized the themes visible in these pictures - which themes should be conveyed to today's viewers as those that were important for the members of the social entities of the past(s)?<sup>444</sup>

The naming of a pictorial theme from our etic point of view can, however, also completely misjudge the pictorial theme - even though we have based this naming on plausibly justified arguments. Depending on the questions with which we approach the picture, with which focus we look at what is presented, at the episodes of an event that are reproduced with the picture, it becomes potentially possible to associate one and the same picture with completely different themes. This possibility that a picture remains potentially ambiguous with regard to its theme directly affects our central concern as socio-critical research archaeologists, namely to be able to make "safe" statements about whose past(s) we see and whose history we can construct on the basis of the materialized cultural forms of expression. A circumstance that is one of the not inconsiderable stumbling blocks we encounter in our attempts to recognize the theme of a picture and to give it the "right" title, both from an etic point of view and from an emic point of view.

Using the example of Christian imagery, I will briefly present a first possible approach to this challenge and at the same time point out further challenges that we as socio-critical archaeologists face in this second step, the identification of the theme. The announced picture (<https://www.kunstkopie.de/a/altdorfer-albrecht/kreuzigung-christi-3.html>) shows a man nailed to a wooden frame. Armed men and weeping women surround the man nailed to this frame. We see the visible. Understood iconically, what is shown corresponds to what has happened; all the actors and everything that has happened belong together in terms of space and time according to this approach. (In the case of the present picture, we can reasonably assume that the initiators intended the recipients to understand what is shown as a coherent event. We have texts that explain what is shown in the picture in this sense). But the question remains: Did every contemporary witness to this execution know the complex social and political context in which this crucifixion took place? Was every contemporary witness aware of the life story of the crucified person? What did contemporaries see and understand, what connotations did this event evoke in them? And what do recipients today, located in the most diverse socio-cultural contexts, see in the picture, in the visible presentation of the event? Do they recognize the entire event in all its facets? Do they know

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<sup>444</sup> See *Excursus I.3, The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to *Excursus I.3.2.2, Stories about the past(s) - on what we can report*; *II.3.9, Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations* up to *II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule/governance*; *III.1.1.1, Representation*; *III.1.2, Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations*; *III.1.3, Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; *III.1.6, The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life* up to *III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

that it is the crucifixion of Jesus? Or do they see the subject - crucifixion, execution - without knowing the historical context? So what is the subject of the picture for which recipients? And what connotations, what representations arise for the respective recipients with potentially very different levels of knowledge about the event? And there are more questions: How would we look at the picture, or search for the theme, name a picture theme, if we were primarily interested in *cause-and-effect relationships*, that is, if we were primarily looking for indexical signs? With regard to the picture of the crucifixion, the question could be as follows: Why are the women weeping? So why not choose this aspect as the theme of the picture: Weeping women?!

Questions about the importance of contexts in creating pictures, choosing themes, and recognizing and understanding themes, about the possibilities of recognizing a pictorial theme as a contemporary or as a "cultural outsider", as an observer from outside the particular culture, of recognizing iconic and indexical signs in the picture that lead us, among other things, to the theme, to the denotations and connotations that "one" might associate with a picture, become virulent again in the fourth step with scenarios 1 - 4. Among other things, these scenarios address our possibilities and the challenges we face as socio-critical archaeologists when we want to name the contexts in which pictorial works were created, in which themes were determined, and in which the reception of the pictorial works took place.

I now refer again to the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamien, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))) in order to show - in an extended scope - the comprehensive complexity of the challenges we face in our attempt to recognize the theme of a picture. At the same time, I would like to draw attention to further stumbling blocks that await us in this attempt. <sup>445</sup>

#### *Step two - once again - the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD*

On the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, meanwhile described many times, <sup>446</sup> we see people in a mountainous landscape. On a peak stands a person, a male, who is clearly larger than all the other

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<sup>445</sup> In this context I briefly refer to the analysis of our archaeological records, in which we proceed quite similarly. There we look at the position of the things to each other as well as the position of the things in the space. We try to find out about the visible relations between the things and the space, respectively about the order we see, clues to the meanings the respective spatial locations have had for the social interaction in the social entities of the past(s).

See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*

<sup>446</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a*

people. This person is stepping on the body of a (dead?) person. In front of this oversized person, we also see a kneeling and a standing person, both with their arms raised, a posture that from our etic point of view reflects a gesture of supplication. On the mountain slope below this group of people, staggered in several rows, more male figures can be seen, walking one behind the other, from my etic point of view designated as standard-bearers as well as armed persons, who establish a connection with this person respectively are in contact with this person or seek it through their line of sight - directed towards the summit and there towards the person reproduced in oversize. On the right-hand edge of the picture, and opposite each of the aforementioned male figures, we see (at least) two further male figures, each with a broken lance in his arm, the other arm raised, a posture that we also see here as a gesture of supplication. The injured or the bodies of the dead fall down the slope. We see actors engaged in different activities, associated with different functions in a (supposedly?) spatio-temporal related event. We see both the living and the dying, we see (apparently?) the winners and the defeated, we see (apparently?) the result of conflict and armed confrontation. I call the theme of the picture the presentation of a conflict situation and its outcome, an interpretation that I have already presented in several places before,<sup>447</sup> and in which I have also explained why the thematization I propose is plausible from an etic point of view and can also be accepted as a corresponding perception from an emic point of view.<sup>448</sup>

My interpretation of the picture here as there says: What is shown is the rendering of a real event, the reproduction that is true to reality, respectively the reproduction that is formally close to reality. My description of the picture, the naming of the theme and my interpretation of the picture on the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD is based on the understanding of the presentation as both "iconic" - the picture shows an event corresponding to reality, all episodes are spatio-temporally related - and "indexical" - it is the conflict or armed confrontation (cause) that led to the death of the people (effect).<sup>449</sup>

And although this view of what is shown has plausible grounds, there are two challenges inherent in this approach that we should address. On the one hand (challenge one), there is the question of to what extent, or if at all, we as archaeologists doing socio-critical research are able to postulate

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*work of art; II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>447</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups; II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; II.3.7.15, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage; II.3.7.19, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts; II.3.7.21, Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation; II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art; II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices

<sup>448</sup> See II.3.5.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness; II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order

<sup>449</sup> See II.3.1.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic; Excursus II.6, The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark; see further the following remarks on the keyword "simultaneity of the non-simultaneous"

with plausible arguments that what we see, what is shown, reflects a real event that took place in space and time as depicted, whether we can therefore understand the events presented in the picture as a complex of iconic signs. On the other hand (challenge two), the question arises whether we can also find plausible reasons, clear indications for our claim that the sequence of pictures on the stele, the depiction of events and their consequences, or the depiction of actions and their results, are to be understood as a cause-effect relationship, as the rendering of indexical signs?<sup>450</sup> Before pursuing these questions in detail, I would like to recall the insights of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic research.

*Step two - the semiotic sign system of Charles Sanders Peirce and its relevance for our socio-critical archaeological research*<sup>451</sup>

Charles Sanders Peirce opens up another sphere of semiotics for us by showing that signs are not simply "signs," but that it makes sense to divide the signs with which we humans (as animal symbolicum, according to Ernst Cassirer, 1953) work into categories. Charles Sanders Peirce's rationale for the formation of categories is the diversity of relations to what the signs denote - an insight which, for our socio-critical archaeological research, on the one hand leads to a broadening of our perspectives on the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s), but at the same time also to the appearance of new stumbling blocks in our research.

To one of my earlier questions - are we able to identify pictorial elements and do we recognize if a picture is an iconic presentation - I can give a preliminary answer for the moment. When we see people, plants, animals, or houses, to name a few, in pictures, even if they are only depicted abstractly, there is a high probability that these illustrations were also intended and could be seen as depictions of the real models. We are dealing with iconic signs. We might also dare to name things according to our perception, taking into account all the caveats I have discussed with regard to the research of Ferdinand de Saussure. And it seems quite possible that through this identification we might succeed in establishing approximations between our etic point of view and the emic point of view.<sup>452</sup>

Achieving a correspondingly "certain" identification of the sign categories becomes more complicated when we are no longer concerned solely with the rendering of individual pictorial

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<sup>450</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay / Wolfgang Stegmüller, 1974 on "causes"*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior, to lie*

<sup>451</sup> See III.1.2.3, *The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*

<sup>452</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

elements. Thus, if we turn to the second challenge mentioned above, the attempt to find in the rendering of events indications of what Charles Sanders Peirce called the sign category "indexical signs", signs that indicate a cause-effect relationship. I have already implicitly taken both categories, the iconic and the indexical, as the basis for the pictorial description of the stele. This is the case where I have described what is shown as the reproduction of an event that took place in the spatio-temporal context in which it is presented (the "iconic view"), as well as where I have considered the conflict and the result of a battle articulated in the picture as the cause for the fact <sup>453</sup> that people with broken weapons stand pleadingly in front of people with intact weapons, that people have been killed, and that actors have been identified as winners and losers (the "indexical view"). However, this logic can also be an apparent (!) logic, which may even prevent us from recognizing the theme of the picture we are looking for. The fact that this logic may prove to be a further stumbling block in our research will be illustrated first by another pictorial work, here on the basis of a relief (orthostat) from the reign of the Assyrian ruler TIGLATH-PILESER III., and then I will return to the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD.

*Step two - stumbling block 3 - the challenge here concerns the reflection - cause / effect (the indexical signs) and spatio-temporal coherence (the iconic signs) - an only apparent certainty?*

Our implicit as well as explicit categorization of pictorial elements as indexical or iconic signs may initially "lull us into a sense of security" as far as the fulfillment of our cognitive interests is concerned, only to make us realize, when we reflect more deeply on our solution approaches, that we may have fallen into a "trap" with our decoding attempts, the categorization of pictorial elements. The supposedly certain recognition of a pictorial element in its function as an indexical sign, i.e. the recognition of a cause-effect relationship in a scene depicted in a picture, or in its function as an iconic sign referring to the spatio-temporal coherence of an event, can potentially also reflect something completely different (!) than we at first logically - plausibly thought. A further example from the field of Near Eastern archaeology illustrates the challenge we socio-critical archaeologists face when we focus on the attempt to discover cause-effect relationships, when we want to understand and explain the cause-effect statement of indexical signs as an indication of the subject, the theme of a picture. Assyrian pictorial works, here on a relief of TIGLATH-PILESER III, depict battle scenes in which both the living and the dead are depicted (see [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Assyrian\\_Relief\\_Attack\\_on\\_Enemy\\_Town\\_from\\_Kalhu\\_\(Nimrud\)\\_Central\\_Palace\\_reign\\_of\\_Tiglath-pileser\\_III\\_British\\_Museum\\_-\\_2.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Assyrian_Relief_Attack_on_Enemy_Town_from_Kalhu_(Nimrud)_Central_Palace_reign_of_Tiglath-pileser_III_British_Museum_-_2.jpg); [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiglath-Pileser\\_III#/media/File:Assyrian\\_Relief\\_Attack\\_on\\_Enemy\\_Town\\_from\\_Kalhu\\_\(Nimrud\)\\_Central\\_Palace\\_reign\\_of\\_Tiglath-pileser\\_III\\_British\\_Museum\\_-\\_2.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiglath-Pileser_III#/media/File:Assyrian_Relief_Attack_on_Enemy_Town_from_Kalhu_(Nimrud)_Central_Palace_reign_of_Tiglath-pileser_III_British_Museum_-_2.jpg);

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<sup>453</sup> See I.1 *What it's all about - in the following essay*

Tiglath-Pileser III besieging a town). The theme of this relief is indicated in the research of Near Eastern archaeology with "Tiglath-Pileser III - siege of a city". The upper part of the relief shows an attack on a city and impaled people. The lower part shows an attacker about to cut off a person's head and dead people, including people whose heads have already been cut off. From our etic point of view and our knowledge of how people behave in war and that people can be killed in conflict situations, I interpret both the action of the attacker in the lower part of the picture and the picture of the dead as a presentation of events that took place in reality in this way ("iconic view") and as a presentation of those who were involved in the fight for the depicted city or who lost their lives in this attack ("indexical view"). Both the "iconic view" and the "indexical view" would be logically justified from an etic point of view.

However, the depiction of the battles and the rendering of the dead on the relief of TIGLATH-PILESER III. (as well as the rendering of the individual actions and events depicted on the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD) could also refer to events that were neither spatially nor temporally related nor corresponded to a cause-effect relationship (see e.g. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, 2023, 7 - 14; 18). If this consideration were correct, then both our "iconic view" and the cause-effect relationship causally linked by us, our "indexical view", would simply not (!) reflect the pictorial statement correctly.

What is the problem?

We can use pictures to tell stories that are related in space, time, and causality - but this relationship is not obligatory! It is not obligatory that what appears as a sequence of pictures also presents events that in reality belong together in space and time and have a cause-effect relationship. We can create sequences of pictures in which what is depicted belongs to different events in both space and time. It is possible to understand such a picture structure as meaningful and as belonging together, and also to recognize it as a cause-effect relationship, if both the initiators of corresponding pictures and the recipients addressed are aware of the reasons why events that are disparate in space and time, but connected in the picture, have been linked together in the way depicted.<sup>454</sup> While the sequence of events, which did not take place together in space and time, might have been causally comprehensible to the members of a social entity of the past(s), i.e. from the emic point of view, in the given ordered sequence of pictures, our interpretation, plausibly justified from our etic point of view - everything shown stands in a spatio-temporal context and is to be understood as a cause-effect relationship - would simply not (!) have corresponded to the statement of the pictures. Have we then, with the title of the picture "Tiglath-Pileser III - besieging a town", grasped the theme and the message which the initiators of the picture had associated with

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<sup>454</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

it? Again we ask: Do we see the real event (iconic) with the combination of the iconic and indexical "gaze" that we have postulated? Do we see the space-time constellation as the framework of the cause-effect relationship correctly (indexically)? Could the picture or the theme of the picture show something completely different from the cause-effect / space-time relationship we postulate? Do we, as socio-critical archaeologists, have the possibility of recognizing the depicted events as a compilation of events that do not (!) belong together in space and time? Which took place in different spaces and at different times, but for reasons unknown to us (so far!?) were brought together in one picture?

Pictures are not texts. The depiction of different scenes in a picture does not necessarily follow the logic of a grammar, which is the basis of languages and texts. Understanding and explaining a pictorial presentation as a spatially and temporally related event, and also as a causally linkable cause-effect event, never allows a picture per se! For our cognitive interest in recognizing the theme of a picture, this fact may be a (still) insurmountable stumbling block.

Again, the challenge is to explain for each individual study of our socio-critical archaeological research whether and why we, as observers, see a pictorial scene from our etic point of view as a spatio-temporally coherent sequence of events or as a cause-effect relationship.

With regard to the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, it would be necessary to explain in more detail whether and, if so, why we can interpret the axes of vision of the participants and also the physical contact between the main character of the event and the person lying in front of him as an indication of spatio-temporal coherence, as a realistic reproduction of what is shown (iconic), whether and why the pleading of one group of actors is causally triggered by the violence of the other group of actors (cause and effect, indexical), and why our interpretation would then also be considered "probably correct" from an emic point of view.<sup>455</sup> With the knowledge of semiotic research, the reference to the potentially manifold possibilities of deriving pictorial statements from pictorial works or projecting them into them always remains topical for our interpretations of pictorial works!

The insights of Charles Sanders Peirce then point to further (as yet) insurmountable hurdles in our attempt to name the pictorial themes when he speaks of symbols. Potentially, all our interpersonal encounters and each of our ways of dealing with things, including their depiction as pictorial elements, also have a symbolic character (Ernst Cassirer, 1953). Every element depicted on the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD as well as on the relief of TIGLATH-PILESER III., every single object, every single actor, but also the entire event can stand as a symbol for something that is not visible,

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<sup>455</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*

but that is meant by the initiators of the picture as well as by the recipients as a meaningful and sense-giving symbol for something that was known to all of them.<sup>456</sup> Based on these cognitions and the fact that we, as socio-critical archaeologists, look at the pictures of the members of the social entities of the past(s) as "strangers", as outsiders, we are faced with two further challenges in dealing with things in their function and in their use as symbols.

*Step two - stumbling block 4 - things, used as symbols - recognizable from the things themselves?*

On the one hand, the question arises as to whether, from our etic point of view, we recognize at all what, according to Charles Sanders Peirce's definition, has been a symbol on a picture and also among the other cultural forms of expression of the societies of the past(s) - and just presents neither or not primarily an iconic nor an indexical sign. I have already referred to this problem with regard to the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, where at the upper edge of the picture there are two pictorial elements which I have called "graphic elements" - symbols in the sense of the above-mentioned definition? And if so, what did they mean for the theme of the picture?<sup>457</sup> But even if we were able to identify a thing or pictorial element as a "symbol" according to the category defined by Charles Sanders Peirce, and were thus able to distinguish it clearly from iconic and indexical signs, this identification would immediately present us with the next challenge.

*Step two - stumbling block 5 - and again asked: Symbol content - recognizable at the thing?*

We take from the studies of Charles Sanders Peirce: The symbolism of an object, of a pictorial element, of our gestures, behaviors, and conversations, that is, the content of symbols, can never be deduced from them themselves. The meaning and content of a symbol must always be learned.<sup>458</sup> Thus, even if we were to recognize a thing, a pictorial element, in its function as a symbol, there would remain a decisive stumbling block in our search for the pictorial themes: The possibility of deciphering the symbolic content of pictures, of artifacts in general, of architecture and spatial order, and of burials, of grasping the symbolic meanings and connotations of the cultural forms of expression intended by the producer - and whose knowledge he could presume in the recipients, the symbolic statements that were intentionally given or habitually and traditionally known by the members of the social entities of the past(s) - is not given to us on the basis of things alone. In other words, the insight into the emic point of view on the content of the symbolic statements may remain largely closed to us in socio-critical archaeological research due to our source situation (see

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<sup>456</sup> See II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>457</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; II.3.2, *Society and community*; VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*

<sup>458</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; Excursus I.1, *The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*; III.1.2.3, *The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*



below, *Step four - iconological interpretation - my consideration of the traffic sign „Give way“ [Vorfabrt achten]*).

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*Step two - A brief summary with a view to finding the theme of a picture and the categories of signs inherent in the picture*

The examples given above illustrate once again the importance of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic research for our socio-critical archaeological work. What Charles Sanders Peirce's research contributes to archaeology is, first of all, a general awareness of the emblematic potential of materiality. The value of semiotic research in general for archaeology is therefore not a direct possibility of application in explaining the functions and meanings of things. It is the awakening of archaeologists to the potential of materiality as a medium of ( nonverbal) communication. It is the invitation and the possibility to specify our questions to the materialized cultural forms of expression. It is the finger pointing to the still existing limits of interpretation and determination of what is represented in what is presented.

Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic research shows us once again what we have to pay attention to when analyzing and interpreting things, and where our limits lie in decoding things as signs and indications of social, political, cultural, and economic conditions in the social entities of the past(s). Last but not least, it is the limits, our "not knowing", that we should always keep in mind when naming the theme of the picture! <sup>460</sup>

***Step three - The iconographic interpretation and stumbling block 6- concerned with the question - What did an individual think in the social formations of the past(s) - and - is this recognizable for us?***

*Step three - The iconographical interpretation - asking about the intentions that the artist or, in the social entities of the past(s), the initiator of a pictorial work had in choosing the theme for a picture*

When it comes to the iconographic interpretation, we want to explore the meanings, the message that - today the artist, at that time the initiator of a pictorial work - had intentionally connected and wanted to communicate with the work, the thing, the picture, beyond what is shown and to be seen in what is not shown but meant.

A truism in advance: Intention can be determined to a certain extent if we ask why things are and were produced in the first place, and if we can answer this question plausibly in terms of their

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<sup>459</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

<sup>460</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations* up to II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule/governance*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life* up to III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

primary functions, i.e., the need for these things to satisfy needs in social interaction.<sup>461</sup> Houses are built for protection from various influences, for the accommodation of people, for the placement of things in them. Vessels are for the storage of things. Our research situation looks different when we ask what intentions the makers, proprietors, owners, and users of things had individually (!) with the production, property [*Eigentum*], or possession (ownership) [*Besitz*] and use of things beyond the fulfillment of their primary functions. What meanings did they individually (!) attribute to the things? What messages did they individually (!) want to convey with the things beyond the visible, messages that were not visible in the things themselves, but were effective in the invisible for social interaction? The stumbling block that we, as socio-critical archaeologists, encounter with this question is obvious: Can we determine the intentions of a person, an individual actor, without that person communicating his or her individually conceived message to us - verbally or in writing?<sup>462</sup>

*Step three - stumbling block 6 - the search for an answer to the question - what did an individual think in the social entities of the past(s) - and - is this recognizable for us? - now takes on a concrete form*

What an individual thinks, what an individual thought in the past(s) when he or she was making or had made a pictorial work, is first of all a matter that takes place in the head, in the mind, in the invisible but effective thinking of the individual.<sup>463</sup> She or he creates a picture or gives an order, chooses a suitable picture carrier for the request, chooses the theme, shows what is to be shown, produces the picture in the chosen style and decides where to place it. The theme, which is ideally recognized and understood by the recipients, makes part of the message of the picture visible. What the respective person, the initiator at the time for the creation of a pictorial work in the social entities of the past(s), wanted to communicate beyond what he or she visibly communicated with the thing, and what he or she also wanted to communicate invisibly but effectively, the intention of this one individual to say more with the picture than can be seen, remains closed to us socio-critical archaeologists, who only have the pictorial work and possibly its original context before our eyes. However: What "one" had associated with the presented pictorial work at a certain time and in a certain context, we socio-critical archaeologists can, plausibly justified, to a certain extent, certainly elicit, as I have (hopefully) plausibly and comprehensibly shown with the numerous

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<sup>461</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; Excursus I.4, *To understand and to explain*; II.3.7.9, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / rituals / routine*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life*

<sup>462</sup> See II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance / motives*

<sup>463</sup> See II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power*

explanations in the previous text <sup>464</sup> and what I will thematize again in the following with the *iconological interpretation (step four)*.

**Step four - The iconological interpretation** - and 13 (!) complex considerations {a - m} to 13 no less complex aspects [...and a short preliminary remark: What follows is a complex and challenging undertaking - one that may not be entirely effortless to follow...]

*Step four - The iconological interpretation - exploration of the spirit of the times [Zeitgeist] and contexts as keys to our understanding of the cultural forms of expression*

In iconological interpretation, the question arises as to why a particular theme was chosen for pictures at a particular time and in a particular socio-cultural context. The question also arises as to what deeper meaning this theme had at the time and in the socio-cultural context in which the picture was created, what the theme represented beyond what was shown, what was not explicitly shown but was implicitly meant by the theme. The focus of this question, and the approach of *iconological interpretation*, is no longer solely on the search for the intentions that an individual had in mind with the presentation and representation of the picture and its theme (see *iconographic interpretation, step three*). It is now a matter of finding out what deeper meaning "one" had attributed to this theme, and why at the time and in the socio-cultural context, in which a pictorial work was created, and also in the subsequent periods in which the pictorial work was received. The paraphrase "one" potentially refers thus to all members of the social entity in which the picture was created and received, as well as to all other viewers who have seen the picture over time. It is a matter of capturing the spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*] in which that which is depicted with the theme of the picture, as well as that which is represented with the theme, could arise and be understood by everyone who was socialized in the corresponding context - and considered again - for all the viewers of the picture who have seen it in the changing times and in the changing spirit of the times. For this purpose, a brief explanation of what is meant by the phenomenon of *Zeitgeist* in the broadest sense: Basically, it is about the "invisible" in our social togetherness, which constantly

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<sup>464</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; Excursus I.1, *The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*; III.1.2.3, *The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; see furthermore my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

influences us in this social togetherness, which we in turn influence through our thinking, behavior and actions, and which is reflected in our immaterial and materialized cultural forms of expression. Inherent in the notion of *Zeitgeist* is the phenomenon of discourse<sup>465</sup> - what can, what may, and what may not be said, or what must be said and shown in a given social entity? The spirit of the times comprises the guiding ideas by which the social order is shaped, social interaction is regulated, and behavioral expectations of the members of a social entity are incorporated. The spirit of the times thus includes the values and norms that regulate interaction. The spirit of the times means worldview, is (also) the ideology of a time, of a social entity, of a generation. Within the framework of iconological interpretation, we look for the signs that allow us to understand and explain how pictorial themes were made connectable with the rules, values, norms, habitus and traditions - in short, with the spirit of the times, or how the spirit of the times and the formation of the framework conditions for the phenomena of presentation and representation were interwoven. We ask about the dominant discourses that were current at the time of the creation and reception of the pictorial work. We ask about the conditions under which knowledge became possible and under which meaningful statements could develop. We ask about the conditions that led to the standardization of socio-cultural orders and the rules of social interaction, the rules by which it was decided what could be said or shown, what was considered meaningful and what was not.<sup>466</sup>

Art scholars rightly point out that in order to grasp the spirit of the times, one must have a "solid knowledge of cultural history".<sup>467</sup> A solid knowledge of the socio-cultural conditions in the social entities of the past(s) is already gained when we deal with the conditions that are and were necessary for a pictorial work to come into being in the first place (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {a} Solid knowledge - Insights into the conditions that are necessary for a pictorial work to come into being*). In order to gain further insights into the basic conditions under which pictorial works were created, used, and received, we should succeed in clarifying the contexts with which we, as social-critical archaeologists, are dealing, and what constitutes them (finding context, context of origin, primary and secondary contexts of use and reception) (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {b}*)

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<sup>465</sup> See III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>466</sup> See Excursus I.4, *To understand and to explain*; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*; I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; see as well Tatjana Schönwälder-Kuntze, 2015, 131 - 151; III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life*; III.1.7, *The power of the cultural - the cognitions of the social and the cultural sciences*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; III.1.7.1.1, *Who was Antonio Gramsci, what cognitive interest did he pursue, what theses did he advocate?* III.1.7.1.2, *Cultural hegemony - how does it thus in a concrete and practical way work? - and a short summary up to III.1.7.2, A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak 1985*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>467</sup> See II.3.1, *What is society??*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*

*Contexts matter*). How we can - theoretically - succeed in identifying these contexts can be demonstrated by the ideal-typical construction of a case study (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {c} An archaeological record - fictitious, but close to reality*). But what it "really" looks like in an excavation, and the extraordinary complexity of the challenges we face in iconological interpretation, respectively when we try to recognize and determine the contexts that we are dealing with in our excavations and that we want to relate to the circumstances and contexts in which the pictorial works were created and received, I would like to illustrate with four scenarios (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {d} The Realities of socio-critical archaeological research - the real excavation situations; scenarios 1 - 4*). However, the fact that even the four scenarios do not represent all realities in the encounter with pictorial works can be shown, on the one hand, by the ways of interacting with pictorial works. We encounter the phenomenon of iconoclasm [*Bildersturm*], the deliberate damaging of a pictorial work and thus the attempt to prevent the originally intended possibilities of reception (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {e} The Phenomenon of iconoclasm [*Bildersturm*]*). On the other hand, we record specific ways in which pictorial works have been used, where pictorial works have been moved from one place to another as spoils of war (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {f} Pictures as booty*) and also in those cases where pictorial works were already intended for mobile use at the time of their creation (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {g} Pictorial works - not booty, not stolen property and yet mobile from place to place*). Contexts matter! Each context in which we record pictorial works (finding context), or in which one has had property over the picture, owned it, produced, used, received pictures (context of origin, context of use, and context of reception), is different. Despite all the differences of the contexts, they are at the same time connected by the following phenomena. In every finding context, in every archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*], we find things that were not made at the same time, but were used at the same time (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {h} The Simultaneity of the of the non-simultaneous - a characteristic of all finding contexts and all contexts of use*) and every archaeological record, every finding context always presents the static section of a dynamic process of becoming and decay [*Werden und Vergehen*] (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {i} The static in the dynamic - a characteristic that connects all (!) finding contexts*) - a phenomenon that calls for yet another focus, especially on the conditions of reception. Contexts matter - this statement is a recurrent theme in our iconological interpretation. And yet, at the end of our considerations, this statement must be questioned: In what way is contextual knowledge about the pictorial activities in the social entities of the past(s) influential for the "correct" iconological interpretation of the pictorial works and thus "really" necessary (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {j} And last but not least - the repeatedly announced consideration of whether the importance of the contexts for the understanding of the picture can also be seen quite differently than presented in my previous remarks*)? All considerations about

the relevance of the contexts for the creation of the pictures and for the understanding of the pictures become topical again and under different signs when we deal with the "last station" of a pictorial work from the social entities of the past(s), the installation in a museum (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {k} A preliminary last station of a pictorial work - the museum*).

This brief introduction to the aspects with which we, as socio-critical archaeologists, are concerned in the observation and analysis of the pictorial works should have already made it clear: Iconological interpretation is one of the extraordinarily complex and thus one of the outstandingly challenging research concerns that we pursue in socio-critical archaeological research. Many questions lie ahead of us, and a not inconsiderable number of stumbling blocks stand in the way of our attempts to develop solid cultural-historical knowledge within the framework of iconological research, and to understand and explain the pictures or the pictorial themes - and all other cultural forms of expression - of the social entities of the past(s) (as has already been shown in many facets with the elaborations in "Own Comments ..." in Part II). The following detailed remarks on the theme will show: Many answers remain to be found. And it is precisely these unanswered questions, our not-knowing, that continually fuel our curiosity and inspire the work of socio-critical archaeological research into the future (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {l} Socio-critical archaeological research - a science of „creative non-knowledge“*). And because of the importance of communication, I will conclude my remarks by discussing once again the function of communication in the success of our social interaction (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation {m} To the end - once again reflected - communication, an impactful parameter for the functioning of social interaction*).

