

**Anders Andrén, *Between Artifacts and Texts. Historical Archaeology in Global Perspective*. Plenum Press. New York & London 1998, 215 p.**

The English-language edition of Anders Andrén's book can by no means be regarded as a significant event for those archaeologists who deal with relatively late epochs sourced to varying extent by written sources of local or external origin. These epochs are also referred as "historical periods" in contrast with prehistory which lacks written sources. The book presents a truly valuable attempt to summarize and analyse the joint experience of "historical archaeologies" in different parts of the world. A comprehensive historiographic survey gives the basis for an analytical description of multifaceted world historical archaeology as a discipline following a number of common approaches or traditions of using archaeological evidence in studies of the "historical" (i.e. literate) past. The assembled experience of existing historical archaeologies is used also for further discussion of relations between written sources and relevant material remains in different perspectives and contexts.

The biggest part of the book contains a historiographic survey of individual historical archaeologies. The author "does not seek to paint a complete picture of the history of research" in historical archaeologies in Europe, Middle East, Asia, Africa and America, but the global sketch he presents is a really valuable and useful compendium of the gradual growth of experience in archaeological investigations of the "historical" (i.e. literate) past. The lacunas in the survey (pointed out by the author himself) perhaps may not permit the use of the book as an encyclopaedia of the discipline, but lacking information on some geographical areas and subjects could hardly add seriously to the presented account of existing concepts and essential perspectives.

This historiographic survey gives the author a firm basis for further analysis and the isolation of five currents or traditions transgressing the boundaries of the exact disciplines: 1) The aesthetic tradition - practical application of relics of the past (historicizing styles in architecture, restoration, reconstruction); 2) The philological tradition (archaeology as a producer of texts and background knowledge of past realia); 3) The historical tradition, focusing on production and its social and technological determinants; 4) The tradition of

cultural history (anthropological, ethnological and ethnographic trends); 5) The archaeological tradition - the discipline as a text-controlled archaeological laboratory for testing methods of the science of prehistory. Something could be questioned in the author's arguments and assertions, but in general the detachment of the five traditions (being termed "methodological") gives an exhaustive picture of a coherent field of archaeology employing texts. At least my own knowledge of archaeological studies in Eastern Europe and Russia (this is one of the mentioned lacunas in the survey) can hardly permit to add anything essential to the picture.

In the special paragraph the author makes an attempt to show how the change of theoretical concepts in modern science during past two centuries (evolutionism - diffusionism - functionalism and incipient post-modernism), as well as political and ideological trends, influenced prehistoric and historical archaeologies. These few pages of the book seem least original, possibly for the reason that the topics they are devoted to (theory, ideology and politics in relation to archaeology) are too vast and complicated to be just briefly touched upon. Even the list of scientific concepts seems to be incomplete. For instance, functional perspectives in the short description cover such different approaches as positivism, structuralism and Marxism.

The last chapter deals with dialogue, interrelations between the material culture of the past (artefacts) and the written sources (texts). The author starts with possible definitions of artefact and text from different perspectives - as categories, as objects, as documents, and as discursive contexts. The latter perspective, which provides the most "threat of tautology in historical archaeology", is studied in more detail. Interrelation between material culture and writing are viewed by the author as "contemporary analogies" and described in the frames of three possible contexts - correspondence, association and contrast. The first context, correspondence, is sought at three levels - as initial classification and then either as identification or correlation between the artefact and the text. And here the author's views on what is classification and how it is to be carried out in the dialogue of the archaeological and written sources, appear to be very debatable.

Firstly, classification in fact is a universal step in any archaeological research, preceding any comparison and interpretation. Accordingly, this procedure will be ini-

tial not only in the context of correspondence (identification or correlation of the artefact and the information provided in texts), but also in the cases of association and contrast. Secondly, in my opinion an obvious mistake is the author's affirmation that the problem of "etic" and "emic" classifications regards only historical archaeology and has nothing to do with prehistoric archaeology. This is one of the "damned questions" of all archaeology.

No doubt the presence of information in written sources greatly influence the procedure of classification in historical archaeology, and not only in the way stressed in the book, where archaeological classification directly follows "natural", culturally determined division of past realia (is that "classification" as well?), borrowed from the written sources, being that objects, monuments, settlements, states, social or ethnic groups. In the author's opinion all these categories of the past reflected in the texts are equal in the search of correspondence in the contemporary archaeological material. To my mind and to my knowledge in practice the above-mentioned categories are unequal for archaeology. The cases of correspondence with past realia occur mostly on the highest levels of archaeological classifications. The search of correspondence is directed mostly to periodization (as a special type of classification) elaborated on the basis of written source information. What differentiates historical archaeology from prehistory is the rare use of the terms "archaeological culture", "type of burial grounds/sites", etc., which are historically indefinite. Instead we more frequently speak of ancient Egyptian culture (and use historical periodization), Etruscans, Hellenistic cultures, etc. The spatial and chronological, as well as cultural, characteristics of these ancient states, ethnic or cultural groups could be and normally are verified by means of archaeological research, but the initial frameworks for the highest level of classification are nevertheless borrowed from texts. These initial frameworks influence the procedure of classification at the lower levels, when we are defining types of rural settlements, burial grounds, dwellings and categories of artefacts. We normally do it in a "pure" archaeological way by choosing typological elements of shapes, forms, and plans of remains. At the same time when defining types (choosing elements in typology) we do it in roughly ready frames of higher classification level, deliberately or not. In other words the influence of texts on classification in historical archaeology is more direct and strong at higher levels and less direct and strong at lower levels.

