

Economic Theory and Greek Neolithic Archaeology

By Kosmas Touloumis

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the way in which economic theory has influenced human sciences such as history and social anthropology with particular interest in prehistoric archaeology and, especially, Greek Neolithic archaeology. The seeking for the origins of agriculture was the starting point for the study of prehistoric economy either in its interaction with society or as an indicative of biological evolution. During the 80's and the 90's the theoretical consideration about the role of economy in the understanding of Neolithic society developed gradually. Greek Neolithic archaeology was, initially, concerned with the problem of the indigenous or the colonial of Greek Neolithic but later a Marxist approach tried to designate the Neolithic mode of production. Other scholars pointed out the significance of exchanges or storage and surplus and they attempted to define the appearance of the prehistoric state in Aegean. Nowadays post-processual approaches argue the importance of production for our theoretical constructions about the past and stress the great significance of social identity, ideology, meaning and symbolic expression. It is necessary, therefore, to reconsider our approaches about economic production and especially the relationship between production and ideology in prehistory.

KEY WORDS

Political economy, economics, Greek Neolithic archaeology, Neolithic mode of production, symbolic production, economic production and ideology, holistic approach.

Political economy, economics and contemporary theories

All scientific theories which examine the role economy plays in the setting of human society are based on the "Political Economy" of 18th and mainly in 19th century drawn by economists like A. Smith, D. Ricardo and J.M. Mill, which have founded the so-called "classical school". Their approach was basically social, since they believed that economy is not cut off from society, they stressed the significance of personal property, economic surplus and its distribution and they thought necessary to delineate the general economic laws. The development of the "classical" economic thought lead to the foundation of the so-called "neoclassical school", in 1870, which introduced the principle of utilisation and maximising profits as the major economic motives within the bound of micro-economic marginal analysis, attributing to the economic performance of each individual clearly psychological hues. Besides, the main representative of the trend in Great Britain, W. Jevons was using psychometry.

The course of events led A. Marshall to introduce the term "Economics" in contrast to "Political Economy", except from the level of theory to that of methodology. "Political Economy" applies theory with the aid of which puts forth abstract theoretical outlines, that later

are applied to cases, while "Economic" is based on the inductance, on observation, i.e. of empirical data and the extraction of results. One of its main supporters, L. Robbins, will speak about man-consumer and the rare natural resources and about economy as the science which describes human behaviour between the aims and the rare sources, which have alternative uses. Thus, we conclude in a general theory of efficiency, which has utilitarian characteristics, since it causes "pleasure" and leads to "welfare". Everything depends on the right economic choice on the behalf of the man to whom the "classical school" has attributed the characteristic of a *homo economicus*, based on the principle of "inherent egoism of man" who searches to equilibrate his interests, through conditions of free market economy, within the bounds of a happy maximisation (MALINA / VASICEK 1990, 22). The "homo economicus" is an old myth (GODELIER 1973) of bourgeois economy, which according to Marx it was fond of building several Robinsons (MARX 1857). In the 20th century "economics" believed to be a crucial component of social sciences (SAMUELSON / NORDHAUS 1998).

Marx's critic of "Political Economy", whose philosophy was based on dialectic materialism and his scientific expression on historic materialism, stressed the historic dimension of the basic categories of "Political Economy". This means that according to the above view we study the economic characteristic of the society at a certain moment of its historic existence and not unchangeable and general economic laws. The approach focuses on the determination of the forms of productive relations and forces of production, that

roughly consist the way or ways of production, whose unity is described by the sense of social formation. The production methods define the social relations and the ideology while the class struggle defines the social development.

The work of M. Weber and V. Zombart interpret things differently. They begin from the "historic school" inaugurated in Germany to challenge the classical school and wished to overthrow the belief that there are general abstract laws governing the economic activities and to turn the interest from theory to the practice and from abduction to induction. This school is today obsolete in economic thought" (LANGE, ET AL.1970, 23). Weber, who tried to approach sociologically ancient civilisations in his book of 1909 *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilisations*, even though sought the economic principles in the "spirit of capitalism", analysing the class structure of society, did not appeal to human sciences, as one would expect, if we discard his influence on the historian M. Finley.

During the last decade there has been a rekindling in the USA, with main thinker D. North, and has been awarded the Nobel in 1993. The influence of history, the critic on the classical school and on theoretic eclecticism with the use of both the Marxist and neo-classical model, and also the use of mathematical modes and other tools, starting with econometrics and the so-called "New Economic History", characterise this approach. According to this theory, except from the market, economic development depends on both change of institutions and on society.

3. Economic approaches in History and Social Anthropology.

3.1. Since ancestry, economic elements have been used in the description of human societies. Referring to archaic Greek habitants, Thucydides, in his so-called "Archaeology" makes mention to the initial lack of trade activities and the self-containment of the people who "were fed by what they themselves produced" and who had no fortune that could refer to money. Continuing his historical overview Thucydides attributes the developments of cities during the Minoan era, to the economic welfare as well as to the constant accumulation of financial wealth. Add to this the economic and political analysis of the events which is very often ventured by him (AUSTIN / VIDAL NAQUET 1977) then it becomes obvious that Thucydides could be regarded as the first man in history who recognised the importance of economy for the ancient Greeks. Yet, it would be enormous to regard this importance with the eyes of modern industrial society. Modern views regarding the interrelationship between economy and history are certainly more interesting. This often proves the limitations of our studies about the past as well as its management in previous time. At least those views, which refer to the historical dimensions as well as the alteration of human economy, tend to interpret the contemporary industrial society.

