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Reflections on Intersections of Mortuary Archaeology and Contemporary Society

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INTRODUCTION

Growing up in my family, we were taught that education was the solution (or one of the most important solutions) to many problems. So, it is not so surprising that I once believed something that many still believe—that education about archaeology will result in better public understanding of what we do, and some level of agreement vis-à-vis the value of archaeology. After experiencing that this long-held belief (or perhaps more accurately, hope) was not always true, I realized the obvious fact that someone can be educated on a topic and still disagree with you. Education does not guarantee agreement with the educator (see Goldstein and Kintigh 1990 for another discussion of this point regarding human remains and mortuary sites). In other words, there is not a single truth, especially on this topic. This is certainly not to argue against education, it is just a reminder about realities.

For this volume, Giles and Williams invited 18 papers from archaeologists who have struggled with a wide range of topics associated with the intersection of mortuary archaeology, public archaeology, and contemporary society. This intersection provides the space and the opportunity for examination of problems and issues that are often not raised in discussions of archaeology or public archaeology or contemporary society alone. The breadth, depth, and diversity of perspectives presented in this volume are both fascinating and enlightening. The chapters are often self-reflexive and attempt to be fair, looking at multiple sides of very complex issues. Museums, governments, news media, and other archaeologists would be wise to carefully read these papers. As an American archaeologist who conducts archaeology in the USA, I find the case studies especially important and relevant since most of the examples are not constrained by the kinds of post-colonial circumstances that

exist in the USA and countries like Australia (this is not to say that there are not other constraints in the case studies). At a minimum, these papers represent a different set of perspectives on problems with which all archaeologists and museum professionals have struggled. The volume is unusual because the authors do not simply state their opinions and present certain facts; they use a variety of tools to try to determine what happened, how public opinion may be measured, and how decisions are made.

As I read these chapters, I found myself creating lists of over-arching themes. After I read the next chapter, I would revise my list. Eventually, I decided to focus my comments as follows: 1) excavations of mortuary sites and issues of accessibility and changing perspectives; 2) exhibits of mortuary archaeology and their accessibility (or lack of accessibility) by the public; 3) opinion about archaeology in general and mortuary archaeology in particular, as well as how that opinion is measured; and 4) reinterpretation and/or reanalysis of sites and exhibits and how that reanalysis or reinterpretation is achieved. There is obvious overlap between these topics and chapters often cross more than one topic. The large number of chapters and space limitations make extensive discussion of each chapter impossible, so I have tended to highlight those topics and chapters that resonate with my own experiences and observations.

EXCAVATIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY

There are many ways that the general public accesses archaeology, but one of the most popular and effective ways is by visiting an ongoing archaeological excavation. For many mortuary archaeologists, the decision to be made is whether or not to allow such visits, how often, whether special visiting days should be created, and whether volunteers are accepted. These decisions are often further constrained by laws governing the excavation of human remains. One case study in this volume struggles directly with problems resulting from a new interpretation of British law, and other authors directly or indirectly comment on the consequences of the law's interpretation, or public misunderstanding of the law. According to this new interpretation, physical screens/barriers are required at all mortuary site excavations, thereby blocking or at least seriously constraining public accessibility and education. This has not only resulted in fewer opportunities for public education and involvement, but it has also increased suspicion of archaeologists and archaeological work—they appear to be 'hiding something' behind those screens.

Sayer and Sayer (Chapter 7) illustrate why a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is problematic by using their experience with the Oakington project. Their chapter goes beyond a focus on why constraining access is problematic;

they look more positively on why mortuary site excavation in particular should directly engage with the community. The Oakington project managed to obtain permission to excavate an Anglo-Saxon cemetery without the required screens, and Sayer and Sayer carefully investigate how the public engaged with the human remains. In discussing the issue of screening cemetery excavations and other similar policies, they note that the desire to be socially correct has often resulted in our inadvertently imposing modern values onto past peoples.

Because of the specific history of burial excavation and curation issues in the USA, it is rare to see open discussion and debate about these topics; sensitivities tend to be very high on all sides. Native Americans and Native Alaskans have often argued that non-Native cemeteries are not excavated or at least not treated in the same way as Native cemeteries. While their argument is accurate to an extent, a number of cemeteries of non-Natives have been excavated, analysed, and either curated or reburied. Broadening the debate about reburial, screening, etc. in the USA leads to suspicion by tribes and others that archaeologists are trying to minimize the Native situation. Final decisions about excavation and analysis may be the same in the USA as in some of the European cases, but it is always useful to highlight different and opposing views and discuss them openly and carefully. However, such discussion requires that all parties are sincere and willing to trust each other, and that can be a very high bar to achieve, especially in North America. Nonetheless, I appreciate the outline of competing issues and the extent of discussions in Sayer and Sayer (Chapter 7), Rajala (Chapter 4), Pearson and Jeffs (Chapter 5), and Brown (Chapter 6) in terms of excavation of mortuary sites.