Of course this does not mean that is impossible to

follow directly in archaeological object classification relevant descriptions found in texts (e.g. Ancient Greek ceramic vessels), but these cases are comparatively rare and pertain exclusively to "text-rich periods" (term from the book). In this connection the author also refers to the widely spread affirmation that "classifications on the basis of material culture and written documents should first be made independently of each other and only then combined". But, on one hand, this is methodologically debatable; on the other, in archaeological practice this "purism" could hardly be reached. Moreover, according to L. Klein's (my University teacher) studies, this initial construction of the rough frameworks of the higher level classifications (cultures, groups of objects, etc.) prior to the lower level should be the deliberate and normative procedure of any archaeological research. In the case of historical archaeology this is also the way to achieve the "emic", culturally determined, quality of classification.

One more important problem related to classifications is absolutely ignored in the book. This is the problem of the classification of written sources in their relation to historical archaeological research. Could the written sources be regarded as equally "valuable" from an archaeological point of view, and could they be seen as something general and united (but the sense of common technology pointed out in the book)? Are the data of chronicles, Icelandic sagas, land cadastres, private letters, etc., etc., used in historical archaeological research equally widely and in one and the same manner? The variety of existing written sources is tremendous, and this fact can not be just missed in the discussion of relations between artefacts and texts.

The necessity of the written source classification in relation to archaeology can be demonstrated from another angle - it could help us to define more explicitly the frameworks of historical archaeology. The lower framework will be protohistory, where the written evidence is so rare that there is nothing to classify and to choose from - the archaeologist uses whatever there is. The upper framework will be the period of history with the written sources of the types, which contain exhaustive information obtainable for the previous periods only archaeologically - through the study of material culture remains. For this upper period the tautological character of archaeological evidence is almost inevitable, and archaeology can serve only for text-controlled testing methods of the science (e.g. "action archaeology" or "archaeological tradition" in the author's account) and for "staging the past".

A firm empirical basis is the strength of Anders

Andrén's book and at the same time this its weakness. "There are several paths to take in a more thorough study of the relation between artefact and text, for example, via philosophical studies of the concepts. In this book I have chosen a different course, namely, a historiographic and analytical investigation of the historical archaeologies". Of course, this is the right of the author. Still the question is - could theoretical (the author prefers the term "methodological") knowledge on the subject (historical archaeology and relation between artefact and text) be obtained via the study of historiography and the analysis of practice - in terms of logic - via inductive generalization?

It seems evident that even the exact definition of historical archaeology is impossible on the basis of just assembled practice analysis, because it is unknown what practice is to be taken into account and what is to be ignored. And indeed definitions given in the book are vague and contradictory. In the first chapter historical archaeology is defined as a sum of "archaeologies focusing on all societies with writing over last five thousand years or more"; it includes studies of the cultures without texts of their own, which are known from descriptions by outsiders. With some hesitation, the author spreads the boundaries of historical archaeology to the cultures and regions without texts, but described by oral tradition, including language. In chapter 5 we learn that "the methodological problems of relating language and material culture are identical with the problems of relating artefact and text" (with references to Malloy and Renfrew). In the conclusions the author comments on the example of Northern Europe that "late prehistoric archaeology, which often deals with runic inscriptions, ethnographic descriptions, mythological narratives, place-names, historical analogies, and historical linguistics, could be included in a broader historical archaeology" and jointly form a united "methodological approach".

In the course of his study the author follows in principle a more traditional understanding of historical archaeology as "focusing on the societies with writing". Describing the dialogue between the material culture of the past and the written sources he arrives at the productive idea that their associations can be regarded as analogies. Unfortunately, this idea is then left undeveloped, though in my opinion it is fruitful for a more explicit definition of historical archaeology's specific focus.

In this perspective the written sources could be first of all divided from other analogies used in archaeology. As models in analogy they have quite a different

structure than data of historical linguistics, ethnography or folklore. All these analogies will create different contexts with archaeological sources. The analogy perspective, therefore, could give us a chance to discuss the difference in procedures used in prehistoric and historical archaeologies at a higher, post-classification, level of research - at the level of historical synthesis and interpretation of archaeological data. Methods to integrate the data obtained archaeologically, on one hand, and "historically" (= from the written sources), "ethnographically", "linguistically", etc., on the other one, all differ. And this very difference in methods separates interpretations in historical archaeology from interpretations in prehistory.

I regard Anders Andrén's book as interesting and useful. My critical remarks are caused by the confidence that the topic of specific features of historical archaeology and interrelations between artefacts and texts is to be discussed not only historiographically but also (rather) in the frames of theory of archaeology as a science.

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