In his attempt to stress the need to re-incorporate history to economy and making mention to the Anglo-Saxon history stresses the existence of two economic histories. The first applies to the historians whilst the second is applicable to the economists. (HOBSBAWM

1997, 122). This view could probably stand as a determinant of the historical studies referring to 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. However, when we make mention to corresponding approaches of archaic or ancient history we realise that things were much worse in their beginnings. Thus, the first questions, having an economic character which were made in 19th century, by German historians, initially referred to outlining the developmental stages of the economy, as it had been done by K. Bucher, followed by the work of E. Mayer where the issue of whether ancient economy could be characterised as contemporary or primitive in relation to the modern one is thoroughly discussed. (AUSTIN / VIDAL-NAQUET 1977). A corresponding view presumes the notion of a monolinear development of the economy as well as the drawing of a curve capable of describing the peaks and falls through the ages. The end point of the above mentioned curve is our modern times, which are viewed as the highest end-point of economic development. All the above took place in times where economic studies remained confined in the historicism as well as to the history which placed the greater stress to the events, whilst the study of historic personas was made in relation to the political and military events, in the context of a "History of War" developing according to certain authoritarian people and principles (DOSSE 1987).

The magazine "Annales d' histoire economique et sociale" which had the characteristic subtitle "Economies, Societies, Civilisations", as well as the academic circle which formed around it when it was first published in 1929, being also influenced by Marxist

analysis, made an essential impression to the science of history. The demand for a "wider" and "more human" history - which becomes realisable through the study of anonymous masses, aiming at comprising casual explanations for the interpretations of collective social and economic phenomena - the political level being excluded - found its expression in the concept of "holistic" history. The "Annales" did not come to the fore accidentally. They were a genuine offspring of the problems of their own times, especially when related to the tornado of the First World War and to the ideological replacements which came as a result, as well as the French ideological tradition that came about by Durkheim's sociological school (DOSSE 1987). The school that was formed by the Annales changed the data existing in the historical study, and, more generally, in the 20th century's historiography and archaeology (BERNARD KNAPP 1992, BINTLIFF 1994). Yet, its applications can be more profoundly spotted in modern history.

The tradition created by the "Annales" gave rise to important thinkers of modern economic history such as F. Braudel who created the basis for the study of material civilisation in Europe from the 15th to 18th century (BRAUDEL 1992). Braudel's studies regarding the Mediterranean history rendered him to the study of the prehistory. He dealt with these studies as a historian, whilst introducing analytical tools and concepts, which were greatly useful for the understanding of the economy. Therefore, regardless of the possibility to dispute the notion of "long term" in terms of its capacity to interpret the developmental ways of prehistoric societies, concepts such as

"inertia", "continuity" and "discontinuity", the "small scale economy", as well as the "possible" or the "impossible" in the everyday life, and above all, the study of everyday life itself (BRAUDEL 1992), are exceptionally valuable for the embellishment of our approaches. In addition to the above, the introducing of the role of geography as "accomplished" with history in the formation of human societies (BRAUDEL 1985) suggests essential ways for the study of the latter.

It is characteristically important the fact that historical and economical studies were rather late in their introduction in Greek historiography which pioneered by N. Svoronos and S. Asdrahas refer to modern history from the Turkish occupation towards. The reasons for this late introduction with regard to economic studies in the Greek historiography could be found in the ideological treatment of history in Greece which confined history to be orientated to pointing-out the greatness of its ancient past where there was no room left for economic history as well as in the peripheral nature of Greek language inside the conditions of scientific "market" which prevented an autonomous interference of Greek historiography in the international context (DERTILIS 1999, 80-84).

Studies having an economic content and referring to ancient history are limited, yet very important for the understanding of ancient world socio-economic terms. The pioneering work of M. Rostovtzeff on the society and economy of Hellenistic Greece (ROSTOVTZEFF 1941) as well as that of Vidal-Naquet and Austin or of C. Starr on Ancient Greece (VIDAL-NAQUET / AUSTIN 1977, STARR 1977) continue to be important points of reference.

By following, in many cases, Weberian ways using the terms "order» and "status" FINLEY (1988, 26) approaches essential issues of ancient economy ranging from Mycenaen economy to the form of land-owing and slavery in city-states. It is remarkable that he emphasises study of human societies, which will never be neither the modern ones, mentioned by sociologists, nor the "primitive" ones mentioned by anthropologists, but rather the pre-industrial literature and "post-primitive" (FINLEY 1988, 33-35). This proposal is particularly useful in all human sciences, yet their primacy importance lies in its application. In archaeology from which it draws the comparative analysis or the anthropological parallels.

