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# Visual Archaeo-Technology and Politics in Southeastern Turkey

Laurent Dissard

► **To cite this version:**

Laurent Dissard. Visual Archaeo-Technology and Politics in Southeastern Turkey. Vitor Oliveira Jorge; Julian Thomas. Archaeology and the Politics of Vision in a Post-Modern Context, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.306-329, 2008, 978-1-4438-0050-1. hal-02169140

**HAL Id: hal-02169140**

**<https://hal.science/hal-02169140>**

Submitted on 14 Feb 2022

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## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

VISUAL *ARCHAEO-TECHNOLOGY*  
AND POLITICS IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY

LAURENT DISSARD

## Introduction

What do we mean by *Archaeology and the Politics of Vision*? The scientific discipline of archaeology gives us a way to understand and *see* the past in the present. It produces knowledge about ancient times and creates the material objects which stand for what we know about it. In this chapter, I will discuss two techniques (the site report and the museum) which facilitate the materialization of the past in order to reflect on the politics of archaeology in the context of a development and dam project in Southeastern Turkey. Museums and site reports, two specific practices which help us to *visualize* the past, both have effects on 1. Knowledge; they produce scientific facts about the past, and 2. Power; they “intervene” (Abu El-Haj 2001 following Hacking 1983) in the wider social and political realms. Focusing on both science and politics, the paper-at-hand will draw attention to the mechanisms behind the production of archaeology’s body of knowledge as well as the effects this body of knowledge and its material forms have in society (Abu El-Haj 2001: 13).

## Archaeology’s Scientific Vision

Discussions surrounding the politics of the discipline<sup>1</sup> have been convincingly framed in terms of the more precise epistemological question concerning the nature of archaeological knowledge (Hamilakis 1996, Hamilakis et al. 1997). This question has divided archaeologists into two camps. Some archaeologists perceive their work as excavating things from the ground, interpreting them scientifically and discovering objective facts about the past. Politics, in this case, should not interfere with the practice

of objective science. Any political engagement on the part of the archaeologist is to remain outside of its realm. Opposed to this objectivist view, other archaeologists recognize that any knowledge is contingent on the social conditions of its production. Any reconstruction of the past is in fact a construction which simply mirrors the predominant social and political ideologies of the time. This part of subjectivity in interpretations can be influenced by and reinforce, for instance, nationalist, sexist or colonialist ideologies. Archaeologists should contest this misuse of archaeology, denounce it and, as best as they can, try to integrate the silenced, indigenous, colonized and oppressed voices into a multi-vocal (Hodder 2003b) discourse about the past.

These debates between objectivists and subjectivists, however, as Nadia Abu El-Haj<sup>2</sup> points out, only question how accurately our current interpretations of the archaeological record represent the past (2001: 11); how biased or unbiased our knowledge of ancient times is. Following Andrew Pickering (1995), she intentionally shifts her focus of analysis from “science-as-knowledge” to “science-as-practice” in an effort to solve or bypass this binary opposition, the “epistemological deadlocks associated with the dichotomy between realism and constructivism (or, much more broadly, between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’)” (Biagioli 1999: xv). With this analytical move, Abu El-Haj proposes an alternative framework to think through the politics of archaeology. The question is no longer “Given our modern political biases, how close are we to the Truth about the past?” but rather “What political effects do the practices and techniques of archaeology have in the present?” On the techniques of archaeology, she adds:

“[t]hat which unifies archaeology across multiple local traditions is perhaps best identified as a *technique*, a specific way of finding out about the past, which, in turn, privileges a particular kind of evidence. Archaeologists who are housed in different disciplines and institutional locations (anthropologists, classical archaeologists, biblical archaeologists, Israeli archaeologists, and so forth) are linked, broadly speaking, by the practice of excavating.” (2001: 13, my italic)

Here, technique is closely related to excavating. She treats “the term technology in its most basic sense, as a set of tools and machines (pickaxes, shovels, bulldozers, and so forth)” (2001: 286). For my purposes in this paper, I define the term *archaeo-technology* more extensively as **any set of techniques-specific means to an end-chosen in order to represent the past**. *Archaeo-technology* is not just composed of

the tools used by archaeologists to excavate a site but includes a wider array of practices such as displaying archaeological objects in museums and writing archaeological site reports. This chapter will pay particular attention to the techniques of visualization used within the scientific discipline of archaeology. Having defined techniques in its broader sense, visual *archaeo-technology* is then composed of any precise calculated strategy, rational act or scientific practice which transforms things from the ground into material objects or facts about the past which can be visualized.

Techniques of visualization, of course, are not just central to the discipline of archaeology. Philosopher of science Donna Haraway writes how endlessly enhanced by machines, vision has shaped our modern western sense of reality (1988: 581). The manner in which visual techniques are conceptualized in this chapter echoes in many respects Haraway's following explanation:

"Histories of science may be powerfully told as histories of the technologies. These technologies are ways of life, social orders, *practices of visualization*. Technologies are skilled practices. How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see for? Whom to see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets blinkered? Who wears blinkers? Who interprets the visual field? What other sensory powers do we wish to cultivate besides vision?" (1988: 587 my italic)

Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison have also discussed the key role vision plays within science. The two authors use scientific atlases defined as "profusely illustrated volumes of carefully chosen observables depicted from a carefully chosen point of view" (1992: 84) in order to chart, as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of scientific objectivity. Representing nature's diversity and accidental experiences, they explain, is not a straightforward task. Scientists must privilege certain standard phenomena that will represent "what truly is" and transform nature's too plentiful objects into the "working images" of science, ideal types which may or may not be found as such in nature.

