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# Archaeology of no names? The social productivity of anonymity in the archaeological information process

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## abstract

The portrait gallery of archaeology presents a conspicuous mix of discoveries of the great characters of the past and an everyday labour of faceless individuals of the past and present in the service of 'archaeology' and 'archaeological knowledge'. The aim of this text is to discuss the premises and conditions of why and how the anonymisation happens in the archaeological information process and the forms of social productivity (or consequences) of the anonymous moves. Anonymity becomes a boundary object that is authored in the course of the switchings from netdom to another to emerge as a particular type of social relation and a constituent of a social imaginary of *being archaeological*.

## Introduction

The portrait gallery of archaeology presents a conspicuous mix of the discoveries of the great characters of the past and an everyday labour of faceless individuals of the past and present. As Fagan notes in an article published in *History Today*, most archaeologists are working 'in quiet anonymity, far from the blaring headlines' (Fagan, 2007: 14) even if public relations officers would make valiant efforts to promote their work and even though the popular image of archaeology is that of the long gone romantic figures discovering the magnificent remains of lost civilisations. Even if archaeology shifted from being the domain of solitary luminaries to being an effort of a college of experts (Bahn, 1996) and later on, increasingly a mixture of expert and community effort (Marshall, 2002), the

question of having or not having a name and an identity still has implications for how archaeological information is used and produced (Huvila, 2006, 2014a).

The aim of this text is to present some tentative ruminations on the premises and conditions of why and how this anonymisation happens in the archaeological information process and the forms of social productivity (or consequences) of the anonymous moves. Anonymity, in this particular context, means that archaeological information is archaeological, being of archaeology rather than interpretations presented by specific individuals. The context of this discussion is to be found in (North) European and Anglo-American 'archaeology', archaeological information processes and archaeological knowledge production that refer to an assemblage of archaeological practices in society, how archaeological information comes into being and how archaeological knowledge is produced by a wide variety of actors in society. The current framing of the global issue of naming is obviously a simplification that simultaneously covers only a part and fails to embrace the entire spectrum of archaeologies from commercial to academic and community contexts and the international nuances that influence its ramifications (cf. e.g. Demoule, 2012; Schlanger and Aitchison, 2010; Shepherd, 2015). The theoretical underpinnings of this study borrow from contemporary theorising on anonymity, the notion of boundary objects of Susan Star and James Griesemer (1989), systems thinking of Harrison White (2008) and the theory of writing of Jack Goody (1986). It argues that the 'archaeologicality' and in the essence, the existence of archaeology as a social practice is constituted by anonymity and its (social) productivity.

## Anonymity and its consequences

Even if many actors remain unattributed in archaeological information process as a whole, the type of anonymity practices related to the scope of this article are characterisable through a social rather than an onomastic lens of understanding anonymity. In this perspective, rather than referring to a binary state of namelessness (e.g. Highmore, 2007), anonymity is a social (cf. Nissenbaum, 1999), or as Scott and Orlikowski (2014) underline, a sociomaterial relation. Leaning on Barad's (2007) sociomateriality they see anonymity as 'an ongoing accomplishment that is enacted in different ways in specific material-discursive practices at particular times and places' (Scott and Orlikowski, 2014: 880). Anonymity can be a norm (e.g. Griffin, 1999) or it can be engaged in the forming of a dissident form of engagement (Drake, 2011).

As the editors of this special issue note, there is conspicuously little empirical research on anonymity and its consequences. Perhaps, in some contexts,

anonymity is taken by its face value to the extent that it is left unproblematised. In others, like in job printing, public administration (Gitelman, 2014), or archaeology, it has become institutionalised and thereby an ubiquitous part of the infrastructure (Star and Ruhleder, 1996) so that it becomes difficult to recognise as anonymity. It becomes an inherent part of the practices and things as in case of the relative anonymity of documentary art (cf. Highmore, 2007). At the same time, because virtually everything including 'raw data' (as Carusi (2008) notes) is a representation, even the most apparent forms of anonymity are not absolute. Therefore, it is not necessarily surprising that anonymity is often debated when there is too much anonymity or that it is compromised or there is such a risk, for instance, because of technological and/or societal changes (Nissenbaum, 1999). For instance, Hays et al. (1997) note that the *lack* of anonymity makes it difficult for rural medical doctors not to be at work. In scholarship, the discussion on anonymity has often heated when itself, its significance or utility has been put under debate. This has happened also in the context of archaeology (e.g. Hammond, 1984; Ramundo, 2012) when anonymity has been perceived as a hindrance for a constructive dialogue or a guise for providing negative feedback on the basis of individuals, not their proposals.

As in the discussion of anonymity itself as a binary relation (Scott and Orlikowski, 2014), the characterisations of its consequences have tended to be rather categorical. Marx (1999) has compiled diverse benefits of full and partial anonymity and identifiability and notes that there are likely costs and gains in both. He names fifteen different factors including the possibilities to facilitate information flow, to encourage attention to the content of the message (rather than the messenger), to encourage reporting, information seeking, and obtaining self-help, to encourage action that might involve illegality, to individuals engaging in socially useful activities (e.g. donors), to protect major economic interests, to protect individuals and their persons, to facilitate judgments based on specific criteria (rather than a person), to protect reputation and possessions, to avoid persecution, and to encourage experimentation and risk-taking.

