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Book Reviews

Stephen Leach. *A Russian Perspective on Theoretical Archaeology: The Life and Work of Leo S. Klejn* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2015, 221pp., 11 figs., ISBN 978-1-62958-138-5)

Leo S. Klejn (born 1927) is an internationally acclaimed Russian archaeologist and anthropologist. In *A Russian Perspective on Theoretical Archaeology: The Life and Work of Leo S. Klejn*, Stephen Leach outlines Leo Klejn's biography and discusses his major contributions to archaeology. Leach draws, among others, on his conversations and correspondence with Klejn, on Klejn's autobiography (2010), and on a series of interviews with Klejn by Kristiansen (1993), Taylor (1994), and Immonen (2003). Stephen Leach is senior researcher in Philosophy at the University of Keele, UK. Having started working in archaeology, he turned to broader issues such as philosophy, specifically epistemology. Given Klejn's scholarship in archaeological theory and philosophy, a better candidate for writing this book can hardly be imagined.

A Russian Perspective is composed of two parts and two appendices. In Part One ('Life Story'), comprised of three chapters (Chs 1–3, 'Before Prison', 'Prison', and 'After Prison'), Leach details Klejn's background and intellectual upbringing, as well as some of the major events shaping his life and thinking, such as his imprisonment for homosexuality in 1981 for political reasons at a time when he was gaining international recognition. Part Two ('Life's Work') discusses Klejn's work on eight key themes: 'Anthropology' (Ch. 4), 'Homeric Studies' (Ch. 5), 'The Resurrection of Perun' (Ch. 6), devoted to Slavic paganism, 'Ethnogenesis' (Ch. 7), 'Histories of Archaeology' (Ch. 8), focused on the 'New Archaeology', 'Theoretical Archaeology in Relation to Practice' (Ch. 9), 'What is Theoretical Archaeology?' (Ch. 10), and 'The Archaeologist and the Detective' (Ch. 11). Because Stephen Leach's PhD thesis was on R.G. Collingwood's philosophy of history, the final chapter of *A Russian Perspective* (Ch. 11), where Klejn's theory is compared with that of Collingwood, is the icing on the cake.

In the Foreword, Stephen Shennan calls Klejn an 'extraordinary man […], brilliant, argumentative, iron-willed, never one to accept the conventional point of view or the easy path' (p. 9). Indeed, Klejn lived more than sixty years under a totalitarian regime, but remained an independent thinker endowed with inner freedom. Because of this he suffered imprisonment and faced innumerable obstacles to develop his career. The session organized by Ludomir Lozny and Stephen Leach at the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) conference in 2011 (University of Birmingham, UK), focusing on his personality and work—and attended by both Western and Russian experts—was a collective tribute to Klejn (Lozny & Leach, 2011). In a review of his autobiography, which regrettably remains untranslated, Lozny (2010) states that *A Panorama of Theoretical Archaeology* (Klejn, 1977)—the first of Klejn's theoretical works to be published in the West—'had fractured the intellectual iron curtain (the political one collapsed thirteen years later), and Trigger rightly noted that it marked the global entrée of Russian (Soviet)

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archaeology' (Lozny, 2010: 890). In the words of Bruce Trigger, whose way of thinking Klejn considers to be the closest to his own, 'That venerable champion of unimpeded international scholarly communication, V. Gordon Childe, would have rejoiced to see Klejn's paper' (Trigger, 1978: 198). 'If archaeology is a craft,' Lozny continues, 'Lev Klejn is its master, if it is philosophy, he is its guru, and if it is science, he is the leading scientist, creative and innovative' (Lozny, 2010: 890). Sarunas Milisauskas (2017: 93) has described Klejn as 'the most famous Russian archaeologist', whom 'we can consider […] like V. Gordon Childe, Lewis Binford, and Ian Hodder all rolled into one.'

A series of Klejn's works published in English in recent years reveals enormous scope and erudition. Especially important among them is his theoretical essay *Metaarchaeology* (Klejn, 2001). These publications, however, are but the tip of the iceberg. In fact, one of the main contributions of Leach's book is discussing Klejn's scholarship, including that published in Russian, on a broad range of topics, from Indo-European origins (Ch. 7) to Homer (Ch. 5), from the Varangian controversy (Ch. 7) to the regressive behaviour of prisoners (Ch. 4), and from gay culture (Ch. 4) to music. None of them is a passing fancy—I have listed only subjects to which Klejn has devoted at least one book whereas some are dealt with in at least two impressive volumes. Archaeological theory, however, reigns supreme (Chs 8–11).

Topics still awaiting monographic treatment while having been addressed by Klejn in numerous articles include the origin of various Bronze Age cultures, Scythians, Slavic paganism, and many others, not to mention his brilliant journalistic pamphlets on political matters and a tremendous summarizing metanarrative titled *Hard to be Klejn* (Trudno byt' Klejnom) (Klejn, 2010)—an allusion to the Strugatsky brothers' novel (Strugatsky & Strugatsky, 1973[1964]) and a hint that only those unversed in Klejnology might deem ostentatious (see Lozny, 2010, for a review). Navigating in the boundless ocean of his scholarship is a truly Homeric feat, and the brave who venture out will find the nearly sixty-page Appendix B in Leach's book ('Klejn's Bibliography', pp. 146–204)—a bibliography, structured according to themes—extremely helpful, if only because of an even larger list of comments, by Klejn himself or by other scholars on Klejn's work, both laudatory and bitterly incisive.