"Working images [are] any manageable, communal representatives of the sector of nature under investigation. No science can do without such standardized working objects, for unrefined natural objects are too quirkily particular to cooperate in generalizations and comparisons... The atlas aims to make nature safe for science; to replace raw experience-the accidental, contingent experience of specific individual objects-with digested experience. All sciences must deal with this problem of selecting

and constituting 'working objects,' as opposed to the too plentiful and too various natural objects." (85)

Science can operate only after this selection is made. The atlases-these volumes of *observables* from a specific point of *view* where "working images" are represented and visualized-are one of the means through which science epitomizes and depicts nature.<sup>3</sup> These early scientific atlases thus operate as part of science's visual technology.

We also find that vision played a fundamental role in the early scientific experiments of 17<sup>th</sup> century England. The credibility of Thomas Boyle's proceedings, for instance, was attained if and only if they had passed under the *eyes* of a group of gentlemen in the public space of the laboratory (Shapin and Schaffer 1985: 69). This type of direct witnessing became the main criterion to establish scientific facts. But, if experiments could be *directly* witnessed by the eyes of society<sup>4</sup>, Shapin and Schaffer also explain how they could be *virtually* witnessed:

"If one wrote experimental reports in the correct way, the reader could take on trust that these things happened. Further, it would be as if that reader had been present at the proceedings. He would be recruited as a witness and be put in a position where he could validate experimental phenomena as matters of fact. Therefore, attention to the writing of experimental reports was of equal importance to doing the experiments themselves." (62-3)

Thomas Boyle's reports announced that the experiments were done in the way stipulated. These accounts were composed of a meticulous written description of the experimental process as well as illustrations which served to narrate a prior *visual* experience. The *visual* representations in the writings of these early scientists gave the reader a vivid impression of the experimental scene. Some pictures also represented the machines themselves (the air-pump for instance) used during the experiments. An image in these reports was:

"not a schematized line drawing but an attempt at detailed naturalistic representation complete with the conventions of shadowing and cut-away sections of the parts. This is not a picture of the 'idea' of an air pump, but of a particular existing air-pump. Their role was to be a supplement to the imaginative witness provided by the words in the text." (61)

Shapin and Schaffer add how "understanding the role of pictorial representations offers a way of appreciating what Boyle was trying to

achieve with his literary technology.” (62) A literary technology... these early scientific reports—full of images working like mimetic devices imitating reality—can also be referred to as a visual technology, the means through which scientific experiments were witnessed both virtually and visually.

Visual techniques therefore help to produce both virtual witnesses and the “working images” of science. These latter, because they are obtained with the help of scientific techniques and machines, appear uncontaminated by the human temptation to theorize, anthropomorphize, beautify and interpret (Daston and Galison 1992: 120). With the assistance of machines—the means and symbol of “mechanical objectivity”—partial and subjective observations made by scientists seem to be replaced by more authentic and judgment-free representations (Daston 1995: 19). Machines are deployed to make it look as if any human intervention in the observation of nature has been eliminated. Innovations in visual technology, constant and limitless in appearance (Haraway 1988), have enabled the knowing subject to distance itself from the object of study. The scientific tools themselves, which seem neutral and a-political, have reinforced this rupture between science and politics.

Archaeologists also have recourse to specific machines and techniques in order to, not just “discover” the past but, reach more automatic and mechanized observations of it. Supposedly, with the assistance of *archaeo-techniques*, a more neutral and a-political vision of antiquity is reached. The way archaeologists see the past today and how they are able to distance themselves from it in the present has, in fact, become an effect of visual *archaeo-technology*. The quest for archaeology’s “mechanical objectivity” has produced the distance separating now and then. When put into operation, visual *archaeo-technology* creates the gap between the subject studying and the object of study. Archaeologists can now act confidently as the “transparent spokesmen” of the past, leaving everybody else in the domain of culture, society (Haraway 1997: 25) or politics. In this great divide, archaeologists and their powerful alliance with visual *archaeo-technology* (such as museums, photography, ground-penetrating radars, and so forth) believe they have safely retreated away from politics on the more cautious side of science.

## Photography or the Witnessing of Archaeology

Let us leave this discussion aside for a moment and focus our attention on one specific technique used within the scientific discipline of archaeology. As I have just reminded the reader, Boyle’s experimental reports and the 16<sup>th</sup> century scientific atlases were full of images. If archaeologists declare the text (usually dry descriptive narratives) as prevalent, their publications are also full of illustrations: site maps and ground plans, charts and graphs, drawings and photographic images, etc... These colorful, carefully conceived or drawn, strategically located visuals make up the essence of the excavation report.<sup>5</sup> Photography, for example, in archaeological reports is particularly ubiquitous and fulfills an important task. For the specific field-science under scrutiny in this paper, experiments completed on the far away sites can only be *directly* witnessed by the excavators themselves. Pictures taken on-site however allow the reader to visualize the excavation process itself. The camera is one of the visual *archaeo-technique* which transforms readers into *virtual* witnesses. Archaeological excavation reports, with the help of photography, become the means which facilitate this type of witnessing.

