Worlds of Archaeology Series

Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice

Cultural Encounters, Material Transformations

Edited By
Matt Edgeworth

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Illustrations

The cover depicts an enigmatic stone carving of Celtic origin that stands on the Isle of Boa in Lough Erne, Co Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. This is the 'January God' of Seamus Heaney's poem of that name. Like the Roman door-god, Janus, the figure has two faces. One looks forward, the other looks back. At once subject and object, the sculpture is taken here to symbolize the need for our outward-looking focus on other cultures to be counter-balanced by a more reflexive inward-looking glance at our own culture of knowledge production. The photograph was taken by Jon Sullivan of PDPhoto.org.

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Multiple Origins, Development, and Potential of Ethnographies of Archaeology

Matt Edgeworth

In order to set the scene for the chapters that follow, this chapter explores the multiple origins and development of ethnographies of archaeology up to now. Where do ethnographic perspectives on archaeological practice originate? Do the roots of these ways of seeing lie in anthropology as well as archaeology? How far back can the idea for this kind of study be traced? Can ethnographies of archaeology be described as just one of a range of reflexive methods used by postprocessual archaeologists? Or, do they amount to something more than that, a set of methods and perspectives that can serve other schools of thought and be applied to areas of archaeological practice outside of postprocessualism? How wide a range of approaches is currently in use? What problems are encountered and what common themes emerge? Only when we have considered these questions will it be possible to get some idea of the potential and future directions of this innovative mode of inquiry.

MULTIPLE ORIGINS OF ETHNOGRAPHIES OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The field of research was prefigured exactly fifty years ago in a small paper by American anthropologist Louis Dupree. He noted that by hiring workmen the archaeologist sets up an "artificial small group." Such a group includes both archaeologists and locally hired labor. Though artificially created, it becomes in time a "natural group" in the sense that—through its members' working together—it builds up "its own set of rules, its own internal equilibrium, and its own structure" (Dupree 1955, 271). It is also temporary insofar as it breaks up

once the archaeological project is over. Dupree clearly saw such groups as being worthy of ethnographic study. He envisaged that archaeologists should on occasion take on a "dual role as technician and human scientist." And he was not just talking about large excavation sites in Afghanistan or the Middle East—an extension of a colonial anthropology. As he put it, "Why not make an interactional study in the Jura Mountains of France or the Bann River Valley of Ireland? Or among Indians or other Americans in the United States?" (271). Although Dupree never put these ideas into practice, artificial small groups or communities of archaeologists would later be the explicit focus of ethnographic study at Leskernick and other sites.

Dupree's suggestion, on the one hand, that archaeologists could take on the role of anthropological observers and, on the other hand, that teams of archaeologists could be constituted as the object of ethnographic observation, immediately brings to the fore an important methodological problem. If (as I understand it) the site director is intended to be the anthropological observer of the archaeological team, who observes the actions of the director? No study of the social and political dynamics of the group would be complete without taking the role of its leader into account. Is the director meant to include himself or herself in the study, reflexively as it were, or to retain the role of a detached observer? We might call this, then, a problem of reflexivity. It is a problem that reappears in one form or another, whoever the ethnographer is, in any ethnography of archaeology.

Perhaps the first time a sociological or ethnographic perspective was actually taken up on archaeological practice was in 1967, when Ove Wall, Anita Christiansson, and Helena Wall carried out a sociometric study of cooperation in an archaeological field team on an excavation in Sweden (Wall 1968, summarized in Christiansson and Knutson 1989).[1] The project was initiated by site director Hans Christiansson. In this case, then, the problem of reflexivity was put to one side by delegating the observational work to others, thereby allowing the director to be included in the scope of the study. Issues addressed during fieldwork included the influence of different educational backgrounds of team members on cooperation within the group, the relationship between the excavation team and its leader, and the interaction between groups working on different parts of the site.

In the 1970s and early 1980s the predominance of New Archaeology and emphasis on scientific objectivity may have discouraged further attempts. The only paper to raise the possibility of an ethnoscience of archaeology was a light-hearted and tongue-in-cheek portrayal of the archaeological community—as it might appear from an ethnographic perspective—in "The Secret Notebook" by Mary Sellars (1973). Kent Flannery's (1982) "Golden Marshalltown" paper was similarly tongue in cheek. More parable than ethnography, it nevertheless contained within it the notion that a kind of stepping back to look at the social activities of archaeologists might yield useful insights on the discipline of archaeology.