Pearson and Jeffs' work at the liberated African graveyard cemetery on St Helena provides a fascinating case study. The circumstances of the liberated Africans and the slave history of the island is interesting in itself, but equally interesting is the way in which current island citizens reacted to the project. How can contemporary groups appropriately incorporate and appreciate their heritage when this island played both a positive and a longer negative role in slavery? How does the archaeologist negotiate among and between the relevant groups? Most archaeologists will appreciate Pearson and Jeffs' observation that archaeological training tends to focus on the technical and, in most cases, does not include training for situations in which attitudes and belief systems differ significantly from the archaeologists'. While some may argue that a benefit of having archaeology as part of anthropology in North America is students' introduction to such situations and the range of anthropological issues, it is rare that archaeologists are specifically trained to handle these often difficult or awkward negotiations. They may appreciate the issues in the abstract, but may have no way of knowing what to do in the specific instance. More focused training of several different sorts may be in order as we consider appropriate training for future archaeologists in such situations.

Particularly notable in terms of negotiating complex and competing issues is Brown's chapter (Chapter 6) on excavation of First World War cemeteries. The diversity of views from a range of stakeholders forces one to think carefully before accepting any particular decision about these cemeteries as definitive. Considering the hundreds of thousands of deaths from the war, and the many tens of thousands whose location is still unknown, it becomes apparent that a focus on First World War dead could easily be a career research focus, with interesting research questions, as well as considerable opportunities for ongoing engagement with many different publics. Brown's subsequent use of the notion of 'tribe' as appropriate for the actions of the military is important because it contextualizes the broader perspective of the specific problems he faced.

In a case somewhat structurally analogous but on a much smaller scale, the nineteenth-century historic military burials (a subsection of 58 individuals of the larger cemetery of over 1400 individuals) from the Alameda-Stone cemetery in Tucson, Arizona (Goldstein and Anyon 2012; McClelland and Cerezo-Román, Chapter 3) were similarly treated as part of a tribe. The US military went to great lengths to make sure that contemporary military personnel and the general public understood that: 1) all branches of the military were part of the tribe (approximately 3000 individuals attended the military reburial ceremonies), 2) no matter where, no matter how long, the U.S. military will always return military personnel back home (a position that has been used by U.S. President Obama in regard to current war dead and captive military personnel), and 3) within the contemporary military cemetery, the military created a special 'historic cemetery' for any military individuals who were deliberately or inadvertently excavated from historic military cemeteries or other contexts. Brown has found that excavations of any military cemeteries or military graves within other cemeteries or other contexts require additional delicate negotiations due to the place of wars in national histories, and it has also been my experience that everyone has claims (or sees themselves as having claims) on these individuals. That these claims are there even when the specific identity of individuals is unknown is especially powerful; in this context, it is all about the promise, association, and allegiance of military individuals to their country, and vice versa.

I have directed a number of mortuary excavations in very public places, and I find myself sensitive and sympathetic to the group of studies focused on mortuary excavation and treatment of historic cemeteries in particular. In the 1990s, I directed excavations at an historic Russian cemetery in northern California (Goldstein 2012). The multi-ethnic cemetery was associated with the 1812–1841 Russian settlement of Fort Ross, and is located within Fort Ross State Historic Park, directly adjacent to the area's major roadway. The park has an interpretive centre that highlights the site's history, including the various groups who occupied the area over time and at the same time. Over

the three years we excavated the site, visitors to our excavations—whether Russian, Native American, Native Alaskan, descendants of early California settlers, archaeologists, or general public—were impressed and pleased with the research and were very interested in what we could learn from the graves. One group of re-enactors especially wanted to know details of how clothing was constructed. It had never occurred to me that I might be able to provide new knowledge in this area, but indeed we did document a unique way that the Russians used to attach buttons (Goldstein 1993). One of our more consistent and annoying problems, however, was with a small group of local citizens loosely associated with the park. They argued that any archaeological excavation of human remains was wrong and disrespectful, and several members of this group refused to visit the site at all, would not allow their children to visit, spread negative stories about us in the community, and rarely spoke to us directly. However, every day at 4 p.m., one member of the group would drive by the site in his truck and scream 'Gravediggers!' at the crew.

In some respects, this negative local response to our cemetery excavations was not surprising; at the time, the Fort Ross cemetery excavations were the first non-cultural resource management excavations of burials that had been allowed in the state of California in about twenty-five years. We convinced Native Americans, Native Alaskans, two branches of the Russian Orthodox Church, many offices in California State Parks, the Sonoma County Coroner, and the State of California that excavating the cemetery would actually help to preserve it since so little was known about it (it took approximately 18 months to receive permission to excavate from all of the stakeholder groups). The California public, however, had been trained over a number of years that mortuary excavations should only be undertaken if absolutely and directly threatened, and not otherwise. I tried to gently point out to the local group that they were being disrespectful to both the living and the dead because the descendants of the Russians, Native Alaskans, and the Native American groups who were buried in the cemetery thought the project was useful and significant for them. Indeed, before we identified the cemetery area and its boundaries, sheep had been grazing on the graves (markers were disturbed or gone) and the harsh environmental setting had destroyed much of the cemetery below ground. Descendant groups and California State Parks officials agreed that the state had not been paying proper respect to the site. Although very different in nature, in several ways my experience mirrors some of the public responses documented by Simpson and Sayer at Oakington, as well as some of the experiences outlined by Exell (Chapter 11) at the Manchester Museum, Jenkins (Chapter 12) who examines using the dead to fight the battles of the living, and Nordström (Chapter 10) who examines how particular individuals from the past are given new identities via excavation, display, and reinterpretation.