Excavations at the site of Tille Höyük in southeastern Turkey, for instance, were carried out in the 1980s by the British Institute of Archaeology just before the construction of the Atatürk Dam in 1990. In the final publication reports (Summers 1993, Moore 1993) of this site now submerged by water, photography occupies an important place. Before a picture was taken at Tille Höyük, a sort of purification ritual took place. Archaeologists sweep and scrape clean the area under excavation that is about to be captured on film. Pickaxes, brushes and trowels, all of the equipment necessary for excavating, are placed on the side for a moment. The photographer, after having asked the workers to step outside of the frame, then takes the picture (cf. figure 16.1).<sup>6</sup> Photography thus captures the last moment of this ritual, only the end result however, not the messy process itself.

The discourses and practices of archaeology show its great concern with the cleansing and purification of antiquities. Hamilakis (2002) explains how, for example, the “polluted” Athenian Acropolis was cleansed and cured of its Byzantine, Muslim and Venetian remains. He associates archaeology’s anxiety with the cleaning of polluted sites and the supposed contamination and purification of antiquity to religious systems of thought as well as practices found within medical institutions. The

paper-at-hand is concerned more with the ways this ritual creates the necessary conditions for the outdoor scientific laboratory of archaeology to emerge from the ground (Abu El-Haj 2001). In other words, what makes this rite of purification neither magic, nor religious, nor medical but indeed scientific? The cleansing process is made up of specific practices and techniques which facilitate the conversion of objects found in the ground into the material artifacts which will stand for the past. In order to understand how places are turned into archaeological laboratories and how facts about the past are “discovered” scientifically, it is crucial to follow this necessary step-by-step procedure.

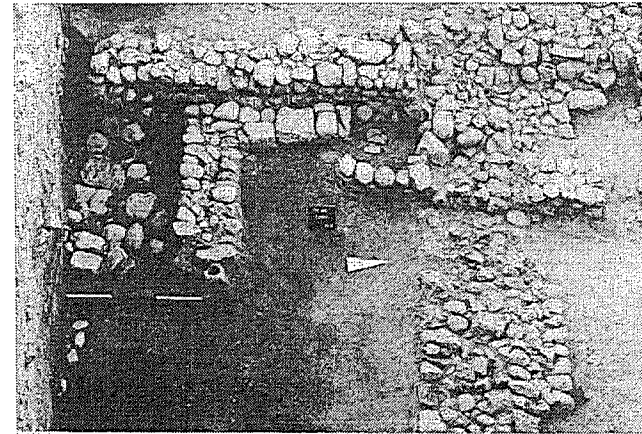


PL11 The north-western bastion and wall of the Burnu Level Gateway.

Fig. 16.1: Picture capturing the end of archaeology’s purification ritual (Summers 1993).

To go back to our previous example, what precise calculated techniques transform a simple mound of earth in southeastern Turkey into the archaeological site of Tille Höyük, a place suitable for the scientific study of the region’s Bronze Age? Can we isolate, for instance, in the picture previously discussed, the rational steps and carefully chosen acts which give the process of digging a mound of dirt its scientific legitimacy? Let us look at some more photographs to answer these questions (cf. figure 16.2). A measuring stick, an arrow and a blackboard are systematically placed on the ground or on the walls of the newly excavated area. The measuring stick provides scale; the arrow indicates the direction and orientates the photography to the north; and the small blackboard displays numbers and letters associated to the area just excavated. This information-scale,

orientation, context-provided by these three tools is placed within the frame of the photography and transforms a simple picture into a scientific record which can then be catalogued, compared and analyzed.



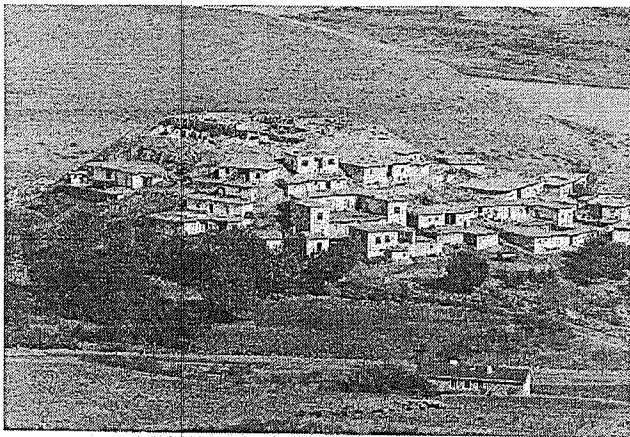
PL3 Trench 7460, Level 3, Structure I and part of Structure II.

Fig. 16.2: The measuring stick, arrow and blackboard of archaeological science (Summers 1993).