The late 1980s was a time when processualist and postprocessualist schools were coming into conflict in archaeological theory. Important work was being carried out in the new field of social study of scientific knowledge (Latour and Woolgar 1979; Knorr-Cetina 1981; Lynch 1985; Woolgar 1988). In social anthropology, experimental forms of ethnography were encouraged (Marcus and Fischer 1986), and Bourdieu's "theory of practice" was beginning to exert its influence (Bourdieu 1977, 1988).

It was in this theoretical context that, in the winter of 1989–1990, I carried out an ethnography of the excavation of a Bronze Age ring-ditch cemetery in the east of England (Edgeworth 1991, 2003). Although already a competent and experienced archaeologist, I spent ten weeks on the dig in the alternative guise of an ethnographer or participant-observer.

My fieldwork focused on the practical transactions between archaeologists and unfolding material remains, in which I observed two interlinked processes taking place. First, material patterns were emerging from the ground to be worked, shaped, interpreted, and transformed into data by archaeologists. Second, in the same everyday events of excavation, archaeologists were honing their digging skills against the resistance offered by that unfolding evidence. Crucially, it was not just physical skills that were being honed, but cognitive skills as well, both being part of the embodied expertise of excavators and bound up in the practical processes in which they were engaged (see Edgeworth 1990 for a discussion of the role of practical analogies in archaeological interpretation out in the field). Of especial interest to me was the emergence of surprising, unexpected, contradictory, or difficult evidence, which rarely appeared in fully fledged form all at once but rather unfolded over time as it was being worked. Existing archaeological knowledge was being applied to shape and make sense of the material evidence at the same time as the material evidence was reshaping the knowledge that was being applied. Such two-way transactions, mediated socially and through the use of tools, were rarely discussed in conventional accounts of excavation and were mostly written out of excavation reports. I called these transactions, where theory was effectively grounded in practice, "acts of discovery" (Edgeworth 1991, 2003).

The idea of ethnography of archaeology was emerging independently in other parts of the world at more or less the same time. In 1992–1993, Blythe Roveland employed a very different approach when she embarked upon work as leader of the excavation of a Late Paleolithic site at Pennworthmoor 1 in Germany (Roveland 2000). Unlike many other ethnographers of archaeology who later came in as relative outsiders, Roveland conducted her work as a situated inside observer, fully involved in running the site. She therefore had to address some of the difficulties entailed in being an ethnographer of one's own practices. She also pioneered the keeping of diaries by excavators as a reflexive excavation technique, which was later used at sites like Çatalhöyük and Leskernick. Her reencounter with archaeology consisted in part of an increasing awareness of the material traces of previous (and present) archaeological activity as forms of

material evidence in their own right. Her view of the archaeological record encompasses "not only the material remains of past societies but also successive interventions by archaeologists," including her own. In chapter 5 of this volume, Roveland summarizes the results of that important research project.

Also in 1992, the feminist archaeologist Joan Gero and the linguistic anthropologist Charles Goodwin carried out ethnographies of excavation at the site of Arroyo Seco 2, Argentina. While Gero's work has subsequently become well known and is cited in almost every discussion of postprocessual or gender archaeology, Goodwin's research (Goodwin 1994, 2000, 2002, 2003) is hardly cited at all in archaeological texts—though it is well known in other fields. A good example of his work is his seminal paper, "Professional Vision" (1994), which compares the work of archaeologists outlining a feature with lawyers highlighting evidence in a U.S. court of law. Based partly on ethnographies of excavation at various field schools in North and South America, his work addresses issues of social perception and action that—though wider than the traditional concerns of archaeology—draw insights from his experience of the materiality of excavation to shed light on other areas of professional work. As Goodwin puts it in chapter 4 of this volume, "My encounter with archaeology . . . led me to see that in my own research I had drawn an invisible analytic boundary at the skin of the speaking, embodied actors I was investigating, so that material structure in the environment was effectively ignored." As a result, he accords a significant role to material artifacts (alongside language, gesture, etc.) in his theories of human action. Chapter 4 in this volume provides a much-needed introduction to Goodwin's work for an archaeological audience.

A focus on the transmission and acquisition of craft skills or embodied expertise is central not only to Goodwin's work but also to that of other ethnographers of archaeology. Fieldwork carried out by the archaeologist David Van Reybrouck and the sociologist Dirk Jacobs at an archaeological field school near the Dutch town of Oss-Ussen in 1996 provides a good example. Their dual approach, juxtaposing the perspectives of a novice on the one hand and an experienced practitioner on the other, is both novel and effective. It yields important insights into the nature of practical competence and skill. As the authors explain in chapter 3, "Competence is not something which is given, but which accrues during research—very much like facts and reality." They go on to develop a sophisticated argument in which social and natural identities, far from being distinct, are mutually constitutive of each other.