In spite of the general lack of empirical research on anonymity, there are examples of how anonymity and its implications have been discussed in different contexts. Many of the observations are parallel to the examples discussed by Marx (1999). For instance, both Garvey (2006) and Highmore (2007) exemplify how both anonymous and pseudonymous publications can be used to draw attention from their authors to their contents (either the message, or in case of Highmore, what lies behind the expressive purposes of the message) and contextualisation from the author to the genre. In Anglo-American newspaper publishing, impersonal voice and anonymity of journalists have been the norm as it was considered to give the stories a more authoritative voice (Reich, 2010). Today, when almost all authors

are identifiable (major exception being The Economist), anonymity may have an opposite impact (*ibid*.).

Lidsky and Cotter (2006) investigated the balance between the benefits and disadvantages of anonymous speech in the US legal setting. The perspective of the social productivity of anonymity has been earlier discussed briefly by Baumeister-Frenzel and collegaues (2010). They note that it is common to see anonymity as dangerous and anomalous whereas the productive potential of anonymity as a social form has been discussed very little. Instead of merely hindering reciprocity, anonymity enacts a new constellation of social imagination and practices related to the thinkable anonymous encounters of the anonymous egg (in the study of Konrad, 2005) and sperm donors (Baumeister-Frenzel et al., 2010) and their equally anonymous biological siblings. Terrall's (2003) discussion of anonymous scholarly publishing in 18th century France is another example of how anonymity allows authors to 'be absolutely nobody and to live absolutely nowhere; [..] [to be] everything and nothing; every sex and no sex' and gives readers a possibility for multiple readings of the texts (Terrall 2003: 108 citing Robert Chambers). Compared with anonymity of donations, the (in practice often relative and temporary) anonymity of authors gives them and their works a new life in the minds of the readers.

Even if the interest in anonymity and its consequences has been rather sporadic, the research undertaken so far demonstrates the plurality of social relations anonymity can enact. The plurality of its implications and premises makes the study of anonymity a truly interdisciplinary challenge (Brazier et al., 2004) whether anonymity is perceived as a norm or a topic of empirical interest. In this text, like in the studies relating to knowledge and information processes in general, anonymity forms a useful lens because, as Scott and Orlikowski note, 'it is a deeply relational concept that is constitutive of the production and use of knowledge in organizational phenomena' (2014: 877). Here the specific interest in anonymity stems from a strive to make sense of how 'archaeological' information comes into being and the anonymity practices embedded in the process.

## Anonymity and archaeological knowledge production

Before engaging in an in-depth discussion of the anonymity practices embedded in archaeological information processes, it is fair to point out that the predominant form of anonymity in the continuum of archaeological information relates to the namelessness of the subjects of archaeological research. Only in rare cases, even when archaeologists are working on very recent remains of human activity, is it possible to connect a material object to a named individual. These cases tend to be

highly exceptional and related to recent past or extraordinary discoveries and well-known individuals like Richard III of England (e.g. Kennedy and Foxhall, 2015) or pharaoh Tutankhamen (Carter and Mace, 1923). As Fagan (2007) notes, the strength of archaeology is to trace the life of the members of past societies like slaves, artisans and labourers, who remain anonymous to us and who seldom have found their way into the written or visual accounts of the past. This form of anonymity does not mean that archaeology would not be interested in agency, personhood and individuality. Quite the contrary, the notions can be useful in understanding the dynamics of past societies (e.g. Fowler, 2004; Knapp and Van Dommelen, 2008) even if, in practice, archaeology would only rarely able to study individual human beings known by their name.

While anonymity of past human beings may be considered as evident and unavoidable (even if in some cases it has been escalated by e.g. social inequalities, Wilkie, 2004), it is perhaps less obvious to non-archaeologists that investigators of our ancestors have a tendency to remain faceless and nameless, too. In the course of the archaeological information process, independent of the type or context of archaeological work (commercial, academic, public) and even more so in the societal contexts within which archaeology is practised, they mostly remain unidentified. Television documentaries, tourism and popular culture have contributed to the emergence of a public awareness and an image of 'archaeology' (Holtorf, 2007; Kehoe, 2007). The crux of this image is that it is not a very accurate representation of the actual work of archaeologists and it does not necessarily mean that archaeologists will be named or taken into account in the context of the societal processes that underpin the major part of archaeological work. In contrast, the (non-)anonymity of archaeologists is determined to a larger extent by policy and regulations. For instance, in the UK, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Flatman and Perring, 2013) positioned archaeology as a part of 'sustainable development' that together with local administration cuts has prompted urges to advocate for the visibility of professional archaeologists (e.g. Hinton, 2013). Instead of steering a 'heritage ship', archaeologists have 'boarded a much bigger vessel, occupying a single cabin somewhere below the deck' (Lennox, 2013: 31).