The Marxist approach to the ancient history, with the exception of Soviet historiography and archaeology (TRIGGER 1989, 207-243), is characterised by an analogous reservation notwithstanding G. Thomson's endeavours to present, since 1949, the Ancient Greek Society in a Marxian way (THOMSON 1954). In Anglo-Saxon historiography G.E.M. De St Croix attempted to restore the appropriateness of Marxist method for the study of ancient history, stressing its historicity and dialectical ability whilst attempting to vindicate the «supposed» materialism and economism of Marx. (DE ST. CROIX 1981). Hence, he points out the basic Marxist position that the relations of production as well as social relationship created among people during the production, determines their lives from all other life factors such as ideological ones, as important for the historical research. Nevertheless, De St. Croix chose the ancient Greek world in order to study it from the point of view of "class

struggle", a Marxian concept created to describe the industrial, capitalist society of 18th century. This creates easy association with the "critical self-deception" of historical materialism as well as Baudrillard's "production mirror" (BAUDRILLARD 1973) where modern man recognises, adapts and calculates himself according to value and performance, as well as Finley's urge for comparative analysis of societies that resemble each other.

The need to form proposals regarding economic theory, which refers to the past as well as their following assessment with statistical data and quantitative research methods, formed the major attribute of econometrics and the Modern Economic History. Dealing with it with scepticism HOBSEBAWM (1997, 143-149) emphasis its so called educational valued as well as the more general problems of its application in economic question of 19th century onwards. He regards it as having critical value, yet a-historical he regards with particular scepticism its theory concerned with alternative effects - the so called "counterfactuals", he spots its possible distorting application in certain faces of economic reality, as well as the fact that it often needs to become based on fragmentary data as well as in facts which are invented or hypothetically which are rendered countable in order to lead to conclusions, whilst, finally, data and models are intertwined in such a manner so that a danger of the vicious circle becomes greatly apparent.

However, D. North stems from the group of "econometrics". His theoretical eclecticism, as it has been above mentioned, led him to seek the structure and the changes in economic history in the

"performance" of economies. Yet, he considers structure (i.e. the institutions) to be the decisive point of economic changes. The "performance" of economies includes the total production, the production per-capita and the distribution of income, whilst the "structure" includes the political and economical institutions, technology, demographic data, as well as the ideology of a society (NORTH 1981). In this context economic history of Western World is being studied, ranging from the appearance of agriculture until now, as a basically, institutional change. This change is affected from the "cost of exchange" which forms a "central concept" of his theory. This concept describes "the understanding of opposition which are created in the area existing between the existing structure of property rights and the productive power of a particular economy". Such an approach, in spite of the rightful reservations expressed by Hobsbawm, certainly revitalises Western economic thought which throw away, as being Marxian, approaches which overly stressed the primary importance of productive relations, like private property.

3.2. In the context of social anthropology, to deal with economy owes a lot to the pioneering studies of M. Mauss, especially «Essai sur le don», concerning the power of the "gift" in "primitive" societies, where the absence of western economic rationalism is stressed together with the absence of interest for profit. In the development of Social Anthropology as an independent science there were three different approaches that were given rise to, regarding the term "economic" (GODELIER 1973): a) The "formalistic" or typical

which is attached to the neo-classical school, and the term given by L. Robbins, b) The "substantivist", the main representatives of K. Polanyi and G. Dalton, where a return to the "Political Economy" can be observed to be realised through the study of "social forms and structures» of production, distribution and circulation of material goods of a particular society in a certain chronological point of its existence, and c) the neo-Marxist which developed during the 70s having as its dominant representative the French anthropological school. Having as its main agents M. Sahlins, J. Friedman, M. Godelier, F. Meillassoux and E. Terray, it uses the traditional Marxist terms of "mode of production" and "social formation". In describing the societies of hunting and those of collection of the Stone Age, M. SAHLINS (1972) make mention to the "original affluent society" in an attempt to discard the myth, which, he thinks, refers to the scarcity of resources greatly valued by formalists.

The contribution of the "substantivists" was important during the 60s when they adopted the theory of an economy "embedded" in social structures, which shook the faith to a clear-cut division in a well-conceptualised economic sphere in "primitive" societies. However, they restricted their endeavours to the study of exchanges following the traditional framework outlined by Polanyi: mutuality, redistribution, trade and home economy. Besides after the concepts of "functionalism" were gradually set aside, the interpretation of society on the basis of visible social relationships, such as kinship and political and religion parameters, the gradual upgrade of the importance of economic structure inside the context of Marxist

approaches, was unavoidable. According to GODELIER (1973) every economic structure is expressed through the triptych "production-distribution-consumption» which although determines the "social structure, it is also an essential part of its. The relationships and powers of production form economic structures. The opposing existing among them - and not inside them - gives rise to alterations. These oppositions are fed, in a long terms basis from the accumulations of technology and only in a short-term basis, from the interference of ideology, Hence:

"The analysis of various types of production and circulation of goods should be made in such a manner so as a) the underlying and indirectly recognisable logic to become sought and eventually revealed and b) to seek and reveal the structural as well as the historical terms of appearance, reproduction and disappearance in the context of history (GODELIER 1973, 69).