If readers are looking for an easy and nonambiguous definition of "natural," they will not find one in this book. Archaeologists out in the field might use the term to denote all those things that are not the product of human action in the past, such as river-borne layers or glacial deposits. In the context of this book, however, the term means something quite different. It might refer, for example, to all those things that are not the product or instrument of the cultural activities of archaeologists in the present day. On these criteria, Paleolithic hand axes still undiscovered in the ground can be called natural, whereas a section cut by ar-

chaeologists through solid clay can not. However, a paradox of archaeological practice is that its natural object (the material remains "out there" that, at least up to the moment of discovery, exist quite independently of archaeological practice) consists in part of the products and outcomes and traces of past cultural activities. It is a further paradox that, as Roveland shows, some of these cultural traces are the result of previous archaeological interventions, including those of the very recent past (such as the trowel scrape performed only a moment ago). And, of course, it is a paradox of all science that in the very act of apprehending its natural object, that object is transformed into a cultural entity—an artifact of science itself. Thus we cannot uncover an ancient feature such as a pit or posthole without working and shaping it with our own tools, thereby making it a product of our own cultural activity as well as a product of cultural activity in the past. Material culture of past societies, through being appropriated in the very act of discovery, inevitably becomes a part of our material culture too.

The fact that artifacts and features discovered in excavation are double artifacts in this sense, at least partially fashioned by archaeologists in the present day, comes across very clearly in Joan Gero's ethnographic study of the excavation at Arroyo Seco in Argentina. She observed that male archaeologists tended to draw feature outlines much more confidently and clearly than women. In a famous example, she noted that one male made larger pedestals of soil for artifacts to stand on than female coworkers, drawing the attention of the site director more easily. She concluded that gender inequalities are to be found not only in social relationships and cultural interactions but also in the actual production of archaeological knowledge—even finding material expression in the form of data produced (Gero 1996).

An interesting feature of Gero's ethnography is that it prompted feedback from the excavation team who were the object of study. Gustavo Politis, the site director at Arroyo Seco, was generally positive about being constituted as Other by Gero and Goodwin, recommending the experience to all archaeologists. However, he suggested that Gero's interpretations of gender inequalities in excavation procedures were themselves inevitably conditioned by the assumptions and expectations of the ethnographer, who after all was coming to the work from a background in feminist archaeology. He went on to argue that the high profile of Gero's article was itself a reflection of power structures within the global structure of archaeology, specifically the dominance of European and North American discourse over voices from South America and other parts of the world (Politis 2001).

This exchange illustrates a major difference between ethnographies of archaeology and other more conventional kinds of ethnography. The latter might be described as one-way characterizations of a group of people by another group of people. In this case, however, some of the archaeologists who were the objects or subjects of the ethnographic investigation live and work in the same academic structures, broadly speaking, as the ethnographers themselves. Published results become a part of the very processes of the production of

knowledge that they are about, open to be read by those who have been ethno-graphized. Within the various constraints identified by Politis, there is the very real possibility that interpretations made by the ethnographer will be challenged by the interpreted.

This not only brings about certain problems for the ethnographer in how to represent archaeologists in fieldwork reports (a major methodological consideration for most of the authors in this book), but it also raises the possibility of something approaching true, as opposed to contrived, reflexivity. There is the potential for a dialectical interaction to develop between observer and observed, in which the outward-looking ethnographic gaze is counterposed and reflected back onto the ethnographic study itself. Through such encounters and re-encounters a more holistic view of archaeological practice and its wider context emerges.

There is, of course, no sense in which ethnography provides a privileged vantage point from which the production of knowledge by archaeologists can be put into question without questioning how ethnographic knowledge of those processes is produced. Findings of ethnographies of archaeological practice, much like those of archaeology itself, are contingent (shaped to some degree by the social and historical conditions of their production). Thus this book is itself inevitably an expression of the global power structures and imbalances that Politis calls attention to. The greater number of English and American voices in the book relative to those from other parts of the world perhaps gives an erroneous impression of the formation of key ideas in dominant English-speaking countries at the "center" of theoretical discourse, only added to later by those from "peripheral" non-English-speaking countries. The reality, however, is almost certainly that early ethnographies of archaeological practice have been conducted in many of these nations, probably about the same time as the other pioneer works identified in this chapter (see, for example, Haber and Scribano 1993; Pizarro et al. 1995, based on project work carried out in 1991–1992 and only recently drawn to my attention). There must be further ethnographies of archaeological practice written in languages other than English; these are not included in the present narrative because they are inaccessible to me or not widely published (though I have done my best to track them down). It follows that there are other possible narratives that could be written on the origins and early development of the subject than the one put forward here.