It is therefore possible to discern two faces of anonymity. One has already been documented and debated in the archaeological literature (e.g. Bradley, 2003; Hodder, 2000; Lucas, 2001; Tilley, 1989) and relates to the *primacy of field directors* (or in the case of large projects, the overall project directors, and in commercial archaeology, increasingly the operator or even land developer) as authors of their projects and their results. At least on an implicit level, the field directors and in some cases their superiors or employers are still not only seen as the owners of *their* data, but at the same time they are the principal, if not only, person associated

with *their* project. The personal attribution functions not only as a label, but also as a token of general trust concerning the reliability of observations and conclusions. It further serves as an indication of the use of certain methods and approaches, and as a pointer to a person to use as a source of further information. This articulation of a single authority does, however, at the same time anonymise all or most of the others in the excavation team that have been responsible for not only moving earth but for identifying finds, structures and features and their respective documentation. Everill (2012) has discussed this sense of anonymity in the context of British commercial archaeology in terms of the invisibility of the majority of the site staff from the post-excavation analysis and reporting of the findings. It is reinforced by the second sense of invisibility discussed by Everill (2012), that of the interchangeability of the ordinary site staff. As Lucas writes, 'there is a very large group of anonymous and silent archaeologists engaging in fieldwork in Britain and elsewhere today, who have no voice' Lucas (2001: 12). In some cases it can be obvious that the authorship rights of individual team members to a particular piece of data, specific interpretation or a part of the work have been violated either deliberately or because of the carelessness of their supervisors (Seidemann, 2003) but in most cases the often criticised anonymity (e.g. Bradley, 2003; Hodder, 2000; Lucas, 2001; Tilley, 1989) can be traced back to the conventions of archaeological work and how the distribution of the intellectual labour of interpreting and drawing conclusions functions in a field project.

There are examples of how certain archaeologists are attempting to fight back these tendencies on individual and collective levels in different branches of archaeology, including commercial (e.g. Everill, 2012), community (e.g. Holtorf, 2015) and academic contexts. The reflexive archaeology of Hodder (e.g. 2000; 2003) is perhaps the most cited approach, even if its principal aim is not to counter anonymity *per se* but to foreground reflection and interpretation on the field and engage all participants of an investigation project to do so. Besides Hodder, also others including, for instance, Tilley (1989), Lucas (2001) and Bradley (2003) have expressed similar views. As an example of a less conventional critique, David Webb's photo archive of archaeologists, the *Diggers alternative archive* is another attempt to counter the imbalance of how archaeology, a discipline of recording and documentation has neglected the documentation of itself (Witmore, 2007). However, as Witmore (2007) notes, Webb's visual approach of documenting archaeologists perpetuates the anonymity of photographed subjects. They are given a face but not necessarily a name. When the group effort is explicitly opened, it becomes obvious that a large number of people have contributed to an interpretation (e.g. Bradley, 2003).

However, perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, the debate on facelessness may not have affected the attribution as much as considerations of its kind. Even if expectations of objectivity and neutrality, and in a sense, anonymity, of individual archaeologists in the process have shifted when the predominant paradigms of archaeological scholarship have fluctuated between positivist and subjectivist theorising (Trigger, 1989), field practices have shown considerable resilience to change. Earlier culture-historical archaeology was centred on the person of the field director and his [sic!] subjective interpretations whereas the expansion and colloquialisation of archaeological fieldwork and the emergence of processual and scientific archaeology especially from the 1960s onwards shifted the focus away from subjects. Post-processualism and reflexivity from the late 1970s onwards lead to resurgence of subjects (Binford, 1964; Jensen, 2012; Trigger, 1989, 1992). As Baines and Brophy (2006) note, at present, there is a gap between the dominant, often rather positivist, documentation (versus interpretation) oriented and subsequently anonymising field practices, and the more theoretically oriented, often academic archaeology with a clearer interest in interpretation and its subjectivity. This does not mean that the authorship of field directors or the anonymity of their team would have changed.

The emergence of professional development-led archaeology as the predominant form of archaeological fieldwork in many European countries and, for instance, in the US and Canada has formalised the role of field directors and subordinated them to new, often more stringent guidelines, legislation and personal needs of securing continuing employment in an increasingly precarious labour market (e.g. Everill, 2012; Huvila, 2006, 2011; Zorzin, 2010). Field directors have also become more closely subordinated to their employers even if (with some precaution) it seems that the formal role of the field director as an author has remained relatively constant. Field directors might not be authors as *auteurs* of an *oeuvre* anymore but rather named professionals with certain liabilities and responsibilities regarding the project and its outcomes (cf. Huvila, 2012). There are indications that field directors might be losing their primacy and become a part of the invisible mass when the contractor becomes the entity with a name (e.g. Zorzin, 2010). When larger developers and infrastructure projects, for instance, Hydro-Québec (Zorzin, 2010) and the Crossrail project (Jackson, 2013), recruit archaeologists directly for their staff, it is legitimate to interrogate the role of these corporate archaeologists as new faces of the projects and ask whether the developers themselves might be turning into *auteurs* of archaeological knowledge. In the sense that developers have an opportunity to put pressure on archaeologists to work faster and cheaper (e.g. Goudswaard et al., 2012; Özdoğan, 2013; Vinton, 2013), they have a major influence on the produced knowledge. They also have an opportunity to use archaeological findings for polishing their image even if they would not directly claim authorship of archaeological knowledge.

Interesting exceptions to the colloquialisation of the role of field directors are popular culture and television documentaries (e.g. Holtorf, 2007; Thomas, 2013) that are still dominated by 'celebrity archaeologists'. For other team members, the changes in how projects and information are attributed have been similarly subtle. There is still 'a very large group of anonymous and silent archaeologists engaging in fieldwork' (Lucas, 2001: 12) namelessly participating in the making of archaeological information and knowledge.

