

B L O G G I N G

ARCHAEOLOGY

Edited by Doug Rocks-Macqueen and Chris Webster

Published by Landward Research Ltd in Association with Succinct Research and  
DIGTECH LLC



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<http://landward.eu/> | [www.succinctresearch.com](http://www.succinctresearch.com) | <http://www.digtech-llc.com/>

ISBN 978-0-9572452-1-1

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction- It is like no other archaeology book before it.</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Archived Links</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Archaeological Blogging and Engagement</b>	<b>9</b>
Matthew Austin	
<b>Professionals, Not Adventurers: Personal Reflections on the Value, Ethics, and Practicalities of CRM Blogging</b>	<b>20</b>
Matt Armstrong	
<b>Teaching Public Engagement in Anthropology</b>	<b>36</b>
Kristina Killgrove	
<b>Looting Matters: Blogging in a Research Context</b>	<b>44</b>
David W. J. Gill	
<b>Calling All Archaeology Careerists: Discussing Archaeology Careers Online</b>	<b>60</b>
William A. White, III	
<b>Why archaeological blogging matters: Personal experiences from Central Europe and South America.</b>	<b>77</b>
Maria Beierlein de Gutierrez	
<b>'A masterpiece in political propaganda' and a futile exercise in archaeological blogging</b>	<b>93</b>
Sam Hardy	
<b>Virtual Curation and Virtual Collaboration</b>	<b>121</b>
Bernard K. Means	

<b>#freearchaeology: blog post turned international debate</b> _____	<b>145</b>
Emily Johnson	
<b>Blog Bodies: Mortuary Archaeology and Blogging</b> _____	<b>152</b>
Katy Meyers	
Howard Williams	
<b>Perceptions of Archaeology and The Words We Use</b> _____	<b>179</b>
Jessica Rymer	
<b>The end of a cycle. Blogging about public archaeology in Spain. El fin de un ciclo. Blogueando sobre arqueología pública en España</b> _____	<b>187</b>
Jaime Almansa- Sanchez	
<b>Etruscans Online</b> _____	<b>196</b>
Lucy Shipley	
<b>The Edgcumbe cannibal fork – blogging a creative response to the meanings of things</b> _____	<b>213</b>
Katy Whitaker	
<b>Fired Twice for Blogging and Social Media: Why CRM Firms are Afraid of Social Media</b> _____	<b>222</b>
Chris Webster	
<b>Running An Archaeology Blogging Carnival - A Post-mortem</b> _____	<b>232</b>
Doug Rocks-Macqueen	
<b>Appendix</b> _____	<b>246</b>
<b>Archived Links</b> _____	<b>268</b>

# Introduction- It is like no other archaeology book before it.

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 a session was run at the Society of American Archaeologists Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas, on Archaeology, Social Media and blogging. Or we should more correctly say, will be run at the SAA conference; at the time of writing this book, it has yet to take place. This book is like many other contribution-based books or special journal issues that are based on a session at a conference. However, it differs in that it has not taken years, after the fact, to be published. In fact, it will be published at the beginning of the session, Saturday morning April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Some of the papers will be online before they are even presented in the session.

In an attempt to reach a wider audience, the editors and organiser of the SAA session, envisioned putting together a book of the papers given at the session and contributions from others interested in the subject. The idea was that everyone, public and archaeologists alike, would have instantaneous access to many of the same thoughts and insights as those who could attend the session in Austin. Thus, several months before the blogging archaeology session would take place in Austin, a call for papers was announced. After several rounds of editing, this book is finally complete.

The general theme of this book can best be described by the abstract from the session it was born out of:

## **Blogging Archaeology, Again**

Blogging and social media have become indispensable tools for archaeologists in recent years. Academic and cultural resource management projects are utilizing blogging and social media for outreach and in classroom settings. The sharing of archaeology news and information by archaeologists and journals is a primary source of up to the minute information for many. A number of blogs are aimed at providing the public with information on either

a single topic or a range of related topics. With all the benefits to blogging and the use of social media in archaeology there are still issues to overcome. The problem of relating site and project information to the public while maintaining anonymity of the parties involved and keeping site locations confidential is something that every archaeologist struggles with. In this session we will examine the ways archaeologists use social media and blogging and how problems related to the use of social media can be overcome.

You will find that almost no two papers are alike, both in content and presentation. As bloggers ourselves, we have noticed the great diversity in the archaeology blogging community and we wanted a book that reflected that. The authors were given instructions to write whatever sort of paper they wanted to, and they did. Some of the papers are heavily referenced research presentations while others are personal narratives. We did not specify what type of English to use, British or American, and both are found throughout this book. For referencing, we only asked for Harvard style but, there was no house style. First person or third person voice, it did not matter to us. Word limits: we had none. We asked authors to write the papers they wanted to present to the world, not the papers we, the editors wanted to present.

What resulted is one of the most unique pieces of writing the field of archaeology has seen in a long time, and we would argue has ever seen in such a formal publication as a book. When have you seen an author alternate the language a section is written in? Each author presents a style of writing that is uniquely their own. You will find some papers used footnotes to express additional ideas in sentences, (while others used brackets) -- or dashes --. Each of the author's voices comes out in unique and very discernable ways, like what one would find on archaeology blogs. Essentially, all of the authors were given the subject of blogging and social media and asked to present to us how they wanted to.

We hope you enjoy the book.

Doug Rocks-Macqueen & Chris Webster

# Archived Links

Because this book deals with blogs and social media, many the resources cited are digital in nature. This means that we run the risk of “link rot”. To avoid this problem, most of the webpages cited throughout this book have been registered with the Internet Archive (IA). Each unique link has an end note with a link to the archived version of the webpage on the Internet Archive. We believe that the Internet Archive will most likely be around longer than many of these Internet resources. The Internet Archive cannot archive every page, for various reasons including those pages blocking IA, and while the majority of linked resources have been archived, some have not. If you find that the original hyperlink no longer works please see the archived links for a snap shot of the resource being cited. You can find them by following the end notes behind each hyperlink.



# Archaeological Blogging and Engagement

Matthew Austin

Blog: <http://darkageology.wordpress.com> <sup>i</sup>

## Introduction

Creating a website in the early days of the World Wide Web was difficult. Not only did such an endeavour require access to a computer with an internet connection, which was expensive and uncommon, it also required a good understanding of HTML. Nowadays the price of computing is relatively low and record numbers of people have access to the internet. The level of technical knowledge required to create a website has also been greatly reduced by the development of online publishing tools. As a consequence, blogging has become an important aspect of the World Wide Web. Particularly in the last decade or so, the number of blogs has increased substantially due to the emergence of popular blogging platforms. For example, there are currently [over 175 million](#) <sup>ii</sup> Tumblr blogs and [over 75 million](#) <sup>iii</sup> WordPress blogs (Tumblr 2014; WordPress 2014). In a sense, the very existence of this volume can be seen as a testament to the growth of blogging.

## Definitions

In order to present a case for archaeological blogging as an important form of public engagement, it is appropriate to first define our terms. For the purposes of this paper, I will define a blog, or 'web log', as an interactive, regularly updated website, composed of posts and pages, which is published on the World Wide Web. A broad definition such as this allows us to consider the variable character of blogs. Archaeological blogs range from personalised, single-author accounts to multi-authored professional news websites with thousands of hits a day.

Most blogs about the past have a single author, but this is by no means the rule. Peter Konieczny and Sandra Alvarez's '[Medievalists.net](#)' <sup>iv</sup> is a very good example of a highly popular multi-authored news blog about the medieval period (Konieczny and Alvarez [2008-2014](#)).

The term 'public engagement', on the other hand, is more difficult to define. Despite this, it is an incredibly significant term, and one which plays an important role in the funding of academic research. In the UK, annual events like the [National Science and Engineering Week](#) <sup>v</sup> and the [Festival of Archaeology](#) <sup>vi</sup> are designed to engage the general public (i.e. the non-specialist) with disciplinary knowledge and academic research (British Science Association [2014](#); Council for British Archaeology [2014](#)). The UK-based [National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#) <sup>vii</sup> defines public engagement as:

'...the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.' - (National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement [2014](#))

An alternative if similar definition has also been put forward by the [Higher Education Funding Council for England](#) <sup>viii</sup> :

'...public engagement should involve specialists in higher education listening to, developing their understanding of, and interacting with non-specialists.' - (Higher Education Funding Council for England 2006, 2)

Whilst these are suitable definitions, they fail to fully appreciate the multiplicity of quantitative and qualitative factors at play, and do not allude to how one might measure such impact. Regardless of this, a broad and nonspecific definition is useful for our current purposes, and allows a range of archaeological blogs to be considered. Archaeological blogs differ in terms of purpose, audience and content, but can be grouped into loose categories. Some of these will now be considered.

## The Archaeological Blog

Many established academics maintain a professional blog as a means to communicate new ideas and engage a wider audience with their research. Good examples of scholarly blogs include Martin Rundkvist's '[Aardvarchaeology](#)' [ix](#), Frands Herschend's '[On the Reading Rest](#)' [x](#) and Howard Williams's '[Archaeodeath](#)' [xi](#) (Rundkvist 2006-2014; Herschend 2011-2014; Williams 2013-2014). Beyond the obvious benefits of offering accessible content to their students and colleagues, these blogs also serve to raise awareness of their research more broadly. Due to their professional authorship, posts that report on new discoveries, like Martin Rundkvist's '[And Yet Another Gold Foil Figure Die from Zealand](#)' [xii](#), serve not only as useful resources for academics but also offer a specialist account to the interested reader (Rundkvist 2014).

Within this category of academic blogs we can also consider the works of postgraduate students and early career researchers. My own blog, '[Darkage-ology](#)' [xiii](#), was created as both a diary of my research as it develops and as a mechanism to engage as wide a readership as possible (Austin 2013-2014). It is fortuitous that I am not alone in this endeavour and several blogs, including Katy Meyers's '[Bones Don't Lie](#)' [xiv](#), Mark McKerracher's '[Farming Unearthed](#)' [xv](#), Emily Johnson's '[Archaeology, Academia and Access](#)' [xvi](#) and Lisa-Marie Shillito's '[Castles and Coprolites](#)' [xvii](#), can be considered in this same category (Meyers 2010-2014; McKerracher 2012-2014; Johnson 2012-2014; Shillito 2012-2014). The fact that so many choose to make their ongoing research accessible to an interested, or even non-interested, readership is encouraging. Looking beyond public engagement, the existence of such blogs boosts the online visibility of the researchers in question, increasing their position in online search engines and therefore making it more likely that people will read their research. The obvious benefits of this for an early career researcher do not need stating.

Other important types of blogs are those which are attached to academic research projects. Cardiff University's community excavation, '[Cosmeston Archaeology](#)' [xviii](#), was a good example of this (Forward and Nicholas 2011-2013). As well as offering updates on the excavations and their wider context, the blog also published guest posts by the student

excavators, many of which [offered humorous takes on excavation life](#) <sup>xix</sup> (e.g. Madge 2011). The excavations were well received by the public, and the blog gave them a way to pursue further information and keep up to date with the project. Two enterprising students even [created a film about the excavations](#) <sup>xx</sup>, which was fully integrated into the blog (Durbin and Barrett 2011).

Additional examples of research project blogs include the Thames Discovery Project's '[FROG blog](#)' <sup>xxi</sup>, which was awarded the [Best Community Archaeology Project 2012](#) <sup>xxii</sup> prize at the British Archaeological Awards, and the University of Reading's '[Lyminge Archaeology](#)' <sup>xxiii</sup> blog (Foreshore Recording & Observation Group 2008-2014; British Archaeological Awards 2012; Knox 2012-2014). By allowing interested individuals the chance to follow the progress of projects, such blogs can be seen as gateways between academic research and the general public. In addition to this, posts can go beyond the reporting of new finds to the personal and social aspects of archaeological activity. This point is emphasised by a comparison of The Guardian's '[Saxon find in Lyminge has historians partying like it's 599](#)' <sup>xxiv</sup> and Lyminge Archaeology's '[The end of a wonderful season of digging, discoveries and many new friends](#)' <sup>xxv</sup> (Kennedy 2012; Knox 2012). The former provides a useful and accessible summary of the discovery, but the latter provides an altogether more detailed and coherent account, as well as a reflection on the rich experience of the excavation itself.

Some blogs are even designed with public engagement as an explicit purpose. [Guerilla Archaeology](#) <sup>xxvi</sup>, a Cardiff-based outreach collective, has a popular blog with a fitting tagline; '*creative engagement with changing times*' (Guerilla Archaeology 2012-2014). The blog chronicles the efforts of the team to engage people who might otherwise have no connection with archaeology. One such way they do this is to take the past to the people, as it were, through street demonstrations and music festivals. These events are then written up as [blog posts](#) <sup>xxvii</sup> which allow those involved to revisit the experience and follow up on their learning (Austin 2013a).

## Engagement

Whilst the preceding section has highlighted the degree of diversity observable in the archaeological blogosphere, the desire to make information, news, analysis and interpretation available online for free can be seen as a universal factor. Raising awareness of the discipline is also a common theme, whether through formal discussion on the [pay and conditions of professional archaeologists xxviii](#) or by using a [popular videogame series to facilitate and inspire education about the past xxix](#) (Rocks-Macqueen 2013a; McGuire 2013-2014). Some authors even feel as though it is something of a [public duty xxx](#) to effect a greater public engagement with the past and increase awareness of the work of archaeologists:

'I am increasingly reassured by a number of us PhD/ECRs [Early-Career Researchers] who see this as a sort of public duty... as opposed to REF [Research Excellence Framework]/institutional promotion. True PE [Public Engagement].'- (O'Hagan 2014)

It is argued here that blogging represents the perfect medium for such endeavours. This is due to two principle reasons; accessibility and interactivity. Blogs are free to access by anyone with an internet connection. Unlike the more traditional forms of media, such as newspapers, magazines and books, there is no associated paywall with blogging and readers need never purchase or donate anything in return. In addition to this, readers can engage directly with the content of a blog, and its author, through various mechanisms such as commenting, liking and reblogging. For some bloggers, this two-way process of engagement is [explicitly mentioned xxxi](#):

'I openly encourage people to contact me with resources and alternative viewpoints... In fact- this is one of the most important parts of blogging. Blogs are a way of opening the dialogue to the greater world.'- (Meyers 2013)

For reasons of accessibility and interactivity, then, it is argued that archaeological blogging should be seen as an effective medium in

which to engage a wider audience. It is also posited that the relevant academic and blogging communities should, wherever possible, support and encourage such endeavours. Volumes such as this one are strong evidence for the growing importance of archaeological blogging and the benefits it can bring to specialists and non-specialists alike.

## Papers, Posts and Impact

Our final consideration is the relationship between blogging and the traditional means of scholarly publication. The case put forward here is that blogging can serve as an effective way in which to increase awareness of archaeological literature and ongoing research. Whilst the importance of printed publication is still significant, there has been a trend in recent years towards online access. In the context of the UK, most of the major archaeological journals are now available online, including the [Archaeological Journal xxxii](#), [Antiquaries Journal xxxiii](#) and [Antiquity xxxiv](#), although a subscription is often required (Royal Archaeological Institute 2014; Cambridge Journals Online 2014; Antiquity 2014).

There has also been a move towards journals that are exclusively online – so-called e-journals – such as [Internet Archaeology xxxv](#) and the [Bulgarian e-Journal of Archaeology xxxvi](#) (Internet Archaeology 2014; Bulgarian e-Journal of Archaeology 2014). When we consider this trend towards digital publication, and take into account how some blog posts actually receive [more views than published journal articles xxxvii](#), it stands to reason that blogging can play an important role in complementing published academic research (Rocks-Macqueen 2013b).

We can illustrate this point with an example from my own area of research. When I was researching the early Anglo-Saxon cremation rite of post-Roman England for my MA dissertation last summer (Austin 2013b), a post on Howard Williams's blog called '[Why Decorate Early Anglo-Saxon Pots?](#)' [xxxviii](#) was particularly valuable (Williams 2013). It was important for two reasons; not only did it serve as a concise and accessible overview of the topic in question, but it also alerted me to [newly published research xxxix](#) in the area (Nugent and Williams 2012).

Because it increases awareness of published academic research, and is presented in an accessible way, this case study can be viewed as a good example of how blogging can increase awareness of research and increase its impact.

## Conclusion

This paper has discussed archaeological blogging in terms of engagement. The argument that blogging represents the perfect medium in which to increase levels of engagement with the past has been supported by references to a plethora of successful blogs. An important final consideration, though, is how one can assess the impact of archaeological blogging. Quantitatively speaking, this can be [gauged using readership statistics](#) <sup>x</sup> and [traffic analysis](#) <sup>xi</sup> (Rocks-Macqueen 2014; Rothwell 2014). Statistics such as these are essential in evaluating the effectiveness of a blog and offer useful supporting evidence to universities, funding bodies and employers. However, there is no point trying to quantify the deeply personal experience of connecting with the past itself. Encouraging engagement should always be seen as more important than measuring it.

At the core of archaeological blogging is a belief that studying the past is worthwhile and relevant. Connecting with the past can be a journey of almost spiritual proportions and having even a basic understanding can enrich all aspects of one's life. Consequently, archaeological blogs should be seen as having the potential to affect people in an immeasurably important way. When such engagement becomes the focus of our collective efforts, then, our capacity to change lives becomes incredibly exciting.

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# Professionals, Not Adventurers: Personal Reflections on the Value, Ethics, and Practicalities of CRM Blogging

Matt Armstrong

Blog: <http://anthroslug.blogspot.co.uk/> [xxx](#)

## Introduction

I began keeping a blog in 2007 for a few reasons, but key amongst them was that I wanted to tell stories and share my experiences. I was writing about my work as an archaeologist, but I was telling it in the form of stories that one might tell at a cocktail party. These stories, the funny ones, the scary ones, the just plain odd ones, were, in essence, adventure stories told to pass the time. Over the next five years, as I continued blogging, I had time to think about what I was writing and why I was writing it. Certainly, archaeology was not the only topic that I covered, but when I did write about archaeology, I began to be less interested in telling the adventure stories and more interested in discussing my work and my role as a CRM professional. At the same time, events in my workplace and in my personal life led to me consider, more carefully, how I wrote what I wrote.

In 2012 I became a father, and as a result, many of my leisure-time activities, including blogging, were put on the back burner. However, I have continued to think about the role of social media, including blogs, in my life and my profession. When I return to blogging (which I wholly intend to do), my subjects and approach will be different than it was in 2007, or even in 2012.

This essay is a reflection on what I have learned about the role of blogging as a Cultural Resource Management (CRM) professional, as a blogger, and as a reader of other blogs. It should also be noted that, as I work in the United States, and the relationship between CRM (whether it is called “heritage management”, “public archaeology”, “contract archaeology” or any other name in your locale) and academic archaeology varies from country to country. So, what I write here is specific to the United States, and is informed by my own experiences in the western United States. In other words, your mileage may vary. Other perspectives are available from CRM bloggers, and I recommend Doug’s Archaeology (<http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/> <sup>lxxxii</sup>) and the DIGTECH blogs (<http://www.digtech-llc.com/blog/> <sup>lxxxiii</sup>) as being especially worthwhile.

## The Value

It will come as no surprise to anybody that archaeology is misrepresented in the general media. What is, perhaps, less well understood is that archaeologists do as much to misrepresent our field as do television and radio producers or print media writers and editors. If one focuses on mass-media outlets where archaeologists discuss their work, one walks away with the impression that: all archaeologists work in universities or museums; that we teach classes most of the year and perform fieldwork only during summers or while on sabbatical; that we dedicate our time to “digs”; and focus on individual archaeological sites (usually ones with huge temples and impressive statuary) for years or decades at a time. This is true whether the archaeology is being discussed on a respected radio news show (All Things Considered 2008; Talk of the Nation 2008), larger news papers and networks (Germaine 2008), on an internet comedy site (Evans and Levine 2014), or even the National Science Foundation (National Science Foundation n.d.) (though this makes sense for the NSF, as it primarily funds academic research). And, while archaeologists who are interviewed by, or write for, media outlets stress that archaeology is not the action-packed field depicted in adventure films, the association of archaeology with “far away” and exotic locales is nonetheless typically played up.

Academic archaeology is the nucleus of the archaeological community, and without research being performed at universities and museums, there would be nothing guiding the methods employed by CRM archaeologists. Ideally, CRM work would provide data that feeds and informs academic research. There is no mystery as to why academic archaeologists have the lion's share of media attention – many work for institutions that encourage their staff to engage in public outreach. Moreover, they often have flexible work schedules that allow them to engage with reporters and producers on the media outlet's schedule, and, importantly, it makes for better radio/television/print to talk about someone doing exciting research in a far-flung and picturesque place than to talk with the fellow who just completed a negative survey in downtown Fresno.

However, in the United States, academic archaeologists are a distinct minority. It is difficult to ascertain the exact proportion of archaeologists who work in CRM. Neumann and Sanford (2009:2) estimated that approximately 7,400 archaeologists work in CRM either for private companies or for government agencies (at the federal, state, and local levels), comprising approximately 85% of the total number of archaeologists working in the United States. Altschul and Patterson (2010) estimate that at least 9,850 work for private CRM companies, with several thousand more working for government agencies. While Neumann and Sanford (2009: 2) dispute similarly large numbers from Doelle and Altschul (2009), the fact remains that CRM archaeologists, including both private and public employees, constitute the vast majority of archaeologists working in the United States.

For the time being, (and likely into the foreseeable future), most people will continue to get their information about archaeology from television, radio, print, or the internet outlets of these traditional media. They will, therefore, likely continue to see archaeology as a largely academic pursuit. However, there is a segment of the public that is curious and that wish to dig deeper, no pun intended, into the nature of modern archaeology. This includes students considering careers in archaeology, people entering avocational archaeology, and people who simply have the time to spend casually studying a subject that interests them. As people "in the trenches" (seriously, I am not trying to

make puns), CRM archaeologists are in a unique position to provide valuable information regarding how archaeology is really done.

The blog is a media form uniquely suited to CRM archaeologists. The ever-expanding availability of Wi-Fi means that we are able to access our blogging platform from most hotels and coffee shops. The fact that blog platforms are inexpensive, and many are completely free to use, means that we do not have any significant cost barriers. The ability to structure a blog entry however we like and to write on whatever subject we please means that blogging is a delightful break from the regimented report formats that we must follow at work.

Moreover, CRM archaeologists can provide a valuable perspective and important information to each of these audiences. To the student, we can provide insight into the day-to-day realities of the archaeological workplace. Entries describing such mundane things as lodging conditions during fieldwork, variations in expense report and reimbursement policies, types of personalities encountered during fieldwork, and confrontations common in CRM (conflicts with land owners, clients, and members of the general public, for example) provide an understanding of this career path that cannot be gained through studying archaeology and regulations. No doubt the bureaucratic matters sound dull as dishwater and half as deep, but there exists a long history of tackling tales of bureaucracy with humor to turn them into entertaining stories. In fact, my own experience has been that the best way to deal with the frustration caused by dealing with red tape is to write about it and lay it all bare (and when possible to do so without violating my professional ethics, to mock it). Similarly, sometimes the best way of dealing with a conflict is to write about it, and to try to understand where the other party is coming from. Importantly, these are aspects of CRM archaeology of which anyone entering the field must be aware.

Avocational archaeologists benefit from discussions of projects and organizations that are seeking volunteers, resources available through CRM companies, academic institutions, and community organizations. If identified as stakeholders, avocational archaeological organizations may find themselves pulled into conflicts and troubles surrounding

archaeological sites, and as such, they may benefit from the same types of insights and information as prospective students.

Curious members of the general public may benefit from the same discussions as students and avocational archaeologists, though I suspect that (unless the entries are spectacularly well written) such interest will be limited. However, CRM blogs do provide a number of benefits for the curious public:

- These blogs allow people to learn about archaeology occurring around them, rather than on the other side of the world (a point also made by blogger Chris Webster on his December 29, 2013 entry on Random Acts of Science [Webster 2013]). While working on field projects, I often find myself talking to locals who are surprised (and more often than not, excited) to learn that archaeologists might be interested in their home town.
- When CRM blogs discuss regulations concerning archaeological and historic sites, it can help to dispel some of the common misconceptions regarding the regulations. Common misconceptions, such as that a construction project will be abandoned because of the discovery of an archaeological site, or that land can be taken from its legal owners because a site was discovered.
- As CRM archaeologists are often required to work more closely with Native American individuals and organizations than our academic colleagues, we can draw positive attention to the descendants of the people whom we study, demonstrate that Native American communities remain active and vibrant, and help to dispel the still puzzlingly common notion that Native Americans no longer exist.

By choosing to write about CRM, we can provide a service to each of these three groups, and help to better represent archaeology in the overall media. While blogs do not permeate the wider culture to the same degree as traditional media, they do allow a supplemental voice to the archaeologists that are typically represented. And, as more CRM



archaeologists take to blogging, this will help to provide a more accurate picture of archaeology to those who are interested.

## Ethics

I believe that not only should more CRM archaeologists blog, but we should specifically blog about CRM. However, CRM archaeologists work within a complex web comprised of project stakeholders, clients, regulatory agencies, and regulations. We must, therefore, consider the ethical implications of our writing.

I, like many of my colleagues, am a member of the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RoPA, members referred to as Registered Professional Archaeologists or RPAs), and I have found that the RoPA code of conduct (RPANET.org [n.d.](#)) is a useful guide for determining the ethics of archaeology, as it reflects the realities of CRM work and communicating information. It has been one element of my developing code of ethics, though I have also had to rely upon others that were developed specifically for online communication including the Bloggers Code of Ethics at [cyberjournalist.net \(@Stylehatch n.d.\)](#), and *Rebecca's Pocket* weblog ethics guide (Blood [2002](#)). Though hardly exhaustive, these sources provide guidance to the blogger, and consideration of RoPA's guide is especially relevant to CRM archaeology bloggers.

What follows is the code of ethics that I have developed during my blogging career. It should be noted that these are my own personal guidelines and do not constitute legal advice for bloggers. Readers of my blog will, no doubt, observe that many of my entries do not meet this code. As this code of ethics has developed in response to feedback from clients, colleagues, and readers, as well as my own changing views of both CRM and public communication, I have discovered that my more recent entries are quite different from my older ones. While I don't feel that anything I have posted violates the interests or rights of my colleagues, clients, or project stakeholders, I do feel that keeping to the following principles improves my ability to protect them:

## Don't screw your client.

Do not air their dirty laundry, talk trash about them, or otherwise make them look bad. Do not release confidential/proprietary information. That is UNLESS they are up to no good and you have a legal obligation to expose the scoundrels (please note, however, that such exposure should be done through appropriate legal/regulatory channels, and is likely to have a detrimental effect on your career)).

This is both a matter of ethics and a practical consideration. It has been my experience that many CRM archaeologists, especially those who deal more with the fieldwork than with the business side of CRM, assume that they have a responsibility to the archaeological community and the archaeological sites, but not their client. This is patently false.

Within the United States, CRM archaeologists typically work for the project proponent (or, in some localities and on some projects, a government agency that performs project environmental permitting). CRM archaeologists occupy an odd position – we are unable to do everything that many of our clients desire without violating our principles as archaeologists. However, we are nonetheless also performing services for pay, and as such, we owe our clients a professional courtesy similar to that provided by other types of consultants.

However, we are often in the position of explaining to our clients that they must perform, or fund, tasks on which they do not wish to spend time and money. As a result, conflicts and frustrations with clients are a large part of our day-to-day reality, and should be discussed.

Each blogger must find the balance on their own (though they may be aided by non-disclosure agreements and other legal restrictions on what they can say), but I have found an approach that seems to work. First off, I never name my clients in blog posts. I generally avoid giving any but the vaguest of geographic descriptions when doing so might indicate whom my client is.

I have had clients who have been wonderful, and who have gone out of their way to protect archaeological sites even when they weren't legally required to do so. I have also had clients who told me directly

that they did not want me there and wanted to try to sue the regulatory agencies to get us to go away. However, no reader of my blog would know who my clients were, much less which ones were in either of these camps.

## Know what belongs to you, to the archaeological community, and what belongs to your client or employer.

Some of the information generated by your work belongs to the archaeological community; some of it belongs to your client. Know the difference and act accordingly.

A separate issue is that of ownership of information and materials. For most projects, it should be assumed that, at the very least, the project location, description (that is, the description of what the client wishes to do/build), and project photographs are client property. This means that you should not discuss them in your blog entries. This is typically simple – most archaeology blog readers aren't going to care overly much about the technical specifications of an electrical peaking station, or that it was placed in Bigol County and not Goodolboy County.

However, it is common to see CRM archaeologists post photographs taken during fieldwork to their blogs (I have even done it in the past, though I have stopped doing so now). Most of the time, your clients won't care, but you should always err on the side of caution. On occasion, it might even get you fired (hey, if Chris Webster can get fired for simply announcing where he is on Twitter or mentioning publicly known information on his blog [Webster 2013], don't assume that your job is secure if you post things that are literally your client's property). If you must post photos of your project area, be sure to not describe the type of project, and to post photos taken A) with your own personal camera, B) outside of work hours, and C) from publicly accessible places.

## Don't screw your coworkers or colleagues.

Do not claim credit for the work of others. Criticism of others is fine, but do not denigrate or misrepresent their work.

This one is generally pretty straightforward – don't plagiarize and don't state that other archaeologists have made claims that they have not. However, for the blogger, it is a bit more complicated. If you happen to be in the field and a coworker has a good idea or makes a sharp observation, do not claim it for your own when writing a blog entry. Similarly, if you are not genuinely certain that an idea is yours do not claim it (though you can write something along the lines of “we thought that...” rather than “I thought that...”).

It is equally important to not misrepresent what another has said or done. This can be especially difficult for the blogger, as we are often moved to write an entry as a response to someone making claims or arguments with which we disagree (indeed, some blogs, such as *Archaeology Fantasies* [<http://archyfantasies.wordpress.com/>], are entirely dedicated to this). The criticism of claims or ideas is valid, but we must make a good faith effort to understand the nature of the position with which we disagree so that we do not make others look unnecessarily foolish – or make ourselves look foolish to well-informed readers.

Again, in addition to the ethical necessity of this point, this is also a practical matter. I learned early on that while most of my co-workers did not read my blog, some were regular readers and others would occasionally look it up to see what I was saying about work. This meant that I had to tread lightly in discussing my co-workers and be cautious to not put them in a bad light. Although my supervisors never expressed any misgivings about my writing, I was always wary that this could occur. Had a coworker or supervisor objected to something that I had written, I could easily have ended up being disciplined by my employer, gaining a soiled reputation, or both.

I will make one exception to the “try to understand where they're coming from” rule: if it's people holding to clearly bizarre and outlandish positions (like the “ancient aliens” crowd), then mockery is an

appropriate response (I will again point you towards the excellent Archaeology Fantasies blog). However, even then it may be valuable to understand why people buy into that nonsense.

## Do not mis-represent the Native American Community.

Do not try to speak for them or make mis-leading statements about their position. Moreover, do not present them as a monolithic whole.

Although many academic archaeologists work with members of the Native American community, CRM archaeologists are typically required to do so. In our work life, we often find ourselves having to explain likely Native American reactions or views to our clients, which can put us into a tough situation as our own views and goals often don't coincide with those of the Native American community. It is, unfortunately, tempting to do this outside of the work place and write about the Native American community on our blogs. The problem with this is twofold. First, as noted, our position as archaeologists means that we must often take positions not in keeping with those of Native Americans, and we may not be able to provide a fair accounting of the places where we disagree. Second, the Native American community has typically been misrepresented in the media, and in trying to speak for them we run the risk of further misrepresenting them.

For my own part, I rarely write about the Native American community. I do not trust my ability to articulate the views of individuals or organizations within the community to others. Moreover, I am always concerned that anything that I write regarding the views of Native American individuals will be taken to represent the community as a whole, which it cannot because the community is a collection of individuals and not a monolithic whole. On those occasions that I do discuss the Native American community, I am cautious to accurately repeat what was said, and to not claim to speak for anyone but myself.

## Do not shoot your mouth off about an archaeological subject without knowing what you are talking about.

When you are talking about a subject about which you are not particularly knowledgeable, own up to the fact upfront, and make it clear just how sizeable a serving of salt should be taken with your opinion. And don't exaggerate – that's the news media's job.

This one is generally easy to follow, as most of us are inclined to discuss areas in which we are experts and/or have a special interest (and therefore generally have developed a special knowledge), and as such we will typically either discuss our areas of expertise, or else put in qualifiers explaining when we are outside of our area of specialization (e.g., "I'm a Californian archaeologist, so take my views regarding 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Israeli archaeology with a tablespoon of salt, but...").

However, there is one area of concern: regulations. The laws, regulations, and guidelines under which we work vary by country, and often by region within the country. In the United States, they tend to be somewhat confusing, and we often deal with multiple, overlapping layers of regulations at the federal, state, and county levels. As a result, one must have a degree of expertise in order to understand what a project proponent is required to do in a given situation as regards archaeological sites. This expertise is typically earned by performing consulting work at the project management level. As a result, I have known many field technicians and field supervisors who were wholly mistaken in their views regarding cultural resource laws and regulations (for example, many times I have heard a field tech inform someone that land containing an archaeological site cannot be farmed, which is completely false). The regulations are very much a part of the context of modern archaeology, and if you are not extremely knowledgeable about them, you run the risk of propagating false beliefs which can be damaging to archaeology as a profession.

## Show your sources.

If there is an online source, link to it. If there is not, cite your sources in whichever manner seems most appropriate (I tend to use the *American Antiquity* citation standard).

This one is important, and easy to forget. We are only as good as the information that we provide, and if we do not share our sources we both under-inform our readers and make it more difficult for them to discover whether they agree or disagree with our views and conclusions. What's more, as professionals who wish to educate our readers, we have an obligation to help hone critical thinking skills, and helping people to distinguish between good and bad sources of information is an important part of this.

I rarely include a bibliography, instead opting for hyperlinks in the text (thus helping readers to find the information quickly). Archaeology Fantasies does an excellent job of keeping a more traditional bibliographic reference at the end of her posts, and also includes hyperlinks (in truth, I should follow her example, but I am a lazy, lazy man).

## Admit when you have been wrong.

Whether in a follow-up post or in an edit to your existing entry, correct errors that you have made.

Because of the nature of our jobs, CRM archaeologists often run up against controversial issues surrounding land rights, intellectual property, Native American rights, and local traditions. We may also feel inclined to comment on public controversies surrounding these or other issues related to historic preservation and archaeology. When we discuss these issues, we often do so with only partial information, and it is common for further information to come to light as situations progress.

As a result, we must be ready to either edit our old posts or create follow-ups (preferably with links to the follow-up edited into the original piece) explaining how we got it wrong. This helps to show that we are honest in our dealings.

## Screw looters.

Do not write anything that can reasonably be interpreted as supporting or furthering activities that may destroy the archaeological record. And if you are able to actively discourage the destruction of the archaeological record, then do so.