ETHNOGRAPHIES OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND POSTPROCESSUAL METHOD

The use of ethnographies of archaeology as reflexive method, or set of methods, was taken up by postprocessualists as part of their general movement away from text and toward practice. Of the three most prominent proponents of postprocessualism, it is significant that Ian Hodder (at Çatalhöyük), Chris Tilley (at Leskernick), and Michael Shanks (at Monte Polizzo) all integrated ethnographies into their excavation programs.

Many ethnographies of archaeological practice therefore have a strong post-processualist flavor. Anthropologist Carolyn Hamilton was invited by Hodder to carry out an ethnographic study of the construction of knowledge at Çatal-höyük in 1996, with a view to developing more reflexive excavation methodologies. Her "Faultlines" paper examines the structural breaks and tensions that can arise in the practices of excavation and recording—for example, between diggers and specialists. She deliberately engaged the archaeologists in discussions about their work and her reflections on it, thereby feeding the results of her research back into the developing excavation strategy, so that her work helped to shape the very practices she was documenting (Hamilton 2000).

Also at Çatalhöyük, Nessa Leibhammer studied visual conventions and representations that archaeologists use on-site in recording material evidence. In noting the great importance of images, which come to stand for and replace original objects and contexts encountered in excavation, she experimented with producing artistic visual representations alongside more conventional plans and sections (Leibhammer 2000). Two important papers by David Shankland examine the impact of the archaeological project on local communities at the nearby village of Küçükköy (Shankland 1997, 2000). Developing this theme, Turkish anthropologist Ayfer Bartu worked with the many different groups involved in the Çatalhöyük project, from tourists to New Age goddess worshippers to government officials, as well as local people and archaeologists themselves. Bartu's approach is interlinked with the work of postmodernist writers on multisited ethnography (Marcus 1995). A major insight here is that the excavation site itself can be seen as only one of multiple sites (overlapping and occupying the same space) at Çatalhöyük, all of which are involved in the construction of knowledge, but each of which has different cultural meanings for different social groups. There is also the emergence of multiple sites of knowledge production outside of the excavation site. All these sites are understood to be linked together at the intersection of local and global processes (Bartu 2000). Another Turkish anthropologist, Oğuz Erdur, has tried to "ethno-graphically ground" philosophical questions in archaeological practice, exploring from the perspective of the ethnographic stranger how archaeologists find meaning in the practice of finding meaning in the past (Erdur 2003a, 2003b).

In assembling this book, authors were encouraged to be daring and to take risks in developing their own versions of ethnography of archaeology, even if this meant breaking with traditional forms of academic writing. Indeed, one of the stated aims of the new Worlds of Archaeology series, of which this book is a part, is to encourage the development of new and unconventional literary styles that move beyond the straitjacket of hegemonic discourse. In chapter 9 of this volume, Erdur presents an innovative and experimental ethnographic narrative that does exactly that. It describes, in the stifling heat inside an excavation tent,

the experience of ontological doubt that besets most ethnographers but is rarely reported upon.

By fictionalizing his narrative, and by giving "Indian" names to real archaeologists, Erdur attempts to strip the archaeologists of the power of their scientific presence and to problematize the uneven power relations between the observer and the observed. Archaeologists are portrayed as exotic members of a tribe of knowledge seekers, whose strange activities are observed by a native anthropologist. The paradox is that Erdur, as a kind of stranger-at-home, is himself part of the academic establishment, and his relation to both the diggers and locals he observes is full of ambiguities. This story of a day in the life of Everybody-Knows-Land is an ironic critique of a multinational excavation project, as well as a critical reflection on the nature of ethnographies of archaeological practice as a mode of study.

Erdur's experimental narrative style and its extreme irony will either enthrall or antagonize the reader. Any attempt to write something so radically different from the norm runs the risk that it will be dismissed out of hand because it is so unconventional. Yet at the same time it challenges us to break out of the conventions of traditional ethnographic reporting and its constructions of objective reality.

Other recent work at Çatalhöyük, brief accounts of which are available on the Internet, includes an ethnographic account of reflexivity in practice by Kathryn Rountree (2003) and an ethnographic study by Jackie Zak of collaboration between archaeologists and conservators (2004).

Another well-known archaeological site where the directors were keen to experiment with ethnographic perspectives as part of reflexive excavation methodologies was Leskernick on Bodmin Moor, UK (Bender et al. 1997). The principal focus of ethnographies here was the so-called artificial community of academics and professional archaeologists (echoing Dupree's concept of the artificial small group already discussed). Project sociologists Tony Williams and Mike Wilmore studied the artificial community in the context of the landscape within which the excavation took place, looking in particular at the many-layered perceptions of that landscape (Williams 1999, Wilmore 2001).

