

EDITORIAL

Introduction to Geographic and Spatial Approaches in the History of Archaeology

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Who studies the historiography of archaeology? Who reads the history of the discipline? Recent years have seen growing interest in the history of archaeology as is reflected in works such as Christenson (1989), Trigger (1989; 2006), Chakrabarti (1988; 2003), Singh (2004), Díaz-Andreu (2007), and special issues in *Antiquity* (Schlanger 2002) and *Complutum* (Moro Abadia & Huth 2013). The target audience for these publications is specialists. So what is novel about geographic and spatial approaches in the history of archaeology?

History of Archaeology in the 21st Century

Not too long ago, studying the history of archaeology meant leaving archaeology, as though the discipline were exclusively field-based. In this essentialist, positivist view, 'new' knowledge was gained only through boots-on-the-ground archaeological fieldwork, whereas archaeology's historiography constituted a 'nostalgic retreat' or what the British archaeologist David Clarke (1968: xiii) described as a way for the armchair archaeologist to avoid new developments in the discipline. For Clarke (1968: 634) 'the two way relationship' between archaeology and computers encapsulated the new development and he remarked on its potential to change the way archaeologists practiced their craft. More than four decades since *Analytical Archaeology*, to what degree does the historiography of archaeology reflect nostalgia? How and what, in the 21st century, can we draw from the two related but distinguishable streams in archaeology: the collection of archaeological data and the interpretation of that data?

Moro Abadia and Huth (2013: 9) have recently remarked that, save for a numbered few 'scientifically oriented publications', articles on the history of archaeology are published in 'mainstream' archaeological journals every year. Professional organizations such as the Society for American Archaeology, henceforth SAA, have special interest groups dedicated to the history of archaeology and sessions on 'histories' feature annually at meetings. Archaeologists no doubt sustain these varied professional activities to promote the historiography of archaeology, reflecting a more complex scenario than Clarke supposed in the mid-twentieth century.

Teaching is another platform where scholars engage with learners from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and with the next generation of professionals. Lecturers are likely to nurture interest not only in the history of archaeology, but cross over disciplinary boundaries to the history and sociology of science, anthropology, geography, biology and computer sciences. Yet not all archaeologists are professors in higher education, nor will every graduate in archaeology enter the academy. In practice, archaeology graduates find employment in non-academic sectors. In many nations, the archaeological community consists of members of private and public firms, nationally-oriented institutions and international agencies in addition to academic professionals, raising the question, who are the archaeologists, and where and when are archaeological investigations carried out? What tools and technologies do archaeologists employ? How do scholars and policy makers interpret archaeological data? This does not mean that the archaeological record does not matter. Rather, as articles in this issue demonstrate, the present state of things influences our view of the past, and this in turn, shapes our knowledge and perception of the present.

Geographic and spatial approaches in archaeology can be viewed as aiding and improving procedure, much in the same way that computational technologies such as geographic information systems (GIS) are thought to assist the accumulation of archaeological data and streamline its management. But there is another way to consider geographic and spatial approaches in archaeology: to elucidate the intersection of space and *power*, which, in turn, can create a framework to enable unexpected insights on human behaviour.

Asking 'why here, why now?' offers clues to explaining the present state of things. As the historian of geography David Livingstone (2003: 11) put it, 'knowledge, space and power are tightly interwoven' at all scales of scientific inquiry, whether as an individual, social groups, states or regions. Thus, geographic and spatial approaches in the

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history of archaeology enable us to vitalize the relationship between the collection of archaeological data and its interpretation. When and where archaeological fieldwork takes place is as critical to know as who carries out the investigations, and the methods and the tools and technologies that archaeologists employed, and their interpretation of archaeology.

Few scholars today would claim the discipline is practiced in a vacuum with little or no influence from social and political factors. This does not mean that specialists are in agreement on these influences, their impact on the collection and interpretation of archaeological data—and, what these factors mean for our understanding of the past. It was with the aim to shed light on these issues that Gupta organized a session at the 2013 SAA annual meetings on spatial approaches to the history of archaeology, which was sponsored by the SAA's History of Archaeology Interest Group, of which Means is the current chair. Gupta and Means' session had particular focus on the explanation of spatial differences within national archaeologies.

The present collection consists of seven (from a total of twelve) papers from the conference session, which shed light on archaeological practices in varied social and political contexts, ranging from Canada, India, the United States and the United Kingdom. Contributors to this collection include junior and more established scholars. Source material for the studies range from published books and journal articles, newspapers, photographs and maps to archived field journals, letters and oral history narratives.