The introduction on-site of a system of measurement (the stick), of orientation (the arrow) and of cataloguing (the board), converts the mundane activity of digging earth into an archaeological experiment and contributes further to the delineation of the mound into a scientific laboratory. Thus, photography not only captures and records field research, but, as it facilitates *virtual* witnessing, converts a mundane place into an archaeological site where science is performed. Photography (but also ground-penetrating radars, magnetic gradient surveys and so forth) are techniques of visualization used on-site to produce the “working images” of archaeology, illustrations which will then stand to represent the region’s ancient history. These produced images do not just “illustrate” the text but enable archaeologists—who spend a lot of time, effort and money before, during and after excavations to obtain them (Latour and Woolgar 1996: 43)—to shift the discussions from excavations to explanations, from the digging of a mound in the present to the lives of the Bronze Age people in the past, from the spoiled “social” time of archaeological fieldwork to the sanitized “monumental” time of the ancient past (Hamilakis 2002 following Herzfeld 1991).

But, I would now like to ask an entirely different question about this scientific process just described. As the scientific laboratory of archaeology emerges from the ground, as the mound of earth is transformed into an ancient site, as the “working images” of the site are carefully constituted and, just as importantly, as the photographic camera captures all of this “science in action” (Latour 1987), what things are (deliberately or not) left behind? Nick Shepherd (2003) writing about photographic images has, in fact, already given us an answer:

“[W]hat we find in site reports are stylised shots of individual artefacts (strategically lit and arranged against neutral backgrounds), and carefully composed shots of archaeological deposits (brushed, tidied, squared-away and labeled). These form a class of imagery from which coworkers and assistants are edited out, along with extraneous items of equipment, signs of camp life, collapsed sections and misplaced artefacts, in fact, any signs of production of failure.” (350)

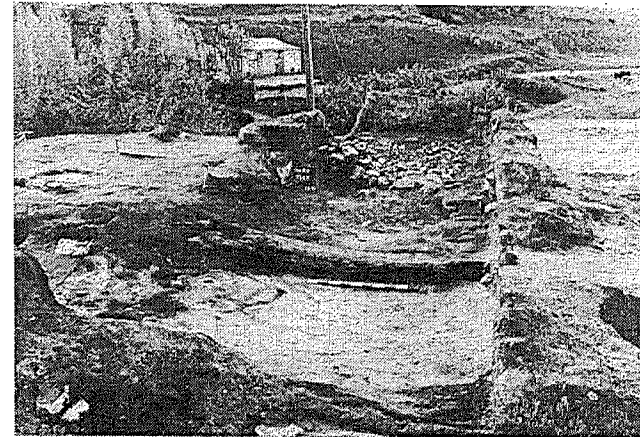


b. Tille village, from the South (08.11.1983)

Fig. 16.3: Village and houses of Tille (Moore 1993).

Shepherd uses a set of photographs found in the publications and archives of John Goodwin’s archaeological expeditions throughout sub-Saharan Africa, in order to discuss the issue of “native” labor in archaeology. The work of “native” coworkers and assistants hired by Goodwin has so far remained unacknowledged in the official history of (African) archaeology. However, they are not entirely invisible as they make unexpected appearances, for example, captured in the margins of photographs or on the side of the frame. In his insightful article, where both “native” workers

and the issue of “native” labor in archaeology step into the foreground, Shepherd succeeds in taking on the difficult-but even more crucial in former colonial contexts-task of restoring the dignity of a name to “native” workers in order to “rethink” through the official accounts of archaeology.



PL9 The south wall of the Burnt Level Gateway (right side) and rooms to the south.

Fig. 16.4: The “local” makes an unexpected appearance on the photographs (Summers 1993).

Again, if we go back to the Tille Höyük reports, the village of Tille itself and its houses, for instance, located on top of the excavated mound not yet submerged by water do make an appearance (cf. figure 16.3). They come into view but remain secondary in importance within the final report. On the margins of another picture (cf. figure 16.4), just behind the scale, arrow and board of the archaeologists, a local farmer’s house and some local cows make their cameo appearance. This photograph underscores how, for the discipline of archaeology, a necessary condition for the production of scientific knowledge is the marginalization of, not just local people and houses, but anything related to the complex local social and political issues of the region.

As archaeology produces accepted science, any signs of the local context appear as a side-note. Archaeological photography consistently focuses away from anything associated with the discipline’s conditions of production as well as the negative effects these same conditions might have on local people, communities and environment. Flanked to the side of the report, the objectivity of the scientific excavations is reinforced in

the mind of the virtual witness. The photographs referred to numerous in the final report,<sup>7</sup> produce the purified “working images” of archaeology, strengthen the text’s objectivity and, in a way, take the dirt out of the final reports. Furthermore, they legitimize the archaeologists as the sole experts of the past, as well as the present, in the local area they are working in. These techniques of visualization confer to the discipline its “mechanical objectivity” and, if not removing it entirely, only allow the local to make rare and unexpected appearances. Having said this, let us now turn our attention to this local context I have been alluding to in the second part of this article.