In addition to the social evolution of archaeological work, also the tools and techniques of archaeology have influenced the authorship of individual archaeologists. As Hodder (1989) noted already a quarter of a century ago, before the digitisation of everyday archaeological practices, the shift towards more schematic, coded and technical drawings have replaced dated and signed personal illustrations. Schematisation together with mechanical and digital production and reproduction of drawings made them comparable to faceless job printing and 'photocopy-lore' in their anonymity (cf. Gitelman, 2014). This type of anonymisation has been accelerated by the emergence of digital data capture as a standard method of documentation in archaeology. Even if data is always a representation as Carusi (2008) reminds us, of both its subject – and as may be added – of its producer, the representations can be very different depending on whether data are captured by using a pen, a total station or a laser scanner. The data, how it is captured, if it is attached with information on its creator and how this information is made available affect the degree and type of the eventual anonymity of their author. At the same time, however, the data may reveal very little of what Hodder (1989) demands, of the decisions, rationales and premisory assumptions related to the processes of documentation and interpretation. Fluctuating discussions on engagement and documentation across the field of archaeology from the documentation of archaeological representations (e.g. Greengrass and Hughes, 2008; Huggett, 2012) to engagement with social media (e.g. Huvila, 2013; Richardson, 2014) are symptomatic of the intricacies of naming and not naming in digital contexts.

Even if the underlining of the authorship of the field directors and, to a limited extent, of a small number of specialists participating in the analysis of the findings and the anonymity of the contributions of the rest of the team is a common form of namelessness in archaeology, it is not the only one. The second, and in a sense, an even more comprehensive form of not naming the origins of archaeological information and knowledge relates to *labelling things as being archaeological*, archaeologically significant and interesting. This type of anonymisation of the information and its stakeholders starts already in the field and is institutionalised in the later stages of the information process when the excavation data and the conclusions of individual projects are archived and used as a basis for making

claims of the archaeological and cultural value of sites and monuments. This anonymity is similar to the anonymity of a large and structurally complicated society where individuals act as representatives of corporations and societal entities. Participants rely on the system rather than on a named individual (Lewis and Weigert, 1985). This process is especially visible in archaeological heritage management and in the decisions of whether a particular 'archaeological' site needs to be protected, if an archaeological site that needs to be investigated exists in a particular area, how the investigation should be conducted and how much it may cost. Huvila (2006) cites one of his informants who underlines that an administrator needs a clear statement from an expert (archaeologist) that a particular site either is archaeologically significant or not. He (*ibid*.) describes the frustration of that particular administrator of the hesitance of field archaeologists to make explicit judgments of the archaeological significance of sites. Apparently it is an important part of the process that it is an *archaeologist* who makes the decision and *turns* a location into an archaeological or non-archaeological site. At the same time, however, the required expertise appears binary by its nature and whenever a decision has been made, a site is archaeological by definition. Something being of or belonging to 'archaeology' and 'cultural heritage' are anonymous, non-attributable relations without a named author even if it is obvious that there is someone that performed the act of making it archaeological. In contrast to the act of labeling itself that comes from a specific archaeologist who is the one who has been there, upon administrative decision, the 'archaeologicality' of a site and the premises of the decision becomes nameless and largely independent of its author.

In an attempt to understand the patterns of how anonymity is practiced in archaeology, it seems that both when anonymity is attributable to the primacy of field directors and when the labelling as archaeological has been performed, much of archaeological information remains anonymous because it is never explicitly attributed to its authors or the attribution is lost during an information process that has often been described (e.g. Huvila, 2014b; Thomas, 2006) as being long and disconnected. Unlike some other forms of anonymous transactions indicated in the literature (e.g. egg (Konrad, 2005) and blood donation (Copeman, 2009) and organ transplantation (Lock, 2002)), the predominant forms of anonymity in archaeological knowledge production and information process are of a more indirect nature. It is doubtful whether any archaeologist would explain that she or he would deliberately attempt to act anonymously. Rather when explicit anonymity might be desirable, for instance, in interview research of archaeologists work (e.g. Huvila, 2006; Zorzin, 2010), online contexts (e.g. Morgan and Eve, 2012) and in countries with small professional communities (Smith and Burke, 2007), it has become apparent in many cases that ensuring anonymity is difficult or even

impossible because most of the archaeologists acting in a given context know or are knowledgeable of each other.

As a conclusion, anonymity of archaeologicality can be seen as a result of a process of the institutionalisation and infrastructuralisation of archaeological knowledge production. The information process has become legitimate *per se* as a part of a process that has produced an authoritative frame of discussing archaeology, a part of the authoritative heritage discourse discussed by Smith (2006) and turned archaeology into a particular type of common good. Archaeological significance and its implications are not generally contested and in general they do not require elaborate argumentation and personal authority to be accepted. Simultaneously, when archaeology has been objectified as public property, the management of archaeological heritage has turned to task-based public administrative work with an ethos of reducing personal involvement and promoting anonymity (cf. Bonwitt, 1989) even in administrative cultures based on transparency, accountability and freedom of information. Similarly to how, for instance, Gray and Jenkins (1993) criticise the mythical anonymity of civil service (in contrast to the accountability of politicians) in archaeology and heritage management, anonymity is a construct that is assumed and acted upon rather than an irrevocable technical state. Even if the identity of the actors can often be difficult to determine: who was digging, who documented what, and who came to which specific conclusion, there are ways to at least partially withdraw the anonymity of archaeologists by consulting the available documentation and making inquiries. The same applies for many other forms of anonymities. The anonymity of organ transplantations, donated blood and eggs can be technically revoked by DNA testing but this is generally resisted because of the preference to maintain the mutually advantageous exchange of assets, whether bodily or informational. As Nissenbaum (1999) notes, the value of anonymity does not necessarily relate to the capacity to be unnamed, but to the possibility of acting or participating while remaining unreachable. This condition can be fulfilled both when an individual remains technically unreachable or the likelihood of being reached is considered negligible.