Anthony (Chapter 2) excavates a relatively recent cemetery, and when I first read Anthony's chapter, I was taken aback by her discussion of 'archaeological investigations of death in modernity.' It is very common for North American historical archaeologists to look at sites in the nineteenth century, and even into the twentieth century. Reading further, it was clear that Anthony's work at Assistens was similar to my work in California at Fort Ross, particularly in terms of the politics and complexities of studying death in modernity. While one assumption may be that these modern cemeteries are complex because of living descendants, there are other issues involved. Some of the problems associated with modern cemeteries likely have more to do with the continued use of the cemetery and the role of the dead in the process of creating histories or narratives about the past and the present, as well as the past in the present.

Archaeologists sometimes make the assumption that the experience of excavating burials in field contexts is similar everywhere, but the chapters discussed above demonstrate the variability that exists. In particular, it is useful to recognize how that variability can impact excavations and interpretations, as well as impact the actions of the institutions and stakeholders who are associated directly and indirectly with the project.

EXHIBITS AND DISPLAYS

By their very nature, museum displays limit and simplify the past, both in terms of interpretation and the nature of the archaeological record. This is perhaps more true when displaying mortuary data than many other sorts of archaeological data because of the interference of our modern views of death. Several chapters in this volume use case studies to examine what is presented in displays, how mortuary ritual is conveyed, and who makes or influences decisions on exhibitions. Nordström (Chapter 10) agrees with Williams (2010) about the need for focus on the bigger picture. That bigger picture can be posed in several ways: Williams (2010), in relation to his specific research, suggests we ask 'What do the early medieval dead ever do for us?' and that question can be broadened to 'How does knowing about this part of the past help us?' and 'What can we learn from the past that may be useful to us?' Some authors make the point that broader questions have often been forgotten in the design of displays.

On a broad scale, Swain (Chapter 8) outlines an overview of museum practices regarding the display of human remains. This perspective is important so that one does not make the false assumption that every country does what our own particular country does; different historical and cultural conditions shape such decisions. In her review, Swain is both historic and geographic in scope, noting place-specific cultural and political perspectives that

contribute to approaches to display. Several of her conclusions provide a framework for the discussion that follows.

Swain's analysis indicates that in North America, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, museum displays of human remains are effectively non-existent because of the impact of Indigenous perspectives, historical and colonial abuses, and politicization. However, in the rest of the world, there is more variability: 1) in Europe, displays of human remains are widespread, although the institutions sponsoring the displays are increasingly aware of ethical considerations; 2) in China, displays of well-preserved human remains are often presented as examples of scientific wonder; 3) in South America, the approach is similar to Europe, but with displays suggesting a more regional and personalized relationship with the dead; and 4) in India, Southeast Asia, and Japan, historical, cultural, and religious circumstances dictate very little display of human remains. Swain's analysis provides an important reminder about the place-specific impact of culture, religion, and history on the treatment and display of human remains. In every specific case, researchers need to examine and understand the history of how the current situation came to be.

Jenkins (Chapter 12) focuses on the Lindow Man exhibit in the Manchester Museum, and in discussing the social construction of repatriation, she notes that those she terms 'actors within' (curators, directors, and policy makers) are often the strongest voices for repatriation and alternative interpretation. Particularly interesting is Jenkins' portrayal of some museums as having a 'crisis of cultural authority,' which she sees as being part of an overall attempt to re-legitimize museum institutions by involving new communities and voices, whether or not these groups have equal, or in some cases any, standing.

In developing her argument about the social construction of repatriation, Jenkins notes that the completed exhibit provides a focus for the participants' interests that are influenced by current-day preoccupations, including identity, multiculturalism, and environmentalism. Interpretations of Lindow Man's actual activities are largely missing from the exhibit, presumably so as not to offend any one group. Jenkins makes an excellent case for the use of human remains as objects of currency. Such actions may not be inherently bad or wrong, but if museums are going to do this, they should do it transparently and consciously. Another important point made by Jenkins, and to my knowledge ignored by most scholars, is that *campaigns to influence museums and other institutions are effective because the context they want to influence is open and unstable* (emphasis added). In Jenkins' construct, museums' approach of minimizing researcher/scientific interpretations and elevating stakeholder interpretations represent the 'therapeutic model.' At a minimum, it is an attempt by museums to make their institutions more 'relevant and current' without considering the effect on science and contributions to knowledge. It takes strong leadership to clearly state and act on the institution's

principles and values, and museums are under so many different pressures that it is not surprising that they are 'open and unstable.'