Many members of the general public do not understand the difference between archaeologists and looters. Through discussing looting and making the problems that it causes well known, we can help to discourage otherwise honest people from engaging in looting. I have written about looting as it pertains to television shows that promote and glorify it, about how looting has impacted the sites on which I have worked, and about the effects that looting has on the archaeological record. It is, in my opinion, not sufficient to simply note the problems with looting, or to discuss the lack of paperwork done as part of looting. We must also discuss the fact that it is, as often performed, a crime, and can have heavy penalties.

In addition, many antiquities dealers do business, whether knowingly or not, with looters. As a result, I have chosen to avoid saying or doing anything that promotes the antiquities market. I do not make false claims about the dealers, nor do I typically call them out for dealing with looters (I suspect many of them are unaware that they are). However, I have been asked to write posts promoting antiquities sales or to respond positively on my blog or other social media in support of antiquities dealers, and I refuse to do so.

## Protect Privacy.

However one feels about another person, that person still has a right to privacy, and this should be respected.

When we are in the field, we get to know some of the more annoying (or dangerous, or unsanitary) habits of our fellow archaeologists. While these entries can make for entertaining reading and writing, we must tread with caution when producing them. If the person is identifiable through the description in the blog, then what is



written could, conceivably, prevent them from finding further work. Alternatively, depending on what was written, it is possible that you may find yourself in violation of your employer's anti-harassment policies.

## Conclusion

CRM bloggers make important contributions to the public understanding of archaeology, and CRM specialists should be encouraged to engage in public outreach activities, including blogging. However, because of the nature of our work, we must proceed cautiously. We must portray ourselves as the professionals that we are, and we must make certain that we do not violate our ethical obligations to our clients. To that end, we must develop codes of ethics that reflect the realities of CRM and allow us to provide information to the public without endangering our careers or harming our clients.

The code offered here is essentially my own guide that I have developed both through a consideration of the various existing codes of ethics for blogging and archaeology, and through my experience as a CRM professional. Some of this discussion is widely applicable, while some of it is applicable primarily to the United States. However it is my wish that this spurs other CRM archaeologists to publicly state their own ethical codes, and that consideration of these points might encourage more CRM archaeologists to write about our profession. I am aware that my own code has deficiencies of which I am unaware, and I hope that the publication of other's codes can help guide bloggers as we continue our writing.

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# Teaching Public Engagement in Anthropology

Kristina Killgrove

Blog: [PoweredbyOsteons.org](http://PoweredbyOsteons.org) [lxxxix](#)

## Introduction

In the spring of 2013, I offered a proseminar entitled *Presenting Anthropology* for the master's students in anthropology at my institution, the [University of West Florida](#) [xc](#). Proseminars in our department serve two purposes: to help the graduate students practice being anthropological professionals and to allow the faculty to teach a course directly relevant to their interests and research. This course was actually one I had pitched during my job interview, and the grad students had been very receptive to learning more about how to engage the public in anthropology, both online and through social media. The public engagement aspect of the course fit in nicely with the aims of the [Florida Public Archaeology Network](#) [xci](#) (FPAN), the headquarters of which are also located in Pensacola, Florida. I decided that combining my success in bioarchaeological outreach (which I accomplish primarily through blogging at [Powered by Osteons](#) [xcii](#), being active on [Twitter](#) and [G+](#), and giving public talks) with the interests and ideas of grad students, on the cusp of becoming professional anthropologists, would make for a timely and useful seminar.

My course set-up was fairly simple and based on the TV show [Project Runway](#) [xciii](#) [[Syllabus](#) [xciv](#)]. Each unit was two weeks long. The first week was like a traditional seminar devoted to discussing readings, but our "readings" included webpages, video, and other media, in addition to journal articles and book chapters. The second week in each unit was devoted to presenting a project that tied in with the unit themes of Social Media, Print, Audio, Video, Kids, and Avant-Garde. At the end of the semester, each student revised his or her three best projects for

inclusion in a digital portfolio. The goals for the course were for students to: 1) speak knowledgeably about traditional and social media use in anthropology; 2) discuss problems with presentation in anthropology; 3) explore new techniques and technology applicable to anthropological research and practice; 4) produce innovative, high-quality presentations; and 5) understand how to make anthropology more visible to the public and how to become one of the public faces of anthropology. Links to readings, questions from the discussion leaders, and projects were put up each week on a closed wiki, but throughout the semester, I blogged about the discussion and projects produced [[See all posts here](#)]. Since I never wrote an overview blog post for the course as a whole, I thought I would take the opportunity provided by this forum to reflect on what worked and did not work in the course, and give some suggestions for best-practices in teaching about public engagement in anthropology.

## Reflections on Unit Themes, Readings, and Discussion

Attempting to find relevant articles and book chapters for teaching this course was more difficult than I had anticipated. Anthropology, unlike many other fields, does not have a strong culture of researching how to teach the subject. In the universities at which I have taught, I have had free reign to choose whichever texts I want for Introduction to Anthropology, and the curriculum has not been standardized, even among sections of the same course at the same university. For all the ink spilled over STEM education and outcomes at the university level, and for all the discussions at multiple institutions about how anthropology should be considered part of or at least relevant to the STEM disciplines, there is an astonishing lack of research into how to promote anthropology and engage the public with the information anthropologists generate. While I think it is important that anthropology be taught a multitude of ways with a multitude of voices, the lack of research into how to teach anthropological concepts seems to discourage publication of best-practice articles. Still, there are some bright spots on the web, like the "[Syllabus as Essay](#)" [xcv](#) mini-series at *Ethnography Matters*. In that vein, my thoughts on the readings and discussions for each unit follow.

*Anthropology, Digital Humanities, and Web 2.0.* [Reading list [xcvi](#)] I started the semester with a basic introduction to the conversations happening online and in print about digital humanities, social media, and open access. There is a growing body of literature on these topics, but the most relevant and accessible book chapters and articles I found were primarily focused on digital approaches to archaeological data production and dissemination. These were useful for starting a discussion among the archaeology students, but the cultural and biological students did not see them as very relevant. Each anthropological subdiscipline has different data and therefore different ethical considerations for publication and outreach, and the readings I chose did not run the gamut of anthropological perspectives. The death of [Aaron Swartz](#) [xcvii](#) just days prior proved to be the most striking catalyst to our discussion. However, our conversation about this unit would have worked better towards the end of the semester, after the students had engaged in their course-long social media project.

*Social Media.* [Reading list [xcviii](#)] The majority of the readings I assigned for this unit were navel-gazing blog posts (including my own) on the relevance of blogging to anthropological outreach, but there are plenty of examples of this genre of writing within peer-reviewed journals like *American Anthropologist* (e.g., Price 2010, Sabloff 1998, 2011)<sup>1</sup>. My choice of readings reflected my attempt to convince students that blogging or otherwise engaging in public outreach through social media was an important facet of their future anthropology careers. Although I required [each student to maintain a social media presence](#) [xcix](#) for the

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<sup>1</sup> Price, D.H. 2010. Blogging anthropology: Savage Minds, Zero Anthropology, and AAA blogs. *American Anthropologist* 112(1):140-8.

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J.A. 2011. Where have you gone, Margaret Mead? *Anthropology and Public Intellectuals*. *American Anthropologist* 113(3):408-416. [2010 AAA Distinguished Lecture Video]

entire semester, most of them quickly dropped blogging as a routine activity because they were not seeing immediate returns in audience engagement. I empathize with being disheartened at the lack of interest a post generates, since blogging, especially at the beginning before you build an audience, can feel like tilting at windmills. While we circled back to the topic later in the semester to discuss the results of the semester-long project, there was little enthusiasm for adding yet another voice to the anthropological blogosphere, and students seemed to feel that their other projects, which had more tangible and demonstrable outcomes, were more worthy of their time and efforts. One student, Tristan Harrenstein, [created a website](#) <sup>v</sup> after the course was over, specifically to showcase some of the projects he produced during the semester.

*Print Media.* [[Reading list](#) <sup>vi</sup>] This unit was a bit of a mixed bag, covering everything from research posters to news articles, but it generated a good discussion about audiences. I have seen increasing media presence at research conferences over the past decade of doing anthropology professionally, which means that the line between presentations for one's colleagues and presentations for the public is starting to blur. In particular, we focused on [Elizabeth Bird's Anthropology News piece on engagement with news media](#) <sup>vii</sup> and discussed the problems that can occur when journalists report on anthropological finds. An especially interesting idea to come out of this conversation with students was a suggestion for teaching anthropologists how to write more journalistic and PR-friendly pieces. I would like to organize a workshop to help students do this, either at my home institution or at a professional conference. As several of the students in this class were affiliated with FPAN, some already had experience writing short materials for the general public. But every student could benefit from this, as being able to encapsulate research in an attention-getting way for the general public would help them write everything from blog posts to grant proposals. In future iterations of this class, I plan to have students read a dozen or so news stories and attempt to write one themselves based on their own research.

*Audio.* [[Reading list](#) <sup>viii</sup>] Although the tape recorder is a staple of ethnography and linguistic anthropology, there are few recurring outreach programs that use audio to communicate anthropological

topics to the public. One exception is “[Unearthing Florida](#),” which started as a weekly two-minute radio spot in the local Pensacola market, hosted by our university president, archaeologist Judy Bense. However, this medium has a lot of potential, as DIY programming such as podcasting and embedded audio in blogging is easy to accomplish. Most of our discussion focused on the kinds of audio students are most interested in, namely short, scientifically-focused segments that relate in some way to our lives (e.g., food, relationships, local history), and most of the projects took this form. One of the best examples of interesting audio came from the group of Linda Hoang, Stella Simpsiridis, and Tina Estep Ebenal, who created a series of short clips called *Anthropology: Did you know?* featuring key moments in the lives of Margaret Mead, Claude Levi-Strauss, Lewis Binford, Franz Boas, Clyde Snow, and Jane Goodall [[Listen here civ](#)].

Video. [[Reading list cv](#)] With the ubiquity of smartphones, it is incredibly easy to make and post short videos, animated GIFs, and [Vines cvi](#). In this unit, we looked at short anthropological videos and discussed longer-form visual media, from documentaries to TV shows like [American Digger cvii](#) that present anthropology in a bad light. Although I was interested in the phenomenon of research-by-documentary (e.g., Armelagos et al. 2012)<sup>2</sup> and what this means for the future of the less telegenic aspects of anthropological research, the students had strong opinions about how anthropology was presented on television. We discussed the concept of “[edutainment](#)” [cviii](#) at length, and the students’ end products, made primarily in iMovie, were slick and informative.

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<sup>2</sup> Armelagos, G.J., M.K. Zuckerman, and K.N. Harper. 2012. The science behind pre-Columbian evidence of syphilis in Europe: research by documentary. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 21:50-57.



Kids. [[Reading list cix](#)] Talking about how and why to tell children about anthropology allowed me to bust out my all-time favorite Kurt Vonnegut quote, from his [1973 Playboy interview cx](#):

"I didn't learn until I was in college about all the other cultures, and I should have learned that in the first grade. A first grader should understand that his or her culture isn't a rational invention; that there are thousands of other cultures and they all work pretty well; that all cultures function on faith rather than truth; that there are lots of alternatives to our own society. Cultural relativity is defensible and attractive. It's also a source of hope. It means we don't have to continue this way if we don't like it."

Science museums in particular tend to teach archaeological and palaeontological concepts to kids, but instruction in ethnography and linguistics is generally lacking. Jumping off from Matt Thompson's "[Illustrated Man cx](#)" post on *Savage Minds* and my post on "[Teaching Preschoolers about Anthropology](#)," we read a variety of kids' books and critiqued their presentation of anthropological concepts. While my experience focuses almost solely on the preschool set, since I have two daughters under five, many of the graduate students had worked with FPAN on developing activities for the Grades K-8 set in Florida through the "[Beyond Artifacts](#)" [cxii](#) guide. One example is the detailed, three-day introduction to archaeology lesson plan that Tristan Harrenstein created, tested, and refined for his project [[download here cxiii](#)]. The consensus was that teaching basic concepts in anthropology was best done at Grades 3 and above, since children at this age can read on their own, use a computer, and self-educate by following up on information through the library or internet. The [resulting kid-focused projects cxiv](#) included books, a felt board, videos, and classroom activities. Teaching anthropology to kids is still a largely untapped market, which is odd considering how interested they tend to be in archaeology and in learning about other cultures and customs. Video games and augmented reality may be the new frontier in kids' education, so finding ways to combine anthropological topics with advances in computing will be worthwhile.

*Avant-Garde*. [[Reading list cxv](#)] As anyone who watches *Project Runway* knows, one of the most interesting events is the avant-garde challenge, where contestants have to draw on all their creative ideas to make an outfit that pushes the boundaries of fashion. Similarly, I asked the students at the end of the semester to push the boundary of presenting anthropology, to try to find a new, different, and unique way of communicating a topic. This unit theme was the most difficult to find readings for, and although I did assign things to read, they were not particularly useful, with the exception of Amber Case's work on [cyborg anthropology cxvi](#). Rather, discussing innovative uses of media was most fruitful in identifying avant-garde approaches to communication – things like [Dance Your PhD cxvii](#) and [physicist Leon Lederman's cxviii](#) penchant for setting up a stand on a street corner and answering science questions. The students' projects were on the whole quite creative: Drunk Archaeology (a take on [Drunk History cxix](#)), a brochure for a fictitious anthropology travel agency, human stratigraphy (gutsy performance art on campus), a prototype for an anthropological sculpture, various lesson plans and activities, [mixed drinks inspired by a student's thesis, cxx](#) and a [collectible pin set cxxi](#). Some of the projects did indeed push anthropological communication in a new direction, and I was happy with the discussion of innovation in presenting anthropology.

## Reflections on Projects and Ongoing Outcomes

I structured the syllabus from most traditional to least traditional approach, with familiar methods (like research posters) early in the semester, in order to establish a baseline of communication methods that we could diverge from as the semester progressed. At the end of the course, I still liked the six main themes and was happy with the two-week units of discussion and project presentations. There were definite drawbacks to some of them, though, particularly the Social Media Challenge and the Print Challenge. Printed material was simply boring; there was really nothing innovative or exciting about printed communication in anthropology. Social media outlets have a lot of potential to reach multiple audiences, but creating and maintaining a blog or Tumblr throughout the semester was too much work for most

students. Particularly problematic is that, in blogging, the author takes a while to develop his or her voice, and the blog takes a while to develop an audience, especially if the author is not synchronously involved on other social media platforms. The Audio Challenge week held the most surprises for me. I am not a regular radio listener, but the short segments the students created were interesting and well produced, leading me to believe that audio programming in anthropology, such as a podcast or regular feature on the radio, holds great potential.

As anthropology is not generally taught in grade school, it has the reputation of being solely an ivory tower subject, when that couldn't be further from the truth. I am not sure if the course convinced students who were not already using social media of the utility of it. A few students continue to blog and to do public anthropology on an occasional basis, nearly a year after the end of the course, but the most engaged students were those already interested in public outreach. As these students earn their M.A. degrees and look for jobs or PhD programs, it will be interesting to see whether they use the projects they created or the new skills they developed in this course to aid in their applications. Regardless, presenting anthropology is an important concept for graduate students to learn, particularly since there are myriad ways of communicating anthropological topics and being a public anthropologist. Bringing anthropological concepts to the public is increasingly important in an age of slashed funding for social sciences, and my hope is that all graduate students and practicing anthropologists find ways to communicate their research and interests to a general audience.

# Looting Matters: Blogging in a Research Context

David W. J. Gill

Blog: <http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/> [cxxii](#)

“Looting Matters” was launched as a blog on 17 July 2007 with its first post, “Does looting matter?”. The blog emerged from a long-standing research interest in archaeological ethics with Christopher Chippindale of Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. In the late 1980s we were working as museum curators in Cambridge and had become increasingly concerned about the growing examples of looted antiquities that were emerging on the market (see Butcher and Gill 1990). One of the prompts was the display of Gandharan sculptures for publicity photographs in St James Park in London. We recognised that the looting of archaeological sites not only had material consequences but also intellectual consequences. Artefacts were being removed from contexts and were thus deprived of contextual information that would help with the interpretation.

## The Research Background: Cycladic Sculptures and Private Collections

In one of our first studies we considered a clearly defined corpus of archaeological material. This consisted of marble figures (mostly female) from the Cycladic islands of the southern Aegean and dating to the third millennium BC (Gill and Chippindale 1993; see also Chippindale and Gill 1993). The study identified that some 85 per cent of the corpus of figures had no known, or even vague, archaeological context. This was followed by two further studies. The first was a quantification study that created two sets of base data, the first for the London market, and the second for a major university collection, Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum

(Chippindale et al. [2001](#)). The second study was prompted by a New York based dealer who had suggested that the Cycladic study was atypical and unrepresentative (Eisenberg [1995](#)). We therefore focussed on a series of European and North American private collections of antiquities (e.g. Shelby White and Leon Levy; Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman; George Ortiz) and their display in public exhibitions (Chippindale and Gill [2000](#)).

## The Medici Conspiracy

In 1997 our research took on a new emphasis. Journalist Peter Watson published a revealing study of the way that antiquities had been handled by Sotheby's in London (Watson [1997](#); see also Gill [1997](#)). The resulting investigation led to the raid on premises at the Geneva Freeport owned by the Italian dealer Giacomo Medici. This resulted in the seizure of a large dossier of Polaroid photographs showing objects that had passed through the Swiss market. Further investigations by the Italian authorities revealed the *cordata* or network of diggers, middlemen, dealers, collectors, auction houses and museums. Watson and Cecilia Todeschini published a dossier of the evidence in *The Medici Conspiracy* (Watson and Todeschini [2006](#)). Further revelations from these investigations have appeared (Silver [2009](#); Felch and Frammolino [2011](#)).

The Polaroid photographs had allowed the identification of large numbers of antiquities that had been acquired by public and private collections in Europe, Japan and North America (for an overview Gill [2010e](#)). In the autumn of 2006 Boston's Museum of Fine Arts announced that it would be returning 13 antiquities to Italy. The museum published a list of the objects along with the full collecting histories showing how the items had passed through the market. We made a study of this first return, exploring the different routes and individuals (Gill and Chippindale [2006](#)). Supporting material was posted on static websites. However things started to move more quickly. The J. Paul Getty Museum announced that it would be returning a first batch of material, including items that had been acquired (by gift and by purchase) from New York collectors Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman, two of the subjects of our earlier study (Gill and Chippindale [2007](#); see also Exhibition catalogue

1994). Newspapers started to report and comment on the developments, and we realised that it was important to “capture” these non-academic sources for information. A blog was the obvious platform to do this. At the time I was chairing Swansea University’s e-learning Committee, and one of the technology support team, Christopher M. Hall, suggested setting up a blog to support our research.

## Creating a Research Blog

The first few months of ‘Looting Matters’ was a time to explore this more relaxed style of blog writing. Topics included the expected additional returns from the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Brussels Oriental Art Fair III, the scale of the market for Egyptian antiquities, ‘radical archaeologists’, looting in Bulgaria, the UK Illicit Trade Advisory Panel, the ‘licit’ trade of antiquities, coins from Cyprus, and a response to Shelby White. In the first 18 months of “Looting Matters” there were just under 500 posts, peaking in 2008 and 2010 with 345 posts per annum.

## Research-led Teaching and Blogging

In the autumn of 2007 I was teaching a postgraduate course on collecting and archaeological ethics (see also Gill 2010a). The students were expected to analyse sale catalogues and to understand the recording of collecting histories. This coincided with a sale of antiquities at a London auction house, and among the lots was a Lydian silver *kyathos*. I had a long-standing interest in ancient silver through research with Michael Vickers (Vickers and Gill 1994), and it was obvious that the item on offer was closely related to the silver plate acquired by New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art and subsequently returned to Turkey (as the Lydian Hoard). Indeed the lot entry made reference to the New York catalogue prepared by curator Dietrich von Bothmer (Bothmer 1984), but the writer seemed to be unaware of the subsequent publication after the objects had been returned to Turkey (Özgen and Öztürk 1996). I used “Looting Matters” to point out the association with the Lydian Hoard, and to discuss the looting of archaeological sites in

Lydia (Roosevelt and Luke [2006](#)). The *kyathos* was removed prior to the sale.

## The Geddes Sale of Antiquities

In 2008 the London auction house Bonhams attracted publicity for one of its upcoming sales by suggesting that a head from a fragmentary Roman sarcophagus looked like Elvis (Bonhams [2008b](#)). The sale was for the antiquities collection of the Australian dealer and collector Graham Geddes. The name Geddes was familiar as it appeared on an annotated copy of a Sotheby's sale catalogue reproduced in Peter Watson's *Sotheby's: Inside Story* (Watson [1997](#); see also Gill [2009e](#), 83-84). A study of the lots revealed that a large number of items, especially Athenian and South Italian pots, had passed through Sotheby's in London at exactly the period when Watson had revealed materials passing through the hands of Medici. The sale itself became more significant as it contained an Apulian krater that had passed through the hands of London dealer Robin Symes (see also Watson [2006](#)). The relevant lots were discussed on "Looting Matters" and on the eve of the auction a number of lots were withdrawn, including the cover piece for the Bonhams magazine that celebrated the sale. Bonhams were interviewed for the press, but they did not appear to acknowledge that their due diligence process had failed to identify the link between the Geddes material and the Medici Dossier (Alberge [2008](#); Bonhams [2008a](#); Gill [2009e](#); Gill [2010b](#)).

## The Impact of Blogging

As objects started to be identified in North American collections it became clear that there needed to be consolidated discussions in academic journals. Christopher Chippindale and I published two detailed analyses for the objects returned from Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and the J. Paul Getty Museum (Gill and Chippindale [2006](#); Gill and Chippindale [2007](#)). One of the pieces that had not been returned to Italy was an Attic red-figured volute-krater in the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Padgett 1983-86 [[1991](#)]). By this point I was working closely with Christos

Tsirogiannis who was researching his doctoral project on Ribin Symes (Tsirogiannis 2012). Images of the krater were identified from the Medici Dossier and the Schinoussa archive. The Medici Dossier images were particularly telling as they showed the krater still covered with mud and, as they must have been taken in the 1970s or later (due to the introduction of Polaroid technology), it was clear that the krater was derived from a recently disturbed grave (indicated by the near intact state of the krater). It soon became clear that the anonymous Swiss and London private collections referred to in the krater's collection history (so-called "provenance") were in fact allusions to Medici and Symes. A breakthrough came when the Director of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Kaywin Feldman commented (in a letter to *The New York Times*, December 7, 2010) on Egyptian claims over an Egyptian mummy mask in the St Louis Museum of Art. Feldman suggested that if a museum became aware of information then it would want to respond to claims. "Looting Matters" discussed the logic of applying Feldman's statement to the krater in her own museum and Lee Rosenbaum of the *Arts Journal* managed to press Feldman on her position. Shortly afterwards Minneapolis announced that it would be returning the krater to Italy (Gill 2011b).

## Commenting on the Antiquities Market

Access to the Medici, Becchina and Symes photographic archives meant that the appearance of material on the market could be discussed. A series of identifications were made for objects that were being offered by Christie's in New York City (Gill and Tsirogiannis 2011; see also Tsirogiannis 2013a; Tsirogiannis 2013b). An interesting twist was that in 2009 Christie's had to hand over some items to the Italian Government after they had been identified from the photographic archive (Gill 2010b). Although Christie's were unwilling to discuss the detail, their press officer noted that the appearance in the photographic archives indicated that the objects had been "stolen". This way of viewing objects shown in the various photographic dossiers could then be used when further identifications were made. In fact, Christie's was



reluctant to withdraw lots, even when information was passed to the Italian authorities and formal government requests were made.

Bonhams also continued to offer objects that could be identified from the archives. One of the items was a Roman sculpture of a youth, apparently offered by a Spanish collector (or at least a vendor who came under Spanish legal jurisdiction) in the April 2010 auction. It soon became clear that there was a wider debate about whether or not objects had been identified by the Art Loss Register and whether the auction-house had acted on that information. In the case of the statue it was claimed that the Italian government had no continuing claim; the Italians felt that this was not completely true (Gill and Tsirogiannis 2011). The case served to raise fundamental questions about the due diligence process conducted prior to sales and the ability of the Art Loss Register to advise appropriately in the case of potentially recently looted antiquities.

The appearance of objects from the Polaroids on the market became clear when Tsirogiannis identified 16 objects that were being offered by a New York dealer in early 2011. Some of the objects were discussed on "Looting Matters" and the dossier of information with details of the collecting histories was passed to the Italian authorities. The dealer continued to offer the objects, although it was unclear how potential purchasers reacted.

Much of the focus has been on the Medici Dossier. However items from the archive of Gianfranco Becchina (and seized in Basel, Switzerland) allowed the identification of key objects acquired by the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University. The report was broken by Greek journalist Nikolas Zirganos and a request for their return made by the Hellenic authorities. Pertinent questions about the objects were asked through "Looting Matters" although at the time of writing the pieces remain in Georgia (Gill 2009e).

## Pot Fragments and Museum Curators

One of the most controversial announcements was the return to Italy of a number of fragmentary pots from a New York private collector (Gill 2012a). The fragments were reported to be linked to pots that had

already been returned to Italy from other North American collections. The implication was that the pots had been removed from their archaeological contexts, possibly broken up, removed from their country of origin, and parts were sold or given to museums or private individuals. The significance of the return was clear when the private collector was identified in the Italian press as Dietrich von Bothmer the long-standing keeper of Greek and Roman Art and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA). This immediately raised questions about how the fragments had been acquired and under what circumstances. The MMA did not comment and did not issue a press release. "Looting Matters" was able to explore and discuss other fragments that formed part of Bothmer's collection and that had been given to other museums. An interesting twist was that a very limited number of images from the collection were posted on the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) Object Registry. Some of the fragments came from an Athenian cup where the central tondo was in the Villa Giulia in Rome (Tsirogiannis and Gill, [in press](#)). It remains unclear how Bothmer acquired the fragments, and why he had failed to make the connection between his fragments and the documented piece in Rome.

## The Princeton University Art Museum

The collection, formed by Princeton University Art Museum, has featured regularly on "Looting Matters" (since the initial announcement of returning material in October 2007). There was an initial story linked to the identification of a series of pieces from the Medici Dossier. However it became clear that Princeton had to return further objects apparently derived from the dealer, Edoardo Almagià. This dealer was particularly interesting as his name was linked to Etruscan objects already returned from the Cleveland Museum of Art (Gill [2010e](#)). Princeton did not make any statement but the Italian Ministry of culture issued a limited press release. Research on the collection made it possible to relate the outline descriptions to specific pieces mentioned in formal publications. It became clear that the return included a series of Etruscan architectural fragments (Gill [2012b](#)). Princeton's silence about the affair was all the more surprising given that it appears to be contrary to the transparency

expected from an internationally recognised institution that should be setting the highest ethical standards for its acquisition policies.

## The Cleveland Apollo

Another line of research has been the authenticity of information that is provided by museums. This was explored through the acquisition of a bronze Apollo by the Cleveland Museum of Art (Bennett [2013](#)). Details of the collecting history could be analysed and questioned, not least the reported discovery of the statue in a house in Saxony where it is said to have once been displayed in a garden gazebo. The statue was acquired from a Swiss-based gallery that had separately sold the mummy mask to the St Louis Art Museum and where there are strongly conflicting accounts of its collecting history from the dealer and the Egyptian authorities who had a record of the mask in an inventory at a time when it was allegedly already circulating in Europe (Gill [2009e](#)). Comments and observations about the scientific analysis were brought together in an extended review article when the glossy publication of the Apollo was published by Cleveland (Gill [2013b](#)).

## From Blog to News Media

One interesting development was the invitation from the news agency, PR Newswire, to write a weekly 400 word press release linked to a more detailed blog post. This gave free news exposure to stories breaking on “Looting Matters” and provided an opportunity for journalists to be provided with key facts about the issues related to the looting of archaeological sites. The project ran some 45 releases from May 2009 to January 2011 (see Appendix). Topics included discussions of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between Italy and the US Government to cover the restriction of movement on antiquities (see Gill [2009e](#)) as well as the so-called Crosby Garrett helmet. “Looting Matters” continues to be cited in major international newspapers and journals. It is also a source of information for journalists wanting to gain accurate information on specific topics.

## From Blog to Print Media

In contrast to the blog, Noah Charney (The Association for Research into Crimes Against Art, ARCA) invited me to write a regular column for his newly established *Journal of Art Crime*. It was agreed that the issues covered by "Looting Matters" would be summarised in a regular column, "Context Matters". This would be linked to a longer essay relating to antiquities (see also Gill [2009d](#)). Topics covered have included the return of material from Princeton University Art Museum. The column also provided that ideas explored on the blog could be consolidated in a published print journal and then cited for academic purposes (Gill [2009a](#); Gill [2009b](#); Gill [2010c](#), d; Gill [2011a](#); Gill [2011b](#); Gill [2012a](#); Gill [2012b](#); Gill [2013a](#); Gill [2013b](#)).

## Blogging and the Cultural Property Debate

"Looting Matters" covered the developing story over the negotiations for the return of the Attic red-figured Sarpedon krater that was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1972 for \$1 million. This archaeological object, perhaps more than any other, had been a focus of the debate about recently surfaced antiquities for more than 30 years. As the debate became so crucial for North American museums, James Cuno, then of the Chicago Institute of Art, used it as part of his provocative study, *Who Owns Antiquity?* (Cuno [2008](#); see also Gill [2009c](#)) and followed with the edited volume, *Whose Culture?* (Cuno [2009](#); see also Gill [2009f](#)). The MMA's Director, Philippe de Montebello, was also outspoken about Italian claims (de Montebello [2007](#); de Montebello [2009](#)). There were claims that the loss of knowledge caused by the looting was minimal when compared with the knowledge that could be obtained from an art historical approach. As the debate continued, culminating with the announcement that the Sarpedon krater would indeed be returned to Italy after an initial period of loan to the MMA, I prepared a longer study on the material and intellectual consequences of acquiring the krater (Gill [2012c](#)). This in some ways developed the ideas first explored for Cycladic figures some 20 years before and applied to one of the iconic figure-decorated pots in a major museum.

There is a tendency in some academic circles to ignore new media. However in a recent overview of recent archaeological developments on Sicily for *Archaeological Reports*, published by the UK-based Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, “Looting Matters” was specifically cited as a source for developments on recent looting and returns (De Angelis 2012). This is in one sense unsurprising given that the returns to Italy have included a number of objects clearly derived from archaeological contexts in Sicily and the region of Tuscany. In 2012 I was awarded the Outstanding Public Service Award from the Archaeological Institute of America for my research on archaeological ethics. “Looting Matters” received a specific mention (Archaeological Institute of America 2012, 366).

The topic of archaeological ethics is not one solely restricted to archaeological circles. There needs to be a solid and rigorous archaeological debate that appears in the mainstream journals. Part of this means engaging in formal dialogue with those who hold opposite positions. Thus the concerted effort by James Cuno to defend the museum establishment has received formal academic responses through review and review articles (Cuno 2009; Cuno 2011; Gill 2009c; Gill 2009f; Gill 2012d). Academic journals tend to be restricted to academic communities and to subscribers. The archiving of print journals through repositories such as JSTOR is still restricted to those who have paid access. A blog such as “Looting Matters” is free to users from anywhere in the world. At the time of writing approximately two-thirds of the readers on any given day are from North America. Readers are invited to leave comments or to respond, and there have been times when important statements to clarify the situation have had to be issued.

## Blogging and Research

The time investment to keep posting to a blog is substantial. A change of job and role meant that time slots that could be used for reflecting and writing on posts were substantially reduced. There is also a sense that the need to comment on stories has diminished as so many identifications have been made, although it is worth reflecting that perhaps only 1 per cent of the objects from the Medici Dossier have

been identified. And with the continuing importance placed on internationally recognised research for the UK “Research Excellence Framework” (REF), can limited time be justified in writing blog entries rather than articles for peer-reviewed journals? Yet, the other major issue relates to how “Looting Matters” became a window on the debates about the looting of Italy (and to a lesser extent Greece and Egypt) during the first two decades of the second millennium. And this in turn raises the issue of how the blog should be archived.

## Conclusion

“Looting Matters” emerged from an established research project looking at specific case studies that explored the material and intellectual consequences of collecting. The blog has been useful to respond to immediate issues and to capture the “grey literature” so often left uncited in academic publications. It has fed stories to the press through the partnership with PR Newswire, tried out ideas for formal academic publications, and provided the basis for a regular column in the *Journal of Art Crime*. Empirical research on issues relating to the looting of archaeological sites and the collecting of cultural property by public museums and private collectors helps to inform public debate and to feed into the creation of international and national policies relating to heritage. Blogs and other Web 2.0 platforms place this research in the wider public domain.

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# Calling All Archaeology Careerists: Discussing Archaeology Careers Online

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Blog: <http://www.succinctresearch.com/succinct-research-blog/> [cxxiii](#)

## Introduction

**Me:** "Honey! Guess what? I just passed 500 connections on LinkedIn!"

**Clarity:** "That's great." (*Pondering what I just said.*)

"Sooooooooo...When are you going to ask some of them out for a drink to talk about nerdy archaeology stuff?"

**Me:** ".....Uuh. Well, they're spread around the globe."

(*Condescendingly*) "It's not like I can just ask them out for drinks anytime."

**Clarity:** "So these are folks you know, right? People you've met at conferences?" (*Brief pause*) "I mean, don't some of these guys go to school with you at the U of A? Some of them live in Tucson, right?"

**Me:** (Struggling to find a way to respond without acknowledging it's stupid to brag about LinkedIn connections or letting her know she's brought up a valid point.) "Of course, some of them live here in town. But, I mean, they're LinkedIn connections. I already know the phone numbers of the guys I'd like to ask out for beers. I can just text them. LinkedIn connections are for networking all over the world." (*Feeling unsure that my response convinced her*)

**Clarity:** (*A sly smile perks the corners of her mouth like a cat that knows it's got a mouse cornered.*) "Well if you can't even ask them to talk shop in person over a drink, what use are they?"

**Me:** (Thinking.)

**Clarity:** “I mean, don’t you archaeos love to drink? Isn’t that where you come up with most of your ideas?”

**Me:** *(Still thinking about her question. I know she’s right, but can’t let her know. Mentally maneuvering.)* “Well, they’re useful because they can help me stay ‘in-the-know’ about the job market and give career advice. You know, help me learn about archaeology stuff before it’s public knowledge. They help me keep a sharp edge.” *(Feeling uncomfortable because I know she’s brought up a valid point that I never thought about before...as usual.)*

**Clarity:** *(Generously not twisting the knife.)* “Okay honey. That’s good. I’m proud of you. Really, I am.”

**Me:** *(Don’t believe her but can’t do anything about it. She won this round)* “Thanks.”

What good is online professional networking? Do archaeologists really “talk shop” over the internet? How useful are LinkedIn connections? Can you really learn about practicing archaeology through online conversations? How will any of this help me find a job?