The contribution of the French school of anthropology as well as that of neo-Marxists lies on the fact that they revealed wonderful new worlds in the study of "primitive" societies: the production, the reproduction, the distribution and the consumption, the powers and the relationships of production, always in the context of certain social and political frameworks. This insistence on viewing the social phenomenon as whole is essential for the attainment of a particular aim: that is to approach the way in which societies are driven towards alterations through oppositional powers and relationships of production in the context of social formation.

The dispute towards Godelier's economic anthropology comes from Baudrillard and his critical views on productivism (BAUDRILLARD 1973). In this criticism the capacity of historic materialism to be applied in primitive societies when these societies could not be explained in Marxist terms, is greatly disrupted. On the other hand, according to our standpoints, these societies could be considered as anti-productive. In the place of production Baudrillard places the "symbolic exchange" whilst moving on to form the rather daring proposition that whatever concerns survival in these societies is a remaining of this "symbolic exchange". Yet, the critique of radical thinkers as Bataille, who, stemming from Mausses "Gift" considered the basic aim of production to be not the attainment, but rather the "symbolic" expenditure, the ritual consumption of a surplus which was produced for this reason (BATAILLE 1949).

The most systematic criticism on structuralism was exercised by P. Bourdieu, the French sociologist and anthropologist, whose view affected not only economic anthropology of the 80s and onwards, but also the post-processual approaches in archaeology. His theories of the importance of "consumption" that appeared in the context of economic anthropology (BOURDIEU 1984, APPADURAI 1986, STRATHERN 1988) stress the symbolic dimension of goods even in the so-called "primitive societies". According to Bourdieu goods are transformed in what he names "symbolic capital", namely in prestige and discriminations, which becomes again transformed into "economic capital". The symbolic "consumption", therefore, is placed on the core of an economical anthropology, which is not self-existent,

but it is rather placed in the quest for a social dimension of things. The "consumption", however, presumes the existence of the person - consumer as well as his or her actions. Hence, Bourdieu stresses the need for a construction of a "theory at praxis», which could facilitate the study of social phenomena and he stresses the habit (habitus) as a medium between structures and action. The characteristics of "habitus" which have an archaeological importance, are basically two: first it springs from practical logic and knowledge and not from a vague place filled with abstract ideas, and, second, it forms the common trend of the accumulated experience of the individual himself and the other members of the society, hence similarity between the behaviour of particular social groups can be discerned.

4. Is there»Economic Archaeology"?

The interpretation of the cultural change with socio-economic criteria virtually started from the work of V. G. Childe, who is considered one of the first Marxist archaeologists. In his early works (1928-1934) having been affected by corresponding studies of his time in British archaeology and without having yet been in contact with Marxism he dealt with economic parameters in an attempt to trace the beginning of technological innovation which were later spread in Europe. (TRIGGER 1989, 250-254). Since 1939, when he came in contrast with Soviet archaeology, he used the already well-known terms with economic content, that is "stone" and bourgeois" revolution (CHILDE 1936). Nevertheless, he remained confined, as

Trigger notes, in the archaeological material without becoming able to compose the models of social change, which he comprises, with the sum total of archaeological data.

The first compositional work referring to the economy of prehistoric period made its appearance in 1952. That was the work of G. J. Clark it referred to the economic basis of prehistoric Europe and it had a rather ecological character instead of an economic one as Clark himself later admits. The influence, however, that he received from British archaeology was definite. He extended the concept of archaeological findings by including in it bones of animals as well as natural remainings from excavations, whose study received a special economic and ecological character whilst new scientific terms were given rise to such a paleoethnobotany, archaeozoology etc. (TRIGGER 1989, 270). Yet, the scientific explosion seen during the 70s when under the influence of Clark's disciple E.S. Higgs and the Cambridge School in England the so called "economic prehistory" (HIGGS 1972, CLARK 1989) and "economic archaeology" (SHERIDAN AND BAILEY 1981) and finally, a distinctive scientific field, "Paleoeconomy" (HIGGS AND JARMAN 1975) which aims at "offering an economic dimension to archaeological stylistic findings» (o.c. 4), were eventually formed. Key words of "Paleoeconomy", which draws from the theory of "economic», are "population", "technology", "natural resources", "survival and survival strategies".