But what about the much shorter—one and a half page—Appendix A ('The Commandments', pp. 144–45)? For me, as Klejn's pupil of more than half a century standing, it is no less valuable, being a collection of twenty-five commandments. Initially written on paper sheets and pinned to the classroom wall rather than being carved on stone tablets, they have inspired several generations of disciples. Some I remember since my university years, for instance, commandment number twenty-three: 'The "golden middle" between two extremes is only the third extreme. It must be proved [separately]' (the original quote read 'It must be proved especially well', resulting from an inappropriate translation of the adverb 'особо'). I also recall his comment: 'Don't follow the example of a doctor who, after oscillating between two alternative diagnoses—cerebral concussion versus leg fracture—chose the golden middle, which was "gastric ulcer".'

There is a biblical feel to these parables, examples, and comments, something that makes us discern the wise Patriarch Joseph's story behind Klejn's account of his miseries in prison (Chapter 2, 'Prison', p. 38; see also Taylor, 1994: 733): 'They put me in an iron box in the corridor,' cf., 'They took him and threw him into the

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cistern.' Reaching a high status in the prison community was likewise miraculous: 'I was nominated "Distributor of Sugar" […] Nobody could approach me if I didn't call him,' cf., 'So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.'

Reading about the impact of Hans Jürgen Eggers' ideas on Klejn's theory (Ch. 9, 'Theoretical Archaeology in Relation to Practice', p. 115), I recall proudly carrying his *Einführung in die Vorgeschichte* (Eggers, 1959) in my jacket pocket. My teacher lent it to me although I was only a novice. He wanted me to read it. Now I can confess that I didn't, but, *pace* Eggers, the take home lesson was more important than anything I could have gleaned from his treatise: the teacher and the pupil are supposed to be equal before science writ large. Wishful thinking or otherwise, this was his message, which I will never forget.

One of the most valuable parts of Leach's book, at least for me, is his analysis of Klejn's epistemology versus that of Collingwood's (Chapter 11, 'The Archaeologist as a Detective'). Here the author is on a par with his characters; in fact, he acts as an arbitrator, reproaching Klejn for being unfamiliar with *An Essay on Metaphysics* (Collingwood, 1940) (perhaps the title was a deterrent: Klejn does not care for pure philosophy). As to the *Idea of History* (Collingwood, 1946), to which Klejn is keenly receptive, Leach compares the historian to the detective. For some reason Collingwood likened himself to Dr. Watson, evidently implying that some higher-level historian—a Holmes—was yet to appear. Leach, with the same modesty, parallels himself with Watson and Klejn with Holmes (p. 12). In Collingwood's view, archaeology, which he calls 'critical history', differs from history proper in that, unlike the latter, it asks only the 'what' questions but not the 'why' questions. History, in other words, is humanistic, whereas archaeology is positivistic.

For Klejn, on the other hand, it is the archaeologist whose work resembles that of a detective or forensic expert. His commandment number one reads, 'Archaeology is not history armed with a spade, but a detective story in which the investigator has arrived at the scene a thousand years late. History is pronounced later by judges. So you must decide: to go in for one or for the other.' (p. 144) Leach tends to concur with that while noting that Collingwood mentioned a significant difference between the historian and the judge: the former is free from the pressure of time (Leach objects that the historian, too, is not supposed to delay his judgment *ad infinitum*).

In his comments on Leach's book, Klejn (2015: 25) notes that history consists of two disciplines, one focusing on sources, the other on inferences. The former, in this respect, is similar to archaeology. But, after all, no archaeologist (least of all Klejn) would confine him or herself to pure artefactology; nor can a historian, humanistic as she or he may be, afford to skip the positivistic stage of source-analysis. The conceptual barrier virtually disappears when both join forces in studying periods such as the early Middle Ages, documented by both material and written sources.

That said, Stephen Leach has done an excellent job by making Leo Klejn more understandable to Western readers. Leach has compiled a coherent narrative, where the life of a man and that of his ideas are intertwined—a story of an unending struggle. When we have reached the end of the book, the meaning of Klejn's commandment number five becomes crystal-clear: 'The scholarly world is not a team of friends. What is your discovery is a loss for someone else. And this someone is usually a prominent and powerful person. Therefore having made a discovery do not expect universal delight. Be ready for tough resistance,

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sudden attacks, and a gruelling and lingering war. A scholar needs talent secondly and courage first.'

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Christine A. Hastorf. *The Social Archaeology of Food: Thinking about Eating from Prehistory to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, xviii and 400pp., 27 figs, hbk, ISBN 978-107-15336-3)

Hastorf characterizes her marvellous book as a 'meditation on thinking about eating' (p. xv), but it is much more. It is a richly detailed presentation of a carefully crafted approach to an archaeology of food and social life centered around five themes: materiality, social agency, the senses, economics, and taste. In Chapter 1, her introduction to the book, Hastorf explains each of these themes and how she uses them to develop an approach to food archaeology that places emphasis on cultural concerns and social life—practices and attitudes around food—rather than on

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