### The Southeastern Anatolian Project’s (G.A.P.) Vision

At the start of this chapter, I mentioned Nadia Abu El-Haj’s alternative framework to think through the politics of archaeology. Again, her work’s most important contribution does not reside in her insightful analysis of the practices behind the production of knowledge concerning the *ancient* past of Israel but in her critique of the social and material effects these scientific practices have in the construction of the *modern* Israeli state. In a more modest fashion, this paper also analyzes how visual *archaeo-technology* is deployed at a specific locality (Tille Höyük), examines how scientific archaeology produces knowledge about the past of a particular region (southeastern Turkey) but also, and more importantly perhaps, scrutinizes the social, political and material effects this particular field-science has on the “local.”

Why have I chosen to discuss, what might seem arbitrary at first, the photographs of Tille Höyük in this paper? The 1980s excavations at Tille Höyük took part in larger rescue operations carried out in Southeastern Turkey over the last 40 years. Southeastern Turkey is the poorest area of the country with the highest unemployment rate and lowest per capita income. The region’s economic situation has been aggravated by political instability, military conflicts and village evictions. The Turkish government hopes, however, to reverse this trend by implementing the G.A.P. (“Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi” or “Southeastern Anatolian Project”), an ambitious development project which plans the construction of 22 dams and 19 hydroelectric power plants on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.<sup>8</sup> The project is expected to create job opportunities, spark an economic revival in the region and eventually reduce the political instability of Turkey’s southeastern provinces. Every time a dam is built as part of the G.A.P., archaeologists are asked to carry out salvage

excavations of some of the threatened sites in order to “rescue the past” or, at least, gather as much information about it as possible.<sup>9</sup>

If we pay attention to the way the development project presents itself, we learn that the G.A.P. is putting a lot of emphasis on the concept of “sustainability.”<sup>10</sup> What is meant by this term remains vague but includes a balance between nature and mankind as well as a concern for the development of both present and future generations. The project will also provide a clean and safe environment and preserve natural resources for everyone. The G.A.P. claims that it will bring eastern Turkey, this backward part of the country as they say, up to national economic standards by promoting “democracy.” All actors will be asked to participate in the decision making process and the project will “help the promotion of a democratic culture in urban management and life” by providing fair incomes, decent sheltering and a sustainable economic growth for all. Furthermore, the project is taking part, in its own words, in a civilizing mission. We learn that “even what has come out today with the partial implementation of the project indicates that the ‘Fertile Crescent’ that hosted many civilizations so far is capable of creating a new and bright one” and that the G.A.P. is “a technological and sociological monument of civilization waiting future generations.” The G.A.P. presents itself as a human-centered, almost humanitarian project whose goal it is to eliminate poverty, close income gaps and provide better access to health, education and social services.

But the G.A.P.’s efforts to portray itself as a bringer of democracy and civilization, in fact, hides its more contested and divisive aspects. If the development project might be perceived as a genuine effort to help reduce Turkey’s Kurdish regions’ political instability by some, there are, to say the least, many controversial issues and troublesome ironies associated with the building of dams there. These more or less dramatic paradoxes might begin with, but are surely not limited to, the practice of archaeology in this particular context. If some archaeologists are taking this opportunity to bring interesting research agendas to this somewhat under-explored region, others are critical, condemning, for example, the construction of the Ilisu Dam and its future destruction of the historical city of Hasankeyf.<sup>11</sup> Despite the G.A.P.’s numerous environmental impact assessment plans and projects to promote sustainable development, environmentalists have criticized the ecological damage and reappearance of certain diseases caused by the dams.<sup>12</sup> While some farmers have seized the agricultural opportunities in the Harran plain, for example, offered by

the waters of the Atatürk Dam, a larger number of villagers have had to abandon their lands submerged by these same waters.<sup>13</sup>

Viewed as a historic step towards progress by some, the G.A.P. is seen by others as a curse for Turkey's Kurdish regions, yet another intrusion into local affairs by the Turkish government. Parallel to Turkey's attempts to develop economically its southeastern provinces and solve its "Kurdish question" through the implementation of the project are the army's sustained efforts to eliminate the P.K.K. ("Partiya Karkari Kurdistan" or "Kurdistan's Workers Party").<sup>14</sup> Turkey's military—one of the most powerful institutions in Turkish society and a pillar of the Republic—has in an attempt to eliminate any signs of separatism maintained pressure in the regions where the majority of the population identifies itself as Kurdish. Since 1984, this armed conflict has resulted, in and out of its borders, in the deaths of more than 37,000 people, both civilians and soldiers.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, G.A.P.'s dreams of economic development, what seems to be Turkey's more peaceful alternative to the conflict, will be impossible to attain in the near future. As David McDowall (2004: 446-449)<sup>16</sup> explains in a section devoted to G.A.P.'s place within the larger Kurdish issue, Turkey's unwillingness or inability to redistribute land (breaking up the strong landowner's system) and reform education (allowing some Kurmanji<sup>17</sup>-speaking primary and secondary schools for example) in its southeastern provinces, both prerequisite for any economic progress to take place, makes the problem even more alarming. Finally, if the G.A.P. has been put forth by Turkey in its bid to join the European Union, the project has angered the two down-stream nations of Syria and Iraq, which are concerned about eventual water shortages.<sup>18</sup>