Spatial approaches using GIS figure prominently in contributions (Randall; Means), as do visualizations of physical and social space (Bollwerk; Bracewell; Gupta; Kirakosian; Carter). Together, these papers reflect the breadth of methods that historians of archaeology currently employ. The contributions consider ownership of the past, the relationship between aboriginal peoples and Euro-Canadians, and -Americans, and the ways that archaeology was made to conform to prevailing values and beliefs of one group. This situation reflects the tendency to hold on to our beliefs about the world and the nature of things even in the face of overwhelming proof to the contrary (B. G. Trigger pers. comm. 2005).

When conceptualized in a geographical and historical framework, we are better able to understand the changing relationship between archaeology and society and the influence of social and political factors on archaeological practices. From this perspective view we gain insight on the making of scientific archaeology, standardized practices and particular field procedures, in addition to subtle changes in the interpretation of archaeology. This, in turn, can help us assess the strengths and weaknesses of archaeology as a science.

Can Archaeology Challenge Colonial Views of the Past?

Previous studies in the 'socio-politics' of the past (Gero 1985: 343) have shed light on political uses of archaeology in which 'fundamental asymmetries' sustain the interests of one group over those of another in a society. While fruitful, these approaches tend to obscure the ways in

which archaeology has (and can) challenge colonial views of the past, as well as maintain them. North American conceptualization of identity is based on three main distinctions among its population from the earliest European colonization here, namely, the people of Native American descent, people of African descent and those of Spanish, English, Irish descent and more recent immigrants. Colonial views of aboriginal peoples and the interpretation of archaeological data are at the heart of Elizabeth Bollwerk's and Jennifer Bracewell's contributions.

Bollwerk traces the views of Middle Atlantic archaeologists in the United States over the last 150 years through an examination of the cartographic techniques used to depict Native American cultures. She argues that published archaeological maps reflect the culturally situated values of the mapmakers and these communication tools in turn, can shape a reader's view of aboriginal peoples and social complexity in past societies. Specifically, Bollwerk observes that archaeologists used particular cartographic symbology to delineate the distribution and extent of archaeological cultures, a unit of analysis, she remarks, perpetuated the belief that Native societies were isolated, static and rigidly bounded. Interestingly, Bollwerk finds continuity in cartographic symbology, a practice, she concludes has not dramatically changed despite the ubiquity of digital mapping tools and technologies.

Long-standing ideas of the simple and unchanging aboriginal are the focus of Jennifer Bracewell's paper. Bracewell contextualizes colonial interpretations of prehistory in northern Quebec, Canada in terms of biblical views of sedentism. She examines the influence that contact period Jesuit missionaries had on conceptualizations of aboriginal social organization, and, how these ideas influenced archaeological investigations in an enormous eight million square mile 'infertile crescent' well into the twentieth century. The missionaries, Bracewell argues, associated mobility with immorality and punishment and thus, hunter-gatherers in the New World were little more than wanderers, not unlike the biblical Cain. Under this model, civilization (read biblical teaching) and a moral life would take root only when aboriginal peoples were permanently settled, and because there was no reason to believe aboriginals had ever been sedentary, early European scholars readily equated contemporary peoples with prehistoric ones. Bracewell contends that it was precisely the *lack* of archaeological investigation in the region that sustained timelessness in the prehistory of the Canadian Shield up until the 1990s. Like Bollwerk, Bracewell breaks down conventional views on the fieldwork-historiography polemic, situating the collection of archaeological data as a way to challenge inaccurate views of the past.

The way archaeological data is collected and the making of 'scientific' fieldwork is the focus of Charlotte Carter's contribution. Carter examines how scale came to be a standard visual feature in archaeological photography between the 1950s and 1980s. In her examination of leading archaeology journals, Carter considers archaeological photographs a reflection of the aims of the archaeologists and their knowledge of theoretical developments in the

discipline, drawing attention to New Archaeology and its impact on field practices. She argues that being scientific meant employing the correct visual features in site photography, such as the rod scale. Interestingly, while Carter finds a slight increasing trend over time towards rod scale in archaeological photography, her study shows clear variations in published photographs in, and between select academic journals, leading her to rightly conclude that this scientific feature was not a prerequisite for manuscript publication. It would be fruitful to consider peer-review practices (Peters & Ceci 1982) in archaeology and to what degree specific journal editors promoted particular kinds of scientific visualization in making archaeological field practices 'standard'.

Who are the Archaeologists? Where and When do They Investigate?

