

Future (Pre-)Histories of the State: On Anarchy, Archaeology, and the Decolonial

Forthcoming in Ferretti, F., Barrera, G., Ince, A. and Toro, F. [eds] *Historical Geographies of Anarchism*. London: Routledge.

Anthony Ince and Gerónimo Barrera de la Torre

The subtitle to *The Order of Things* is not ‘*the* archaeology’, but ‘*an* archaeology of the human sciences’. It’s up to you, who are directly involved with what goes on in geography, faced with all the conflicts of power which traverse it, to confront them and construct the instruments which will enable you to fight on that terrain.¹

Geographers and social scientists have long followed Foucault in using the term *archaeology* as a metaphor for the process of uncovering the buried but power-laden layers of knowledges and ideas on which present societies are often unknowingly ‘built’. Archaeology as a term implies a sense of lost history rediscovered; a multitude of stories long-forgotten being pieced together in forensic detail through material remnants and their arrangements. In this chapter, we explore less a Foucauldian and more a literal interpretation of archaeology – as an academic discipline with a particular set of ontologies, epistemologies and empirical insights. We read archaeological scholarship through the ‘alien’ lens of geography, not to crystallise an archaeological gaze that is supposedly better than geographical perspectives but instead to render our hitherto atomised disciplinary debates open to the possibilities that a conversation of the two may be of use to anarchist historical (and contemporary) geographies.

Of particular interest to us is a set of critical literatures in archaeology that can inform geographical understandings of the state and its multiple forms and trajectories. Through a critical discussion of archaeological treatments of the state, and drawing from a radical perspective that brings together Deleuzian philosophy and complexity theory, we develop a non-essentialist, anarchist and decolonial reading that can strengthen existing scholarship on what, elsewhere, we have termed *post-statist geographies*ⁱⁱ. It is our intention that this chapter will also contribute to future inter-/trans-disciplinary engagements between the two fields more broadly.

The chapter begins with a brief critical discussion of geographical studies on the state, identifying how geographical knowledges are subtly shaped by statist epistemologies, by drawing on previous works that outline our vision for post-statist geographies. Next, a brief discussion of archaeology and its key schools of thought is followed by three key themes in which we seek to draw from a number of emerging strands of contemporary critical archaeology. The first theme concerns the foundations of the state, considering not only its origins but also its institutional structures and relations. In this section, we argue that drawing from archaeology can help to highlight the state’s fragility and contingency, and unsettle the perceived certainty of the state as a permanent, natural and universal fixture in society. Second, building on these foundations, we discuss the ontological underpinnings of the state as a colonial and Eurocentric concept, and question the singular notion of *the* state as one of a diversity of polities that have existed in the past or could exist in the future. By decentring the state from our ontologies and narratives of political organisation, we can decolonise the way

we think about it and identify alternatives. In the third theme, we discuss the contributions of archaeology to understanding the state as a mode of coercion and domination, as well as a focal point of both pre-emptive and ongoing resistance. In concluding, while recognising the limitations of archaeological scholarship, we explore how these contributions can signal an important non-essentialist shift in geographical understandings of the state.

Statism and beyond in geography

Despite Agnew's seminal work on the 'territorial trap'ⁱⁱⁱ, in which he criticised scholars for failing to question the solidity of state borders in analyses of international relations, it has taken quite some time for geographers to engage substantially with the structuring role of the state in our thinking. In recent years, geographers have made significant strides in rethinking the state as a complex assemblage of "prosaic"^{iv} and "ordinary"^v relations, operating not simply through coercive violence^{vi} but also more subtle mechanisms of ordering, aid, guidance, measurement and smart technologies^{vii}. These relations regulate and securitise the movement of people, goods and capital at the borders of the state, but they also operate within the micro-spaces of everyday life (e.g. homes, bodies)^{viii}, as well as far into the territories of states elsewhere^{ix}. As such, the notion of sovereignty^x – often considered to be a central facet of state modes of power – is increasingly recognised by geographers as profoundly disrupted by the very conduct of states themselves. However, within these debates, definitional issues continue to plague the state and how we experience it empirically.

The growing complexity of many analyses serves to underline the profoundly vague, slippery concept of the state. This is complicated further by the augmented role of global and supra-regional neoliberal institutions and agreements in shaping the parameters of state-scale governance and creating a "variegated"^{xi} meshwork of multi-scalar *de facto* regulatory regimes within what are formally understood as *de jure* singular state spaces^{xii}. In tandem with these uncertainties there has been a growing acknowledgement of the ways in which so-called "state-centrism" has limited and shaped geographical imaginations^{xiii}. For example, Moisio and Paasi deploy relationality as a notion that can help to overcome the fetishisation of monolithic imaginaries of state sovereignty in geopolitics literatures. For these authors, their priority is to more effectively "reflect on how the state perpetually regionalises or territorialises the lives of its citizens in state spaces" and recognise how "state spatial transformation is inescapably connected with certain policy transfers/policy mobilities"^{xiv}. Juliet Fall's powerful critique of the naturalisation of state borders is another example, in which the author dismantles the foundations of economics scholars' conceptions of space-as-container, outlining how "[r]eification, naturalisation, and fetishisation of boundaries happen simultaneously"^{xv} through discursive and policy constructions of economic and material spaces.