In USA of 50s economic quests had led to neo-functional as well as neo-evolutionary approaches that placed greater emphasis on cybernetics as well as on the study of societies as "systems". A new

anthropological and archaeological trend was thus given rise to, namely the "cultural ecology" having L. White, J. Steward and M. Harris as its major representatives. The faith upon the material basis of society as well as the notion that every society forms a subsystem inside a particular ecosystem, where people, animals and plants exist in the mutual interrelationship, forms its basis position. Yet, the theory has resulted to an economism having no counterpart in the history of science since it reduces social relations to epiphenomena of economic ones which, in turn, are reduced to an adaptation technique to a natural and biological environment (Godelier 1973)

Systems Theory as well as the importance of ecology were thus going to form the central points of reference in the materialistic "New Archaeology" of the 60s which had L. Binford as its main representative in the States. In Europe, D. Clarke developed similar ideas whereas its influence was apparent in C. Renfrew notwithstanding his claims concerning the need for a "cognitive - processual" approach (RENFREW ET. AL. 1993, RENFREW / ZUBROW 1993) during the 90s; an approach that would possibly bridge the gap between processual and post-processual approaches. (RENFREW / BAHN 1991, 431-434). Aiming at a systematic study of the change and development in socio-economic systems New Archaeology became focused on cultural processions, hence the name "processual" that was attributed to it (RENFREW / BAHN 1991, 34-37). In such an approach economy is considered as a subsystem existing inside broader human ecosystems, whose parts are in a constant interdependence. It is therefore natural to consider economic

changes as a result of ecological and population crises inside an utterly balances "homeostatic" system which is being driven towards cultural changes through the effect of exogenous factors. Thus the ability of such theories to interpret economic changes in a satisfactory way is highly doubted (KOTSAKIS 1992).

The way "substantivists" view economy influenced archaeology as well as history. Thus, in the exchange models the interpretative models were sought for the cultural exchange. These theories dominated in the USA (SABLOFF AND KORLOFSKY ,1975, EARLE AND ERICSON 1977, ERISCON AND EARLE 1982), while in Europe C. Renfrew was the one who put them into practice in combination with the procedural approach of "New Archaeology" (RENFREW 1979). Similar theories were systematised and today we find them in the so-called "World Systems Theory", which in 1974 introduced by I. Wallerstein, a historian.

I. Wallerstein in an effort to interpret the incoming of modern capitalism and to seek for its roots argued that capitalism is a unity where multiple social and cultural systems are integrated under a unique distribution of work and which are based in the exchange of basic products. In this exchange we distinguish the "centres" and the "periphery", where the latter depend heavily on the first (WALLERSTEIN 1974). The views concerning exchanges in the bounds of centre ↔ periphery, and the undeniable primacy of the centre, were applied in archaeology (ROWLANDS, LARSEN AND KRISTIANSEN 1987, SCHIFFER 1987, KARDULIAS 1999). Lately within the bounds of the self-critical approach objections have been

raised concerning both the fact that Wallerstein focused on exchange and not on production (KARDULIAS 1999), on overstating of external exchange relations at the expense of other relations developed in the interior of a society (STEIN 1999).

The ideas of Marx influenced western archaeology, mainly through neo-Marxist approaches (SPRIGGS 1984). At the same time, Systems Theory and Ecology are included in the Soviet Archaeology and the Economy is set as «the totality of socially productive relationships governing and regulating the exchange of matter and energy between society and environment" as well as "if human society is treated as a complex system with subsystems, the economy or subsistence pattern may be viewed as a feeding component of the social system" (DOLUCHANOV 1979, 12). G. H. Hourmouziadis, introduced the historical materialism as an analytic tool to understand prehistory in the 80s, within the bounds of what had called "new paradigm" for the Greek archaeology (KOTSAKIS 1991). Economy, as it is natural, plays a significant role. Its aim was to determine the "Neolithic mode of production" (HOURMOUZIADIS 1995, 111-165) with the use of Marxist terminology *production relations*, *productive forces*, *social formation*, the utilisation of the theory systems, but also the *ideology*, as was defined by L. Althusser, as material existence (HOURMOUZIADIS 1978).

The post-processual approach sees the economic factors in the frame of symbolic and ideological approaches (SHANKS AND TILLEY 1987). Their importance is artificial and inexisted in the long term as "may be seen to form repeated patterns that have an

underlying structural or cultural rhythm" (HODDER 1986, 177). Additionally, the symbolic messages are organised by rules and codes different for every society, which are not determined by economic, biological and natural factors (HODDER 1992, 11). In exchanges one should look for characteristics, which reveal the ideological and symbolic role in each society and attribute a different meaning and value. These symbolic and notional differences could set the form of exchanges (HODDER 1982).

I. Hodder, after having reviewed Weber, refers to the absence of references in the archaeological bibliography (HODDER 1986, 81-84), criticises New Archaeology, which, he argues, lead to setting apart the systems of economy and surviving from their social environment (HODDER 1992: 85). The reconnection is possible through the quest for data designating the "habitus" of Bourdieu, i.e. the accumulated knowledge which being changed in ideology forces people act in a certain way, and according to him this way is socially determined.

"Archaeologists need to make abstractions from the symbolic functions of the objects they excavate in order to identify the meaning content behind them, and this involves examining how the ideas denoted by material symbols themselves play a part in structuring society" (HODDER 1986, 121).

After this short review we can try to answer to the question whether "economic archaeology" exists an independent scientific field, i.e. "seeing economy as an independent unity of apparent economic relations and not as a unity having the same social

phenomenon in a relation of mutual interest and determination (KOTSAKIS 1983, 200, my translation). Today there is not any human science supporting the independence of economy even in cases of specialised archaeological sections and specialities inherited by "Paleoeconomy" continue to exist and to be academically recognised. The holistic approach of the cultural phenomenon is not to be denied and this justifies thinkers who supported it first, like M. Mauss, as well as Marxist political economy for having used it.