Nordström (Chapter 10) examines three mortuary displays in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Nordström takes what she terms a 'biographical approach' to human remains in museums, and in particular, she is interested in why some displayed individuals from the past become famous and effectively 'immortal', while others are forgotten. This is not a question I had considered, but her analysis highlights several interesting points. One prime example of Nordström's famous individuals on display is Ötzi, the Iceman, who is known to almost everyone in the world and is still famous decades after his discovery. Nordström points out that the ancient dead have become everything *but* dead objects. One way to see such displays is as representative of post-modern museum culture that provides multiple narratives of meaning and interpretation. However, Nordström also observes that being a famous display and being considered an important find often depends on being found at the right time by the right archaeologist. In her analysis, she demonstrates how interpretations change over time and do not necessarily change the individual's fame. The more attention we focus on these individuals, the more immortal they become. Nordström's research suggests that over time, a number of these individuals have been used to shape our grand narratives about humanity. She sees our relationship with these past individuals as representative of entanglements, in Hodder's (2012) sense of the term. Interestingly, these individuals also change through time as new science emerges, or new finds that elucidate contextual information, or as ideas about the past and present shift focus. Death is unavoidable, yet these individuals remain immortal and fascinating. At one level, they force us to define who we are and allow us to get deeper perspectives on our own culture.

The details in some of the author observations make even a knowledgeable reader stop and rethink interpretive exhibitions. As one example, Williams (Chapter 14) notes that virtually none of the European museum exhibits that he documented showed the *process* of cremation, if they showed cremated bone at all. Above and beyond archaeologists', osteologists', and museums' historic dismissal of cremation as an important mortuary practice, I had not consciously recognized that museums do not mention, let alone interpret, the process(es) by which cremation occurs. The visitor may see a pile of burned bones (in an out-of-the-way case), but that visitor will not be told how the bones came to be burned, or the possible meaning of burning. Given that cremation today is done for very different reasons (e.g. many see it as efficient and environmentally sound) than cremation in the past (past cremations often had a significant performative component), this lack of interpretation is a significant omission and a missed opportunity for public education. In the USA, virtually no institution exhibits human bones in any condition, with the rare exception of a single bone exhibiting a disease or fracture. That is

probably why I, as a North American, had not noticed Williams' crucial point about cremation exhibits—I had been so pleased and/or surprised to see any human bone in a museum display that I did not further contextualize exhibits I viewed. While Williams' focus is on the issue of display of cremated human remains, I think his point can be made for many museum exhibits; museums often try so hard to please stakeholders that they fail to appropriately interpret and provide context for the materials they display, and similarly, they are concerned with today's context while ignoring the context of the past. To my knowledge, there have not been a large number of detailed studies of the role of various stakeholders in the process of exhibiting mortuary practices, and some chapters focus on this absence as an issue, collecting data that highlight many of the problems and concerns. Authors are generally careful to gather and present data that allow the reader to come to his/her own conclusions. Additionally, biases in the data and in the collection methods are recognized and outlined. The chapters discussing various aspects of the Manchester Museum controversy (Swain Chapter 8; Exell Chapter 11; Jenkins Chapter 12) are perhaps the most clear in this regard. While most of the problems that arose in the Manchester case are not necessarily unusual in contemporary museums, the examples cited seem to represent a decision about display of human remains that came top-down, and resulted in unanticipated consequences. Reading Exell's (Chapter 11) account of the shrouding of the Egyptian mummies at the Manchester Museum was especially surprising and can certainly be framed as an overreaction or inappropriate reaction to sensitivity in other cultural contexts.

Exell argues that changes in what is appropriate for an exhibit result (deliberately and/or inadvertently) in changing the role of specialist curators in relation to public communications. Similar to several of Jenkins' concerns, Exell demonstrates that what happened at the Manchester Museum was directly the result of individual agendas, combined with the cultural climate at the time. Although Exell focuses on personal and individual decisions, she attributes the decisions made at the Museum to overarching 'post-modern exhibitionary discourse'.

Continuing on the theme of framing the discourse as having developed from a post-colonial critique of the 'role of science in the politics of oppression,' Nilsson Stutz (Chapter 13) compares the USA as representative of a post-colonial example, and Scandinavia as representative of a post-nationalist example in which human remains are exhibited without contestation. Nilsson Stutz argues that the different political landscape and history results in almost opposite reactions to displays of human remains in each country. Somewhat similar to Exell and Jenkins, Nilsson Stutz concludes with the observation that both case studies represent examples of cultural practice and political process deeply rooted in cultural concerns. However, she also makes the important point that because these situations are in flux, decisions made in one context may not be either relevant or transferrable to the other.