Despite these developments, there continue to be problematic assumptions embedded at the root of geographical treatments of the state. We have discussed these critical issues in depth elsewhere^{xvi}, but a number of central themes stand out. Perhaps the most striking point is that scholars critical of state-centrism have rarely taken their important concerns beyond the realm of critique, remaining within a broadly statist paradigm rather than develop new ways of knowing the world that step outside the state-centric framework they rightly criticise. This, however, is not due to an explicit support for state-building or nationalist efforts; instead, this overall scarcity of conceptual innovation stems, in our view, from a series of unarticulated statist myths, which underpin most geographical (and popular) understandings of the state.

These myths of the state discursively render it as natural, efficient, eternal, politically neutral, and the only possible counterbalance to free-market capitalism. As such, this silent statism is a largely unarticulated epistemological ‘fix’ that undermines and excludes forms of knowledge, and modes of knowledge production, that operate according to logics beyond a Eurocentric statist framework.

In seeking to destabilise, deconstruct and *overcome* this statist paradigm, then, an intellectual project of developing *post-statist* geographies is necessary. Identifying how the logics of statism operates in our structures of knowing is a necessary first step, and anarchism is the central school of thought from which we can draw ideas and inspiration^{xvii}. A particular concern is the positioning of the state as a reference point around which knowledge is constructed. This has a variety of problems, most obviously reinforcing colonial relations of power within and between states, in which a modern statist paradigm – with coercive power operating from a central point of authority – is mobilised as both the assessment method and the ideal-type of any form of organisation.

In this chapter, we are particularly concerned with the way statist knowledge regimes tend to produce strictly delimited temporal and institutional imaginaries of how polities may be organised. Reading geographical questions through contemporary archaeological literatures, we suggest, can add important empirical and conceptual substance to a post-statist project, as well as shedding new light on the geographies of the state more generally. In doing so, we seek to build a framework for understanding social change that decentres the modern, Eurocentric state form and opens up more plural, anarchistic ontologies of social and political organisation.

Archaeology: when spaces and times collide

Archaeology is the study of material artefacts, bodies and structures to analyse and understand past societies. Although archaeology is necessarily linked to the past, it covers the full spectrum of human existence, from the Palaeolithic Era (beginning around 2,500,000 BCE) to the present day. Despite clear overlaps between historical geography and archaeology in terms of sharing some common methods (e.g. archival research) and research questions, there has been relatively little effort among human geographers to bring the two disciplinary traditions together. This is in contrast to physical geography, which has developed the field of geoarchaeology to integrate the two disciplines around archaeological concerns, although most of this work centres on geomorphological and paleoecological techniques and perspectives, where positivist methodologies prevail. This is similar to landscape archaeology, where Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and geophysics are used to reconstruct past landscapes in order to analyse changing populations, cultures, economic activities and relations of power.

There are, however, some works that integrate a human geography analysis. Lisa Hill has been notable in this regard, arguing that “there are many commonalities shared by these disciplines”^{xviii}. Hill notes that in the Anglophone world the two fields have shared common intellectual trajectories since the 1950s and 60s, first embracing empiricism, then positivism, before the gradual emergence of critical and poststructuralist thought from the 1980s onwards^{xix}. Hill goes so far as to suggest that something akin to what geographers understand as non- or more-than-representational theory is a commonly held viewpoint among

archaeologists. Likewise, echoing Marston et al.'s^{xx} geographical ideas, “[t]he idea that the world is ontologically flat is now old news to many within the archaeological discipline”^{xxi}.

Although the centrality of these alternative ontologies in archaeological literatures may be somewhat overstated by Hill, in recent years two key schools of thought in archaeology have emerged in contrast to the 'processual' or 'evolutionist' orthodoxy, both focusing on contestations and relations of power. Influenced by continental European social theory, 'post-processual' archaeology has heavily criticised the 'scientific' positivism of mainstream approaches. Initially driven by the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss, post-processual scholarship has become increasingly influenced (and autocritiqued) by poststructuralist ideas. Embracing the subjectivity embedded in interpretation, post-processual archaeology refuses objectivity and foregrounds a mode of analysis that draws from both materialism and idealism to produce knowledges that are fundamentally oriented towards understanding human agency^{xxii}.

Contemporary materialist, or Marxist, archaeology is also a rejection of the positivist and 'a-political' methods of processual approaches, but draws its inspiration from a historical materialism that foregrounds the analysis of changing relations of production and power over time. Unlike post-processual archaeologists, these scholars follow a dialectical theory of history and understand the agency of peoples and societies to be bound up with dynamic struggles over material and economic relations^{xxiii}. What these two schools share, however, is a rejection of positivism and an explicitly politicised conception of archaeology as a mode of social and historical analysis which foregrounds the way past lives, cultures and polities were shaped by often complex and shifting relations of power.