It is significant to state here that despite the prevailing of the later; theories differ in their orientation and thus set their research field and their exegetic power. Thus the "Paleoeconomy" and its evolution are oriented to the human choice towards the rare goods for satisfying the need for survival, the " World Systems Theory " and the substantivists in the exchanges, New Archaeology in a positivist attachment to the theory of systems, the Marxism in production and the advantage, the post-proccesual approaches to symbolism, ideology and the sense which lead to social unities.

5. Economic Approaches to the Aegean Neolithic Archaeology

The problems, on which the research in the Aegean has focused until today, have to do mainly with the genesis of Greek Neolithic in combination with the appearance of agriculture and cattle breeding in Europe and the formation of the first complex societies, as the Minoan and Mycenaen. The transitions from the Neolithic Period to Early Bronze Age and from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age, at a

time, i.e. the Minoan civilisation culminated and Mycenaen just debuted in mainland Greece, still preoccupy Greek archaeology. Besides the data about Greek Neolithic period are more abundant in recent years (DEMOULE / PERLES 1993 ANDREOU ET AL. 1996, PAPATHANASOPOULOS 1996) and Neolithic excavations increased. Thus, the studies aspiring to approach the economic data at the prehistoric Aegean try to give to answer to these questions. There is a trend to define Neolithic period economically, following Marxist analysis (HOURMOUZIADIS 1995) or to find evidence, which could lead to the composure of Neolithic society, where economic parameters are ascertained, either autonomous, or socially and culturally set (HALSTEAD 1999).

D.P. Theocharis was the first to support the Greek origin of Neolithic Period and having assessing the views of Childe, sought to reproduce it using economic terms. Thus he sets the Greek "Pro-ceramic" as the prelude of the Neolithic, and he spots the economic characteristics that led to the development of Agriculture and Cattle Raising (THEOCHARIS 1973, 33-44). Theocharis, was just moving along the lines set by the archaeological research of his time. Wild species of plants and animals were the only and sufficient prerequisites for the transition to agriculture and cattle raising economy, without having taken into consideration the internal cultural causes might lead to that transition (KOTSAKIS 1986).

In the 1980's two main trends dominate Greek archaeology concerning the economic approaches: the first, the Marxist, introduced by G. Hourmouziadis, tried to describe the Neolithic mode

of production and the second, following the European tradition of the School of Cambridge and G. Clark, tried to spot in the archaeological record, those finds which would inform for the economy of a prehistoric settlement within the bounds of paleobotanical and paleozoological researches, taking, inarguably, into account the social parameters of Neolithic communities.

The work of P. Halstead on Neolithic society and economy was based on Greek archaeological data characterises the second approach to which we have referred above. The titles of his articles are characteristic. They are to be found: a) paleozoological approaches (1981a, 1992a) b) terms which refer to economics as "danger", "uncertainty", "risk", "stability", and restricted food resources as restrictive motives of human economic action (1981b, 1989b, HALSTEAD / O'SHEA 1989) "survival strategies" (1984), "bad" years of production, and "economics" itself as a concept (HALSTEAD / O'SHEA op. cit.), c) the concept of ecology which reminds G. Clark (1984, 1989a, d) the explicit correlation between economy and society with references for questions preoccupying political economy, like the surplus and its social role, (1981b, 1988, 1989b, HALSTEAD / O' SHEA 1982) as well as the redistribution of the product as a motive for development and social stratification in the area of the Aegean (1981b, 1988, 1992b, 1995) and the "domestic mode of production" (1992a), and possible economic competitions between the Neolithic households, which can be expressed even in a symbolic level (1999).

With the aid of Neolithic mode of production the Neolithic social structure was analysed for the first time, in its entirety, as a system based on economy. This base is "organized in two levels of mutual dependence» the food production and the domestic mode of production (HOURMOUZIADIS 1995, 116), while a significant factor weaving social structure is "family". The economic interests of family's members, since its "basic mission in Neolithic era is the production" (op. cit, 151) are manifested through the so-called "political elements of Neolithic "practices or mechanisms of ideological structure" which can take the form of relative competitions, leading to economically specialized, groups and to "competitive inequality" of Bronze Age (op. cit., 119) From the household level results that surplus labour doesn't exist, while the domestic mode of production contains the conditions of transformation of use value to exchange value, event of particular interest since this is how the production of surplus results (op. cit, 121-122).

Substantial element of this approach is the studying of property relations developed within the bounds of Neolithic way of production. We can pinpoint three significant discoveries (HOURMOUZIADIS 1995: 117): a) the foundation of private property *is based on the community and* for that major role plays the combination of domestic mode of production with agriculture, offering this way autarchy and at the same time the possibility for production and overproduction b) Neolithic period characterized by a *periodical property of "fractional" rationale*, i.e. a part of the product belongs to every

family depending on its members and c) we see an *automatic regulation* of Neolithic social formation, without the influence, i.e. of human groups, indicating the existence of social stratification.