In an analysis of the variability in English Heritage's displays of mortuary remains, Tatham (Chapter 9) looks at three sites and the reasons behind the differences in how human remains are displayed in each. For any site, there are many different stories that can be told, and the reasoning behind the selection of stories underpins many of the discussions in this section in general and in this chapter in particular. English Heritage did not engage the public in the planning of these exhibitions, but all three new exhibitions turned out to be popular and represent attempts to engage and educate the public once the exhibits opened. Tatham makes the point that because the public funds English Heritage, the exhibits and interpretations should be open to criticism and challenge. Limiting the public to input after exhibition decisions are made can ultimately impede attempts to be innovative, responsive, and engaging. Although Tatham's point is an important one, I think one can also see this particular case as an example of Jenkins' point about strength of leadership.

McClelland and Cerezo-Román (Chapter 3) write the only American-focused contribution; their chapter takes a very different perspective than others in this volume. In particular, they discuss the shift in views about bodies by stakeholders, archaeologists, and osteologists, suggesting that osteologists now participate in embodiment and re-embodiment of bodies, conferring personhood on what was once only considered an object of study. Their example is the historic (c. 1860–1880) Alameda-Stone cemetery excavations and reburials in Tucson, Arizona, and the processes of personhood and re-embodiment as the individuals were excavated and reburied and memorialized. The displays they cite are at the site of the reburial, in a modern Tucson cemetery.

I am extremely familiar with the Alameda-Stone project since I served as an overall project consultant from the project's beginning, and I wrote parts of the initial report (Heilen and Gray 2010) and parts or all of five of the eight chapters in the published volume (Heilen 2012). While I agree with McClelland and Cerezo-Román's premise, I think several observations may help to better contextualize the project, even though it may also add one or more layers of complexity. The authors note that parts of the cemetery had accidentally been found at several times since the cemetery closed, with a large number of human remains recovered in 1953. That find was mitigated by a group of University of Arizona anthropology students, and the interesting thing about changing values is how the find was used. In the Arizona Daily Star of February 23 1955, a local construction company, Hunziker Construction, used the excavation in an advertisement. The ad noted that: '…in the interest of science, we [Hunziker] proceeded a scoop and a skeleton at a time until all the scientific information had been gathered' (Fig. 20.1).

The number of stakeholders involved in the Alameda-Stone cemetery project was large, multi-ethnic, and diverse, and several groups had conflicting

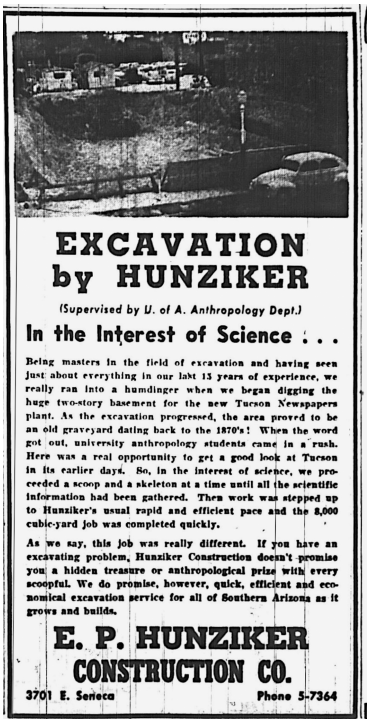

Fig. 20.1 Advertisement from the late 1950s Tucson Citizen newspaper for the Hunzicker Construction Company. [Image courtesy of SRI, Inc and Alameda-Stone Cemetery project—see Goldstein and Anyon 2012].

desires. It is important to note that the project was not conducted under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), because that law applies only to Native American, Native Alaskan, and Native Hawaiian groups. Instead, the work was conducted under a direct court order that outlined procedures to be taken in the consultation, excavation, analysis, and reburial of the human remains. There was, in fact, little divergence from what might have been required under NAGPRA, and the native tribes were involved in and agreed with the decisions made. In fact, this was the most transparent and culturally sensitive large-scale cemetery project of which I am aware. The citizens of Arizona are unusually aware and proud of archaeology in their state, and although the project was costly and received considerable publicity, there were no complaints officially registered.

One additional comment I wish to make about the Alameda-Stone cemetery concerns the reburial location. As McClelland and Cerezo-Román note, the cemetery in which the majority of individuals were reburied is in a remote location at the edge of Tucson. The reasons for this location add another layer of complexity and construction of personhood. The cemetery is owned by the Catholic Church, but includes separate sections for a number of different religions and groups. More centrally located cemeteries are nearly full, and this

cemetery is trying to convince people to buy plots in this more distant location. Their success has been variable. However, the project needed a place to rebury the individuals from the Alameda-Stone cemetery and the majority of the individuals in the cemetery were Hispanic Catholics, so it made sense to place them in a Catholic-owned cemetery. The cemetery, Pima County, and various stakeholders developed a plan that would honour the past citizens of Tucson and would be a special place for contemporary citizens. This 'garden of the ancestors' (the name may have been subsequently changed) was seen as an important memorial that would draw increased interest in and use of the cemetery and eventually benefit both the past and the present. If successful, it would bring the idea of constructing group identities in the present closer to fruition.