Importantly, both also share a recognition that these histories can play a pivotal role in constructing or critiquing dominant power relations in the present^{xxiv}. As we shall see, these critical schools of archaeology are not without some relatively major problems for broader efforts to construct post-statist frameworks, but they do help us to uncover other ways of viewing the state within a much longer timescale and a more heterodox and fine-grained understanding of the constitution of polities. Building on this latter point, we later engage with scholarship drawing from Deleuzian and complexity theory that presents neither an essentialist nor reductionist approach to the archaeological. Moreover, as we will analyse later, an issue that crosses these different perspectives is a common attitude towards truth, which reflects certain forms of understanding in critical archaeologies^{xxv}. The remainder of the chapter explores these possibilities in more depth.

Complexity and evolution: challenging the foundations of the state

Perhaps the most profound difference between geographical and archaeological treatments of the state is the most obvious distinction. Human geographers articulate the state as a given; as a constant (if uneven) presence in geographical studies and debates. The archaeological record, however, demonstrates that the state – indeed *any* formalised hierarchical structure or logic of social organisation – is a relatively new phenomenon. The earliest states^{xxvi} only began to emerge patchily (and often initially as cities) as recently as 3,000 BCE^{xxvii}, and the modern state studied by geographers has only been the dominant system of organising and managing polities and territories globally since the late colonial period, i.e. for little more than 200 years^{xxviii}. When we recognise these facts, two important observations emerge: first,

that the state is a relatively new addition to human societies; and second, that states have both *beginnings and ends*.

If we explore these in more depth, there is a great deal more to be said. Exactly how states come about is a topic of considerable debate, but a number of key factors commonly influenced this process, especially the emergence of elites, the threat or experience of war, resource conflicts and urbanisation^{xxxix}. Contrary to popular accounts and assumptions^{xxx}, population growth has been shown to have relatively little impact on state formation^{xxxii}. In many cases, a number of different factors are believed to have contributed simultaneously to state formation, but the emergence of *inequality* is what produced the conditions in which the first states formed. With inequality came the perceived necessity to protect the new hierarchical order and the accumulated influence of elites through the creation of professional standing armies and bureaucratisation of social organisation, often in collaboration with or drawing from religious and spiritual authorities^{xxxiii}.

Despite the powerful nexus of new social organisation, religious affinities, and coercive power, very few states – be they early or modern – have lasted more than a few hundred years^{xxxiii}. Crucially, however, the collapse or decline of states does not mean the collapse or decline of the societies from which they emerged^{xxxiv}. Across archaeology, the notion of 'generations' of states has become a common term referring to the succession of state-building efforts and subsequent collapses within a given region. For example, Rogers' study of several generations of states in eastern Inner Asia (c. 2,000 BCE to the late 18th Century AD) indicates the contingency and fragility of the state form as only one of many modes of organising the steppe polities during the studied period. Rogers concluded that

it may be valuable to look at... state formation as more than a point of origin, and instead consider it as a source of constraints and ultimately systems of value that formed the social continuity, discontinuity, and disjunctures integral to the formation of states. [...] [S]tatecraft as a process does not necessarily imply continuity of economy or cultural practice [but] a very important factor that does tie together the regional approach to state formation is continuity within the ideological patterns used by elites to establish and legitimate control, otherwise termed *social power*.^{xxxv}

What Rogers and others^{xxxvi} suggest, then, is that the state is part of a much longer temporal trajectory. Long-term continuity within their respective polities is underpinned not by identifiable, discrete state structures (which regularly come and go) but by much more 'organic' cultural and ideological affinities that are periodically mobilised strategically by emergent elites. State formation is therefore characterised not only by possibility but at least as much by *constraint*, since deeply-held norms and values persist or develop independently of different state generations, and aspiring state leaders must shape their own ruling ideologies to fit these much stronger affinities. And then, even if a polity has been 'captured' by the statist logics of these aspiring elites, the state may not survive for long.

In this context, archaeologists have been keenly aware of the sheer diversity of state forms. Rather than identify a singular notion of *the* state, evolutionary and processual archaeological theory identified a whole host of state-related terms to try and gather the huge diversity of social organisation under the umbrella of the state. They refer to 'petty states', 'segmentary states', 'city-states', 'polycentric states', 'statelets', 'peer polities', 'peer statelets', among many

others^{xxxvii}. This well-meaning effort was drawn from an important contribution made by archaeology, namely that what we call states have in most cases throughout human history not been the dominating, territorially contiguous, bureaucratically integrated, militarily singular institutions – characterised by isomorphic polities, bureaucracies, and economies – that we live in today^{xxxviii}. In fact, most states (especially before European colonialism) were weak, uneven, unstable and heterarchical, often playing a minimal or highly contested role in their subjects' daily lives. By identifying new terms to classify this jumble of institutional relations, archaeologists have sought to better understand the diversity of state forms.