## Social productivity and anonymity of archaeological information

A closer look at the various forms of anonymities in archaeology suggests that like anonymity itself, the eventual social productivity (and counter-productiveness) of being and remaining anonymous stems from how anonymity is practised within and in relation to archaeology in different situations. Archaeology reminds us of other contexts of anonymous relations in that the (relative) namelessness of individuals, to paraphrase Terrall (2003), gives them a new life of their own as archaeologists and representatives of 'archaeology'. In comparison to the life (as a

context) of a named individual, it is a parallel milieu with different possibilities to act. The extent and kind of possibilities and for whom they apply depend on how, when and in conjunction to what anonymity is being practised.

*Anonymous past*

Even if the *anonymity of past human-beings* may seem an obvious form of namelessness, that does not mean that it could not be socially useful. In contrast, it plays a very specific role in the context of contemporary post-colonial and community-oriented archaeo-politics. In spite of the recent advances in palaeogenetics and the new possibilities to study the evolution of populations, only rarely is it possible to name an individual or a group in the archaeological record. It is more likely when it comes to recent remains, remains that are associated with explicit written evidence or when very specific conditions are met. Similarly, it is extremely difficult to find definite links between past and present populations and communities. From a strictly scientific point of view, it is obvious that archaeological evidence is not very useful in supporting claims of lineage and ownership set forth by individuals and communities today (Gathercole, 2001). However, even if the demands would lack validity beyond any reasonable doubt in a scholarly and scientific sense, they can be useful as political arguments outside of the professional and scholarly archaeological discourse. The anonymity of ancient remains can be used as an argument for claiming that the remains are not unique and as such of limited significance. On the other hand, many local communities take pride in archaeological sites (Huvila, 2006) and make claims of lineage to the ancient inhabitants of their site and in some cases assert ownership or influence on how a specific site should be managed (Chirikure et al., 2010). In both cases, the rather hypothetical possibility of lifting the anonymity of the past occupiers of a site and uncontroversially determining a specific contemporary community as their 'true heirs' would be unlikely to lead to a useful outcome. The prioritisation of (genetic) lineage would exclude later historical and contemporary occupants and communities engaged in the site and its heritage and could bestow the named community with responsibilities beyond their contemporary interests and capabilities.

*Invisible archaeologists*

In addition to the namelessness of the past, social productivity can also be found in other forms of archaeology related to anonymity practices. Even if the *primacy of field directors* has been a subject of vehement criticism, the facelessness of individual fieldworkers can also be an advantage. From the perspective of anonymity, it coalesces with the labeling of things as being archaeological. Even if the silencing of individual voices can be questionable from the point of view of

collecting and appreciating diverse interpretations and perspectives to the object of study, the anonymisation functions also as a mechanism of standardising the archaeological information process – for good and bad.

From the perspective of an individual fieldworker, anonymity furthermore has a certain equalising potential when the results and interpretations of the entire group are presented under the authorship of the field director or a collective body. Whether being a part of the mass is detrimental or not, depends on how the information process is working, to what extent contributions of individual participants are erased and whether the field director is claiming a total ownership or merely assuming the liabilities relating to the project and its outcomes. The relative anonymity of an individual does not necessarily mean that interpretations or reflections are not encouraged (even if it would be the case in many situations) but it is rather a question of how they are used in drawing conclusions and how they are recorded and preserved as a part of the field documentation.

The equalising potential of anonymity does not only pertain to the professional and academic archaeological communities but as Deeley et al. (2014) suppose, they can balance uneven power relations between archaeologists and members of local communities. Anonymity on the Internet (as Deeley et al. (2014) suggest) but also in general as a technology-non-specific social relation can allow and encourage spectators to ask questions, make comments and provide information without exposing themselves to the institutionalised hierarchies.

## Anonymous archaeology

Even if the practices of *labelling things as being archaeological* are distinct from the primacy of field director, the forms in which they are potentially productive have similarities. *Labelling things as being archaeological* obviously is a relative form of namelessness but in practice it can be sufficient to create a new life and to 'unname' an individual for the practical purposes of one's work.

From the perspective of individual archaeologists working in precarious labour market conditions, a relative anonymity can function as a safeguard against direct critique. Even if it can be useful to stand out in a positive sense, in practice, it can be less risky to try to focus on avoiding to stand out as being wrong. This type of strategy of trying to stay in relative anonymity has influenced archaeological report writing and the tendency to write formally faultless but conservative and unambitious reports in order to secure future employment (Huvila, 2006).