Brief as it is, the description of the G.A.P. above reveals how archaeology is just one actor among many constituting the complex network associated with politics and development in Southeastern Turkey. And, it might seem that parallel to the project's social, political, technological and environmental dimensions, archaeology is discreetly carrying out its scientific goals...<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, in order to understand the ways a supposedly objective and a-political science mediates within this intricate assemblage and to appreciate the social and material effects its practices have within the larger framework of Turkish politics, I now turn to the second visual *archaeo-technique* of this paper, namely the archaeological museum. The mosaic floor known as the "Gipsy Girl" (cf. figure 16.5) made international news' headlines after it was discovered and rescued by archaeologists from the rising waters of the Birecik dam. The site of

Zeugma where this and other Roman mosaics were unearthed is located halfway between the southeastern Turkish cities of Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa. The Birecik dam which submerged a significant part of Zeugma was completed in 2000 as part of Turkey's development project.

Built overlooking the dam, located on top of a hill, a small museum called the Birecik Cultural Center (cf. figure 16.6) welcomes the few visitors who make it to the area.<sup>20</sup> A guard waits inside the center greeting them as they enter through the large glass doors. On the floor of the first room, some ancient Roman jars and statue fragments are exposed as well as, hanging on the walls of the museum, facsimiles of the mosaic floors discovered at the nearby site of Zeugma. A flight of stairs then invites the visitors to the second room of the museum where the main attraction lies.

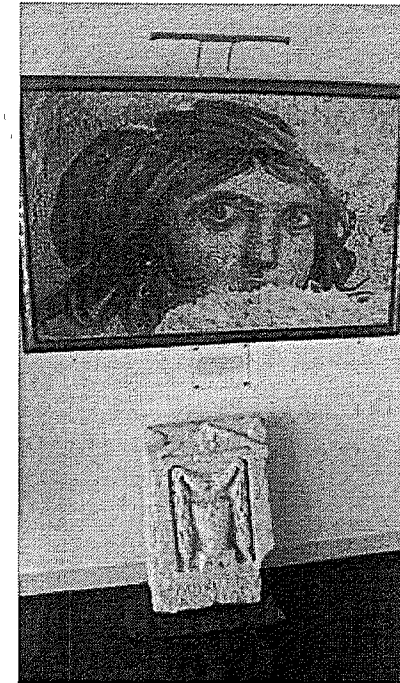


Fig. 16.5: A facsimile of the "Gipsy Girl" mosaic.



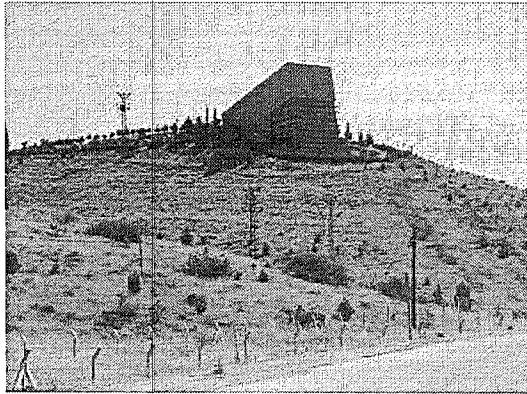


Fig. 16.6: The Birecik Cultural Center built on top of a hill “overlooking” the dam.

In front of their eyes, just behind the rectangular glass panels which make up the wall of this room, stands the Birecik dam itself to admire (cf. figure 16.7). Displayed next to ancient Roman objects in the same edifice, the dam is also being shown to the public as a museum piece with aesthetically pleasing qualities to contemplate. The dam, in a way, has become art; the engineers have become artists and the Turkish government-financing the dam and the development project-the patron of the arts. Within the walls of this small cultural center, the boundaries between art and science, archaeology and technology, the past and the future have become blurred. Displayed together, the rich, illustrious past of ancient Anatolia legitimizes the technologically advanced but contested, modern state of Turkey.<sup>21</sup>



Fig. 16.7: The dam displayed as a museum piece in the Birecik Cultural Center.

The irony behind all of this, of course, is that Turkey's development project, responsible for the destruction of Zeugma, is presented as the savior of this archaeological site and of its mosaics. This paradox-the *modern* threatening and at the same time protecting the *ancient*-is never made explicit to the museum visitor however. The architectural design of the museum itself reinforces this impression. The center has a specific *vision*; it works like an eye as it directs the visitor's gaze in one direction. The shape of the museum does not allow a panoramic 360° vision of the surrounding landscape (like the eyes of a fly would have) but obstructs the view of its guests left and right (like the eye piece of a horse pulling a carriage) and controls their vision so that they are only able to look ahead. As the museum disciplines their gaze to see the dam among archaeology, visitors are taken away from the polemics behind Turkey's contested development project. Placing side by side the techno-scientific feat of the engineers and the scientific discoveries of the archaeologist, the center erases the messy political issues associated with dam construction in Southeastern Turkey and makes the profound changes brought by the G.A.P. seem as natural as possible. Hiding the political, making any controversial issues related to dam building invisible, we can finally say, is a necessary condition which allows the sanitized version of archaeology's scientific discoveries to be displayed in the museum.