Efforts to develop a typology of state forms, however, has been critiqued by those who view itemised lists of discrete characteristics as actually serving to obscure the true nature of the state as a manifestation of a certain set of social relations. This is an important point, since not only does it parallel important state-theoretic developments in geography^{xxxix}, but also because such typologies reify the state as an eternal reference point from which we must define all other societies:

[T]here is the very real danger that we are trying to 'fit' our archaeological research on past societies into existing evolutionary typologies, rather than find out how far past social forms were similar or different from those known in the ethnographic record.^{xl}

This attitude being critiqued is precisely the kind of essentialism that we wish to avoid, since it is both empirically incorrect and allows the notion of the state to be weaponised by a linear imaginary of progress from 'savages' or 'primitives' (stateless societies) to 'civilisation' (state societies). Moreover, the fact that archaeology's focus on material remains leads to an overemphasis on sedentary populations means other forms of social organisation among migratory or nomadic societies are obscured. As a society becomes more complex, so it is implied, the closer it gets to the ideal form of social organisation, that is, the modern Eurocentric state. As González-Ruibal explains, "[t]he archaeological invention of the concept of 'Prehistory' in the mid-19th Century... identifies 'Prehistory' as time that preceded authentic (state) history"^{xli}, thus implicitly rendering any logic of social organisation preceding the modern state fundamentally *inauthentic*. Although archaeologists rarely integrate it explicitly into their theorising^{xlii}, the statism of the archaeological orthodoxy represents a deeply colonial logic.

Nevertheless, scholars risk falling foul of their own critiques, in trying to read a diverse range of past societies through their modern lens^{xliii}. A related weakness is the archaeological binary that is drawn between egalitarian and complex societies. The former refers to societies in which little or no identifiable authority is wielded by any individual or group over others, whereas the latter refers to societies with two or more social strata. The rationale behind the distinction is understandable, but in practice 'complexity' is used as a code-word for *hierarchy*. Scant attention is paid to the possibility that complexity can be manifested in multiple ways beyond hierarchy and stratification. The outcome of this simplistic binary is that because egalitarianism is perceived as anathema to the state^{xliv} and the state is associated with modern societies, the principle of egalitarian social organisation is also necessarily positioned as inherently incompatible with contemporary society. In other words, this archaeological discourse confines egalitarian and non-state logics of organisation to the distant past.

What, then, of the broader contributions of archaeology to understanding the state's foundations? Despite problematic elements (which are critically explored later), two important points can be made. First, in identifying the vast diversity of logics and structures that run across polities, we must recognise the fallacy of seeking to construct an ahistorical notion of a singular, identifiable state. Assigning an eternal 'essence' to what a state is – a set of empirically measurable characteristics – ultimately plays into a deeply problematic colonial and modern discourse of progress. Second, it is equally troublesome to seek to break the notion down into a range of different state forms, since the definition becomes so broad that it loses analytical usefulness. Geographers' definitions of the state tend also to focus on state characteristics^{xlv}, and in this regard the emerging efforts^{xlvi} to understand the state and related concepts (e.g. sovereignty, territory) as a set of social relations could be more productive. Likewise, our own efforts to focus not on the state but on *statism* – as a set of organisational logics^{xlvii} – is, we feel, another way of developing a more 'relational' view of the state.

Following from this, it is important to attune ourselves as geographers to a far longer and more diverse sense of the temporality of human societies. Archaeological methodologies articulate multiple intersecting temporal fields and chronologies – ranging from gross (e.g. ceramic phases, C14 dating), medium-grained (e.g. stratigraphic analysis of floors and buildings) and fine-grained (e.g. texts) – to build a picture of the multiple rhythms and processes cross-cutting a particular place^{xlviii}. Perhaps more importantly, whereas geographical imaginaries tend to implicitly understand the state as a constant presence in all societies, building in an archaeological understanding of states as contingent, time-bound and the results of conscious effort by certain groups, serves to destabilise the seemingly eternal temporality of the state. Through this, it may be possible to open up new theoretical and methodological perspectives that put the state in its rightful historical place, not as an end-point or pinnacle, but as one of a multitude of organisational forms and logics that have existed and may exist in the future.

Ontological limits on the conception of the state

As we stress at the beginning of this paper, we consider the shift from an epistemological to an ontological level a significant matter. Since one of our objectives is to decolonise and decentre our way of thinking about the state in geography, a reflection on the naturalisation of statist logics is at the forefront of our reflection. We find in archaeology an important ally in this, since it allows us to examine different experiences in social organisation throughout human history and grasp the complexity of these forms and their representation. But also, as we will address, it gives us more data to transcend our exclusive universalities and go beyond our own codes to understand our present^{xlix}.