Beyond the property relations in the Neolithic period, the Neolithic mode of production brings up to discussion the problem of the existence and the significance of surplus in the prehistoric Aegean, of the economic specialization, and the form of exchange. The view that the environment is both a "natural" and cultural unit, including both the material and social element, and the application of the ecological idea of "limiting factor", which refers to viewing reality under special environmental and historical conditions (HALSTEAD 1989b, 25, HALSTEAD / O'SHEA 1989, 2), links Halstead's views with the theory of Political Economy. Thus the notion of "social storage" – the storage of food with the intention to exchange it with non trophic goods, and the latter being exchanged in periods of deficiency again with food – is one more "survival strategy", a means to uproot uncertainty, but also a social motive and the role of surplus and its impact on the social complexity in the Aegean (HALSTEAD 1981b, 1989b, 1992).

Structuralists, having adopted the primary significance of ideological and social frames, argue that the surplus is culturally and not economically defined. The «Symbolic Capital» of Bourdieu reinforced these attitudes and thus ideas came about on the "symbolic surplus" (SCORRE / RENFREW 1996) or on the close relation between ideology and economy, as a part of the religious quests of human groups in pre-capitalistic societies. Within these bounds:

"...Capital is symbolic rather than economic. Its consumption can be understood as a kind of re-investment if it is directed to win the support of supernatural forces, such as deities and ancestors. Agricultural surplus can be transformed into luxury goods, which may be sacrificed to gods" (PARKER-PEARSON 1984, 70).

The sense of surplus can be reduced to a practical level of Neolithic social life, where question like *what should I produce? How and for Whom?* (HOURMOUZIADIS, 1996, 38). The last question is very important to remain unanswered, and yet, when the discussion concerns the surplus. We have striven elsewhere to find out the role of the surplus in Neolithic of Aegean and its evolution in the Early Era of Cooper (TOULOUMIS, 1994, 1996).

Thus the existence of surpluses as economic growth was set and its importance within the control of given which concerns production, consumption and the effort to find out possible empty spaces between these two economic stages. This study had also a historic perspective since it had striven to describe the changes, which took place in the perspective of production and its use – under the sense of »institutilized" integration in the productive programs of the community – among the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. A sure index of the economic function was the tracing during the middle Bronze Age in Crete and the Late Bronze Age in Mainland Greece as a distinct differentiating factor of elite, which was connected with the palatial economy.

In social structures of Neolithic period we can trace the principles of the increased significance, which lead from the

"automatic arrangement" of the distribution to the "communal arrangement" of distribution in a "communal arrangement". In the last sperms of inequalities have been observed, as the community realizes the possibilities the surplus offers, since it can support not only the exchanges but also groups of people, which are cut off the immediate production. The groups, which possibly result from the redistribution of the product and assume gradually to insure the reproduction of the conditions of their existence, consist, probably, the first prehistoric elite (TOULOUMIS 1996: 69). These conditions could produce also ideological relationships, which could contribute to the establishment and institution of the above groups and to the transformation of productive relations, as the property relations, from the communal to the private level. It is otherwise, possible, that the "**basic contradiction** which function within the social formation ... (to) be found between the individual and the community ... between the **personal production** and the **collective appropriation** (Kotsakis, 1992: 130, my emphasis).

Certain studies research some details of the Neolithic economy, as the specialization and the exchange of goods. Some researchers see specialization during Neolithic period based on economic criteria, while others doubt such an importance. The archaeological findings which consider as indicative of exchange are: an obsidian from Milos, a firestone from Carpathians and Danube, goods from oysters Spondulys Gaederopus, certain categories of luxury ceramics, are goods requiring certain skills. At the same time the occupation with

the weaving or cattle raising are seen as signs of economic specialization³⁶.

The economic approach of specialization based on the laboratory of engraved vessels found in Dhimini, meant (Choumourziadis 1977:225) that in the frame of "Neolithic way of production" a) the specialized technicians did not have any guaranteed rights on propriety and control of the means of production, since the "products of Neolithic specialty do not aim at the specialization in operating the means of production b) the products of specialization do not influence the productive process "neither positively nor negatively, and c) "the specialized groups of Neolithic economy did not have any power. On the contrary it was on every moment at the hands of the community because the latter was responsible to nourish them". It is true that the answer to the question "for whom?" sets the aims of the said approach.

The negation of the role of economic factors in the formation of the Neolithic specialization, is combined with the priority of cultural or social choices (Perles and Vitelli 1999, 101-102). He starts off saying that the study of the specialization in Neolithic Greece should not be based on a priori views for the social organization, but only in a "simple" definition (op. cit. 96) and argues that despite the fact that Neolithic society is not hierarchical, there has been seen a specialization which is not economic but cultural and social. The above view tries to interpret the different economic practices between the Neolithic societies as a result of cultural and social differences. He does not explain how these differences are born, if and how the

develop and how they influence the general social structure. The answer must be found in the definition of "habitus" of Bourdieu, the view, that is, that cultural differences are the result of practical knowledge and accumulated experience or in the "mind" of Neolithic groups.