Those are typical questions I have received whenever I told people about the topic of my SAA 2014 presentation. They’re questions I wanted to answer before writing this paper. “How can I use LinkedIn to further my career?” Until 2013, I had a LinkedIn profile for years but really hadn’t done anything with it. It wasn’t even complete. I’d been hearing about how important online connections can be for career development and job opportunities, but I was still doing things the old fashioned way—through face-to-face conversations with other archaeologists and professors. That method worked for years and it still works today. However, during the Great Recession, the face-to-face technique started failing me because of the dearth of cultural resource management (CRM) work going on in the country. In an age of shriveling opportunities and increased competition, I knew I had to find another way to land work. Still, I did not turn to LinkedIn or other online networking services.

In 2012, I started blogging as a way to share knowledge and help other archaeologists have more fruitful job searches. It was at this time that I realized how social media outlets provided a way to reach a wider audience and connect with other archaeologists around the world. Initially, I was completely anti-social media. Other than LinkedIn and the obligatory Google/Yahoo profiles that come along with their free email accounts, I had no social media presence. Yet, slowly, I came to realize that social media could help my career and help me share information with other archaeologists.

I reluctantly signed up for a couple different social media accounts and started watching the conversations that were going on. Most of it was gossip, ads, or junk, but sometimes I learned something or connected with a particularly knowledgeable individual that actually helped my career. As the current largest social media platform for professionals, I realized LinkedIn provided me an opportunity to connect with thousands of archaeologists from around the world and, unlike most of the other media outlets, archaeologists on LinkedIn were focused on their careers. I started paying particular attention to conversations on LinkedIn groups and began growing my own connections. This paper grew from my professional networking efforts during the last year (2013).

## Experiential Learning, Careerism, and the Internet

We all know that forging a path in archaeology requires a wealth of experiential learning that is amassed throughout an individual's career. Therein lays the paradox: *you need to have experience to get work, but how do you get work without the experience?* Our career paths as archaeologists usually follow a similar trajectory. We go to college for a degree in archaeology, anthropology, historic preservation, or a similar field. During college, most of us take a field school or internship as a way to get experience because hands-on experience is one of the things you need most to get a job after graduation. Some of us go on to graduate school right after getting our BA, while a larger number go on to work in archaeology, usually in CRM, before heading back to graduate school...or not. Some of us are even crazy enough to go for the PhD or work as professors.

Regardless of the path your career takes, in archaeology, professional development is strongly dependent upon experiential learning. Whether you aspire to be a field archaeologist, professor, principal investigator, or government archaeologist, it is easier to land that particular job when you already have experience in that position. *Experience trumps education* when it comes to successfully landing an archaeology job; but, *who you know trumps experience*. How do you get experience when you don't have any experience? You need to know the right people or be very, very lucky. Building your network is a safer bet and, today, networking includes making connections over the Internet.

I'm not the oldest man to wield a trowel, but when I started in archaeology your network was really limited to the archaeologists in your community or those you had directly worked with in the past. In order to build a robust network of connections, you needed to have decades of experience and projects behind you. Having decades of experience is still the best way to build a network because, in the process of conducting projects, the connections you make come from direct, person-to-person interactions. The Internet, specifically social media, adds a new way for us to connect and provides each of us an opportunity to interact without meeting in person. It also allows us to expand our networks far beyond our local communities and share information with individuals we've never actually met. This can help us build a huge "network", but it will never supersede face-to-face interaction in most instances. *Online connections should be considered like a first date that may or may not lead to something bigger.*

## How many archaeologists are there to connect with?

Archaeology is a pretty closed field because there aren't too many of us in the world. While I'm not sure about the exact number of archaeologists in other countries, various sources suggest there are between 7,200 and 12,000 archeologists in the United States. On the low end, the archaeology/anthropology job outlook created by the United States Department of Labor says there are about 7,200 individuals working in this industry in the U.S. and suggests that the number will grow

by 19% between 2010 and 2020. This is the least accurate estimate I've encountered because the Department of Labor is most likely only counting individuals with a graduate degree (their definition of an "archaeologist" or "anthropologist" says a Master's Degree is the minimum education requirement) (U.S. Department of Labor 2013). Recent information collected by the American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA) (2013) suggests the CRM industry employs 10,000 individuals and generates over \$1 billion in revenue.

Another assessment of the number of archaeologists in the U.S. comes from Jeffery H. Altschul and Thomas C. Patterson (2010). In their chapter in *Voices in American Archaeology*, Altschul and Patterson (2010:297–302) estimate that there are about 2,500 archaeologists working in the public sector, that the CRM industry employs about 10,000 archaeologists, and that 1,500 archaeologists work in universities. They also suggest that there are about 14,800 total CRM specialists, including archaeologists and others involved in CRM, in the United States, but not including temporary archaeological technicians, although they use a round figure of 14,000 for their CRM industry employment statistic (Altschul and Patterson 2010:300–302). Including archaeological technicians in this statistic could inflate the total of CRM archaeologists by another 2,200 (Altschul and Patterson 2010:302) to around 12,000 archaeologists and 16,000 CRM specialists.

## How many archaeologists are on LinkedIn?

There are three different types of LinkedIn profiles: individual, business, and groups. Individual pages primarily include information about persons. Similarly, business pages summarize the same information about businesses. Group pages are a little different in that they are places where individuals can congregate to share information about a specific topic. While individual and business pages are open to all other LinkedIn users, groups can be either open or closed, meaning membership can be controlled by the group's organizer to only admit select individuals—typically persons with similar career experiences or in the same industries.



Quantifying archaeologists using a free LinkedIn account is even more difficult than the attempts made by the ACRA, Department of Labor, or Altschul and Patterson. LinkedIn has two different types of accounts, free basic accounts and paid membership accounts. There are a variety of paid accounts designed for different clients including job seekers, recruiters, and sales professionals. Like all search engines, LinkedIn searches depend on keywords found on profile pages. The amount of information you can access is dependent on the type of account you are using. Obviously, you have access to a greater amount and range of information if you buy a membership. Paid memberships can get more accurate, nuanced search results.

It is difficult to quantify the number of archaeologists that use LinkedIn because the free account search options are very basic and do not provide for nuanced search results. For instance, when I, with a basic account, searched for persons with the word "archaeologist" in their profile, LinkedIn showed me all personal profile pages with that word anywhere in the individual's profile. This search showed me all LinkedIn users that are, or have been, an archaeologist in the past. This goes the same for locational data. LinkedIn showed me all persons that are or were archaeologists that currently work or have worked in a specific state. Thus, LinkedIn basic account searches show networks: individuals, organizations, and companies with connections to a given trade or location in the past and in the present.

Despite these restrictions, I found that LinkedIn can provide fairly good information on archaeologists and archaeology groups, but it is severely lacking in information on CRM companies and non-profit organizations. According to the information I accessed through my free account (March 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014), LinkedIn lists 18,253 individuals around the world that are currently or have been archaeologists, 8,140 of which live/worked in the United States (US), 2,719 in the United Kingdom, 1,029 in Canada, 747 in Australia, and 705 in Greece. Table 1 illustrates states in the US with the most and least archaeologist connections. Most importantly, we have to remember that this search yielded results for all individuals that have career or educational connections to these states in the past or present. For example, the search shows a person that earned their degree at the University of Washington, worked as an

archaeologist at some point in the past in Wyoming, but does not currently work as an archaeologist. That person would have ties to Washington and Wyoming even though they're no longer an archaeologist.

<b>Table 1: LinkedIn Results for the Term "Archaeologist" in the United States*</b>							
Top 10 States				Bottom 10 States			
Rank	State	Ind.	Prof.	Rank	State	Ind.	Prof.
1	California	1,847	144	1	Vermont	98	10
2	Washington	1,188	132	2	Delaware	101	12
3	New York	1,183	174	3	Maine	104	11
4	Texas	836	81	4	Nebraska	106	9
5	Florida	747	77	5	Rhode Island	113	9
6	Arizona	743	75	6	New Hampshire	125	13
7	New Mexico	732	76	7	South Dakota	139	16
8	Colorado	713	61	8	Connecticut	153	14
9	Virginia	644	72	9	North Dakota	159	17
10	Pennsylvania	583	79	10	Arkansas	165	16

\*Search conducted March 10th, 2014; results yielded individual profiles with the term "archaeologist" in past or present job titles; shows past or present connection to locations

Since the majority of archaeologists in the United States work in cultural resource management, I also searched LinkedIn for that information. There are 11,768 individual profiles that contain the term "cultural resource management"; 7,158 profiles have connections to the United States, 852 to Canada, 832 to the United Kingdom, and 454 to Australia. Table 2 summarizes the results for this search that also has the aforementioned caveats.

<b>Table 2: LinkedIn Results for the Term “Cultural Resource Management” in the United States*</b>					
Top 10 States			Bottom 10 States		
Rank	State	Ind.	Rank	State	Ind.
1	California	1,476	1	Maine	88
2	Washington	1,296	2	New Hampshire	102
3	New York	1,019	3	Rhode Island	119
4	Texas	826	4	Vermont	131
5	Virginia	819	5	South Dakota	139
6	Arizona	664	6	Connecticut	142
7	New Mexico	649	7	Delaware	156
8	Colorado	643	8	Iowa	158
9	Pennsylvania	643	9	North Dakota	170
10	Florida	642	10	Nebraska	173

\*Search conducted March 13th, 2014; results yielded individual profiles with the term “cultural resource management” in past or present job titles; shows past or present connection to locations

The results of individual profile searches indicate areas where archaeologists are concentrated, primarily the mid-Atlantic, Southwest, and Pacific coast states. There are few archaeologists in the New England and Midwestern states (*Note: not all of the states in these regions made it into the top or bottom 10 list*). The top 10 list indicates states where archaeologists have the most and fewest connections and this list remains similar whether the search focuses on the term “archaeologist” or “cultural resource management.”

I also surveyed LinkedIn for archaeology professor profiles, which are summarized in Table 3. The search for “archaeology” and “professor” revealed a total of 6,239 profiles with 3,552 linked to the United States, 453 to the United Kingdom, 323 to Canada, and 177 to Italy. The top five universities noted in these profiles included the University of California, Berkeley (23), Columbia University in New York City (23), University College of London (21), the University of Pennsylvania (19), and the University of Copenhagen (19). This includes individuals that are full/tenure, assistant, and adjunct professor.

Top 10 States			Bottom 10 States		
Rank	State	Prof.	Rank	State	Prof.
1	New York	174	1	Nebraska	9
2	California	144	2	Rhode Island	9
3	Washington	132	3	Vermont	10
4	Texas	81	4	Maine	11
5	Pennsylvania	79	5	Delaware	12
6	Florida	77	6	New Hampshire	13
7	New Mexico	76	7	Connecticut	14
8	Arizona	75	8	South Dakota	16
8	Virginia	72	9	Arkansas	16
10	Michigan	63	10	North Dakota	17

\*Search conducted March 10th, 2014; results yielded individual profiles with the term “archaeology” and “professor” in past or present job titles; shows past or present connection to locations; includes adjunct, assistant, and full or tenure professors

Again, these results do not indicate how many archaeology professors are in these states. It simply reflects the number of individuals that have been or currently are archaeologists or professors. It is an indicator of the places where archaeology professors are connected to; however these numbers also mirror the results in Tables 1 and 2. These tables point toward the states that have played a larger role in archaeology careers and where the largest numbers of archaeologists have connections.

LinkedIn statistics for companies and organizations that do archaeology are much less refined. It appears that a very small segment of the CRM and contract archaeology community has a presence on LinkedIn. Perhaps this reflects the overall dearth of online presence within the CRM community. A total of 535 companies with LinkedIn profiles stated archaeology is part of what they do. This includes a wide range of organizations including CRM companies, non-profit organizations, and tourism companies that provide tours of archaeology sites. Of the companies with profiles, 132 have connections to the United States, 109 to the United Kingdom, 26 to the Netherlands, 25 to Canada, and 21 to Italy. The results for the United States are summarized in Table 4.

<b>State</b>	<b>Companies</b>
California	20
Pennsylvania	7
2 States (Alabama, Tennessee)	6
4 States (New York, Utah, Virginia, Wyoming)	5
7 States (Arizona, Colorado, Ohio, Maryland, New Jersey, Nevada, Texas)	4
6 States (Delaware, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, North Carolina, Washington)	3
15 States (Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia)	2
11 States (Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Wisconsin)	1
4 States (Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Washington, D.C.)	0
*Search conducted March 10th, 2014; results yielded company profiles with the term “archaeology”	

Clearly, these results are inaccurate. The ACRA website indicates there are 28 CRM companies that do work in the state of Arizona alone (ACRA 2014). Another ACRA publication, written in 2013, states there are over 1,500 CRM companies in the United States. It appears that most companies that do archaeology do not have LinkedIn profiles. However, these data do roughly correlate with the individual profile data in that many of the states connected with a larger number of companies are also states with a large number of individual archaeologist profile connections. The same goes for the states with the fewest or no archaeology company connections.

## Are career-related conversations taking place on LinkedIn groups?

While LinkedIn members can send private messages to each other, most conversations about archaeology take place on archeology-related groups. These groups are intended to serve as a forum where information can be shared with group members who have the opportunity to comment. This is probably the main way archaeologists can network because LinkedIn usually only allows individuals to connect with each other if they have something in common, such as past work

experience, went to the same college, or are members of the same LinkedIn groups. My research indicates that there are 159 “archaeology” groups on LinkedIn that vary widely in membership size as illustrated in Table 5.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Status**</b>
Archeology	7866	Closed
Professional Anthropology/Archaeology Group	6,779	Closed
Medieval and Renaissance Art, Antiques, Architecture, Archaeology, History and Music	4,987	Closed
Society for American Archaeology	4,346	Open
Archaeology and Heritage Jobs	3877	Open
Historical Archaeology	3683	Closed
The Discovery Programme	2350	Open
Freelance Cultural Resources Professionals	2061	Closed
Geschichte/History	2000	Open
Experimental Archaeology	1898	Open
17 groups have only one member		4 closed, 13 open
*Search conducted March 10th, 2014; results yielded groups with the term “archaeology” in title or group profile		
**Group membership status is either “closed”, meaning members are vetted by group managers, or “open” to any LinkedIn user		

LinkedIn archaeology groups also vary widely when it comes to activity. LinkedIn notes group activity in the last 30 days, and for less active groups, notes the total number of group posts. Table 6 summarizes the most active 25 percent of LinkedIn archaeology groups (n=40) based on the amount of activity in these groups.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Activity Level**</b>	<b>Last Month</b>
History Enthusiasts Group	334	Open	Very Active	334
Medieval and Renaissance Art, Antiques, Architecture, Archaeology, History and Music	4987	Closed	Very Active	259
Archeology	7866	Closed	Very Active	91
Professional Anthropology/Archaeology Group	6779	Closed	Very Active	70
Past Horizons Archaeology	548	Open	Active	35

Roman Archaeology	949	Closed	Active	31
Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Culture, Language, Literature, History, and Archaeology	333	Open	Active	30
Archaeology News	563	Open	Active	25
Society for American Archaeology	4346	Open	Active	22
Archaeology	1850	Closed	Active	21
Archaeology and Heritage Jobs	3877	Open	Active	20
Historical Archaeology	3683	Closed	Active	20
The Society for Historical Archaeology	248	Closed		11
CAA: Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology	1596	Closed		10
Tennessee Council for Professional Archaeology	33	Open		10
Maritime Archaeology	1842	Closed		8
American Cultural Resources Association	1486	Closed		8
University of Leicester School of Archaeology and Ancient History Alumni	12	Closed		8
Council for British Archaeology	1789	Open		7
Evolution of Language Research	1579	Open		7
History Jobs English Art Literature Library Political Science, Museum Liberal ArtsHistoryJobs.com	982	Closed		7
Digital Archaeology	1206	Open		6
Friends of The Archaeology Channel	314	Open		6
Forensic Archaeology	292	Closed		6
BAJR Archaeology Jobs and Resources	280	Open		6
Celtic Studies	106	Open		6
Experimental Archaeology	1898	Open		5
Sea Research Society	797	Open		5
The Discovery Programme	2350	Open		4
Freelance Cultural Resources Professionals	2061	Closed		4
Archaeologists and CRMers	494	Closed		4
Archaeology Careerist's Network	152	Closed		4
Geschichte/History	2000	Open		3
GIS and Archaeology	770	Open		3
GIS History and Archaeology	694	Open		3
Cambridge Heritage Research Group	182	Closed		3
Texas Archaeology	99	Open		3
Australian Archaeology	718	Open		2
Archaeology Scotland	290	Open		2
*Search conducted March 10th, 2014; results yielded groups with the term "archaeology" in title or group profile				
**Activity Level determined by LinkedIn; all "very active" and "active" groups have more than 20 posts each month				

As indicated in Table 6, activity level varies between archaeology-related groups. A small number of groups ( $n=12$ ) are classified by LinkedIn as “very active” or “active” and a larger number of groups have much lower activity levels. About 67 percent ( $n=107$ ) of all archaeology groups have had no activity in the last 30 days. It is also interesting to note that the majority of “very active” archaeology groups are “closed”, which means their membership is vetted by the group’s manager(s). Closed groups are usually comprised of a very select demographic of professionals and enthusiasts. Discussions in these groups, generally, are more focused on topics mentioned in the group’s profile.

In order to get a better idea of the types of people that compose these groups and the types of conversations happening in them, I decided to analyze five groups within the largest 25 percent range ( $n=40$ ; 7,866–297 members) and five groups within the middle 50 percent ( $n=79$ ; 292–4 members). I wanted to look at five groups in the lowest 25 percent ( $n=40$ ; 4–1 members), but none of these groups had any activity in the last month. These ten groups were chosen in a completely biased manner and were selected based on which ones I thought had the most interesting title/profile, or groups I thought would be more oriented toward career-related conversations. I was also limited to open groups or groups of which I was already a member (as of March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014).

## Archaeology Career Conversations on LinkedIn Groups

Table 7 is a summary of the last month’s activity for the 10 groups I chose to examine (*Full Disclosure: I am the group manager for the Archaeology Careerist’s Network*). In order to quantify the conversations on these groups, I categorized the posts into five principal types: queries, jobs, information, promotions, and spam. Queries included questions addressed to other group members and were primarily about artifact identification and job inquiries. The jobs category included posts about employment opportunities. It was most difficult to differentiate between information and promotions, but I noticed that most informational posts focused on recent findings and current events in the field of archaeology. Posts on upcoming conference calls and fundraising



efforts were categorized as promotions. The spam category included advertisements that were not related to archaeology.

<b>Table 7: Archaeology Career Conversations on LinkedIn Groups*</b>								
<b>Group</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Posts**</b>	<b>Post Type</b>				
				<b>Query</b>	<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Info</b>	<b>Promo</b>	<b>Spam</b>
<b>Top 25 Percent</b>								
Archaeology	7,866	Closed	91	1	2	71	16	
SAA	4,346	Open	22	3	1	11	5	2
Historical Archaeology	3,683	Closed	20	1		12	7	
CRM Freelance Professionals	2,061	Closed	4			4		
Archaeologists and CRMers	494	Closed	4			5		
<b>Middle 50 Percent</b>								
TN Council for Professional Archaeologists	33	Open	10			10		
BAJR Archaeology Jobs	280	Open	6	3		3		
Celtic Studies	106	Open	6			4	2	
The Discovery Programme	2350	Open	4			2	2	
Archaeology Careerist's Network	152	Closed	4	2		2		
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>171</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>
*Limited to Open groups and groups the author was a member of as of March 19th, 2014								
**Only includes posts made in last 30 days								

According to my wholly unscientific, limited, and biased analysis of select LinkedIn group conversations that took place during the last 30 days (from March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014), most group conversations focused on discussing recent findings and promoting conferences and fundraisers. A smaller proportion of group posts are queries about artifact identification, career advice, or about education. An extremely small number of group queries appear to be job posting discussions. It is also important to note that the bulk of the material in these groups is posted by a small number of individuals who broadcast the same information

across a wide number of LinkedIn groups. Thus, many of the conversations are actually shared across a large number of groups.

These findings appear quite bleak, but it is important to note that I only investigated the last 30 days of activity in these groups and was limited in which groups I could examine. While older posts (created more than 30 days ago) appear to have similar trends as the data for the last 30 days, it is possible that the focus of posts varied in the past. Additionally, it is important to remember that these groups are primarily for conversations about archaeology. LinkedIn has separate search capabilities for job seekers. Finally, as the manager of an archaeology career-oriented group, I know that conversations that can contribute to career development do occur on LinkedIn. In the past, my group has discussed several important topics such as CRM/university studies, grant writing, CRM marketing, and professional standards. This qualitative information would not be identified using the data collection methods I employed for this paper.

## Conclusion

It would be easy to admit that my wife was right in insinuating that LinkedIn connections are less valuable than the ones you make face-to-face. The data presented in this paper certainly suggests there are few career-related conversations taking place in LinkedIn groups and participating in these groups is simply a way to hear about the awesome discoveries around the world. These data also indicate career advice is not being conveyed via LinkedIn groups and users are not learning much about what it is like to be a professional archaeologist through group conversations. However, my methods would not reveal this type of qualitative information.

While groups are currently not being used by archaeologists to their full potential, my research indicates LinkedIn is still a great way to connect with other archaeologists. Groups are useful because they provide a way to connect with archaeologists you have not worked with directly. LinkedIn does not typically allow “cold calls”. A common reference point is necessary to reach individuals you have not worked

with before and this commonality can include a LinkedIn group. If Altschul and Patterson are correct in their estimations of the number of archaeologists in the US, than over half of all archaeologists in the United States may be on LinkedIn and this number continues to grow. LinkedIn is a great networking tool because it allows you to connect with archaeologists in your state or even metropolitan area, which gives you the chance to create those powerful face-to-face interactions that are so central to a successful career in archaeology.

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# Why archaeological blogging matters: Personal experiences from Central Europe and South America.\*

Maria Beierlein de Gutierrez

Blog: <http://sprachederdingeblog.wordpress.com> [cxxvii](#)

## Introduction

I am a fully trained archaeologist, specializing in Bolivian ceramics. I graduated in “Latin American Archaeology” and “European Archaeology” in Berlin in 2004 and went on to my Ph.D. at the University of Bonn, Germany. My studies were centred on values and a historical background that came from the Anglo-American tradition of Archaeology & Anthropology with all its history and discussions on the communication and interaction of Archaeology to and with a broader public (*for a short overview*: Beavis and Hunt 1999; Clack and Brittain 2007; Holtorf 2005, 2007). As opposed to the other more traditional German approach of teaching archaeology mainly as an extended version of Art History, avoiding any mingling of Archaeology with social or political matters. This rather descriptive and only reluctantly interpretative approach was still en vogue when I began my studies in the 1990s (for an abbreviated history of German archaeology see Eggert 2012, p. 7ff.)

Nevertheless, communicating archaeology became a constant and even urgent necessity in my professional life when I started investigating in Bolivia in the late 1990s. Postcolonial countries tend to be very sensitive to people coming to investigate certain aspects of their life and culture, and the past is an especially sensitive issue after more than 500 years of colonization (see also: Bruchae et al. 2010, Oyuela-Caycedo 1994 a, b; Gnecco 2012 and the growing body of literature at Left Coast Press,

e.g.<sup>3</sup>). Communicating archaeology can help to lower barriers between the investigator and local people, and in the best case, creates an intertwined relationship between both; it offers archaeological data and information, thus presenting access to a new facet of interpretation of the local past. It explains how we are doing Archaeology, ensuring a broader understanding of the issues of cultural heritage in academic terms. It is vital in this context that while we are increasingly respecting local knowledge and attitudes to the past and its material remains, as archaeologists, we should also present our standpoint based on academic knowledge (see also: Holtorf 2005 arguing the same viewpoint regarding “*alternative archaeologies*”).

On the contrary, during my work in Germany, communicating Archaeology was almost no issue. German Archaeology still clings widely to the practice of communicating exclusively between scientists and not so much with the public, although this panorama has recently begun to change and is still highly debated (Karl 2012, 2014). Since the mid 1990s the courses of studies of European and non-European archaeology have increasingly suffered major cutbacks<sup>4</sup> - the last of those when the closure of the studies of Classical Archaeology at the renowned University of Leipzig in January 2014 was announced (have a look at: <http://ausgraben.wordpress.com> [cxxxviii](#)). In my opinion, these two facts, insufficient communication outside our discipline and funding cutbacks, are intertwined. Therefore, communicating archaeology as a discipline of deep relevance for the German and Central European society is getting even more important.

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<sup>3</sup>[https://www.google.de/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=left+coast+press+archaeology+and+indigenous+issues+series&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&gfe\\_rd=cr&ei=ZF8hU-SeKMvesgaUsYBY](https://www.google.de/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=left+coast+press+archaeology+and+indigenous+issues+series&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&gfe_rd=cr&ei=ZF8hU-SeKMvesgaUsYBY)

<sup>4</sup> Have a look at the excellent analysis of this situation at Eggert 2012, p. 382. Eggert centres on the relevance of “*economic usefulness of knowledge*” and the “*relevance of the pecuniary*” (ibid., 382, my translation) in our current, western society, which is certainly an absolutely decisive factor in the current developments at universities when it comes to archaeology and humanities in general.

This chapter focuses on how communicating archaeology in increasingly Internet based societies matters – in Central Europe and in South America. The parameters may be different and the approaches and problems as well, but the importance of blogging archaeology remains the same. I would like to present my personal experience of the how and why.

## Archaeological blogging and outreach

As has been stated recently, the use of Web 2.0 in and for archaeology has become a fact (Henson 2013; Huvila 2013; Scherzler 2012). There are a multitude of publications on the practical uses of Web 2.0 for archaeological research. Data storing and exchange (e.g. Kansa et al. 2008) and digital humanities are a major subject at universities, conferences and the like. The coverage on possibilities of Web 2.0 for the outreach of archaeological projects and its impacts on the communication of archaeological knowledge and thinking has been patchy at best. The communication of archaeology via media such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs, websites and on platforms like Pinterest has been seen in the tradition of analogue media used by archaeology (Clack and Brittain 2007; Henson 2013; Kulik 2007). Archaeology has even been considered “*a subject with a mass-market appeal*” (Henson 2013, p. 4).

Many authors stress the blurring of former hierarchical or academic frontiers between the public and archaeologists, and go on to state the creation of new boundaries and new, widened communities (Henson 2013; Huvila 2013). Hierarchies are being abolished by the rather heterarchic use of internet spaces and media by a wider public. This includes not only academics working in the field of archaeology, but also a broad range of so-called amateur archaeologists or people

simply interested in archaeology [cxxxixcxxx](#) <sup>5</sup>. This widened community calls for a different approach to communicating archaeology on part of the archaeologists. A need has arisen to accept and integrate different approaches and ideas on archaeology held in high esteem by the public but maybe not always by archaeologists. As Holton says:

“[...] The significance of archaeology may lie less in any specific insights gained about the past than in the very process of engaging with the material remains of the past in the present.” (2005, p. 548).

It's still difficult to find a consensus on how to act and interact with people in the Web 2.0 who are not academically trained archaeologists. The widening of the community that takes an interest in archaeological work and their interaction with archaeology and archaeologists has changed through the direct interaction with the public on the Internet instead of 'displaying content to a disconnected and largely passive audience' (Henson 2013, p. 3) via television or radio.

What can be said is that the possibilities to interact with and communicate to an audience outside the academic world have been increasingly used in the last years by archaeologists, often either in blogs about archaeological projects, covering and presenting archaeological fieldwork itself<sup>6</sup> [cxxxii](#) [cxxxii](#), or on archaeology and related discussions<sup>7</sup> [cxxxiii](#)

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<sup>5</sup> A current example of this interaction and debate in Germany is the case of the so-called “*treasure of Rülzheim*” which has been recently uncovered by a so-called “amateur archaeologist” and retrieved by German authorities. The comments on this case and its media coverage have been analyzed by Jutta Zerres on the archaeological blog “*Archaeologik*” in a remarkable article <http://archaeologik.blogspot.de/2014/02/das-nennt-sich-fieldwork-ihr.html>.

“*Archaeologik*” (<http://archaeologik.blogspot.de>) is being hosted by Rainer Schreg.

<sup>6</sup> Have a look at: <http://nunalleq.wordpress.com> or <http://reaparch.blogspot.de>

<sup>7</sup> Some rather unusual examples may be found at:

- a) <http://pastthinking.com>
- b) <http://archaeopop.blogspot.de>
- c) <http://www.visualizingneolithic.com>



[cxxxiv](#) [cxxxv](#). In that way, archaeologists are part of Web 2.0, where interaction, constant re-modelling of information, and sharing are the norm.

## Two blogs – two continents

My first experience with blogging was a descriptive blog about my Ph.D. project in South Bolivia. My team and I practised different kinds of community outreach communication on a daily basis during the project, including presentations aimed at different audiences and offering data and interpretations to a wide range of social and political groupings.

It seemed necessary to offer our data to a wider public, especially after the project was finished. This was due to the complete lack of information on the subject of my investigation and the desire expressed by local people to know more about it. The goal was to present a systematic overview of the investigations, past and present, in the study region and of the first results of my project that were upcoming on the time we opened the blog. The blog was consequently aimed at the broad public, and not at fellow scientists who can access the same information at archaeological journals or via [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) [cxxxvi](#) <sup>8</sup>.

We were therefore looking for the possibility to present the information as cheap and broadly as possible. Surely, blogging seemed the best option at this time instead of setting up a whole website, paying for rented web space and the like. We opened <http://paas-tarija.blogspot.de> [cxxxvii](#) in 2007, offering information on the project itself, the participants, the preliminary results, an overview of the earlier archaeological investigation of the area and a special section named “*What is Archaeology? Towards a future replete with past*”. During fieldwork we found that archaeology was a decisive part of the local

and regional social reality. It was, and is, used openly in political discourses and helped different groups to back up their specific positions on political autonomy, ancestry and the like, bending the archaeological data at their convenience. The blog was a medium to present our data to a wider audience, but can be read at the same time as our basic version of the data, presenting them explicitly without political and social interpretations for current struggles about autonomy and politics.

In Germany, the approach to the use of archaeology is completely different. Archaeology fascinates the broad public but is rarely used openly to substantiate different political agendas<sup>9</sup>. Since the 1950s, German archaeology has limited itself mostly to the presentation of data with a minimum of interpretation, relying on a rather descriptive approach (Strobel & Widera 2009). The dichotomy between the inter-archaeological, supposedly “objective” discourse of merely describing finds on the one hand and the fascination for sensational findings in the wider public on the other, has resulted ultimately in an ever-growing irrelevance of basic archaeological data and research in everyday life. Archaeologists have retreated to their laboratories, and ‘Communicating Archaeology’ is not practised very often. Rather, we communicate for and between ourselves, reaching out only in minor instances to a wider public in the realm of expositions and publications on rather sensationalist topics (see also: Benz and Liedmeier 2007). This leads ultimately to insufficient funding of archaeological investigations and education because we don’t communicate the relevance of our studies to a wider public. Archaeology is about the ‘Past’ permeating

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<sup>8</sup> <https://uni-bonn.academia.edu/MariaBeierlein>

<sup>9</sup> The reason for the rather anti-interpretative approach in German archaeology up to the 1990s may be suspected in the political use of archaeology in the nationalist debates from the 1860s onwards, resulting in the inclusion in the agenda of National Socialism (see: Focke-Museum 2013, Hardt et al. 2003, Schachtmann et al. 2009).

everyday life around us, about its relevance to us and about how it shapes our current situation.

In order to raise my voice on this topic, I started an archaeological blog called “Language of Things” (<http://sprachederdingeblog.wordpress.com>), which focuses mainly on the persistence of archaeological questions in our everyday life. It asks questions like: How are history and archaeology permeating our lives? Why is archaeology relevant to our everyday experiences? How do expositions and musings on these topics influence us? Aimed at fellow scientists as well as interested non-archaeologists, the blog is a platform for thoughts on archaeology and the ‘Past’ as well as exhibitions and professional training. It is also, a space to present ideas and thoughts in an informal way, without writing a full-length article or other rather scientific publications.

## Differences and Similarities. What does Archaeological Blogging mean in both continental contexts?

Archaeological blogging in Bolivia faces big challenges and possibilities at the same time. There is a growing demand for archaeological data from different societal segments: students, archaeological colleagues, indigenous groups, political parties, archaeologically interested persons and so on<sup>10</sup> [cxxxviii](#) . Archaeological projects working in Bolivia are regularly asked to leave printed documentation of their findings with the local and regional communities where the investigation took place. When offering archaeological information on the internet, you can be sure that there will be a steady

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<sup>10</sup> To get an overview for the cases of Chile and Bolivia, have a look at the special issue of *Chungará* 35(2): <http://www.chungara.cl/index.php/vol35-2>

and even growing interest visible in hit numbers for your site, an interest that does not diminish with time.

But there are several big questions: Who has access to the Internet, how is this access provided and at what cost? What are the technical possibilities of Bolivian Internet cafés or access at your home? That's a big problem because access is available, but mainly in big cities. Rural areas are seldom provided with Internet access or don't have any access at all, with people relying on sparse visits to town only once or twice a month or even less. If access is provided, the speed of the Internet is often limited and impedes reading and/or printing pages or documents with high data volume or pictures<sup>11</sup>.

So, who has access to your information? It is mainly the non-rural segments of society and this is surely a big disadvantage because rural people often have a major interest in learning more about a different view on their past. The Bolivian educational system has existed for several hundred years in the obsolescence of prehispanic cultural developments and has only recently integrated the prehispanic past into the curricula. But still, it centres on the so-called "high civilizations"<sup>12</sup>, like Tiwanaku<sup>13</sup> or Inka<sup>14</sup>, and ignores regional cultural developments that may span several thousand years. This negation of regional history has led to an ever-growing interest about the "real" past (i.e. the past not represented

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<sup>11</sup> See the first hits with the search terms „*Acceso de internet en Bolivia*“ and find some of relevant statistics:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=acceso+de+internet+en+bolivia&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

<sup>12</sup> See Swartley, 2002, for an interesting introduction regarding the use of prehispanic cultures in Bolivian politics.

<sup>13</sup> Tiwanaku: Archaeological entity of the South-Central Andes, spanning a time between approx. 400 – 1100 AD.

<sup>14</sup> Inka: Archaeological entity of the Andes, spanning the time between 1000 AD – 1535 AD. The Inka culture developed the valleys near the city of Cuzco, Peru, expanding their dominium up to Ecuador in the North and to Chile and Argentina in the South in the last 200 years of their development which came to a forceful halt due to the arrival of the Spaniards.

in school books and the like) from regional, often indigenous, groups. This was experienced by our project, as well as by many others, when doing field work and encountering dozens of interested people on the site during the excavations or during survey, who asked continuous questions on how, why and when people lived there. There may be different approaches and ideas about the past and ancestry, but still the interest persists. Archaeological narratives may provide a counter image of regional, local and official history.

It is these rural people who have the least access to knowledge provided via archaeological blogging. But as rural education centres are being increasingly provided with computers and electrification, access to the Internet is growing. In the meantime, personal expositions, visits to schools and other cultural or educational institutions as well as the transfer of written accounts on the results of fieldwork have to cover the gap between occasional online access and the direct possession of archaeological data and information for rural areas. At the same time, the presentation of archaeological data via a permanent Internet source is – up to point - a guarantee for accessibility. Printed versions may get lost or perish because space, resources and interests limit their storage and accessibility in local communities, while the information on the web is available even years after being published<sup>15</sup>. In this sense, a blog persists, offering data to everyone who is able to get to an Internet café and search for the history of his/her region.