Clearly, archaeology recognises and explores the blurred lines between civilisation and barbarism, and documents the variety of forms that surpass these concepts. Even so, many archaeological perspectives and their anthropological interpretation are defined by reductionist thinking and typologies. More than that, as a definitional problem, we know that much like geography, the discipline of archaeology originated as part of the expansionist and colonialist politics and discourses of states. But there are alternative proposals that convey a creative way to understand archaeology from the “traditional”, positivist, official, neo-evolutionary, etc., perspectives. Against this hegemonic archaeological colonialism, we follow Alonso's¹ outline of critical archaeologies. These are archaeologies that are against

reductionism, not only of the representation of past societies but also against the narrowing of thought; archaeologies that tend to refuse and confront the reproduction of inequalities and the status quo.

Alonso^{li} critiques processual, post-processual and symmetrical archaeologies since from his perspective they do not succeed in transcending the constraints of colonialist thinking. For example, he enquires: “how does this epistemology work?” He answers that it serves to “hid[e] power inequalities derived from the privileged research locations from which the archaeological discourse is produced and from which it is demonstrated (to ourselves, society and institutions) the apparent justice and equity of our work as researchers (and, incidentally, to accumulate cultural/academic capital)”.

This anthropological perspective takes a position that radically changes the point of reference; as Marin Jones^{lii} explains, an archaeology that considers the existence of an “outside” past, something that needs to be discovered throughout a concrete epistemology, generates an image of that past that allows its political essentialisation and appropriation. This process entails a lineal progress, which is the fundamental basis of teleological time in official histories.

For the latter, we follow some suggestive ideas about truth and the production of knowledge from an archaeological perspective. Knowledge does not function to reconstruct or “interpret” but to construct something new from the archaeological record^{liii}. Alonso draws on a Deleuzian perspective to introduce other ways of engaging with knowledge construction and the understanding of our world. He argues that “our ways of knowing reality (epistemology) are directly linked to political questions related to what and how reality is constructed and the knowledge that dwells in it (ontology)”. Thence, we have the problem of truth: since all knowledge is ontological, it is derived from the circumstances of every epoch, culture, person, etc. What Alonso^{liv} makes evident is that archaeology should not look “for the truth of things, but to understand its articulations, its organisation, limits and ways of construction”, in such a way that “different attitudes towards truth involve different ways to understand a critical archaeology”. So, “truth is not something ‘outside’ for someone to discover it, but it is constructed”. This refers us back to what the anarchist Gustav Landauer proposed in his reflection on the Mauthner’s book *Critique of Language*: “truth is an absolutely negative word, negation in itself, and for that fact is the theme and goal of every science whose hardwearing results are always of a negative nature”^{lv}. On this point, Landauer identifies how the construction of knowledge generated by Modern/Western science reproduces social inequalities, and therefore the urgent need for other ways of thinking.

Therefore truth is an emerging process, and following Alonso, archaeology should not seek to reconstruct the past *but to construct a new past*; and that is our main idea when we entitle this paper “future pre-histories” as part of an ongoing process to critically examine the state and the statisms it produces. In this sense, Gallego^{lvi} considers that “scientific thinking is not to correspond what is seen with what is said, nor to order or systematise what is conceived, but to problematise, to link an ensemble of singularities throughout their differences”. Later, we examine how some proposals have had this effect and help us to move forward in our understanding of the state.

As we have discussed, these critical archaeologies can challenge and usefully inform our conception of state formation from a decolonial perspective, whereby the contingency,

variability and discontinuous transformation of social organisation are foregrounded, as well as contesting the foundations of knowledge regarding the state. Elsewhere^{lvii}, we have examined decolonial perspectives in depth, related to our post-statist ideas. However, we engage with this perspective for its focus on decentring dominant world-views (even Western anarchism^{lviii}) and epistemic paradigms acknowledging “other” knowledges as equally valid and the intersectionality (race, gender, patriarchy, class) that traverse the imposition of modern/Western perspectives. This could be read as a relativist/postmodern analysis, but what we present here is a vindication of a critical, anarchist perspective; an alternative that opposes hierarchical or coercive imposition of a uniform/hegemonic/official way of discovering and understanding reality. Rather than drift into a hegemonic relativism, we follow Adorno^{lix} when he postulates that relativism is “the brother of absolutism [and] it approaches a doctrine” – it is, in all, a limitation of thought. Instead, we need to acknowledge subjectivity as a perspective that has a particular localisation from which knowledge is acceded and the world is conceived as a place from which reality is experienced^{lx}.

Again, however, we are not considering the world as an ensemble of different views where all have found *the* truth or a piece of it. What we stand for is that in the multiplicity of experiences we will find the possibility to join together and cross-reference complementarily different world images and transcend our own limits to understand the complexity and diversity of the world^{lxi}. It is in this space where geographers might usefully draw from the partial, fragmentary experience of working with the archaeological record in seeking not ‘whole’ truths but cross-fertilising fragments of lived experience to construct new pasts on other, post-statist knowledges, to bring alternative knowledges and imaginaries into view. Thus, returning to Echeverría^{lxii}, to transcend our codes and exclusive universalities, we must maintain that all world-visions are necessarily incomplete and ignorant of many aspects of other realities^{lxiii}. Our task is to render this ‘un-knowability’ visible and explicit, and to bring different situated knowledges and visions into conversation.