*Step four - {a} Solid knowledge - Insights into the conditions that are necessary for a pictorial work to come into being*

Even before we begin the concrete analysis of the pictorial works with the above-mentioned cognitive interests and the focus on the phenomenon of the spirit of the time - how did the pictorial theme emerge at a certain time and in a certain geographical environment in a certain social entity, what did "one" see in what was presented and what representations did one associate with what was presented - what was allowed to be shown, what had to be shown (and what was not shown?) - we already gain initial insights into aspects of the social order in the social entities in which pictorial works were produced. First, we think through the various conditions that must be guaranteed for a pictorial work to come into being at all, <sup>468</sup> starting from the truism: The basic prerequisite for the production of pictorial works was the social, socio-cultural and political

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<sup>468</sup> See I.6.1, *Things - the diversity of sources which are potentially available to us for our socio-critical archaeological research / the concept of "traces"*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

necessity (or possibility) of having (or being able to use) pictorial works as a medium of nonverbal communication in a social entity. We can, on the basis of plausible arguments, name behavioral expectations for the initiators of the pictures as well as behavioral expectations for those who do the work so that a picture can be created.<sup>469</sup> We recognize value concepts and normative guidelines that had to be respected in the procurement of materials as well as in the craftsmanship and technical implementation of the work. We can take these requirements as given, also plausibly justified. We deduce from the things themselves the craftsmanship required to produce the pictorial work. We see the pictorial works and recognize the material from which the pictorial works are made. We associate the combination of pictorial work and material with the fact that in every social entity norms and values determine which material is suitable, possible or allowed for which kind of pictorial work. From the localization of the pictorial works, we already derive the first indications of who was allowed to have which kind of pictorial work made from which material. Drawing on the cognitions of sociological, iconographic, and iconological research on the influence of the spirit of the times on thought and action and on the formation of values and norms in a social entity and vice versa, we postulate that the spirit of the times and discourses were already at work in this decision. We can name the stocks of knowledge that had to be and were given in order to know about the geographical and natural availability of the necessary raw materials as well as about the political possibilities of access. At the same time, we ask about the conditions under which who was allowed to acquire which knowledge.<sup>470</sup>

We create scenarios regarding the accessibility of knowledge as well as scenarios regarding the political and economic conditions that must have existed in order to obtain the raw materials and employ the craftsmen. We draw first conclusions about the functional differentiations and the development of socially differentiated groupings associated with them, or the social differentiation that was considered necessary and therefore presupposed for the development of specialized craftsmen in the social entities of the past(s).<sup>471</sup> In order to understand the pictures or pictorial themes in the sense of their creators, our investigation begins by examining the social conditions,

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<sup>469</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social entities - unities?*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; IV.1, *Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other?*

<sup>470</sup> See I.7.1, *Briefly mentioned once again - the influence of our background in making socio-critical archaeology possible at all*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.3, *Groups*

<sup>471</sup> See II.3.3, *Groups*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*; Excursus II.5, *How is disparity produced and reproduced?*; II.3.7.14, *The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected?*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social entities - unities?* II.3.8, *Equal - unequal or different? - First considerations*; II.3.8.1, *Equal, unequal or just different?*

the contexts, and their significance for this understanding already for the period before the pictorial work was created.

*Step four - {b} Contexts matter*

The cognitive interests that iconological research pursues with regard to the relevance of the framework conditions, with regard to the spirit of the times that becomes effective in choosing a theme are also pursued by us in socio-critical archaeological research. In both sciences, in the iconological research and in our socio-critical archaeological research, the aim is, among other things, to discover the contexts and backgrounds that reveal why certain themes were chosen for pictorial works at a certain time, and to pursue the question of what "deeper meanings" people associated with the themes depicted. Both sciences are concerned with the search for what is represented in what is presented, for the spirit of the times that made it possible for all viewers of the pictures to associate more or less comparable associations and connotations with what is shown.

In one essential point, however, these two sciences differ: The starting point from which we socio-critical archaeologists begin our investigations is diametrically opposed to the research situation of iconographic and iconological research. In their search for the above-mentioned connections, iconographers and iconologists are able to begin their research at the time when the pictorial work was created, from its context of origin [*Entstehungskontext*], from the point in time when the theme of the pictorial work was chosen, and from the point in time when a decision was made about where the pictorial work was to be displayed and exhibited. They are able to determine the circle of potential commissioners for a pictorial work and postulate, if not state, the circle of potential recipients. We socio-critical archaeologists, on the other hand, approach the search for insights into the aforementioned common cognitive interests from the end point of the reception period of a pictorial work.<sup>472</sup> With our finding context [*archäologischer Befund*] we record a pictorial work according to the time when the users of that time had left the settlement. We find ourselves in a context in which the pictures have not only already been created and received, but have also already been abandoned. Contexts matter! Different categories of context are relevant to the creation and reception of pictorial works. We investigate these context categories with our questions about the context in which pictorial works and their themes were created, by whom and why at all, in which context they were received by whom, by whom they were understood in their denotations, and with what connotations the respective pictorial themes were associated by whom. We need to show

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<sup>472</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; II.1, *Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*



why and in what ways the knowledge of the contexts in which the pictorial works were created, and in which their themes and locations were chosen, were relevant to the members of the social entities of the past(s), and are relevant to us social-critical archaeologists, in order to understand the themes that the pictures depict and the connotations that they represent.<sup>473</sup> We socio-critical archaeologists must therefore clarify which context categories we are working with and how we characterize categories of contexts. Four context categories seem possible to me, on the basis of which I structure the search for the connections between making and receiving pictures as described above. These are the finding context, the context of origin, the primary context of use and the secondary context of use. Last but not least, we must then explain according to which criteria we assign a finding context created by us [*archäologischer Befund*] to one of the context categories created in the social entities of the past(s).

*Step four - {b} The finding context (context one) - the archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*], created by us socio-critical archaeologists, in which we discover the pictures and their spatial localization*

The finding context, that is, the archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*] in which we first see the artifacts, including the pictorial works, is created by us socio-critical archaeologists through our excavations. Whether our context is the context of origin of the pictorial works (context two), the primary context of use (context three), or a secondary context of use (context four), we do not know at this point.

*Step four - {b} The context of origin (context two) - where the pictures were produced and the themes were determined*

We search for the context of origin of a pictorial work [*Entstehungskontext*], that is, the context in which a pictorial work is created and designed and the theme determined according to the spirit of the times. We are looking for the genesis [*Entstehungszusammenhang*] in which the initiators of a pictorial work determined the type of medium and its material within the framework of the prevailing spirit of the times and influenced by their socialization. We are looking for the general conditions under which decisions were made about the theme and location of a pictorial work. We are looking for the backgrounds against which "one" might have considered both the intended recipients and the associations and connotations desired upon reception.

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<sup>473</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic - the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous*

*Step four - {b} The primary context of use (context three) - the context thus for which the pictorial work was originally intended and its theme chosen*

The context of origin (context two) and the primary context of use can potentially be identical, for example, when picture carriers are permanently installed in buildings (e.g. the frescoes of religious content in a Christian church; the orthostats with power-related pictorial themes in an Assyrian palace - see *Step two - The iconographical description*). However, that the primary context of use of pictorial works must not have been the context of origin (context two) becomes clear when we consider the fact that things were used in a mobile way, spread over large geographical areas and used over long periods of time. The primary context of use in this case would not be the context of origin (context two) (see below, *Step four - iconological interpretation - j, k*; see as well below - *The secondary context of use*).

*Step four - {b} The secondary context of use (context four) - a complex phenomenon - when the original connection no longer exists between the commissioner for a picture, the chosen theme and the location of the picture, the function of the location, the users of the location and the recipients of the picture*

An example: A secondary context of use can be assumed if the original functions of a location for which a picture was originally created no longer exist, e.g. the functions of a building in which a picture was permanently installed have changed, and the groups of users who had access to the building or saw the pictures have also potentially changed with the changed functions of the building. This was already possible during the lifetime of those who founded the building, commissioned the pictures for it, and decided on the pictorial themes (the founding generation). (e.g.: A Christian church built in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is desecrated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and immediately after that converted into a restaurant; see <https://www.suedkurier.de/region/schwarzwald/villingen-schwenningen/Wenn-sich-die-Kirche-in-ein-Restaurant-verwandelt-Hinter-den-Kulissen-der-Vesperkirche;art372541,9100337>).

However, changes in the building's function, changes in the group of users of the building as well as in the group of recipients of the pictures were also possible at any later point in time - i.e. beyond the time of the founding generation (parents) and their descendants (children – grandchildren). In this case, the groups who have used the building, may not have had the socialization background of the founding generation. These users may have viewed the pictures without the knowledge of the spirit of the times of that past. (e.g.: A Christian church, built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is desecrated and converted into a restaurant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century).

We must also consider the following situation: A building is used well beyond the time of the founding generation in the function it had in the founding period, in the context of its origin (context two), and in the primary context of its use (context three) (e.g. the Christian church - ST.

PETER'S BASILICA / PETERSDOM in Rome, construction started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, used as a Christian church until today, 21<sup>st</sup> century). What changes over time are the users of the building and the recipients of the pictures, not the function of the building. Now we are definitely dealing with groups who use the building without the socialization background of the founding generation, and who may view the pictures without any knowledge of the spirit of the times that prevailed at the time the pictures (and the building) were created.

In our excavations, the analysis of the construction history of a building and our stratigraphic observations enable us to determine whether the corresponding building has remained unchanged in form and construction throughout its history of use, or whether it has been altered. With our chronological studies we determine the lifespan of the building. Ideally, we will thus identify the clues that give us information about the history of this building's functional use.

Finally, we also assume secondary contexts of use if we can plausibly demonstrate that we find a pictorial work in a context that is neither the context of origin (context two) nor the primary context of use (context three) (for corresponding observations see below, step four - iconological interpretation - f, g, h, i, k).

*Step four - {b} Knowing the reception contexts - why is this important for the understanding of a pictorial work?*

Why and in what way knowledge of the contexts in which pictorial works were created and used is relevant for the understanding of pictorial works and the respective emergence of connotations that "one" could, should, or had to (!) associate with what is shown, I have outlined with the preceding statements. Two actual examples from everyday life today should illustrate this topic with a view to further facets and with a further reference to the insights of Charles Sanders Peirce. Explicitly, semiotics points us to the importance of the context of use of a pictorial work for the "correct" understanding of what is presented and the "correct" connection of what is presented with what is represented, the "deeper" meaning of what is shown. For our concerns in socio-critical archaeological research, the studies of Charles Sanders Peirce, which have been mentioned several times, are particularly instructive (see above, *Step two - stumbling block 5 - And again asked: Symbol contents - recognizable at the thing?*).<sup>474</sup>

Looking at a traffic sign, we can see the importance of contexts, socializing contexts, the spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*], the context in which a traffic sign is used, for understanding the presentation and for developing connotations, for understanding the representation of what is being presented. The traffic sign "Give way" only makes sense if we have learned through our socialization (social and socio-cultural context) what the abstract image of this traffic sign means (this meaning cannot

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<sup>474</sup> See III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations up to III.1.2.3, The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*

be derived from the sign itself, it is the category of symbolic signs in the sense of Charles Sanders Peirce's definition). The sign must also be in the right place for the message to be understood, i.e. it must be set up at the intersection of two roads (*spatial context*). Placed in a forest clearing, the sign would make no sense. Our social and socio-cultural contextual knowledge, our knowledge of the message, and our knowledge of the correct spatial placement of the sign, the spatial contextual knowledge, are thus the prerequisites for representing what is presented in the sense of those who had the sign made and who ordered its placement (But - see also the considerations under item *Step four - iconological interpretation - k*).

*Step four - {b} Knowing the reception contexts - why is this important for understanding how to deal with pictorial works?*

Our interdisciplinary collaboration with iconographic and iconological research has alerted us to the importance of both the context in which a picture was created, the context of origin (context two) and the contexts of use (contexts three and four). The importance of knowing these contexts for the pursuit of our cognitive interests is made abundantly clear by the example of the defamation of paintings as "degenerate art" during Nazi rule in Germany.<sup>475</sup> The same paintings that were respected and understood as art worth seeing at the time of their creation were degraded as "degenerate" in the spirit of the Nazi ideology. This contemporary example is related to our socio-critical archaeological research as follows: In order to find out how one can, should, or must (!) understand pictorial works respectively their themes, the knowledge of all recipients and thus also our knowledge as socio-critical archaeologists about the spirit of the times in which pictorial works were created as well as the knowledge about the spirit of the times in which pictorial works were received is necessary - in the archaeological record concretely: the knowledge about the context of the origin of the pictorial works as well as the knowledge about the handling of pictorial works in the different contexts of use (but see at the same time *Step four - iconological interpretation - e (!), j, k*). Our goal in iconological interpretation, to find out the reason for the choice of a particular pictorial theme and the determination of what has been seen in the theme in the social entities of the past(s) (and here it should be remembered once again - this question - who saw what in the visible and non-visible cultural forms of expression - applies to all (!) cultural forms of expression that we socio-critical archaeologists are dealing with), which associations and connotations were to be expected contextually as the respective possible ones,<sup>476</sup> thus directs our attention especially to the

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<sup>475</sup> See the history of the so-called "degenerate art" at the time of the of Nazi rule in Germany; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entartete\\_Kunst](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entartete_Kunst); see as well *Step four - iconological interpretation - e; V.3.1, Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

<sup>476</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary*

identification and analysis of the conditions of reception. How we in socio-critical archaeological research can approach these challenges in the archaeological record, and how a plausible assignment of the finding context to one or more of the above-mentioned context categories - in particular the recognition of the context of reception - can potentially take place, I will first show on the basis of a fictitious, ideal-typical, but realistic example.

*Step four - {c} An archaeological record - fictitious, but close to reality*

In our excavations, we first create the finding context (context one). In doing so, we uncover a building whose exterior walls, as well as the interior walls of the rooms, are equipped with permanently installed orthostats.<sup>477</sup> We see the integration of the building into the settlement area, we see its location, we capture the shape and size of the building, we recognize the building materials. We see the locations of the pictures (potentially the context of origin (context two); most probably the primary context of use (context three)), the picture carriers, we recognize their materials, we name the picture themes (taking into account the challenges associated with this step - see *Step two - iconographical description*). By determining the construction history of the building and with the help of stratigraphic observations, we recognize that this building was "single-phase". We date the building in relative and absolute chronology, we determine its duration of use and arrive at a period that does not exceed the time of the founding generation and their immediate successors (see above: parents - children - grandchildren).<sup>478</sup> The location within the settlement and the construction of the ensemble, the choice of the picture carriers and the materials used for the orthostats, the fixed installation of the pictorial works, i.e. the connection between the building and the chosen pictorial themes, are, according to my thesis or in my ideal-typical example, all related to each other and are the result of intention and planning.

I interpret our archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*] (finding context, context one), the building and its furnishings with pictures in this fictional representation of the evidence as an expression of both the context of origin (context two) and the primary context of use (context three). I therefore assume, with plausible reasoning, that the planners of the ensemble, the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] and the builders (those who carried out the construction work [*Erbauer*])<sup>479</sup> and those responsible for equipping the building with orthostats, or the initiators of

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and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts / Votive relief of Ur-Nanshe; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>477</sup> See for example and again from the research area of Near Eastern archaeology - Persepolis / Heidemarie Koch, 2006 ; [https:// de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persepolis](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persepolis)

<sup>478</sup> For the "single-phase" use of a site, see, for example, the construction and duration of use of the Assyrian royal residence Dur Sharrukin; [https:// de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dur\\_%C5%A0ar-rukin\\_\(Assyria\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dur_%C5%A0ar-rukin_(Assyria))

<sup>479</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

the production of the pictures, knew which spatial and intellectual context at the time made possible or required which architecture and which pictorial themes. As a socio-critical archaeologists, we can also hypothesize the socio-cultural, political, and economic contexts of the circles from which the members of the social entities of the past(s) commissioned the creation of the pictorial works and determined the choice of picture carriers, pictorial themes, and places where they were exhibited.<sup>480</sup> We begin by outlining hypothetical answers to the questions of for whom a commission to produce a picture was necessary, in what political order or for whom it was possible, who decided under the respective conditions of the time who the intended recipients of the pictorial works were to be and what "deeper meanings" these recipients could or should ideally derive from the themes of the picture in accordance with the intentions of the initiators.<sup>481</sup> We postulate the worldview or ideology<sup>482</sup> of those who, according to the spirit of the times and the prevailing discourses, were in a position to decide which picture carriers were to be used for the presentation of which themes in which contexts. We postulate which discourses of the time allowed what could be shown on the pictures and what had to be kept "silent", thus not shown. We also assume that "one", the recipient, who was familiar with the spirit of the times,<sup>483</sup> knew what one saw in the ensemble of buildings, pictures and themes and what deeper meaning both the pictorial themes and the connection between location, function, and type of building as well as the furnishing of this (!) building at this (!) location with these (!) pictures and their themes were intended to convey or have conveyed. We therefore postulate that at the time of the construction of this ensemble (context of origin, context two – both for the building and for the pictures),

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<sup>480</sup> For the determination of these circles see among others my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder, change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Pierce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>481</sup> On the connection between social and socio-cultural conditions and the use of pictorial works see especially my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder, change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Pierce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*;

*With a view especially towards the considerations of the possible "deeper meanings" of a theme and what the representation can cause for all those involved in the reception of the pictorial work, see, among others the remarks on the stele of NARAMSIN, II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art; II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Pierce, semiotics*

<sup>482</sup> See *Excursus III.1, Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*

<sup>483</sup> See *III.1.1.3, Discourses and representations - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research; Excursus II.4, How does socialization work?*

respectively at the time of the primary context of use (context three), one understood, why the theme had been chosen, what was represented in what was presented, that the deeper meaning of the ensemble, the message communicated nonverbally by the senders was understood by the recipients in the sense of the senders. The "ideal-typical" archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*] constructed here - the location of the building, the type of building, the localization of the pictorial works, and the chosen picture carriers and pictorial themes were planned as an overall ensemble and related to each other in all elements - already implies an answer to the question: Do the themes of the pictures and the contexts in which the pictorial works are received have to fit together so that the understanding of what is not shown, but what is always also meant by what is shown, the grasping of the "deeper meaning" can succeed? With the construction of the fictitious but reality-based example, we would therefore answer this question in the affirmative, and both semiotic research and our own everyday experience (traffic signs) would support this affirmation or thesis: There was (and is) a "logic" in the choice of certain themes for certain picture carriers and for certain places of installation of the pictures, so that a meaningful and sense-giving understanding of the message of the pictures, of the presentation as well as the development of suitable representations - suitable in the sense of the initiators for a picture work - becomes possible. That this plausible "affirmation" can still be a potential stumbling block will become apparent when we look at mobile picture carriers and consider whether this thesis can be turned upside down by an antithesis, i.e. by a possible counter-argument (see *Step four - iconological interpretation, j, k*). On the other hand, the statements regarding the origin and design of the ensemble as well as the postulated duration of use of the complex plausibly justify the identification of the ideal-typically designed finding context as the context of origin as well as the primary context of use and reception of the entire ensemble.

*Step four - {d} The realities of socio-critical archaeological research - the real excavation situations; scenarios 1 - 4*

In reality, however, the situations we face when analyzing finding contexts and looking for the context categories we have to deal with are much more complex than I have described with the fictional, but still realistic, example. I would like to show what these situations can look like with the help of four scenarios that correspond to real excavation conditions.

The scenarios illustrate even more impressively the challenges we face when we deal with the complex challenges of iconological interpretation, step four, when we try to identify the finding context as a context of origin or as a context of use and reception and to clarify what "one" could associate with the pictorial works under certain conditions of the spirit of the times, and also who "one" was, who the recipients were who saw the pictures, i.e. whose emic point of view we are thus dealing with.

*Step four - {d} **Scenario 1a**, our finding context (context one) [archäologischer Befund] - recognized as context of origin (context two) and as primary context of use (context three) - designed, considered and targeted by the "founding fathers"*

We record a building in its original formal design (see recent example - church building) and its functions (see recent example - church) as they were intended by the "founding fathers". We record the places where the pictures were placed (see recent example - frescoes) and the themes of the pictures (see recent example - religious motifs). We postulate the groups of users and recipients (churchgoers) who were primarily addressed by the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] of the building and the initiators of the pictures.

*Step four - {d} **Scenario 1b**, Single - phase use, not extending beyond the era of the "founding fathers" - Form and function of the building unchanged*

We can see that the building was constructed in a single phase, that the form of the building (*building history, stratigraphic observations*) as well as its function were left unchanged, that the pictorial works remained the same, even their location was unchanged, and that the founding generation experienced a consistently homogeneous use of the building.

*Step four - {d} **Scenario 1c**, Recipient groups*

Here, as in all of the following scenarios, we assume that in addition to the circles of users and recipients primarily addressed at the time (see above - churchgoers), other people may have entered the building and seen the pictures – both contemporaries of the founding generation with possibly the same socialization background and familiarity with the spirit of the times, who could have understood the pictures in the sense of this spirit of the times as well as people who may have belonged to circles other than those of the primarily addressed users and recipients. People who may not have belonged to the local population and were not socialized in the context of the inhabitants of the settlement, i.e. visitors from outside, even usurpers and enemies. We take into account - here and in all following scenarios - the fact that absolute control over the users of the building and the recipients of the pictures may not have been possible.

*Step four - {d} **Scenario 2a**, our finding context [archäologischer Befund](context one) - recognized as context of origin (context two) and as primary context of use (context three) - designed, considered and targeted by the "founding fathers"*

We record a building in its original formal design (see recent example - church building) and its functions (see recent example - church) as they were intended by the "founding fathers". We record the places where the pictures were placed (see recent example - frescoes) and the themes of the



pictures (see recent example - religious motifs). We postulate the groups of users and recipients (churchgoers) who were primarily addressed by the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] of the building and the initiators of the pictures.

*Step four - {d} Scenario 2b, single - phase use, not extending beyond the era of the "founding fathers". But - in the course of this single - phase use, the form and function of the building were changed*

It can be seen that this was a single construction phase, but that the form and function of the building (formerly a church) were changed during the foundation phase (now a restaurant). While the pictures remained the same and even their location remained unchanged, the context of the pictures had nevertheless changed. The founding generation was now confronted with different ways of using the building. The primary context of use (context three) was expanded to include facets of a secondary context of use (context four).

*Step four - {d} Scenario 2c, Recipient groups*

We consider that in addition to the primary group of users and recipients at the time, other people entered the building for other purposes and took note of the pictures. They may have been contemporaries of the founding generation, but when the building's function changed, they may have belonged to circles other than the primary intended circle of users and recipients. Alternatively, they may have been users who did not belong to the local population and were not socialized in the context of the settlement's inhabitants. This changed situation leads to the question: What had they "seen" in the religious pictorial themes, now localized in a secular context?

*Step four - {d} Scenario 3a, Multi - phase use - The building has a history that goes beyond the founding phase, the context of origin (context two) respective the primary context of use (context three)*

Our excavations indicate a history of use of the building that goes beyond its context of origin (context two) and possibly beyond its primary context of use (context three), i.e., it was used beyond the context of its foundation, beyond the time of the founding generation of the building and its decoration with pictures, and extended over several centuries.

*Step four - {d} Scenario 3b, Form and function of the building unchanged*

We record the formal design (church building) and the functions of the building (church) in the course of its history of use, register the places where the pictorial works were installed, and analyze the pictorial themes: The form and function of the building remained constant throughout its history of use (see for example ST. PETER'S BASILICA / PETERSDOM in Rome).

*Step four - {d} Scenario 3c, History of use and recipient circles*

The history of the building's use makes it unmistakably clear that the circles of users of the building and the recipients of the pictures have changed over time in comparison to the circles of users and recipients addressed by those who commissioned the building and those who initiated the pictures. In this scenario, the "others" are no longer contemporaries of the founding generation. In this scenario, we are now definitely dealing with groups, visitors, users who no longer belong to the socialization community of the founding generation and who may have taken note of the pictures without knowledge of the spirit of the times and the circumstances in which the building was erected and the themes of the pictures were chosen (visitors today in ST. PETER'S BASILICA / PETERSDOM in Rome). What was the message of the pictures to these visitors?

*Step four - {d} Scenario 4a, The building has a multiphase history that goes beyond the founding phase, thus beyond the context of origin (context two) respective the primary context of use (context three)*

As in Scenario 3 (3a) our excavations indicate a history of use of the building that goes again beyond its context of origin (context two) and possibly beyond its primary context of use (context three), i.e., it was used beyond the context of its foundation, beyond the time of the founding generation of the building and its decoration with pictures and extended over several generations.

*Step four - {d} Scenario 4b, Form and function of the building - changed*

In contrast to scenario 1b, but comparable to scenario 2b, the form and function of the building were changed in the course of its history of use (from church to restaurant), while the pictorial works remained in their original location.

*Step four - {d} Scenario 4c, History of use and recipient circles*

For scenario 4, the following applies: Everything has changed, we are in toto in a secondary context of use (context four).

Specifically for scenario 4c, we postulate, or already state, that the circles of users of the building and the circles of recipients of the pictures have changed over time compared to the circles of users and recipients at the time of the founding phase, the context of origin (context two) and the primary context of use (context three). The development of the building, its functional use - instead of being a church - it is now a restaurant, the circle of users and the recipients of the pictures - in short - everything has changed with regard to the context in which it was created (context of origin, context two). We now see the complete realization of a secondary use (context four). In this context, the question arises again: What kind of message did the pictures convey to these types of visitors?

*Step four - {d} Scenarios 1 - 4, Contexts matter - an interim summary*

The visible occurrences, our observations and statements about continuity and/or change with regard to the shape of the building and the locations of the permanently installed pictures can be documented relatively clearly (*spatial context*). Considerations about the functional use of the building over several phases of use, if supported by plausible arguments and documented, are also traceable (*spatial context and functional use*). A challenge is the naming of the circles that have used the building and also the naming of the circles that have seen the pictorial works (*socio-cultural context of the users and recipients*). With our questions about who "one" was, who the recipients were, and what "one" had associated with the pictorial themes beyond what was visible in the respective contemporary conditions in the social entities of the past(s), we encounter the following, possibly still insurmountable stumbling block.

*Step four - {d} Scenarios 1 - 4 and the stumbling block 7 concerned with the question - Who were the recipients?*

Basically, we socio-critical archaeologists are faced with the situation that we can plausibly postulate an originally potentially targeted circle of recipients on the basis of the above-mentioned visible criteria. However, it is no more possible to determine the actual circle of people who have spent time in a building and who have also seen the pictorial works. This is just as impossible as one could have exerted absolute control over access to the building and the pictures at that time. This leads to the question of how we construct, whose reception and what effect, which and whose connotations we elicit and present with our iconological interpretations, i.e. what answers we give to the question "Who is speaking? - we, the socio-critically researching archaeologists from our etic point of view, or the members of the social entities of the past(s) from their emic point of view, and here once more specifically asked - who of the actors of the past(s) from whose (!) emic point of view?

The question "Who speaks?" is joined by the question "Who acts?", where we are confronted with another constellation of context and reception, the intentional damage and destruction of pictorial works, the phenomenon of "iconoclasm".

*Step four - {e} The phenomenon iconoclasm [Bildersturm]*

On the orthostat "Assurbanipal with the queen in the wine arbor", one of the orthostats in the palace of the Assyrian king ASSURBANIPAL (669 - 631 BC) in Nineveh (see <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/ZDCH4E2VIQYTIG2TODOPADLAWVW3MYLL>) we recognize signs of arbitrary and intentional damage. Unmistakably, the faces of the actors have been gouged

and rendered unrecognizable.<sup>484</sup> The question of who the recipients of pictorial works were in the social formations of the past(s), under which spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*] and political conditions pictures were seen, which ideologies and discourses influenced the representation of what was depicted, and which ideologies and discourses governed the associations and connotations that one developed when looking at a pictorial work, confronts us socio-critical archaeologists against this background once again, this time with a completely new focus: Who had decided why what should no longer (!) be seen?

A further change of direction in the search for the recipients who were able to see a picture, for the contexts of the creation, use, and reception of pictorial works, for the connotations that were associated with them, arises when we deal with picture carriers that were no longer bound to a location, but were in mobile use.

*Step four - {f} Pictures as booty*

We are confronted with things that have been carried as booty from one place to another and have been seen there in a changed spatial context, possibly in a widely changed geographical context, and also in a changed socio-cultural and political context. The question of who has seen which pictorial works thus also arises in cases where pictures have been stolen from their original context of display in the course of warlike activities and have been taken as booty to another context - a "fate" which the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, which has been discussed many times in the meantime, has also experienced (see Siegesstele des akkadischen Königs Narām-Sîn, König von Akkad, Mesopotamia, 2273 bis 2219 v. Chr.; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin\\_\(Akkad\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naram-Sin_(Akkad))). From Sippar / Mesopotamia (today's Iraq) the stele had come to Susa / Elam (today's Iran)<sup>485</sup> as booty of the Elamites and this, if we can "trust" the texts on the stele, about 1000 (!) years after the stele was made. We only know about the transfer of the stele from Sippar to Susa because an inscription, placed on the stele by order of the victorious war party, tells of its plunder and removal to Susa. The questions that this situation raises again, especially for our search for the recipients of the stele, are obvious - who were the recipients in the course of the entire history of the use of this stele, who had seen what in which context regarding the theme of the stele - and this a thousand years after it was made? Who had understood what was represented by what was presented, for whom were the stele and the theme of the stele - if at all - and in what way (still) meaningful? The fact that we know about the "fate" and the history of the use of the stele through the inscription

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<sup>484</sup> *Recent iconoclasm on Assyrian monuments by IS - see Marlies Heinz, 2015*

<sup>485</sup> *See King Šutruk-Nahhunte, reigned 1185 to 1155 B.C. / [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0utruk-Na%E1%B8%AB%E1%B8%ABunte\\_II](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0utruk-Na%E1%B8%AB%E1%B8%ABunte_II)*

also raises new questions for us as socio-critical archaeologists: What are the consequences of our knowledge of the stele as booty for our interpretations of the stele - especially with regard to the question of the recipients and their perceptions when looking at the stele? <sup>486</sup> And further, as already mentioned above, what would be the significance and implications for our considerations of reception of our ignorance of this fact? Would we socio-critical archaeologists have recognized from the finding context or from the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD itself that Susa had been a secondary context of use, if the facts - the stele as a booty from Sippar, brought to Susa - had not been recorded in inscriptions?