While archaeological blogging in Bolivia has political and societal dimensions, touching on themes like ethnicity, (post-) colonialism, the integration of archaeology into politics and other sensible domains, blogging about archaeology in Germany is a completely different world. Archaeology is widely understood as an ivory tower discipline that

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<sup>15</sup> I am aware that Internet sources may be manipulated or updated, but in this context I am assuming that the data remain unchanged on a maintained web site or blog.

fascinates a lot of people but many of them are not even remotely aware that there may exist a connection between Archaeology, the discipline that studies the material remains of the past, and their own political or social situation. Although archaeological blogs in Bolivia and Germany are similarly sparse, the reasons for this are completely different.

Continuous access to the Internet is available almost everywhere in Germany and the use of the Internet has increased in the last decade<sup>16</sup> [cxxxix](#), but blogging is still a minor activity compared to the English-speaking part of the Internet. Most German blogs on archaeology offer descriptions of new finds and try to communicate news and data to a rather scientific public<sup>17</sup> [cxl](#) [cxli](#) or to people looking for beautiful objects or sites. The reasons for this situation can be suspected in the German tradition of communicating archaeology (see above). There are only a few blogs on archaeology that are offering something beyond scientific news and sensational objects, presenting the impact of archaeology on contemporary society and perceptions. It was this facet that seemed to me the most important. Archaeology is much more than its objects, and much more than just science. In my opinion, history permeates our lives everywhere. But mostly we are not aware of it - not of its presence and even less of how it shapes our decisions and us. Many publications exist on the conscious and rather unconscious mingling of Archaeology with political and social perceptions today and in the past (Hardt et al. 2003; Kaeser 2008; Molineaux 1997; Smiles and Moser 2005). Archaeology, to me, is a tool to get to know the past and to communicate the past. To

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<sup>16</sup> <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/13070/umfrage/entwicklung-der-internetnutzung-in-deutschland-seit-2001/>

<sup>17</sup> To cite some examples:

- a) <http://www.praehistorische-archaeologie.de/blog/>
- b) <http://provinzialroemer.blogspot.de>
- c) <http://alpinearchaeologie.wordpress.com>

make the past relevant to all of us, sensitizing ourselves to the impact of the past on our everyday life. Archaeology, in my opinion, has ceased to receive the attention that it should have due to its impact on our social and political realities. Instead, it has become something like a beautiful hobby, a search for gold and silver, and the occasional bones of elite people from past times. And this development is leading ultimately to the disappearance of Archaeology in public opinion. It's standing as a luxury good, a science that nobody really needs unless she/he is interested in some remote, seemingly irrelevant past.

I felt that it was time to translate this reality into written words and opened the blog 'Language of Things'. Instead of presenting data as a means of equal access to the past as we did in Bolivia, where the relevance of the past and archaeology are not at stake, the German blog aims at the opposite side of archaeology: to claim relevance, leaving the presentation of data outside this medium. Writing about expositions, the Past in our contemporary lives, about the many details where the past mingles with our current society, is the goal of this blog. Based on the necessities that archaeology has in Germany today, this is for me the most important action to take.

## Conclusions: Why does archaeological blogging matter?

If Archaeology matters then we should communicate this fact. We should communicate data, information and relevance. Communicating Archaeology outside the academic realm is something we should do continuously, with high standards and a conscience of the importance of this communication. The relevant themes that archaeology represents in a given society and cultural-scientific backgrounds differ from country to country, but the fact remains the same: if we don't speak up, then we won't be heard. And if there are no big budgets to give or much time to spend, blogging can be an important opportunity to share thoughts and data. Personally, I have a deep belief in archaeology's relevance and so I decided that I would present my view of the Past to the world, putting my grain of sand into the World Wide Web. In my belief, the Past is not just some murky, cloudy thing hovering there in the classroom or on our bookshelves in (unfortunately often badly written and researched)

novels. It's not a past "Disneyland" where kings and queens leave gold and jewels behind, It's so much more. Archaeology matters. According to Kulik (2007, p. 123ff.), we are approaching a time when TV, newspapers, and radio are becoming increasingly indifferent to archaeological coverage and he calls for the '*strength of the bonds among archaeologists, the media, and the public that was developed in recent years*' to go on establishing this relationship. Blogging and Web 2.0 may be a considerable part of it.

I have had different experiences with blogging, in central Europe as well as in South America. There were and are problems regarding the accessibility and problems with outreach. The main points to cover are different ones, at least in my opinion. But I still think that there is nothing more relevant than communicating that Archaeology and History matter to us, to our society and to our lives. If we can't communicate this overall important message, then we shouldn't wonder why we are continually underfinanced and neglected - or respected only for gold, jewels and Indiana Jones. Gold, jewels and Indiana Jones are part of Archaeology - but they are not its essence. The essence is something else: the shape of our present is the impact of our past. We should get this point across in whichever way we can. I chose blogging.



\*Minor parts of this article have been published at the blog "Sprache der Dinge" in the context of Doug Rocks-Macqueen's (<http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/about/>) questions on archaeological blogging, which I consider a great opportunity to reflect on the reasons of archaeological blogging: <http://sprachederdingeblog.wordpress.com/2014/03/05/what-are-the-goals-of-archaeological-blogging-blogarch/cxlii> .

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# 'A masterpiece in political propaganda' and a futile exercise in archaeological blogging

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Blog: <http://unfreearchaeology.wordpress.com/> [cxlv](#)

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 2010, after a 28-hour journey home from a conference, I found an e-mail to me and my supervisors. Its author 'protest[ed my] words and alleged findings concerning the looting of the Cypriot Cultural heritage'; stated that it was 'very obvious' that I had 'never visited [the] North part of Cyprus' and that I was 'heavily under the Greek fic[tit]ious propaganda'; asserted that my findings were 'fic[tit]ious'; and informed me that, 'although [he] could not read [my] thesis', he 'strongly believe[d]' that it was 'also fic[tit]ious and ha[d] no academic value' (Atun, 2010n). It was certainly fictitious insofar as it had not yet been written.

Having met the e-mail's author, Turkish Cypriot Near East University Prof. Ata Atun, in the north part of Cyprus (in Famagusta in 2007), I remembered that he was also a journalist, I searched for keywords from my paper and was horrified by what I found. I went on to challenge my accusers, reasoned with their publishers (unsuccessfully) and blogged the research paper and multiple defences. However, they had scored their point and moved on. On that occasion, at least, my archaeological blogging appears to have been the equivalent of boxing someone else's shadow. This chapter reviews that story.

## Blogging as communication

In response to nationalist reactions in Cyprus to my earliest blogging, I quickly developed a habit of posting irregularly and writing in a disengaging style. It certainly reduced the nationalist reaction, but it may have prevented my work from developing a moderate audience as well. Even after I had augmented that blog with the texts of background notes and conference papers, and published 24 village surveys as associated photo blogs, I only received about twenty or thirty visitors a day in total.

When I launched the *Conflict Antiquities* blog, I experimented with blogging and micro-blogging news, but ended up focusing on deep investigations into intriguing, public interest cases – the Olympia museum robbery, Syrian civil war looting, the Gezi Park uprising (shared between *Conflict Antiquities* and *Unfree Archaeology*), and the Gaza “Apollo” case. I greatly improved the readability of my work, and the readership – to fifty or sixty visitors a day.

Paul Barford's (2014) blog on *Portable Antiquity Collecting and Heritage Issues* has received one million site visits in five years. After five years, *Conflict Antiquities* – my most popular and most successful blog – will probably have got only one hundred thousand page views. Since Barford's blog offers similarly international coverage of the same subject, it may provide an instructive comparison.

*Heritage Issues* is updated frequently (often, several times daily) with brief but combative notes and analyses of news; it has a wider geographical coverage overall, grounded in the study of metal detecting in the UK. *Conflict Antiquities* is updated irregularly (but, on average, twice weekly) with reports and investigations that are commonly thousands of words long – far longer than the average post length of the most popular blogs on news and politics (cf. Allsop, 2010); it has a narrower focus on zones of conflict and crisis.

Although *Heritage Issues* may have a naturally larger Anglophone core audience, based upon its retweets and site referrals, *Conflict Antiquities* has a wide appeal to audiences for information on organised crime and political violence. So, it appears that something in the

alchemy of frequency, length and style accounts for Barford's achievement of a more than tenfold superiority in feeding and keeping public interest (through increased numbers of visitors and/or visits).

## Blogging as research, blogging as engagement

Blogging has enabled me to share experiences and warnings that would have been much diluted and delayed by scholarly publishing (e.g. Hardy, 2007). It has demonstrably increased my readership and engagement with affected communities, and thereby improved the accuracy and detail of my research (Hardy, 2011c: 113-115; 2013b; for systematic analysis, see Garfield, 2000: 3; Moxley, 2001: 63). As a result of it, I have been quoted in *the Weekly Standard* (Eastland, 2010, regarding Hardy, 2010a), consulted by *Bloomberg Businessweek* (Silver, 2014a, regarding Hardy, 2013d; Silver, 2014b, regarding Hardy, 2014a) and *the Daily Mail* (Thornhill, Kisiel and Walters, 2014; Kisiel and Walters, 2014; cf. Hardy, 2014b), *Jadaliyya* (Barry-Born, 2014, regarding Hardy, 2013a) and other media and civil society organisations (privately).

However, the success of the community campaign against Nazi War Diggers – in which I was a more visible member of a much larger movement against an intrinsically problematic television programme, and which was not actually a campaign concerning my research as such – was exceptional in every sense. My research into state complicity in cultural property crime and illegal undercover police activity (Hardy, 2011: 201-215; 2014c; 2014d), which I have blogged in draft and postprint form (Hardy, 2009d; 2010a; 2010b; 2010p; 2011a; 2011b; 2012), and which I have summarised in Greek and Turkish (e.g. Hardy, 2010k; 2010l), has simply been ignored.

Journalists approached me about Nazi War Diggers. No-one (outside the case) approached me about the death of Stephanos Stephanou and, when I approached them, no-one considered it newsworthy. Indeed, the only news coverage of my work on that case was a libellous attack on me. So, I question whether blogging has significantly increased the social impact of my research. And perhaps the best evidence of

that is my futile attempt to defend myself from the attack on me for my investigation into the death of Stephanos Stephanou.

## Myths and misrepresentations

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2010, I discussed *Cypriot Antiquities Rescue from the Turkish Deep State: the Rescue of Forgeries and the Death of Stephanos Stephanou* at the World Archaeological Congress's International Conference on Archaeology in Conflict in Vienna (Hardy, [2010a](#)). The paper was based on a blog post on *Death and Denial: Stephanos Stephanou and the Syriac Bible* (Hardy, [2009d](#)), which was based on information from a confidential informant, who had contacted me regarding a previous blog post on *[the] Antiquities Trade, Turkey-Cyprus: [a] Syrian Orthodox Bible* (Hardy, [2009a](#)).

In the conference paper: I had described the deprivation of the ghettoised Turkish Cypriots, who were enclaved during the Cypriot civil war and who turned to 'antiquities looting [as] a way of surviving'; explained the paramilitary takeover of the illicit trade, which was a source of personal enrichment and conflict funding; highlighted the assassination on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1996 of dissident Turkish Cypriot journalist Kutlu Adalı, who had reported on the looting of the Monastery of Saint Barnabas by the Civil Defence Organisation (Şivil Savunma Teşkilâtı (SST)), which was an auxiliary of the Turkish Cypriot Security Forces Command (Kıbrıslı Türk Güvenlik Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı (GKK)), which was the successor organisation of the civil war paramilitary Turkish (Cypriot) Resistance Organisation (Türk Mukavemet Teşkilâtı (TMT)) (Irkad, [2000](#); Kanlı, [2007a](#); Kanlı, [2007b](#)); and explored the death on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2007 of a Greek Cypriot undercover antiquities police agent in Turkish Cypriot police custody.

In the session discussion, an unidentified Turkish Cypriot, who lived in Vienna, accused me of a litany of offences, including: denying Turkish Cypriot suffering; representing Turkish Cypriots as 'animals' and the 'worst criminals in the world'; scapegoating them for looting, which they could not have committed precisely due to their containment in the enclaves; misrepresenting TMT as a paramilitary or deep state structure when it was



a 'defence' force; perpetuating the myth of the Turkish deep state (an ultranationalist para-state), which did not exist; and perpetuating the myth of the deep state murder of Kutlu Adalı, whose death was the consequence of a clash between 'Communists and Conservatives'.

Already concerned with precise language regarding such a sensitive case, I had written out my paper and read my text from the page, so there was no possibility that I had spontaneously used ambiguous or misleading words or phrases by mistake. The representation of my paper was so unreal and so provocative that I suspected that he was not a random member of the audience. Nonetheless, unable to expose any vested interest to the audience, I simply refuted his claims point by point.

Outside, I had a civil conversation with Turkish Embassy Counsellor (Botschaftsrat) Ufuk Ekici. Then I found that the Republic of Turkey's Embassy in Vienna (ROTEIV, 2010) had left print-outs on *Protection of the Cultural Heritage in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*. Since that document regarded destruction, whereas my paper concerned theft, it may have been a reaffirmation of their monitoring of my (other) research activities. After all, when I had been conducting fieldwork on destruction in northern Cyprus, plain-clothes police had: surveilled, doorstepped, and questioned me; had (albeit inattentively) searched my computer and documents; and had questioned my contacts and acquaintances, until I moved back to southern Cyprus to avoid putting anyone at further risk. Otherwise, since my research into destruction in southern Cyprus had actually documented violence against Turkish Cypriot cultural property that had been excluded from other scholarly studies and public education (Hardy, 2009b; 2009c, which I developed into Hardy, 2011: 152-168; 2013c), it may have been evidence of an oblivious local embassy's last-minute reaction to my paper's title or the Turkish Forum's activism.

At the time, I almost – *almost* – welcomed the trouble-making intervention, because it made everyone forget my nervous presentation and it certainly eased introductions.

## ‘A political thriller’

Then I went home and found the e-mail that started this chapter. As well as an academic and a journalist, Atun was (or had been) an Adviser to the (nationalist) Democratic Party President Serdar Denktaş, and a Consultant to the (nationalist) National Unity Party government’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs under Democratic Party leader Rauf Denktaş’s presidency. I was not optimistic. Searching online for “Sam Hardy” and “Stephanos Stephanou” revealed that, the day after my presentation, a technically unnamed person had posted a purported summary of my paper and the incident (Anonymous, 2010). It was on the Turkish Forum, an international, not-for-profit organisation, which was established to influence public opinion by presenting ‘the realities of the world with regards to Turks’ (Turkish Forum, 2011), which had about 19,000 members (Akçam, 2007a). The day after that, Prof. Atun had published an article regarding that summary in newspapers across Europe. The day after that, the article had reached a strategic research centre in Western Asia. Within a week, it had reached my neighbourhood newspaper in north London (Atun, 2010a-m; 2010o-2010z). I began to track the spread of the article through its online publication (though since then, due to common practice in Turkish newspapers, some of these articles have had their address changed, and many have been taken offline), and to investigate the people who had been involved in the article’s production. I also began to draft an examination of it through blogging.

## Kufi Seydali

The anonymous Turkish Forum posting revealed that the person who had commented on my paper was Mr. Kufi Seydali, who was (or had been) an Honorary Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), the President of the Friends of the TRNC, a Representative of Turkish Cypriot Associations (Overseas), the President of the European Cyprus-Turkish Associations Congress, the President of the World Turkish-Cypriot Federation and the Vice-President of the World Cyprus-Turkish Associations Congress.

Moreover, Seydali was a Member of the Senior Advisory Board Committee of the Turkish Forum and Chairman of its Advisory Board Committee on Issues of Turkish Cyprus and Western Thrace. When a long-persecuted Turkish historian of the Armenian Genocide, Prof. Taner Akçam, discussed the international Turkish nationalist campaign against his research, he identified three of the elements of the 'Deep State', 'military-bureaucratic complex': the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA); Tall Armenian Tale, which is 'one of the most popular Armenian Genocide denial sites'; and the Turkish Forum (Akçam and Schilling, 2007).

## 'A masterpiece in political propaganda'

The texts of Anonymous's and Atun's attack(s) were so close as to be either simultaneously-authored articles or an English-language original and a Turkish-language translation (cf. Hardy, 2010e; 2010f). The attacks were not only unreal and provocative but self-contradictory – for example, Anonymous (2010) alleged that I had 'creat[ed] a mythical Greek hero called Stephanos Stephanou, who was presented as an under-cover, Greek Cypriot police officer' (Anonymous, 2010), while Seydali claimed that I had shown 'signs of manipulation by Greek Cypriot under-cover agents of the type of [the implicitly real] Stephanou' (Seydali, 2010).

It is unnecessary, and would be even more futile, to refute these allegations again, because they were made with a wilful disregard for witnessed, verifiable, documented truths in the first place. Still, it may be worthwhile to consider a few of the claims and their relationship to the truth, in order to expose the production and intention of the authors' arguments.

All used sarcastic and emotive language, such as Seydali's mocking of my work as a 'political thriller' (9<sup>th</sup> April 2010, paraphrased by Anonymous, 2010), Seydali's description of my work as 'anything but academic [akademik olmaktan başka her şeye benziyordu]' (Seydali, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010, paraphrased by Anonymous, 2010; paraphrased by Atun, 2010a-2010m; 2010o-2010z), and Atun's description of me as someone

who was 'silly, foolish or stupid [sersem]', who 'told lies without blushing [yalanları yüzü kızarmadan da söyleyen]', in an attempt to undermine my carefully sourced investigation.

Seydali judged my work to be 'a masterpiece [of] political propaganda using an international scientific forum to present the TRNC as an illegal and criminal entity [gerçekte uluslararası bilimsel bir forumu kullanarak KKTC'yi yasadışı ve suçlu bir varlık gibi göstermek amacını güden politik propagandanın bir şaheseri]' (9<sup>th</sup> April 2010, paraphrased by Anonymous, 2010; paraphrased by Atun, 2010a-2010m; 2010o-2010z).

In fact, I (2010b) had specifically avoided directly or indirectly commenting upon the legality or status of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) [Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti (KKTC)]. Seydali positioned himself on the defensive; he presented me as the 'attack[er]', who had 'unjust[ly]' maligned TMT, 'whose sole function was to defend the Turkish Cypriot community against Greek-Greek Cypriot attacks' (9<sup>th</sup> April 2010, paraphrased by Anonymous, 2010). Yet, for instance, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1962, TMT assassinated Turkish Cypriot *Cumhuriyet* journalists Ayhan Hikmet and Muzaffer Gürkan, because they had exposed TMT's "false flag" (staged, provocative) bombings of Bayraktar Mosque and Ömeriye Mosque (An, 2005: 6; CyBC, 2006: 39-40); and, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1965, TMT assassinated two trade unionists, Turkish Cypriot Derviş Ali Kavazoğlu and Greek Cypriot Costas Mishaoulis, because they were bicommunalists/pacifists (An, 2005: 6; Papadakis, 2003: 260).

Seydali accused me of 'a veiled attack on the TMT and Turkish Cypriot State[,] which was equated to some mythical and indefinable entity called "The Turkish Deep State", which was made responsible for all ills on Cyprus [Kıbrıs'ta yaşanmış tüm kötülüklerden sorumlu olduğunu iddia ettiği, tanımlanamayan ve hayali bir varlık olan "Derin Devlet"le eşleştirilmeye çalıştığı TMT'ye ve Kıbrıs Türk Devletine üstü kapaklı bir saldırı yapmış bu kişi]' (9<sup>th</sup> April 2010, paraphrased by Anonymous, 2010; paraphrased by Atun, 2010a-2010m; 2010o-2010z). In fact, I (2010b) had explicitly categorised the 'plunderers' as 'Turkish and Turkish Cypriot *nationalist gangs*, which form[ed] a Turkist deep state, which operate[d] *outside and beyond Turkish state control*'. Seydali asked rhetorically: 'How is it possible... that a small community imprisoned into

3% of Cyprus and beleaguered by the Greek army and Greek Cypriot armed elements, and under UN observation, could do such damage to the cultural heritage of Cyprus?' (9<sup>th</sup> April 2010, paraphrased by Anonymous, 2010). 'How is it possible that the Turkish Cypriots, who were confined in 3% of the island, were able to loot all of the island's historic sites [nasıl olur da adanın yüze üçüne sıkıştırılmış Kıbrıslı Türkler adanın tümündeki eski eserleri yağmalayabilir[di]]?' (Seydali, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010, paraphrased by Atun, 2010a-2010m; 2010o-2010z).

I had said that the illicit antiquities trade was 'primarily' structured around poor Turkish Cypriots' subsistence digging and rich Greek Cypriots' collecting (2010b). I had explained precisely how that trade was possible. According to then Greek Cypriot antiquities director Vassos Karageorghis, the Greek Cypriot administration had secretly allowed Greek Cypriot collectors to purchase illicit antiquities from Turkish Cypriot enclaves (1999: 17), and he had used a UNESCO vehicle to do so with government money (2007: 102-103). Since then, I have blogged sample studies of archaeological excavations and antiquities collections from the civil war (2010p; 2011a; 2011b; 2012), which corroborate that interpretation. (Indeed, one peer-reviewer of that data (Hardy, 2014c) considered it to be a 'polemical' indictment of Greek Cypriot archaeologists, rather than the Turkish Cypriot community.) Needless to say, that research blogging has elicited no response.

Intriguingly, Seydali noted that 'Stephanou was visited by UN officers and Doctors [sic]' (9<sup>th</sup> April 2010, paraphrased by Anonymous, 2010). I (2010b) had not mentioned the repeated autopsies under UN supervision and the UN has not acknowledged access to Stephanou before his death, only 'representations' on his (family's) behalf (Christou, 2007) – so, evidently, Seydali had known the Stephanou case very well before I presented it. Ironically, Seydali's intervention at the conference may have been one of the few tangible products of my research blogging.

Atun's (2010a-2010m; 2010o-2010z) article concluded with a rallying call:

Now the time for us to be organised has come. We must tell our own truths to the world, and lay out in front of them Cyprus's realities.

Sam Hardy's e-mail address is "[deleted]" and his thesis supervisor Prof. [deleted]'s e-mail address is "[deleted]". Please deliver your protests to these addresses and state that Sam Hardy's comments with regard to the Turkish Cypriots did not reflect the truths.

[Artık organize olmamızın zamanı gelmiştir. Bizler de dünyaya kendi doğrularımızı anlatabilmeli ve onların önüne Kıbrıs'ın gerçeklerini sermeliyiz.

Sam Hardy'nin e-mail adresi "[silinmiş]" ve tez hocası Prof. [silinmiş]'un e-mail adresi "[silinmiş]" dir. Lütfen bu adreslere protestolarınızı iletin ve Sam Hardy'in Kıbrıslı Türkler ile ilgili söylediklerinin doğruları yansıtmadığını belirtin.]

The only protest that my supervisor and/or I received was his own.

## A futile exercise in archaeological blogging

Initially, I commented under the articles to make specific points and/or to share links to the text of my paper on my blog (e.g. Hardy, 2010c; 2010d), so that readers could judge my work for themselves. I blogged a string of English-language and Turkish-language defences and demands for a retraction and an apology (Hardy, 2010e-2010j; 2010n); but it made no identifiable difference. Only my very first defence is in my doctoral blog's top 100 entry/exit pages. And that's 63<sup>rd</sup>: *TRNC Representative Kufi Seydali: A 'Masterpiece in Political Propaganda'?* *Avrupa Gazete* (2010) removed Atun's article from their website. *Açık Gazete* (2010) refused to expose themselves to accusations of censorship, but offered a right of reply. However, exhausted and fearful

that I would highlight and prolong the attack, I did not submit a reply. None of the other publishers replied to my (2010m) appeal.

While I am not under the level of scrutiny, nor under the intensity of harassment, nor in the kind of physical danger that Prof. Akçam (2007a) is – thugs have ‘tried to break up [his] meeting[s]’ and have ‘physically attacked’ him – I suspect that the *intention* and the *mechanism* of the attacks on me are the same as the intention and the mechanism of the attacks on him. Akçam (2007a) and his employer have been sent ‘harassing e-mails’. He has been accused of being a ‘propagandistic tool of the Armenians’ (ibid.). And he (2007b) has been the subject of libellous newspaper articles: ‘There [wa]s no record of a call, not one single email from [the newspaper]. They never bothered to contact me. They didn’t check their facts or attempt to interview me. And when I demanded a correction, the editor-in-chief ignored my letter.’

At one point, Akçam’s (2007a) Wikipedia page was ‘persistently vandalized’. Then, when he went to Canada to give a lecture on the Armenian Genocide, he was detained by Canadian border police due to the claims in one out-of-date, vandalised edit. Seemingly, one or more members of ‘Tall Armenian Tale and[/or] the... Turkish Forum.... had seized the opportunity to denounce [him]’ and used the published falsehoods to trick or trap the police into detaining him (ibid.), in order to intimidate him and to interfere with his research and teaching.

‘You will never be quite sure that I will not be listening to you’

As Seydali (2010) publicly warned me during the spread of Atun’s newspaper article, ‘you may continue to deliver your polit-thriller but you will never be quite sure that I will not be listening to you’. Supposedly to find out the source of my information concerning the assassination of Kutlu Adalı, even though I had stated my source, and it was the police’s Chief Investigative Officer at the time of the assassination, Tema Irkad (2000), Atun (2010aa) privately notified me that he had it ‘in mind to inform our Criminal Department of the TRNC Police HQ to interrogate you upon your arrival to North Cyprus’.

## If he is listening, he's one of few

This case raises questions about the social significance of unblogged as well as blogged research. Although books are significant media for publication, it is undeniably significant that 48% of peer-reviewed research articles in social sciences, some majority of peer-reviewed research articles in archaeology specifically, and 93% of peer-reviewed research articles in humanities are never cited (Hamilton, 1991; Pendlebury, 1991); and 80% of citations in humanities are concentrated in 7% of the cited articles (Larivière, Gingras and Archambault, 2009). Some argue that any reduction in citation is a sign of efficient sourcing of key information (e.g. Evans, 2008), and that these statistics are evidence of the advance of knowledge (e.g. Garfield, 1998). Nonetheless, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that many scholars are publishing many works 'on the periphery of human interest' (Gordon, 2014). Even the demonstrably inconsequential archaeology blogging under discussion has a readership hundreds of times larger than the readership of the average archaeology article.

Still, the simple act of making archaeology visible through blogging is not enough to describe it as knowledge mobilisation or professional/public engagement. I "mobilised" my work, but it did not go anywhere. I "engaged" colleagues and communities, but I did not establish a connection, let alone a change in thought or action. I fear that nine years' research blogging has had *negligible* social impact.

Nonetheless, it has at least enabled immediate, multilingual communication, which was not possible even for the official release of the pre-submitted abstract of the conference paper (cf. Hardy, 2010o). In addition, it has enabled the presentation of sources for fact-checking with an immediacy that is not possible even through the online editions of most academic journals. The result of the Nazi War Diggers case suggests that, through collective public action, notably through collective public blogging and micro-blogging, archaeologists do (or can) have the power to drive real social change. Perhaps it would be fairer to judge that ten years' *research* has had negligible social impact, and blogging has been unable to change that.



## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Prof. Shawn Graham, who thought of ways for me to measure the comparative influence of the publications, before I realised just how one-directional the flow of information and opinion was.

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# Virtual Curation and Virtual Collaboration

Bernard K. Means

Blogs: [vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com](http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com) <sup>cciii</sup> and [virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com](http://virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com) <sup>cciv</sup>

## Introduction

For the last two-and-half years, much of my time outside of teaching undergraduate students has been consumed with operating the Virtual Curation Laboratory (VCL) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). My time includes blogging on a regular basis about what my students and I are doing in the VCL or our work with our partners in the heritage and preservation communities. At first, I viewed blogging as primarily a tool for documenting our progress as we became entangled with virtual curation—a subject that I had only a passing acquaintance with prior to August 2011. However, our blog (<http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com> <sup>ccv</sup>) quickly became integral to marshalling my thoughts as I worked through the promises and potential of virtual curation. Blogging has also helped me establish a dialogue with like-minded individuals and people with a passing interest in digitally preserving the past.

## Virtual Curation and the Virtual Curation Laboratory

With funding from the Department of Defense's (DoD) Legacy Program, I established the VCL in August 2011 in cooperation with John Haynes, then archaeologist for Marine Corps Base Quantico. As an alumnus of VCU, John felt that undergraduate students at VCU would be ideally suited for carrying out DoD Legacy Project 11-334, entitled "Virtual Artifact Curation: Three-Dimensional Digital Data Collection for Artifact Analysis and Interpretation." I certainly agreed that my anthropology

students were up to the task of testing the NextEngine Desktop 3D scanner for its suitability in virtual curating artifacts recovered from DoD installations (Figure 1).

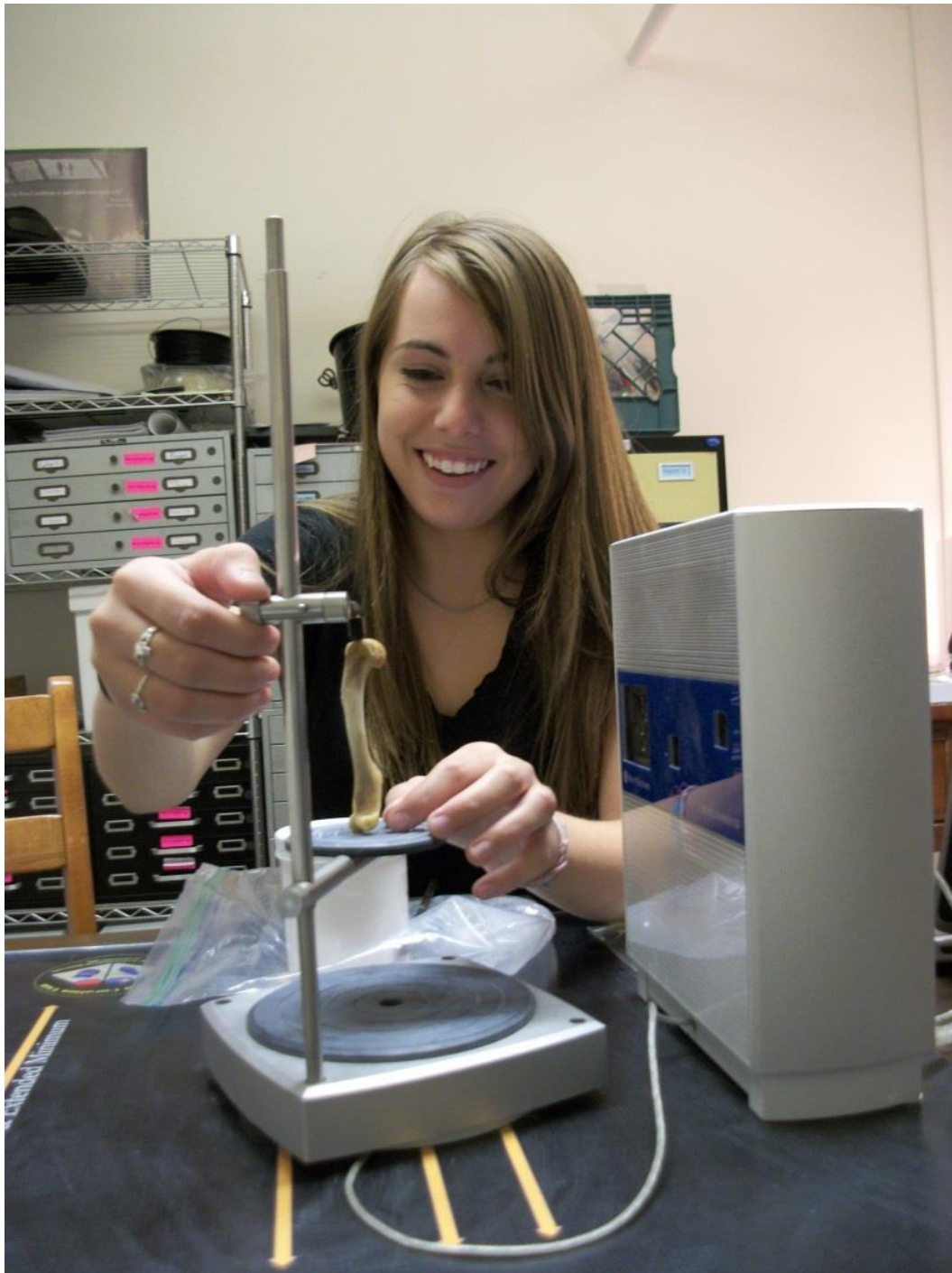


Figure 1: Mariana Zechini prepares a raccoon bone for scanning with the NextEngine Desktop 3D scanner.

Virtual curation - the creation of intangible digital models from tangible artifacts—can extend collections from the material world into virtual realms. This process enhances the preservation of artifacts while significantly increasing how much and in what ways people can access objects from the past. 3D scanning of artifacts can be seamlessly integrated into more traditional efforts for curating archaeological remains (Means [2014a](#); Means et al. [2013a, b](#)).

Creating digital media that can be shared and manipulated in multiple dimensions certainly expands our ability to generate new interpretations and new insights into archaeological remains. With 3D artifact scanning, we can display many details of an object from multiple viewpoints—without touching or even directly seeing the object itself. We have created digital models of artifacts that can be shared with researchers across the globe, and used in a variety of educational and public archaeology settings.

## Virtual Curation and Education

What I did not anticipate when I established the VCL is how central it would become to fostering professional training and research opportunities for my undergraduate students, as well as increasingly expanding public outreach activities. For over two-and-a-half years, undergraduate student researchers associated with the Virtual Curation Laboratory have focused on creating virtual avatars of unique artifacts, including small finds from cultural heritage sites located throughout Pennsylvania and Virginia (Figure 2). What has made all of this research and outreach possible is the considerable and generous access provided for my VCU students and myself by museums, archaeological repositories, cultural heritage locations, and private individuals across Virginia and throughout the Middle Atlantic region (Figures 3 and 4). In 2013 alone, we did research, demonstrations, or public outreach at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Clover Hill High School, James Madison's Montpelier, the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference, George Washington's Ferry Farm, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Virginia Museum of Natural History, Fairfax County Park Authority Preservation Branch, Carter Robinson Mound site, Archaeology in the

Community's Day of Archaeology in Washington, D.C., The State Museum of Pennsylvania, Jamestown Rediscovery, Alexandria Archaeology Museum, and the Archeological Society of Virginia annual meeting—some more than once. Because some of these repositories curate artifacts from throughout the world, our creation of virtual models is not limited to North America.



Figure 2: Animated smoking pipe recovered from the Consol site, a Monongahela village located in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.-  
*Depending on the format you are reading this is in e.g. PDF, EPUB, etc. it may not be animated.*



Figure 3: VCU alumnus Crystal Castleberry scans an artifact at George Washington's Ferry Farm.