Following these perspectives we find archaeologists could help geographers to challenge the actual/official/hegemonic understanding of the state. Moreover, we recognise the necessity of an ontological level of analysis in geography that can articulate the discipline with other disciplines or philosophies, as Deleuzian philosophy might, but also with other geographies from other world-visions altogether. For Alonso^{lxiv} “through Deleuze, philosophy and archaeology can fit together with a politically-aware complexity theory which could allow us to overtake the challenges of scientific reductionism” and also “works side by side with social movements in a horizontal manner”^{lxv}.

This said, we are not proposing engagement with the ideas of Deleuze (and Guattari) to construct a “Deleuzian geography”, since there is a number of important political issues related to Deleuze that would need to be addressed in relation to anarchist and post-statist geographies. Nevertheless, some elements of Alonso’s Deleuzian reading of archaeology are fruitful. For example, “Deleuzian philosophy embraces immanence and rejects transcendence to give account of transformation and the emergence of the novel from efficient causalities and external relations to their terms”^{lxvi}. The concept of *immanence* fights the domination of a certain world-vision and helps more open and decentred perspectives to emerge. It also allows the inclusion of complexity, not simply as part of society’s linear progress, but in terms of its incommensurable diversity and plurality. Thus, “archaeology could apprehend this complexity without the fear of losing explicative potential”^{lxvii}, and incorporate the “heterogeneity of numerous perspectives about the real”^{lxviii}. In the next section, we draw on

Pierre Clastres' work to explore how these proposals might relate to the violent power relations involved in statism and state formation.

Contesting statist logics of power

We have argued that an important contribution made by archaeology has been to render the state as only one of many political structures, relations and effects of non-linear societal change. This heterodox understanding of 'the real' allows us to reposition the state and the statist logics on which it is founded as marginalia of a much bigger and more diverse human story. It also calls us to interrogate more closely the circumstances in which states arose. There is no doubt, even in orthodox archaeological literatures, that the authority of states was rooted not in their positive contributions to societies (e.g. in protecting people from a 'savage' life in a 'state of nature') but in the cultural, moral and spiritual codes that elites mobilised and weaponised against their own subjects to claim legitimacy^{lxxix}. Likewise, rather than collapsing into an abyss of chaos and self-destruction, periods after the decline of states and empires were in many ways a story of societal resilience; showing the continuity of those underlying norms and affinities as persisting *in spite of* the existence of a state^{lxxx}.

However, one of the main challenges in relating geography to archaeology is the interpretation of collected data. Since a colonial perspective reproduces inequalities through the reproduction of actual social schemes projected in the past, the social theory used for interpretation needs to be inherently rebellious against this dominant perspective. As Alonso argues, social theory "has been chiefly an accomplice of the status quo spreading [a colonial perspective and] categories to all fields with positivism working as a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' which makes the world fit its preconceived moulds"^{lxxxi}.

One work that has the power to creatively problematise these issues is Pierre Clastres' studies on 'societies against the state'^{lxxii}. Clastres' ethnographic work demonstrated not simply how stateless societies rejected the structures of the state as a mode of governance but also – and crucially – actively and pre-emptively resisted any incursions of statist foundational logics or rationales. Not only societies *without* the state, then, these were societies *against* the state. Instead of developing his ideas, which we have already analysed elsewhere^{lxxiii}, we will briefly examine the repercussions for the possibilities of using this work in post-statist geography as a framework for reading archaeology differently and bringing its insights into the post-statist project.

It is significant, as Campagno explains^{lxxiv}, that very few archaeologists of the Antique period have used Clastres' ideas for their analysis. However, there are several exceptions, including the edited work by the former author. It is clear in these studies that Clastres' reflections allows scholars to think about societies of the distant past in other ways, and to understand the origin and paths of states through a different frame of reference. We will allude to two main ideas which confront the popular misconception of societies without state as lacking something, as incomplete, and leaving political complexity to developed/ Western societies.

First, he exposes the inequalities of previous visions by presenting a new problematisation to consider the question of how the state comes into being. What Clastres achieves is to open new questionings; he has addressed a new problem in the definition of the state beyond previous perspectives (i.e. not only to interrogate the origin and form of the state but also to denaturalise its ordinary myths). These are questions that allow new knowledge to be

produced in a way that undermines the centrality of the state as a reference point. Secondly, Clastres presented a new perspective to understand and reflect on the construction of societies through state formation; that is, “to understand societies ‘with the state’ from the perspective of societies ‘against the state’, and no more the societies ‘without state’ from the view of the state”^{lxxv}. It allows us to think of societies against state not as incomplete but radically different.