*Step four - {g} Pictorial works - not booty, not stolen property and yet mobile from place to place*

But it is not only as war booty and stolen goods that things, including pictorial works, end up in altered spatial, spatial-geographical, and socio-cultural contexts for which they were not originally intended. As socio-critical archaeologists, we are not only dealing with things that were permanently installed in space (for the research space of Near Eastern archaeology, I am referring, for example, to architecture, burials, and the orthostats presented in detail), but on the contrary: The majority of the artifacts available to us (vessels of all kinds, utensils of all kinds, tools, weapons, jewelry, stamp seals and cylinder seals, clay tablets etc.) were used in a "mobile" manner, i.e. their use was explicitly not tied to one and the same space. Mobile artifacts may have arrived in the finding context, i.e. the archaeological record, in which we then discover the artifacts - as imports through commodity exchange and trade, or brought by immigrants as their property or personal possessions from their homeland, as heirlooms used over generations, as goods transferred from one cultural context to another that were already "antique" when they were exchanged, as gifts, as objects left in place and space at a certain point in time, forgotten, lost as objects and thus associated with further things in the respective spatial context. The diverse spectrum of "pictured" artifacts in mobile use and the manifold ways and possibilities in which these have come into a context that we can initially only name as the finding context, and for which we then search for the contexts of use and reception, make this search, or rather our search for answers to all the questions raised so far about the connection between contexts, spirit of the times, socialization background, in which pictorial themes were chosen and contexts, in which the recipients were confronted with the

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<sup>486</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

pictorial works respectively had to understand the messages of the pictorial works, even more challenging.<sup>487</sup>

*Step four - {g} Pictorial works - not booty, not stolen property and yet mobile from place to place / Seals - already intended for mobile use when they were made*

The example of seals can be used to illustrate this challenge (<https://de.-wiki-pedia.org/wiki/Rollsiegel>). Who decided in which context, in which spirit of the times, about the possible or necessary pictorial themes of the seals? Who planned and who overlooked the variety of possible uses, the unrolling of the seals and thus the permanent fixation of the seal pictures on which objects and in which context - spatially as well as socio-culturally, economically, politically - and in each case with which function? Who decided on the intended recipients at the time the seals were produced and the picture theme was chosen (context of origin / context two)? Could a restriction of the circle of recipients be considered at all in the run-up to the explicitly mobile use of the seals, or could this circle still be controlled after the seals had been inserted?<sup>488</sup> Who had seen the mobile picture carriers and the pictures on them and understood them in what sense? Who had recognized in what was depicted what the initiators of the seals wanted to depict? Who had the knowledge to understand the signs, signals and codes inherent in the pictorial works? What did people understand when they looked at pictures that did not necessarily come from their own socio-cultural context? How could one grasp the presentation in a picture as the theme of the picture and decipher the originally intended deeper meaning, the originally intended representation, by looking at what was presented?

In order to ensure the "correct" understanding of a picture, "correct" in the sense of those who commissioned the pictorial work and determined the theme and place of installation respectively use, knowledge of the context of its use and reception is significant - significant for the members of the social entities of the past(s) as well as for us socio-critical archaeologists. At the same time, it must be remembered: This assertion may also contain the stumbling block mentioned above, which could be used to turn the previous considerations about the understanding of the picture upside down! (Keyword: What did one - the members of the social entities of the past(s) as well as we, the social-critical archaeologists and you, who are reading this text right now - really have to know in order to perceive a pictorial work as meaningful and sense-giving? (see *Step four - iconological interpretation {j}* *And last but not least - the several times announced consideration about whether the meaning of the contexts for the understanding of pictures can also be seen quite differently than presented in my previous remarks; Step four - iconological interpretation {k}* *A preliminary last stop of a pictorial work - the museum*). Our concern,

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<sup>487</sup> See Marlies Heinz, 2016, 62

<sup>488</sup> See Marlies Heinz; Julia Linke, 2012, 185 - 190

then, to find out what "one" had seen in the pictures or pictorial themes when dealing with the mobile used pictorial works, and what one had associated with what one had seen in the social entities of the past(s), becomes here again and explicitly recognizable as one of the complex challenges of our socio-critical archaeological research.

*Step four - {b} The simultaneity of the non-simultaneous - a characteristic of all contexts of discovery and use*

Contexts matter! The previous remarks have shown: The finding contexts and contexts of use of pictorial works and their circumstances of origin are manifold. However, one characteristic connects them all. The phenomenon of the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous,<sup>489</sup> which has already been implicitly discussed in the previous reflections on the variety of contexts in which the use of things and the reception of pictorial works are embedded, is characteristic of each finding context and each context of use, and is relevant and challenging for any research on reception. In social togetherness, each community of settlers creates this simultaneity of the non-simultaneous simply by the fact that in each social entity there are always several generations living together. According to this coexistence of different generations, old and new things, the material expression of the simultaneous in the non-simultaneous, are occurring and used side by side. Each generation creates cultural forms of expression, including pictorial works, according to its needs and its means of satisfying those needs. Each generation participates in the constant change of the settlement's inventory, including the discarding and creation of pictures and pictorial themes. The examples mentioned, especially the phenomenon of picture theft and the mobile use of things, show that the common occurrence of things in the finding context and the context of use, the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous, can be traced back to quite different contexts of origin than simply the coexistence of several generations. Even things from socio-culturally different contexts than that of the common socialization association or that of the common spirit of the times enter the inventories. As the stele of the NARAMSIN OF AKKAD shows, even these "unfamiliar" things can (re)present the simultaneous of the non-simultaneous (here with a time difference of 1000 years). The diversity of possible contexts of origin of the settlement inventories poses a challenge for the reception of pictorial works - and all other materialized cultural forms of expression - when answers are sought to the questions of what one sees in the things, in the pictures, how one can interpret what is shown and grasp what is represented in what is presented. The members of the social entities of the past(s) face this challenge, as do we, the socio-critical archaeologists, who must also

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<sup>489</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic - the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous*

consider whether, how, and why it is possible for us - or denied to us - to bring our etic point of view and the emic point of view closer together in answering these questions.

*Step four - {i} The static in the dynamic - another feature that connects all (!) finding contexts*

The truism that the only constant in the formation of a context of use is the permanent change in the composition of things leads us finally to the consideration and question of what we socio-critical archaeologists actually find in a finding context, in the archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*]: Each finding context represents a static moment in time and space which is the result and at the same time the provisional endpoint of a dynamic process in time and space, it is a "cutout of time".<sup>490</sup> However, our archaeologically produced context (finding context, context one) is not only to be considered as a section in time and space.

Rather, it must be understood in a much broader sense as an excerpt from extraordinarily complex socio-cultural, i.e. spatial, spatial-geographical, social, political and economic contexts, which are, moreover, subject to constant change. This characterization of the finding context as an excerpt from a larger context, characterized among other things by the phenomenon of the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous, makes us socio-critical archaeologists aware again and again: A "complete" inventory of a settlement or a space cannot exist, the composition of things in the context of use is rather in constant flux.<sup>491</sup> A statement that can be supported by the sociological definition of society. This says that society never "is", that there is no such thing as "the" society, but that what we call "society" is a social entity that - like things in the context of use - is also constantly in flux. (Thomas Schwietring, 2011, 23).<sup>492</sup>

In relation to our topic, iconological interpretation and our cognitive interest in the sense-giving connections of contexts and their effects on the reception of pictorial works, this means: Here, too, we encounter further stumbling blocks in our attempts to recognize, understand, and explain the sense-giving connections between corresponding contexts, actions, and actors, or the choice of pictorial themes and the development of connotations.

*Step four - {i} The static in the dynamic - and the stumbling block 8 dealing with the phenomenon - „gaps“*

Thus, we cannot clarify whether something is missing from the context of use that we have created and grasped, something that originally belonged to the spatial equipment that was considered necessary at the time for the "correct" use of a space and the "correct" understanding of the pictures. We cannot determine whether there were "gaps" in the inventory of the context of use,

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<sup>490</sup> See II.3.1.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic

<sup>491</sup> See I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies

<sup>492</sup> See II.3.1.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic



gaps in the equipment of the rooms in which the reception of the pictorial works had taken place and which would have affected or impaired the possibilities of reception of the pictures.

*Step four - {i} The static in the dynamic and the stumbling block 9 - Changes that are not visible but have an impact*

Also to be considered: There are changes which may be socially and politically far-reaching, but which are not reflected in any way in the materialized cultural forms of expression<sup>493</sup> - a white spot in our socio-critical archaeological research which we cannot illuminate, but which we must keep in mind when thinking about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct, and what influence our ignorance of potentially fundamental social realities in the social entities of the past(s) has on answering these questions. For our thesis that contexts matter, these facts represent stumbling blocks that cannot (yet?) be cleared out of the way, facts that we must consider and name as white spots in our discussions of our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct.<sup>494</sup>

*Step four - {j} And last but not least - the several times announced consideration about whether the meaning of the contexts for the understanding of pictures can also be seen quite differently than presented in my previous remarks*

Toward the end of my remarks on iconological interpretation, I would like to propose one more consideration that has the potential, if not to counter-argue, then at least to turn on its head for a moment all of my previous statements about the importance of contexts for picture making, theme selection, and reception - "keyword": What did the members of the social entities of the past(s) have to know, what do we, the socio-critical archaeologists and you, who are reading this text right now, "really" have to know in order to perceive a pictorial work as sense-giving, also in the sense of the initiators of that time? Could and can one look at a picture from the past solely with the respective current ideas of the spirit of the times and with this knowledge alone understand what is "right" in the sense of the initiators and elicit the connotations desired in the sense of the initiators? Was - and is - the knowledge of the context in which the event shown in the picture took place, then of the context in which this event was visually depicted, and then of the context in which the picture was received at all necessary in order to be able to perceive a picture from an etic point of view as meaningful in the originally conceived sense, i.e. in the sense of the emic point of view? Did and does one have to know anything at all about the original context of the production

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<sup>493</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>494</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

of the picture, about the reason for the choice of the theme, about the reception, the development of associations and connotations, in order to understand a picture or the statement of a picture, its theme, its explicit or implicit message, or to make sense of it? Was it necessary then, and is it necessary today, to know the circles of recipients who saw the pictures in order to find out what associations and connotations were associated with the pictures in the social entities of the past(s)? Specifically asked with regard to the history of the context of use of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD: Do we have to know today the contexts of origin, the contexts of use and reception, as well as the circles of recipients, in order to find out what was associated at that time, first in Sippar/Iraq and 1000 years later in Susa/Iran, with the pictorial theme of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD?

Did the recipients of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD at Susa need to know the historical context in which the picture had been created 1000 years earlier in order to understand what was shown and to develop the originally intended connotations of what was shown? Did they need to know the context of the stele's creation, the historical and political events of the Akkadian period, and the actors depicted in the picture in order to recognize what was at stake in what was visibly shown and what was invisibly represented? Are there pictorial themes that can be understood in the same sense by all recipients across space, time, and culture, regardless of the context of creation, use, and reception? Furthermore: Was - and is - it possible to develop a view of the picture in a context other than the "original context" which, despite the lack of prior knowledge of the original contexts of creation and reception, has led or leads to a meaningful and sense-giving understanding of the picture? A view, therefore, that may be quite different in content from that intended by the initiators and developed by the originally addressed recipients - and in this respect it should be noted from the outset: Could we, as socio-critical archaeologists, even recognize such a deviation? In short: Was and is there only one "correct" reception, or are there many ways to create a sense-giving reference to a pictorial work when this reception does not take place under the "original conditions"?

Questions that arise anew with each new interpretation of the archaeological record and finds, and especially of the pictorial works. Questions to which, in my opinion, there can be no answers that apply equally to all finds or to all pictorial works. Questions which, because of their complexity, deserve to be discussed in a separate study. But let me make one remark here: if we socio-critical archaeologists who do historical research refrain from wanting to understand a pictorial work, a pictorial theme, the presented and the represented in the sense of those who originally commissioned the pictorial work with a certain intention, with an idea of which pictorial medium should be made of which material and in which size for which theme at which place for which circle of recipients to convey which message and to achieve which effects, then what kind of

"history" would we construct - a story (?), history (?).<sup>495</sup> In other words, what was and is the "correct" understanding of pictures in which situation and for whom?<sup>496</sup> Last but not least, a final look at one of our own contexts of reception, in which we, as socio-critical archaeologists or those interested in the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s), look at the pictorial works of the social entities of the past(s) - the museum!

*Step four - {k} A preliminary final station of a pictorial work - the museum*

A pictorial work, in this case the frequently mentioned stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD, which was transported from Sippar/Iraq to Susa/Iran, from Susa to Paris/France - arrives, after an odyssey through various stations, in what is for the time being its last context of use and reception: in a museum, here specifically in the Louvre/Paris/France. All the questions that have become relevant in the context of iconological interpretation now begin anew, formulated in bundles: What does one see, what do we see, the socio-critically researching archaeologists, what does one see as a visitor to a museum, as someone leafing through an illustrated book or looking at ancient oriental pictorial works on the internet today, in the pictorial works of the social entities of the past(s)?

*Step four - {l} Socio-critical archaeological research - a science of "creative non-knowledge"!*

It is perhaps the very cognitive interests that we pursue with iconological interpretation in the analysis of things, focused here on the analysis of pictorial works, that point us to the challenging potential of our not-knowing.<sup>497</sup> Not knowing at the moment and with the current methodological state of research what the answers to a multitude of questions might be and what they might mean for answering our overriding questions in socio-critical archaeological research - whose past(s) do we see and whose history do we construct - proves to be a creatively challenging stumbling block, for the elimination of which we must continuously and with unrelenting curiosity search for ways.

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*Step four - {m} To the end - once again reflected - communication, an impactful parameter for the functioning of social interaction*

The preoccupation with verbal and nonverbal communication runs like a red thread through the social and cultural science oriented socio-critical archaeological research. The importance of

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<sup>495</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct up to Excursus I.3.2.2, Stories about the past(s) - on what we can report*

<sup>496</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests; III.1.2.3, The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*

<sup>497</sup> *In preparation 2024 - Marlies Heinz, Socio-critical archaeological research - a science of "creative non-knowledge"!*

<sup>498</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?; I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies; II.3.1.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*

successful communication for successful social coexistence is an implicit theme of all considerations of social organization in socio-critical archaeological research.

I have already mentioned at the beginning, and implicitly several times in the meantime, the challenge that we as socio-critical archaeologists face when dealing with nonverbal communication, and the basic question of what nonverbal communication actually is, what it takes to communicate nonverbally, and how nonverbal communication then functions.<sup>499</sup>

The fact that the study of nonverbal communication is of special importance in our source situation should have become clear once again with the remarks on iconographic and iconological interpretation. We communicate nonverbally with the things that the members of the social entities of the past(s) used as media of nonverbal communication. We take up the challenge of eliciting, through our nonverbal communication with the things created by the members of the social entities of the past(s), the nonverbal communication of the members of the social entities of the past(s) with these things. We want to use our analysis of things and our view of medial realness to gain insights into the social realness of the social entities of the past(s).<sup>500</sup>

In the following, I will go over again the requirements that should be fulfilled for the implementation of nonverbal communication and the starting point from which we begin our investigations if we want to understand things as media of nonverbal communication and explain nonverbal communication. I will again draw attention to our chances of gaining insights into the ways of life in the past(s) that we seek through the analysis of medial realness, and also to the stumbling blocks that await us in this research.

*Step four - {m} Given at all times - nonverbal communication*

At all times humans use things and artifacts as media of nonverbal communication, we humans create medially mediated realities.<sup>501</sup> Nonverbal communication was used in the social entities of the past(s), nonverbal communication is used today. We communicate nonverbally and face to face through gestures and facial expressions. We communicate nonverbally through the use of things.

*Step four - {m} Nonverbal communication - what is needed, ...*

For nonverbal communication to take place, there must be a sender, a message, a medium to convey the message, contexts in which the message is created and in which it can potentially be understood, and recipients who have sufficient knowledge to understand the nonverbally conveyed

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<sup>499</sup> See III.1.1, *Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

<sup>500</sup> See II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*

<sup>501</sup> See II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

message and also to grasp the connotation beyond the denotations, the represented in what is presented.<sup>502</sup>

*Step four - {m} ... what we have ...*

Of these elements necessary for nonverbal communication, we have at our disposal the things, the artifacts, the kind of artifacts and the materials from which they were made, the architecture and spatial order, and the burials, the media through which the messages were transmitted. We have at our disposal the spatial context, first of all the finding context, ideally identified as the context of use that these cultural forms of expression constitute, or in which they are embedded, and that provided the framework for communication in space and time.

*Step four - {m} ... what we are missing ...*

We do not know the senders, i.e. the initiators of the communication, we do not know the implicit, invisible, but always intended messages that were communicated using the objects and looking at the pictures using the themes, and we do not know the addressees, the recipients, to whom the senders directed their nonverbal transmitted message.

*Step four - {m} ... and what we are looking for*

We explore the nonverbal communication that took place in the past(s), from a situation of nonverbal communication with the past(s). We look at the medially mediated realities. We hope to gain insights into the social realness that has led to the medially mediated realness.<sup>503</sup> To this end, we analyze the things, here with a special focus on the pictorial works, the pictorial media, the themes and the places where the pictorial works are installed.

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<sup>502</sup> See I.6.1, *Things - the diversity of sources which are potentially available to us for our socio-critical archaeological research*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life up to I.8.1.1, Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.1.2, *Representation and "language" - language, understood not only in the sense of spoken language, but also as written texts, pictures, objects and activities*; III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*; III.1.2.3, *The semiotic approach to materiality - Charles Sanders Peirce*

<sup>503</sup> See II.3.5.1, *We, the humans - and our capability to form and live in social entities up to II.3.5.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations*

*Step four - {m} Opportunities and stumbling blocks*

The use of things as media allows us to have indirect nonverbal communication, that is, communication that does not have to take place in face-to-face encounters, but can take place between participants separated by time and space. Messages can be sent over large geographical areas and maintained over long periods of time. I.e., this possibility of communicating with each other without being present in person offers us socio-critical archaeologists the chance to elicit insights into the social realness of the long-ago past(s). It is in this detachment from time and space where our chance lies as socio-critical archaeologists to gain clues to the social realness of the past(s) through the analysis of things as media of nonverbal communication, or through the analysis of medial realness.

*Step four - {m} ... and stumbling block 10, when communication does not take place in the personal face to face encounter takes place*

At the same time, this detachment from time and space is one of the stumbling blocks for any nonverbal communication and thus for the realization of our concerns in socio-critical archaeology. For the success of any nonverbal communication it is precisely this indirect form of nonverbal communication that represents an uncertainty factor that should not be underestimated. Once a message has been sent, the sender has only limited or no control over whether the message - presentation and representation - has reached the recipients in the way the sender wanted and intended, and there is also only limited control over the circle of recipients, as we can easily see from the example of our own activity. The success of the intended understanding is not directly verifiable and therefore cannot be guaranteed. A possible failure cannot be corrected directly during the communication process. Whether the message intended by the sender reaches the recipient with the desired meaning - or not - ultimately remains more or less open. A question that concerns not only the success or failure of nonverbal communication in the past(s), but also the success or failure of our nonverbal communication with the past(s). The success of a nonverbal message, in the sense of all those involved in the communication, therefore depends, among other things, on the contexts in which the nonverbal communication takes place (see however at the same time again *Step four - iconological interpretation {j}* *And last but not least - the several times announced consideration about whether the meaning of the contexts for the understanding of pictures can also be seen quite differently than presented in my previous remarks*). Mutual understanding is facilitated when the sender and recipient of the nonverbal message belong to the same (!) socialization community, to the same (!) socio-cultural context. If this is not the case, the risk of misunderstanding increases. In this circumstance lies the next stumbling block in our attempts to understand and explain the nonverbal communication of the members of the social entities of the past(s).

*Step four - {m} ... and stumbling block 11, once again - contexts matter!*

As mentioned several times before: Context is a cultural and social parameter influencing our human action (see the example of the traffic sign above). Contexts and our human actions are interwoven through interaction.<sup>504</sup> Contexts therefore matter - and not only for the nonverbal communication of the members of the social entities of the past(s). Contexts are also significant for nonverbal communication in the present - and thus also for our nonverbal communication, which we as socio-critical archaeologists conduct among ourselves, for the nonverbal communication that results from the reception of our writings, for the nonverbal communication that we conduct with the finds and archaeological records that we uncover in our archaeological excavations. As socio-critical archaeologists, we do not belong to the socialization and communication community of the members of the social entities of the past(s). We do not belong to the insiders, we represent the outsiders who try to elicit the knowledge of the insiders. From this outsider-location we are researching, we direct our view from the present to the conditions that made nonverbal communication possible or necessary in the past(s). With this outsider-location we create - comparable to the phenomenon of finding context / context of use - another communication context. We create this new context because we are now (!) the recipients of the media that at that time served the members of the social entities of the past(s) as media of nonverbal communication or were used by them as media of communication.<sup>505</sup> Our social, socio-cultural, economic and political context, from which we communicate nonverbally with the past(s), is constitutive of the messages we develop from this communication, influencing our view of the past(s) and our constructions of history (see however here as well once again *Step four - iconological interpretation {j}* *And last but not least - the several times announced consideration about whether the meaning of the contexts for the understanding of pictures can also be seen quite differently than presented in my previous remarks*).

<sup>506</sup> So we keep this starting point in mind or reflect on the question of what we archaeologists "really" see and recognize when we deal with the medial reality while searching for the social realities of the past(s) and the nonverbal communication that took place in these social realities. Do we "see" the emic point of view? Do we recognize the handling of materiality as a medium of nonverbal communication, the messages denoted, exchanged, received and connoted in the past(s) as seen by the actors of that time?<sup>507</sup> Or do we approach our sources, the finds in archaeological

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<sup>504</sup> See I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.5.1, *We, the humans - and our capability to form and live in social entities*

<sup>505</sup> See II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realness"*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.1, *Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations*

<sup>506</sup> See Excursus I.3.3.2, *Historiography - or - construction of history*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>507</sup> See Excursus I.3.3.2, *Historiography - or - construction of history*

records, the artifacts, the architecture and space design, the burials, primarily from our etic point of view, that is, "from the perspective of the individual archaeologist who studies them"? Are we then primarily bound to our etic point of view of the past(s), our present and the spirit of the times - our conditioned perceptions, thoughts and reflections about how actors in the past(s) dealt with materiality as a medium of nonverbal communication, our view of how actors in the past(s) designated and exchanged, received and connoted messages?

*Step four - {m} To the end - once again reflected - communication, an impactful parameter for the functioning of social interaction / And last but not least ...*

... the question must be asked again in these considerations: "Who is speaking?",<sup>508</sup> when we archaeologists doing socio-critical research look at the material remains of the social entities of the past(s), when we archaeologists try to gain insights into the then nonverbal communication, when we interpret the past(s) and when we construct history on the basis of an always incomplete material record of these past(s)?<sup>509</sup>



### *III.1.6 The Power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life*

The previous remarks on socio-critical archaeology as a social and cultural science show the importance of culture, i.e. the cultural forms of expression (and content) of social concerns and social conditions in shaping everyday life and the success of social coexistence. The ways in which we humans express our everyday interactions with each other and with the things and artifacts we create, declare things and artifacts as property [*Eigentum*], or simply own them (ownership)[*Besitz*] and use things,<sup>510</sup> and the meanings we ascribe to our behavior and interpersonal encounters, as well as to our ways of dealing with things and artifacts, determine, among other things, whether and how our social interaction succeeds. The shaping of content and the control of cultural forms of expression thus have a far-reaching potential for power. From our own life experiences<sup>511</sup> we are familiar with the potential of exercising power<sup>512</sup> through the control of the cultural, i.e. the influence we ourselves exert on our everyday lives and social interactions, both through the imprint

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<sup>508</sup> See I.2, *Once again and summarized: Socio-critical archaeological science - what is it and what are we striving for?*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social entities - unities?*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>509</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*; VI.5 *Philology*

<sup>510</sup> See Part IV, *Economy*

<sup>511</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests.*

<sup>512</sup> See II.3.9, *Power and Domination - First considerations*



we make and through the way we deal with cultural forms of expression: Currently (2024), the effects of internet consumption on our thoughts and actions, i.e. on the organization and shaping of our daily interaction, the use of "anti"social networks, the influence of the media, newspapers and television stations on our view of world events and on our view of ourselves in this world should be mentioned. The exercise of power through the disposition of the cultural also includes the control over which and whose scientific research and scientific cognitions are made accessible to the public and which and whose scientific research and scientific cognitions are not published.<sup>513</sup> The indications from our everyday experience show how pervasive and powerful are those among us who determine and control the content and cultural forms of expression. We socio-critical archaeologists are in many ways both actively and powerfully involved in this state of affairs - dealing with cultural forms of expression - and in many ways passively subject to the exercise of power by others, i.e. affected by the exercise of power by others over the control of the cultural itself. We as socio-critical archaeologists exercise power by the very fact that we have turned to this socio-critical archaeological research.<sup>514</sup> We determine which regions and locations we will explore, we determine the excavation methods, we determine the type of sources we want to uncover as well as the extent of the exposure (areas - deep cuts/sondages).<sup>515</sup> We formulate our research interests and control the range of insights into ways of life in the past(s).<sup>516</sup> We decide on the content, scope and manner in which we document, analyze and present the archaeological records, things and artifacts, i.e. in which we decide which of the cognitions we consider relevant we want to make available to the public. It is through this treatment of the cultural forms of expression created by people in the past(s) that we socio-critical archaeologists today determine the image that contemporaries (you, who are reading this text) and future generations can have of the past(s). In this way, we determine views of the world and, at the same time, influence views of ourselves - by juxtaposing the modes of life of the past(s) with the modes of life of today's viewers.<sup>517</sup> But we do not only describe and present the cultural forms of expression of the past(s). We also question them in terms of whose needs and options in the social interaction of the time are presented and represented by the cultural forms of expression.<sup>518</sup> We try to identify the actors who had the needs

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<sup>513</sup> See *Excursus I.3.3.3, Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

<sup>514</sup> See I.6, *With our socio-critical archaeological research, we place the human being within the community into the focus of our cognitive interest - through the "things" we work out the access to the past(s) life worlds.*

<sup>515</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?; I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>516</sup> See *Excursus I.3, The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to *Excursus I.3.3.2, Historiography - or - construction of history*

<sup>517</sup> See I.6, *With our socio-critical archaeological research, we place the human being within the community into the focus of our cognitive interest - through the "things" we work out the access to the past(s) life worlds; Excursus I.3, The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*

<sup>518</sup> See I.8.2, *An initial conclusion and a first reference to the potentials of sociological research for socio-critical archaeology; I.8.3, Terms from our everyday language and their application in this essay, Excursus I.1 - Excursus I.4*

or the possibilities to create the cultural forms of expression at hand. We try to identify the actors who had the power to visibly express the social concerns through the corresponding cultural forms of expression. In addition to determining the primary functional concerns, we also try to elicit the connotations of the things and artifacts and to grasp what the presented represented. Our power as socio-critical archaeologists thus lies in the fact that we create a picture of social interaction in the past(s), by naming what the social relations of the past(s) looked like and who in these social contexts had the power to shape the visibly accessible cultural forms of expression. With our research, then, we postulate who among the actors of the time we can plausibly assign what powers to.<sup>519</sup> By naming these actors in our documentation, we extend the reach of the power of the powerful far beyond the contemporary events of the time to our present.<sup>520</sup> Thus, as socio-critical archaeologists, social and cultural scientists, we have the power to establish our epistemological interests as the red thread through which we conduct our reflections on the past(s) and write our construction of history (Lynn Hunt, 2018; Ulrike Sommer; Martin Schmidt, 2016; Gottfried Stiehler, 2002; Hayden V. White, 2008). We determine which view of the past(s) and which conceptions of history all those interested in socio-critical archaeological research can develop.<sup>521</sup> The immense political dimension of this power that we have as cultural professionals will be discussed in detail at the end of my remarks.<sup>522</sup> Another constellation comes into play in which we as socio-critical archaeologists are both actively involved in the exercise of power and rather passively confronted with or exposed to the exercise of power. As socio-critical researchers, we actively exercise power over our contemporaries where we occupy decision-making positions, especially in our scientific environments. At the same time, we are passively exposed to the exercise of power by others over us when these "others" occupy decision-making positions relevant to our actions. Corresponding constellations, which in the present consideration primarily concern the possibilities of becoming scientifically active as socio-critically researching archaeologists and of exerting socio-political influence through this activity, include activities as financiers, media controllers, representatives of administrations, leaders of political conditions, and representatives of scientific institutions. Whether and which positions of power we as socio-critical archaeologists are able to assume, or which constellations of power we are confronted with, is also influenced by our own social, economic, and political background and our resulting social position. All these "factors" determine whether, where, and by whom socio-critical archaeological research takes

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<sup>519</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / initiator and power*

<sup>520</sup> See I.3, *Archaeology as socio-critical archaeological research or: What is actually meant by "socio-critical"?*

<sup>521</sup> See Excursus I.2, *What is meant by the term »cultural forms of expression«?* up to Excursus I.3.3.3, *Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

<sup>522</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

place, whether, where, and how which and whose cognitive interests can be formed, where and how these can be pursued by whom, where the cognitions of socio-critical archaeological research, where which and whose views of the past(s) and which and whose constructions of history can be made accessible to which public in which way - or how, why, and by whom this is prevented. Our possibilities as socio-critical archaeologists to exercise power in those places where we shape the view of the past(s) and present our construction of history, respectively the power of those who prevent this form of exercising power, i.e. to enable a public in our present to have access to insights into the past(s) and to make historical images visible or keep them invisible,<sup>523</sup> have potentially far-reaching effects on our present (and future) social interaction - locally, regionally, and globally. Contemporary discourses on cultural and historical issues (currently - 2024 - such as the debate on restitution claims) reveal the socio-political effects of control over the cultural.<sup>524</sup>

### *III.1.7 The power of the cultural - the cognitions of the social and cultural sciences*

The social significance of culture and the role of culture in society as a medium of understanding among us humans, as a sense-giving and orientation-giving force in the life of the individual members of a social entity, as well as in the safeguarding of our social togetherness, have been shown to us by social and cultural scientists through their research, and our own experience agrees with these cognitions. Sociological research emphasizes the importance of order,<sup>525</sup> of sense-giving thinking and action for successful social interaction.<sup>526</sup> Cultural sociologists (see Matthias Junge, 2009) and cultural studies scholars point to the connection between the importance of culture in the establishment and maintenance of order and the possibilities of orientation it provides in and for our togetherness.<sup>527</sup> Social, cultural, and art scientists, semioticians, as well as we socio-critical archaeologists reflect and discuss the functions of both the "creators" and the recipients of culture. In particular, our reflections focus on how we experience the interaction with culture as sense-giving, or, as the sociologists of culture describe it, how orientation takes place through the cultural, and what significance is assigned to the creators and recipients of culture in the assignment of connotations.<sup>528</sup> Potentially, so to recall my repeatedly expressed initial thesis in the consideration of our social togetherness,<sup>529</sup> we are all, as members of a social entity, both creators of culture and

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<sup>523</sup> See *Excursus I.3.3.3, Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

<sup>524</sup> See *V.3.1, Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

<sup>525</sup> See *II.3.7, What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*

<sup>526</sup> See *Excursus I.4, To understand and to explain; II.3.6.3, Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>527</sup> See *II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*

<sup>528</sup> See *III.1.1, Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations; III.1.2, Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations; III.1.3, Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception; III.1.6, The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life*

<sup>529</sup> See *I.7.4, Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

recipients of the cultural. In addition, the observations and cognitions of the social and cultural sciences make it clear: inherent in the social significance of culture is the political power of culture in all social entities, political in the sense of the statement of the sociology of culture, according to which culture provides us with sense-giving orientation in our individual lives as well as in our social interactions. As an instrument of the political, the cultural becomes decisively effective at the moment when, on the one hand, we human beings specifically exert influence on the content and design of the cultural, that is, on the cultural forms of expression with which we articulate our social concerns, and, on the other hand, when we control access to this exertion of influence.<sup>530</sup> Thus, whoever directs and controls the content and form of the cultural influences our social interaction, our communication, our views of ourselves and the world.<sup>531</sup>

### *III.1.7.1 The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*

Research in the social and cultural sciences has demonstrated the political significance of the "understanding" for securing social coexistence, for establishing a sense-giving and meaningful order,<sup>532</sup> and for guaranteeing orientation. Politically, the handling of the cultural is (even) more effective when the controllers of the cultural place themselves in the service of the political rulers or ally themselves with the political rulers. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) in particular drew attention to this power of the cultural as an instrument of political action with his concept of cultural hegemony. My following account of Gramsci's concept is largely based on the following studies: Perry Anderson, 1979; Thomas Barfuss; Peter Jehle, 2014; Florian Becker et alii., 2013; Johannes Bellermann, 2021; Antonio Gramsci, 1983; Antonio Gramsci; Joachim Meinert, 2012; Antonio Gramsci; Klaus Bochmann; Wolfgang Fritz Haug et alii., 1991; Jens Kastner, 2015, online - <https://www.kubi-online.de/stichwort/gramsci>; Sabine Kebir, 1991; Axel Körner, 1997, online - 2016 - [https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe\\_14.html](https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe_14.html) {since 2023 no longer accessible}; Ines Langemeyer, 2009; Chantal Mouffe, 1979; Harald Neubert, 2001 (see as well [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio\\_Gramsci](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_Gramsci); [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_hegemony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_hegemony)).