In chapter 10 Wilmore widens out the notion of landscape to include broader structures of class and power within which archaeologists work. As he puts it, "Archaeology is a social field structured through the exchange of various species of capital, at once economic, cultural and educational . . . and this means that differences between participants cannot be assigned only to 'beliefs, interests, or lifestyles.' The objective circumstances within which archaeologists live and work must be taken into account. Class may not be relevant to our understanding of Bronze Age society, but it is a vital component in our understanding of what occurs during archaeological research in the present day."

Ethnographic perspectives have also been developed in the context of postprocessual methodologies at the site of Monte Polizzo in western Sicily. Ashish Avikunthak demonstrated the great potential of video for this kind of research in

a film that juxtaposes scenes from the excavation with old film footage (discovered in a roadside junkyard) of ceremonies and rituals of the middle-class India of the 1970s (Avikunthak 2001). His postmodernist style contrasts markedly with the more pragmatic use of video footage as an ethnographic recording technique by Goodwin, as outlined in chapter 4.

Cornelius Holtorf wrote an innovative and humorous paper about the life history of a potsherd found at Monte Polizzo, taking the moment of discovery as the beginning of its life and tracking it through various postexcavation procedures (Holtorf 2002). The life-histories approach can be applied to archaeological sites as well as objects. In terms of this approach, the life of the site can be taken to start when the archaeologists first arrive on the scene or at the moment the first spade cuts into the turf. Alternatively the archaeological activity can be seen as simply the latest phase in the history or life of the site. Either way it makes sense for there to be an ethnographer there to record this activity, hence Rachel Giraudo's work on the life history of the site at Monte da Igreja in Portugal (Giraudo 2002).

In chapter 7 Holtorf asks "what kind of experience project members have on an archaeological excavation project . . . what it means to participate in an archaeological project from the participants' point of view, and what it is they are actually learning during an excavation." As Holtorf points out, such questions are especially important when one considers that most multinational excavations are designed to facilitate student training. The author goes on to argue that training excavations like Monte Polizzo "are not only about acquiring professional skills and experience but also about learning a professional culture" and that transmission of this culture "occurs on excursions and beach visits as much as during working hours." In exploring the professional culture of archaeology in this wider sense, he examines both the stereotypes and the realities of "archaeology as adventure."

In these ways Holtorf effectively experiments with alternative strategies for conducting multisited ethnographies of archaeological practice (cf. Marcus 1995). In his paper on the life of the potsherd he "follows the thing" through multiple contexts and transformations, while in the latter part of chapter 7 he "follows the people," even when their various adventures and excursions take them away from what would normally be considered the archaeological "site."

A FOCUS ON THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

At both Çatalhöyük and Leskernick the project leaders chose to invite ethnographers in rather than to take on the role themselves. We might say that their reencounters with archaeological practice were negotiated by and mediated through these researchers. This is understandable, given the nature of the job of site director. All the same, it is interesting to speculate what kind of ethnography Chris Tilley, who wrote *An Ethnography of the Neolithic*, would have

written of the dig at Leskernick. Or to imagine what kind of ethnoarchaeological study might be conducted by Ian Hodder, who wrote *Symbols in Action*, among all the material equipment and paraphernalia at Çatalhöyük. Would the methods and techniques used to study patterns of decoration on pots in an African village, or ancient artifacts from southern Scandinavia, be appropriate to the study of the material culture of archaeologists?

Jonathan Bateman argues in his study of computer visualization in archaeology (Bateman 2000) that our theories of material culture should in principle be reflexively applied to our own material culture too. This material culture is odd in that it is rarely constituted as the object of the archaeological gaze. Trowels, spades, planning grids, tapes, cameras, grids, theodolites, laptops, and so forth, are all examples of artifacts involved in the production of archaeological knowledge. But as anyone familiar with excavation recording will know, these are not meant to be viewed as objects in their own right. They are usually cleared out of the way, for example, whenever a photo of objective evidence is about to be taken. In my experience on sites in the United Kingdom, diggers first of all erase the traces of their own actions in preparing the evidence for photography, such as trowel marks. They then remove their spoil and tools and stand out of the way so that their shadows do not fall within the frame of the picture.

In chapter 6 of this book Bateman repositions and refocuses the camera just enough to capture, together with the archaeological evidence itself, the material items and indeed the diggers normally removed from the scene—the instruments and agents of knowledge production. His photographs of the Gardom's Edge excavation in Derbyshire, UK, portray a greater part of the archaeological reality than we are accustomed to seeing represented in this media. The tools that shape and record evidence, the shadows, footprints, and marks of archaeologists themselves, remind us of aspects of archaeological evidence—our own role in constituting it—that we sometimes tend to deny. It is difficult to look at these photos without getting a sense of the sheer tactility of excavation and its materials. I find the images powerful because, even though I never worked on this particular site, they reconnect me with my own experience of the realities of archaeological fieldwork.