Figure 4: VCU student Ashely McCuistion scans an artifact at Mount Vernon as Mount Vernon archaeologist Eleanor Breen looks at the scanning effort.

My students are energized by their engagement with others working to preserve and make the past come alive. This is in part because virtual curation opens up the back rooms and deep storage of collections repositories, as we travel around the region. We either scan on location with a portable set up, or borrow collections to 3D scan back in the VCL. Even those students who have not had the opportunity to physically go and be exposed to any of the cultural heritage locations, or who never even saw collections as they were being scanned in the lab can still engage with the digital models that have been generated during this process. If I cannot bring students to the collections, I can bring the collections to the students—even if only in a virtual form. The VCL is staffed by a highly motivated and dedicated team of undergraduate students pursuing majors in anthropology, and they all have their own research interests. I am certainly more than happy to accommodate their interests as it meets our broadest goal—preserving and making the past more accessible. I am especially pleased with the number of students who have presented their research at local and international conferences (Figure 5). This research has been or soon will be published in the pages of the *Journal of Middle Atlantic Archaeology* (McCuistion 2013), *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia* (Ellrich 2014; Huber 2014a; Hulvey 2014a; McCuistion 2014; Volkens 2014; Zechini 2014a), and *Pennsylvania Archaeologist* (Bowles 2014; Huber 2014b; Hulvey 2014b; Zechini 2014b).



Figure 5: At the October 2013 Archeological Society of Virginia annual meeting. Left to right are VCU students Aaron Ellrich, Mariana Zechini, Allen Huber, Rachael Hulvey, Ashley McCuiston, Lauren Volkers, and VCL director Dr. Bernard K. Means.



Figure 6: Lowell Nugent examines a panel depicting animal bone from archaeological sites. Courtesy of Mary Nugent.

Some digital models have been used to create tangible replicas, in plastic, of small finds artifacts—these accurately scaled objects can be handled in ways not possible for the actual artifacts. The VCL employs MakerBot Replicators to generate our plastic replicas of artifacts and ecofacts scanned from archaeological sites, which we refer to as artificions and ecofictions, respectively. These plastic replicas are integral to public outreach efforts, educational endeavors on the K-12 and undergraduate levels, and as part of tactile components of temporary and transitory exhibits (Figure 6). We have found that digital models of artifacts are very effective for educational endeavors on the high school and undergraduate levels, and in public outreach efforts, especially if they have been translated into tangible forms with our MakerBot Replicator, which can create plastic replicas of our virtual models. Archaeology in the Community recently produced an Instagram series “The Dig” that featured objects scanned and printed in the VCL, and, that were uploaded throughout the month of January 2014 (Figure 7; <http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com/2014/01/20/artifacts-and-artificions-presenting-the-past-with-archaeology-in-the-community/> [ccvi](#)).

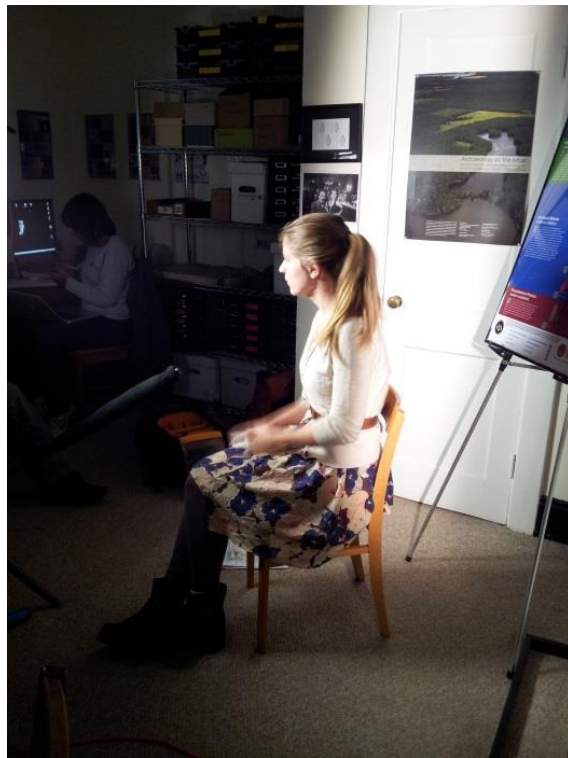


Figure 7: Archaeology in the Community films VCU student Olivia McCarty at the Virtual Curation Laboratory.



## Blogging and Virtual Collaboration

Shortly after we began blogging at <http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com> <sup>ccvii</sup>, researchers began to contact us about our 3D scanning efforts. Our first contact from someone who read our blog was Dr. Michael Shott of the University of Akron, who also 3D scans artifacts. He focuses his efforts on 3D scanning of chipped stone tools to capitalize on the researcher's ability to measure digital models in ways not possible with analog measuring tools (Shott and Trail 2011, 2012). Most of our contacts via our "official" blog site have related to people who either have a parallel effort in 3D scanning, or are seeking advice on setting up a virtual curation laboratory along the lines that we operate with here at the VCL. Most recently, we had a visit from Jeremy Barker, an Engineering Technology Specialist at Mercer University in Savannah, Georgia (Figure 8). Jeremy had been following our blog as he set up his own 3D scanning project, using a NextEngine Desktop 3D scanner that had been purchased in the past but was underutilized and basically neglected. Jeremy has a background in history and uses the 3D scanning technology to get engineering students interested in heritage. This was of interest to us in the VCL, as we are using 3D scanning of heritage items partly to get students in history. While our virtual collaboration here became actual, we can maintain our collaboration via the sharing of culture heritage items in a digital format—expanding radically the opportunities for research that we can make available to our students.

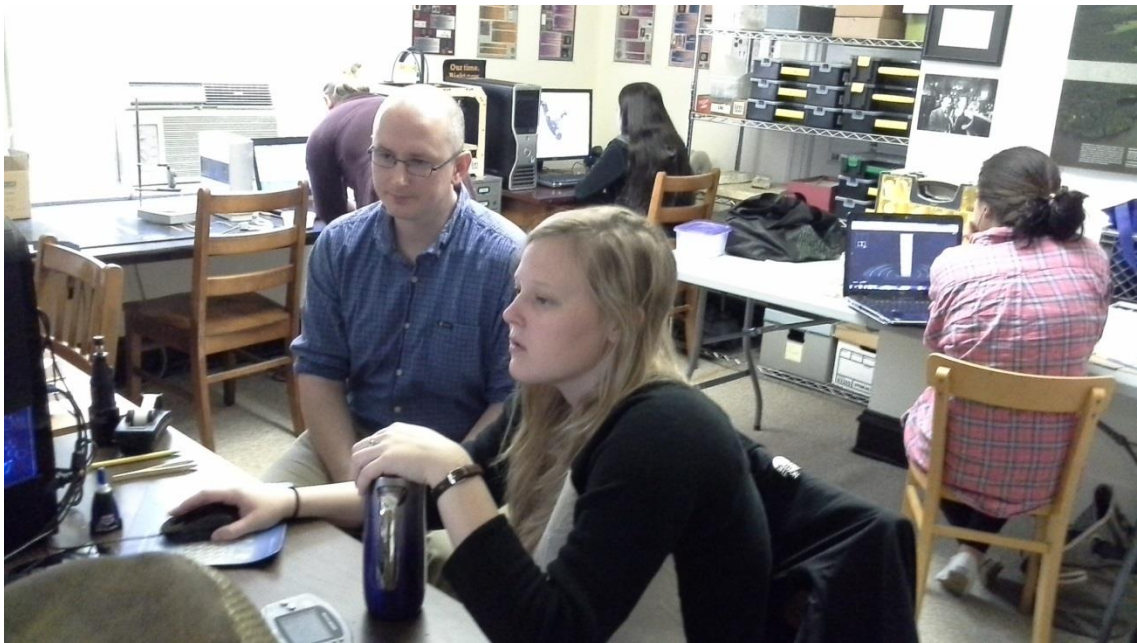


Figure 8: Jeremy Barker, an Engineering Technology Specialist at Mercer University in Savannah, Georgia, visits the Virtual Curation Laboratory and watches VCU alumna Lauren Volkens edit a file.

Our most fruitful virtual collaboration has been with Dr. Zac Selden of the Center for Regional Heritage Research (CRHR) at Stephen F. Austin State University in Austin, Texas. CRHR and VCL have partnered to make more widely available data on Caddo vessels curated at CRHR Research Fellow Dr. Tom Middlebrook's repository in Nacogdoches, Texas. VCL created 3D animations and some printed replicas of the Caddo vessels using digital models created by Selden (<http://crhrarchaeology.wordpress.com/2014/02/05/virtual-collaboration-crhr-vcl-and-the-middlebrook-collection-selden-and-means/> <sup>ccviii</sup>). This virtual collaboration has been mutually beneficial, from a research perspective, and has expanded our horizons on how virtual sharing of complex 3D digital models differs from more traditional sharing of static images and other two-dimensional data.

Last year, I had a short piece published in a special issue of the online *Museum Practice* devoted to 3D technology (<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/3d-technology/15082013-virginia-commonwealth-university> <sup>ccix</sup>). In this piece,

I detailed particularly how reactions to digital models of artifacts or printed replicas differ depending on the needs and expectations of our audiences, as well as the needs and expectations of those who are presenting virtual or tangible versions of the past. Ultimately, we are talking about opening the past to a broader audience, particularly those who might not readily have access for one reason or another. Robert Jaquiss, who has been blind since birth, contacted me after following our blog and shared his perspective on the importance of virtual curation for the blind

(<http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com/2013/08/16/access-to-the-ages-the-importance-of-virtual-curation-for-the-blind/> <sup>ccx</sup>):

“It has been my experience that many people who are blind avoid museums. Glass cases, barriers and a lack of signage make visiting museums a boring experience. Persons who are blind cannot easily get to sites that are not accessible by public transit. They must instead rely on family, friends or possibly a tour operator in order to visit a site. The practice of Virtual Curation makes it possible to share 3D images of artifacts. An artifact may be viewed by anyone with the appropriate computer hardware and software. From the point of view of this author, Virtual Curation has a major benefit. 3D images can be printed with a 3D printer producing a touchable 3D model. Such models can be touched by the blind allowing those who are blind to more fully appreciate the subject matter.”

We have been able to share with Mr. Jaquiss some of the digital models that we scanned from artifacts recovered from a diverse range of locations, including George Washington's Ferry Farm and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens. As Mr. Jaquiss lives on the west coast, providing him with the ability to create 3D printed versions of historic artifacts—what he refers to as tactile graphics—is an effective way to make a virtual heritage tangible again, albeit at a location far removed from an artifact's original place of discovery and display.

## Virtual Curation Museum

While I am certainly pleased with the virtual collaboration inspired by our original blog site at [vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com](http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com), that blog has been less conducive to inspiring research and co-creation by outside individuals than I had hoped. In October 2013, roughly two years after the VCL was established, we “opened” the Virtual Curation Museum (<http://virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com> <sup>ccxi</sup>) as an extension of the VCL University to highlight research by myself, by undergraduate students working, interning, or volunteering in the laboratory, and by our partners in the heritage and preservation communities (Figure 9). The basic goal of the Virtual Curation Museum is to make available a selection of the 3D digital models that we have scanned from archaeological sites across the world and place them in an online format that parallels the standard conception of a museum. Unlike a brick-and-mortar museum, we have more flexibility in changing our “virtual space” and the Virtual Curation Museum is intended to be quite dynamic as we add new exhibits and new exhibit halls. Erecting a museum without walls has not been without its challenges.



Figure 9: Preparing a replica ground hog skull from George Washington’s Ferry Farm for exhibition.

The Virtual Curation Museum was officially “opened” on October 21, 2013 to coincide with a physical exhibit opening at VCU’s James Branch Cabell Library in Richmond, Virginia (<http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com/2013/10/23/virtual-curation-exhibit-and-museum-opens/> <sup>ccxii</sup>). The exhibit opening was co-sponsored by the VCU Libraries, the VCU School of World Studies, the Virtual Curation Laboratory, and the VCU student-run Virtual Archaeology Scanning Team. The exhibit was billed as a celebration of undergraduate research into 3D scanning and archaeology, part of my initiative to use the VCL to foster and promote research and presentation skills by my students. Entitled “Digital Archaeology in the Virtual Curation Laboratory: 3D Scanning and Research at VCU,” the exhibit featured plastic replicas of artifacts scanned by Virtual Curation Laboratory team members. One large glass case highlighted research that was presented at the October 2013 meeting of the Archeological Society of Virginia: Ashley McCuiston (2014) on measuring lithic artifacts, represented by a replica of an Acheulean handaxe; Lauren Volkers (2014) on different ways of replicating artifacts, represented by a replica of a sandstone carving; Allen Huber (2014a), on creating a digital osteological collection, represented by various printed human cranial elements; Rachael Hulvey (2014a), on the historic component at James Madison’s Montpelier, represented by various artifacts including a musket rest; and, Aaron Ellrich (2014), on the prehistoric component at James Madison’s Montpelier, represented by projectile points from varying periods.

The exhibit also included four panels that are portable and could be moved throughout the library or other campus (and non-campus locations). The four panels consisted of 2-foot by 3-foot display boards with the usual text and illustrations, but with two unusual additions: plastic replicas of artifacts adhered to the panels that enable viewers to touch the past; and, QR (Quick Response) codes next to the text or artifacts, that take the viewer equipped with a smart phone or tablet to an online museum component (Figure 10). A free, online QR code generator was used to create the QR codes that were located on each of the portable exhibit panels. The use of QR codes was a low-cost way to incorporate digital animations into the exhibit without using expensive touch screens for each panel—something beyond our budget in the VCL. A user

equipped with their smart phone or tablet computer becomes an extension of the exhibit. We did not see this as a major limiting factor for access to the digital animations, given the ubiquity of smart phones gripped tightly in the hands of every student walking zombie-like across campus. Viewers would be required to download a QR code reader, if they did not have one.



Figure 10: Ashley McCuiston, Lauren Volkers, and Mariana Zechini stand next to one of the poster exhibits in the James Branch Cabell Library.

The online Virtual Curation Museum has additional text related to the exhibited plastic items, as well as animations of the objects themselves. The extension of the physical exhibit onto the internet via the Virtual Curation Museum was intended to allow visitors who could not physically come to VCU's Cabell Library to still have the ability to enjoy and learn about the past. The Virtual Curation Museum and the exhibit panels were both designed using free, or freely available, software. WordPress

was chosen for the web component because it has free options and because two years of blogging for the VCL made me familiar with its quirks and limitations. The four portable exhibit panels include:

## George is Waiting: Archaeology at George Washington's Ferry Farm

(<http://virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com/george-is-waiting-archaeology-at-george-washingtons-ferry-farm/> [ccxiii](#)): Archaeologists working at Ferry Farm in Fredericksburg, Virginia, are actively excavating the site where George Washington spent his childhood, beginning at age six. Since 2012, VCU students have joined with George Washington Foundation archaeologists to uncover traces of young George, his mother Mary, and the rest of their family, as well as that of the Washington family's enslaved servants. Archaeologists here have also found evidence of the American Indians who lived on this landscape beginning 10,000 years ago, Union encampments associated with the American Civil War, and even the families who lived here above the banks of the Rappahannock River into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Virtual Curation Laboratory at VCU has created 3D digital models and printed resin replicas of artifacts from all major time periods revealed through archaeology at George Washington's Ferry Farm.

## Making No Bones About It: Why Zooarchaeologists Study Animal Bones Found at Archaeological Sites

(<http://virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com/making-no-bones-about-it-making-no-bones-about-it-why-zooarchaeologists-study-animal-bones-found-at-archaeological-sites/> [ccxiv](#)): VCL began systematically creating 3D digital models of faunal remains in Fall 2012 using elements of a raccoon skeleton loaned by the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) and California University of Pennsylvania. Particularly through a partnership with VMNH, undergraduate researchers have been working under the direction of Digital Zooarchaeologist Mariana Zechini to create a virtual faunal type collection. The digital comparative collection that we are developing in the VCL will allow archaeologists,

educators, and students the ability to study, manipulate and share virtual models of animal remains anywhere in the world. The creation of an accessible digital comparative collection of animal bones is part of recently funded Department of Defense (DoD) Legacy Program project entitled: "Virtual Mobility Archaeology Project with Further Applications of Three Dimensional Digital Scanning of Archaeological Objects" that is being developed jointly with the Fort Lee Regional Archaeological Curation Facility.

## Telling Time with Stone: How Archaeologists Use Chipped Stone Tools to Find the Age of Archaeological Sites

(<http://virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com/telling-time-with-stone-how-archaeologists-use-chipped-stone-tools-to-find-the-age-of-archaeological-sites/> [ccxy](#)): In the absence of material suitable for radiocarbon analysis or other dating technique, archaeologists rely on temporally diagnostic chipped stone tools to date archaeological sites. Thus, diagnostic chipped stone tools were the focus of this panel. As we are doing for animal bones, we are also creating a digital comparative collection of diagnostic chipped stone tools as part of our active DoD Legacy Program project.

## Digging Up the Noxious Weed: the Archaeology of Tobacco Smoking Pipes

(<http://virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com/digging-up-the-noxious-weed-the-archaeology-of-tobacco-smoking-pipes/> [ccxvi](#)). Tobacco cultivation dominated the economies of Virginia, Maryland, and other states almost from their initial establishment as colonies of England and continuing well into the twentieth century. The vast acres of land needed to grow tobacco and meet an insatiable appetite on a global scale led to the establishment of plantations worked by enslaved laborers first brought over from Africa. Sometimes it is difficult to envision that the very custom of smoking tobacco dates, for much of the world, only from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Well before their sustained contact



with people of European and African descent beginning in A.D. 1492, however, American Indians had cultivated tobacco. VCL has created 3D digital models and plastic replicas of smoking pipes associated with the largely prehistoric Monongahela Tradition of southwestern Pennsylvania, the Susquehannock Indians of eastern Pennsylvania, and enslaved Americans located on Virginia plantations—as well as smoking pipes made commercially in the U.S. and Europe.

The physical exhibit was open until early December 2013, but the Virtual Curation Museum was designed to be open indefinitely. The Virtual Curation Museum remains very much something under construction and is ever expanding to include more content and digital animations. One issue we had was related to internet access in the library. The QR codes were not always readable due to connection issues. The placement of QR codes next to each animated object made each poster panel look busy. One solution would be to just have one QR code for each panel—something I considered—but this would lower the viewer's immediacy of getting more information about an object and seeing its animation. We also had no way to track how many people viewed our exhibit components. The panels were placed in high traffic areas, but, on the other hand, they were placed in high traffic areas. My own observations of students was that they rarely paused to look at panels on the main floor, as their primary goal was to find a vacant computer, or stand in line at the library's coffee establishment. Even if we did not establish the Virtual Curation Museum in conjunction with a physical exhibit, we still would have found working within the confines of a pre-existing WordPress template challenging.

## Does the Virtual Curation Museum meet the basic goals of a museum?

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, George Brown Goode, director of the US National Museum, outlined three valuable functions that museums could serve: as repositories for reference material; as places of public education; and, as preservers of collective memory (MacArthur 2011:56-57). At this stage, the Virtual Curation Museum blog and the original VCL blog, I think, meet all of these functions at a minimalist level. Fully

addressing these functions will take a more concerted effort, and, dialogue with others working with digital materials. I will also be working with teachers and my own students interested in K-12 and undergraduate education with developing lessons using our virtual museum, and I think that the dynamic nature of these efforts will help further refine the ability of the museum to become a true reference tool. Whether we can do this for free, and through WordPress or other similar online avenues remains to be seen.

The museum site is currently being used to highlight objects in our virtual collection, usually timed to accompany major research projects, trips to heritage locations to scan new materials, public outreach efforts, or even important dates in history. This is done primarily by posting an animated object of the day (Figure 11). I like the idea of regularly posting animated objects, but I recommend not using a daily frequency. While we have plenty of animated archaeological objects, and are adding more each week, a daily posting—however brief—takes time. Next calendar year (2015) we will switch to an animated object of the week, with special posts as warranted.



Figure 11: Animation of a mummified juvenile opossum. *Depending on the format you are reading this is in e.g. PDF, EPUB, etc. it may not be animated.*

## The Future of Virtual Curation and Virtual Collaboration

The future of the Virtual Curation Laboratory will involve various kinds of actual and virtual collaborations, more diverse educational and public outreach efforts, and an expansion of our virtual curation efforts beyond traditional archaeological objects—and this future will be documented and dissected via our main blog site at [vcuarchaeology3D.wordpress.com](http://vcuarchaeology3D.wordpress.com). We will also continue to ensure that the virtual collaboration efforts will have a home on our sister blog site at [virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com](http://virtualcurationmuseum.wordpress.com), where we plan to increase that site's interactivity and research content.

The remainder of 2014 will see some major student-driven initiatives. One of my undergraduate anthropology students, who is a veteran of the armed forces, is developing plans to involve fellow returned veterans at VCU in a Veterans Curation Project type program using the resources of the Virtual Curation Laboratory. An art student is working with our digital artifact and ecofact models—and their printed replicas—to reimagine them using traditional art media, including painting and illustration.

As a major project, I will be working with interns in the Virtual Curation Laboratory and students in a new Virtual Museum Anthropology course to create a new archaeology exhibit to open in late 2015 at the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) (Figure 12). We are also working with the VMNH's paleontologist to 3D scan Miocene fossil whale bones for use in a future exhibit—a non-archaeological application, to be sure, but one that fits in broadly with virtual curation of the past. We will go even deeper into the past and create virtual models of dinosaur remains.



Figure 12: Mariana Zechini and Ashley McCuiston scan an artifact at the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

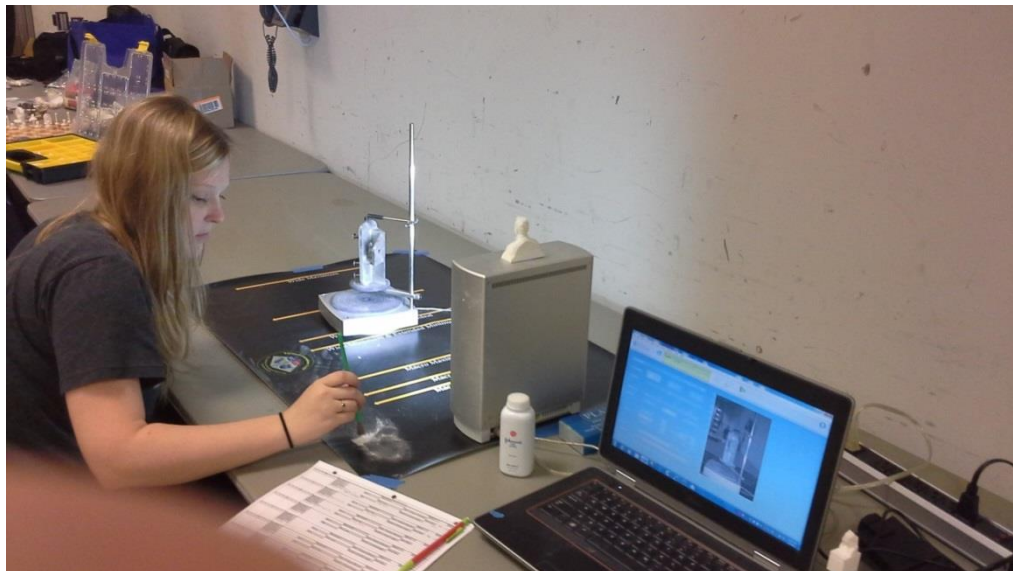


Figure 13: Lauren Volkers scans a bracket from the Space Shuttle Discovery.

Exactly what the future holds for the Virtual Curation Laboratory depends on our virtual and actual interaction with other scholars and members of the public at large. We recently had the opportunity to scan brackets from the Space Shuttle *Discovery* (<http://vcuarchaeology3d.wordpress.com/2014/04/08/in-space-no-one-can-hear-you-scan/> <sup>ccxvii</sup>) at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum (Figure 13). The brackets will be used to produce replicas that can be used on the Space Shuttle *Endeavour*, which is to be displayed at the California Science Center in Los Angeles (Figure 14). This 3D scanning effort helped solve an issue of how to obtain unique parts for the Endeavor when they are no longer being manufactured. There are apparently no limits to where we can go with virtual curation—and we will share our travels through digital realms via our social media endeavors.



Figure 14: Animation of a bracket from the Space Shuttle Discovery. Depending on the format you are reading this is in e.g. PDF, EPUB, etc. it may not be animated.

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# #freearchaeology: blog post turned international debate

Emily Johnson

Blog: <http://ejarchaeology.wordpress.com/> [ccxix](#)

Much like a blog post, this short chapter will take the form of a personal narrative. Through this narrative I will explore certain aspects of blogging that I believe bring something to academia (with regards to archaeology in particular) that no other form of dissemination can. After introducing my place in the archaeological blogosphere and the realisation of the #freearchaeology hashtag, I will deal with the lessons that I have learned from about a year and a half of blogging archaeology. I will argue that the democratic nature of blogging indiscriminately gives a hugely diverse group of people a voice. It allows topics too controversial or 'unacademic' (whatever that may be) to be approached in an environment primed and ready for equal discussion. Most of all, it provides a platform for open conversation and debate.

## #freearchaeology: blogging and twitter

The blog post on which this chapter will focus (Johnson 2013) was initially conceived of in a Tweet (see fig. 1). My Twitter account pre-dates my Blog by several years. If you delve back to the very first tweets (although I wouldn't recommend it) on that account you will find youthful obscenities, numerous swears and ridiculous observations on undergraduate life. Only when I started my Master's programme in Digital Heritage at the University of York did I decide that it might be useful to have a Twitter account for networking in the arguably very small online archaeology community.

I quickly found myself engaging with a wide range of people in the online world of archaeology, anthropology, heritage, museums and the wider cultural sector. I encountered fellow students, academics,

professionals, 'normal' people with 'normal' jobs, and even - thanks to some earlier posts about prehistory in fiction (Johnson 2012) - authors! The first thing that struck me about the people I was encountering in the Twitterverse and the blogosphere was how friendly they all were. The second was how open to discussion and full of fascinating, important opinions people were. I instantly knew I'd fit in well.

Really it was only a matter of time before I ruffled feathers. I casually tweeted one day, contemplating discussing the problem of volunteer culture in British archaeology (fig 1.). The idea was met with such enthusiasm I wrote a blog post and published it on my blog (Johnson 2013). The post, which can still be found there, confronted issues that I myself was just coming to terms with. I wrote about how, in my search for a job related to my educational background, I was discovering that the volunteer culture in the British heritage sector was a great hindrance to those in a similar position to me. I suggested that there was a huge social bias in the cultural sector. The only people getting the highly sought-after jobs in museums and heritage/archaeology organisations were those who could afford to spend huge amounts of time working for free and gaining the vast amounts of experience that are expected of most successful applicants in the cultural sector. I asked the question:

'Could it be argued, then, that heritage practice is becoming de-specialised because there are those without qualifications who are willing to work for free?'

These were quite controversial things to say, particularly considering that without volunteers the noble cause that is archaeological pursuit would fall flat on its face, flounder in the mud, and then have to creep back to the university departments that it once emerged from. I like to think that I emphasised my appreciation for all volunteers worldwide sufficiently, and I am sure that most volunteers would sympathise and understand entirely rather than being utterly affronted by the notion. My point is that despite all the good work that is done by volunteers, the issue here is evidently a very real one. I know this because of the huge response the post received in the form of comments on the original post, responses on other blogs, and discussions on the Twitter hashtag, #freearchaeology.

I treated the post itself as a forum for discussion, promising to edit in links to any blogs posted in response and to moderate the comments on the post itself. I soon found that the task was rather a large one and felt that the response was so widespread and well-circulated on Twitter that there was no need to catalogue all of the responses on my main blog. I chose to allow the discussion to develop organically. Now, I wish I'd been less lazy about the whole thing and kept track of the posts properly. I'm sure there were tens of responses elsewhere on the web that people didn't get to see because mine was the first thing they saw and then the trail went cold.

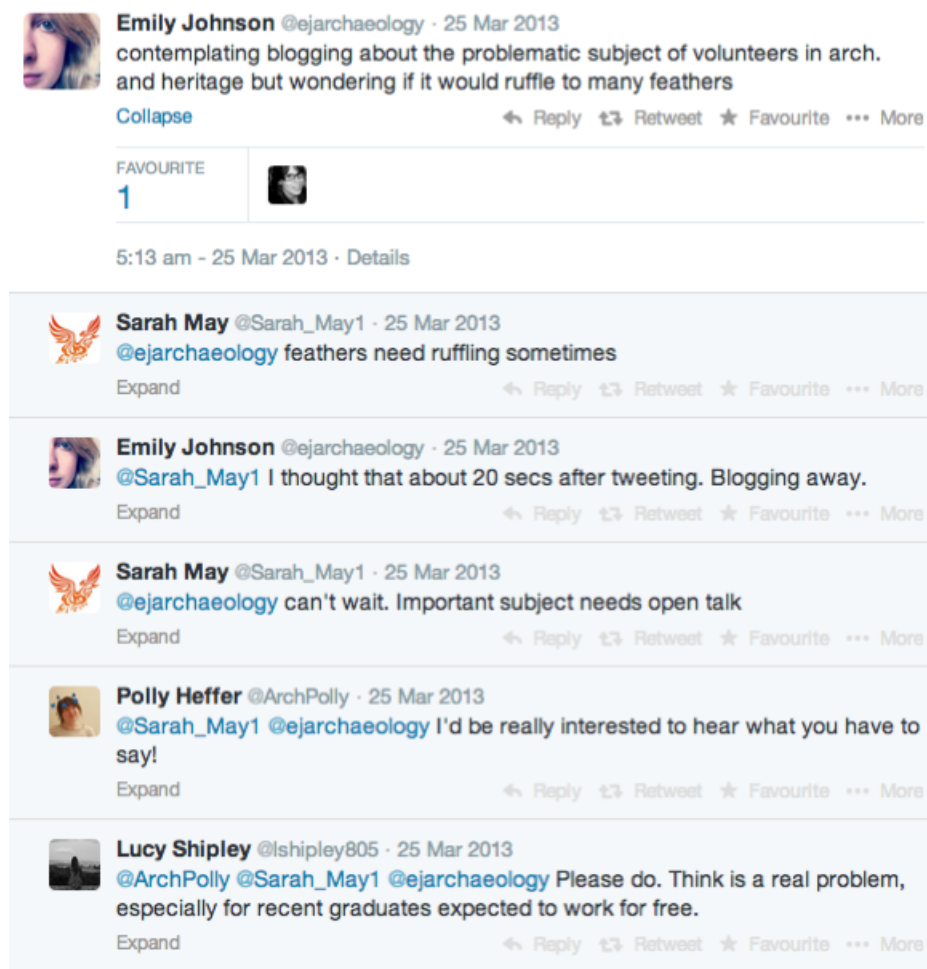


Figure 1. A screenshot of the tweet that initiated the #freearchaeology debate.

## The #freearchaeology Twitterstorm... and its aftermath

Whilst the main bulk of discussion on the topic of #freearchaeology is now viewable in the form of its contributors' blog posts, the original and most exciting, immediate discussions were held on Twitter. I am unsure if what happened with the #freearchaeology hashtag in March 2013 can be described as a Twitterstorm in its truest sense (Greenlade 2011 defines a Twitter storm as a story that is initiated on Twitter but then gains attention from a wide audience in traditional press), but it was certainly a global discussion which gained a wide audience in the realm of online archaeology.

Here is not the place to gather and review every blog post or article ever written on the subject of #freearchaeology, there's the internet for that, but there is one person who absolutely *must* get a mention. Archaeologist and blogger Sam Hardy took the subject under his wing, creating a whole new blog page for his musings on the matter: *(un)free archaeology*, subtitled *unpaid labour, precarious lives in the cultural heritage industry*. Sam has done a truly excellent job analysing and discussing a range of aspects to the issue and has now become *the* source for #freearchaeology. This wonderful resource and forum for discussion would not be in existence now if it weren't for the fact that blogging – a form of open access, immediate publication – is a popular pursuit amongst academics and professionals in archaeology and heritage.

### Lessons learned: the failures and successes of #freearchaeology as an example of blogging in academia

In the interest of ending on a positive note, I will deal with the shortcomings of #freearchaeology before I sing its praises. I believe that the one failure of blogging archaeology as a forum for genuine intellectual - even political - discussion in academia is that it is a difficult thing to police. Obviously, nothing is peer reviewed (although I think peer reviewing is quietly becoming less important, particularly in non-traditional forms of study) and opinions can be more forcefully aired than with traditional forms of publication. However that isn't where I

believe the problem lies, especially in the case of the #freearchaeology discussions. Whilst the aforementioned Sam Hardy of *(un)free archaeology* has done a truly excellent job of creating and maintaining his blog as a resource for all things #freearchaeology, there was so much more potential for more *organised* discussion. I know that at one point there was talk of a conference and subsequent publication, but the idea never came into fruition. I think the reason that something of this sort never happened wasn't a lack of dedication or passion, but more the lack of an organisational body urging the contributors to collaborate and organise themselves. Had the discussion originated in a non-digital setting - at University or at a conference for example - there may well have been more action taken to move the discussions forward.

More positively, there are huge successes as far as this particular case of blogging archaeology is concerned. The giant surge in conversation on a topic of obvious and pressing importance must be seen as entirely positive. This is even more significant considering the arguably taboo nature of the discussions. When I brought up the topic there was a very real danger that I could have sounded like some petulant graduate, whining, 'all these volunteers, coming in here, taking all our jobs!' Which, of course, is not at all what I was saying. It has taken so long for the problem of unpaid internships, and free labour in general, to be confronted in the world of heritage because of the generally un-profitable nature of the sector. Of course, commercial archaeology is done for profit, but there is still the general consensus that we are doing the archaeology for a noble cause - the preservation and understanding of our collective past. Surely to do such a thing is a privilege and no one has the right to complain that they aren't paid enough to do a thing that some people are willing to do for free, or even pay to do. The well considered observations on the #freearchaeology conundrum, made by people in the know and backed up by real and genuine statistics (Rocks-Macqueen 2013), made the problem seem all the more real.

I very strongly believe that without an open, democratic and free form of publication, like blogging, conversations similar in nature to the #freearchaeology discussion wouldn't find a place in academic discourse, or it would but it would be far too late in the day.

## Conclusion and recommendations: what blogging in archaeology has now and needs in the future

This short essay has very briefly summarised and considered the way that international discussions similar to the #freearchaeology debate are influenced by blogging in archaeology. It is by no means an in depth analysis. Indeed, there is certainly room for one elsewhere. It is a reflection on one of my own most powerful experiences of blogging in archaeology. I have introduced the way in which a difficult topic in the heritage sector was made possible by blogging. It is this potential for enabling discussion and conversation, particularly where challenging or taboo subjects are concerned that I believe is one of the best things that blogging has to offer. I have also mentioned my positive experiences with the nature of networking – both social and professional - in the blogosphere.