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<sup>530</sup> See *Excursus I.3, The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to *Excursus I.3.3.3, Publication and Publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*; *III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconological interpretation, step four*

<sup>531</sup> See *II.3.6.2, Social and "medial realness"*; *II.3.9, Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*

<sup>532</sup> See *II.3.7, What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*; *II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; *III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / sense making*

*Guidance to the concept of Cultural Hegemony*

With Antonio Gramsci's concept, we socio-critical archaeologists have another tool to help us put our own experiences and the cognitions of the social and cultural sciences about the impact of the cultural in our social interaction into a structured context.<sup>533</sup>

Moreover, Antonio Gramsci's focus on the power of the cultural as the power of the political coincides with our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists, where we ask who created the cultural forms of expression we are studying, whose social modes of life they represent, whose connotations they represent, and for whom they have been a sense-giving and meaningful aid or obstacle to orientation in everyday life, and whose order of life they supported or overthrew,<sup>534</sup> when we ask whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct on the basis of our specific source situation, which consists of the cultural forms of expression of the social of the past(s). For the clarification of our cognitive interests, it is of particular interest to learn how, according to this concept, control over the cultural, over the cultural forms of expression of the social, can become a means of political power.<sup>535</sup> Who in a social entity, according to Antonio Gramsci, is in a position to determine and control the cultural - and how do those who determine and control the shaping of cultural forms of expression translate this power into political power? How, then, according to Antonio Gramsci's concept, are the controllers of the cultural put in a position to determine the social order, the social togetherness, themselves? How do they use the control of the cultural to direct the orientations of the members of a social entity, to anchor the social world and the way of life thus formed as a "good order" for all, as a sense-giving and meaningful way of life in the imaginations of the members of a social entity? In short, how do the controllers of the cultural succeed, through the instrument of cultural hegemony, in getting their ideology, i.e., their view of the "good life" as everyone's view of the good life, accepted among the members of a social entity?

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<sup>533</sup> See III.1.7, *The power of the cultural - the cognitions of the social and cultural sciences*

<sup>534</sup> See *my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN* - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Pierce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*; see as well II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / initiators and power; / representation / discourse*

<sup>535</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological research / representation*

<sup>536</sup> See *Excursus*, III.1, *Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*

III.1.7.1.1 *Who was Antonio Gramsci, what cognitive interest did he pursue, what theses did he advocate?*

Antonio Gramsci (1891 - 1937), Italian Marxist philosopher, father of the Italian Communist Party, was sentenced to many years in prison by the Italian fascists. During this imprisonment he wrote his so-called "prison diaries" [*Gefängnistagebücher*](Antonio Gramsci; Joachim Meinert, 2012). In these writings, he explicitly reflected on the connection between the control of cultural affairs and the exercise of political power in order to establish a successful government (in the sense of political leadership). Antonio Gramsci had the 20th-century Italian bourgeois society in mind when he argued that governing - from a governmental point of view - should be successful through a combination of enforcement (authority) [*Herrschaft*] and consent (hegemony) [*Führung*], based on the connection between the exercise of political power and the deployment of cultural affairs.

Antonio Gramsci was a Marxist, but he did not fully agree with Karl Marx's model of society, in which he saw a major weakness, namely, Marx's social division of societies, split, in a transferred sense, into base and superstructure, and the functioning of authority [*Herrschaft*] as well as the efficiency of society primarily, if not exclusively, shaped by the dictates of the economy. It would thus be the mode of economic management, the participation of the people in the economy, and the control of the economy, or the control of the participation of the people in economic affairs, that would primarily, if not solely, secure the authority [*Herrschaft*] of the state.<sup>537</sup> Karl Marx's social model, according to Antonio Gramsci, thus erased the influential role of culture and the function of cultural hegemony. According to Antonio Gramsci, it is only by gaining the definition, control and mediation of culture, in addition to the control of the economy (and, I note, the military), that a government, the authority [*Herrschaft*], would be able to create the bond between the people and the political potentates to which the unity of society is dependent.<sup>538</sup> Only when a government, the authority [*Herrschaft*], was able to claim the red thread through the cultural field and to control the mediation of the corresponding cultural parameter, i.e. to exercise cultural hegemony, would a government, the authority [*Herrschaft*], be stable and durable and receive legitimation from the people. Antonio Gramsci considered the cultural field to be the decisive parameter through which people identify with the ruling order.<sup>539</sup> Thus, Antonio Gramsci approached the analysis of society

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<sup>537</sup> See IV.2, Wolfgang Maderthaler and Lutz Musner: *The role of the socio-economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society*; IV.3, Rabel Jaeggi - *Economy as a social practice*

<sup>538</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*

<sup>539</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

from a different conception. He saw the structure of society divided into the political sphere, the state, and the sphere of civil society, the population (see inter alia Ines Langemeyer, 2009, 72 ff.). The organization of society was effected by means of authority [*Herrschaft*] and hegemony [*Führung*] (Harald Neubert 2001, 65), i.e. by the simultaneous exercise of force and consent (Thomas Barfuss; Peter Jehle, 2014, 26 and 52). Thus, according to Antonio Gramsci, the exercise of cultural hegemony represents a means of power that, in its importance for shaping social interaction, is equivalent to the control of society through the control of the economy. It is precisely this aspect, the recognition of the power of culture and the corresponding modification of Karl Marx's approach to understanding and explaining the social order, the efficiency of society and the functioning of authority, that makes Antonio Gramsci's thought extremely valuable and useful for any archaeological research, including this study.

*Key terms and their meanings in Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony*

Culture, hegemony and authority are the primary key concepts in Antonio Gramsci's model of cultural hegemony.

Culture, in Antonio Gramsci's view (elucidated by Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 161 ff.) (and closely related to my own reflections on what culture is),<sup>540</sup> encompasses the perception of what human beings are and what social togetherness produces and preserves. Culture is not an individual concept, but a concept shared by "all". In this context, "all" means that culture corresponds to the collective way of thinking and living (of a group, a community, a society), to the collectivity of our regular ways of living, the daily actions, habits, desires, needs, and concepts of life that are implemented under the given political and economic conditions.<sup>541</sup> The cultural world is the stock of knowledge, skills, and shared practices that serve us, the members of a social entity, as a guide for our social togetherness. It is the visible as well as the invisible diversity of our social needs and of the options we seize to organize and secure our social togetherness.<sup>542</sup> Of course, culture is always connected to and influenced by economics and politics.<sup>543</sup> However, as mentioned above, it is the cultural field, as considered by Antonio Gramsci, that is the decisive parameter through which people identify with the ruling order.<sup>544</sup>

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<sup>540</sup> See Excursus I.2.1, *Culture*

<sup>541</sup> See Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?*

<sup>542</sup> See Excursus I.2, *What is meant by the term »cultural forms of expressions«?*

<sup>543</sup> See IV.1, *Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other?* up to IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>544</sup> See I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; II.3.7.16, *A secured social order does not mean that no conflicts exist*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule / governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*

*Hegemony* [*Führung*] is a term with a wide range of definitions. The resulting ambiguity makes it necessary to focus on a limited range of meanings and to elucidate this selection for the present study. A very general presentation will begin with the translation of the term, which is of ancient Greek origin. "Hegemony" means "*Führerrolle*" (Georg Klaus, 1985, 516 - 517), i.e. "role of a leader"<sup>545</sup> - and it is in this sense that Antonio Gramsci understands hegemony. According to Antonio Gramsci (Harald Neubert, 2001, 66), hegemony is expressed as political, spiritual, cultural and moral leadership within the social entity. Successfully exercised hegemony (successful in the sense of the authorities) means the ability to lead people, to form groups with homogeneous conceptions about their ways of life, the norms, values, beliefs, rules and regulations according to which they live. Successfully exercising hegemony thus means being able to group people under a common ideology,<sup>546</sup> a shared and accepted vision of an accepted way of life. The basis of hegemonic power, according to Antonio Gramsci, and thus the functioning of hegemony, is based on consent, understanding and acceptance (Harald Neubert, 2001, 67).<sup>547</sup> Consent between the hegemon and those on whom the hegemony is extended (Harald Neubert, 2001, 67), so the concept of Antonio Gramsci is seen as the result of negotiations, of compromises, by capturing the aims, values and interests of others, binding them together and aiming at a common perspective (Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 20).<sup>548</sup> Hegemony thus cannot be claimed, it must be expected (Harald Neubert, 2001, 67). It becomes possible, according to Antonio Gramsci, only through the willingness of both the ruling classes and the people to step up to each other and negotiate the implementation of their respective needs and wishes.<sup>549</sup> This procedure of achieving a functioning consensus (John Storey, 2001, 193) was then, according to Antonio Gramsci's concept, the guarantor of achieving a stable ruling order and a long-lasting accepted and legitimized government that would even make opposition unnecessary (Harald Neubert, 2001, 66 - 67; Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 20).

*Authority* [*Herrschaft*] represents the sphere of the political society. The social group that disposes of authority (Harald Neubert, 2001, 66) exerts this authority over opposing groups, be they people associated with the social entity of each civil society or people from outside.<sup>550</sup> The authority exerting group, on the other hand, leads intellectually and morally those people and groups who are related or allied (through cultural hegemony)! Authority, in the sense coined by Antonio Gramsci, thus represents political power, the political sphere of society. For Antonio Gramsci, political actors are in a position in which they have to fulfill the responsibility of ordaining the

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<sup>545</sup> See II.3.9.1, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft]. What is it and who executes it?*

<sup>546</sup> See Excursus III.1, *Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*

<sup>547</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>548</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*

<sup>549</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>550</sup> See Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism - Chantal Mouffe*



political goals, values, norms and rules, i.e. the guidelines according to which the state should function.<sup>551</sup> In line with Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci assumes that those actors who monitor the judicial system and the military and who control the economic base of a society have access to authority. According to this approach, the control of the economy and the establishment of political authority operate hand in hand (Axel Körner, 1997, 11, online - 2016 - [https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe\\_14.html](https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe_14.html) {since 2023 no longer accessible}). However, authority cannot be kept stable, according to Antonio Gramsci, by controlling the economy alone, or by controlling the economy and, should the situation arise, by resorting to violence. It is not violent repression that will lead to a lasting relationship between the state and civil society, between authority and the people, between the dominant and the subordinate, according to Antonio Gramsci (Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 7). Rather, the authority must succeed in establishing a mutual consent between itself and the people with regard to the identification with, and thus the legitimation of, the ruling order. The use and incorporation of culture, the control of the content and messages of the cultural forms of expression, and the control of the mediation of the cultural forms of expression are, according to Antonio Gramsci, essential instruments to serve and achieve this goal (Axel Körner, 1997, 13, online - 2016 - [https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe\\_14.html](https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe_14.html) {since 2023 no longer accessible}).<sup>552</sup>

### III.1.7.1.2 Cultural hegemony - how does it thus in a concrete and practical way work? - and a short summary

When culture, in the sense explained above, establishes the bond between the people and *authority* [*Herrschaft*], then authority should have means at its disposal to ensure the perpetuation of the "correct" contents of culture, that is, those contents that serve to stabilize order and ensure the permanence of authority. Here a new factor or actor comes into view, the so-called intellectuals of Antonio Gramsci. Antonio Gramsci sees the so-called intellectuals as these "means", as the mediators between the people and the authority who ascertain this requirement. They do this by order and for the account of the authority (Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 89 ff. with references to the respective pages in - Antonio Gramsci: *Gefängnishefte*. Edited by Klaus Bochmann and Wolfgang Fritz Haug, 1991). Antonio Gramsci's definition of what it means to be an intellectual differs from the definition that prevails today. According to Antonio Gramsci, everyone is an intellectual (Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 90 and 94), because everyone reflects on his or her own life, the ways

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<sup>551</sup> See Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?*

<sup>552</sup> See for a recent philosophical approach to this aspect ZHAO Tingyang, *Alles unter einem Himmel. Vergangenheit und Zukunft der Weltordnung*, 2020

of being, the conditions of life, the world, the present, the future. However, intellectuals are not only the "brainworkers", but also the manual workers, who also think (!) and have a broad spectrum of knowledge at their disposal to accomplish their tasks (Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 91). Thus, all people are intellectuals, and everyone is potentially capable of becoming a hegemon (Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 6 and 8; Thomas Barfuss; Peter Jehle, 2014, 115 and 118). Every interest group, every association can produce its own intellectuals, functionaries who represent and organize the group's interests.<sup>553</sup> De facto, however, according to Antonio Gramsci, not all people in a society, but only some, take on the function of intellectuals who deal with administrative or organizational tasks in the service of the *authorities* [*Herrschende*].<sup>554</sup> Those intellectuals who work for the authorities, according to Antonio Gramsci's concept, serve the task of mediating between the authorities and the people the knowledge that is necessary to keep the authority stable, the ruling order accepted and legitimized by the people, and that is thus essential for keeping the social entity together and the social system functioning.<sup>555</sup> The appropriate knowledge comprises the knowledge taught in schools, the knowledge gained at universities, the knowledge acquired in job-related education, the knowledge conveyed on the basis of traditions, religion, art, norms, values and rules according to which we live our everyday lives and which shape our habitus. Authority and intellectuals of the mentioned groups do not readily form a unit; the intellectuals are both rewarded and controlled by the authorities (Axel Körner, 1997, online - 2016 - [https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe\\_14.html](https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe_14.html) {since 2023 no longer accessible}) to convey the necessary knowledge and to educate the masses at the authority's option (Axel Körner, 1997, online - 2016 - <https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe14.html> {since 2023 no longer accessible}). The intellectuals, the mediators, and with them the means of cultural hegemony, turn into instruments of authority. The disposition of the cultural field and the control of the cultural by the mediators and the control of the mediators by the authorities thus become the most important means of establishing and securing the necessary consent between the authority and the people.<sup>556</sup>

Antonio Gramsci thus identifies culture and cultural mediation as the fields that endow community. According to Antonio Gramsci, authority uses culture and its mediators to harmonize the needs of authority with the (seemingly?) needs and wishes of the people, and to make people into objects of the system by integrating them into the system (Axel Körner, 1997, 10, online - 2016 -

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<sup>553</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

<sup>554</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*

<sup>555</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>556</sup> *In relation to the present the question is who controls the internet and the so-called social networks and who sets the direction in the media; for the social entities of the past(s) it is a question of who determines the cultural forms of expression, who sets picture themes, see as well who determines the design of public space, II.3.6.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description / pictorial themes*

[https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe\\_14.html](https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe_14.html) {since 2023 no longer accessible}).<sup>557</sup> The intellectuals act as a link between the authority and the people. The linkage between the (apparent?) interests of the people and the wishes of the authority transforms (or masks) social tensions into social harmony, the system and the ruling order, thus establishing authority (Axel Körner, 1997, 10, online - 2016 - [https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe\\_14.html](https://www2.hu-berlin.de/skan/gemenskap/inhalt/publikationen/arbeitspapiere/ahe_14.html) {since 2023 no longer accessible}).<sup>558</sup> While the basis of authority, according to Antonio Gramsci, is the control of the economy (and, own remark, the control of the military), only the accompanying control of content and the mediation of culture make authority functional and stable. Only when the people consensually identify with the authority and thus legitimize the ruling order can authority function sustainably, according to Antonio Gramsci's reflections on the subject. Leadership, *hegemony* [*Führung*] within a social entity, within kin and clan groups, communities and societies, specified as leadership explicitly based on the ability to define the content of cultural forms of expression, to determine the ways and modes of knowledge acquisition, and to control the mediation of cultural forms of expression. The acquisition and control of the mediation of knowledge is thus what Antonio Gramsci means by cultural hegemony.<sup>559</sup> Accordingly, the function of culture and the influence of cultural hegemony play an essential role in stabilizing authority, strengthening the ruling order and holding society together. Cultural hegemony exercises leadership by mentally binding the people to the ideologies of the authority and by transforming the ideologies of the authority into the common sense of the entire population. Thus, cultural hegemony is a mental, spiritual and intellectual hegemony that leads the people by binding them to the ideology of the authority.<sup>560</sup> While, as pointed out above, anyone can potentially act as a hegemon, it is the authority [*Herrschaft*] - in the concept and political context dealt with by Antonio Gramsci - that exercises cultural hegemony [*Führung*], that pays, assigns and controls the intellectuals as mediators of the cultural values relevant for the stabilization of the ruling political system, that sets the cultural agenda, that defines, controls and secures the content of the cultural forms of expression, and that should be those who determine the forms in which these cultural issues are presented, or in which they, the authorities, symbolically represent themselves. A demand that Antonio Gramsci expresses in his concept when he says that social togetherness can only be achieved and authority can only be

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<sup>557</sup> See Excursus III.1, *Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*

<sup>558</sup> See Excursus III.1, *Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*; III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>559</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*

<sup>560</sup> See Excursus III.1, *Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*

successful when both sides, the powerful groups and the subordinated, step towards each other and respect the needs of the other side.<sup>561</sup>

### *Excursus III.1 Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*

In order for authority [*Herrschaft*] to function, the authorities must be able to propagate their ideology, their idea of the good life as the idea of the good life for all, among the population and anchor it there. In other words, they must be able to convince the people that they, the authorities, advocate the interests of the general public, whereas de facto it is more often than not a matter of ensuring the implementation of their own interests.

Explained in detail: I understand and use the term ideology according to Karl Marx's interpretation. I understand a dominant ideology to be a set of ideas about the rules and regulations of "good" social coexistence developed by powerful and assertive members of a given entity, be they members of the government, financial or industrial magnates, religious leaders, or military personnel. In the political sphere, ideology corresponds to the ideas of what the respective authorities consider to be the "good life". The ideas that the authorities develop to achieve their good life are presented to the population as universally valid and beneficial to all. In any case, it is the authorities who benefit from the authorities' ideas of what a good life looks like and how to achieve it, if they succeed in winning the people over to their ideas or in getting the population to behave in accordance with the authorities' ideas.<sup>562</sup> Thus, for the authorities, the life experiences of individual members of a community are not primarily relevant. Rather, the implementation of an ideology by the authorities causes the members of a social entity to ignore their own life experiences and possibly not to live their lives according to their individual experiences. The affirmation of an ideology can lead people to set aside their own thinking and follow an idea that may even contradict their own life experience (see inter alia Hannah Arendt, 1991; 1996).<sup>563</sup> "Successful ideologists" are those who have the resources to implement their visions of the good life through a variety of means. These means

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<sup>561</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia - James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>562</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*; see as well II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; Excursus III.2, *Consensus between the authorities (rulers) and the population - fact or ideal? Visible or not in the materialized cultural forms of expression?*; III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>563</sup> See I.0, *Instead of an introduction - A personal note in advance - Why at all archaeology?*; V.3, *Enlightenment as a task of the humanities and social sciences - or: What socio-critical archaeology can contribute to this task in the present as a socio-critical historical science*

include persuasion, deception, coercion, pressure, terror, and even violence-means used explicitly against the will of those affected. >How do people adapt their goals to the ideology of the powerful?< [„*Wie passen die Menschen ihre Ziele an die Ideologie der Mächtigen an?*”] (Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 110 - 111). Ideologists of this kind do not need to explicitly legitimize the implementation of their intentions, nor do they need to seek the consent of the people. Rather, ideologists can enforce their claims regardless of whether the rules and regulations they pursue are in accord with the ways of life, perceptions, and everyday practices of the people concerned. In principle, those in power would not have to cooperate. They can afford to risk a disconnect between their visions and the everyday practices and needs or desires of the people affected. For Antonio Gramsci, according to Florian Becker, ideology was >the contested terrain on which people become aware of their social conflicts and carry them out< [„*das umkämpfte Terrain auf dem die Menschen sich ihrer gesellschaftlichen Konflikte bewusst werden und sie austragen.*”] (Florian Becker et alii, 2013, 111).

However, according to both Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci, this drifting apart of the ideology of those in power and the everyday practices and perceptions of the people will one day lead to conflict and rebellion, even to revolution (Florian Becker et al., 2013, 110 ff. on the question of how, and if so why, people, according to their own cognition and rationality, eventually adjust their perceptions to the goals of the ideologists).

According to Antonio Gramsci, long-term successful rule can only be achieved if the authorities succeed in anchoring the ideology they propagate in the population with positive connotations, thus gaining the necessary acceptance. Cultural hegemony is one of the means by which this can be done. According to Antonio Gramsci, only the authority that is able to reconcile authority and hegemony will be successful in the long run. The authority that, according to Antonio Gramsci, is willing to negotiate and cooperate with the people - through the so-called intellectuals. An authority, therefore, that seeks to reach a generally accepted agreement on the ways of life and the nature of the ruling order in the social entity concerned, and that is therefore willing and able to bring together all those involved, itself as the representative of the authority, the intellectuals as mediators, and the people, in order to meet in a spirit of negotiation and cooperation, with the aim of reaching an agreement on the ways of life that is accepted by all sides (Florian Becker et al., 2013, 110 ff. - for a reflection on how ideology is transformed into hegemony through concrete practice).<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>564</sup> See *Excursus II.10, Ideology and common sense*

Excursus III.2 *Consensus between the authorities (rulers) and the population - fact or ideal? Visible or not in the materialized cultural forms of expression?*

Before I continue with the questions I raised at the beginning about Antonio Gramsci's concept and the applicability of the concept in our socio-critical archaeological research, I will add a further digression, a critical reflection on the concept of cultural hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci. For this purpose, I present the study by James Scott - "The Weapons of the Weak" (1985)<sup>565</sup> focusing on the question of whether Gramsci's model can be generalized. Specifically asked: Does the combined exercise of *authority* [*Herrschaft*] and *cultural hegemony* [*Führung*] in all social entities lead to the results propagated by Antonio Gramsci - harmonious coexistence and consolidated political authority?

Another focus of my considerations is the question of how or whether the successful exercise of authority and cultural hegemony, the consensus-building between authorities and the population, can be recognized in the materialized cultural forms of expression - or not. Another question is whether the shaping of cultural forms of expression also takes place against the population's ideas of the so-called good life - and whether we, as socio-critical archaeologists, can see both scenarios in the materialized cultural forms of expression?<sup>566</sup>

James Scott's empirical cognitions about the social interaction between authorities and the population can be read as a critical evaluation of the concept of cultural hegemony, possibly even as a counter thesis to Antonio Gramsci's concept. For our socio-critical archaeological research, the engagement with James Scott's study triggers an extended "cascade" of possible ways of looking at the material legacies as well as related critical questions - questions about the forms of organization of social interaction, the relationship between authorities and the population, and the visibility of the corresponding facts. Will we socio-critical archaeologists be able to gain insights into the relations of authority and cultural hegemony of social entities in the past(s), given the sources we have?<sup>567</sup>

The entire concept of *authority* [*Herrschaft*] and *cultural hegemony* [*Führung*] developed by Antonio Gramsci depends on the smooth harmonization of the needs and desires of the authority and the people, that is, on the functioning of this consensus (John Storey, 2001, 193) and thus on the overcoming of any antagonism and opposition. However, a critical reflection - inter alia the studies of James Scott - questions the ways and modes in which the "consent", i.e. the interrelation of authority and cultural hegemony, the togetherness of the state or its representatives and the

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<sup>565</sup> See III.1.7.2, *A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia*, James Scott, *The weapons of the weak*, 1985

<sup>566</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description / iconological interpretation, step 4 / iconoclasm; II.3.6.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*

<sup>567</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconological interpretation, step 4 / iconoclasm; III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

population, civil society or, referring to the past(s), the rapprochement between dominant groups and subordinate groups was actually achieved - voluntarily, through negotiations - or rather through coercion from "above", through the suppression of the needs and desires of the people, even by force?

James Scott's empirically based insights into social coexistence in a Malaysian village and the - supposedly - consensual coexistence of authority and people there offer a helpful starting point for the question of whether and to what extent we socio-critical archaeologists can use Antonio Gramsci's concept for the analysis of socio-cultural and socio-political relations in the social entities of the past(s).

### *III.1.7.2 A critical reflection of Antonio Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, *The weapons of the weak*, 1985*

While Antonio Gramsci assumes that an (outwardly) functioning state is based on the consensual harmonization of the needs and desires of the people and politicians, on a leadership that has successfully harmonized the political, spiritual, cultural, and moral issues of society, the anthropologist James Scott points to a different explanation of how the cooperation, the social togetherness of the dominant and the subordinate functions.

James Scott (1936), U.S. anthropologist, focuses his research on "non-state societies, subaltern politics, and anarchism. His primary research has focused on peasants in Southeast Asia and their strategies of resistance to various forms of domination."<sup>568</sup> His empirical studies of why people act and behave in apparent harmony with authority, conducted among villagers in rural Malaysia, lead him to the following conclusion (James Scott, 1985): People exhibit the most ambivalent behavior when one studies their thinking about, and their actual acting and behaving within, a given dominant order. What, he asks, makes people act and behave in seeming harmony with the authorities? They, the people, do not necessarily do so because they are convinced of the "just hegemony" exercised by the authorities. They do not do so because they agree on more or less all aspects of leadership. They do not do so because some group of so-called intellectuals has taught and convinced them to behave in accordance with the ruling order and ideology. The people, he argued, were well aware of the ambiguity of hegemony, leadership, ideologies, political programs, promises, actions and behavior of the local ruling class. As James Scott ascertained in his research in Malaysia, it was pragmatism and fear of reprisal for deviant behavior on the part of subordinates that prevented them from openly opposing the local rules and their representatives, rather than negotiations among the actors involved and a consensual agreement on the validity of the local

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<sup>568</sup> See [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_C.\\_Scott](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_C._Scott)

ruling order.<sup>569</sup> Open and visible opposition would have had serious consequences.<sup>570</sup> Discreetly and largely unnoticed, people thus resorted to what James Scott called "the weapons of the weak," a resistance to the dominant that brought them relief and allowed them to participate in a community where the chances of living a "good life" were most unequally distributed. They developed their own way of exercising cultural hegemony in order to realize their visions of a life that was at least better than the given one. The "weapons" they developed included "foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage" (James Scott 1985, p. XVI), to name but a few of the means of this "quiet resistance" and "counter appropriation" (op. cit., p. 34) or what James Scott also calls "everyday forms of resistance" (op. cit., p. 36).<sup>571</sup> However, this kind of compromise between thinking differently about the ruling order and acting within the community went well as long as the dominating fulfilled the people's expectations regarding their daily togetherness (op. cit., p. 308). As long as the traditional way of life and especially the legal conduct of rituals and feasts were secured, the customary giving and thus the social commitment of the rich to the poor remained untouched, as long as the unwritten laws that governed the social togetherness between the dominant and the subordinate (in the Malaysian context under study) were satisfied by the dominant, as long as the seasonal and traditional feasts were celebrated and the dominant fulfilled its expected "generosity" towards the people, the latter would "accept" or at least not openly oppose the local ruling order.<sup>572</sup>

This fact, that people would more or less accept the local rules as long as the cultural habits they valued were not changed supports an essential aspect of Antonio Gramsci's societal model: The importance of culture as a means of maintaining social togetherness.<sup>573</sup> This aspect is not challenged by James Scott, who as well revealed with his empirical studies the significance for those who have the say to realize the impact of culture, to respect the local traditions and the customary rights and to fulfill the unwritten laws and expectations of the local population in order to keep social togetherness functioning and thus to secure their own roles and positions in the respective

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<sup>569</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical description*

<sup>570</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>571</sup> See II.3.7, *What is order? How does it come into being? What holds order together? - First considerations* up to II.3.7.6, *Order - once again: Or - What is the opposite of order and what causes disorder for whom?*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*

<sup>572</sup> See II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society? - First considerations* up to II.3.5.2, *However, how do we humans manage to hold a society (in the sense of the sociological definition) respectively a social entity together? (social entity - meant in the sense of people living together and in this sense used here)*

<sup>573</sup> See II.3.7.2, *Order, rules and regulations - parameters of vital importance for all human cooperation*



communities. It is this issue, this demand, that Antonio Gramsci expresses in his concept when he says that social togetherness can only be achieved, and authority can only be successful, when both sides, the powerful groups and the subordinated, step towards each other and respect the prevailing needs of the other side.

James Scott thus sees the importance of the cultural sphere in ensuring social cohesion. His empirical research confirms the impact of the "right" or "wrong" handling of cultural matters, traditions, habitual expectations and customs. He sees the effects of cultural hegemony and considers the powerful, the authority, obliged to pay attention to these effects in order to ensure social togetherness. But he disagrees (!) with Antonio Gramsci's thesis that cultural hegemony, i.e. mental, intellectual leadership achieved by the ability of the dominant to "harmonize" their worldview with that of the subordinate, ensures conformity in social togetherness. Through his empirical studies, he was able to show that even if people thought differently about what a just social order might have been, they openly acted and behaved more or less according to the local rules. It was the (invisible) thinking<sup>574</sup> that often deviated from the official doctrine, not primarily the (visible) acting.<sup>575</sup> It is the thinking that is not (!) reached by the cultural hegemony of the ruling classes or by the mediation for which the so-called intellectuals have taken responsibility. Unlike Antonio Gramsci, James Scott argues that the ruling class does not so much shape the thinking of the subaltern as it de facto influences the visible actions of the people. Acting in accordance with the expectations of the local village chiefs and the powerful families of the villages was not entirely in line with the thinking of the people in terms of accepting and thus legitimizing the ruling order. Rather, playing by the rules helps people cope with the discord of thinking differently but being afraid to show that disagreement in public. This discrepancy, however, makes it difficult, according to James Scott, to determine "where compliance ends and resistance begins" (op. cit., p. 289). (The outbreak of rebellion seems to be the terminal point after a long period in which people have been subjected to unjust rules and regulations, have acted according to the rules, but have long been in mental opposition to the ruling classes.) What James Scott points out is that a seeming consent expressed in practice is often potentially more a matter of keeping up appearances than of actual social reality. According to James Scott, cultural hegemony does not result, as Antonio Gramsci postulates, in a comprehensive harmonization of the needs of the population and the powerful or rulers, achieved by mutual agreement, does not go back to the activities of the latter to have reconciled the contentious issues in social interaction (James Scott, 1985).