In a similar vein, Håkan Karlsson and Anders Gustafsson direct our attention to the modern steps, paths, platforms, drainage gullies, and other aspects of site layout that play such a major role in shaping the experience of visitors to archaeological monuments, yet like archaeological tools are rarely constituted as objects of interest in themselves. In chapter 12 they look specifically at the signposts and information boards at the World Heritage listed site of rock-carvings at Tanum in Sweden. By comparing these artifacts to totem poles, they use a similar metaphorical device to that employed by Erdur in his chapter, when he gives real archaeologists "Indian" names. The irony of such a comparison is clear. By making such familiar artifacts exotic and strange, Karlsson and Gustafsson encourage us to re-encounter them, to rethink their uses, and perhaps to redesign them or even replace them with something else. A focus on the material

culture of archaeology has major theoretical as well as practical implications. Hodder's conception of archaeology "at the trowel's edge" (Hodder 1997, 1999) is based upon a reconfiguration of our view of the humble trowel from mundane item of kit to an instrument of agency and power in the production of archaeological knowledge, as well as an instrument of human perception. It is amazing to think that most of our initial contacts with material evidence out on-site, our first encounters with that external reality until discovery exists independently of the cultural activities of archaeology—our very perceptions and active manipulations of emerging objects and features—are mediated through the use of the trowel (see Edgeworth 1991 and 2003 for detailed practical examples observed and analyzed from an ethnographic perspective). When the active agency of field archaeologists and their material culture is fully taken into account, fieldwork methodology itself may have to be rethought and redesigned (Chadwick 1998, 2003; Andrews et al. 2000; Hodder and Berggren 2003).

As Gavin Lucas (2001b, 42) acknowledges, recent consideration of archaeology as a *materializing* practice stems in part from perspectives afforded by ethnographies of archaeology. These perspectives have enabled archaeological practice to be understood as more than just a one-sided encounter, or "a subject encounter with an object" (Lucas 2001a, 15). To be sure, archaeologists shape and sculpt material evidence. But the object being worked acts back on the subject and shapes the very skills and techniques that are shaping it. There is a practical dialectic at work. Material "resistance" encountered in practice challenges and transforms archaeological knowledge (again, for many practical examples, see Edgeworth 1991 and 2003).[2]

Recently Thomas Yarrow introduced the important concept of "artifactual persons," emphasizing the interrelatedness of persons and things in excavation (Yarrow 2000, 2003), a point reiterated by several authors in this book. There are clear connections here, for example, with the argument developed by Van Reybrouck and Jacobs about the mutual constitution of natural and social identities. As this work shows, ethnographies of archaeology offer a potential means of moving beyond the opposition of subject and object, which has tended to characterize archaeological debate over the last few decades. In chapter 2, Yarrow describes his fieldwork at a Mesolithic site close to the famous site of Star Carr in Yorkshire. He points out that sites are made, in part, from the reputations as well as the actions of the people who excavated them (in addition to the actions of past human agents). But these people are also revealed in turn by the material properties of the archaeological site. In this closely argued chapter Yarrow looks at "how people create the site, and how they are in turn created by it."

Other aspects of the materiality of excavation are highlighted by John Carman in chapter 8, such as the hoardings that surround certain excavations, the baulks and wheelbarrows and other tools out on-site, and the beer that is drunk in the evenings. What emerges from a reading of Carman's chapter, where he sets out the perspectives of a social archaeology of archaeology, is a

sense of just how strongly the social aspect of excavation is rooted in the material dimension, the two aspects being deeply intertwined with each other, perhaps far more so than in other areas of life. Social interactions and relationships in excavation practice can never be completely disembedded from this material matrix.

DEVELOPMENTS ON THE INTERFACE OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The impetus for the ethnographies of archaeology we have looked at so far has come largely from within archaeology. Ethnographic studies have for the most part either been carried out by archaeologists themselves or by ethnographers invited in by archaeological site directors. Either way, it is archaeological agendas that have mainly underpinned this type of research (with the notable exception of Goodwin's work).