PUBLIC OPINION AND HOW TO MEASURE IT

Outreach has become an important measure for professional archaeologists and public institutions that display archaeological information. Institutions want to document that the research conducted is of some value to the public, and that the public has access to information. Such documentation of outreach makes institutions appear relevant and responsive in an increasingly sceptical world. Larger questions include how one measures outreach and how one collects a relatively unbiased view of public opinion. Many museums use surveys. Although surveys can be helpful, many biases are inherent in them (not the least of which is the problem of only surveying people who visit museums), and chapters here look at alternative ways to measure opinion and/or to take those biases into account.

When a contemporary archaeologist excavates a mortuary site, it is often in the context of a cultural resources management project. In such contexts, the archaeologists often assist in locating or 'clearing' space by identifying the extent and nature of burials present and removing those burials. However, such work can also provide larger value in mourning and commemoration of the death in the contemporary context (Williams and Williams 2007). Communication and engagement with the public and various stakeholders is required to maintain, create, and explain the value of heritage, and many descendants, whether close or more tangential, appreciate the knowledge and can subsequently close that chapter of their lives or history.

By using a cross-disciplinary methodology of questionnaires, interviews, and conversations, Sayer and Sayer's two-year research at Oakington revealed the complexity and multi-staged relationships between people and human remains. This may seem an obvious finding, but a variety of heritage professionals and other stakeholders have repeatedly made claims suggesting near

universal responses in this relationship. Sayer and Sayer were able to document a real (generally positive) change in attitude as the archaeological work progressed. It would be fascinating to conduct similar studies in similar contexts in very different regions of the world. Importantly, Sayer and Sayer documented the nuances and variability in the public's views, trying to highlight the importance of this variability.

Rajala (Chapter 4) also conducted a survey, but in her case she focused on a group of twenty central Italian archaeologists. In 2003, she surveyed these archaeologists regarding their attitudes towards their research and objects of study. She found what she describes as core attitudes towards the dead and the ancestors at the time of the survey: 1) the objectification of human remains and 2) negation of any ancestral significance of those remains. Rajala places these attitudes in their cultural context, suggesting that these come as a result of the Second World War and post-war rejection of the concept of nation. This link is interesting because archaeologists often fail to associate their perspectives with broader contemporary or historic events in society, even though we know that such events have major impact on our research and interpretations.

Related to Rajala's conclusions is Weiss-Krejci's (Chapter 16) examination of why a cemetery in Austria was allowed to wash away. Her quest to understand why Austrians act as they do in response to human remains led her to research the issue in several different ways, including the number of repatriations that have been accomplished by various countries. Weiss-Krejci found that there had been a significant number of repatriations from England and Scotland, but very few from Austria or the rest of continental Europe. She outlines possible explanations for this discrepancy, but, in her mind, none of these explanations really account for the slow progress in repatriation of human remains.

Weiss-Krejci's proceeds to contextualize approaches toward dead bodies in Austria and the general German-speaking world, in an attempt to tease apart a better explanation of Austrian attitudes toward human remains. One key point of her discussion is that attitudes toward the dead in continental Europe are different than much of the rest of the world. People still actively use ossuaries, and charnel houses and relic bones in and around churches are both common and easily accessible. One is not buried 'in perpetuity.' She suggests that, from the Austrian perspective, repatriation claims most likely arise from British and other traditions of restricting disturbance of the dead. However, she also notes that in Britain, non-disturbance was largely restricted to the British, but not those in the colonial context who were socially stigmatized, enemies, or 'primitive.' Things are changing in repatriation in the German-speaking world, and it will be interesting to see whether and how such shifts are reflected in changes in the society, and vice versa. Related to the previous section of this chapter, do museums in Austria and the broader

German world represent similar attitudes to those Weiss-Krejci documents for cemeteries and reburials? Do they miss or ignore the same kinds of things that Williams reports for his European museum sample? How do they present the process of cremation or funerals?

Sayer and Walter's work (Chapter 17) is especially noteworthy in regard to measuring public opinion since they employed an unusual evaluation method. Using three stories of archaeological mortuary excavation, they look at newspaper websites from two different points on the political spectrum to examine online readers' responses to stories about these excavations.

Sayer and Walters make it clear that one particular way of measuring opinion will never be sufficient, and that major biases are inherent in every measure. However, I think that this innovative approach, in combination with other methods, should provide a better idea of the range and nuances in public opinion about archaeology. Similarly, the other analyses in this section measure opinion in different ways that also provide insights into behaviour and attitudes. Finally, as Nordström observes, the role of media cannot be overstated. Media play an important role in highlighting particular exhibits, sites, and stories, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to control the direction and nature of their attention. The media also want to tell good stories.