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<sup>574</sup> See II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.1.2, *Representation and "language" - language, understood not only in the sense of spoken language, but also as written texts, pictures, objects and activities*

<sup>575</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical interpretation*

*A short resume*

Cultural hegemony, as Antonio Gramsci's concept and James Scott's studies have shown, is a powerful political instrument. Both studies illustrate the strong influence of culture and hegemony on and in society. Both authors highlight the political potentialities of culture and hegemony and expound the ways in which the control of culture and the exertion of hegemony function.<sup>576</sup>

Antonio Gramsci approaches the phenomena of power, authority, and cultural hegemony by developing both a concept and a theoretical outline to explain what a ruling group, a government, should do to secure its position in society and to make its rule long-lasting and stable. He looks at the functioning of social coexistence from the point of view of the powerful groups.

In contrast, James Scott approaches the topic of social togetherness by studying the effects that power, including cultural hegemony, has on people by analyzing how people deal with and react to power, authority, and the cultural hegemony that the respective power groups exert. He arrives at differing insights about what cultural hegemony is and how it works and affects daily life. His findings and insights coincide with those of some critics who argue that theoretical blueprints for the organization of society are usually developed by members of the middle class who often have no clear idea of people's everyday world.<sup>577</sup>

According to the differing approaches of Antonio Gramsci and James Scott to the workings and effects of power on people, both arrive at differing insights into how cultural hegemony affects everyday togetherness. Both approaches make us aware that cultural hegemony can be used to harmonize our daily actions and togetherness, it can be used to present alternatives to the given order, it can be used to resist the dominant order and even to overthrow it. Both studies agree in recognizing that cultural matters, in addition to economic conditions, constitute a major force without which social togetherness would not be possible and social entities could not function. Cultural hegemony exists as "hidden transcripts", according to James Scott (James Scott, 1990), invisibly located in our minds as well as in our daily activities. In our daily routines, we can discursively exercise cultural hegemony, which means that our corresponding activities do not necessarily manifest themselves in visible signs. We can and do also transform our mental, spiritual and intellectual hegemony into visible results, i.e. all things we create are unfailingly transformations and materializations of ideas, visions and thoughts, all of which are potentially suitable to be used for exerting cultural hegemony.

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<sup>576</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*

<sup>577</sup> See *Excursus I.3, The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to *Excursus I.3.3 Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*



III.1.7.3 Own commentary and archaeological reference

*The power of the cultural - cultural hegemony and politics*

Both Antonio Gramsci and James Scott, in their reflections on cultural hegemony and on the relationship between the authorities or the powerful in a social entity and the members of a social entity in general, have shown in a specific way the far-reaching and profound social and political impact of the cultural and cultural hegemony. Both scholars implicitly point to the socio-political relevance of all social, cultural, and historical research, including socio-critical archaeological research. The preoccupation with the cultural is thus neither an activity that takes place in the ivory tower, nor an engagement that can be transferred to the closed space of a "greenhouse", as the term "orchid science" describes it. Rather, the socio-political relevance that becomes effective in dealing with the cultural underscores the socio-political importance of all correspondingly oriented sciences (Johannes Bellermann, 2021). We confirm these insights into the effects of the cultural every day anew with our own experiences<sup>578</sup> of dealing with things as media, as well as with the experience of being exposed to the media.

Antonio Gramsci's concept and James Scott's ethnological study draw attention to significant aspects that are connected to our socio-critical archaeological research, that characterize it, and that we researchers, critically reflecting, (should) have in mind as a kind of background to our research work.<sup>579</sup> Therefore, first a brief look at the implications of our own work as historically researching social and cultural scientists, as socio-critically researching archaeologists.

*Researching, publishing, creating publicity, power, cultural hegemony that we exercise as socio-critically researching archaeologists*

Dealing with the thoughts and insights of Antonio Gramsci and James Scott reminds us first of all that we, as socio-critical archaeologists, belong by virtue of our activity to the group of those who influence social coexistence by controlling the cultural. As socio-critical archaeologists, we shape culture - and create new cultural forms of expression by presenting what we call the cultural and social of the past(s). We create images of history.<sup>580</sup> We influence our contemporaries (you who are reading this text right now),<sup>581</sup> potentially also future generations, who take note of our constructions of history, who compare their view of the past(s) as well as their view of their own present, where they confront their newly acquired knowledge of the past(s) with critical questions

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<sup>578</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests.*

<sup>579</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>580</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*

<sup>581</sup> See II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference/ order*

about their own living conditions in the present and connect it with further considerations about the shaping of their future. By constructing history as socio-critical archaeologists, we dispose of political power. We exercise political influence where we use the media available to us to present our interest driven view of the past(s) as an image of history.<sup>582</sup> As socio-critical archaeologists, we act as mediators of knowledge in our professional contexts. We are (often) employed by government agencies. Are we then what Antonio Gramsci called intellectuals who act in the interests of the authorities, are we critical, enlightening mediators between the powerful and the people, or are we as socio-critical research archaeologists rather cultural hegemony ourselves, pursuing our own power-political intentions?<sup>583</sup> In this question, which illuminates one's own position in the context of the exercise of cultural hegemony, my reflections on my own location and my own social function as a socio-critical research archaeologist meet my questions about who had succeeded in exercising power as a cultural hegemon in the social entities of the past(s) - and who had been active as a mediator of knowledge, in the sense of Antonio Gramsci, as an intellectual - if these had existed in the social entities of the past(s).<sup>584</sup>

*Who were the hegemony?*

The basic question that we ask in our socio-critical archaeological research, the question of whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct, is closely related to the question of who held the political power at the time that could determine the design of the cultural forms of expression and their contents, their statements, their meanings.<sup>585</sup> Therefore, we are looking for answers to the question of who in the past(s) was able to successfully exercise cultural hegemony, i.e. who was able to fulfill the multitude of conditions necessary for the exercise of cultural hegemony! Who was

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<sup>582</sup> See I.4, *Socio-critical archaeological research and its political relevance*; I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life*; I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*; Excursus I.3.2, *The telling of stories*; Excursus I.3.3, *From the story to history - the construction of history*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; Excursus II.10, *Ideology and common sense*; Excursus III.1, *Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; V.3, *Enlightenment as a task of the humanities and social sciences - or: What socio-critical archaeology can contribute to this task in the present as socio-critical historical science*

<sup>583</sup> See V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>584</sup> See II.3.7.14, *The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected?*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>585</sup> See II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; see my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

able to determine the form, the style, the themes, i.e. the content of the cultural forms of expression and to control the communication through them? <sup>586</sup> Who had decided on the location and the inner-local space to present the chosen messages, to render them visibly, or to make them invisible but still let them be known (at least in some circles)? <sup>587</sup> In short, who was controlling the thinking and actions of those who were exposed to the influence of appropriately controlled communication, who were exercising cultural hegemony, among other things, through the use of things and through the control of communication? <sup>588</sup>

The questions at hand already implicitly illustrate some of the preconditions that had to be in place in order for cultural hegemony to be successfully shaped in the sense of the hegemon. In order to exert the desired influence on the thoughts and actions of their contemporaries in their own interests, the hegemonic actors had to have a wide range of cultural knowledge at their disposal, in addition to economic resources and political influence. <sup>589</sup> Cultural knowledge had to be imparted with regard to the functioning of all forms of communication and representation and, in this connection, with regard to the power of the cultural forms of expression. Once again, it is pictorial works that can be used to illustrate this thought process, the use of things as media for the dissemination of socially relevant political messages. <sup>590</sup> Cultural knowledge was necessary in order to find the "right" picture carrier, the "right" materials, and the "right" picture theme for the intended influence on social coexistence and the exercise of cultural hegemony. It was also necessary to know and decide where to find the "right" location for the pictures to achieve the desired effect. <sup>591</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>587</sup> See II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realism"*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographical interpretation, step 3; iconological interpretation, step four*

<sup>588</sup> See I.0, *Instead of an introduction - A personal note in advance - Why at all archaeology?*; III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / initiator and power / representation*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*

<sup>589</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; see as well I.0, *Instead of an introduction - A personal note in advance - Why at all archaeology? / guiding ideas*

<sup>590</sup> See II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; see my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*; see as well III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; III.1.4, *Science of Art - Iconography / Iconology*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / finding a topic / representation*

<sup>591</sup> See II.3.8, *Equal - unequal or different? First considerations*; Excursus II.10, *Ideology and common sense*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; Excursus III.1, *Ideology and hegemony - what is the difference?*; III.1.1, *Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations*; III.1.2, *Semiotics -*

In the previous chapters, I have already implicitly referred to the power of the aforementioned preconditions and also to the question of who were the hegemonies in the social entities of the past(s): If we succeed in postulating in a well-founded way who were the initiators of the cultural forms of expression,<sup>592</sup> who used the pictorial works as media of nonverbal communication,<sup>593</sup> who were able to erect monumental buildings and to determine the spatial order,<sup>594</sup> who were the ones who decided about the production, about the property [*Eigentum*], about the ownership [*Besitz*] and the use of so-called luxury and prestige goods,<sup>595</sup> and if we can recognize who decided how to bury the dead,<sup>596</sup> we can plausibly identify the members of the social entities of the past(s) that we have postulated as actors, or the circles from which they came, as the forces that were able to exercise cultural hegemony in their communities. It was possible to create things - here, too, the pictorial works are in the foreground - but also to damage them, to destroy them and also to steal them - and to make the power of culture and cultural hegemony in the shaping of social coexistence implicitly and explicitly visible with each of the aforementioned ways of dealing with media. In this way, the power of those becomes visible<sup>597</sup> who, through what they see as the successful (!) use of things as media of nonverbal communication or through the handling of things and with a view to the phenomena of presentation and representation, are able to present their view of the "right" social coexistence, to manifest their ideologies and, ideally, to trigger the desired associations in the circle of recipients.<sup>598</sup>

In the previous chapters, I have already sketched out several hypotheses for the consideration that - and why - the commissions for the production of pictorial works,<sup>599</sup> as well as the erection of monumental buildings<sup>600</sup> and the spatial planning associated with their construction, may have originated both from the circles of the economically and politically powerful, the so-called elites,

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*Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / finding a topic / finding a location / representation*

<sup>592</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups; II.3.7.7, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; II.3.7.15, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage; II.3.7.19, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts; II.3.7.21, Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation; II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art; II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices

<sup>593</sup> See III.1.3, Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / nonverbal communication

<sup>594</sup> See II.3.6.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / initiator and power

<sup>595</sup> See III.1.1, Representation - semiotics - nonverbal communication - science of art - in short: communication - First considerations

<sup>596</sup> See II.3.5.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness / burial customs

<sup>597</sup> See II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance / obedience

<sup>598</sup> See III.1.1.1, Representation; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation

<sup>599</sup> See II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior / initiators of pictorial works

<sup>600</sup> See II.3.6.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / initiator and power

and from the so-called mainstream of the population. According to these hypotheses, cultural hegemony could potentially have been (and still is) exercised by all members of a social entity. Two examples, again from the field of Near Eastern archaeology, will show the extent to which plausible answers or solutions to these hypothetical assumptions have already been developed through the well-founded research of colleagues. On the basis of these examples, therefore, I will not ask how the answers were developed, but will present the solutions postulated in the expert circles. At the same time, I encourage you, who are reading this text now, to use the references in a creative and critical way to find out how and with which arguments or sources the colleagues found and justified their answers.

*Two case studies respectively answers to the question: Who in the social entities of the past(s) had pictorial works made? Who had monumental buildings erected? Who, then, exercised cultural hegemony with the help of cultural forms of expression?*

The Assyrian city of Kalchu, located in northern Iraq and known today as Nimrud, was founded in the 9th century under King ASSURNASIRPAL II. (883 to 859 B.C.) as the capital of the Assyrian Empire (<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nimrud>). In the course of its history, the city was equipped with several palaces and temples. Numerous rooms in the palaces were decorated with elaborate stone wall coverings in relief (orthostats). In Turkey, at Göbekli Tepe in southeastern Anatolia, hundreds of monumental stone pillar buildings were constructed in the course of the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. The buildings were arranged in circular enclosures with their stone pillars decorated with pictures ([https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%B6bekli\\_Tepe](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%B6bekli_Tepe)).

There are plausible proposals for answers to the question of who were the commissioners [*Auftraggeber*] and the builders (those who carried out the construction work) [*Erbauer*] in the respective localities <sup>601</sup> and who gave the orders for the production of the pictures, i.e. who and from which circles in the respective social structures of the past(s) were able to influence social interaction as cultural hegemons.

The proof that cultural hegemony was exercised by members of the economically potent and politically powerful circles, by members of the ruling so-called elites, or by the institutionalized rulers themselves, the kings, and this in an urban society, has been presented with well-founded arguments for the conditions in the Assyrian city of Kalchu (David Kertai, 2011, 71 - 85; Michael Seymour, 2000/2022; Eva Cancik-Kirchbaum, 2015; Karen Radner, 2015).

The fact that members of the social entities of the past(s), who were not integrated into institutions but were empowered, also had monumental buildings erected and commissioned monumental pictorial works, and thus influenced social interaction as cultural hegemons in a social environment

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<sup>601</sup> See II.3.6.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture

that was characterized by non-sedentary, i.e. not permanently cohabiting communities, but by mobile living social entities, has been demonstrated by the colleagues with plausible and comprehensible arguments in their profound research on the site of Göbekli Tepe (Marion Benz; Joachim Bauer, 2022; Marion Benz, 2017, 12 - 17; Klaus Schmidt, 2007; Metin Yeşilyurt, 2014).

If we thus succeed in assigning the cultural hegemony to one or the other socio-politically influential grouping, this specification and differentiation opens up a further field of research - the comparative observation and investigation of the pictorial themes chosen by the non-institutionalized powerful people or the politically ruling (rule / governance [*Herrschaft*]) in the social entities of the past(s) in order to realize their culturally hegemonic intentions. The powerful significance of pictorial themes and the associations they evoke, the representation of what is not shown but is also meant, I have explained many times in the preceding considerations.<sup>602</sup> With the opening up of the expanded field of research, a broader spectrum of questions arises once again. Did the actors of these different circles, the powerful, the forces not integrated in institutions, as well as the rulers (rule/governance) choose comparable themes because the basic power-political and order-securing concerns were the same, regardless of the organizational forms of power, rule, and social togetherness? Or, on the contrary, did the unequal organizational forms of power, rule, and social togetherness require different and context-specific themes in order to successfully exercise cultural hegemony in the respective different socio-cultural contexts? From our etic point of view, do we recognize corresponding differences in the pictorial themes, differences that are due to the different socio-political contexts of the actors? And do we, as socio-critical archaeologists, have the necessary cultural knowledge (contexts matter!) to recognize which pictorial themes are and were relevant to power or rule? Do we have the methodological means to recognize corresponding indications and signs in the materialized cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s)? With the help of the comparative discourse analysis of individual case studies, we can expect first indications of the connections we are looking for and thus answers to the question of how cultural hegemony was carried out in the social entities of the past(s).<sup>603</sup>

*How did the recipients behave toward the cultural hegemony, or the cultural forms of expression, the media that were used to exercise cultural hegemony?*

From the juxtaposition of Antonio Gramsci's reflections on the functioning of cultural hegemony and James Scott's empirical studies of a community's response to the powerful in its environment,

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<sup>602</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / picture themes; representation; iconographical interpretation, step 3; iconological interpretation, step four*

<sup>603</sup> See III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*



the question for socio-critical archaeological research is how the recipients responded to the actions of the cultural hegemons. We ask how the recipients behaved towards the cultural forms of expression as well as towards the cultural hegemons - consensually, as postulated as an ideal by Antonio Gramsci, or opportunistically and/or subversively, as observed by James Scott? Here, too, the question arises as to whether we as socio-critical archaeologists have the methodological means to recognize these reactions by analyzing things. First hypothetical, but plausible answers can be obtained by the direct analysis of pictorial works. We find clues to the sought-after reactions of the recipients where we can plausibly show that pictorial works have been intentionally damaged, as already shown in the case of the orthostatic relief "Assurbanipal with the queen in the vine arbor" [*Assurbanipal mit der Königin in der Weinlaube*].<sup>604</sup> Possible backgrounds and causes<sup>605</sup> for why artifacts were intentionally damaged or destroyed I present concretely for the relief in question (scenario 1) and theoretically for the phenomenon of "destruction" (scenario 2). Both explanatory approaches are quite plausible in their respective explanatory potential. At the same time, both of them point, also quite plausibly, in fundamentally opposite directions.<sup>606</sup>

*Scenario 1 - Damage of a pictorial work - damage to the power of the cultural hegemons*

Intentional damage to a pictorial work can potentially be seen as a negative reaction to the exercise of the cultural hegemony of those on whose behalf the attacked picture was once made, or to the cultural hegemony of those who made the reception of the picture possible until the time of the attack. The partial destruction of the orthostat relief "Assurbanipal with the queen in the vine arbor" [*Assurbanipal mit der Königin in der Weinlaube*] can be considered as intentional damage to a pictorial work (Nineveh, North Palace Room S, 645 B.C./[https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/ZDCH4E2VIQYTIG2TODOPADLAW\\_VW3MYLL](https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/ZDCH4E2VIQYTIG2TODOPADLAW_VW3MYLL)). The eyes, nose, and mouth of the main characters, the king and queen, and their closest servants were deliberately chiseled out. This meant that these people could no longer communicate with each other, but above all - symbolically - with the gods, and thus their social death was certain. With the deliberately destroyed pictorial work, I postulate with this view of the destruction, we have before us, with regard to the originally intended goals that "one" had pursued with the picture, first of all the testimony of a no longer successful exercise of cultural hegemony.

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<sup>604</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconological interpretation, step four / iconoclasm*

<sup>605</sup> See I.1 *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>606</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness / tradition*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

In view of the importance of pictorial works as a medium of nonverbal communication, as a means of presenting and representing the ruling order, and thus as an instrument for exercising cultural hegemony,<sup>607</sup> it is plausible to postulate that the destructive attack on the pictorial work was not only a concrete attack on the materialized expression of cultural hegemony, but that this attack can at the same time be understood as a symbolic attack on the depicted ruler.<sup>608</sup> The attack on the portrait of the ruler or on the ruler himself then corresponded to the offensive resistance against the ruling order.

Antonio Gramsci assumes that the harmonious coexistence in a social entity is achieved through the successful interaction of political rule/authority and cultural hegemony. In the present case, or in my view, against the background of "iconoclasm," this system would have collapsed, or would no longer have been able to function. This is also in line with James Scott's observation that such an open attack on order indicates that the dissolution of order, which could affect both a system of institutionalized rule/authority and a system of communal organization of social togetherness, was already far advanced.<sup>609</sup> The possibility of attacking the pictorial work, considered as an expression of the ruling order and the cultural hegemony of those who were responsible for the production and reception of the picture, means at the same time: the circle of cultural hegemon has changed. Now those circles exercise cultural hegemony that were able to determine what "one" should no (!) longer see.<sup>610</sup>

We see the attacks on the pictorial work. I interpret this attack as an attack on the ruling order, on the cultural hegemon representing this order, on the ruler and his immediate social environment, and ask: Who were the ones who "dared" to attack the pictorial work?<sup>611</sup> From which circles came the attackers, the "new" cultural hegemon? Could such an attack on the pictorial work of a king (Assurbanipal, identified as king by textual evidence) come from the general population, or was access to such pictorial works restricted to members of the ruling class?

In the present case, the spatial context of the picture is the king's palace. So we have to find out and explain in a plausible way who had access to these rooms<sup>612</sup> in order to find answers to the question of who was able to attack the picture as such as an expression of cultural hegemony, as an attack on the ruling order, and ultimately as an attack on the cultural hegemon itself.

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<sup>607</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*

<sup>608</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

<sup>609</sup> See III.1.6.2, *A critical reflection of Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>610</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconological interpretation, step four / iconoclasm*

<sup>611</sup> See II.3.7.18, *Protest, riot, rebellion and revolution*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*

<sup>612</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / recipients*

*Scenario 2 - Damage of things, also pictorial works - Preservation of the ruling order, support of the cultural hegemons*

My second explanatory approach points in the opposite direction with regard to the background of why attacks on the visible signs of a dominant order occur. We know from our own experience that damaging and destroying things also fulfills ritual functions (nowadays, for example, the destruction of dishes on a Christian wedding night; the trampling of a glass in the context of a Jewish wedding). Social and cultural studies support this knowledge and point to the occurrence of ritual destruction of things also in the social entities of the past(s) (Joachim Friedrich Quack, 2000). In these rituals, the destruction of things and artifacts (including architecture and spatial order) is not aimed at their annihilation in the sense of eradication. Rather, it serves to maintain order and to preserve traditions and values.<sup>613</sup> As socio-critical archaeologists, we observe identical phenomena in the things of the past, namely damage and destruction. We are aware that the causes for the respective state of preservation of cultural forms of expression are manifold,<sup>614</sup> that the reasons for dealing with things and the goals pursued in dealing with things are complex, and that they can extend to (alleged) contradictions (attack on order vs. preservation of order).

It is undisputed that pictorial works, architecture and spatial planning, as well as burial rites, were useful in the exercise of cultural hegemony. But whether cultural forms of expression and especially their state of preservation show the harmonious togetherness of the members of a social entity - and this as a result of negotiations, as postulated by Antonio Gramsci - or whether they are the result of oppositional, not infrequently subversive behavior that conceals the "true" togetherness, as observed by James Scott,<sup>615</sup> is the question to which we seek answers in every socio-critical archaeological study. Whether the damage to things or their undamaged preservation reflects an attack on the ruling order, on cultural hegemony, or on the cultural hegemons themselves, or whether both seemingly contradictory ways of dealing with things served to preserve and thus support the order and the concerns of the cultural hegemons, is a complex question that can certainly be seen as a stumbling block.<sup>616</sup>



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<sup>613</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness / tradition*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; see my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; IV.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

<sup>614</sup> See I.1 *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>615</sup> See III.1.6.2, *A critical reflection of Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*

<sup>616</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; Excursus II.8, *Antagonism and agonism -*

## Part IV

# Economy

#### IV.1 Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other?

The socio-political significance of culture, of visible and invisible cultural forms of expression, our awareness of their importance, the influence that we humans exert on our everyday lives and on the organization of our social interaction through the imprint of culture, is clear to us from our own everyday experience and thanks to sociological research as well as the studies of Antonio Gramsci and James Scott.<sup>617</sup> At the same time, it is a truism that every social interaction, and thus the development of all cultural forms of expression, requires a secure economic basis. For the organization of our individual everyday life as well as for the organization of our social togetherness, it is important to know who has which possibilities of access to which resources, who has which visible or known property [*Eigentum*] of things, artifacts and resources in the community, respectively, who owns [*Besitz*] them, uses them, but cannot call them his property. As a reminder: For the organization of one's own life as well as for the organization of social interaction, it is important whether one has property or owns things (ownership) and is allowed to use them, but cannot call them his or her property. Is the apartment you live in your property [*Eigentum*], or do you have the right to live there for rent (ownership) [*Besitz*] without it being your property? For the secure organization of our social interaction, all members of the social structure must be aware of the meanings that are attributed in this structure to the respective access to things, artifacts, resources, to ownership and property relations, such as ownership [*Besitz*] (without property rights, i.e. solely the possibility of using things, artifacts and resources) or property [*Eigentum*]. The economic orders and the organizational forms of economic activity are an inseparable part of every social interaction, always part and element of our social orders and organizational forms and thus decisive elements from which we humans derive values, norms, self-images and world views. Economic orders and organizational forms of economic activity emerge within the framework of context-specific conditions of opportunity and are themselves decisive elements of the conditions of opportunity under which we can develop the cultural forms of expression of our social togetherness in the first place. Antonio Gramsci explicitly pointed out the unity of the social, the socio-cultural and the economic, and the mutual influence of these spheres, and emphasized his agreement with Karl Marx's reflections on this aspect.<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; III.1.1.1, *Representation*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; III.1.7, *The power of the cultural - the cognitions of the social and cultural sciences*; III.1.6.2, *A critical reflection of Gramsci's main point - based on James Scott's empirical studies in Malaysia / James Scott, The weapons of the weak, 1985*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*

<sup>618</sup> See III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*

According to Antonio Gramsci, one of the foundations of any political rule (authority) is that this authority secures for itself the control of the economy and the organization of the world of work, i.e., the control of all the economic concerns of a society. This includes the *conditions of production* {i.e. all conditions as a whole, so that production can take place at all} and the *relations of production* {i.e. the entire world of work}, thus the control of the entire *organization of work*, furthermore the control of the access to *property* or *ownership* of the *means of production* {e.g. machines, tools} as well as the control of the *productive forces*, i.e. the working population {the people with their skills and abilities, furthermore the technology, the social knowledge}. Specifically, Karl Marx's illustration of the power of economic conditions to shape social life is as follows:

*„In der gesellschaftlichen Produktion ihres Lebens geben die Menschen bestimmte, notwendige, von ihrem Willen unabhängige Verhältnisse ein, Produktionsverhältnisse, die einer bestimmten Entwicklungsstufe ihrer materiellen Produktivkräfte entsprechen. Die Gesamtheit dieser Produktionsverhältnisse bildet die ökonomische Struktur der Gesellschaft, die reale Basis, worauf sich ein juristischer und politischer Überbau erhebt und welcher bestimmte gesellschaftliche Bewußtseinsformen entsprechen. Die Produktionsweise des materiellen Lebens bedingt den sozialen, politischen und geistigen Lebensprozeß überhaupt. Es ist nicht das Bewußtsein der Menschen, das ihr Sein, sondern umgekehrt ihr gesellschaftliches Sein, das ihr Bewußtsein bestimmt. Auf einer gewissen Stufe ihrer Entwicklung geraten die materiellen Produktivkräfte der Gesellschaft in Widerspruch mit den vorhandenen Produktionsverhältnissen oder, was nur ein juristischer Ausdruck dafür ist, mit den Eigentumsverhältnissen, innerhalb deren sie sich bisher bewegt hatten. Aus Entwicklungsformen der Produktivkräfte schlagen diese Verhältnisse in Fesseln derselben um. Es tritt dann eine Epoche sozialer Revolution ein. Mit der Veränderung der ökonomischen Grundlage wälzt sich der ganze ungeheure Überbau langsamer oder rascher um. In der Betrachtung solcher Umwälzungen muß man stets unterscheiden zwischen der materiellen, naturwissenschaftlich treu zu konstatierenden Umwälzung in den ökonomischen Produktionsbedingungen und den juristischen, politischen, religiösen, künstlerischen oder philosophischen, kurz, ideologischen Formen, worin sich die Menschen dieses Konflikts bewußt werden und ihn ausfechten.“* (Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, 1859; Institut für Marxismus Leninismus beim ZK der KPdSU, 1961, Marx, Karl; Engels, Friedrich; Werke, Band 13, 1961, 8 - 9).

*>In the social production of their lives, men enter into certain necessary relations which are independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a certain stage of development of their material productive forces. The totality of these relations of production forms the economic structure of society, the real basis on which a juridical and political superstructure rises and to which certain social forms of consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and spiritual process of life in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but conversely their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come into contradiction with the existing relations of*

*production or, what is only a legal expression for it, with the relations of property within which they had hitherto operated. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into fetters of the same. Then an epoch of social revolution occurs. With the change of the economic basis the whole immense superstructure turns over more slowly or more rapidly. In the consideration of such upheavals one must always distinguish between the material upheaval in the economic conditions of production, which is to be stated faithfully in scientific terms and the juridical, political, religious, artistic or philosophical, in short, ideological forms in which people become aware of this conflict and fight it out.*“ < Riane Eisler (2020, 33; 114) explicitly refers to further factors (op. cit., p. 33) on which economic inequality is based and highlights among these in particular the factors: Age; health status or illness; gender; ethnicity; foreignness or affiliation.

#### IV.2 Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner: The role of the socio-economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society.

In the following remarks on the relationship between economy and society I reproduce the critical reflections of Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner, which they expressed in their groundbreaking study on this topic (*Wolfgang Maderthaner / Lutz Musner, Die Selbstabschaffung der Vernunft. Die Kulturwissenschaften und die Krise des Sozialen. 2007*).