What I feel blogging really needs now is recognition as a respectable and valid form of publication for scholars and professionals. The fact that blogging is both Open Access and democratic in its nature has huge importance for the dissemination of knowledge in a newly global society. My hope is that the new generation of researchers in archaeology will publish and/or promote their findings in the blogosphere, making this form of sociable knowledge-making commonplace in future. The past is something that we are all connected to. It belongs to each and every one of us. Therefore it is not only something that everyone has a right to know about; it is also something that everyone has a right to an opinion on, and blogging is *the* place for those opinions and conversations to live and breathe.

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# Blog Bodies: Mortuary Archaeology and Blogging

Katy Meyers

Blog: <http://bonesdontlie.wordpress.com/> [ccxxvi](#)

Howard Williams

Blog: <http://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/> [ccxxvii](#)

## Introduction: Mortuary Archaeology Today

Mortuary archaeology - the study of past beliefs and practices surrounding dying, death and the dead using archaeological theories, methods and techniques - is a rich, diverse and growing field of research that incorporates, and extends beyond, bioarchaeology (oste archaeology) in its scope (Parker Pearson 1999; Tarlow and Nilsson Stutz 2013a). This particular subfield has many dimensions, a global reach and the scope to study human engagements with mortality from earliest times to the present day. Mortuary archaeology is inseparable from other kinds of archaeology - it inevitably overlaps with material culture analyses, settlement studies and landscape archaeology. It incorporates many specialists scientific techniques used to analyse artefacts, bones and other materials retrieved from mortuary contexts.

The archaeology of death also extends far beyond the study of mummified human cadavers and articulated and disarticulated skeletal remains (burnt or unburnt). It also involves: considering artefacts and ecofacts from mortuary contexts; the structure and arrangement of graves; burial chambers and tombs; a wide range of art, architectures, monuments and memorials to the dead. Mortuary archaeology incorporates both cemeteries and other spaces designed to commemorate the dead, the spatial relationships between mortuary locales and the evolving landscape in which they are situated. The archaeology of death and burial can be site-specific, or it can look within particular localities or regions. Likewise, it can look at single periods



or they can chart the development and shifts in mortuary practice over many centuries and millennia.

Taking these various points into account, it is evident that today's mortuary archaeology not only has multiple dimensions and scales of analysis, but also many tendrils into, and explicit dialogues with, other disciplines. For instance, the archaeological and bioarchaeological investigation of death, burial and commemoration can involve close dialogue with cultural anthropologists as well as with social historians of death. Equally, mortuary archaeology shares and exchanges ideas and perspectives with: sociologists and theologians of death, dying and bereavement; studies of the representation and material culture of death; and memory by art-historians and architectural historians. Bearing these points in mind, for both prehistoric and historic eras, mortuary archaeology reveals increasingly new and fascinating insights into human engagements with mortality across time and space.

## Public Mortuary Archaeology

A key part of mortuary archaeology is public engagement. The discovery of human bodies, fragmented or articulated, both fascinates and disturbs, and simultaneously intrigues and repels. Tombs, graves, mummies and bog bodies are widespread icons of archaeology. For instance, mortuary archaeology embodies the romance of discovery and the mythologies surrounding archaeologists' fictional meddling with supernatural powers, embodied in the stories and reception of the excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb. To this day, excavations of graves, cemeteries and human remains are among the most widely popularised archaeological research.

This fascination with human remains in Western modernity might be dismissed as ghoulish and unnatural, but it can be situated in relationship to global media trends and shifts in a variety of senses (Asma 2012). Deaths of individuals and of entire populations is now seen and witnessed in the media more than ever before. Conversely, Western society is obsessed with the mental and physical health of the self and with the maintenance of corporeal beauty; so death disturbs and

challenges the body-project and the vision of the healthy society (e.g. Jupp and Walter 1999). Moreover, the focus on the body's mortality chimes with Western modernity's consideration of the self as bound to individual corporeality (Crossland 2009).

Set against this background, it is unsurprising that, from the study of Neanderthal graves to the forensic application of archaeological techniques in the study of recent mass-graves resulting from wartime atrocities, mortuary archaeology is high-profile and popular. Also for this reason, the archaeology of death is the focus of considerable political debate and the ethical dimensions of digging up and displaying the dead have been called into question and are subject to massive sea-changes in archaeological thinking and practice (e.g. Jenkins 2010; Sayer 2010; papers in Tarlow and Nilsson Stutz 2013a). In particular, the climate and conditions within which mortuary archaeology operates has seen recent and rapid shifts with the colonial tradition of digging and curation of artefacts and human remains extracted from mortuary sites across the world called into question and subject to calls for repatriation and reburial. This change has had a massive impact on mortuary archaeology across the Western world. For example, following protests and pressure from Native American communities and a reevaluation of the role of museums themselves, the introduction of NAGPRA (*Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*) in 1990 in the USA witnessed a radical shift in relationships between native tribes, the US government and the work of museums and other archaeological institutions and groups. Human remains are now rarely on display and increasingly rarely curated within anthropological collections (Giesen 2013). In the UK, there has been a more subtle trend over the last two decades towards the repatriation of human remains obtained from overseas, together with the increasing reburial of human remains excavated from British soil following a reinterpretation of the 1857 *Burial Act* in 2009 (see Parker Pearson et al. 2013). Still, in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, digging, displaying and curating human remains have continued to be seen as a legitimate and integral part of archaeological research by universities, museums and other sectors if subject to correct guidelines and due respect and dialogue with stakeholders and

descendant communities where they exist (e.g. Swain [2006](#); Sayer [2010](#); papers in Giesen [2013](#)).

## Archaeologists as Death-Dealers

Despite significant differences in national and regional policy and procedure, it remains the case that archaeologists are widely recognised across Western societies as a specific group of professionals who work close to death and the dead and a large part of their popular appeal comes from this relationship (Sayer [2010](#); Williams [2009](#): 201). The climate for this perception is worth noting. Modernity is often characterised as a time when death is distanced (Aries [1974](#)). Medical advances and improving lifestyles and social infrastructures have made life expectancies soar across the world during the twentieth century. The process of dying, death and disposal are managed by innumerable specialists, professional and semi-professional groups. Many of us in the Western world can go for months, years or even decades without witnessing dying and death and few take a direct role in handling the bodies of the dying and the dead and arranging for their disposal.

Perhaps because of this increasing distance from death, linked to the medicalisation and secularisation of society as well as the professionalisation of death industries, mortuary archaeology has become a distinctive yet often overlooked group through which Western individuals can engage with the corporeality of death and a wider sense of mortality by engaging, in a relatively safe and sanitised fashion. Rather than the 'object' engagement with just-dead corpses, archaeology offers the possibility of reflection upon the deaths of long-dead individuals and communities whom can be adopted as 'ancestors' without the powerful and painful emotions of mourning (e.g. Williams [2009](#)). In this regard, there remains a secular aura of sacredness around many museum displays of human remains, and discussions persist regarding the need to show 'respect' and 'reverence' to the remains of long-departed humans from the sites of their excavation to museum stores and university laboratories, giving them names and giving them personalities that we conjure from artefacts and bones.

Therefore, in its many dimensions, from the study of early hominin fossils to the study of historic gravestones and cemeteries, mortuary archaeology has become more than a subject about death – the production of knowledge about death in the past- it has become a prominent medium for experiencing and understanding death in Western modernity. Mortuary archaeologists, as narrators about how past societies mourned, disposed of, and commemorated their dead in varying and changing ways, have become a principal Western form of death-dealer, mediating and narrating stories about dying, death and mortuary practice for the vast majority of the human past without written records (see also Kirk forthcoming). As death-dealers, mortuary archaeologists provide tangible, rich and varied sources of new evidence on mortality in prehistoric and historic eras and inform our sense of mortality in the present.

## An Online Death Explosion

Despite the radically different environments in which mortuary archaeology takes place in the USA and UK and the spectrum of policies and procedures found around the globe (see papers in Clegg et al. 2013), the continuing role of mortuary archaeologists as a distinctive kind of professional and academic death-dealer permeates widely. Furthermore, national and regional differences in policy and procedure are overshadowed by a far more impressive trend than repatriation and reburial. Mortuary archaeology is increasingly taught, studied, researched, disseminated and debated through virtual media using the World Wide Web by archaeologists from a range of backgrounds: professional and semi-professional; academic; governmental; commercial; and museum-based. What is striking about this trend is how it has been largely escaped critical reflection by mortuary archaeologists themselves. Namely, while there has been a steady growth in academic literature evaluating mortuary archaeology's ethical dimensions and public engagement, how mortuary archaeology operates online, responding to, and even building public engagement, has largely escaped scrutiny (but see Renshaw 2013: 41).

We suggest that the reason for this is that mortuary archaeologists have taken a profoundly materialist and corporeal approach to the ethics and practicalities of studying human remains. Almost all the debates have focused on how, when and why should archaeologists dig up human remains and mortuary contexts? How, when and why should museums curate and display human remains? How, when and why should human remains and other mortuary derived artefacts be subject to repatriation and/or reburial? (e.g. papers in Clegg et al. [2013](#); Giesen [2013](#); Tarlow and Nilsson Stutz [2013a](#); Giles and Williams [forthcoming](#)). To date, no studies have taken place to explore how online media interact with all these questions and create new strategies and audiences for mortuary archaeological discoveries and analyses as well as to explore and debate the processes and nature of how these audiences and networks are created (Renshaw [2013](#); but see also Sayer and Walter [forthcoming](#)). Moreover, online media are interpretive environments in which human remains, artefacts and other materials and spaces are assembled to construct knowledge of human mortality, akin to Moser's ([2010](#)) vision of museum displays

Since the intervention of the Internet and the development of the World Wide Web, a wide range of applications and media thereon have developed that report subjects in mortuary archaeology. Established media of film, television, books and newspapers now have well-established and expanded online presences which feature mortuary archaeology in both fact and a wide range of fiction (see Sayer and Walter [forthcoming](#)). Furthermore, social media has facilitated the dissemination of many news stories about the archaeology of death and burial, as well as photographs and videos from museums and heritage sites to be disseminated to all and sundry.

Increasingly, archaeologists themselves have grappled with the 'archaeo-appeal' (Holtorf [2005](#): 150) of mortuary projects in a variety of ways. As well as publishers providing increasingly open access platforms for archaeological publications including mortuary discoveries, many online archaeology magazines feature burial archaeology stories for public consumption. Mortuary remains also feature on the websites of many heritage sites and museums whilst commercial archaeological companies showcase human remains upon their websites and host

innumerable grey literature reports listing new discoveries of graves, cemeteries and memorials. Moreover, many archaeologists, professional and amateur, have been writing their own online archaeology magazine stories, creating project websites and disseminating their discoveries and ideas through social media like Facebook and Twitter. Together, through all these avenues and more, the ancient dead have exploded across the World Wide Web and, on an unprecedented scale, the worldwide population can access stories about the discovery and study of human remains and mortuary contexts like never before.

The proliferation of archaeological death online has many ramifications that go beyond the concerns of existing ethical, political and procedural debates regarding the practice of mortuary archaeology. Who are the communities that are stakeholders in the dead? Which religious and ethnic groups should be afforded respect and sensitivity in relation to the human remains we uncover, report and discuss? Online communities are loose and complex, unbounded and varied, uncensored and unparalleled. Barriers of language, nationality, locality, physical appearance and issues of age, gender, race and other dimensions of personal identity can be manipulated or (de)emphasised online. In this environment, mortuary archaeologists are finding themselves communicating with a whole range of new online groups and individuals.

To put it baldly, it is becoming less clear whether the 'public' to which mortuary archaeology is most readily engaged with is the local community near the dig site, the museum visitor, or the consumer of specialist print publications, but instead to a vast, varied and complex online community. If this point is accepted as an important one for how we write and engage the public with mortuary archaeology, then national policies on the display and reburial of human remains, whilst remaining important topics for debate, are joined by a new need to debate how we utilise online media to explore and debate death in the human past as well as the theories, methods, and ethical concerns of mortuary archaeology. Archaeologists and heritage professionals need to afford detailed scrutiny to what, how and when we write online and its ethical, moral, academic, social and other ramifications. They also need to scrutinise the potential for online blogging to create a new

environment for disseminating mortuary archaeological research and producing new knowledge about human mortality (see also Sayer and Walter forthcoming).

## *Bones Don't Lie and Archaeodeath*

It is against this background that there is a need to consider and discuss the rise in blogging about the archaeology of death (see also Meyers and Killgrove 2014). Here, we see mortuary archaeology as broader than blogging about the scientific analysis of human remains. As we define it above, mortuary archaeology, it encapsulates many more topics and interdisciplinary intersections than either 'burial archaeology' (excavating and surveying ancient burial sites) or 'bioarchaeology' (the analysis of human remains in particular). Using our experiences from the USA and UK, we critically explore the current use and future potential of blogging as a key medium of teaching and researching mortuary archaeology. We have both created blogs as mechanisms for exploring and disseminating our research interests in the archaeology and bioarchaeology of death, burial and commemoration. Let us explain our backgrounds and how we came to be mortuary archaeology bloggers.

Katy Meyers (KM) is a PhD candidate in the [Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University, USA](#) <sup>ccxxviii</sup>. She began blogging through her Wordpress site [Bones Don't Lie](#) <sup>ccxxix</sup> as a way to discipline herself in keeping up-to-date with the latest archaeology news and archaeology publications in her chosen field of study. It has subsequently evolved as a widely read site for discussing new theories, methods and discoveries in mortuary archaeology from across the globe, including 5,500 followers from over fifty different countries through Wordpress, a Facebook community over 1,100 strong and 1,600 followers on Twitter. KM reports on the latest news from archaeological and anthropological magazines and news websites, the latest research published in academic journals, and sometimes she focuses on places and sites of particular affinity and interest to herself, particularly early historic mortuary practices and bioarchaeological analyses. Recent blog entries in 2014 have ranged from discussions of the [antiquity of cancer](#) <sup>ccxxx</sup> to the [study of funerary trends and photography](#) <sup>ccxxxi</sup>. KM distributes her

blog through Twitter, LinkedIn and Academia.edu on a weekly basis. Since her blog began in August 2010, KM has posted over 375 entries. Her work has been recognised in the *Oxford Annotated Bibliography* as top digital resource for bioarchaeology (Killgrove 2013), and is cited in *Bioarchaeology: An Integrated Approach to Working with Human Remains* written by Debra L. Martin, Ryan P. Harrod, Ventura R. Pérez in the chapter “The Future of Bioarchaeology” (Martin, Harrod and Ventura 2012) as a digital resource.

Howard Williams (HW) is Professor of Archaeology in the [Department of History and Archaeology, University of Chester, UK](#) <sup>ccxxxii</sup>. He was inspired to blog by *Bones Don't Lie* but also by the long-established archaeology blog [Aardvarkaeology](#) <sup>ccxxxiii</sup> by Swedish archaeologist Dr Martin Rundkvist. HW is relatively new to blogging. His Wordpress site [Archaeodeath](#) <sup>ccxxxiv</sup> is motivated in part by the frustrations experienced in relying on his own academic institution to promote his new publications and fieldwork as well as in part from the desire to communicate to a wider community than those attending his conference presentations and public talks. *Archaeodeath* was an experiment that continues to evolve and currently has to date a relatively modest 139 followers but regularly attracts a wider audience through dissemination via Facebook and Twitter. Currently *Archaeodeath* serves as an outlet for a [range of topics](#) <sup>ccxxxv</sup>. These include discussions of medieval and modern mortuary and commemorative practices, focused on HW's ongoing research projects including fieldwork at the [Pillar of Eliseg, North Wales](#) <sup>ccxxxvi</sup>: *Project Eliseg*. HW posts about his latest publications, academic conference presentations and public talks in early medieval and contemporary archaeology. HW also uses his blog to discuss his role as Honorary Editor for the [Royal Archaeological Institute's](#) <sup>ccxxxvii</sup> publication: the [Archaeological Journal](#) <sup>ccxxxviii</sup>. HW incorporates commentaries on visits to museums, ancient monuments, heritage sites and archaeological landscapes with a mortuary or memorial dimension. Finally, HW occasionally writes opinion pieces (“archaeorants”) regarding directions and debates in the archaeology of death, burial and commemoration. Indeed, his most popular posting to date was an “archaeorant” about the excavation of King Richard III at the site of Greyfriar's church,



Leicester, that has been viewed 2,250 times to date far more than his other posts. His blogging began only recently, in [June 2013](#) <sup>ccxxxix</sup>, and since then HW has subsequently posted over 130 entries.

From our joint experience, we identify some specific issues that demand our attention in utilising blogging as a medium for archaeological publishing. Stopping short of presenting guidelines for good practice, we argue that blogging about ancient death is an important part of academic engagement with the public, however there are certain considerations regarding sensitivities, tone and use of imagery that must be taken into consideration.

## Why Should Archaeologists Blog about Death? Pros and Cons

Stories about mortuary archaeology are online, disseminated and discussed regardless of whether they were written by practising scholars or not. The popular media has increasingly delved into mortuary archaeology as a topic of discussion and sensationalist news. Blogging as a medium allows for archaeologists to rapidly publish and openly share new ideas, discoveries and debates without and sometimes overtly questioning, the spin and inaccuracies of the journalists who regularly report archaeological stories. Further, blogs are often more approachable than journal articles due to the high cost of access and complicated jargon utilised in the latter. Blogging is also a more liberated medium for archaeological writing, allowing responses and hence dialogue, unrestrained by the precise conventions of academic publishing; in this regards, it shares a powerful position in its relationship on a spectrum between academic and creative writing (see also Kirk forthcoming).

Furthermore, by increasing our involvement in online discussions about the field, we improve the overall perception and understanding of ancient death and direct both specialists and the wider public to the ever-evolving literature on this topic. In this regard, with a potential worldwide audience embracing many ethnicities and faiths, archaeologists have the responsibility to disseminate as far and wide

their discoveries. Moreover, they have the duty to explain the value of digging up, curating and displaying the dead where deemed appropriate and acceptable to descendant communities, academic research questions and other factors.

Given the rapid dissemination of information through the Internet, mortuary archaeology news will be reported on whether or not we want it. Due to this, archaeologists are advocated to control the story through disseminating it, not through hiding it (Sayer 2010). Rather than concealing death, archaeologists should be educators and enablers of community engagement with death. Blogging about mortuary archaeology can challenge misconceptions in the popular media (Meyers and Killgrove 2014). Furthermore, sometimes archaeologists can be lobbyists through their blogs, arguing for changes in the law and in attitudes and practices, or, as with the social media campaign against the proposed National Geographic TV show 'Nazi War Diggers', actively vocalising concerns over the ethics of their actions in digging up war-graves without utilising trained archaeologists or bioarchaeological methods and expertise. Examples of this are the forthright postings by [Deathsplaining ccxi](#) on this topic.

An example of the work that can be done by mortuary archaeologists to support research and prevent sensationalism is the rise of 'vampire burials' over the past few years. On *Bones Don't Lie*, the actual journal articles and evidence that led to these accusations of vampirism have been explored and broken down in [Archaeology of Vampires, Part I ccxli](#) and [Part II ccxlii](#). KM is able to coherently convey that there is no evidence of vampires themselves, but rather there is evidence of behaviour to prevent perceived vampire-like activity among the deceased. While it is a small matter of perception, it is important that we be active proponents of evidence-based research, rather than silently critiquing popular media.

Another example comes from *Archaeodeath*. The sensationalist finding of Richard III was widely publicised, but no-one had been talking about the broader issue of what this excavation meant with regard to the popular perception of mortuary archaeology. HW was able to articulate that the real problem was not the organisation and focus of

the investigation, the evidence or the way it was discussed - rather it was the fact that this overshadowed the important process of mortuary archaeology in exploring process, variability and change, not the graves of named historic personages. In '[What is truly wrong about digging up Richard III](#) <sup>ccxliii</sup>', HW argues that celebrity excavations detract attention from the population-level study of mortuary variability and change in the Middle Ages and other periods. It also detracts from the shameful neglect of many skeletal populations following excavation. Finally, HW argued that the search for celebrity burials constitutes a form of royal necrophilia in its fetishistic focus on reconstructing the identity of a single individual from the past.

Finally, the rise of mortuary archaeology blogging is part of a bigger trend of bringing back conversations about death. Death used to be part of the home, part of the average life, it was photographed, discussed and there was ownership over it. Death as a topic for discussion is coming back; groups like [Order of the Good Death](#) <sup>ccxliiv</sup> or [Death Salon](#) <sup>ccxlv</sup> have been discussing death and related topics. As part of this broader trend, mortuary archaeologists have an important role to play by providing the historic and prehistoric context of how death has changed through time. Further, mortuary archaeologists have a deeper understanding of the variability of death and mourning behaviour. By engaging in these broader discussions occurring online we provide an important service of normalizing death related behaviour by situating it in its historical context and discussing its variation.

These points lead us to a broader consideration about the potential for blogging on death in the human past and in archaeological practice for mortuary archaeologists – from those building careers (e.g. KM) to those more established in the field (e.g. HW) to operate as public intellectuals, contributing towards, challenging and driving new directions in popular thinking about dying, death and the dead in the past and present (see contributions to Tarlow and Nilsson Stutz [2013b](#)). Whilst we make no grand claims to be achieving this ourselves at this stage in our blogging, this medium affords new voices operating in less restricted and less hierarchical structures and thus perhaps more democratising (or indeed subversive). Blogging offers a means of distributing and debating mortuary topics that escapes from the

stranglehold of the media of television documentaries and newspaper stories that favour a small academic elite as well as only a selection of mortuary topics focusing on the discovery of fleshed human remains in particular (e.g. mummies and bog bodies). To put boldly, KM has acquired during her graduate studies a far more extensive network and platform via her blogging than many expert mortuary archaeologists can ever hope to enjoy through their academic writing or brief appearances as talking heads on television documentaries. Moreover, the blog is arguably a more rich, informative and enduring medium compared with the brevity and simplicity and singular voices that these established media afford and with the potential of driving new views and perspectives that might have weight outside the academy (e.g. Larsson 2013).

Despite these many positive reasons for writing online, we can appreciate the inertia and ambivalence of some archaeologists towards blogging about mortuary matters. First, many groups involved in museum and field projects may have tight restraints imposed by employers, developers or funding bodies regarding strategies for disseminating their finds and copyrights. For example, housing developers might not want publicity that human remains were found during excavations to affect the sale-price of their flats and housing. It also may infringe upon established policies within some organizations. Second, local communities and descendant communities might wish to avoid too much publicity in fear of attracting disrespectful comments and attention as well as treasure-hunting and illicit excavations at the sites of discovery. Archaeologists might wish to avoid criticisms of, and appropriations of, their methods and techniques by blogging, ahead of formal publication. In such scenarios, details of their fieldwork projects might fear a compromising of their professional perception. Archaeologists might be reluctant to post information about mortuary remains found during excavation until a trained physical anthropologist has had the time to analyse the remains, and other post-excavation analyses have been conducted. For many archaeologists, blogging might be seen as too much ceding of authority and control over knowledge production and dissemination, without peer-review and the ability to verify facts and argumentation. Finally, concerns over blogging

might be related to the archaeological finds themselves, some deemed too disturbing to exhibit them via a blog because of perceived issues of ethics, taste and aesthetics.

We would not attempt to refute any of these concerns as illegitimate. In specific instances, and blogging strategies should be adapted to avoid likely pitfalls. However, in many ways these concerns are attempts to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted. Censorship of mortuary archaeology online is impossible to achieve since so much is already uploaded. Moreover, secrecy online regarding key mortuary archaeology stories and discoveries can breed misunderstandings and the perceptions of elitism or even of conspiracies of silence regarding discoveries (see Sayer 2010). Every archaeologist must weigh the pros and cons themselves; however it is argued here that the positive aspects of blogging far outweigh the challenges, and many of these concerns can be avoided through mindful attention to potential problems. Therefore, blogging in some form should be regarded as an important and integral part of mortuary research by archaeologists.

## How Should Archaeologists Blog about Death? Debating the Tenor of Death

There are no pre-set guidelines for blogging about mortuary archaeology, or death in general. The Internet has proven time and time again that any topic can and will be shared. However, as scholars, we need to be aware of broader ethical and emotional concerns that come with talking about death and the deceased. At all times, there must be a clear awareness of the sensitivity of death. Here, we discuss how the use of different literary devices such as humour, metaphor and shock can be employed in blogging to create a deeper public connection to death in the past, but must be used carefully to avoid diminishing or disrespecting the deceased.

Determining when to exercise sensitivity is primarily up to the author, however there are topics where careful use of imagery and awareness of tone is important. Over the past couple of years, there has been debate around the Tophet of Carthage. The site contains the burials of

hundreds of cremated infants, and since its discovery there has been argument over whether the site represents a ritual site of human sacrifice, or a special cemetery reserved for this age group. The debate has led to sensationalist news reports with headlines like “[Carthaginians sacrificed their own children, archaeologists say <sup>ccxlvii</sup>](#)” or “[Ancient Greek stories of ritual child sacrifice in Carthage are TRUE, study claims <sup>ccxlviii</sup>](#)”. News stories like these do not however share the detailed archaeological and archival evidence, nor do they discuss the deeper reasons for this practice and the historical context. To counteract this, KM wrote multiple blog posts including “[Ancient Baby Graveyard or Infant Sacrifice Site <sup>ccxlviii</sup>](#)” and “[Cemetery or Sacrifice Site in Carthage, Again <sup>ccxlix</sup>](#)” discussing all the available evidence and all related journal articles. As archaeological bloggers, it is important to challenge this type of sensationalism, and objectively discuss the evidence so that popular audiences might better read between the journalistic spin.

Because HW's interests extend from the early historic period to the present day, *Archaeodeath* contends with the commemorative practices of recent centuries. This is evident in the entries about cathedral memorials at [Chester <sup>cc</sup>](#) and [Norwich <sup>ccli</sup>](#) as well as discussions of memorials on public spaces such as country parks and [roadside memorials <sup>cclii</sup>](#). In addition to discussing sites visited about ongoing research (without outlining the details of the research itself), HW has attempted to outline new ways of thinking afresh about well-studied and well-visited buildings and landscapes in our contemporary society and from the perspective of mortuary archaeology. For example, for roadside memorials, HW is taking a perspective usually afforded to far more ancient remains and applying them to a very sensitive dimension of present-day memorial practice through the medium of the blog, thus simultaneously challenging how

## Dead Funny: Using humour to discuss death

Tone is important for blogging as it can range from conversational to academic. When dealing with topics of death, it is important to be aware to the possibility that the reader might be sensitive to the language utilised. Having said that, archaeologists should avoid being

either overly maudlin or euphemistic. Archaeologists may be death-dealers, but we are not undertakers dealing with newly bereaved families. Our writing can be upbeat, even humorous, if it serves to communicate our message. Therefore, while no single tenor of writing should be recommended, being too sensitive and obscure can be a hindrance more than a help. Death and comedy have long been good bedfellows, and the combination of the two has proven quite successful in modern medical settings. Thorson (1985) argued that “death humor is seen to have functions both as a defense mechanism as well as a social lubricant”, further it gives the dying and bereaved a sense of control over death. In clinical settings, joking has been proven to relieve anxiety, decrease discomfort, provide coping mechanisms, as well as increase comprehension and retention in educational settings (Johnson 1990). Comedy can be used for archaeological blogging in a similar manner. By infusing some jests in our work, we remove some of the unnecessary mystery, discomfort and fear surrounding death.

Both KM and HW have used humour as a mechanism for lightening an otherwise dark topic but are always sensitive to the challenge that humour online is readily misinterpreted as ‘disrespect’. In general, *Bones Don’t Lie* provides commentary on journal and news articles broadly relating to mortuary archaeology, which are written with an academic and respectful tone. However, witty posts are often intermixed into these more serious publications in order to provide levity and prevent reader burnout. “Waiter there’s a toe in my drink” was a blog post that discussed an absurd example of cannibalism from a modern news article. Another example was “[The Santa Issue II](#)” <sup>ccliii</sup>, which proposed what the fictional burials of different incarnations of Santa Claus would look like if they were excavated by archaeologists.

For *Archaeodeath*, HW attempts to mix humour into posts on otherwise serious matters. For example, in a recent post regarding a visit to the Neolithic site of Woodhenge, HW parodied the title of a famous article from the *Journal Antiquity* as ‘[Woodhenge for the ancestors: the concrete cylinders pass on the message](#)’ <sup>ccliv</sup>. HW reviews the latest evidence about this monument, appraises its heritage presentation, but then adds some lighter comments regarding the merits of the site for exercise and child’s play, satirising but not deriding both academic and

popular perceptions of Neolithic monuments as sites of healing. In other posts, HW restricts humour to the titles and occasional references to popular culture in otherwise more dense discussions of sites, monuments and other archaeological remains, as in the entries “Completely Stoned in Ceredigion 1 [cclv](#) and 2” [cclvi](#). In the former, HW likens the carving of human figures on one early medieval stone cross to characters from Schultz’s Peanuts cartoons. A more overtly humorous commentary is “[Talking Archaeo-heads](#) [cclvii](#)”, yet it is still a reflection on a serious heritage issue for mortuary archaeology: the widespread use, almost an obsession, with facial reconstruction in archaeological museums and visitor centres. HW sees this as a mechanism by which new ‘ancestors’ are created and venerated by museums (see also Williams [2009](#)) but also muses what these heads would say if they could see us in the present day, both their museum environment and visitors.

Other blogs on human remains utilise humour more regularly, overtly and effectively, notably the superb [Deathsplaining](#) [cclviii](#) blog. Whether used sparingly or frequently, humour has the ability to lighten topics that may be difficult for readers to confront, and used sparingly can be a good way of breaking up what have the potential to be very sombre readings. It can also be a way of lightening critiques of mortuary displays and practices.

## The Past in the Present: Making connections to modern phenomena

One of the challenges of blogging about ancient death is making it relevant to the modern audience. Our selection of titles for our blogs in itself calls out to popular audiences. *Bones Don’t Lie* making a rhetoric statement about the evidential power of human remains to tell us about past societies and dispel mythologies and speculation. Meanwhile *Archaeodeath*’s title was intended as tongue-in-cheek pomposity yet also succinct and memorable. It was also intended as an accurate description of the blog’s focus: consciously avoiding a focus on bones but citing the principal connections of archaeology and mortality as key to the blog’s subject matter.



Popular news has been quite effective at making connections to the public by exploring the more sensational side of mortuary studies. Examples include the supposed discovery of vampire burials across Eastern Europe, or the search for celebrity burials like Richard III or Mona Lisa. There are two major ways of making connections that we have used repeatedly: drawing connections between physical spaces and popular media.

In *Archaeodeath*, HW repeatedly introduces concepts and themes from his research through the use of popular examples of particular well-known sites and landscapes, such as critiques of museum displays of mortuary contexts - "Stonehenge Incomplete 1 [cclix](#) and 2 [cclx](#)", "[Roman Death at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester](#) [cclxi](#)" or "[Old Mold Gold](#)" [cclxii](#). Then there are discussions of the material cultures of death at heritage sites and country parks - "[Bodnant Garden - Death in the Family Garden](#)" [cclxiii](#) or "[Gazing through the Lens](#)" [cclxiv](#) - or else explorations of commemorative practice in the past and the present such as: "[Moor Memories - Dartmoor](#)" [cclxv](#) and "[The Childe of Hale](#)" [cclxvi](#). By exploring the past through these physical places, readers gain a deeper appreciation for their local heritage and are encouraged to explore these - and other similar - spaces themselves with a new, archaeological perspective.

In *Bones Don't Lie*, KM explores the concept that one of the easiest ways to aid people in better understanding death is to create connections to popular media. The use of metaphor can improve affinity with, and understanding of, complex topics within mortuary archaeology. KM has used movies such as "[Weekend at Bernie's](#)" [cclxvii](#) as an illustration for understanding the complexities of interpreting human remains. Over the course of a single weekend, the corpse of Bernie Lomax is subjected to a number of activities including attending a party, playing monopoly, getting buried in the sand and even dragged behind a boat. None of these activities would have been readily apparent to the individuals excavating a grave. However, there could be important signs of post-mortem activity if examined carefully. Similarly, Anthony Bourdain, popular foodie, chef and television host, [inspired a post](#) [cclxviii](#) that drew connections between modern food television shows to funerary behaviour in the past. We often do not know what happens

between death and burial, and using a popular movie can help illustrate how important that information can potentially be.

## Razor's Edge of Challenging Perceptions and Shocking

In many ways, we play an important role in the broader shift to discussions of death and dying. In the modern world where death is medicalised and bereavement is often hidden, archaeologists can offer insight into alternative options and discuss how this current state of death has occurred. We provide historical context for broader debates relating to death and human remains. Further, we have unique insight to challenge monolithic perceptions of death by presenting the wide range of variation that exists in the world. However, there is a thin line between challenging the current beliefs and shocking the audience. The goal should not be to appal an audience, but rather to push the limits of their perception and challenge their preconceived notions regarding death and the dead.

Last year, the web exploded in outrage over a trend known as 'Funeral Selfies' [cclxix](#), whereby teens were using camera phones to take photos of themselves whilst at a funeral. While most audiences were disgusted, Caitlin Doughty, creator of the Order of the Good Death and a Los Angeles-based mortician, argued that we need to be more aware of what this behaviour actually means. She argues that instead of disgust towards teens, we should focus more on educating them, and recognise their behaviour as an outlet for ritual and mourning not found in Western Society (Doughty 2013). However, this is where taking a historic perspective can help others better understand this behaviour. In many ways, the funeral selfie trend is just a reincarnation of post-mortem photography from the 19th century. This was discussed by KM in a [blog post cclxx](#) following the modern phenomenon, and it allowed for a broader discussion about the incorporation of technology into the mourning and grieving process, allowing death to become part of broader rituals of life. By blogging about this broader trend, and creating historical connections, readers are better able to interpret behaviour despite the blog challenging their initial reaction.

## Visualising the Dead

Museums and publications utilise a wide range of methods to visualise the dead, from artist's impressions of funeral scenes, to reconstructions of graves as they were once composed, to plans and photographs of mortuary remains in their context of discovery (Williams 2009; 2010). One key area of blogging is to augment and expand textual arguments with the use of images. This is enhanced by the ability to select from material available with Creative Commons licenses and from photographs taken by the blogger at a range of archaeological sites, mortuary monuments and cemeteries.

For recent memorials, there are issues regarding whether individual, named memorials should be reproduced. Some academic journals like *Mortality* have pursued a strategy of pixelating-out personal names upon memorials in photographs accompanying academic research (e.g. Parker and McVeigh 2013). As guest editor for that journal (Williams 2011), HW resisted this, accepting that some anonymity of the location is required and the depiction of full-names of the very-recently dead should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. In many blogs, one can find photographs of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century gravestones taken without full permission of living relatives and HW believes that to do otherwise is a poorly considered attempt to show 'respect' and thus thoughtless censorship, self-imposed or by publishers. In *Archaeodeath*, memorials situated in public places are regarded as intentionally for public viewing and hence it is legitimate to transcribe their texts and photograph them. This approach is taken in some archaeological publications (e.g. Corkill and Moore 2012). HW would argue that this is not ethically problematic. Memorials are by definition designed for audiences, often (but not always) placed intentionally to be read in publicly accessible and owned spaces. Indeed it is questionable to censor since it gives the impression that the personal name is somehow 'dirty' or 'tainted' whilst the memorial itself is less person and specific. Crucially, the name and material become disconnected, and the latter dehumanised, through censorship. Thus, writing about these memorials holistically - both text, material and context - with due respect and sensitivity as well as visualising them with care to their context of creation should not in itself

cause offence or require permission from relatives of the deceased. Indeed, depicting the memorial practices from the human past – distant or recent – is itself a form of respectful honouring of both past lives and past deaths. What possible ‘disrespect’ is afforded to reproduce images of (for example) war graves or gardens of remembrance that are already fully accessible to the public?