In a broader context, Finnigan (1989: 238) notes that in Canada, with many of the members of the professional archaeological society, the Saskatchewan Association

of Professional Archaeologists 'linked directly or indirectly to the government, it is impossible to influence public policy without the anonymity granted through a professional society'. The collective body anonymises an individual opinion by granting it a collective identity. As in the case of the Saskatchewan Association of Professional Archaeologists, the identity that bestows anonymity can be a specific named body but it can also be a more obscure collective label like archaeology or archaeologist. Zorzin (2010) refers to an opinion piece published in an Irish newspaper by an anonymous archaeologist who could identify herself as a member of the collective body of archaeologists but stayed anonymous as an individual. Morgan and Eve (2012) make similar remarks on how anonymity can help junior (or female, as Scott (1998) notes) archaeologists in fighting back the lack of transparency of employment processes by anonymously publishing information on the progress of their applications, or when government-employed archaeologists are releasing information about negative policies of the current regimes in their home countries. Under this anonymous but professionally anchored identity the writer of the opinion piece, underrepresented or disadvantaged groups, and archaeologists under threat can express their critique of the situation in the commercial archaeology in Ireland, unveil the possibly unjust employment processes and report on the current developments in their home countries for both their own and their colleagues' benefit. Similarly to how Griffin describes the usefulness of anonymity for literary authors, anonymity can be 'commercially useful' (Griffin, 1999) for archaeologists by providing protection not only for an individual archaeologist but also for the entire profession. An anonymous archaeologist as a writer of an opinion piece or a report is simultaneously an archaeologist without being a named individual. A relative namelessness can help secure one's personal integrity, support and increase the impact of the claims made by an *archaeologist* versus those presented by a named archaeologist, and facilitate spreading the information as a part of a particular genre and discourse.

Drawing on examples from the Midwest USA, Baake (2003) discusses how the (economic) context of conducting archaeological fieldwork influences the writing of the reports. He argues that the professional archaeologists (working with more explicit temporal and financial constraints and with an awareness of that the site they are investigating will cease to exist due to an incoming land development project) tend to be more focused on limitations of their work and interpretations and the negative consequences of losing the site. In research excavations when there is no imminent risk for losing the site, he notes that the style of writing tends to be more optimistic, focused on observations and less prone to emphasise the limitations of the work. Baake (2003) argues that both groups draw from a narrative of the destruction of the unspoiled past shared with some

environmentalists expressing similar feelings of sadness of the loss of a mythical pristine nature.

Even if Baake's (2003) reading of his empirical work might be somewhat limited in explaining the entire spectrum of complexities of the narratives of archaeological reporting, his observations of the origins of archaeological authorship are helpful in understanding how 'archaeology' (instead of individual professional opinions) is produced as a part of the archaeological documentation and reporting practice. His work is illustrative of how archaeology is written to be representative of archaeology rather than of the individual report writers. As Baake (2003) notes, the context is an active agent in the rhetorical situation of writing a report. A report emerges in the context of the social setting of archaeology and Baake (2003) underlines that the social setting is clearly influenced by the economic constraints of the field project. Assuming Baake's perspective, it is apparent that besides reports (i.e. information objects) the anonymity of archaeological reporting itself stems from the interplay of different types of contextual agencies ranging from the economic onsets of archaeology to theoretical paradigms (Trigger, 1989), information policies governing archaeological knowledge-making (Börjesson et al., 2015), practices of doing archaeological work, and for instance, the different work-roles of individual archaeologists (Huvila, 2006).

## Between productivity and detrimentality

In spite of the examples of its social productivity, it is not self-evident that anonymity is always socially useful or that usefulness applies to everyone. The anonymity of individual fieldworkers and archaeology professionals in general is a social issue and a problem for the preservation and advancement of archaeological knowledge. It contributes to the lack of appreciation of the archaeological work, lower wages, degrading of the profession, shortage of competent professionals and decline of archaeology as a branch of scholarship (Everill, 2012; Hinton, 2013; Lennox, 2013). In commercial archaeology, the detrimental potential of anonymity is especially apparent. The precarious situation of both fieldworkers and archaeology contractors described by, for instance, Zorzin (2010) and Everill (2012) combined with the facelessness of individual archaeologists makes it easy to play down the significance of archaeological work in contrast to land development. An example from the field of biblical scholarship illustrates the possibility to use anonymity to generalise critique beyond its specific target also in archaeology. Thompson (2009), a biblical scholar, criticises a biblical archaeology conference 'for the use of caricature and anonymity in referring to their critics as "minimalists"'. The example is illustrative of the potential problems

that collective anonymity of a discipline than the 'archaeologicality' can represent. If a strong enough opinion exists against (anonymous) 'archaeologists' or 'archaeology', it is possible to question the legitimacy of an entire discipline without a need to argue against specific lines of reasoning. It is conceivable that similar issues might arise when an 'archaeological' actor, whether a private or public organisation, produces substandard work causing shame and bad reputation for the entire discipline. Within the archaeological profession, relative anonymity gives room for omissions of reflection and interpretation, conducting and submission of substandard work and lower quality of documentation without directly risking one's own name.