In their extraordinarily constructive analysis and extremely critical statement on cultural studies research, the social and cultural scientists Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner (2007, 20 - 30; 31 ff.; 103 - 115) explicitly refer to the power of the economy or the control of the economy to shape social togetherness and point out how, with the emergence of socio-cultural studies in the field of cultural studies, the discussion of the impact of economic relations on the shaping of social togetherness has been increasingly neglected. However, no study of the social and cultural sciences, and thus no socio-critical archaeological study, can comprehensively elicit social interaction without explicitly addressing economic realities. I discuss Wolfgang Maderthaner's and Lutz Musner's critical view of cultural studies in detail precisely because my focus in the present reflections on socio-critical archaeology is not on the preoccupation with the economic foundations of past societies, but I fully agree with Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner's demand that the power of economic conditions to influence the shaping of all forms of social order and organization - then and now - must not be allowed to disappear from view. The considerations of both scholars serve as a guideline for any socio-critical archaeological research by considering the connections between culture and economy. Thus, Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner, in their excellent critical study of social and cultural studies, convincingly assert that socio-historical studies, and I would add studies of cultural hegemony, can never be carried out without dealing with the economic sphere of social togetherness, with working conditions, with political conflicts, with social inequalities, with unequal access to resources (op. cit., p. 104 - 105), without addressing

society and the power constellations inherent in any social togetherness (op. cit., p. 103), nor without considering the material and institutional framework in which people think, act and live (op. cit., p. 104). Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner make it explicitly clear in their plausible critique of cultural studies that culture, the meaningfulness and sense-giving of culture, can only be adequately investigated if the formation and significance of cultural forms of expression are grasped and analyzed in their > historical, social, political and economic contexts< [„historischen, sozialen, politischen und ökonomischen Kontexten,“] (op. cit., p. 106). Consequently, according to the authors, cultural studies' abandonment of a relational view of social, cultural, political, and economic activities makes it impossible to consider the functioning of our social interactions and, in this, the significance of the cultural for the political. According to the authors, understanding and explaining socio-cultural and political coexistence cannot succeed without an explicit engagement with economic realities - it is not least >commodity production, dependent labor, universal relations of exchange [...] that constitute the conditions of human existence.< [„Warenproduktion, abhängige Arbeit, universelle Tauschverhältnisse [...], die die Bedingungen menschlicher Existenz konstituieren.“] (op. cit., p. 114).<sup>619</sup> Cultural practices, according to Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner >i.e. the way in which people relate to the circumstances and conditions of their existence and inscribe meaning / sense into them - can only be analytically grasped by asking what their material preconditions are.< [„also die Art und Weise, wie sich Menschen zu den Umständen und Bedingungen ihrer Existenz verhalten und ihnen Sinn einschreiben - können analytisch nur erfaßt werden, wenn danach gefragt wird, was deren materielle Voraussetzungen sind.“] (op. cit., p. 115).<sup>620</sup> Thus, we cannot comprehensively investigate, understand, and explain cultural practices if we do not simultaneously address the distribution of and access to economic resources, existing social inequalities, and concrete power constellations. We can only begin to understand and explain the power of culture in our social interaction if we simultaneously pursue the analysis of social and economic power constellations. Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner's main criticism of cultural studies research is that not a few representatives of this field of research have turned away from the view of social conditions as an interwoven interaction of human activity, economy, politics, and culture, and have placed the isolated view of culture at the center of their social considerations. The specific accusation is that, since the rise of the cultural and linguistic turn (op. cit., p. 20 - 23), this research has so exclusively emphasized the primacy of culture as the decisive force in shaping social interaction that the impact of the economic and political has basically been completely eclipsed. In particular, they criticize the radical departure of French-influenced cultural studies research from Marxist discourse as well as from Western Enlightenment universalism, from Critical Theory and thus from critical social

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<sup>619</sup> See IV.3, Rabel Jaeggi - *Economy as social practice*

<sup>620</sup> See II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*



analysis (op. cit., p. 25) >The withholding of reflection on the material and institutional frameworks of one's own work and professional existence, the asymmetrical concentrations of symbolic capital in the institutions of knowledge, and the non-thematization of the rigid conditions of access to the theory market, in a word, the fading out of the economy and politics of postmodern cultural theory, has serious consequences for the production of theory itself.< [„Die hintangehaltene Reflexion über die materiellen und institutionellen Rahmenbedingungen der eigenen Arbeit und beruflichen Existenz, die asymmetrischen Konzentrationen symbolischen Kapitals in den Institutionen des Wissens und die Nicht-thematisierung der rigiden Zugangsbedingungen zum Theoriemarkt, mit einem Wort, die Ausblendung von Ökonomie und Politik postmoderner Kulturtheorie, hat gravierende Folgen für die Theorieproduktion selbst.“] (op. cit., p. 104 - 105). But when cultural studies turn away from critical social research in this way, they also give up the possibility of participating in shaping social coexistence. They disempower themselves (op. cit., especially p. 26 - 29). The authors therefore call for a critical examination of socio-cultural conditions as well as political and economic events as always indissolubly interwoven parameters that shape society, and for ensuring the constant reference to the critical approach demanded by critical theory in understanding and explaining social conditions, in order to grasp social togetherness in all its >distortions, contradictions and refractions< [„Verwerfungen, Widersprüche[n] und Brechungen“](op. cit., p. 11). Of course, they speak of culture as having a decisive function in the successful organization of our social togetherness when they characterize culture as >the sum of those interpretative patterns and interpretations which allows acting people to recognize the world around them as their own and to act in it.< [„die Summe jener Deutungsmuster und Interpretationen, die es handelnden Menschen erlaubt, die sie um-gebende Welt als die ihre zu erkennen und in ihr zu handeln.“] (op. cit., p. 103). Culture, as the authors further define it, is >that ensemble of dispositions, competencies and practices [...] that enables social groups and social individuals to cope with the given social conditions in such a way that they can assert themselves in these conditions and vis-à-vis them< [„jenes Ensemble von Dispositionen, Kompetenzen und Praktiken [...], welches es sozialen Gruppen und gesellschaftlichen Individuen ermöglicht, mit den je gegebenen gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen so zurechtzukommen, sodass sie sich in diesen Verhältnissen und gegenüber diesen behaupten können.“] (op. cit., p. 103). Thus, Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner, despite their critical discussion of cultural studies, also see culture as a decisive element for the success of our social coexistence. According to Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner, cultural studies research can only recognize, understand, and explain the impact of culture on the shaping of our social interaction if the corresponding research is part of a critical analysis of society - and is thus integrated into the analysis of the interrelations and interactions of society, economy, politics, and culture.

### IV.3 Rahel Jaeggi - Economy as a social practice

The relational approach to culture, society, politics and economics rightly called for by Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner has been elaborated, concretized and put into practice by the philosopher Rahel Jaeggi in her excellent essay "*A broad concept of economy: Economy as a social practice and the critique of capitalism*" published in 2017 in the anthology "*Critical Theory in Critical Times. Transforming the Global Political and Economic Order*", pages 160 - 182. That is, in her study of the conditions of opportunity in social life, she has focused her consideration on these connections, or on the mutual influence of social acting and economic action.

For us socio-critical archaeologists, this study is at the same time another text that offers us an introduction to this approach, that shows the relevance of relational cultural research for socio-critical archaeological research, and that offers the possibility of integrating this relational approach into archaeological work (Marlies Heinz, 2022, 127 - 150).

#### *Social action*

According to Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 163 - 164), social activity and economic action should be seen as a whole set of social and socio-economic practices.<sup>621</sup> We human beings form and perform social practices by acting and reflecting on our own being, thinking and acting where we interact with our fellow human beings, but also with things. Such social practices have a habitual character. Ideally, they guarantee the functioning of social interaction. However, the following preconditions should be met: Our social practices must be carried out in a context in which the addressed co-actors, due to their comparable socialization, are able to perform these actions as meaningful and experience them as sense-giving (op. cit., p. 165). We perform our social practices consciously and unconsciously. Social practices, according to Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 165), are thus both the result and the precondition of our social being, thinking and acting. Social practices are determined by norms, values and rules. We humans act (and function...) more or less according to the rules in everyday life (op. cit., p. 165). We perform our functions, "play" the roles that correspond to the behavioral expectations of our fellow human beings with regard to the respective functions, and thus ensure the successful course of our everyday togetherness. With our social practices we pursue goals (consciously and unconsciously), and one and the same social practice can pursue several goals at the same time (op. cit., p. 165). Social practice, according to Rahel Jaeggi, can only be understood and explained as such, i.e. as social practice in the sense of sense-giving and meaningfulness, through interpretation, through meaningful and sense-giving understanding (op. cit., p. 165). According to Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 166), social practices and their contexts, social

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<sup>621</sup> See Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record*

as well as material equipment, the level of technical development are interdependent. Ways of life, Rahel Jaeggi continues (op. cit., p. 166), can be understood as chains of interwoven social practices that are habitually developed and executed, both consciously and unconsciously. We humans materialize ways of life in institutions, political, economic, religious, cultural, social functions, etc., as well as in things! - including architecture and equipment of all kinds (op. cit., p. 167). Our social practices lead to the production of this materiality, and at the same time we humans then respond to and interact with the material world we have created (op. cit., p. 167). Our social practices, habitually-normatively structured, partly materialized, simultaneously enable and prevent possibilities of thinking and acting (see as well Andreas Reckwitz, 2003, 282 - 301).

### *Economic activities*

The central question that Rahel Jaeggi poses in her consideration of economic activities as elements of social practice and then of the formations of social practices is (op. cit., p. 167): To what extent and in what ways do economic practices constitute social practices that, together with other social practices and in interdependence, shape ways of life? A short but concise definition of economy is given by Rahel Jaeggi on page 168. According to Rahel Jaeggi, the economy serves the satisfaction of all reproductive needs that arise in societies, i.e. the production and distribution of goods and services. The phenomena that Rahel Jaeggi examines and reflects upon in her study of economic activities are property - market exchange - labor and production (op. cit., p. 168 - 171).

### *Property (Eigentum)*

Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 168) considers property as part of a complex "set of practices". The definition of what counts as property, or the possibility of what counts as property, is a culture-specific normative given, i.e. given by social thought and action (not everything can be property!). The definition of what property is, the view of what property can be, is thus the result of social practice and is potentially seen from many - and thus potentially from very opposing - points of view. Rahel Jaeggi goes on to reflect on how we integrate our treatment of property into our daily thoughts and actions. The treatment of property is an integral part of our everyday social practices - so how does property affect our social practices? The knowledge of what counts as property and the ways of dealing with property that correspond to this knowledge are part of the economic order - and culturally, temporally, and spatially potentially very different (op. cit., p. 168). According to Rahel Jaeggi, economic systems are potentially always characterized by specific property rules. The different understandings of what is whose property and which rules underlie the legitimation of the respective property relations are flanked by potentially different practices of acquiring, preserving and making property visible, of showing it. The question of what may be shown, what

property must be shown, and what property should preferably not be made visible, according to the normative rules that apply in each case (op. cit., p. 168), is therefore of crucial importance both for our present living conditions and for securing social coexistence in the past(s)! Property is and has been acquired in very different ways.

While some forms of property are generally accepted, i.e., considered legitimate, in a social entity, other forms of property acquisition are considered illegitimate and unlawful, depending on the cultural context. Acquiring property and declaring it legitimate becomes possible only through a whole set of legal requirements, as well as through a whole set, a spectrum of social practices, the latter structured and expressed through respective social norms and sets of rules. With the help of these, people in the respective social communities also determine what can become property and what cannot (op. cit., p. 168). The question of what people can and cannot declare as property is, according to Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 168), one! criterion with the help of which social orders can be defined respectively what, among other things, characterizes social orders and thus also potentially distinguishes them.

Rahel Jaeggi's remarks (own note - and see also Jeffrey K. Hass, 2020, 221 - 233) show how important it is to know what property is, who has access to and can use property, and how this knowledge and the conditions of proprietorship affect the possibilities of shaping one's own life. Rahel Jaeggi ascribes to the cultural context in particular a formative importance in this process in which social practices are formed (and is thus clearly close to the Marxist approach of Antonio Gramsci, who clarified this importance of the cultural in shaping the political and thus in shaping social interaction with his concept of cultural hegemony), Karl Marx took as his starting point the society-shaping interaction of the economic factors conditions of production [*Produktionsbedingungen*], relations of production [*Produktionsverhältnisse*], means of production [*Produktionsmittel*], productive forces [*Produktivkräfte*] and the conditions of proprietorship [*Eigentumsverhältnisse*], which he saw as the factors that decisively shape social practices (see above Karl Marx)(see as well Kurt Bayertz, 2016).

### *Market exchange*

Exchange can take place on a private basis, private property is alienated, reciprocity - exchange on the principle of reciprocity - is practiced, gifts are exchanged and not in every case a direct gift in return is expected. Any exchange of goods, Rahel Jaeggi continues (op. cit., p. 169), no matter what form it takes, is also always governed by normative rules and ergo structured by behavioral expectations. In other words, exchange can only function in a meaningful way if the participants know the relevant rules and thus act in accordance with the behavioral expectations of their respective partners.

*Work and production*

According to Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 170), considerations of economic activity as a part and element of social practice also lead to the question of who defines which activities as work in which context. The definition of activities as "work" is society-specific, whereby work is understood in the sense of performing a function that is an activity in - and for - successful social interaction (op. cit., p. 170) (own note - the question remains, by whom which activities are declared as „work“ and why). The definition of "work" in the aforementioned sense is determined by the norms and values that apply within society and their interpretations. In the course of history, according to Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 171), with the development of knowledge, skills, technology, the emergence of needs and the realization of options to satisfy them, continuous changes can be traced with regard to the activities that were considered, when, where, why and by whom as "work" in the sense of Rahel Jaeggi's explanation. The changed evaluations concern not only the concrete activities, but the entire context in which the social practice took place and continues to take place, as well as the social practice itself. Socially relevant activities, Rahel Jaeggi continues (op. cit., p. 171), which are declared as "work", take on determining forms as part of - and as an element in - social practice. By defining activities as "work", activities that are considered constitutive in and for social interaction, we humans develop legal norms for how these activities are coordinated and carried out in cooperation with other activities (e.g. by means of contracts). The remarks of Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 171) make it clear - "work" is not only an economic quantity, not only the performance of an activity for the production of goods and services. "Work" means the performance of functions and the fulfillment of role expectations that are associated with corresponding functions and that make the success of economic activities and "work" possible in the first place. These functions are weighty and socially constitutive factors in our more or less complex social networks, in the variety of social practices carried out daily by all members of social communities. "Work" and our economic activities are thus much more than purely rational and goal-oriented activities. "Work" is composed of a variety of activities, behaviors, attitudes, habits, symbolic and communicative skills, and forms of performance, all of which emerge in specific socio-cultural contexts.

*Rahel Jaeggi - A conclusion*

All socio-economic practices, according to Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 172), all definitions of what people call property and work / labor, all conditions of property and forms of labor, all definitions of what property can be, all forms of exchange of both labor and property are established in specific socio-cultural and historical circumstances (op. cit., p. 172). This is made possible by normative-regulatory action, in other words, the latter is necessary for the emergence and execution of the

respective social practices. The concepts of property and work and the social practices in which property is handled and work is performed, of which the disposal of property and the performance of work are an immanent constitutive part, express these normative rules and behaviors and at the same time shape, transmit and modify them in each individual performance (op. cit., p. 172). Economic activities are never free of norms (op. cit., p.173). On the contrary, as seen, they are normatively shaped, socio-economic practices. Moral and ethical norms belong to the set of normative rules. Socio-economic practices, according to Rahel Jaeggi (op. cit., p. 173), explicitly and inherently contain ethical-functional norms that make the functioning of socio-economic practices possible in the first place. At the same time, socio-economic action is, on the one hand, focused on certain goals and, on the other hand, like all social practices, is always accompanied by unintended, non-targeted events, effects and exceptions - the "invisible hand" is always at work (op. cit., p. 174).

In conclusion, the economy cannot be seen or understood in a reduced way as merely goal- and purpose-oriented utility maximization behavior by which people try to fulfill narrowly defined interests. Economic action is the socio-economic part of our everyday social practices. Economic practices are not! detached from the network of social practices in which they are entangled, to which they belong, and which they both constitute and are the result of (see also op. cit., p. 175).



#### IV.4 *Own commentary and archaeological reference*

##### *Socio-economic everyday practices and the socio-critical archaeological research*

Economic action, as the remarks of Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner, as well as those of Rahel Jaeggi and, of course, Karl Marx before them, have made clear, is always part of everyday social practice - and this in every society, in all parts of the world, at all times - and thus also in all social entities of the past(s). When we, as socio-critical archaeologists, ask whose past(s) we see in the materialized cultural forms of expression and archaeological records that we excavate, we are thus always also looking for the socio-economic conditions under which the expressions of the social in the material, the cultural, i.e. the things, the artifacts, the architecture and the spatial order were created and the burials were laid out and marked.

*Conditions of production [Produktionsbedingungen] - the conditions for production to take place at all or: first steps in the search for the interrelations of economic, political and cultural conditions in the social entities of the past(s)*

We, socio-critical archaeologists, record the basis for economic activity and thus for the possibility of social coexistence by analyzing the environmental and natural conditions at the site.<sup>622</sup> Even if it seems like another truism, it should be explicitly stated once again - it is the environmental potentials that provide the basic prerequisites for settling at a site in the first place.

*Observations made about the natural environment*

Based on the potential of the natural space at the settlement site, we first elicit the potential of the site for subsistence. We look at the climate, water and soil conditions. We determine the spectrum of plant availability and the local spectrum of fauna. In this way, we record the general conditions at the time and the possibilities for settlement. We also look at the local availability of resources that may not have been used for immediate subsistence, but were necessary for settlement, such as wood and stone for construction projects. We explore the possibilities for metal extraction.

*People live in neighborhoods - We analyze the geographic-topographic features of a settlement site*

We consider the settlement location in its geographical-topographical position with respect to potentially given local, regional and supra-regional route connections over land and water. We elicit the possibilities of local, regional, and supra-regional contacts and postulate the spectrum and range of possible neighborly contacts of the settlers. At the same time, we postulate the extent to which neighborly contacts could have led to an expansion of access to resources for all participants, i.e., access to resources that might not have been available locally at the respective settlement site.

*Settlement inventories - the result of the economic activity of the members of the social entities of the past(s)*

Once we have clarified which subsistence potentials were available at a settlement site and which resources beyond subsistence were available on site or could potentially have been added through neighborly contacts, we analyze the settlement inventories themselves to determine which of these potentials were used in the settlements or what traces, plant remains, animal bones, fish bones, and things were preserved in the settlement inventories.<sup>623</sup> However, in our search for the exploited resources we encounter several stumbling blocks.

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<sup>622</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*; I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*

<sup>623</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?* up to I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my*

*Economy - stumbling block 1 - Handling things*

The transmission of things, including the perishable traces of plant and animal remains, is, as has been said many times, fundamentally tied to the way people handle things.

*Economy - stumbling block 2 - Climate and soil conditions*

The preservation of plant remains, animal bones, and fish bones is also highly dependent on the climatic and soil conditions at the location of a settlement.

*Economy - stumbling block 3 - Continuous change*

Moreover, it is worth remembering once again: In sociological research we assume that society never "is", but is always in the process of becoming! The constant change in the composition of a social entity is accompanied by a constant change in the cultural forms of expression of a social entity - a statically fixed "total" of a settlement inventory cannot exist.<sup>624</sup> We socio-critical archaeologists can therefore neither determine the "total stock" of an archaeological record, nor the incompleteness of what has survived!<sup>625</sup> If we look at the spectrum of preserved traces of things and artifacts, of architecture and spatial order, and also of burials, among other things, as evidence of the economic activities of the settlers and the socio-economic conditions in the social entities of the past(s), these "uncertainty factors" must be taken into account.

*Regardless of the "uncertainty factors", initial insights into the handling of resources are still possible.*

Taking into account the aforementioned constraints, we can see what resources have been used. We can see how resources were used and how people economized. We can see from the plants whether or not they were cultivated or whether they were gathered. From the animal bones, we can see whether or not the people were engaged in animal husbandry, herding, and hunting. We recognize fishing as part of the economic activities by the preservation of fish bones. We see that and how resources, raw materials were processed into things, artifacts. We "see" or deduce from the variety of ways of using and processing resources and raw materials that the members of the social entity of the past(s) had specialized knowledge and specialized craftsmanship at their disposal. We postulate that there was a division of labor in the performance of tasks that required

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*experiences -; II.3.7.9, Own commentary and archaeological reference / rituals / routine; II.3.7.13, Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior; III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>624</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*

<sup>625</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?; I.7.1, Briefly mentioned once again - the influence of our background in making socio-critical archaeology possible at all; II.3.5.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness; II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconographic description; V.4, Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*



appropriate skills.<sup>626</sup> Based on the preserved plant remains, the preserved animal and fish bones, and the raw materials that we find in the archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*], we localize the respective regions of origin of the remains and show whether local resources were used exclusively or whether one also drew on the resources of neighboring areas. Thus, we ask whether exchange with neighbors was part of the settlers' economic activities. In our search for answers to this question, we encounter another stumbling block (stumbling block 4), where we want to clarify what kind of encounter the "exchange" was.

*Economy - stumbling block 4 - A thing passes from one context / from one place to another*

This stumbling block has already been addressed elsewhere, where I explained the many ways in which an object can move from one context to another (among many others, by trade, by robbery, as a gift).<sup>627</sup>

*We see not only the occurrence of things, plant remains, animal bones and fish bones, raw materials in the settlement inventories but also their distribution in the settlement area*

We see in which contexts of the settlement what kind of things and what spectrum of raw materials, plants, and animals were available or preserved. We register whether and where exclusively local resources were used. We register whether and in which contexts non-local resources were used. We find out whether the inventories of the settlements were characterized by relatively homogeneous equipment, i.e. whether the occurrence and distribution of all things, plant remains, animal bones, fish bones, and other resources were rather uniform, or whether they were characterized by conspicuous differences. And if so, where had unique and exclusive things and resources occurred in the settlement area, where had extraordinarily elaborate buildings been erected, and where had unique and elaborate burials of the deceased been arranged?<sup>628</sup>

*From the visible evidence of the conditions of production to the "elicitable" prerequisites for production to take place at all - knowledge and skills - needs and options to satisfy needs*

This may be a truism, but as always, I will not refrain from stating it explicitly. From the observations of natural space, we already derive, with plausible justification, numerous indications of the conditions of production, the preconditions that must be present in order for production to

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<sup>626</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences*; II.3.4.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.20, *Are societies social unities?*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*

<sup>627</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconological interpretation, step four*

<sup>628</sup> See II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

take place at all. From the results of the handling of resources, the settlement inventories, the visible results of economic activities (gathering, cultivation, hunting, animal husbandry, fishing, construction and burial management, craftsmanship in general), we extract the as such invisible, but at the same time indispensable conditions for the fact that production can take place at all. These are the needs of the members of the social entities of the past(s), as well as the options for satisfying these needs, including the stocks of knowledge and craftsmanship that had to be given in order to serve the socio-economic, socio-cultural, and political requirements.<sup>629</sup>

*From the conditions of production to the determination of the relations of production [Produktionsverhältnisse], the socio-cultural organization of the world of work*

From the direct analysis of the visible cultural forms of expression that we recorded with the settlement inventories, we were able to gain initial insights into economic methods and make initial statements about truisms: One knew about the available resources and one knew about the possibilities to use them. On the basis of the analysis of the visible things it could be plausibly postulated that the members of the social entities of the past(s) had specialized knowledge and specialized craftsmanship and that production was organized on the basis of the division of labor. Turning to the relations of production, we look for the sets of rules that have determined the worlds of work, economic concerns, and socioeconomic coexistence in the social entities of the past(s). We ask, on the one hand, which socio-cultural order had underpinned the practice of economic activity in the social entities of the past(s). And we ask, on the other hand, what social effects the economic practices carried out in the social entities of the past(s) had on social interaction. We ask about the possibilities and forms of participation that the members of the social entities of the past(s) had in the economic activities of their social entity.<sup>630</sup> We are therefore looking for the conditions under which the participation of all members of the social entity in economic activity was or was not possible. We are looking for the conditions of proprietorship and distribution ratios, as well as for the conditions of ownership and the relations of power and rule under which the settlements were created and under which the members of the social entity lived. We are looking for clues as to who was to be understood by "one".

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<sup>629</sup> See II.1, *Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research*; I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*

<sup>630</sup> See II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society? - First considerations*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*; II.3.7.8, *Parameters that keep orders going: Rituals and routines*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

*Concretization - who "worked", who "commanded" ...*

We are looking for answers to the question of who actually carried out the work that led to the visible materialized cultural forms of expression, as well as for answers to the question of who initiated, ordered, organized, and controlled the corresponding work without actually participating in its execution.<sup>631</sup> We are looking for answers to these questions in order to be able to answer whose past(s) we see in the material heritage and whose history we can construct on the basis of the cultural forms of expression.

*So who "worked"? ...*

Who ensured the livelihood of the social entity through the daily work in the fields, the labor with the herds, through gathering, hunting and fishing - and following Rahel Jaeggi's explanations, the question arises, who has understood which activity as "work"? Who manufactured the things, the consumer goods for the household, the utensils, the weapons? Who constructed the buildings, laid out the graves, and performed the burials? Who exchanged resources and goods with their neighbors, and in what ways?

*And who was "in charge"? ...*

Who had given the orders for the specific work to whom?<sup>632</sup> Who had ordered and supervised the work without being directly involved in its execution? Who had been able to convince whom - and by what means - that the required work was not only necessary, but also to be carried out for the success of social coexistence?

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<sup>631</sup> See II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations*; up to II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life up to III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; see as well my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; in addition see as well II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Assyrian pictures and where they were installed / Votive relief of Ur-Nanshe*

<sup>632</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; see my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics*; see as well II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Assyrian pictures and where they were installed / Votive relief of Ur-Nanshe*

*Questions about the participation of all members of the social entities of the past(s), the "performing working population" and the "instructing initiators"*

In whose hands was the power to decide on the organization of economic events in the social entities of the past(s)? Who controlled which resources? Who had control over access to property, ownership and use of the means of production and productive forces, or who decided on who would have access to which resources and goods and in which ways - and who would not? <sup>633</sup> What does the equal or unequal distribution of resources and goods in the settlement inventories mean?

*A short intermediate thought - Who belonged to whom?*

Were those who actually procured the desired or needed resources of all kinds, and those who actually carried out the processing of the resources, the raw materials, and the production of the artifacts and buildings, or the construction of the burials, part of the circle of persons who gave the order for the procurement and processing of the resources and raw materials, or for the production of the material cultural forms of expression? We see in the archaeological record the occurrence of exclusively available foods, extraordinarily elaborately produced artifacts and buildings, and uniquely occurring and elaborately designed burials of the deceased. Were those who had actually worked out this exclusivity, procured the selected food, manufactured the artifacts, erected the buildings, and buried the dead, also part of the group of those who had given the orders to secure the exclusivity and who could also claim this exclusivity for themselves? Were those who performed the work, the activities of resource extraction and processing, among those who owned [*Besitz*] or had property [*Eigentum*] in the resources, artifacts, and buildings? So, did the performers of the work, of the activities of resource acquisition and processing, and the initiators, controllers, proprietors of the resources, artifacts, and buildings represent one and the same group, or did they belong to different circles of the social entity? <sup>634</sup>

What form of economic organization and social order was effective in each case where we find equal or unequal distribution of resources and goods in the inventories? Moreover, who had the complex knowledge about the occurrence of edible plants and animals? Who knew about the

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<sup>633</sup> See II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social entities - unities?*; II.3.9, *Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life up to III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>634</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; see my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Pierce, semiotics / representation / iconological interpretation, step four*; see as well II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts / Votive relief of Ur-Nanshe*

occurrence of raw materials - desired by whom and why? Who had the specialized knowledge and craftsmanship necessary to process both food and raw materials? Who held what knowledge to organize the complexity of economic activities, and who then managed the organization of that complexity? And who decided on who had access to what knowledge and skills?

In the context of our socio-critical archaeological research, we ask which rules, which norms, traditions, and habits had formed the basis of socio-economic interaction and who had ensured their preservation and application.<sup>635</sup> Who has provided for the satisfaction of all needs, or the needs of all members of a social entity, with the full range of necessary resources and goods? A question that implicitly refers back to some very basic questions: How do needs arise? How and why did the need for certain resources and things arise in the social entities of the past(s)? Whose needs had been expressed and required the acquisition of what resources and the production of what things? Whose needs were met by the provision and processing of resources and the production of things, by the construction of buildings and the setting up of burials?<sup>636</sup> Asked differently or with a changed perspective: Who had determined the needs - the need for what foods, artifacts, buildings, burial customs?<sup>637</sup>

And last but not least, the question arises: who had the economic means to finance the resources and things that were desired or needed, and to pay all the workers involved?<sup>638</sup> How were costs and burdens, or benefits and returns, distributed among the members of the social entity in both economic and social terms? Whose social practice was affected by the costs incurred, and how? What were the normative guidelines that linked economic and social practices and their financial requirements? Questions that lead to the fundamental questions of how and why equality and inequality develop in social entities, and how the phenomena of economic, political, and cultural power and domination come into play in this development.<sup>639</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> See II.3.7.8, *Parameters that keep orders going: Rituals and routines*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>636</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation* III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>637</sup> See I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?* up to I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.15, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / knowledge; representation* III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>638</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>639</sup> See II.3, *Sociology and archaeology - a first conclusion up to Excursus II.5, How is disparity produced and reproduced?*; II.3.3, *Groups*; Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work*; II.3.5, *What holds us together as a society? - First considerations up to II.3.5.2, However, how do we humans manage to hold a society (in the sense of the sociological definition) respectively a social entity together (social entity - meant in the sense of people living together and in this sense used here)*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.14, *The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected?*; II.3.8.1, *Equal, unequal or just different?*; II.3.8.2, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art*; II.3.9,

*More than a small difference: The importance of ownership [Besitz] and property [Eigentum] in shaping social interaction*

The importance of ownership (as a reminder: to possess something [*etwas besitzen*], used here in the sense of: I use something, e.g. a house, but the house is not my property - and to dispose of property [*über Eigentum verfügen*] used here in the sense of: I not only use the house, but it is legally my property) both for the organization of individual life and for the organization of social interaction is familiar to all of us from our own life experience.<sup>640</sup> The work of Karl Marx, in particular, has shown us the importance of the distinction between property and ownership. Thus, it is not only the way in which members of a social entity participate in the exchange of labor and goods that is of far-reaching importance for the shaping of each member's own life as well as for the organization of social interaction. It is not only the rules that determine who can participate in social, cultural, and economic events and in what ways that have an impact. What matters is whose property was the soil, the water sources, the yields of cultivation and gathering, whose property were the herds, the hunting and fishing grounds, the things, the artifacts, the equipment, the tools, the weapons, the architecture, and the raw materials (means of production) [*Produktionsmittel*], and whose property were the knowledge and skills of the craftsmen and the people themselves (productive forces)[*Produktivkräfte*].<sup>641</sup> The decisive factor was who had control over access to socially relevant resources of all kinds. Decisive for the socio-economic organization of social interaction was who disposed of property, who legally had property in a social entity of the past(s), and who was without property. The challenge of recognizing, on the basis of things alone, who disposed of property respectively owned the means of production and productive forces, who claimed property, and which forms of legally legitimate respectively illegitimate property and ownership existed, leads to or "ends" in three further stumbling blocks, for the "elimination" of which we socio-critical researchers must find a solution, but for which we socio-critical archaeologists, with our source situation and our methodological instruments, may not yet have the means to "overcome".

*Economy - stumbling block 5 - Property or (only) ownership?*

The search for answers to the question of whether a thing was someone's property or somebody's ownership is already one of the extraordinarily complex challenges that we socio-critical archaeologists face with our specific source situation, the things alone. Two examples illustrate the

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*Power [Macht] and rule/governance [Herrschaft] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.1.1, Representation; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation; III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>640</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*

<sup>641</sup> See II.3.9.10, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance / power dependencies*

challenge of developing solutions and designing approaches: Who were the users, who were the owners and who were the proprietors of the Assyrian palaces and monumental buildings at Göbekli Tepe? <sup>642</sup> Who owned respectively used the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD and who were the proprietors at the time the stele was erected at its (presumably) original site at Sippar? <sup>643</sup>

*Economy - stumbling block 6 - Who exactly were the proprietors respectively the owners?*

The challenge of finding an answer to this question becomes even more complex when we look not only for signs that allow us to recognize the difference between ownership and property, but when we ask more concretely who exactly was the proprietor or who concretely was the owner of the material cultural forms of expression, of the monumental buildings, of the pictorial works. Were the things the ownership or property of an individual, a group, an officeholder, an institution, or the collective ownership or property of the entire social entity? And last but not least, did deities or other beings dispose of ownership or property?