REINTERPRETATION AND/OR REANALYSIS

It is a given that we are never done learning or interpreting—as we collect and analyse more data, our interpretations will change. As we develop new analytic techniques, we will learn even more about the specific past. Every so often, exhibits and public materials must be updated, broadened, changed. Unfortunately, this process is not always clear and it varies from institution to institution. Who makes the decisions? Who has veto power, and who has input? What aspects of the culture are portrayed and what is ignored? How does reinterpretation accommodate the previous interpretation, or does it even mention previous views?

Several authors evaluate exhibits that have been updated. They compare before and after, pointing out potentially important things that have been overlooked, ignored, or relegated to a corner. Especially useful are the analyses of why and how such decisions may have been made. These are not simply finger-pointing exercises, but instead careful and nuanced looks at specific and general cultural influences on decision-making. If archaeologists are going to have a positive influence on such decisions, they must know and understand how decisions are made.

Not surprisingly, many chapters in this volume examine the role of non-archaeologists in the intersection of mortuary archaeology and contemporary

society. Reflecting on archaeology's past, it is hard to believe that some archaeologists once saw themselves, their research, and their field as existing outside politics, even though any time government funding and/or support is involved, politics and political decisions are present.

A significant part of reinterpretation involves the role of non-archaeologists, and authors detail the many ways in which this happens, the many different kinds of people who are involved, and the results and/or impact such involvement may have. Involvement is not inherently nefarious or negative or positive, but awareness of the involvement is crucial. For example, in examining the intersection of mortuary archaeology and contemporary Pagan groups, Rathouse (Chapter 17) presents a multi-threaded ethnographic examination of contemporary Pagan culture, showing that interest in mortuary archaeology may be for spiritual, political, and ethical reasons. His work causes one to realize that archaeologists may need education and appreciation of variability almost as much as the groups protesting what we do. Rathouse points out the many different ways and reasons Pagan groups use the archaeological record and interpretations. Similarly, prompted by items from a local cemetery found in a riverbed, Weiss-Krejci (Chapter 16) discovered in her analysis of modern Austrian mortuary history that the issues of reburial and repatriation are ones that seem outside the range of normal Austrian approaches to the dead.

In several earlier sections of this chapter, I discussed various authors' analyses of reinterpretation of human remains and museum displays. A particularly strong example of such analysis is Nordström's examination of how reinterpretation is accomplished, the role of stereotypes, what kinds of meaning may be behind various pushes toward new views, and how some new interpretations never move beyond some old assumptions. Nordström's example of the Mesolithic grave from Bäckaskog in southern Sweden provides excellent evidence of all of these points. The original frail young man or dwarf reluctantly began to be understood to be a woman, but that was a problem because people were not ready to accept that a woman could hunt. Eventually, that acceptance came and the exhibition and reinterpretation came with it and is still continuing. The individual is still seen as being first and foremost a woman, and is often now used as an example of the typical Stone Age woman, regardless of anything else that we may learn about her.

The public engages with the dead through more than bones and artefacts. Two of the chapters in this volume tackle particularly interesting examples of the reconstruction process, incorporating another set of perspectives to the intersection of archaeology, public archaeology, and contemporary society. These perspectives often have the greatest direct impact on the general public and what people learn from museum displays.

Kirk (Chapter 18) urges archaeologists to make contributions to writing pasts that are characterized by multi-vocality, creativity, and imagination. He argues that such writing must also be grounded in the materiality of

archaeological data. As Kirk quotes Tarlow (1999: 179), 'No account of the past is free from creative and imaginative input.' Kirk notes that some archaeologists think that imagination and creativity are potentially a bad or negative thing that may distort interpretations of the past, but this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, Kirk suggests that memory, metaphor, emotion, and dialogue between the past and the present could form the basis for future interdisciplinary work. Kirk notes that both poets and archaeologists transform their subject matter by considering different contexts. According to context and intent, different meanings emerge; meanings are not fixed. In essence, Kirk is calling for archaeologists to use language to open a dialogue between different voices, but he also asks that archaeologists not forget about the data that help craft those meanings. Imagination does not always mean fiction.

It is very appealing and easy to agree with Kirk's call to archaeologists; at some level, we would all like to be that person who writes with creativity and imagination, all the while incorporating data, collaborating with others, and maintaining multi-vocality about interpretations of the past. I wonder, however, how soon we reach the place where we are asking every archaeologist to take on more than one person can manage? Is there a way to compromise and still achieve the goal? All archaeologists should and could 'assess the nature of creative imagination' in our wider engagement with the archaeological past, but I doubt that all of us can do so effectively. Nonetheless, it is easy and useful to be inspired by Kirk's call to action.