However, a completely separate origin for ethnography of archaeology can be traced from within anthropology (at the points where it interfaces with or encounters archaeology). The Yucatán region of Mexico is a particularly fertile area in this respect. An important ethnography of the Mayan site of Chichén Itzá by Quetzil Castañeda (1996) challenged conventional views of archaeological sites. He regarded the material form of the site—with its temples, pyramids, ball courts, and so forth—as just as much an artifact of Western scientific practice as it is an artifact of ancient Mayan civilization. More to the point, the site is regarded as a key locale for cultural production in the present as well as the past, involving a complex web of activities and texts by archaeologists, local communities, landowners, tourists, tour guides, government officials, and other groups, through which the cultural identities of the Maya (and, we might add, those of archaeologists too) are produced and reproduced (Castañeda 1996).

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that anthropologists are beginning to situate their ethnographies in such places. The site of the production of archaeological knowledge is now becoming more and more the site of the production of ethnographic knowledge as well, with ethnographers and archaeologists both operating in the same space—their worlds overlapping, their views intersecting (or conflicting). Both Lisa Breglia (2002) and Timoteo Rodriguez (2001) have separately carried out recent ethnographies at the site of Chunchucmil, close to Chichén Itzá. Other projects that focus on the interaction between archaeologists and local communities, such as Angela McClanahan's ethnography of heritage management practices in the Orkney Islands, are being conducted independently elsewhere (McClanahan 2002). So here we have several scholars entering the field from new directions, with fresh approaches and new sets of research objectives. They widen out the perspectives of this book to encompass not just the archaeological site, and the practices that take place within and upon it, but also the wider landscape and its inhabitants (as well as outside in-

fluences such as heritage authorities and tourists) and the interactions between all these elements.

McClanahan focuses her attention in chapter 11 upon a region of Orkney that has been designated a World Heritage Site. Her ethnography reveals that the designation has caused some disagreement between local people and heritage managers. The numinous landscape of Orkney, dotted with extraordinary archaeological sites, is at once the setting, the instrument, and the object of dispute. As McClanahan states, "Through everyday, mundane action, the landscape of Stenness and Brodgar is lived and politicized, with many interest groups . . . negotiating different aspects of their identities and needs, with the landscape being used as both an explicit and implicit tool." Her sensitive ethnography uncovers some of the nuances of the relationship between local people and the rich archaeological landscape they inhabit.

In chapter 14, Rodriguez also discusses a contested landscape, in the equally exceptional setting of the Yucatán peninsula in Mexico. He shows how archaeological sites can be perceived quite differently by archaeologists and local Maya farmers, giving rise to cultural conflict between these two groups. As he explains, "a difference of understandings arose between local farmers and foreign scholars, constituting different perceptions of the same space through their different practices." Thus (reframing Marcus and Bartu) there are "different sites of cultural production in a local space." In documenting how the shared landscape is materially and symbolically contested, the author considers the question of the potential role of ethnographies of archaeology. He argues, following Laura Nader (1972), that such work can help us to study "up" as well as down, to produce an anthropology of the colonizer as well as the colonized.

Related themes are touched upon in chapter 13 by the Brazilian archaeologist Denise Gomes, who describes her ongoing project of excavation and survey in a remote area of Amazonia. This is an important chapter in the book precisely because it is written from the perspective of an archaeologist rather than from that of an ethnographer. Conducting research in difficult terrain, lone workers and small teams of archaeologists often do not have the rather luxurious option—enjoyed by large multinational research excavations—of taking along ethnographers of archaeological practice. This does not mean that the method is inappropriate. As Roveland and others have shown, it *is* possible to incorporate some form of reflexive ethnographic method into everyday archaeological activities; archaeologists *can* be ethnographers of their own practices.

Gomes develops an ethnographic awareness of her own work by taking on board the perspectives of local people (some of whom see archaeologists as foreigners or stealers of land). She highlights the important and usually neglected role of local people as hired workers in the production of archaeological knowledge, and the ways in which certain local groups may selectively appropriate archaeological findings into their cultural identities. Her achievement is that, while retaining the traditional archaeological focus on material culture of

past societies, she places herself and the wider context of her work (including her unfolding relationships with local people) in the picture, and thereby attempts an essentially reflexive account of an archaeological project that takes place in a complex cultural and political environment.

Interesting correspondences emerge from chapters by Rodriguez, Breglia, and Gomes. All describe traditional communities who for different reasons do not regard themselves as descendants of the ancient peoples that occupied their land, and who therefore do not make a direct connection between themselves and the archaeological heritage that might be supposed to be theirs. This raises some ethical dilemmas about how archaeology and heritage work should be conducted in such places.

For Lisa Breglia in chapter 15, such dilemmas provide the rationale for developing and carrying out ethnographies of archaeology in the first place. She argues that "ethnography of archaeology begins by acknowledging this deep and often frustrating problem of how to carry out archaeology that meets both the standards of the discipline as well as the cultural context of the local community." Such research, involving new forms of collaboration between archaeologists and ethnographers, can help to build "a locally meaningful, ethical context" for archaeological and heritage work to take place.