## Conclusion

Archaeological site reports and archaeological museums participate in the production of the scientific and material (arti)facts of the past. This chapter has also pointed towards some of the social and political effects this knowledge can have in the construction of the present. Visual *archaео-technology* enables archaeologists to reach more “neutral” observations of the past and facilitates their role as sole “spokesmen” of it. As the so-called experts safely retreat on the side of science, multiple processes of inclusion and exclusion simultaneously occur. The paper-at-hand illustrated how the local context of rescue excavations in Southeastern Turkey was marginalized in the scientific accounts of archaeology and how visitors to the Birecik Cultural Center were directed away from the local polemics behind Turkey's contested development project. In fact, hiding the controversial issues related to dam building in Turkey's Kurdish regions has become a necessary condition for the sanitized version of archaeological science to emerge from the ground and materialize itself in museums and site reports.

As a final note, visual *archaeo-techniques* produce objectivity and mediate the past only through, to use Donna Haraway's (1997) terminology, a politics of positioning. What we know about the past is not just an effect of techniques but, more importantly, an effect of positioning. Archaeology partakes in the larger assemblage of actors all connected to Turkey's contested politics of development. It positions itself within this complex network as the supposedly a-political science whose sole concern is the past. *Archaeo-technology* helps to establish this specific position. By examining the broader social and political context of the region however, we immediately see the ambiguity and paradox of this particular positioning and the ways it contributes in making the profound and problematic changes brought by the G.A.P. seem as natural as possible.

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## Notes

1. To give an overview, even a brief one, of the ever-changing field of politics of archaeology would be too large of a task given the scope of this paper. If Hamilakis (2003), Abu El-Haj (2001) and Shepherd (2003) have given me here the most inspiration to think about the politics of archaeology, one can trace the field, for example, through Trigger (1984), Shanks and Tilley (1987), Kohl and Fawcett

- (1995), Wylie (1996), Gosden (2001), Hodder (2003a) and Pollock and Bernbeck (2005).
2. Nadia Abu El-Haj's work is at the intersection of the fields of anthropology of colonialism and anthropology of science. Again, to give an overview of the field of anthropology of science or science studies goes beyond the scope of this paper. If I have found Daston and Galison (1992), Shapin and Schaffer (1985), Latour and Woolgar (1996) and Haraway (1997) the most useful to think through the relationship between science and vision, Hess (1997) and especially Biagioli (1999) give good overviews of the field.
3. Put in other words, Donna Haraway (1997: 33), after reminding us of Latour's (1987) 'science is made as nature is undone' writes how nature is raped by the modest man of science in a masculine quest to reveal her secrets.
4. Society for a 17th century experimental philosopher meant the British Royal Society made up of gentlemen, including Oxford professors but excluding, for instance, Oxfordshire peasants (Shapin and Schaffer, 1985: 58) and women (Haraway 1997: 32). Abu El-Haj takes Shapin and Schaffer's point to remind us that at the earliest moments of this scientific epistemology, the foundations of a new science and a new social order (including a few and excluding many others) were created simultaneously (2001: 27).
5. This is also the way Daston and Galison describe scientific atlases: "Whatever the amount and avowed function of the text in an atlas, which varies from long and essential to nonexistent and despised, the illustrations command center stage. Usually displayed in giant format, meticulously drawn and engraved, and expensively produced, they are the *raison d'être* of the atlases. Indeed, to call them "illustrations" at all is to belie their primacy, for it suggests that their function is merely ancillary, to illustrate a text or theory... the pictures are the alpha and omega of the genre." (1992: 86)
6. I would like to thank Geoffrey Summers and the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara for permission to use the photographs of figures 16.1-4. The photographs of figure 16.5-7 were taken by the author in July 2005.
7. These images recall Latour and Woolgar's *figures* obtained from the experiments of a 20th century neuroendocrinology laboratory in California. The two authors explain how these *figures* make results have an existence of their own independent of the scientist's subjectivity (1996: 85). To make a reference to a *figure* in a scientific text validates conclusions which previously seemed not to rest on anything. Accumulating references is what, in the end, creates the effect of objectivity and makes the experiment worthy of belief.
8. The region I am calling Southeastern Turkey in this paper is composed of the Turkish administrative provinces of Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa and Şırnak. Southeastern Turkey is also referred to as the G.A.P. region or northern Kurdistan. Information about Southeastern Turkey's underdevelopment and statistics concerning the region's unemployment come from the G.A.P.'s website itself (<http://www.gap.gov.tr>). In this paragraph and the next, I am only presenting G.A.P.'s vision of the region.
9. A large part but not all of the rescue work carried out in the context of the G.A.P. has been published by the Middle East Technical University (M.E.T.U.).

For the 1968 to 1974 Keban dam survey and rescue excavations of 19 sites on the Euphrates River, see M.E.T.U. (1967, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1979, 1982). The G.A.P., implemented only in 1980, is a continuation of the Keban dam project. Not officially part of the G.A.P., I still include the 1968 to 1974 rescue excavations in this paper. For the 1977 to 1991 Atatürk and Karakaya dams survey and rescue excavations of 28 sites on the Euphrates River, see Özdoğan (1977), Serdaroğlu (1977) and M.E.T.U. (1987), and for the 1990s Birecik and Karkamış dams survey and rescue excavations on the Euphrates River and current excavations in anticipation of the future construction of the Ilisu and Cizre dams on the Tigris River, see Algaze (1989) and Algaze & al. (1991) for surveys and Tuna & al., eds. (1999, 2001, 2002, 2004) for excavation reports. See Bischoff and Pérouse (2003) for more details on the G.A.P. and the threat to the region's cultural heritage. Also, see Steele (2004) and Shoup (2006) who discuss some of the political issues associated with the practice of archaeology in the region.