The final chapter in the volume is by Giles (Chapter 19) and examines reconstructing the Iron Age chariot burials of East Yorkshire. Giles outlines various problems with illustrators' reconstructions of the past. Particularly important is her idea that artist and archaeologist need to collaborate during the full process of creation, installation, evaluation, and reinterpretation. In the process of collaboration, Giles was careful to try and address many of the biases and problems she had earlier outlined. One example of her efforts is the fact that the image she collaborated on and helped to produce is not the end of the burial event, but rather the middle of the ritual.

Giles' work with an illustrator on reinterpretations of the chariot burials is impressive, and takes best advantage of both the skills of the archaeologist and those of the illustrator. Although Giles' final result is remarkable and really should be seen as a visualization rather than a reconstruction, one wonders how such long-term, intensive collaborations can be developed when places like the Manchester Museum and other museums are increasingly eliminating the expertise of curators and archaeologists in developing exhibits. How can the kinds of work proposed by Giles, Kirk, Nordström, Rathouse, and others be incorporated into interpretations and exhibits of mortuary archaeology when money is increasingly tight, people are much more hurried, politics is

always present, and few people have longevity in their professional positions? A single archaeologist can manage to hold onto and incorporate many ideas and people into a project, but their ability to influence museum exhibits and displays is often a much more problematic endeavour.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The chapters in this volume demonstrate that local context is critical not only in archaeological and mortuary interpretation, but also in public, religious, political, and government responses. Although I have personally been involved in such issues for more than thirty-five years, these chapters expanded my view, in part because the perspectives and examples allowed me to see some situations in a new light. The diversity in topics and approaches (everything from excavation to observation to display to protest to ethnography to writing and drawing about death) suggests that archaeology may have finally moved beyond old habits of complaining that things are not right, to working toward understanding why particular positions are taken and what we can do to affect constructive and productive change.

While the chapters in this volume focus on burials or mortuary sites or mortuary exhibits, the volume is really about the intersection of these topics, and how archaeologists might best evaluate and negotiate that intersected space, while paying proper attention and respect to the archaeological data.

At the beginning of this chapter, I outlined what I saw as four themes of this volume: 1) mortuary site excavations and issues of accessibility and changing perspectives; 2) exhibits of mortuary archaeology and their accessibility (or lack of accessibility) by the public; 3) opinion about archaeology in general and mortuary archaeology in particular, as well as how that opinion is measured; and 4) reinterpretation and/or reanalysis of sites and exhibits and how that reanalysis or reinterpretation is achieved. Associated with each of these themes is a set of chapters that address the theme from a different perspective with a different data set. Beyond this classification, however, is an important and much broader set of lessons and observations.

Bones are powerful symbols that live on long after the individual is gone. These powerful symbols may have several meanings that change over time, including the present. Bones are used and reused in a number of different ways by different groups for different purposes. Because of these changing meanings, context takes on even great significance, and stakeholder groups become larger and more diverse.

The discussion in this volume about excavations of mortuary sites was not simply about specific laws or debates between groups. Instead, authors

productively focused on how archaeologists can deal with the intersection of laws and interests and ethics and the general public and various stakeholders.

Discussions about exhibits of human remains noted the need for a bigger picture on such exhibits, an acknowledgement of variability in practice, the nature of the social construction of repatriation, and crises of cultural authority with open and unstable contexts. Further, exhibits tend to show end results and rarely focus on the process of how these activities or results happened.

Measuring opinion about mortuary sites and exhibits must include recognition of mourning and commemoration of the death in the contemporary context. It also must include education and engaging the public. Opinions on these complex topics cannot be calculated via one survey: the biases and problems demand that a variety of approaches and techniques be employed.

In terms of reinterpretation and reanalysis, key questions include who makes the decisions and how are these decisions made? There are a variety of ways to approach reinterpretation, and authors demonstrate that the group that might be undertaking the reinterpretation will not be successful without the continued input and expertise of the archaeologist.

To put it simply, although this volume focuses on intersections, it is perhaps more accurately about entanglements (see Hodder, 2012 but also Thomas, 1991). Material objects have a social life, but human remains have both a social life and power in the past, in the present, and in the past in the present. The authors in this volume provide examples and suggestions for archaeologists negotiating those intersections and entanglements.

How does one negotiate the entanglements that live in those intersections between heritage and the archaeology of death? The stage cannot be 'us vs. them,' but is actually a complicated, diverse, multi-layered, multi-vocal space that requires time, research, training, and flexibility to navigate. We may likely have to reconsider how we train the archaeologists of the future to make this transition successful. As seen in this volume, archaeologists have matured concerning their roles and interpretations, understanding that they must be ready to take on these challenges, moving beyond excavation and particular interpretations of slices of time. Archaeology is a far more difficult task than it has ever been because we must do everything we have always done, plus a whole lot more, with many more people and conflicting and intersecting interests. We have to learn how best to interpret the processes and performative aspects of past mortuary practices as well as their end results, and thus in turn we must learn how to better translate those processes and performances into interesting and insightful displays. Ultimately, a more mature and complex approach will result in more accurate archaeological interpretations and more satisfying interactions in those interpretations.

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