Considering the evidence of resistance against the state on the basis of Clastres’ work, it is possible to critique and negate the ‘naturalness’ of states, and societies’ allegedly inherent desire for them as a kind of predetermined telos. Thus we follow Gledhill^{lxxvi} when he asserts that “It would rather be a matter of seeing resistance to state formation as the inherent human tendency, and a transition beyond the absolute rank chiefdom to ‘the state’ based on ‘permanent coercive power’ as a rare event dependent on unusual circumstances”. From the latter, archaeological records and practices can also be used to justify and support counternarratives and resistances in the present^{lxxvii}.

Lastly, although our main concern is archaeology, it is notable that anthropological frames and social theories often define archaeological interpretation of data. As such, echoing the proposals analysed through the text, we emphasise ‘other’ experiences and discourses from contemporary peoples who can provide alternative treatments and visions of spatio-temporal and political organisation. From there we can in horizontal dialogue re-read our specific and situated realities across difference. We can turn to other experiences of communalism that fight the state and prefigure new spatio-temporalities.

With this in mind, we finish with two reflections from Indigenous intellectuals. Jaime Martínez Luna^{lxxviii}, a Zapotecan thinker, asks how the next generation will achieve a continent without borders, without states. He argues that “we will achieve that, if we reproduce and strengthen our ways of living that are the solutions to State’s ubiquity and the private property that it defends, appropriating the planet, the land, which is of every being that inhabits it”. This relates closely to the (Western) anarchist tradition of prefiguration, in which a conscious reworking of social and organisational relations in the here-and-now is what constitutes revolutionary activity; building a new world through everyday actions and interactions. How post-statist thinking (informed by Clastres) could help present social struggles is further indicated by Ailton Krenak^{lxxix}, activist of the *Unión de Naciones Indígenas de Brasil*, who affirms that: “Pierre Clastres [...] concluded that we are societies that naturally organised in a way against the State; there is no ideology in that, we are “against” naturally, like the wind that makes its own path, like the water of a river that makes its own path, we are making our way naturally which does not support that institution as fundamental for our health, education and happiness”. This hints at how we might mobilise anthropological, archaeological and ethnoarchaeological material in concrete struggles over wellbeing and social justice, decentring the state not only from our knowledge systems but also our practical solutions.

Concluding comments: towards a non-essentialist notion of the state in geography

In this chapter, we have analysed and explored the anarchist possibilities embedded in a conversation between archaeology and geography on the subject of the state and its (pre-) histories. Rather than utilising the established anarchist canon, we have drawn primarily from a diverse range of radical, critical and decolonial thinkers to explore these possibilities. In

doing so, we have identified three key contributions. First, the relative vastness of the archaeological record can help to render the state not simply a fragile and contested institution – which is already well-documented in geography – but a young, impermanent and time-bound institution that is in fact an *anomaly* rather than the norm when considered in relation to the far longer temporal trajectory of human existence. This disrupts the linear perception of history as a unitary process that moves towards a singular end-point (i.e. the liberal capitalist state). Second, the contributions of archaeology are not to be taken at face value, and must be problematised through an awareness of the risks of inferring universalisable ‘truths’ from fragmentary evidence and the situated reference point of Eurocentric modernity. Finally, in our efforts to read geographical debates on the state through a post-statist lens, it is essential to attune ourselves to the voices and lived experiences of those societies and movements that live beyond and against the state. This may potentially include those existing ostensibly ‘within’ states but organising and collaborating through other logics, platforms and relations.

We are certain that the ideas presented have the capacity to enhance the possibilities for developing anarchist and post-statist geographies – both historical and contemporary – and allow for the inclusion of a fuller spectrum of organisational imaginaries in human experiences, societies and politics. The imperative to cooperatively construct knowledge across and beyond a multitude of reference points – among different societies, cultures, social movements, academic disciplines and beyond – is of particular relevance for mobilising insights for ‘real-life’ impact. The latter, we believe, will strengthen the interdisciplinarity of geography, but crucially it could also help to *un-discipline* geography in exciting new ways.

ⁱ Foucault, “Questions on geography”, p. 173.

ⁱⁱ See Barrera and Ince, “Post-statist epistemologies”; Ince and Barrera, “For post-statist geographies”.

ⁱⁱⁱ Agnew, “The territorial trap”.

^{iv} Painter, “Prosaic geographies of the state”.

^v Staeheli et al., “Dreaming the ordinary”.

^{vi} E.g. Boyce, Banister and Slack, “You and what army?”; Martin and Mitchelson, “Geographies of detention and imprisonment”.

^{vii} E.g. Clark, ‘The “life” of the state’; Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, “Governing temptation”; Staeheli et al, *op. cit.*

^{viii} E.g. Mountz, “Human smuggling”; Woodward and Bruzzone, “Touching like a state”.

^{ix} E.g. Silvey, “Transnational domestication”.

^x Mountz, “Reconfiguring geographies of sovereignty”.

^{xi} Brenner, Peck and Theodore, “Variegated neoliberalisation”.