*Economy - stumbling block 7 - Property respectively ownership - legitimate?*

Our challenge becomes even more complex, if not intractable, when we ask about the legal foundations that regulated access to property respectively to ownership. Whose property or ownership was considered legitimate or illegitimate? This problem can also be illustrated by the example of the stele of NARAMSIN OF AKKAD. The stele had been stolen in the course of a military conflict - whose property respectively ownership had the stele been after it had been taken from Sippar / Mesopotamia to Susa / Elam? <sup>644</sup>

*Economy - conclusion 1 - or: How we as socio-critically researching archaeologists can approach insights into facets of the economic realities in the social entities of the past(s), given the source situation - the materialized cultural forms of expression alone*

The analysis of the natural conditions at the location of a settlement and its neighborhoods gives us first insights into the conditions of production [*Produktionsbedingungen*], i.e., into the preconditions that must be given so that inhabitation of a place can take place at all. The analysis of the processing of raw materials and the manual and technical requirements for the production of things then leads to first insights into the relations of production [*Produktionsverhältnisse*], where we can state, on the basis of the things as given, the functionally specialized knowledge and the specialized handicraft

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<sup>642</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>643</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / iconological interpretation, step four*

<sup>644</sup> See II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / knowledge / social entities - unities?*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / knowledge; representation* III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

skills necessary for the production of artifacts, the construction of buildings, and the arrangement of burials.

Through the analysis of materialized cultural forms of expression, we develop clues about the necessary means of production [*Produktionsmittel*], including clues about the occurrence of the tools necessary for the production of things, such as the wheel for turning clay into vessels. We gain knowledge about the productive forces [*Produktivkräfte*] (people, technology, knowledge, skills, abilities) - again through our insight into the specializations we can attribute to the members of the social entity in terms of their knowledge and skills. We postulate, in a plausible way, the existence of organizational competencies and the realization of the organizational abilities that had to be given in order to produce the things that appear in the archaeological record.

*Economy - conclusion 2 - or - where the stumbling blocks still seem insurmountable*

Two domains that become relevant for our questions about whose past(s) we see in the material heritage and whose history we construct on the basis of our insights are at the same time those domains in the processing of which we must recognize that our source situation as socio-critically researching archaeologists leads to stumbling blocks or to research problems for which we may not yet be able to work out solutions.<sup>645</sup>

First of all, this is the domain of the relations of production [*Produktionsverhältnisse*], where we are looking for answers to the questions of who can own or use things and resources (ownership) [*Besitz*] and to whom these things formally belong (property) [*Eigentum*]. The consequences for the organization of social forms of life that property in things and resources or "only" possibilities of use, ownership of things and resources imply, have been shown in detail by especially Karl Marx. Elsewhere I have already outlined ways in which we can approach insights into relations of production [*Produktionsverhältnisse*] with a focus other than on the organization of economic activity. I have explored them by considering who the people had been who had commissioned [*Auftraggeber*] and built [*Erbauer*] monumental buildings,<sup>646</sup> for example, who the people had been who had commissioned and built the Assyrian "palaces" and the monumental buildings of Göbekli Tepe.<sup>647</sup> With the focus on economic conditions, however, these considerations are now expanded to include the specific questions of who used the monumental buildings, who owned them (ownership), and who were the actual proprietors (property). Considerations of the potential initiators and recipients of pictorial works<sup>648</sup> are also related to questions of ownership and

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<sup>645</sup> See II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness*; II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>646</sup> See II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture / commissioners*

<sup>647</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>648</sup> See my reflections on the stele of NARAMSIN - II.3.3.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / groups*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values,*



property. Answers to these questions can only be hoped for (if at all) in detailed individual case studies.

Where we can show with plausible reason on the basis of things that functional specialization and differentiation existed in the social entities of the past(s), this insight is followed by our knowledge that functional differentiation, social differentiation and social hierarchization not infrequently go hand in hand. In order to clarify which social order in the social entities of the past(s) was linked to functional differentiation and whether functional differentiation was also linked to differentiated access to the appropriation of things and resources and to the exercise of power (property instead of "mere" ownership), we turn again to the cognitions of sociology in our search for answers. Sociological studies of group formation,<sup>649</sup> of the emergence and development of functional and social differentiation,<sup>650</sup> of the formation of hierarchies,<sup>651</sup> of power<sup>652</sup> and cultural hegemony,<sup>653</sup> and of the transformation of power into rule / governance [*Herrschaft*]<sup>654</sup> are likely to be significant. The challenge is to apply these cognitions to the interpretation of the materialized cultural forms of expression and to postulate them plausibly as results of the economic conditions in the social entities of the past(s). All the above-mentioned considerations are based on the question on which economic organizational basis the socio-cultural and socio-political conditions could have developed, or in which way the social interaction in the social entities of the past(s) had an effect on the development of which economic conditions. Perhaps even more complex is the search for clues to the modes of production [*Produktionsweise*], to the social-organizational relations in which things were created, according to Karl Marx's definition, thus the search for clues to the organizational forms of primitive society, slavery, feudalism, and others.

Many questions remain, many answers are (still) to be found. The multiplicity and the complexity of the questions and cognitive interests regarding the economic events in the social entities of the past(s), which I have formulated by turning to the consideration of the relations of production [*Produktionsverhältnisse*], illustrate that generalizing solutions can hardly be expected for the moment. Rather, in close cooperation between practical archaeological-empirical research (excavations,

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*norms, deviant behavior; II.3.7.15, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-structural linkage; II.3.7.19, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts; II.3.7.21, Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation; II.3.8.2, Own commentary and archaeological reference / etic and emic point of view in the reflection of a work of art; II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / symbols; picture themes / monumental architecture / Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics / iconological interpretation, step four; see as well II.3.7.19, Own commentary and archaeological reference / Assyrian pictures and where they were installed / Votive relief of Ur-Nanshe*

<sup>649</sup> See II.3.3, Groups

<sup>650</sup> See II.3.7.21, Own commentary and archaeological reference / social differentiation

<sup>651</sup> See II.3.9, Power [*Macht*] and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*] - First considerations up to II.3.9.10, Own commentary and archaeological reference / power and rule / governance

<sup>652</sup> See II.3.9.1, Power [*Macht*] and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*]. What is it and who executes it?

<sup>653</sup> See III.1.7.1, The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony up to III.1.7.3, Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony

<sup>654</sup> See II.3.9.1, Power [*Macht*] and rule/governance [*Herrschaft*]. What is it and who executes it?

artifact studies), the formulation of socio-critical archaeological interests and questions, and sociological research (what is society and how does it function), site after site must first be studied individually. On the basis of the individual case studies, plausible and comprehensible proposals are to be worked out in the justification, on the basis of which signs in an archaeological record can possibly be postulated that point to the still unexplained facets of economic events. The focus is on the one hand on the domain of relations of production [*Produktionsverhältnisse*], in which we try to clarify the relations of property and ownership, and on the other hand on the domain in which we search for answers to the question of who is to be understood by "one". We also ask whether and how we can succeed in gaining insights into the modes of production [*Produktionsweise*] of the social entities of the past(s). That is, in dealing with the economic realities of the social entities of the past(s), the question is also whether and how it becomes possible for us to gain insights into the domains we are looking for on the basis of the "world of things" alone.



## Part V

# Socio-critical archaeology - my reflections in conclusion

## V.1 *Our locations [Standorte], enlightenment as the task of the social and cultural sciences, and the relation to Critical Theory shape our socio-critical archaeological research*

Our locations determine our standpoints (see also Lucien Goldmann, 1971, 43 - 52).<sup>655</sup> To contribute to the enlightenment of the present about the causes<sup>656</sup> and backgrounds of present and past social conditions, i.e. to ask for the WHY of all social conditions in the present as well as in the past(s) and to search for answers, is one of the fundamental goals of socio-critical archaeological research.<sup>657</sup> A red thread through my efforts to promote critical thinking is critical theory<sup>658</sup> (see also Ralf Becker, 2021, 157 - 170; see also Stephen Eric Bronner, 2017).

## V.2 *Our locations determine our standpoints*

Our location from which we conduct our socio-critical archaeological research, shapes our standpoints, from which we view the past(s) and construct history.<sup>659</sup> All people think and act from standpoints. All people are shaped by their respective socialization in terms of habitus, norms, values and worldviews.<sup>660</sup> Each researcher approaches his or her own thinking and acting, and thus also his or her scientific work, from his or her own position, which is shaped by his or her socialization. Socialization has an impact on our value concepts, on the values with which and according to which we live as researchers. Socialization has an impact on the resulting ideas about the nature of the social, cultural, political, and economic world, on our respective images of man and society.<sup>661</sup> According to our habitus, we develop culturally and socially specific knowledge, cognitive interests, and questions. Our socialization influences our choice of research topics and the development and direction of our research questions.<sup>662</sup> It influences the knowledge we acquire and thus our constructions of social orders and the images of history we present. Our location influences the standpoints from which we view the past(s) and from which we construct history.

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<sup>655</sup> See V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>656</sup> See I.1 *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>657</sup> See V.3, *Enlightenment as a task of the humanities and social sciences - or: What socio-critical archaeology can contribute to this task in the present as a socio-critical historical science*

<sup>658</sup> See V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>659</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*

<sup>660</sup> See Excursus II.4, *How does socialization work?*; II.3.7.2, *Orders, rules and regulations - parameters of vital importance for all human cooperation*; II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*; II.3.7.14, *The functions of positions, roles and habitus or: How are the actions of people and social structures interconnected?*

<sup>661</sup> See I.8.1, *What do we "see" in our everyday interactions with things and what can we postulate with regard to the parts that things play in our daily interactions? - An account of my experiences -*; I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*

<sup>662</sup> See I.7.1, *Briefly mentioned once again - the influence of our background in making socio-critical archaeology possible at all*

As a reminder, as I have argued at length elsewhere, <sup>663</sup> "constructing history" does not mean the imaginative arbitrariness of historiography. As socio-critical archaeologists, we choose which past(s) to explore; as socio-critical archaeologists, we tell *stories* and construct history. We evaluate the cultural heritage of bygone societies, we decide in what way, in what sense and to what direction contemporary societies should know about the past(s), and we determine whose history we construct on the basis of the material remains we excavate. <sup>664</sup> We are therefore, among others, the ones who determine and control how other people see the past(s) and present, and how they form ideas about their future. With our socio-critical archaeological research we exercise cultural hegemony, <sup>665</sup> our socio-critical archaeological research is therefore always a political operation, which on the one hand has an impact on the ideological direction of the research conducted, and which on the other hand will naturally influence the thinking of the recipients of the research. The choice of wording and the terms that we use have an effect on the formation of opinions. The discourses we participate in and control through our activities shape our standpoints, which are then implicitly and explicitly expressed in our stories, our explanations of the past(s), and in our constructions of history. <sup>666</sup> Our socio-critical presentations of the past(s) and our constructions of history thus always stand for the production of significance. The socio-political significance of our socio-critical archaeological research makes the search for an answer to the question "Who is speaking?" <sup>667</sup> all the more urgent: Are we presenting the meanings given to the cultural forms of expression studied in the past(s), i.e. the emic point of view, or the meanings produced by us socio-critical archaeologists in the present when we write the narrative of that past(s), i.e. our etic point of view? If it is the latter, will we be able to get closer to the aspects of each emic point of view on the meanings given to the material world by the members of social entities that existed long ago? <sup>668</sup> Who is thus speaking when we socio-critical archaeologists interpret the material heritage of the past(s) as a representation of history? This is a crucial question, especially when we consider the accidental nature of what evidence is preserved in an archaeological record, <sup>669</sup> the equally often

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<sup>663</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to Excursus I.3.3.3, *Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

<sup>664</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*; I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*

<sup>665</sup> See III.1.6, *The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life*; III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>666</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct* up to Excursus I.3.3.3, *Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history*

<sup>667</sup> See III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*; III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*; VI.2, *Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*; VI.5, *Philology*

<sup>668</sup> See III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations*; III.1.3, *Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception*

<sup>669</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*

accidental nature of how we archaeologists choose a site, and the contingency of how our scientific concepts and cognitive interests evolve to guide us as scientists. Our self-critical reflection on our research methods should reveal "the regimes of truth and the regimes of power that define what is thinkable and what is unthinkable" in the study of history (Elizabeth Kassab 2010, 175 and her reference to the Algerian philosopher Mohammad Arkoun, who demands this critical view for other sciences as well). It is thus, among other things, the power of the historical in relation to life in the present, or to our activity and impact as cultural hegemony, that makes it imperative not only to critically question the past(s), but above all to critically reflect on the ways in which history is constructed, and then on the constructions of history themselves. The quest for enlightenment becomes increasingly urgent (Nabil Ali, 2020, 307 - 319; Hayden V. White, 2008).<sup>670</sup>

V.3 *Enlightenment as a task of the humanities and social sciences - or: What socio-critical archaeology can contribute to this task in the present as a socio-critical historical science*<sup>671</sup>

In my reflections on the question of how scholars can contribute to enlightenment today, and what I can contribute as a social-critical researching archaeologist respectively as a Near Eastern archaeologist concerned with the history of the Near East, I ascribe a central role to access and critical engagement with information and knowledge, i.e. to the possibility of interpreting information (Günter Dux, 2000). My considerations are based on my own experiences in dealing with knowledge. That is, in the following I present the self-experienced and created practice of my archaeological work in the sense of a short experience report. In order to provide a general and more objective view of my personal everyday experience, I combine my insights into the empirically experienced, i.e. learned and lived reality as an archaeologist with Max Horkheimer's remarks on the demands of a critically reflective science, which he already elaborated in 1937 in his essay "*Traditionelle und kritische Theorie*" (Max Horkheimer, 1937<sup>7</sup>, 2011). In my opinion, the questions posed by Max Horkheimer's critical theory and the demands he places on scholarly work have lost none of their topicality. On the contrary, they represent cornerstones on which a multitude of recent reflections on the tasks of critical scholarship are decisively based (Dirk Martin, Susanne Martin, Jens Wissel (eds.), 2015; Michael Schwandt, 2010; Rainer Winter, Peter V. Zima (eds.), 2007). Critical theory is for me also less a theory in the classical sense. Through the fundamental questions it raises, critical theory offers a guide to and through a science that is not limited to

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<sup>670</sup> See V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*; V.4, *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

<sup>671</sup> The article is the slightly modified version of my article with the same title published in Ulrich Brückling, Axel T. Paul, 2019, 46 - 50. I thank the editors for permission to reprint.

description, but combines critical analysis of the object of research as well as of one's own approach (William H. Sewell Jr., 2005; Gottfried Stiehler, 2002). >The critical theory of society, < according to Max Horkheimer (op. cit., p. 261), >has as its object man as the producer of all his historical forms of life. The relations of reality, from which science proceeds, do not appear to it as givens that are merely to be ascertained and calculated in advance according to the laws of probability. What is given depends not only on nature, but also on what man can do with it. The objects and the mode of perception, the posing of the question and the sense of the answer, testify to human activity and the degree of its power.< [„Die kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft“], according to Max Horkheimer (op. cit., p. 261) has [„die Menschen als die Produzenten ihrer gesamten historischen Lebensformen zum Gegenstand. Die Verhältnisse der Wirklichkeit, von denen die Wissenschaft ausgeht, erscheinen ihr nicht als Gegebenheiten, die bloß festzustellen und nach den Gesetzen der Wahrscheinlichkeit voraus zu berechnen wären. Was jeweils gegeben ist, hängt nicht allein von der Natur ab, sondern auch davon, was der Mensch über sie vermag. Die Gegenstände und die Art der Wahrnehmung, die Fragestellung und der Sinn der Beantwortung zeugen von menschlicher Aktivität und dem Grad ihrer Macht.“] (op. cit., addendum, p. 261).<sup>672</sup> To enable every human being to critically engage with the becoming and working of what Max Horkheimer calls the >relations of reality< [„Verhältnisse der Wirklichkeit“] and thus with the conditions of life in the present and in the past(s), and not, as it is also according to Max Horkheimer the primary concern of researchers integrated into the social apparatus, to take care of the perpetual >reproduction of the existing< [„Reproduktion des Bestehenden“] (op. cit, p. 213),<sup>673</sup> is a decisive goal of critical research - and thus of one's own archaeological work as well as of any socio-critical archaeological research (Marlies Heinz, 2009).

### V.3.1 Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report

As a socio-critical Near Eastern archaeologist, I can answer the question of how I, as a scientist, can have an enlightening effect through my archaeological work:

- by dealing in principle with the way knowledge is handled,
- by dealing with the significance of knowledge, with the acquisition of knowledge, with the production of knowledge and further,
- by trying to initiate a critical questioning of current stocks of knowledge through my archaeological work.

As an archaeologist I organize and carry out excavations. With each excavation and the uncovering of finds and archaeological records, I expand and change the information situation of the

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<sup>672</sup> See V.4, Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research

<sup>673</sup> See III.1.7.1, The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony

established stocks of knowledge (Marlies Heinz, 2016). For the inhabitants of the places where I excavate - they are located in the rural regions of the Middle East - the consequences include the following. During the excavations, the "sense and purpose" of archaeological research is always intensively discussed. There are numerous debates in which I present the material world that we make visible as a result of human activity. I also assert that I am not tracing, not reconstructing, but constructing the history of the past(s) manifested in the exposed finds and archaeological record. In the social environment in which I excavate, both the excavation itself and my assertions about the construction of history, the world, and reality elicit reactions from all participants. There is agreement and contradiction - both about the fact that I make the past visible at all, and about my concept of reality, especially my assertion that the world and society in all its various forms are man-made. I arouse contradictions mainly because my concept of reality and history definitely violates the ideological and religious concepts of many people with whom I work as a foreigner in the field. I influence and change ideological conceptions and practiced ways of perception. I provoke questions that affect previously valid self-evident facts. I evoke the critical questioning of traditional local knowledge. One might say: With my work and my implicit intention to provide access to information and knowledge and to promote the critical use of knowledge, i.e. to enable enlightenment in the sense mentioned above, I cause "unrest".

In my so-called western working environment, my archaeological work also intervenes in ideological concepts and existing ideas about historical processes. Here, too, my questions about the use of knowledge cause "unrest". Unrest, because here too my reflections contain the request to deal critically with one's own handling of history, past(s) and culture (Jonathan I. Israel; Martin Mulrow, 2014). This can be illustrated by two examples. First, there is the question of the concrete reasons and background of the media furor, especially in the Western world, over the destruction carried out by the fundamentalists of ISIS (ISIS - Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) of the archaeological evidence of a very distant ancient Near Eastern past(s) in Iraq and Syria (Marlies Heinz, 2015). On the other hand, the immense public attention paid to the restitution concerns of some African, Asian, and Middle Eastern interest groups is revealing. These groups are asking museums, especially in the so-called Western world, to return to them the cultural heritage of their countries, the artifacts "stolen" by the so-called West. In both cases, I encourage reflection on the following questions:

Whose cultural heritage are the stakeholders talking about? Whose cultural heritage do those outraged by the actions of ISIS see threatened? Whose cultural heritage do the fundamentalists of ISIS see threatened? Who do those who demand the return of antiquities represent in their home countries? Who do they speak for, and who has legitimized them as claimants? And what is their relationship to the circles in their home countries that explicitly do not want the return of certain



cultural assets? Why is the political instrumentalization of history, the visibility or invisibility of the past, and the construction of a culture of memory so obviously important to all those involved in these discourses? Who wants to give whom access to information and knowledge, and who wants to deny access - and with what interest and legitimation? <sup>674</sup> For me, access to knowledge and the critical questioning of the use of knowledge are the decisive factors for the success of enlightenment. The contribution that I, as an archaeologist, can make to enlightenment is, in short, to work towards making access to information, knowledge, and interpretation possible for all. It is crucial to demand and promote the critical questioning of all stocks of knowledge, in the case of archaeological research especially of all constructions of history, and to constantly refer to the political relevance of history. The political dimension of archaeological work must be made clear and the potential power of those who construct history - that is, among others, ourselves, the archaeologists - and those who use history must be shown (Pablo Aparicio Resco (ed.), 2016). This power is potentially available to all of us, but especially to those groups of people who are able to use archaeological constructions for the realization of far-reaching political interests (Alexander Fischer, 2016).

*Conclusion:*

The enlightening potential of archaeological research, as these remarks may have shown, does not lie solely in the concrete engagement with the past itself, but rather in the critical examination of the constructions of history that are written in the archaeological disciplines.

V.4 *Central concerns of the Critical Theory and their relevance for socio-critical archaeological research*

In his reflections on traditional and critical theory (Critical Theory, written in 1937 by Max Horkheimer in the USA; I refer in the following to the 7th edition from 2011; Max Horkheimer, Traditionelle und kritische Theorie, 2011<sup>7</sup>, 205 -260) Max Horkheimer shows how much the methods and interpretations in all sciences depend on the spirit of the times, the circumstances of research, and the biography of the researchers (op. cit., p. 212). Since we researchers are integrated into the social apparatus, we are also responsible for the >perpetual reproduction of what exists<

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<sup>674</sup> See I.8.1.2, *Things: functions, modes of use and connotations - the challenge to verify the complex relationships between people and things and the implications this verification has for our socio-critical archaeological research interests*; II.3.5.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / meaningful social togetherness / tradition*; II.3.6.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture*; II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.14, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / monumental architecture. / change*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*

[„fortwährenden Reproduktion des Bestehenden.“] (op. cit., p. 213).<sup>675</sup> We live in a >dualism of thinking and being< [„Dualismus von Denken und Sein“] (op. cit., p. 214). This means that science, as part of our life-world, can never be independent of it and can never be self-sufficient. In and with our thinking and being, according to Max Horkheimer, we as scientists are also >exponents of the unclear social mechanism.< [„Exponenten des unübersichtlichen gesellschaftlichen Mechanismus.“] (op. cit., p. 214). According to Max Horkheimer (op. cit., p. 215), the goal of traditional science, which is oriented towards natural scientific thinking, is the creation of an order, a unity, in which all phenomena and facts of our life-world are given their (explainable) place. Max Horkheimer calls for a departure from this orientation. >The self-knowledge of man in the present is not the mathematical science of nature, which appears as the eternal logos, but the critical theory of the existing society, which is dominated by the interest in reasonable states of affairs.< [„Die Selbsterkenntnis des Menschen in der Gegenwart ist jedoch nicht die mathematische Naturwissenschaft, die als ewiger Logos erscheint, sondern die vom Interesse an vernünftigen Zuständen durchherrschte kritische Theorie der bestehenden Gesellschaft.“] (op. cit., p. 215). In other words, it is a matter of inquiring and investigating why we human beings live in the orders that shape social coexistence, of critically questioning the reciprocities of our actions in the system, our response to the system, combined with our impacts on the system in which we live. Understood in this way, critical theory, or rather the demand of critical theory on scientific work, on our "thinking and being," can at no time lose its topicality. Critical theory sees all aspects and phenomena of human togetherness in their interconnectedness as part of our social practice<sup>676</sup> and not isolated from contexts and conditions of development. Social togetherness, viewed in this way, always involves the researcher in what is being researched. Since human togetherness is always also the result of history,<sup>677</sup> the contexts of action are essential for the understanding and analytical explanation of social facts. >The facts that the senses bring to us are socially preformed in two ways: by the historical character of the perceived object and by the historical character of the perceiving organ.< [„Die Tatsachen, welche die Sinne uns zuführen, sind in doppelter Weise gesellschaftlich präformiert: durch den geschichtlichen Charakter des wahrgenommenen Gegenstandes und den geschichtlichen Charakter des wahrnehmenden Organs.“] (see op. cit., p. 216 - 217). We question our own actions as archaeologists, and we ask what thought and action led to the emergence of the materialized worlds of the past(s). We ask what meanings people at the time assigned to things, and we critically reflect on the ways and methods available to us archaeologists to determine this. With reference to Immanuel Kant, Max Horkheimer explicitly emphasizes the subjectivity on which

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<sup>675</sup> See III.1.7.1, *The power of the cultural or: Antonio Gramsci and the concept of cultural hegemony*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*

<sup>676</sup> See IV.2, *Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner: The role of the socio-economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society*; IV.3, *Rabel Jaeggi - Economy as a social practice*

<sup>677</sup> See Excursus I.3, *The past(s) is, stories we tell, history we construct*

individual cognition depends (op. cit., p. 220). We must be aware that the way in which pieces are separated and summarized in receptive observation, how some are not noticed, others are emphasized, is just as much the result of the modern mode of production as the perception of a man from any tribe of primitive hunters and fishermen is the result of his conditions of existence and, of course, of the object. < [„Art, wie im aufnehmenden Betrachten Stücke geschieden und zusammengefaßt werden, wie einzelnes nicht bemerkt, anderes hervorgehoben wird, ist ebenso Resultat der modernen Produktionsweise, wie die Wahrnehmung eines Mannes aus irgendeinem Stamm primitiver Jäger und Fischer Resultat seiner Existenzbedingungen und freilich auch des Gegenstandes ist.“] (op. cit., p. 218). >The classification of facts into ready-made conceptual systems and their revision by simplifying or clearing up contradictions is, as has been said, a part of the general social practice. In view of the division of society into groups and classes, it is obvious that theoretical entities, depending on their affiliation with one of these, also have a different relation to this general practice. < [„Das Einordnen der Tatsachen in bereitliegende Begriffssysteme und deren Revision durch Vereinfachung oder Bereinigung von Widersprüchen ist, wie ausgeführt, ein Teil der allgemeinen gesellschaftlichen Praxis. Bei der Gespaltenheit der Gesellschaft in Gruppen und Klassen versteht es sich, daß die theoretischen Gebilde je nach ihrer Zugehörigkeit zu einer von ihnen auch eine verschiedene Beziehung zu dieser allgemeinen Praxis haben.“] (op. cit., p. 221). Critical theory now proceeds as follows: Where >categories of the better, the useful, the expedient, the productive, the valuable< have formed in societies, these are themselves >suspect to a critical researcher. < [„Wo sich in den Gesellschaften „Kategorien des Besseren, Nützlichen, Zweckmäßigen, Produktiven, Wertvollen“ gebildet haben, sind diese einem kritisch Forschenden selber „verdächtig.“] (op. cit., p. 222 - 224). I would add that this applies to all the evaluative categories and assessments with which we all form our realities of life, our "social realities".<sup>678</sup> The critical examination of the terms and categories with the help of which we humans structure and order the realities of life<sup>679</sup> is always connected with the question: For whose benefit, for whose advantage has the respective categorization and above all the respective evaluation of a state of affairs taken place? Critical theory therefore always and critically questions both the emergence of the social framework conditions in which we live and the interactions that result from the activities of individual people within these framework conditions; it asks how and why framework conditions emerge and what forms they take through the intervention of all people; it critically asks what reactions to these framework conditions created by us humans we humans in turn show to these framing conditions of thought and action. We act and react, creating the conditions of our being. But not on a purely voluntary basis, as Karl Marx already emphasized - we find conditions, and on the basis of what we find, we humans create our history, our realities

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<sup>678</sup> See I.8, Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life; II.3.6, What is social reality? - First considerations

<sup>679</sup> See II.3.7.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / order

of life, the framework of our thinking and doing (see also op. cit., p. 229).<sup>680</sup> Max Horkheimer's remarks on Critical Theory thus refer explicitly (and in the classical Marxist sense) to the fact that and how the reflectively thinking human being is enabled to deal critically with his own reality. >What traditional theory can easily take for granted, its positive role in a functioning society, its admittedly mediated and opaque relationship to the satisfaction of general needs, its participation in the renewing process of life of the whole, all these requirements, which science itself does not care about because their fulfillment is rewarded and confirmed by the social position of the scholar, are questioned in critical thinking.< [*„Was die traditionelle Theorie ohne weiteres als vorhanden annehmen darf, ihre positive Rolle in einer funktionierenden Gesellschaft, die freilich vermittelte und undurchsichtige Beziehung zur Befriedigung allgemeiner Bedürfnisse, die Teilnahme an dem sich erneuernden Lebensprozeß des Ganzen, alle diese Erfordernisse, um die sich Wissenschaft selbst gar nicht zu kümmern pflegt, weil durch die soziale Position des Gelehrten ihre Erfüllung belohnt und bestätigt wird, stehen beim kritischen Denken in Frage.“*] (op. cit., p. 233). The latter is not surprising, since one of the demands of critical thinking is not to promote and secure the reproduction of the respective social relations unquestioningly, but to question them in terms of the extent to which they enable or prevent the "good life for all" and to change them (in the respective present and for social togetherness in the respective present of the researchers) in such a way that participation in the good life becomes attainable for all. For critical theory, according to Max Horkheimer, pursues, among other things, the concern not only to propagate a social >state without exploitation and oppression< [*„Zustand ohne Ausbeutung und Unterdrückung“*] (op. cit., p. 257), but also to show the possibility of achieving this state and thus to realize it. Critical thinking questions every actual state and is not only open to the change of given conditions, but also demands it in the sense mentioned above. According to Max Horkheimer, critical research is not possible with merely registering descriptions and affirmative thinking. >For purely registering thinking always presents only series of appearances, never forces and counterforces, which, of course, is not in its nature, but in the essence of this {own note critical} thinking.< [*„Dem rein registrierenden Denken bieten sich nämlich immer nur Erscheinungsreihen, niemals Kräfte und Gegenkräfte dar, was freilich nicht in der Natur liegt, sondern im Wesen jenes {eig. Anm. kritischen} Denkens.“*](op. cit., p. 246 - 247). It is understandable, if not to be expected, that critical research that runs counter to mainstream thinking is perceived as threatening. >The hostility to the theoretical as a whole that is rampant in public life today is actually directed against the transformative activity associated with critical thinking. Wherever it does not stop at the determination and ordering into categories that are as neutral as possible, i.e., indispensable for the practice of life in the given forms, resistance immediately arises. In the overwhelming majority of the controlled, the unconscious fear stands in the way that theoretical thinking could make the laboriously achieved adaptation to reality appear

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<sup>680</sup> See IV.1, Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other?

wrong and superfluous.< [„Die Feindschaft gegen das Theoretische überhaupt, das heute im öffentlichen Leben grassiert, richtet sich in Wahrheit gegen die verändernde Aktivität, die mit dem kritischen Denken verbunden ist. Wo es nicht beim Feststellen und Ordnen in möglichst neutralen, das heißt für die Lebenspraxis in den gegebenen Formen unerläßlichen Kategorien bleibt, regt sich sogleich ein Widerstand. Bei der überwiegenden Mehrheit der Beherrschten steht die unbewußte Furcht im Weg, theoretisches Denken könnte die mühsam vollzogene Anpassung an die Realität als verkehrt und überflüssig erscheinen lassen.“] (op. cit., p. 249). The >critical theory of society,< as Max Horkheimer put it at the end of this reflection, >has as its object man as the producer of all his historical forms of life. The conditions of reality from which science proceeds do not appear to it as conditions that are merely to be determined and calculated in advance according to the laws of probability. What is given depends not only on nature, but also on what man can do with it. The objects and the mode of perception, the posing of the question and the meaning of the answer testify to human activity and the degree of its power.< [„Die kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft“, so mit Max Horkheimer zum Abschluß dieser Betrachtung, hat „die Menschen als die Produzenten ihrer gesamten historischen Lebensformen zum Gegenstand. Die Verhältnisse der Wirklichkeit, von denen die Wissenschaft ausgeht, erscheinen ihr nicht als Gegebenheiten, die bloß festzustellen und nach den Gesetzen der Wahrscheinlichkeit vorauszurechnen wären. Was jeweils gegeben ist, hängt nicht allein von der Natur ab, sondern auch davon, was der Mensch über sie vermag. Die Gegenstände und die Art der Wahrnehmung, die Fragestellung und der Sinn der Beantwortung zeugen von menschlicher Aktivität und dem Grad ihrer Macht.“] (op. cit., p. 261).