As an example of what means cultural choice, we could mention the Neolithic ceramics. According to the thinkers, despite the fact that the ceramic cookeries were known during the mid Neolithic era, in Greece of Neolithic period stoves, hearths and pits were used in contrast with Neolithic Western Europe, while ceramics is a sort of luxury³¹ (Perles and Vitelli 1999: 101). Despite the apparent differences in dealing with cooking practices in the example we used, there is a deeper meaning, which unites them. It is the knowledge and the experience, but how does this is differentiated and what it is influenced from? It is difficult to include in this knowledge and the experience, which they are called to deal with, but the accessible productive forces they dispose of which they discover while searching to satisfy their needs. The need here does not function mechanistically or functionally, but is seen as a having a dual sustenance³⁷, biological and social and economic, as something, i.e. which is imposed both by the need to stay alive, and by the way of life, the social or in other words the environment.

The searching for exchange in Neolithic Aegean is something seen with a special interest by researchers. In the beginning, as it was expected, the information were searching only to spot the products, where the exchange nets participated and how these were

manufactured by specialized technicians (Renfrew 1973) or consisted a certain form of early commerce (Renfrew 1984) which, according to the "Theory of Global Systems" finds that, during the Cooper Era was practiced only in the Eastern Mediterranean (Kardulias 1996). Later, questions concerning the social importance of the exchanges as the latter were combined with the social relations, which were developed (Halstead 1989a, 1992, 1992, 1995, 1999, Kotsakis 1996).

When we are referring to the social content of exchanges we should relate them with the basic economic notion of "value" which for the political economy is identified with the "abstract work" as expenditure of labour force. As we have noted (Kotsakis 1983: 215) "there is not any indication that it has developed in the Neolithic society an abstract social work, for which Marx spoke. The work here is shaped only through the contrast use value – value of exchange. This event is an obstacle to find except for the use value the exchange value of Neolithic exchange. Thus what was required in this section was the cause of exchange in social relations which were constructed at their process, basing the at the same time.

The causes were seen so as exterior, as pressures, for instance, of the natural environment (dry periods, scarcity of food, bad crops etc.) as well as interior in the social formation under the form of social relations. These relations were to be found within the community and out of it, either as friendly or as competitive (Halstead 1995, 1999). More interest present the view that the exchanges are found in a geographical place which can be a "unique community area" (Kotsakis 1996), given that in that area we could find the first

characteristics of self-conscious, in wider frame than that of the community.

Conclusion

If the aim is to get over the reef of οικονομισμού and a series of "economic" analysis of human history, the sense of unity presents itself as a solution to clarify the perplexity of the archaeologist, when he tries to "decode" his science and draw any sort of information from it. When for instance human bones or charred seeds or stock of ceramics are excavated, would they be used as exclusive indexes of social and economic structures, the significance of prehistoric economy is undermined. The philosophic definition of the notion of unity is absolutely illuminating for what it can offer.

"If we substitute the principle of identity and non-contradiction with the principle of complementarity, the conception of individual causes with the conception of multiple causes consisting a unified set, the notion of determinism and indeterminism which seem to exclude the one the other with the notion of possibility, **introducing a gradually larger number of parameters, it is possible to reach a more positive solution and to give a wider interpretation to the sense of unity, inserting in the latter the sense of multiplicity and multiformity**" (Mourellos, 1991: 305, my emphasis)

The sense of multiplicity and multiformity presupposes a change in the archaeological approach which is usually interested in the finding, or in the tyranny of today and of its ideological pursuits³³. In such a "holistic" approach, production and survival are the starting points from where one should commence, since they are always

present in the archaeological findings, which as material objects, are products in a production chain, and are meant to be used. It suffice not to give them metaphysical properties, as it happens today with the notion, for instance, of "market" which as masterfully has been pointed out (Hobsbawn 1998) has the characteristics of the "Providence". Here, skepticism can offer "objective" information.³⁴ and the reviews of post-procedural approach could play significant role.

To avoid generalizations about the prototypes of Neolithic societies searching and trying to interpret uniformity and the primacy of a "civilization" over the next, we could resort to the "holistic" approach . Multiformality and complexity can be seen not as a result of a evolutionist determinism, but as concrete, historically determined conditions of existence, based on two sorts of relations: dialectic relation between man and natural environment and the relations people develop between them.

Before concluding the social and economic theories and archaeological applications we should admit that it is not possible to state that Neolithic man could distinguish a separate sphere of activity, which set as economic. But through his everyday production and mainly, through agriculture, which was characterized by delayed yield, he becomes conscious of his productive capacities. He can on that pre-scientific level, to which we classify Neolithic period, of interpreting the world, the ideology is a prerequisite to conceive reality, and yet, a part of reality is conceived as illusory (Dimitrakos, 1981: 43-44). This does not mean that a scientific archaeological

interpretation should search exclusively this illusionary relation without trying to approach reality. In this subjective reality the production can have symbolic dimensions, but it is not symbolic.

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