^{xii} Sparke, “Political geographies of globalisation”.

^{xiii} Brenner, “Beyond state-centrism”; Häkli, “In the territory of knowledge”; Marston, “Space, culture, state”; Moisió and Paasi, “Beyond state-centricity”.

^{xiv} Moisió and Paasi, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

^{xv} Fall, ‘Artificial states?’, p. 146.

^{xvi} Barrera and Ince, *op. cit.*; Ince and Barrera, *op. cit.*

^{xvii} E.g. Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*; Barclay, *People without Government*; Heckert, “Sexuality as state form”; Landauer, “Weak statesmen, weaker people!”

^{xviii} Hill, “Human geography and archaeology”, p. 412.

^{xix} *Ibid.*

^{xx} Marston, Jones and Woodward, “Human geography without scale”.

^{xxi} Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

^{xxii} E.g. Shackel and Little, “Post-processual approaches”; Shanks, “Post-processual archaeology and after”.

-
- xxiii E.g. Chapman, *Archaeologies of Complexity*; Wurst, “The historical archaeology of capitalist dispossession”.
- xxiv E.g. McGuire, *Archaeology as Political Action*.
- xxv Alonso, “Flanqueando el procesualismo”.
- xxvi Indeed, as we discuss in more detail below, these early states were only states (in the modern sense) if we take a rather broad, unsophisticated and ahistorical definition of the term. Thus, decoupling complex polities from the notion of statehood is an important move in decentring the state from our imaginaries.
- xxvii Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State*, chapter 3.
- xxviii For a brief overview of colonial state-building and archaeological scholarship, see for e.g. González-Ruibal, “Colonialism and European archaeology”, p. 41-43.
- xxix E.g. Feinman, “The emergence of social complexity”; Rogers, “The contingencies of state formation”.
- xxx E.g. Diamond, *El Mundo Hasta Ayer*, p. 26.
- xxxi Feinman, op cit.
- xxxii Chapman, op cit.
- xxxiii Marcus and Feinman, *Archaic States*.
- xxxiv See McAnany and Yoffee, *Questioning Collapse*.
- xxxv Rogers, op cit., p. 257-258.
- xxxvi E.g. Chapman, op. cit.; Tilly, “War making and state making”; Yoffee, “The power of infrastructures”.
- xxxvii See, for e.g. Marcus and Feinman, op cit., p. 10.
- xxxviii E.g. ibid.; Rogers, op cit.; Yoffee, “Infrastructures”; Yoffee, *Myths*.
- xxxix Painter, op cit.
- xl Chapman, op cit., p. 196.
- xli González-Ruibal, op cit., p. 41-42.
- lxii See, however, Lydon and Rizvi, *Handbook of Postcolonial Archaeology*.
- lxiii In Chapman's case, class struggle
- lxiv This belief, at least, would find sympathy among anarchists.
- lxv E.g. Flint and Taylor, *Political Geography*, p. 137; Jessop, *State Power*; Robinson, op cit.
- lxvi E.g. Jones, “State encounters”; Painter, op cit.
- lxvii Ince and Barrera, op cit.
- lxviii Marcus and Feinman, op cit., p. 12.
- lxix Echeverría, *Definición de la cultura*.
- l Alonso, op cit.
- li Alonso, op cit., p.28.
- lii Cited in Alonso, op cit., p. 18.
- liii Alonso, op cit., p.17.
- liv Alonso, op cit., p. 16-17.
- lv Landauer, *Escepticismo y mística.*, p. 89.
- lvi Gallego, “Deleuze y la filosofía”, p. 72.
- lvii See Barrera and Ince, “Post-statist epistemologies”
- lviii The work of Ramnath places an interesting critic about this. Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism*,
- lix Adorno, *Dialéctica Negativa.*, p. 42.
- lx Alonso, op cit., p. 20.
- lxi Landauer, op cit.
- lxii Echeverría, *Definición de la cultura*.
- lxiii Santos, *Refundación del Estado*.
- lxiv Alonso, op cit., p. 14.
- lxv Alonso, op cit., p. 16.
- lxvi Alonso, op cit., p. 18.
- lxvii Alonso, op cit., p. 28
- lxviii Alonso, op cit., p. 22.
- lxix E.g. Chapman, op cit.; Yoffee, op cit.
- lxx E.g. McAnany and Yoffee, *Questioning Collapse*.
- lxxi Alonso, op cit., 15.
- lxxii Clastres, *Society Against the State*.
- lxxiii Barrera and Ince, op cit.
- lxxiv Campagno, “Introducción. Pierre Clastres”.
- lxxv Campagno, op cit., 21.
- lxxvi Gledhill, “Introduction: the comparative”, p. 9.

^{lxxvii} E.g. McGuire, op cit.; Morehart, “What if the Aztec empire never existed?”
^{lxxviii} Martínez, “Comunalizar la vida”, p. 2.
^{lxxix} Krenak, “O eterno retorno”.