10. The information and quotes in this paragraph have been gathered from the G.A.P.'s website (<http://www.gap.gov.tr/>) and from various flyers and documents, such as G.A.P. (2005 a,b,c,d), collected at the G.A.P.'s regional directorate office in Şanlıurfa during the summer of 2005. G.A.P. (2005a), for instance, concludes with the following sentence: "In short, the GAP brings civilisation back to the Upper Mesopotamia."

11. Contrast, for instance, the attitudes of archaeologists in the scientific reports published in Tuna & al., eds. (1999, 2001, 2002, 2004) where the Ilisu dam and its consequences for the local environment and population are barely mentioned to the letter written by the World Archaeological Congress sent to Tony Blair on 16 January 2001 (W.A.C. 2001) showing its concern for human rights violation as well as the destruction of cultural heritage.

12. In their report, Bischoff and Pérouse (2003) devote a whole section (II.B. *Patrimoines environnementaux: écosystèmes, formations végétales, climats et salinisation*) on the environmental problems linked to the construction of the G.A.P.'s large dams. They describe, for instance, one of the G.A.P.'s environmental impact assessment report made for the Ilisu dam and power plant as pure propaganda denying the environmental reality of the region. G.A.P. (2005b) might seem to offer a more balanced and realistic view of the project's goals but still overlooks most of the region's ecological issues. Ronayne (2005) also deals with some of the environmental problems associated with the future construction of the Hakkari, Ilisu and Munzur Valley dams.

13. G.A.P. (2005c) mentions the new developments in agriculture in the Harran plain. See Hildyard & al. (2000) (and especially *Box 14: Atatürk's Victims: The Continuing Misery*), Hildyard & al. (2001) and Ronayne (2005: 27-28) for a discussion of people abandoning their villages because of the construction of the G.A.P.'s dams. See Ayata and Yüksek (2005: 22) for more details on how the G.A.P. relates to the larger issue of internally displaced persons in Turkey.

14. For an overview of the origin of Kurdish nationalist movements, including the P.K.K., and of their development in the 1990s, see Olson's (1996) edited volume. For a more recent article on the P.K.K., see Bruinessen (2004).

15. Besides internal operations aimed at combating P.K.K. terrorism inside its territories, the ongoing (January and February 2008) Turkish military incursions into northern Iraq, which have led to a further destabilization of the region, is the last of a series of operations outside of its national borders. The Kurdish Institute in Paris follows this situation on a daily basis on its website (<http://www.institutkurde.org>).

16. David McDowall has made this section of his book (2004) available in a slightly different version on the Ilisu Dam Campaign website. It is entitled *Ilisu: the economic and political context* and is available at <http://www.ilisu.org.uk/david.html>.

17. Kurmanji is one of the Kurdish languages along with Sorani, Zaza and Gorani. It is the language spoken by most Kurds in southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq. Sorani is spoken more in southern Kurdistan by Iraqi and Iranian Kurds. For more details, see Bruinessen (1992: 21-22, 107-115).

18. The G.A.P.'s so-called "Program for Transition to a Strengthened Economy" was prepared as part of the process for Turkey's accession to the European Union (G.A.P. 2008). See G.A.P. (2005d) for information on the European Union's financing of the "GAP Regional Development Program." For a discussion of the conflict the G.A.P. has provoked between Turkey and the countries of Iraq and Syria, see Daoudy (2005).

19. In fact, archaeology is never practiced in parallel to, but is rather an integral part of, the natural or social world. It is a *science* practiced by *social* actors consisting in the transformation of *nature* (a mound of earth) into a sterilized laboratory observing the past. As Timothy Mitchell (2002: 27) explains, social theory has difficulties grasping contexts where elements from the natural and the social world mix. He adds how we need to abandon the artificial divide between science, nature and society. Dams—the technological and *scientific* achievements conceived and built by engineers that alter the *natural* flows of rivers but also provide water for irrigation, produce electricity for *society* and build nation-states themselves—also need to be thought through from this perspective.

20. This section derives from visits I have made to the Birecik Cultural Center during the summer of 2005. Even if it is not very large, not always open, not easily accessible and, as a consequence, very few visitors come to visit it (an average of 20 visitors in one day), its location, its architecture and the objects it is displaying are very indicative of the larger effects the G.A.P. is trying, successfully or not, to achieve in the region.

21. Many parallels can be drawn with Hamilakis' short article (2001) which deals with the public display of antiquities in the stations of the new Athenian metro. As he explains, the construction of the subway, which resulted in large-scale rescue excavations, signified a new image of modernization and civilized Europeanization of Greece. Antiquities contribute to the sacralization of the subway in Greece or of the dams in Turkey and, ironically, emphasize this image of modernization.