The historiography of archaeology is incomplete in the absence of the identity of the archaeologist – who you are has a great deal to do with where you can go, whom you might socialize with and the degree to which you can influence people and situations. Asa Randall's and Katie Kirakosian's contributions shed light on this issue. Randall discusses the development of 'scientific American archaeology' through a GIS-based reconstruction of Jeffries Wyman's surveys of shell middens in Florida, whereas Kirakosian elaborates on the social circles of shell midden archaeology in Massachusetts using Social Network Analysis. Jeffries Wyman served as president for the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS) and in 1866, he became the first curator of collections at the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Wyman was Professor of Anatomy at Harvard College until his death in 1874.

Randall focuses on unpublished field journals to gain insight on Wyman's understanding of stratigraphy and the degree to which these methods enabled him to interpret mounds as having been 'made by Indians' or attributable to geologic processes. At some mounds, Wyman observed pottery and human remains, whereas at other locations, such as on Hontoon Island North, he overlooked the antiquity and significance of burial mounds. Randall explains that these missed opportunities were likely because of Wyman's ill health and the paucity of labour to assist in excavations. Yet, as Randall further remarks, Wyman continued to believe that shell middens were little more than refuse disposal sites, shedding light on the power of beliefs and values on the practice of American archaeology.

'Social terrain', the charting of individuals and their membership in groups is the focus in Kirakosian's assessment of Jeffries Wyman and others engaged in shell midden archaeology. Using concepts from social network analysis and Ingold's wayfaring, she examines changes in the social terrain of shell midden archaeology over a 140 year period, between 1868 and 2008. Kirakosian argues that 'social climate', the occurrence of alliances and incidence of disputes between archaeologists (social actors) is necessary to understand changes in local social networks. She remarks that 'outward appearances do not

always correlate with one's private opinions', citing tensions between members of Wyman's social circle, which included Asa Gray, Frederic Ward Putnam, Edward Morse, and Louis Agassiz. Despite shifting alliances and at times, a strained relationship between Wyman and Agassiz, Kirakosian observes that the two men worked together for decades, reflecting their professional and social self interest and mutual aims toward advancement of their disciplines.

Placing Archaeology in Physical and Social Space

Bernard Means addresses variations in archaeological investigations during the Depression in the United States. The New Deal was a series of federal government programs introduced in 1933 to create jobs 'that did not compete with existing normal business activities'. Means remarks that the policy prioritized projects that were 'shovel ready' and 'expended funds on labour' – a good fit for archaeological investigations in which a few trained archaeologists might supervise 'large numbers of unskilled labourers'. Yet as Means suggests, how these funds were spent, and whether or not archaeological findings were reported heavily depended on the recipient local and state government. Means argues that marked variations in archaeological fieldwork across the 48 American states are a reflection of local interests and 'strong personalities passionate about the past' who secured New Deal funding. For example, 19 of 21 counties in New Jersey had allocations for New Deal archaeology, whereas none of the 105 counties in Kansas had any allocations. However, where New Deal archaeology was carried out, archaeologists quickly amassed large collections that enabled subsequent archaeological research. As Means explains, archaeological investigations correlate well with places with high unemployment rates, a situation which, although not methodologically ideal, enabled researchers to recover the archaeological record in specific locations for the first time.

The selection of a specific place for archaeological investigation and interpretation of data recovered there is a central theme in Neha Gupta's examination of post-colonial Indian archaeology. Gupta argues that local social and political conditions impacted where Indian archaeologists carried out fieldwork, which she demonstrates through the case of Sanghol, Punjab. Sanghol, a community located 200 kilometres from the sensitive Pakistan-India frontline, was the scene for archaeological investigations in the aftermath of the 1984 assassination of then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Gupta believes that discontinuities in research at Sanghol show that it was not always an important site in Indian archaeology. Rather, its recent status as one of the most important archaeological sites reflects the changing interests of Indian archaeologists and the impact of social unrest and severe political instability in India. This situation is best reflected in collaborative archaeological fieldwork in Sanghol between 1986 and 1990, led by the Archaeological Survey of India, the national department for archaeology and heritage management, and the Punjab state department of archaeology.

The present collection, thus, offers insight on how knowledge making is interwoven with space and power and the conditions under which conventional views of the past came to be, and the ways these ideas were maintained. Far from Clarke's nostalgia, geographic and spatial approaches in the history of archaeology draw out the social and political factors in archaeological practices enabling insight on the role of individuals in making and maintaining particular views of the past. This, in turn, can illuminate the ideas that have real impacts in society.

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