Breglia's chapter, in configuring ethnography of archaeology as an ethical field of practice, situated on the interface between archaeologists and local communities, is an appropriate one with which to conclude the book. She rightly urges practitioners to move beyond the "closed hermeneutics of disciplinary self-reflexivity"—not that we should leave behind the reflexive project but rather that we try to open it up to encompass wider issues and realities. In envisaging that ethnographies of archaeology should explore hitherto uncharted areas of research on the boundaries of archaeology and ethnography, she sets a direction and trajectory for future research.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL

The potential of the "field" of ethnographies of archaeology lies in its capacity to facilitate alternative ways of looking at things, no matter what the prevailing orthodoxy might be. It is not a unified school of thought; nor is it a part of one. Individual proponents develop their version after their own fashion, to their own ends. Its great strength lies in its freedom from an encompassing ideology. As Rodriguez argues, it is better to conceive of it as an attitude or ethos rather than a doctrine.

That ethos is a reflexive and subversive one. Ethnographies of archaeology can help us to develop the kind of "critical ontology of ourselves" that Rodriguez, following Foucault, recommends. A general aim is to try and see ourselves (our activities and our material culture) as cultural Others see us, or as we see them. There is an imperative there to break down the established privileges

of observer over the observed and to twist the outward-looking gaze back in on itself, so that an encounter with the cultural Other is also a re-encounter with archaeology or anthropology itself.

Fresh perspectives afforded by re-encountering our familiar world can quickly fade into established and orthodox ways of seeing, and things that stir our sense of wonder can soon become mundane and taken for granted. The use of the word "re-encounter" therefore refers to an ongoing process rather a finite event, and to what Breglia describes as "a continuously deterritorializing object of study." She envisages ethnographies of archaeology looking always to "the unexplored disciplinary interstices."

Participation of ethnographers like Breglia, Wilmore, and Yarrow as well as archaeologists like Gomes, Bateman, and Roveland means that the sites or fields where ethnographies of archaeology come into being are situated in the area of overlap right on the disciplinary boundary between anthropology and archaeology. These are liminal spaces of great creative potential, where ideas and techniques from both sides of the boundary can be combined. Hopefully, such spaces might also provide openings for the voices of local communities who inhabit archaeological landscapes to emerge—and not simply in the passive form of the "ethnographized." What archaeology and anthropology both currently lack is a critique of the disciplines formulated by local people themselves, empowered to engage on equal terms in intellectual discourse about archaeological sites and monuments on their land.

Perhaps one day—who knows?—there might be a Maya or Parauá ethnography of archaeological practice or an ethnoarchaeological study of the material culture of archaeologists, possibly carried out by an indigenous group or traditional community itself. Such a study might look not just at that material culture in its own right, but also at how it is used to shape (and through shaping, appropriate) the pasts of whole peoples, thereby fashioning also their present and the future. Or, as Rodriguez imagines it, there might be "an ethnography of ethnographers," perhaps conducted by those who were formerly the ethnographized. Appropriated by other cultures in this way (normally such cultural appropriation takes place in the other direction), the very practice of ethnography itself would be transformed.

As this book shows, ethnographies can constitute archaeological practice as the object of study from both outside or inside points of view, or any point in between. They can encompass both the very large and the very small, operating on a number of different levels or scales of inquiry. The method can be used to explore, for example, the microprocesses of the production of archaeological knowledge. It can penetrate into the tacit domain of embodied expertise—going right down, as Goodwin does, into the structure of a single sentence, gesture, or movement of the trowel. But at the other end of the spectrum ethnographies of archaeology can shift the level of focus and turn attention to the cultural and political interactions between archaeologists and local communities and other groups on a much broader landscape.

This is what ethnographies of archaeology enable us to do best—to shift in and out of focus, to change stances, to take up new perspectives, to reflect critically on established viewpoints, and to look at things in new and surprising ways. This work can add another dimension to the study of the past, enriching archaeological knowledge. By including the archaeological observer and the practical and social contexts of observation within the domain of study, ethnographies of archaeological practice can help us look more holistically at the past in the present and the present in the past.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Cornelius Holtorf for pointing out the existence of this early work.
2. There are of course other "grounds" of archaeological knowledge apart from excavation practices. Ethnographers have been drawn to the study of excavation because of the extraordinary nature of the material engagements that it is possible to observe there, perhaps neglecting the study of survey and other modes of archaeological investigation (Bradley 2003).

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