## Part VI

# How to proceed? An outlook

*VI.1 At the end once again remarked: Socio-critical archaeological research is always interdisciplinary oriented research*

As socio-critical archaeologists, we bring into the interdisciplinary research <sup>681</sup> our research interests, our questions, the finds and archaeological records [*archäologischer Befund*] that we observe, analyze, and interpret, as well as our methodological knowledge, which includes our procedures from obtaining our sources to interpreting them. We offer the participating sciences the opportunity to expand their own field of research by the temporal and spatial dimension far beyond the present and their own reality of life, as well as to deepen their studies of the functions of the material world for the functioning of human coexistence on the basis of these expanded historical and intercultural dimensions. For our consideration, analysis, and interpretation of the cultural forms of expression, of things, artifacts, architecture, the order of the built and natural environment, spatial order, and burials, we, as interdisciplinary researchers, draw on the research interests and results of the respective "others". We integrate the empirically obtained and theoretically abstracted cognitions of neighboring scientific disciplines. All of us who participate in the interdisciplinary exchange thus have an almost unlimited spectrum of questions, methodological procedures, and answers at our disposal. From this reservoir of wide-ranging research approaches, we look at the evidence of the past(s), at the materialized results of the thinking and skills, of the will, of the needs and possibilities of the people of the past(s) to satisfy the pending needs, on this basis we approach our analyses and interpretations of the cultural forms of expression and, starting from this spectrum, make our constructions of history.

At the same time, interdisciplinary research makes it clear to all those involved - to us, the socio-critical archaeologists, as well as to scientists from neighboring disciplines - what is not yet known and where, among other things, the methodological tools are still lacking in order to illuminate the respective sources with regard to our questions, based on the questions asked and the answers not yet given. Interdisciplinary work therefore documents "gaps" and these "gaps" also represent potential for current and future research. I therefore see in the interdisciplinary cooperation the potential to work through the "gaps", to expand and deepen our knowledge of the life forms of the past(s), to explain even more comprehensively from additional perspectives how and why we can understand and explain whose past(s) we see, and to be able to justify even more soundly how we arrive at our respective constructions of history, if we expand socio-critical archaeological research in future studies to include the questions and insights of ontology as well as epistemology, if we engage with theories of action and practice, if we turn to the broad field of natural sciences, and if we, as socio-critical scholars of Near Eastern archaeology, combine our studies of material

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<sup>681</sup> See *Excursus II.1, What interdisciplinary work may and may not achieve*

legacies with the multifaceted and complex textual knowledge of Ancient Near Eastern philology. It is the philosophy that is available to all human beings as a basis for thought. It is the philosophical thinking that guides us all in the question of what reality is. It is the philosophy of the Enlightenment, which serves us as a red thread when we want to clarify what truth is, on the one hand, and when we want to look for the ways that make an answer possible for us, on the other hand.

## VI.2 Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology

Socio-critical archaeologists and *philosophical researchers* are both concerned with the phenomenon of reality or realities, specifically with the study of the basic structures of realities,<sup>682</sup> and also with the question of how we arrive at certain knowledge and cognitions. The cognitive interests of ontology revolve, in very (!) general terms, around the question of what "is". (For a concise and at the same time very well understandable explanation see <https://www.philosophie.uni-muenchen.de/fakultaet/schwerpunkte/ontologie/index.html>; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontology>; Gunnar Skirbekk; Nils Gilje, 1993; Johann August Schülein; Simon Reitze, 2016). The cognitive interests of epistemology revolve broadly around questions of how we arrive at justified knowledge, under what historical conditions knowledge and cognition emerge. (An account, also very comprehensibly formulated, can be found at <https://www.philosophie.uni-muenchen.de/fakultaet/focues/knowledge-theory/index.html>; <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erkenntnistheorie>; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology>; Gottfried Gabriel, 2020<sup>4</sup>; for the cognitive interests of evolutionary epistemology see Gerhard Vollmer, 1975, 2023<sup>9</sup>). In both disciplines, we researchers look for the causal connections of complex entities, that is, the relationships between the elements of the whole (Brian Epstein, 2016, 240 - 253). In all societies, we humans see the natural environment and the environment that we humans have shaped. In all societies, we humans are more or less aware of the meanings of the visible and invisible cultural forms of expression that we ascribe to them as members of the respective society and that we allow to become effective in shaping our ways of life and for our successful social togetherness.<sup>683</sup> In all societies, we humans perceive phenomena that we cannot see and that we cannot grasp,<sup>684</sup> or that we cannot grasp but that we can see (e.g., light/darkness), to which we react, and which we incorporate into the design of our ways of life through our reactions.<sup>685</sup> In socio-critical archaeology as well as in philosophical research, the shared interest in cognition lies, among other things, in grasping this invisible. We are looking for answers to the question concerning the impact

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<sup>682</sup> See II.3.6, *What is social reality? - First considerations*

<sup>683</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*

<sup>684</sup> See Excursus I.1, *The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*

<sup>685</sup> See II.3.7.10, *Further parameters that keep orders going: Values and norms*



of the invisible but perceptible, e.g. the phenomena of warmth - cold, silence - noise in the shaping of social interaction. We want to understand and explain the impact of the visible but intangible, e.g. light - darkness, as constitutive elements in our constructions and conceptions of reality.<sup>686</sup> Concretely, we pursue this cognitive interest in socio-critical archaeological research already where we turn to the core concern of socio-critical archaeology and ask what society is and how society functions. In doing so, we draw on sociological knowledge<sup>687</sup> and extend this interdisciplinary collaboration with studies in philosophy. *Ontologists* inquire, among other things, about the duality of being and becoming, about the basic structures of reality and whose realities can be grasped, and, related to this, about the problem of identity, persistence, and change over time. This cognitive interest also coincides with our socio-critical archaeological research. In the analysis of any archaeological record we are concerned with the phenomenon of the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous.<sup>688</sup> Each archaeological record [*archäologischer Befund*] represents a static moment, is at the same time the result and starting point of dynamic processes of development, to which we pose the question whether those who created the cultural forms of expression were (still) those in time and space who used them. Whose reality(s) does an archaeological record express?<sup>689</sup> We keep coming back to this question when we ask, "Who is speaking?" as we reflect on the site.<sup>690</sup> As an archaeologist doing socio-critical research, and in my case as an archaeologist specializing in the Middle East, I can again use my own experiences in dealing with different realities as a starting point for my socio-critical archaeological research and combine them with the cognitive interests of philosophical research at the beginning of the interdisciplinary collaboration with philosophical research. As an "archaeologist of the Near East", I am initially the "other" on excavations for the colleagues with whom I work on site - different from them in my view of myself and the world because of my socialization. At the same time, these colleagues are "different" from my point of view for the same reasons.<sup>691</sup> We, the "Near Eastern archaeologists", as well as our colleagues in the field, are thus for each other the "others" in our common present working environment. In the realization of our intercultural cooperation, we actively deal on a daily basis with the meaning of the phenomenon of "us and them" and with the effects that this categorization has on our thoughts

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<sup>686</sup> See Excursus I.1, *The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*

<sup>687</sup> See Part II, *What is society, how does society function - and what challenges arise for socio-critical archaeological research when we seek answers to these questions in the archaeological record?*

<sup>688</sup> See I.7.4, *Reflections - considerations - and further questions that we are concerned with during our work on site in the direct engagement with the material legacies*; II.1, *Our cognitive interests as socio-critical archaeologists and the knowledge of sociological research*; II.3.1.1, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / static, dynamic*; II.3.7.4, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order*; Excursus II.6, *The experience of change and some thoughts about the phenomenon of time - a remark*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>689</sup> See I.7, *Our sources - the things, the materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is actually accessible to us, how and why?*

<sup>690</sup> See III.1.5, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation*; V.2, *Our locations determine our standpoints*; VI.5, *Philology*

<sup>691</sup> See V.3.1, *Near Eastern Archaeology and enlightenment - a personal experience report*

and actions, on our mutual perceptions, on our ideas and perceptions of reality,<sup>692</sup> and on the formation of our respective images of the world. The empirical knowledge we gain in everyday life about the perspectives of "others", about the logics and plausibilities with which the respective "others" understand and explain their realities, expands and deepens with each further intercultural cooperation. This constantly growing knowledge forms an equally constantly growing basis for the development of our questions, when we turn to the cultural, temporal and spatial "others", the members of the social entities of the past(s), on the basis of their cultural forms of expression of thought, action, their needs and their possibilities of satisfying needs. We extend this foundation by bringing together the knowledge and cognitive interests of our colleagues in philosophical research with our socio-critical archaeological work. This extension of our interdisciplinary work with a philosophical view of reality connects us and our research interests with the ongoing discourses on the topic in neighboring disciplines. We perceive the view of "others" on our common cognitive interests, we take up the impulses of philosophical research, which sharpen our awareness of the existence and diversity of culturally shaped realities. With the inclusion of philosophical research, we broaden and deepen our knowledge of the phenomenon of perception and the significance of the invisible in the construction of reality(s). We deal with the questions of philosophical research, attentively follow where answers to which of the questions posed are still lacking, and with this knowledge at the same time expand the spectrum of our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct when we analyze the material heritage handed down with the archaeological evidence. We are challenged to constantly and reflectively clarify how we arrive at our knowledge of life in the social entities of the past(s). In other words, our research is always accompanied by the question of how we arrive at our reasoned knowledge. It is this challenge and question that leads us to the study of *epistemology*, i.e., to this very fundamental question of how we arrive at reasoned knowledge in the first place. At the same time, with the expanded interdisciplinary collaboration, we are again faced with new challenges in dealing with the phenomena of perception and knowledge of the invisible in the context of seeing the visible.

*A brief summary of the cooperation between socio-critical archaeology and philosophy*

All our questions about the why, about the relations between what we see materialized in the archaeological record, the appearance of the material world, the materialized realized reality and the invisible phenomena that led to the materialized reality, all our questions about the meanings that we humans - today as then - create between the visible and the invisible world, are at the same

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<sup>692</sup> See *Excursus I.1, The phenomenon of perception as a factor influencing the way we interact with things*

time questions that were and are asked in philosophical thinking.<sup>693</sup> All our questions about the possibilities we humans have to move from beliefs and opinions to knowledge, to generate knowledge, and to gain cognition belong to the fundamental questions of philosophical thinking (Hubert Knoblauch, 2010<sup>2</sup>; Karen Joisten, 2009). This is also true of our attempts to understand and explain the sense-giving of human action and the meaningfulness of human being.<sup>694</sup> The philosophical exploration of reality and the philosophical search for truth coincide, last but not least, with the concerns of our socio-critical archaeological research, where we fundamentally ask whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct when we study the materialized cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s)!

### VI.3 Action theory / Practice theory

With the expansion of interdisciplinary cooperation in the field of sociological sciences and the deepening of this cooperation through the inclusion of action and practice theory in socio-critical archaeological research, we deepen our engagement with the question of how and why cultural forms of expression have emerged.<sup>695</sup> We see the results of actions and we look for the invisible causes<sup>696</sup> and backgrounds, the triggers that have led to the emergence of visible cultural forms of expression. Concretely linked to this concern is the question - and then also the search for possible answers - of who was responsible for the "production" and shaping of cultural forms of expression, i.e. whose past(s) we see in the material legacies - and whose history we write on the basis of our postulates. Did the cultural forms of expression emerge as a result of intentional action, as a result of consciously performed actions, as a result of routine procedures and habits, or as a result of chance - and who was responsible for what and what caused which conditions of formation? Whose needs and whose ways of satisfying them, whose practices led to which actions, which were then reflected and preserved in the materialized cultural forms of expression?<sup>697</sup> For the question of how the above-mentioned facts, cultural forms of expression and archaeological records [*archäologischer Befund*] could have come into being in the respective cases, the insights of action and practice theory on everyday action and activity in social interaction offer valuable suggestions for the expansion of our spectrum of questions in socio-critical archaeological research. They broaden the basis for formulating hypotheses to answer our questions, and at the same time they pose

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<sup>693</sup> See I.8, *Things - constituent elements in the formation of our everyday life* up to I.8.1.1, *Assigning meaning to things - a decisive factor in regulating our social interaction*; II.3.6.2, *Social and "medial realism"*; VI.6, ... and last but not least: *What about theory and socio-critical archaeology?*

<sup>694</sup> See II.3.6.3, *Realness, the social world and {once again} sense*

<sup>695</sup> See I.0, *Instead of an introduction - A personal note in advance - Why at all archaeology?*

<sup>696</sup> See I.1, *What it's all about - in the following essay*

<sup>697</sup> See I.8.2, *An initial conclusion and a first reference to the potentials of sociological research for socio-critical archaeology*; I.8.3, *Terms from our everyday language and their application in this essay*, Excursus I.1 - Excursus I.4

further questions about how we can develop an understanding and explanation of the sought-after contexts, and thus answers to these questions, with which methodological steps.

#### VI.4 Natural Sciences

With the expansion of socio-critical archaeological research into the broad spectrum of the natural sciences, the range of sources changes. We expand our focus from the analysis and interpretation of materialized cultural forms of expression to the study of natural phenomena. Geoscientists, topographers, geologists, geoarchaeologists and paleontologists acquaint us with the geological past and the history of the Earth. The knowledge of volcanology, earthquake science and palaeontology, the study of fossils, is particularly relevant for us. This is especially the case when we are in the process of clarification of the causes and reasons that led to the destruction of settlement areas. Information about the climatic conditions of the past(s) and thus about the basic possibilities for colonizing a region is available to us through the research of climatologists and climate researchers. We familiarize ourselves with the research results of soil scientists, botanists and archaeobotanists on soil quality, soil use and soil development as well as on the potential for plant growth on the site. We learn about the availability of water, i.e. the quantity and quality of water that was available at the settlement sites, through the studies of the disciplines that are active in water research. Zoologists and archaeozoologists inform us about the fauna of the past(s). By expanding our interdisciplinary research to include the knowledge of the natural sciences, we thus incorporate the potential of the natural environment and its significance for the development of life and life forms of social entities into our socio-critical archaeological research (cf. Dieter Hassenpflug, 1993; Gottfried Liedl, 2022).<sup>698</sup> In addition to the factors already mentioned,<sup>699</sup> the composition of social entities according to age and gender, the origin of the members of a social entity, and the health and nutritional status of the population (Michael Schultz, 2001) are important for the organization of social togetherness, factors that we also take into account in the search for answers to our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct. Colleagues from the fields of biological anthropology and palaeopathology analyze human skeletons using scientific methods and scientific questions and share their knowledge with us. With these insights, which are also additional for us socio-critical archaeologists, we turn to the analysis and interpretation of burial customs with a new perspective and new questions. Genetic research (Philipp Stockhammer with

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<sup>698</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?*; I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*; IV.1, *Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other?*; IV.2, *Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner: The role of the socio-economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society*; IV.3, *Rabel Jaeggi - Economy as social practice*

<sup>699</sup> See II.3, *Sociology and archaeology - a first conclusion*

Ian Mathieson and others, 2017; David Reich, 2018; Micha Meier; Steffen Patzold, 2021; Stefanie Samida, 2021), which gives us socio-critically researching archaeologists access to insights into the determination of human genetic material and ancestry, DNA research, which provides us with insights into provenance analysis, and paleopathology, via its insights into the study of diseases that occurred in the past(s) (Michael Schultz, 2001), offer us a further new and expanded view on burials and on the thus expanded spectrum of indications of potentially society-shaping factors in social interaction. Our task as socio-critical archaeologists is now to combine the cognitions of the natural sciences on the foundations and framework conditions for securing life with the findings of the social and cultural sciences on the foundations and framework conditions for successful social coexistence and the development of cultural forms of expression. This means that we are faced with the challenge of integrating the findings of these sciences into our postulates and hypotheses about the emergence of social interaction and using the knowledge gained there for our understanding and explanation of life forms in the past(s). In other words, we want to show whether and in what way the conditions and prerequisites for successful social togetherness named by researchers in the natural, social, and cultural sciences are causally related and thus form the basis for the existence and success of any social togetherness - and thus also that of social entities in the past(s). Regarding our questions about whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct, cooperation with the natural sciences expands both our spectrum of questions and the possibilities for finding new answers to our questions. Some of these questions, which arise from our expanded interdisciplinary research in addition to the questions we ask as social and cultural scientists about cultural forms of expression, the artifacts, are already at hand! I would like to cite a few examples to provide a first glimpse of the potential we gain by extending our research to include knowledge from the natural sciences. We ask, for example, what impact the natural conditions of a settlement area had on who was able to develop which ways of life.<sup>700</sup> We consider what modes of subsistence were possible, and what previously unrecognized aspects of the organization of labor, yield, power, and governance we can uncover by combining scientific knowledge with our interpretations of cultural forms of expression. With the insights of the natural sciences, it becomes possible to expand our questions about access to resources to include questions about the range of resources that natural space has offered for subsistence.<sup>701</sup> We analyze whether we can find correlations

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<sup>700</sup> See I.7.2, *Our background influences our cognitive interests - our cognitive interests have an impact on the choice of our research regions as well as of our excavation sites. How do we proceed? What do we see?;* I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?;* III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony;* IV.1, *Economy, culture, society - how do they relate to each other? IV.2, Wolfgang Maderthaler and Lutz Musner: The role of the socio-economic conditions in the development of culture and politics, in short - of society;* IV.3, *Rabel Jaeggi - Economy as social practice*

<sup>701</sup> See I.7, *Our sources: The materialized expressions of human thought and action: What is accessible to us, how and why?;* I.7.3, *With the start of the excavation, in other words, with the first cut of the spade, the next glimpse into the past(s) opens up! - and asked again: What do we see? What do we postulate? What are we looking for?;* II.3.7.21, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / social*

between the concentration of certain plant species, animals, and artifacts in certain spatial contexts,<sup>702</sup> and we question the sources to see whether the cognitions of the natural sciences can provide new clues to our previous interpretations of spatial order, property and ownership, the possibilities of using things and artifacts, and access to resources. Research in paleopathology, genetic studies, and DNA analysis may enable us to formulate answers to questions such as what role age, gender, health, and affiliation played in the efforts that (burial) communities devoted to the deceased - and to what extent the data obtained through natural scientific methods alter our previous views as cultural and social scientists regarding the roles and functions of valid traditions and prevailing orders in, among other things, the treatment of the deceased. We ask questions about the treatment of "the other" in the legitimate hope of being able to give answers where studies in the natural sciences provide clues about the composition of the members of a social entity according to their origins. With the extension of our socio-critical archaeological research to the cognitive interests as well as to the cognitions of the natural sciences, we receive decisive information for our postulates and hypotheses on the origin, the chances and problems of the development and existence of the ways of life in the past(s) and the causal connections between "culture and nature", which broaden our view of the testimonies of the past(s), deepen them, if necessary steer them in new directions and thus directly influence the orientations of our constructions of history.

### *VI.5 Philology*

As a socio-critical archaeologist specializing in Near Eastern archaeology, I refer to another source genre relevant to my discipline, the texts. With the inclusion of texts in our socio-critical archaeological research, and thus with a further expanded source situation, a new, wide-ranging and fundamentally altered spectrum of possibilities opens up once again for looking at the events of the past(s) with an expanded cognitive interest, and for looking at the connections between needs and options for satisfying these needs, for thinking and acting, for questioning, analyzing and interpreting them. Potentially, it becomes possible not only to identify the triggers that led to the cultural forms of expression, the results of action, but also to name the actors more concretely than is possible with unlabeled artifacts alone. To our questions, whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct, a new and changed potential for developing answers arises again with the texts. The texts provide us with insights into areas of social life that are of crucial importance for successful social coexistence in any social entity, including the legal systems, which we cannot grasp from the unlabeled, materialized cultural forms of expression that have come down to us. With the

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*entities - unities?; IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices; II.3.4.1, Own commentary and archaeological reference / boundaries*

<sup>702</sup> *See IV.4, Own commentary and archaeological reference / socio-economic everyday practices*

changed situation of the sources, new questions as well as new methodological challenges arise: How does one read ancient Near Eastern texts in terms of semantics, the spectrum of meanings of words, and thus the entire content of the text in terms of the meanings of what is written?<sup>703</sup> Who had access to the written documents, who didn't? Who were the authors? With what intentions were the texts written, and for whom? What issues and whose concerns were recorded? Whose concerns were recorded in writing and whose concerns were not on the written record?<sup>704</sup> Questions that I always connect with the fundamental critical question of the "why" of the respective facts. Can we, as socio-critical archaeologists or philologists, determine the veracity of what has been written down?<sup>705</sup> As in all the other interdisciplinary associations, we are again challenged to relate the statements of the texts to the postulates and hypotheses that we have created on the basis of the unlabeled artifacts and on the basis of the things and traces from the natural space, i.e. to relate the textual statements to the materialized cultural forms of expression and their meanings. In many ways, the question that we ask ourselves in connection with any reflection on our location becomes relevant once again: "Who is speaking" when we translate texts, analyze texts, interpret texts, interpret textual content?<sup>706</sup>

#### *VI.6 ... and last but not least: What about theory and socio-critical archaeology?*

Socio-critical archaeological research is always theoretical research! Socio-critical archaeological research is already (implicitly) theoretically oriented research the moment we ask for the WHY of things, facts, and events. Socio-critical archaeological research is theoretical research from the moment we formulate theses and hypotheses, venture interpretations, express postulates - in short, take steps aimed at understanding and explaining what we "see" in things, in the materially present cultural forms of expression beyond the visible. Socio-critical archaeological research is theoretical research in the moment in which we look for the connections of cause and effect, that is, for the causal connections that have led to the existence of the cultural forms of expression.

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<sup>703</sup> See III.1.2, *Semiotics - Knowing, recognizing, reading and understanding signs - First considerations up to III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference/representation*

<sup>704</sup> See Excursus I.3.3.2, *Historiography - or - construction of history; Excursus I.3.3.3, Publication and publicity - factors in the process of constructing history; III.1.1.1, Representation; III.1.3, Nonverbal communication - what is it and how does it function: One possible perception; III.1.6, The power of the cultural - or: The power of those who control the cultural - Experiences from our own everyday life up to III.1.7.1.2, Cultural hegemony - how does it thus in a concrete and practical way work? - and a short summary*

<sup>705</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*

<sup>706</sup> See III.1.1.3, *Discourses and representation - according to Michel Foucault, elucidated by Stuart Hall - and relevant for socio-critical archaeological research; III.1.5, Own commentary and archaeological reference / representation; V.2, Our locations determine our standpoints; VI.2, Philosophy / Ontology / Epistemology*

*So what is „theory” - a (very) brief explanation*

According to Angelica Nuzzo's definition (in Hans Jörg Sandkühler (ed.), 2021, 2735), theory is a ... >systematically structured consideration of objects, facts, events.< [„*systematisch strukturierte Beobachtung von Gegenständen, Tatsachen, Ereignissen.*“]. Theory is a >comprehensive system of reasoned propositions for explaining certain facts and phenomena in terms of their underlying regularity, inherent principles, and general concepts.< [„*umfassendes System begründeter Sätze zur Erklärung bestimmter Tatsachen und Phänomene durch die ihnen zugrunde liegende Gesetzmäßigkeit, die ihnen eigenen Prinzipien und allgemeinen Begriffe.*“]. According to Matthew Johnson (2011, 2), every interpretation we make of social conditions in the past(s) contains theoretical aspects, "the way we interpret the past(s) has 'theoretical' aspects." And further, "theory covers the 'why' questions, method or methodology covers the 'how.'" Any use of concepts, ideas, and assumptions (op. cit., p. 6) thus means implicitly incorporating theoretical approaches into one's own research - consciously and intentionally or unconsciously. And according to Mario Bunge (1996, 42-43; quoted in Brian Morris, 2020, 109), theoretical research means "explaining appearances in terms of hypotheses that posit imperceptible things and processes." (see also Mario Bunge, 1996, 43)(see as well Johann August Schüle; Simon Reitze, 2002; 2016<sup>4</sup>, 204 - 298, especially page 208 and page 224). In my remarks on "Own commentary and archaeological reference" I point out that the theses and hypotheses, the interpretations and postulates that I put forward in these "commentaries" must be substantiated in individual case studies and there with corresponding theoretical approaches. In the individual case studies it is to be decided with which further theory we pursue the search for causes and effects, the explanation of the results of action and their expression in the materialized cultural forms of expression. What theories, what explanations have the social and cultural sciences developed on the basis of their source situation - man and society - e.g. with regard to the topic of conflict, and how (if at all) can we draw on these with our source situation - the things - in order to understand and explain the archaeological record in its emergence and the uses and functions of the things - e.g. with regard to the phenomenon of destruction <sup>707</sup> or also with a focus on the abandonment of settlements? <sup>708</sup> Socio-critical archaeological research is therefore per se and with the cognitive interest that runs like a red thread through our research "Whose past(s) do we see, whose history do we construct - and why?" a theoretical and thus understanding and explanatory research. And this search is always accompanied by the cognitively shaped question of how we, the

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<sup>707</sup> See II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.16, *A secured social order does not mean that no conflicts exist*; II.3.7.17, *Unmissable forms of conflict - First considerations*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*; III.1.7.3, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / cultural hegemony*

<sup>708</sup> See II.3.7.7, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / order and disorder / change*; II.3.7.13, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / values, norms, deviant behavior*; II.3.7.19, *Own commentary and archaeological reference / Pictorial works and criteria for the detection of conflicts*



socio-critically researching archaeologists, have come to our conclusions and why, how we have achieved them (Hans Jörg Sandkühler, 2014, 94 - 153)!

### *VI.7 Closure and reference back to the beginning of the essay*

As socio-critical archaeologists, we focus our research on people, their needs, and the ways in which they live their lives. We are interested in how people think and act, how they organize their daily lives and how they interact socially. We are interested in the lives of people today, in the present as well as in the past(s). From our own experiences in everyday life, as members of a social entity, as well as from our function as researchers, our first questions arise about the finds and archaeological records we are dealing with in archaeological research. From our own experiences we develop first thoughts and hypotheses about whose past(s) we are dealing with, with the cultural forms of expression of the social entities of the past(s), and whose history we are writing on this basis. We put our own experiences, our subjective statements about functions and meanings of finds and archaeological records, about needs and ways of satisfying them, about the actors of the past(s) on a more generally valid basis by linking our knowledge with the empirically elaborated and theoretically abstracted cognitions of neighboring sciences. With its focus on human beings, our socio-critical archaeological research is always interdisciplinary. The spectrum of sciences of interest to us is open to all sides and is based on the cognitive interests that each researcher concretely pursues.

In this essay I have presented the sciences of interdisciplinary work that I believe contain the most meaningful insights to answer my questions. Through my questions about the possibilities of shaping the forms of life in the past(s) and the expressions of past life, I combine the reflections on my own everyday experiences in the present and the findings of my interdisciplinary work with my analyses and interpretations of the events that took place in the lifeworlds of the distant past(s). Thus, we socio-critical archaeologists develop our interpretations of cultural forms of expression based on our cognitive interests, our experiences, and our knowledge gained through interdisciplinary work, and formulate content-based, plausible hypotheses and postulates with the goal of understanding and explaining whose past(s) we see and whose history we construct as socio-critical research archaeologists.

The present book, written as an essay, is an attempt to show ways in which we can concretely connect our interests in knowing and thinking about the material legacies of the past(s) with our practical work on the finds and the archaeological record, with which methodological approaches we can work out answers to our questions about the how and why of the existence of cultural forms of expression, and in what way the interdisciplinary cooperation helps us to understand and explain the material legacies of the social entities of the past(s) as an expression of social

togetherness, whose past(s) we can see and whose history we can construct. There are no blueprints for how to proceed in socio-critical archaeological research, neither for the spectrum of possible questions, nor for the search for answers, nor for the formulation of theses, hypotheses, and postulates, nor for the choice of methodological procedure, nor for the choice of interdisciplinary cooperation. On the contrary, all procedures are first worked out for each specific case.

What all socio-critical archaeological studies have in common is that our socio-critical archaeological research is always political. As socio-critical archaeologists, we provide creative-constructive unrest with our critical view of both our own ways of life in the present and the social conditions we postulate for the past(s), and combine this with our goal of ensuring access to knowledge for all, and thus contribute to enlightenment as an archaeology that understands itself as a critical historical social science.

# Bibliography

The literature cited below reflects a spectrum of ideas, influences, and suggestions that have shaped my thinking about socially critical archaeological research over many years. The thoughts of some authors have been directly incorporated into this paper and are referenced in the text. Many of the studies cited here have been part of the reading load over the years, have not been directly incorporated into this essay, but have nonetheless influenced my own thinking. It is an aspect of honesty to make these influences visible. At the same time, it is intended to make visible the infinitely broad spectrum of suggestions that emerge from an infinitely broad spectrum of studies worth reading. Ideally, the extensive bibliography, which covers a wide field of knowledge, will encourage all readers to "lose themselves" in the boundless pleasure of reading and to be surprised by completely unexpected stimuli for their own research and interests (in whatever fields).

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