Its detrimental potential shows that anonymity, like other social relations, presents an amalgam of productive and counterproductive potentials. So far in archaeology, the explicit discussions of the intermingling of the productivity and detrimentality of anonymity have focused on the online discussions and their role in archaeology. Emanuel (2014) criticises the possibility to use anonymity for spreading misinformation and misinterpretation, intentionally circulating information that is implausible or plainly wrong. Morgan and Eve (2012) emphasise the benefits of transparency and non-anonymity in making archaeology more 'ubiquitous, reflexive, open and participatory' and acknowledge the benefits of anonymity when it can abolish existing barriers of publishing information.

From the perspective of how Morgan and Eve (2012) conceptualise anonymity as an essentially binary state (even if they acknowledge that in contemporary society, achieving full anonymity is close to impossible), it is easy to agree with their conclusion. However, if anonymity seen as a complex socio-material relation with different shades of grey rather than as an antagonistic state of namelessness, the question of benefits and disadvantages become more convoluted. In addition to physically or economically risky contexts, various degrees of anonymity can help decrease the opacity while increasing ubiquity, reflexivity, openness and participatory potential in other areas of archaeology as well. As Garvey (2006) notes in the context of anonymous publishing during the US Civil War, anonymity opens the possibility to participate in the making of the authorship for readers and distributors. Similarly to the imaginary relations between egg donors and their biological siblings, an anonymous authorship of archaeological interpretations and reflections can be suggested to have a potential to nurture the social usefulness of the texts. As Morgan and Eve (2012) suggest, online anonymity can be useful in scholarly contexts, so that it seems plausible to assume that there is even more potential in exploiting this type of a social imagination in the interface between scholarly archaeology and society.

On an individual level, the consequences of revoking anonymity in the archaeological information process differs from that of many other anonymous relations. From the perspective of an individual unnamed contributor, it may be considered as a positive acknowledgement of one's contribution. From a systemic perspective, the differences are smaller. The assumption that each individual would be personally accountable for every small detail and transaction in the information process would quickly become a liability for both the authors and users of the information. Similarly to how blood donations function because of a trust on the nameless relation, the anonymisation of the relation between individuals and archaeology keeps the information process manageable. At the same time, it is apparent that similarly to many other anonymous contexts, anonymity applies to a part of the (information) process. The identity of a blood donor is known by the time of donation even if the blood itself is made anonymous for its recipients. Similarly, in archaeology, information is named in specific communities: within an investigation team most of the members are likely to have a rather good knowledge about the author of individual pieces of information. In the scholarly archaeological community, the scientific and scholarly arguments are authored by named individuals but like in other anonymous communities, the names remain within certain boundaries.

## Discussion

Even if it would be an exaggeration to claim anonymity as a norm in contemporary archaeological information processes like it has been at times in literary and scholarly authorship (Griffin, 1999) as well as in journalism (Reich, 2010), it is apparently no anomaly. Anonymity that reflects back to the context of its operation can function as a dissident practice in an established economic-juridical order by forcing us to engage with defining what is an author (Drake, 2011), or in more general terms, an actor who is not named. However, as the scrutiny of archaeological anonymity practices shows, this non-conformist potential of anonymity does not imply that anonymity would be dissident *per se*, and thus cannot be deeply embedded in the hegemonic regimes of practices.

It is fair to admit that most of the mentioned anonymity practices embedded in the archaeological information process are not dissentient. Only the suggestions of the emancipatory potential of anonymity in the work of Morgan and Eve (2012) and the (critical) references to the invisibility of archaeological fieldworkers represent non-conformist views (e.g. Everill, 2012; Lucas, 2001). In most cases anonymity has been institutionalised and infrastructuralised to such an extent that it is not explicitly claimed or assumed. The assertion of Latour (1996) that granting of anonymity takes the same semiotic price as the granting of humanity,

collectivity or materiality may seem counter-intuitive due to the invisibility of anonymity. This invisibility does not mean however, that assuming and maintaining anonymity would not be gratis in terms of the effort of attributing a thing to a named author, ascribing it as archaeological or anonymous. Considering the categories of Marx (1999), it is apparent that anonymity can facilitate information flows to the extent that it is tempting to claim that anonymity is a significant enabler of archaeological information processes. The literature contains also evidence of how anonymity can enable or is assumed to be capable of enabling socially useful (but also detrimental, cf. Emanuel, 2014; Huvila, 2006) activities and protect individuals (Huvila, 2006; Morgan and Eve, 2012). The relative anonymity of the authorship of archaeological information (as with data, cf. Carusi, 2008) and the anonymisation of its expressions by the standardisation of documentation encourages attention to the content of the message rather than the messenger and facilitates judgments based on specific criteria rather than a person (cf. Marx, 1999). Beyond that the archaeological information and documentation practices can be argued to incorporate a similar desire as with the artistic documents discussed by Highmore (2007), to go beyond the message to the phenomenon the document is documenting. To a certain degree, archaeological information is not authored by a named individual or an anonymous 'archaeologist'. It is anonymous, it *is* a substitute for its referents.