Still, it is recognised that perceptions of a public space can be seen as simultaneously public by many and private by their creators. Hence, where possible, the precise location and details of full personal names should be omitted where not necessary. For example, the park bench with a memorial plaque and recently scattered ashes is simultaneously a public and private space. In order to communicate my argument regarding commemoration in contemporary British society, in “[Gazing through the Lens](#) <sup>cclxxi</sup>” HW incorporated two photographs, one of the front of a memorialised new bench in an anonymised Welsh country park, another of the ashes of the loved one scattered behind the bench. HW also transcribed the memorial to ‘dearest Len’ and commented on the memorial in what HW regards as a sensitive and respectful fashion without intruding on private property. Since a full name is not recorded, affording anonymity in this instance is not an issue.

For older remains, and for human remains in particular, the question comes: what is the function of the blog as a medium for visualising death; are some images too shocking and disturbing to reproduce? Notwithstanding the fact that blogs almost always utilise images and materials already in the public domain, we need to justify how and why they are being used, rather than deploy images simply to attract the eye or to make gratuitous statements about the suffering of past individuals from particular diseases affecting bone or the fate of particular dead persons. An example from blogging, for *Bones Don't Lie*, is the absence of modern imagery from many posts despite its potential relevance. In “[New Morbid Terminology: Coffin Birth](#)” <sup>cclxxii</sup>, imagery for the past is in general lacking, while modern forensics imagery is more common. Despite that, it was determined by KM not to include modern imagery as it was too gratuitous and could be emotionally damaging. Conversely, humour has been used in visual imagery to lighten death, such as the comic-like format of the *Horrible Histories* by Terry Deary and Martin

Brown (1993), which portray scenes of death and violence in a light-hearted format. As discussed previously, humour in some situations can lessen the discomfort of discussing death, but must be used carefully.

Imagery of the deceased should be used to augment and educate, not to shock. Moreover, if the images are publicly accessible via other existing media, the question comes as to whether the blog is making them more or less shocking by carefully incorporating them within a new and considered context. There is also future potential to employ the use of art and digital imagery in innovative ways to articulate concepts and ideas about mortuary archaeology afresh, something advocated for archaeological publishing but also pertinent to blogging about archaeology and death (Perry 2009; Williams 2009; 2010; Giles forthcoming). The use of alternative forms of imagery, such as art, drawn comics or cartoons, could also aid in engaging alternative audiences, or perhaps convey messages in a different way than more traditional forms of photograph and video. Archaeological illustrator John Swogger (2012) has argued that comics are a two-dimensional form of artwork that have explanatory power, and can act as graphic reports of archaeological work.

Hence, in blogging death, a range of visual imagery should be carefully and cautiously encouraged to facilitate innovation in communicating death past and present, not quashed by false attempts to show 'respect' through censorship. Again, as Sayer (2010) argues, concealment like this is counter to a spirit of public research in which mortuary archaeology should embrace openness in order to drive new perspectives and debates.

## Conclusion

To our knowledge, this article is the first attempt to tackle the complex issues affecting blogging in mortuary archaeology, although blogs in bioarchaeology and archaeology more generally have, on rare occasions, addressed some of the issues within their own pages (e.g. *Archaeodeath*'s "[Blogging Ugly Death](#)" <sup>cclxxiii</sup>; see also Meyers and Killgrove 2014). Unlike blogs on archaeology generally, or more specific

human remains-focused themes in bioarchaeology or forensic science, mortuary archaeology deals with a wide range of evidence and behaviour relating to the deceased and mourning community; offering unique insight on the perceptions and approaches to death in the past. Blogging offers an approachable and open medium for mortuary archaeologists to communicate complex and often difficult topics to a broad audience. However, as discussed above, because we are dealing with a topic that has ethical and emotional concerns, there must be a greater awareness when blogging about death as to the purpose of the writing and the goal. Indeed, we would argue that blogging in mortuary archaeology has the potential as a medium of driving new levels of openness in the recording and debating of our motives and choices regarding how to write and visualise death in archaeological theory and practice. Thus, as mortuary archaeology bloggers, we hope to challenge and educate our readers about death in the human past but also about the archaeological project and the archaeological imagination, developing new formats to disseminate and debate research into mortuary practice and commemoration in the human past. By using humour, creating connections with the present and carefully selecting illustrative imagery, we create a digital arena where death can be explored and discussed and in which mortuary archaeologists, as public intellectuals, can challenge and shape popular understandings of death past, present and future.

## Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to Doug Rocks-Macqueen, Sara Perry and Chris Webster for valuable comments on pre-publication drafts of this chapter.

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# Perceptions of Archaeology and The Words We Use

Jessica Rymer

Blog: <http://digthisfeature.tumblr.com/cclxxviii>



In 2006, eminent archaeologist Bruce Trigger gave an interview in the *Journal of Social Archaeology*; asked about the future of archaeology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he replied that:

"Archaeology will continue to excite substantial public interest so long as it continues to discover 'wonderful things' and provides the mass media with 'mysteries' that entertain people." (Yellowhorn 2006, p. 326)

This quote is one that I have used before, and one that I responded to in the following way in a post about the importance of community engagement:

"As all of us are aware, **we don't always find 'wonderful things'**. **Sometimes, you don't find ANYTHING.** But I don't think that means that archaeology is on its way out if it can't remain 'sexy', I think that it means that we're entering a new period of archaeological practice where the goal is to make the public care by getting them engaged and invested." (Rymer, 2013, emphasis added)

I chose the emphasis specifically to highlight a challenge that I have both grappled with and observed in the year plus that I have been blogging. Coupled with the first quote it represents two ends of a spectrum in talking about archaeology: at one end we have treasure hunting, Indiana Jones, and Lara Croft, at the other we have realism, tedium, and drudgery. The former is more common in [the mainstream media](#) [cclxxix](#); the latter usually comes from frustrated archaeologists wishing to be taken seriously.

I saw this play out on my blog as I strove to provide an accurate picture of fieldwork while still posting news stories that covered archaeological finds that I found interesting. As social media becomes more integrated into archaeological projects as a tool of community engagement, the language that we, as archaeologists, use becomes even more important. The words we use communicate our ideas to our audience but they also drive page views and search results in a very practical way that can have a powerful affect on a project's visibility in the community. In the following sections I want to explore the language at each end of the spectrum, citing print sources, but also including hyperlinks to relevant blog posts and online articles as if these sections were actual blog posts.

## Extreme # 1: Archaeologists as treasure hunters



It's no secret that archaeology has been used to perpetuate colonial stereotypes that preserve a historical narrative sympathetic to colonizers at the expense of the colonized. Randy McGuire perhaps said it best in *Archaeology as Political Action* when he wrote that, "the products of the archaeological ideology factory have most commonly sustained, justified, and legitimized the dominant ideological values" (2008, p.16). The more involved I've become in indigenous archaeology, the more apparent it has become that perpetuating, even inadvertently, that treasure-hunting myth is not only harmful but counter-productive. Phrases

like “treasure trove” and “gold mine”, even when used alongside words like “ceramics” or “knowledge”, are problematic because they associate archaeology with treasure hunting in the public consciousness. They can drag up painful memories for groups who have been victims of this kind of archaeology in the past, and are damaging to the relationships we are trying to build in the present. How many times have I seen “Archaeologists unearth prehistoric treasure trove” or “Largest Iron Age hoard yet found” and immediately hit re-blog? What does this communicate to my followers about my priorities? How does this reflect on my original content?

“The words we use” is a phrase that Stephen Mrozowski used at the [Conversations Between Communities event cclxxx](#) at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, in November. He remarked that reflecting on the words archaeologists have used was important in how he came to understand how the archaeological community was initially seen as the enemy by the Nipmuc Nation. But so often these words, as problematic as they are, can provide a quick signal boost. And they are good PR because they garner immediate interest in our projects. Trigger, in the opening quote, was making a purposeful reference to Howard Carter's words after his first look at Tutankhamen's undisturbed tomb. Bill Kelso and the brilliant minds behind the PR machine of the Jamestown Rediscovery Project did something similar when they found the “[Rosetta stone of Jamestown](#)” in 2010. Appropriating references to well known finds like these to drum up interest (and funding) is really nothing new, but one of the challenges of using social media is how do we get people to care without falling into the treasure trap?

I wrote about this dilemma in a blog post from February (“[The Problem with Treasure](#)” [cclxxxi](#)), in which I cited a [2006](#) article by Palus, Leone, and Cochran. They point out that historic preservation in the U.S. works a lot like “treasure” logic- we tend to preserve “things, not the connections between people and things” (Palus, Leone, and Cochran [2006](#), p. 93). The solution that they suggest, which I'm sure will resonate with a lot of people, is to engage the public so that they are *invested* in what is being preserved and passionate about its protection. Archaeology and the past fascinate people all on their own. I think the solution to the “problem with treasure” is to realize that the mention of

archaeology is interesting enough on its own to grab people's attention. It can be difficult at times to accept when you're in the throes of sampling plowzone, but archaeology is only boring when we, the archaeologists, make it so in our attempt to separate ourselves from Indiana Jones and Laura Croft. Which brings me to the *other* end of the spectrum.

## Extreme #2: Realistically portraying a realistic archaeology



When I was salting a mock dig for my campers one summer I joked that we should leave three of the four units empty so the kids would know what it's like to be a real archaeologist. This is precisely the kind of attitude that Colleen Morgan called out on *Middle Savagery* (and was [recently re-posted by Archaeology, Museums, and Outreach cclxxxii](#)) in a post aptly titled "Stop Saying 'Archaeology is actually boring'". It can be a gut reaction sometimes; a visitor comes by the site and asks if you've found any gold coins, and you dutifully respond that you've found nothing but nails, and sometimes you don't find anything! With archaeological funding being cut by the NSF and under fire from [Congress cclxxxiii](#), it's perfectly reasonable to want to throw away our fedoras, put on our white lab coats and declare that we are *serious scientists*, not fanciful adventurers. An emphasis on the less exciting, day-to-day realities of running a dig can seem to be the perfect way to do this.

Portraying realism in a positive way is one of the challenges of being an archaeology blogger, particularly when the blog is a personal one.

Though the content I posted to *Dig This Feature* from the field was always posted with the permission of my P.I., it is ultimately a personal endeavor that remains unaffiliated with an institution. While this gives authors such as myself more freedom in the content we choose to post, it also exposes us to the danger of our blogs becoming less of a vehicle of public outreach and more of an outlet for our own feelings. The danger here is not that archaeology will be portrayed as dull but that archaeology will be portrayed as terrible, as a thankless job that no one should pursue.

Archaeology can be hard. It is a field that comes with a set of unique challenges. There are holes in the ground that fill with water when it rains and have to be pumped. There are days when it is below freezing and you find yourself outside. And you will probably have to buy a wristguard at some point. I do not think that there is anything wrong with being honest about these things; in fact, I feel a certain responsibility to share them because of the number of undergraduate archaeology and anthropology students amongst my readership. I've also shared links to articles about wages, funding, diversity, and [being a female archaeologist cclxxxiv](#) for the same reason. While complaining is definitely a bonding experience, we need to be careful with the words we use, especially when we are speaking with our authority as archaeologists.

## Finding your voice

Finding your voice is one of the more difficult parts of blogging. If you look at my first response to #blogarch, a Blogging Carnival, on why I started blogging and my last response on where I hope to go with it you'll see that I'm still not entirely sure. And part of the reason is that with blogging comes the freedom to change your voice as you experiment with what kind of blogger you want to be. Do you want to be funny or serious? Re-blog mostly news stories or create your own content? Offer commentary or post things as they are? Is it mostly for yourself, or, is it academic?

In experimenting with voice, one thing that has remained is that blogging is ultimately a form of media for consumption, and as such the “words we use” are important. As I’ve experimented with some of the questions I mentioned above and seen more and more how integrated various forms of social media are, I’ve paid more attention to the words I use. Words are powerful things. It’s not a coincidence that books like [The Death of Prehistory](#) [cclxxxv](#) are being published on the heels of a conversation I had with a coworker who was uncomfortable with labeling our field *historical* archaeology. Regardless of whether you hold a B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. when you introduce yourself as an archaeologist your audience perceives you as having the authority to speak on the past and issues related to it. So while my blog is ultimately a personal one, because I am perceived as having the authority to speak on certain issues because of how I describe myself in my “About” section, I need to critically reflect on the perceptions that I am perpetuating. I may think that because my blog is not affiliated with an institution that I have the unbridled freedom to post as I please but, as different forms of social media have become increasingly integrated with one another, the Internet has become a very small place.

While social media, from my perspective at least, is no longer “new”, it continues to offer new challenges as archaeologists integrate it into their toolkit. I will echo some of [the other responses](#) [cclxxxvi](#) to the blogging carnival’s final question when I express uncertainty about archaeology blogging’s future, mostly due to the attitudes of my own peers. It may be that something new comes along and these issues become a moot point, however, critically evaluating ourselves is never a bad thing, and blogging is fortunately a great venue for doing just that.



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# The end of a cycle. Blogging about public archaeology in Spain. El fin de un ciclo. Blogueando sobre arqueología pública en España

Jaime Almansa- Sanchez

Blog: <http://publicarchaeology.blogspot.com> [ccxciv](#)

\*This is a bilingual text.

\*\*Con bilingüe quiero decir que hay partes en español, and others in English.

14 Apr 2014, 16:07

In this exact moment, I am writing the last post on the first blog I ever created. I am correcting the proofs of this chapter, which will be the last post of the "Public Archaeology" blog. The next lines are an overview of the blog, how it started and how it ended. La última reflexión antes de cambiar de ciclo.

Introduction. So you had a blog?

28 Sept 2007, 14:30

That is the exact moment I started my first blog. I cannot remember much more. I was a bit bored in those days. My MA in London had just started and the blog seemed to be a great idea to share public

archaeology with my Spanish colleagues. I remember I checked domain names and both “Public Archaeology” and “Arqueología Pública” were available, so I picked them for myself. The Spanish Government had started a campaign to make us create web pages by giving us free domains. I had chosen “arqueologiapublica.es”, so while figuring out what I was going to do with the domain name (and its blog), I started using the English domain for myself. For a while I thought about doing the blog in English, but I felt my audience should be in Spain, so I went for it and created a Spanish blog.

When you start a blog you are a bit obsessed with statistics, for a while. For weeks I was writing and checking my blog statistics several times a day. I thought I was going to write about my experience in London, but at the end it was about raw public archaeology more than my experiences.

One day I had dozens of posts and thousands of visits. My presence in the Internet had increased a lot, and with it my prestige. Early in 2008 I received an email from a professor in Galicia who was starting a blog about the use of the past in popular culture. She wanted me to participate and, of course, I did. “Pasado Reciclado” is a successful blog, still active, in which we analyse contemporary material culture evoking past icons. It is the most fun you can have writing about archaeology.

Almost seven years later I manage four blogs about archaeology with regular content, of which “Public Archaeology” and “Pasado Reciclado” are still the most important. In the meantime, “El futuro de la arqueología en España” (<http://elfuturodelaarqueologia.blogspot.com> [ccxcv](#)) served its purpose as an extension of the same titled book for almost two years, with several controversial posts that triggered debate in different events. Today, I still try to use blogging for something different. “El diario de Lancaster Williams” (<http://eldiariodelancasterwilliams.blogspot.com> [ccxcvi](#)) is the extension of a different book, “El Hallazgo”. Besides announcing events and offers, it is the platform for the voices of two of the main characters, Lancaster Williams, and Ian MacAllister (<http://irlandescabreado.wordpress.com> [ccxcvii](#)), in what has been called a “blognovel”.

Seven years ago, I would never have imagined I was going to be such a blogger. I have over 800 blog posts and more to come.



Figure 1: Public Archaeology's first post in 2007 (screenshot)

## Toda la arqueología es pública por definición

¿Por qué empieza todo esto? En 2005 le dije por primera vez a mi tutora lo que quería hacer en mi tesis. Arqueología Pública. «Pero toda la arqueología en España es pública por definición» me contestó... Y entonces se me cayó el alma a los pies y decidí ir a Londres. Puede que allí empezara todo, en mi frustración a la hora de explicar qué es lo que hacía. Nadie me entendía. Tenía que cambiar aquello.

Por un momento, las pocas referencias que podías encontrar en España a la arqueología pública estaban en mi blog. Ya había algunos equipos trabajando con comunidades, pero mi posición iba un paso más allá. Yo quería tratar las relaciones arqueología/público en toda su extensión, especialmente la política y la económica.

Por eso, en las entradas del blog intenté analizar la actualidad arqueológica desde la arqueología pública, intercalando entradas más explicativas durante los primeros años, con otras más «extrañas» después.

Entre los dos blogs, conseguimos que la arqueología pública llegara a mucha gente. Sólo quedaba asentar el proceso. ¿Es posible que internet cambiara en algo la forma de entender la arqueología? No. Pese a la estupenda acogida de los blogs y la rápida incorporación de otros dedicados a diferentes ámbitos de la arqueología, los blogs no movían la actualidad española. En lo que a mi concierne, congresos y publicaciones hicieron el trabajo, pero los blogs se convirtieron poco a poco en una referencia alternativa a las vías oficiales.

La arqueología en España está aún lejos de ser pública por definición, pero si me volvieran a decir eso hoy, ya podría reaccionar de otra manera.

## Ranting, ranting and ranting

I have said that “Public Archaeology” was a blog in Spanish, but, there were certain topics I needed to write about in English. The blog was the only platform I had to express myself in more than a couple of lines. What happened? If I needed to express myself in English, the reason could not be good. Actually, a boycott and a half...

## The WAC controversy:

April 2012

<http://publicarchaeology.blogspot.com.es/2012/04/wac7-lost-illusion.html> [ccxcviii](#)

November 2012

<http://publicarchaeology.blogspot.com.es/2012/11/road-to-perdition.html> [ccxcix](#)

I never met Peter Ucko. Unfortunately, he passed before I went to London. However, his spirit was still there, especially for public archaeology students. UCL changed my mind in very different ways and the World Archaeology Congress (WAC) was one of them. These kinds of congresses are monstrous, and lately too standardized for my taste.

Although there was something about WAC that made it different. It really was a World Archaeology Congress. My relationship with the organization has been turbulent, and now I just want it to change back to what Ucko wanted it to be. For details, check the links.

## The Springer controversy:

<http://publicarchaeology.blogspot.com.es/2013/12/boycott.html> [ccc](#)

In close relation with the WAC controversy, I just exploded last December (2013) with the publisher Springer and decided to start a personal boycott against them. The post did not have much repercussion besides my own journal, which declined to review any books from them. Funny thing was, that this same day (I saw the article the day after, shared dozens of times in Facebook) a Nobel Laureate did so and made a huge impact. I need a good award in order to rant properly.

## The System controversy:

<http://publicarchaeology.blogspot.com.es/2014/02/what-is-point.html> [ccci](#)

With the boycott to Springer still fresh, in late winter 2014, events came like a syzygy and I felt like ranting again about the system itself. What was the point of participating anyway? This has not been made for foreigners. But this same day I got an email about this book (the one you are reading now) and just forgot about it. Crazy chapter going on in Spanish and English...Will anyone read it?

## La audiencia

La verdad es que he tenido varios finales en falso para el blog, pero siempre que digo que lo dejo, tengo muchas cosas que contar de repente. Estoy convencido de que el blog ha sido un éxito, pero hacía ya unos años que la audiencia me tenía decepcionado. La interacción

pasó de poca a nula y no me gusta escribir para que nadie lo lea, sobre todo cuando se trata de temas controvertidos.

Hoy, con la perspectiva que da escribir sobre el tema y varias semanas a un ritmo muy bajo, me pregunto si en el fondo el blog no habrá sido un fracaso. Me resisto a pensarlo y la experiencia de «El futuro de la arqueología en España» me ayuda a reafirmarme en ello. El colectivo arqueológico español está aún poco decidido a debatir en un blog. Mientras en las mesas redondas asociadas a los eventos de presentación del libro nos quedábamos sin tiempo para debatir, en el blog nada...

Pero la mayor desesperación llega cuando te comparas con otras plataformas y ves que allí hay más movimiento. En cualquier caso, la oferta es tal, que hoy en día es difícil encontrar lo que buscas sin el apoyo de otras redes sociales, lo que implica tener también una audiencia en esas redes sociales.

Gestionar un blog es mucho más que escribir. Para triunfar sin ser de antemano una personalidad, necesitas mantener un nivel muy alto en las entradas, con unos contenidos atractivos. ¿Y eso qué significa? Que hay que elegir entre un blog comercial, y un blog personal (lo que creo que era el sentido original). Pero, sobre todo, como diría Lorna Richardson, que hay que diseñar una buena estrategia de comunicación digital.

En cualquier caso, esa sensación que tenía al comenzar el blog ya no existe. No tengo la necesidad de escribir que tenía antes. Pero, sobre todo, ahora tengo muchos compañeros escribiendo blogs de gran calidad. No siento que tenga nada más que aportar. Es el final de un ciclo.

-Pablo Aparicio: <http://pabloaparicioweb.blogspot.com> [cccii](#)

-Antonio Vizcaíno: <http://pi3dra.tumblr.com> [ccciii](#)

-Juan I. García: <http://arqueoart.blogspot.com> [ccciv](#)

-Adrián Carretón: <http://arqueoblog.com> [cccv](#)



De hecho, cuando hace unas semanas el autor de este último blog me dijo que «Public Archaeology» había sido un ejemplo para él, lo tuve claro. Si el alumno supera al maestro, quítate del medio.



Figure 2: Un pantallazo de Pasado Reciclado (captura de pantalla)

## The end of a cycle

So, that was all! Seven years and a...legacy? I want to think that all my writing was for something. It helped me clarify and share ideas. During this time I had the opportunity to share everything that was going on in public archaeology, set some ideas that I was about to publish in the traditional academic media, and, more importantly, build a small network of researchers and students willing to work under the premises of public archaeology. I don't remember if I had a goal when I started the blog, but even if I was so pretentious to think I could indoctrinate my colleagues, I finally managed to do it (I want to believe it was not only through the blog). What was the point of continuing? This is the story of an end; like the last post of a long-living blog that ran out of ideas. I am glad I have now the opportunity to write it.

Having a look at the list of "friend blogs" I linked to in my blog, I see that most of them are out of business now. Some of them did not even last a couple years. People get tired, sooner or later. It has taken me

more time, but, I am tired too. I think I've run out of ideas and I don't want the blog to become a collection of news, or a ranting platform. It was a place for reflection and analysis, and that is over now. It is hard to admit it, but at some point you have to stop.

What happens now? I guess I will continue collaborating with "Pasado Reciclado", although "Pi3dra" is offering great content in this same line. Sharing the blog makes it easier to maintain the activity at least. I know that I will come back at some point, with renewed strength, so this is more like a "see you later" or an "under refurbishment" than a "good bye".

## ¿Y ahora qué?

Ahora he empezado un blog sobre series de televisión y me tomaré un tiempo para pensar qué quiero hacer con mis redes sociales. Tengo más blogs de los que cuidar y quiero que todos ellos mejoren en calidad y en contenido. Mi abuela siempre me decía: «quien mucho abarca, poco aprieta» y puede que ese haya sido el detonante de mi adiós. Simplemente no podía más, pero cuando escribes más de 100 entradas al año, es imposible mantener el nivel.

Voy a terminar la tesis, voy a cerrar proyectos y, mientras tanto, me divertiré un poco...

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_IsVjJ0zK08](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IsVjJ0zK08)

[\*English speaking friends, you can find subtitles in the video]

## Epilogue

I have just started a new blog about different TV Series. Quite a change, but I cannot avoid writing about archaeology sometimes. I really hate to give up on archaeology blogging, so I will keep doing it. This is like a drug, or a therapy... After all this time, I can only conclude that blogs have been one of the greatest advances in communication. We might have a limited audience, but search engines always find you when someone is looking for the topics you talk about. Academic publishing is becoming more and more difficult for certain topics. The

market is obscene and the rankings are actually killing talent in the fake search for quality. Blogs let you write about topics that would not make an article, or would not even need to make an article, but are interesting for the community. They have been extremely useful for me, both as an author and researcher, so I only have good words.

I said this was the last post of my blog...Ask me again in another seven years.

# Etruscans Online

Lucy Shipley

Blog: <http://potsplacesstonesbones.blogspot.co.uk/> [cccvi](#)

## Introduction

When people ask me what I work on as an archaeologist, I know what's coming. I say "the Etruscans." They look confused. I say "pre-Roman Italy." They nod, smile and glaze, popping my specialism into a neat little box, conceptualising a people by the southern rivals who destroyed and absorbed their civilisation. No matter that Etruscan culture transformed large areas of Italy and the wider Western Mediterranean as they spread out from their heartland of Tuscany and Umbria between around 800 and 300 BCE, that Etruscan objects have been found from Egypt (Grmek 1994) to Germany (Arafat and Morgan 1997), that Etruscan influence kept the Greeks out of central Italy and kept the forces of Rome at bay. No, the Etruscans just came before the Romans, and that's that. This conversation, and the ensuing awkwardness, is one of the reasons I started blogging about this Iron Age society, and its misrepresentation in the past and present.

So what can blogging accomplish? How can blogging be of help, aside from making me feel better and providing an expressive outlet? In this chapter, I will argue that blogging has the potential to transform sub-disciplines like Etruscan studies, relatively closed communities from which the general public has been systematically excluded. From busting the myths of the Etruscan mystique, to exposing poor reporting in the paper press, blogging could be a way forward for a discipline that is notoriously resistant to change (Izzet 2007: 13). I suggest that current models in public reporting of Etruscan archaeology stem from antiquated precedents, visible from at least the early Renaissance period in Italy, if not the ancient world itself. These have led to an evolving series of tropes, focused on the presentation of the Etruscans as possessors of mysterious, arcane knowledge, a people apart. These stereotypes form

the subject of the second part of this paper, as I demonstrate their dangerous transmutation into online media, including the primary sources of information for non-expert Etruscology. It is only through open access content produced by expert scholars and presented in an accessible manner that these kinds of stereotypes can be undermined and blogging is an ideal method for accomplishing this.

The dangers of such misrepresentations are exposed fully in the penultimate part of this paper. I analyse the development and dissemination of an archaeological media storm focused on the discovery of infant remains at one of the most complex sites of the Etruscan world, Poggio Civitate. The presentation of the findings at the American Institute of Archaeology conference was picked up on by non-digital media, and presented entirely inaccurately. The nuances and subtleties of the original argument were lost, and caution was thrown to the winds by journalistic reporting. Subsequently, bloggers weighed in to attack the interpretation offered for the presence of the infant remains. The episode illustrates the problematic position of specialist disciplines in an age of 24 hour news media, both on and offline, but also the positives and pitfalls of blogging as archaeological critique. The incident demonstrates the need for archaeologists to take ownership of the presentation of our work in the media, developing non-academic writing styles that nonetheless present complex information in an accessible way. This need is at its most desperate in those disciplines, like Etruscology, that present startling finds to the world, then abandon them to inappropriate and inaccurate reporting based on stereotypes and misconception. Large scale scholarly blogging could be a way to resolve this pressing problem.

## Discovering the Etruscan World

The most lasting image of the Etruscans is that they are somehow other, foreign and strange. When one considers their position within the classical world, this idea is not a surprising one. Rivals of the Greeks for power in the western Mediterranean, the earliest classical sources present the Etruscans as malign or predatory. Hesiod (*Theogony* 12.1.1) describes the Etruscans, or Tyrsenoi, as being the descendants of

Odysseus and Circe, the product of a union hemmed about with unnatural power. Aristotle recounts (Pol. [3.19.1280a](#)) the Etruscan allegiance with Carthage, and their staunch defence of trade routes around Corsica, preventing Greek settlers from establishing their dominance in the area. The home lives of the Etruscans are also discussed, most famously by Theopompus of Chios ([Histories](#) 115), who uses accusations of sexual intrigue to question the right of Etruscan families to their land. His description of Etruscan women as emboldened and masculine, sexually voracious and untrustworthy, is a deliberate action, simultaneously emphasising the barbarous 'Otherness' of these people and hinting at the illegitimate nature of their rule.

These models were adapted and adopted by Roman authors, including Livy ([History of Rome 5.1 and 7.2](#)). Yet, by the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the strange behaviour of the Etruscans had become an object of fascination. Three hundred years after the fall of Veii in 396 BC, an event which marked the end of the Etruscan period of dominance in central Italy, Etruscan religious practices and fortune telling are recounted by the philosopher Lucretius ([6.397-82](#)). He relates the existence of *carmina*, or books of divination, which record methods of interpreting lightning strikes to tell the future. This is just one aspect of a wider Etruscan interest in prediction, with a raft of methods from hepatoscopy (the study of the liver of sacrificed animals) to observing the flight of birds. These techniques were gathered together under the term "Etrusca disciplina" (Colonna [2005](#)). The retained value of these forms of arcane knowledge developed the old Roman rivalries and antipathies into a more complex form of estrangement, establishing the major stereotype of the mysterious Etruscan. Strange and unknowable, separate from pragmatic Roman practices, the Etruscan behaviours described by Lucretius are the first hint of two thousand years of speculation and alienation.

These early descriptions of Etruscan religious mysteries were elaborated in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The Emperor Claudius himself compiled a substantial volume on the history and religion of the Etruscans, perhaps due to his own familial connections to old Etruscan families (Holleman [1988](#)). The figure of the Etruscan haruspex, or fortune teller, was a particular feature of Claudius' interest, deepening the association between Etruscan culture and mysterious religious practices. The

uncanny accuracy of Etruscan soothsayers is illustrated in the legend that it was a haruspex who provided Julius Caesar with his fatal warning prior to his assassination (Rawson 1978). The survival of Etruscan religious practices as a quasi-underground cult is attested to by inscriptions naming individuals as haruspices, with examples written in the Etruscan language surviving from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Freeman 1999). Etruscan religion was still a force to be reckoned with during late antiquity, although it remained a shadowy mystery cult, akin to that strange new religion, Christianity. Both religions promoted the idea of an eternal afterlife, although Etruscan beliefs suggested that this could be obtained through sacrifice rather than faith and good works, and both incorporated the figure of a central prophet, Tages in the Etruscan case (Briquel 2007: 157).

As Christianity became the dominant religion of the Empire, Etruscan religion lost its influence and appeal, Etruscan texts disappeared or were destroyed, and even the Claudian history was lost, adding an additional level of separation between Etruscan culture and those who encountered or considered its workings. Yet, the earlier inferences of unearthly knowledge and mysteriousness remained attached to the people who had developed these beliefs, now interpreted through the prism of Christian disgust for pagan practices. Etruscan rulers and magicians alike appear in Dante's *Divina Commedia* (Schoonhoven 2010), where they are placed firmly in *Inferno*, condemned for their torture of noble Roman kings (Paradiso IV: 84) and their warped beliefs (Inferno XX: 46). The mysterious Etruscan had become a figure of horror for Dante's Christian audience. Attitudes towards Etruscan ancestors did begin to change during the 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries as a rebellion against an alienated papacy (Shipley 2013), and chroniclers (medieval bloggers?) such as Leonardo Bruni revived images of the Etruscans as originators of Italian culture (Ianziti 2007:249). This idea, however, remained closely entwined with a vision of secret knowledge, and while Florentines in particular grew increasingly engaged with their Etruscan past, these ancestors continued to be presented as strange and unknowable, albeit in an idealised rather than vilified fashion.

This interest was facilitated by the discovery of Etruscan artefacts in Italy, the recording of these discoveries by chroniclers, and the

establishment of collections of antiquities by wealthy families, such as the Medici of Florence. Yet, the earliest recorded excavation of Etruscan artefacts dates from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and establishes a second clear trope which continues to be used in the modern world. During the digging of foundations for an extended city wall at Arezzo, strange objects were uncovered, painted vases that the chronicler Ristoro d'Arezzo described as "*blue and red...light and subtle, without heaviness*" (D'Arezzo 1872: 137). He presented these discoveries as a gift from God, a divine sign of favour for the city of Arezzo. This is the second major trope in Etruscan archaeology the idea that discoveries are unusual events, rare survivals or extraordinary blessings from the past or from the heavens. Starting with d'Arezzo, this stereotype continued throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, reinforced by the regular discovery and eventual systematic looting of Etruscan cemeteries (Leighton 2004: 12). Intact tombs filled with immensely valuable objects continued to be viewed as singular incidents, with the discovery of the Regiolini-Galassi tomb at Cerveteri a case in point. Excavated in 1836 by an unusual pairing of a priest and an architect, the golden jewellery enclosed within this tumulus, alongside bronze and silver pieces and pottery, was quickly purchased by the Vatican and enfolded within the Church. The artefacts were displayed like relics, and never incorporated into nuanced interpretations of the individuals who were buried with them, the two bodies instantly assigned royal status and obscured by their glorious grave goods. For English travellers and Grand Tourists, such finds were objects of intrigue and desire, and these individuals gladly adopted the twin conceptions of the Etruscans as mysterious, and the excavation of their tombs as extraordinary (Chai 2011: 182-3; Pieraccini 2009: 7; Ramage 2011: 189).

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century went on, archaeologists turned to the historical record to fit Etruscan discoveries into the sweeping dialectics of culture history, and in doing so inadvertently added a further layer to the mysterious Etruscan's stereotype. Such wonderful artefacts as those discovered at Regiolini-Galassi, clearly influenced by contact from the eastern Mediterranean, could not have been made by the indigenous peoples of Italy. The account of Herodotus, describing the Etruscans as the result of a migration from Turkey (Histories 1:94), seemed entirely



plausible. Yet as excavations grew more rigorous, this orthodoxy began to crumble. The young Massimo Pallottino, the greatest Etruscologist of the last century, began to argue for cultural continuity between indigenous Villanovan peoples and the later Etruscan cities (Pallottino 1939, 1947). He suggested that trading connections had resulted in the new Near Eastern styles, with the rich metal resources of Etruria used to gain influence and luxury goods across the seas. While Pallottino's arguments fitted the archaeological evidence, the old adherence to classical sources refused to die (Drews 1992; van der Meer 2004). Linguistic evidence, too, was used to support the latter idea Etruscan is a non-Indo European language, unrelated to any other indigenous Italian tongue (Bonfante and Bonfante 2002; Wallace 2008). The result of these academic arguments was confusion in public perceptions of Etruscan origins. The fact that nobody seemed to agree on who these people were and where they came from only added to their mystique.