In contrast to the relatively straightforward task of identifying different types of anonymities and how they are perceived to be a part of the archaeological work, the question of how anonymity is produced as a part of archaeological practices is complicated. Following the theorising of White (2008), the entire network of individuals and institutions participating in the archaeological information – from the field to the archaeological heritage management agencies and beyond (for a detailed discussion on the layout of the process, e.g. De Roo et al., 2016; Huvila, 2006; Zorzin, 2010) – can be seen as a network of named and anonymous identities and partly overlapping, sometimes antagonistic but mostly identity-related control regimes (White, 2008) that utilise information and documentation to advance their goals. The regimes and their represented identities are authors of the archaeological anonymity and its constituents similarly to how relations and relational artefacts can be intentionally and unintentionally authored (cf. Huvila, 2012). In terms of White and Godart (2007), the information process and its paper-trail in archaeology can be argued to form a story. Archaeological information itself is an amassment of meanings that surface in the process of how archaeology is practiced through switchings in surroundings within which direct identities seek to take control over one another. It traverses chronologically from the field to the post-excavation work, report writing, archiving and archaeological heritage management to research, public dissemination and beyond. In parallel to that, it switches between unattainable ideals and the often severely restricted working

conditions, precarious labour market, and expectations of framing the work according to the principles of archaeological education, contemporary guidelines of archaeological work and current legislation. Individual stories from specific projects, their syntheses and accretions, not only their individual constituencies, can be and are constantly called into action and they are used to frame archaeological practices. Anonymity is an outcome but besides it functions as a glue and an enabler in the meaning making and the assemblage of the stories as socially useful and individually practicable in the diverse *netdoms* (network, domain) (White et al., 2007) to which archaeological practices pertain. Similarly to the socio-material theorisation of anonymous relations by Scott and Orlikowski, the Whitean reading of the archaeological information process conceptualises it as a process of becoming in which the practices of anonymity intertwine with a series of material artefacts (cf. Barad, 2007: 439; Scott and Orlikowski, 2014) from artefacts to tools and reports. Both the anonymity and archaeological knowledge are matters of practices, doings and actions instead of being something essential.

Even if the stories of archaeological information processes are constituted and negotiated in a labyrinthine continuum of switchings, the anonymity of the past human-beings, the primacy of field directors and the *labelling of things as being archaeological* have one thing in common. In all of them a major propeller of anonymity relates to an act of *writing* (or not writing) as a constituent form of making and cementing the relative anonymity of things. Even if the anonymity of the past human-beings and invisible fieldworkers differ from each other, both groups are excluded in their specific contexts from a hegemonic written culture. In contrast, the field directors and archaeology are explicitly mentioned as significant actors in the narratives produced as a part of the archaeological information process. However, instead of merely focusing on writing versus not writing, it becomes apparent that the relative and quasi-absolute forms of anonymity are a part of the infrastructure in how archaeological information comes into being. Building on the theorising of Goody (1986) on the contrast of oral and written cultures, the naming and non-naming of subjects can be seen as a breach between actors operating according to the conditions an 'oral' and a 'written' culture and perhaps more importantly, the act of writing specific individuals and archaeology as named identities and granting them relative forms of anonymity in the archaeological information process gives them a possibility to traverse netdoms and interact with other identities – to make them productive in particular social constellations. Others are divested of this possibility.

The practical significance of this observation for understanding the archaeological information process as a chain of sociomaterial practices and switchings of identities from a netdom to another is that writing itself draws attention to the moment when anonymity and having a name become social relations (and to the

process of that happening). As Scott and Orlikowski (2014) point out, anonymity is not binary or separate from the material aspects of reality. From the perspective of writing and Whitean stories, it is a part of how things are constituted as a part of the system of our lived reality. Even if anonymity can be abused, in contrast to the generally negative considerations of anonymity in public sector (e.g. Paul, 1991), relative forms of anonymity are a central element of the making of common infrastructuralised social relations like the *archaeological* relation to the human past and a constituent of their social productivity. Similarly to how anonymity ties donors to their siblings or people to their anonymous donors (e.g. Konrad, 2005), anonymity in archaeological practices creates a related social imaginary of archaeology and being a part of archaeology. It becomes a social relation in its own right but also, as in terms of Star and Griesemer (1989), a boundary object that helps to traverse perceptual and practical differences among communities including archaeologists and other stakeholders of archaeological information from land developers, museum professionals and politicians, and facilitate cooperation by emanating mutual understanding (Karsten et al., 2001). The problem might not necessarily be the facelessness of fieldworkers or the hegemony of field directors alone but the negligence of the role the names and the nameless play in how archaeological information comes into being.

## Conclusion

As a conclusion, it may be argued that the anonymisation of subjectivities of the data is a process of objectification and/or institutionalisation that makes archaeological information potentially productive for other archaeologists, museum professionals, community planners and stakeholders of cultural heritage, cultural politics and societal debates as a part of the institutionalised system of archaeology and that system or lived reality, socially productive for those who engage in it. The archaeological anonymity becomes a boundary object that is authored in the course of the switchings from one netdom to another to emerge as a particular type of social relation and a constituent of a social imaginary of *being archaeological*. The downside of its socially productive potential is that it is not self-evident that the outcomes of anonymity are necessarily positive for archaeology itself. The anonymity of being archaeological makes it also exposed for external influences and gives possibilities for other stakeholders to make claims of its significance and ownership. Whether it is a question of positive openness as in public archaeology or vulnerability as in the case of archaeological pseudo-science or the critique of the precarity of contract archaeology depends on the context of discussion. For archaeology and the society as a whole, it is undoubtedly a question of both, a double-edged sword *par excellence* so to say.

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