Away from academic archaeology, another author was busily compiling a travelogue which would pull together the strands of these previous stereotypes, and construct his own vision of the Etruscan world which would prove hugely influential. D.H. Lawrence had fled from the constraints of middle class England during the 1920s, and hidden in Tuscany with his scandalous new wife, Frieda, whose academic ex-husband had once taught Lawrence. After a summer spent exploring archaeological sites in Tuscany in 1927, Lawrence wrote his *Sketches of Etruscan Places*, a passionate protest against the political situation of fascist Italy and the constrained nature of the England he had fled. In this work, the Etruscans were recast as rebellious heroes, hedonistic lovers of pleasure and beauty, contrasted against the dull, militaristic Romans who would overcome them. Lawrence's writing is characteristically lyrical, and the book was unsurprisingly influential. Building on a century of miraculous discoveries and mystical origins, Lawrence's intimate view of the Etruscans added a compelling further vision; the Etruscan as tormented, artistic victim, broken on the wheel of Roman rigour. This idea could be incorporated perfectly with the initial conception of the Etruscans as strange and other, now that they could appeal to those outside traditional society, providing a past people to identify with. Conspiracy theories and crypto-archaeology began to cling to the

Etruscan world, and would only strengthen over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before bursting into life on the internet.

## Etruscans Online

These three stereotypes – the figure of the mysterious Etruscan, the miraculous, God-given discovery and the beautiful rebel have now all migrated online. To investigate the Etruscans through a search engine is to dive into a mish-mash of all three ideologies, presented by non-expert websites. The most problematic of these is [www.mysteriousetruscans.com](http://www.mysteriousetruscans.com), whose front page is illustrated in Figure 1. The name of the site is a very obvious reference to the most powerful of the three Etruscan stereotypes, and is deliberately chosen to appeal to readers fascinated by the false mystery. For it is false, after a century of well-organised, professional archaeological research, the Etruscans are no more mysterious than any other people of the Iron Age. Indeed, they could be considered better understood than many other cultural groups of the period, certainly better than the peoples inhabiting Britain and Ireland during this period, Celts or otherwise (Collis 2003, 1996a, 1996b).



Figure 1. Home page of [www.mysteriousetruscans.com](http://www.mysteriousetruscans.com)

Yet, this knowledge has not migrated outwards from the increasingly restricted journals. The major English language journal dedicated to Etruscan archaeology, *Etruscan Studies*, ceased to be open-access in 2012, while the Italian language *Studi Etruschi* is not available online. Even within these journals, the sub-discipline remains locked in remorseless patterns of presentation, focused on the preparation of typologies, the analysis of single artefacts and entrenched arguments. They are the opposite of accessible academia, difficult to access and difficult to understand. The frankly dull and repetitive patterns of interpretation that are employed in academic Etruscan studies do not translate well to the fast moving world of the internet. The archaeology is left to be interpreted by non-experts, who are of course free to develop and perpetuate their own vision of the past, one influenced by stereotypes and outside perception, rather than deep study of the data at hand. The promotion of emotive and non-factual responses to the Etruscan world by D.H. Lawrence finds its successor on sites such as *Mysterious Etruscans* and they colour the online reporting of anything to do with the Etruscan world.

*Mysterious Etruscans* itself is by no means the worst example of this kind of online media. While it presents information in a fashion deliberately designed to support preconceptions of Etruscan otherness, the site nonetheless does provide factual information. Other sources of online Etruscology are not so rigorous. YouTube is a particular arena in which Etruscan conspiracy theories can grow and spread. A video with over 29,000 views declares that the Etruscans were lost Israelites who ended up in Italy and “ruled Rome” ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdRLC\\_N2UDM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdRLC_N2UDM) <sup>cccvii</sup>). Another video, which argues that the key to the Etruscan language was found in a cave in Illinois considered by the filmmakers to be the tomb of Alexander the Great ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G\\_XiOKoV8QM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_XiOKoV8QM) <sup>cccviii</sup>), has had over 26,000 views. It is impossible to know whether these thousands of people were genuinely searching for information about the Etruscan world, and whether they were convinced or confused by the strange arguments presented to them. Such films are an inevitable extension of the ideology which associates Etruscan culture with occult knowledge

and strangeness, or which chooses to identify with the Etruscans as underdogs and misfits of the ancient world.

One particular example of the warping of Etruscan archaeology through online media involves excavations at the city of Orvieto, an Etruscan and medieval stronghold, in the summer of 2012. Funerary structures of an unusual pyramidal form were uncovered during excavations led jointly by the Orvieto Archaeological Park and St Anselm's College, thought to date to at least the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Instantly, the online reporting of the story referenced the classic Etruscan stereotypes. Discovery News described the Etruscans as “one of antiquity's great enigmas” and followed this up with a reference to them as a “fun loving and eclectic people” (Lorenzi 2012). However, these speculative and inappropriate comments were only the first indication of what was to come. The story was picked up by a far wider community interested in crypto-archaeology, and ended up appearing on [www.muldersworld.com](http://www.muldersworld.com) [cccix](#), an X-files inspired website dedicated to the paranormal. The opinions of the excavators and the Etruscan community were steadily swallowed up by the Internet, with anyone seeking the views of the archaeologists online due for disappointment.

## Not Playing the Game

Any discovery which violates the code of mystery and idealism with which the non-specialist reporting of the Etruscan world is likely to provoke a strong reaction from these quarters. This was demonstrated by the presentation at a professional conference of material from one of the most important Etruscan sites, that of Poggio Civitate (Murlo). The site, located on a hilltop about 20km south of Siena, was once dominated by a monumental complex of buildings, deliberately destroyed around the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BC (Phillips 1993; Tuck et al 2010). The site had been occupied prior to this phase of construction, with three earlier, equally large-scale buildings destroyed by an accidental fire at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC (Tuck and Nielson 2001), and evidence suggesting even earlier occupation dating back to the Iron Age (Tuck, Rodriguez and Glennie 2012). Excavations at the site began in the mid-

1960s, under the direction of Kyle Meredith Phillips, and have continued uninterrupted to the present day<sup>18</sup>.

In the summer of 2012, a project to re-analyse and categorise the bulk bone finds from the site began, directed by Sarah Kansa. Kansa set to work on the endless bags of bulk animal bone, excavated alongside potsherds, terracotta tile and other artefacts from the monumental complex and labelled by trench and context. She painstakingly ascribed species to each fragment, pulling together a picture of the animals being consumed at Poggio Civitate. However, during this process, Kansa also encountered the remains of human infants, a discovery which surprised everyone. They were found on the floor of one of the earlier 7<sup>th</sup> century buildings, associated with domestic refuse, and were fragmentary, mixed with animal bones, not indicative of a formal burial. Site director Anthony Tuck, from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, presented the findings at the American Institute of Archaeology Annual Meeting in January 2013. He developed a careful and sophisticated interpretation of why the infant remains might have ended up where they did, arguing that high rates of infant mortality may have influenced the treatment of their remains, and that infants did not qualify for full Etruscan personhood (cf. Fowler [2001](#)).

This story did not fit with the established tropes of Etruscan archaeology. First, the remains were found in the course of re-examination, part of a long series of investigations, not in a “God-given” miraculous single find. This long history of excavation ensured that there was little mystery surrounding the remains, which were presented initially in a matter of fact way, accompanied by a nuanced explanation. Second, and most importantly, modern identification with Etruscan people as romanticised rebels was halted in its tracks. How could anyone choose to identify with a people who didn't treat infants with the

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<sup>18</sup> I should say at this point that I have been part of the Poggio Civitate Project for the past four years.

same adoration they receive in the Western world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Etruscan websites and blogs ignored the story entirely, the discovery simply did not fit with the vision of the past they wished to present. The grisly details, however, appealed directly to the more general world of archaeological blogging. “Baby bones found scattered in ancient Italian village” screamed LiveScience (Pappas 2013), steadfastly not using the word “Etruscan” in its headline. The Daily Mail online went one better, attributing the remains to Romans (Smith 2013) in a spectacular example of poor archaeological journalism. Osteoarchaeologists who had never visited the site then critiqued the original work based on the press coverage, with blogs such as “Bones Don’t Lie” (Meyers 2013) and “Past Horizons PR,” (Killgrove 2013) arguing for the misinterpretation of the remains, unknowingly supporting utopian models of the Etruscan past.

The entire episode illustrated the constricted situation of Etruscan archaeology online, particularly compared with the earlier discovery in Orvieto. The two stories garnered almost equal attention, but from two very different communities. The pyramidal funerary structures were exactly the kind of information which supported and appealed to the stereotypes of Etruscan archaeology in the public eye and they were embraced without question. The infant remains from Poggio Civitate were mislabelled, misunderstood and criticised. I would suggest that this is because they did not fit with the idealised mythologies and narratives that reconstruct the Etruscan world online. The full information from the excavation was published in the autumn of 2013 in *Etruscan Studies*, behind the paywall of the journal’s publisher, allowing it to be ignored by the non-specialist communities. Although the reaction to both finds was very different, the end result was the same: an opportunity for the general public to find out more about the realities of Etruscan archaeology was lost. Overcome with speculation in the first case, drowned out with criticism and misinformation in the second, two discoveries that should have cleared the smoke and broken the mirrors of Etruscan archaeology passed the public by. How many more will do the same?

## Conclusion

I may have appeared, throughout this article, to consider much of the online media surrounding the Etruscans as deeply negative, promoting outdated stereotypes and developing and encouraging emotive reactions to Etruscan archaeology. Yet, as I have also argued, this situation is entirely due to the lack of engagement with the public by Etruscan specialists. The literature remains exclusive in terms of both access and content, particularly in the context of online knowledge and research. These problems are not unique to Etruscan studies. Almost any small sub-discipline in archaeology will have similar issues in communicating itself to the public, and many others experience problems with unfortunate preconceptions linked to mystery and pseudoscience like pre-Columbian archaeology and Egyptology, to name just two examples.

The only way for Etruscan scholars to improve both our own public image, the information available online to the public and the perception of the Etruscans by non-specialists, is to take action. I began this article with a reference to my own blog, which I use not only to discuss the Etruscan world, but other issues within archaeological practice. I have had popular (well, for me; 200+ views is nothing special by comparison with larger blogs) posts on some of the very issues discussed in this article: the infant remains at Poggio Civitate and the issue of the trope of mysterious Etruscans. Yet, I am deeply aware that my blog remains undiscovered and unread by the majority of people who might find it interesting. Other specialists are also making an effort to reach out to the internet. Classics Confidential have uploaded two video blogs on YouTube featuring Etruscan scholar Dr Phil Perkins on the genetic evidence for Etruscan origins (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEt1b0Zazfocccxi>), as have tourist organisations such as Orvieto Viva (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SINkEE7Z7yMcccxi>) and museums across the world. Yet all these individual videos have, like my blog, experienced relatively little interest. All have fewer views than the inaccurate videos discussed in this paper. Yet all are also simple format lecture or question and answer videos, which cannot compete with the

sensationalist views presented in their unprofessional rivals. They do not capture the interest of the reader in the same way, and as such are doomed to remain under appreciated and under watched.

I remain convinced that presenting accurate, nuanced information online is the only way forward for Etruscan archaeology, and the only possible method of exposing the misconceptions at the heart of what, to me, are very tired stereotypes. However, the failure of simple videos to beat off the myths of the Etruscans is unsurprising. New approaches to presenting our knowledge must be developed in order to succeed in sharing the Etruscan world online. It is only by making our content more available, more compelling, more exciting, without sacrificing depth and accuracy, which archaeologists can compete with pseudo-science online. This is the great challenge for archaeology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, yet successful promotion and enjoyment of archaeological knowledge through online media would soon have effects elsewhere, perhaps in television and paper news reporting. If every excavation was accompanied by a detailed blog by the team in question, this could form the primary source for the inevitable non-specialist articles, whether in digital or print format. By gathering together these different accounts in a single forum, accompanied by pages dedicated to already established information about Etruscan culture, the work of publicising Etruscan archaeology could be shared out among many hands. A group blog (a glog?), worked on by a community of scholars determined to break away from myths, break the disciplinary silence and share Etruscan archaeology of the world could be a solution. An Etruscanpedia would gather together experts and younger scholars, students and interested members of the public, and would break the two thousand year old power of the image of the mysterious Etruscan through the newer power of the Internet. It would take a vast amount of cooperation, promotion and most of all time, but never having to hear the Etruscans described as "Roman" again would be more than worth it.



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# The Edgcumbe cannibal fork – blogging a creative response to the meanings of things

Katy Whitaker

Blog: <http://artefactual.co.uk/cocxviii>

“The practice of kidnapping persons, on purpose to be eaten, proves that this flesh is in high repute.” (Williams 1858, 211)

This short chapter describes the rationale behind one of my blog posts (Whitaker 2014) which was inspired by an artistic intervention to a display of Fijian cannibal forks at the University of Cambridge’s Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA). The blog post also tried to rise to Mike Pitts’ (2013) recently blogged call to action for specialists in general and archaeologists in particular to find better ways to communicate about their work.

Pitts, editor of popular monthly magazine *British Archaeology*, identifies the need for “a different form of writing and thinking” in the face of, for example, thrill-seeking television programmes, in order to engage a public interested in archaeology; and states that, far from ‘dumbing-down’, this new communication – using vehicles such as blogs – will succeed if it focuses on “the stimulation of thought”. Just as the MAA’s cannibal fork display represents a different way to stimulate thought in the museum’s visitors, I experimented with a way to prompt questions about artefacts and archive material through blogging.

## Cannibal forks

Created in the Autumn of 2010, “Tall Stories: Cannibal Forks” was an intervention into the MAA display of Fijian cannibal forks, led by Arts and Humanities Research Council Creative Fellow, Alana Jelinek. It comprises

of 26 new forks carved in native British greenwood by museum staff and their colleagues, displayed alongside the historical forks carved in Fiji in wood from native palm tree species. Jelinek (2010) intended that the resulting artwork would prompt consideration of “why and how we think what we think.” As well as videoing their craft activity the participants also exchanged and recorded their knowledge about the creation and use of the historical forks that are curated in the museum’s anthropology collections. Since then Jelinek has developed a series of art exhibitions and interventions designed to explore ideas of story-telling and knowledge; myth-making, fact-sharing, knowledge-transfer – considerations of the facts that people choose to learn and choose to recount.

Fijian cannibal forks are potent objects to experiment with in this regard. They are contested objects whose histories are coloured by accounts of barbarous behaviour by the Fijian people. So terrifying were the observations of Fijian cannibalism made by Thomas Williams (a mid-nineteenth century missionary in Fiji) for example, that his editor felt it necessary to print a caveat to Williams’ (1858, 214) descriptions,

“It is but just to state, that much detail and illustrative incident furnished by the author on this subject, have been withheld, and some of the more horrible features of the rest repressed or softened.”

This reassurance following such graphic reports as mutilated victims being made to watch parts of their dismembered bodies being cooked, candid descriptions of human butchery methods, and accounts of cannibals made famous for the numbers of people they claimed to have eaten (Williams 1858, 205-214)!

Cannibal fork hermeneutics are reflected in the MAA catalogue, in which each record grows and expands as new information is made available. The record for cannibal fork 1955.246 is a typical example of the developing interpretive cycle. Collected by Sir Arthur Gordon (Governor of Fiji from 1875 to 1880; Francis 2011) and given to Baron von Hügel (who became the museum’s founding curator in 1883, and who had also spent time in Fiji; Allot 2012), this fork and associated objects were listed in the Faculty Board of Archaeology and Anthropology’s

*Annual Report on the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, List of Accessions to the Museum, 1955-56.* As the compiler of the Accession Record noted, "The Duckworth Laboratory [Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies, Cambridge] possesses some of the bones of the last man to be eaten in Fiji, so the addition to the Museum's collection of Fijian cannibal forks is considered very appropriate" (1956, 1). The implication of the 1950s record is that cannibal fork meanings inherited from the nineteenth-century were not being questioned; these were the objects used by those Fijians who had practiced cannibalism, to share and feast on human flesh.

In 2011 the meaning of fork 1955.246 and others in the catalogue started to shift – or accrete – as a more nuanced and scholarly addition was made to the record, quoting Fergus Clunie's interpretation of the Fijian terminology for cannibal forks which suggests that the names "have been more of an explanatory term applied when explaining what they were used for to outsiders rather than terms applied amongst themselves by people native to the areas in which the forks were used" ([MAA Catalogue](#)). As Jelinek (2010) concluded from her research following her first encounter with the museum's holdings, that whilst based on a real object used in ritual feeding, many (perhaps all?) of the forks collected in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries were produced to satisfy the predilections and prejudices of the missionaries, ethnologists and tourists who brought them home to Europe (see for example Arens 1980 and Obeyesekere 2005).

As they carved their new forks and discussed the knowledge and stories that they held in mind, the "Tall Stories" project participants moved the record on further when their greenwood forks were accessioned to the museum collections. The ongoing craft activity – literally telling stories around the camp fire or basking in the late Summer sun whilst whittling, if photographs of the developing project are a good representation (Jelinek 2012) – provided the reflective context in which, whilst hands were occupied, knowledge could be collected, developed and exchanged through conversation. The outcomes could then be shared with a wider audience – the museum's visitors – through the artwork.

## Blogging a cannibal fork story

I saw in this an opportunity to explore the wider nature of the information that we use when trying to understand objects. Drawing on my professional career in archaeological archives, my woodworking practice, and inspired by the MAA artwork (thus demonstrating the achievement of Jelinek's aim), I started to make cannibal forks and to think about primary evidence from archival sources – in addition to reports, travellers' tales, antiquarian inventories – that might bear upon fork meanings.

Whilst I concede that the museum's new cannibal forks are intended to be interpreted in the site-specific context of their display alongside the historical objects, they are nevertheless too young to have accumulated the time-deep museum paraphernalia of document, written record, note, photograph, drawing and publication that, following their collection, contributes to Fijian fork meanings. The new fork biographies are shorter. There are perhaps fewer facts to interpret and dispute. Yet, what chapters are missing from the biographies of the historical Fijian forks? What parts of their stories cannot be told for want of testimony left by their carvers and their various owners, for example?

In our world of online catalogues and digitised archive material, a blogpost seemed an appropriate way to try to communicate a cannibal fork story through not only the fork itself, but also additional elements of gathered archive. Blogs provide a flexible way to work with multiple digital media. This resulted in my creation of the Edgcumbe cannibal fork blog post.





Object type: fork

Museum number: MAEB:1987.11.622

Description: four-pronged Cannibal Fork made of wood, 290mm x 53mm x 53mm

Materials: wood

Technique: carved

Acquisition Date: 1987

Notes: Donated by the Edgcumbe family (see correspondence file 1987-11-EDG), claimed to be a Fijian cannibal fork

The fork's museum catalogue photograph and caption are presented alongside transcribed manuscripts and scanned documents dating from 1841, sourced from three different archives, including: a transcribed diary entry; a transcribed letter; a digitised copy of a General Register Office registration of death; and a digitised newspaper article. These items give contradictory evidence about the fork, suggesting different ways that it has been or could be interpreted and

understood. Certain elements in the archive material can, should the reader care to make enquiries, be established as factual by referring to other sources that are readily accessed online.

Finally, a gallery of photographs that show stages in the object's manufacture confirm that the artefact is in fact recently carved; and allow the reader who is interested in understanding manufacturing and technical processes – common archaeological and historical interests – to unpick at least part of the fork's *chaîne opératoire*. The evidence, presented under a lurid title, “My brother was eaten by cannibals”, which reflects intentionally the tenor of the Victorian ethnography, is intended to prompt questions about the information that we depend on to make sense of things; and from those things, to make sense of the past.

The completed post can be found at:  
<http://artefactual.co.uk/2014/02/26/my-brother-was-eaten-by-cannibals/> [cccix](#)

## Small steps towards a big conversation

For archaeological organisations and individuals who want to engage with an increasingly internet-literate audience, the flexibility to present a rich mixture of text, images, web-links and other media, and the various evaluation tools with which to assess both quantitative and qualitative impact on readers should make blogs a very attractive and powerful communication medium. Blogs enjoy a more immediate and convenient means of evaluation than most museums enjoy in judging the impacts of a display – with the added advantage that interaction over time with any given blog post is also captured. Blogs come with tools and techniques to make posts more searchable and “findable”. As Pitts (2013) observes, an archaeological blog post can be just as high quality as a more traditional journal article, yet have a far wider reach to a potentially limitless online audience.

Nevertheless, the audience that an established museum can, to some extent, take for granted needs to be found by the bloggers themselves. Also, a museum can target its evaluation activities to

guarantee a response from visitors in person, whilst with an online blog, a visitor can remain silent. For archaeological blogs to live up to their promise to reach out and to engage, they must be read and responded to.

It is outside the scope of this brief article to begin to assess the demographics of archaeologically-themed social media use or to analyse the consumption of blogged archaeological content. Whilst archaeologists blog for a range of different reasons, and so will expect to communicate with a varied audience which could range from the tens to the thousands, blogging offers an unrivalled opportunity to connect and to communicate. We can inform our readership of archaeological issues and questions without a dependency on traditional forms of communication, such as a capricious mainstream broadcast media.

My blog's digital medium gave me a way to experiment with a creative response to object meaning, and I look forward to using the blog platform's tools to find out who comes across the Edgcumbe cannibal fork, and what they think of it. It is too early, however, for me to judge that blog post's impact. Just as my response to Alana Jelinek's intervention at MAA has come some four years after the artwork's creation, archaeologists' blog posts might prove to have the most impact in the long term. I contend that we must take a long view. The archaeological community, in its broadest sense, is already taking advantage of the benefits that blogging can bring to building relationships. Yet beyond the exciting immediacy of a still-young medium, we should consider how we curate our online presence to have the best chance, over time, to effect the stimulation of thought in new readers around the world.

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# Fired Twice for Blogging and Social Media: Why CRM Firms are Afraid of Social Media

Chris Webster

Blog: <http://www.digtech-llc.com/blog/cccxxvi>

During the 2011 Society for American Archaeology Meeting in Sacramento, California I attended a session called “Blogging Archaeology”. I’d heard of blogs before but hadn’t read any regularly. I wasn’t even on Twitter. At the start of the session the chair, Coleen Morgan, had a slide up showing the conference hashtag for Twitter, among other things. That pretty much changed my life.

Before the first paper started, I’d signed up to Twitter for the first time and @ArcheoWebby was born. Instantly, I was transported to the conference back-channel by following the #SAA2011 Twitter hashtag. People were having conversations about papers they were seeing. There were people not even in attendance that were interacting with people tweeting from the conference. A new world of possibilities was opening, but that was just the beginning.

After a very enlightening session that fateful Saturday afternoon I went right back to my hotel room and started a blog called, “Random Acts of Science”. I’d been thinking of starting something like that for a while and the session was the final straw. How could I not participate in this behind-the-scenes action? It’s the same way I felt when I found out about geocaching. What do you mean there are little treasure boxes hidden all over the world and all around me?

## Fired Once

When I started *Random Acts of Science* (RAoS) I was working for a medium-sized cultural resource management (CRM) firm out of Reno, Nevada. The firm was based in Colorado, but, Reno was one of the bigger offices. I was a Crew Chief and had a mediocre level of responsibility. I was very cautious regarding blogging about my work and took care in not revealing anything sensitive. I'll cover sensitivity of archaeological information in a few pages.

It was blog post number seven that did it for me. We were on a project in central Nevada and I'd seen an article in the local paper about the history of the town we were in, Tonopah. I decided to write a blog post about the history of Tonopah and the resurgence of mining in the area. The article mentioned the mining company we were working for, so, that was no secret. Using information available on the mining company's website, I created a post that talked about what they were doing in the town and what we were doing on the survey.

The post went largely unnoticed for a couple months. Then, I sent an email to my boss asking if he could put me in contact with some agency officials so I could ask them some questions for a blog post I was working on. Within a few days, after not hearing anything about the email I sent, I received an email from my boss. The subject line was "conditions for termination". That's right, they fired me by email!

I immediately called the owner of the company in Colorado. He said I was fired because I broke confidentiality by mentioning that we were on a survey for a client. The fact that the client was talking about the project to the local media was beside the point. The company had a zero tolerance policy about breaking client confidentiality, which I was not aware of. I'm sure I signed something in the confusing mountain of paperwork when I was hired, but that had been nearly a year prior to this incident.

There was no going back. They wouldn't listen and wouldn't hire me back even if I took the post down. In fact, I did take the post down, but I put it back up when I realized I was never going back. Within a couple weeks I had a new job and a new appreciation for the

apprehensiveness companies can have against social media, or so I thought.

## Fired Twice

My next job was with another Reno company. This one was a bit smaller and had just the one office in Reno. Years earlier this was the first company I'd worked for in the Great Basin.

By the time I started working with company number two I was using Twitter and Instagram, in addition to blogging, quite extensively. This came into play when we were on a project on a mine in central Nevada.

In CRM, when you go on a mine and it's been a year or more since you worked on the mine you have to do what's called "site specific" training. It's part of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) training you have to get before even stepping foot on the mine. Often, the training from the mine is all about how they are great for the environment, how mining is good for all, and it's all sunshine and roses. Well, I have a blog now, so I thought I'd write a little story about it.

I found the mine on Google Earth first. Then, I looked back in the satellite image history and found the mine area about 10-15 years earlier. I put both in a blog post. Keep in mind, the blog post didn't mention that I was working on a mine, didn't mention what company I was working for, and didn't mention the name or location of the mine. So, there was no identifying information at all. I wrote about how the site specific training I've had always had a touch of arrogance from the mine company and a little too much hyperbole. You get tired of hearing them brag about how good they are for the environment while you're sitting in a hole the size of a mountain.

A few days after I posted the blog entry I got a call from the Principal Investigator (P.I.) at the company. She was furious! She said the post was way out of line and that I should take it down immediately. I asked her what in particular was bad about it and she couldn't even tell me. All she said was to take it down. Well, I had bills to pay so I complied, but I didn't, and still don't, know exactly what was wrong with the post. The



mine company would never be able to tell that an employee of a sub-contractor wrote the post and that is assuming they could even find the post online. There was literally no defining information in it whatsoever. That's not what got me fired, however.

A few months went by and we were still on the same project. I hadn't written any more blog posts about the mine, or, about the project we were on. I was, however, using Instagram and Twitter to send out interesting photographs of projectile points and other artifacts. We were finding a lot of intact points on the project and it was fun sharing them with the world via social media.

Of course, when I took the photos I made sure that GPS and location services were turned off on my iPhone so the meta data in the picture would not contain any coordinates. I also made sure to not mention any location data in the posts. Finally, I never took a photo with geographic features in the background. I didn't want someone to be able to find these locations at all.

At some point, though, I connected the social networking app Foursquare to my Instagram account. Foursquare is a check-in app and lets people know where you are. It also connects with other applications, like Instagram, and will insert a place name into your photos if you want it too. When I'd connected Foursquare it automatically reconnected my location services. Apparently, I sent out a picture on Instagram and Twitter with the name of the mine tagged in it. The mine was auto-tagged by Foursquare and I missed it.

The company waited until we got back to Reno at the end of the session to tell me about all this. I was called into the PI's office and she told me about the tweet. I almost didn't believe it and had to go back and check. Sure enough, I'd tagged the mine in the tweet. She said it was my second infraction, which they don't normally give, and that she had to let me go. At least she called it a lay-off in case I wanted to go on unemployment.

What was wrong with the tweet, really? Well, since the mine was only tagged with a location then probably not much. If they'd searched their own name (the name of the mine) then they might have seen it. What would they have seen? They would have seen a projectile point, or a

sunrise, or some meal I had for lunch; the usual stuff you see on Instagram. Would that have broken their confidentiality agreement that I didn't know existed? Maybe. Would it have caused any actual harm to me, my company, or the mine? Certainly not. If anything, it showed that they were being attentive stewards to the land and that they were doing the right thing by having it surveyed.

## Confidentiality

Now we get to confidentiality agreements. Almost every company has something in place that you sign that says you won't share information you gain while employed with the company. They also often have a clause that says something about not talking about client information, which includes even naming the client in public, and not releasing any information about project specific details.

Are confidentiality agreements useful? Yes. Do we need them? Yes. Should they be re-written for the digital age? Absolutely. Having a blanket statement that says, "The first rule about archaeology is that you don't talk about archaeology" isn't really the way to do things. Part of our responsibility as professionals should be to relay our experiences to the public so everyone can learn something about the land they live on. Companies need to rethink their confidentiality and social media policies to reflect the world we live in.

## Looting

A common concern I've heard regarding blogging and photo-sharing archaeological sites and artifacts is that they'll be more accessible to looters. This is a valid concern and companies should make a concerted effort to establish parameters for sharing prior to any field project. The information could be disseminated at the same time safety information and project information is given out.

Some restrictions related to blogging and photo-sharing include:

- Disable location services on your smart phone.
  - Photos are often “tagged” with a latitude and longitude and a savvy looter can obtain those meta data with the right software.
- Don’t include prominent geographic features in your photographs.
  - If you’re taking a photo of an archaeological site, angle the camera down slightly so the mountain ranges in the distance are not visible. It’s unlikely that the exact location of the site could be determined by triangulating the location based on distinct features, but it’s not entirely implausible. Better safe than sorry.
- Never include client information.
  - Unless a client specifically says they want to draw attention to their project, don’t mention them. Often, we work on projects on land that is in the process of being purchased, or is in dispute in one way or another. The client may not be ready to disclose their involvement with the land, and their wishes should be respected.
- Be vague about location
  - When I post a photograph, or discuss a project, I refer to the location in extremely vague terms. I say, “central Nevada” or “somewhere north of I-80 in northern Nevada”. I never give detail that could locate the project within 50-100 miles of the actual location. Never reveal a nearby town, county, or geographic feature.
- Wait until the project is over and no one cares.
  - Sometimes you just have to wait. Most, if not all, blogging platforms give you the ability to schedule a post. Write the post while it’s fresh in your mind, then schedule it out six months to a year. When it finally posts it will be a pleasant surprise and there is a good chance that none of the concerned parties will care, or even notice.

- You can't really do the same with photos on Instagram or other social media sites. What you can do is schedule a calendar appointment for six to twelve months out to remind you to post photos of artifacts or features. This will ensure that no one will be concerned about your posts. More than likely, you won't even be working for the company that did the work anymore.

There are other concerns, of course. These, however, are some of the most important ones that I've come across in my experience. If a company you work for doesn't have a social media policy, suggest to them that they create one and maybe show them this chapter.

## Public Outreach and Archaeological Responsibility

I always say that our job as professional archaeologists is only half done when the fieldwork is done and the report is written. We have an obligation to disseminate additional information about the project on various platforms. Of course, you need to write this into your proposals and contracts so clients are aware that you'll be sharing data and information collected on their land. More often than not, you'll get the permission. You only have to ask.

I make a policy to disclose information about a project on at least one platform that is accessible by more than a few people. This can include:

Blog entry

Journal article

Conference presentation

Conference poster

Photo series on a popular photo-sharing site

Article on [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu) [cccxxvii](#)

Public presentation at a local event

Website

Book

Numerous other outlets — be creative!

### Blogging and Social Media Tools

As mentioned above, there are many ways you can teach the public and colleagues about your fascinating archaeology project.

**Blog.** Starting a blog is probably the easiest, and most flexible, way to disseminate information about a site or project. With a blog you can include photographs, videos, commentary, data tables, and almost anything else. Blogs can be distributed to a number of media and social media outlets and can provide a potentially limitless audience.

**Youtube.** Making videos is simpler than you might think. A video can be produced using camera-phone footage, a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation, or of a series of photographs. It doesn't have to be complicated. If the video is titled and tagged for maximum search engine optimization (SEO) then it could be seen by millions of people. Monetize your videos and you just might fund the next ones.

**Instagram.** Instagram can be a great tool for publicizing your company and your projects. Using hashtags, photographs can be searchable by the millions of users of Instagram. From this platform, you can also post your photographs and short (15 seconds) videos to Twitter and Facebook. It's staggering how many people can be reached by this one simple, free, platform. The opportunity for public engagement is astounding.

**Facebook and Twitter.** I'm including these two popular social media platforms because they accomplish essentially the same goals. They both give you the ability to reach a massive audience, but Facebook allows you to write longer descriptions and have more meaningful comments and dialogue with the public.

Both Facebook and Twitter utilize hashtags for searching. However, as of this writing the Facebook hashtag has limitations. Unless the post is public, and most are not, the hashtag will not be searchable by people you aren't "friends" with on Facebook. Twitter, on the other hand, functions almost exclusively on hashtags. The #archaeology community on Twitter is vibrant and prolific. I don't need to follow all of the people that might post about archaeology as long as they include

#archaeology in their posts. Sometimes you have to be creative with a Twitter post, since you only have 140 characters to work with. There are some changes possible on the horizon, though. It is rumored that Twitter is going to stop including hashtags and user names in your character count. This will really increase the posting potential of a single tweet.

Facebook groups are where the real power lies. Two groups, the Archaeology group and the Archaeo Field Techs group, both have thousands of members. Not all of the members are archaeologists, although many are. These groups give you the ability to reach a wider audience than just your “friends list”. Observe the rules of the groups, though. Some don’t allow certain kinds of posts and like you to stay on topic.

**New platforms.** By the time this eBook comes out, or whenever you get around to reading it, there will probably be some new, hot, platform for posting and bragging. If you’re concerned with public archaeology and with education you’ll stay on top of the latest trends. Just make sure you’ve always got a 20 year old college student as an intern and put them in charge of social media. That will ensure you’re always on top of the next big thing and that your company will stay relevant.

## Summary

Social media doesn’t have to be scary. Companies don’t have to worry that their employees will post something that is either unethical or will lose them a contract. What they need to do is be pro-active with social media. Show the employees that they want to participate and actively put in place policies that encourage the dissemination of archaeological information in a safe and respectful manner. Acting like the old man on the porch yelling, “get off my digital lawn!” is a sure way to alienate not only your young employees and temporary field technicians, but, the public as well. I firmly believe that if we, as archaeologists, were freer with our archaeological information that shows like “American Diggers” and “Nazi War Diggers” wouldn’t exist, or have such a massive audience. People would see them as we do, as unethical looters. Instead, show the public that archaeology can be fun

and informative, without destroying sites or removing artifacts. It's our duty to present archaeology in a fun and interesting way. Almost everyone I've ever talked to has said that they wish they could have been an archaeologist. Let the world know what it's like!

# Running An Archaeology Blogging Carnival - A Post-mortem

Doug Rocks-Macqueen

Blog: <http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/> [cccxxviii](#)

This chapter is going to be a post-mortem, of sorts, on running a digital collaborative event. Reading the introduction to this book you will be aware that it came out of the efforts to increase participation for a session on blogging and social media at the 2014 Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Conference in Austin. This book was not the only attempt to involve a wider audience beyond those who could attend the SAA conference. In the months leading up to the session, I created and ran a blogging carnival whose purpose was, to quote the tag line of the carnival, to bring the SAA blogging session to the Blogosphere. What follows are my recollections, insights, and lessons learned from running a Blogging Carnival of Archaeologists, known by its Twitter hashtag as #blogarch. It is both a personal narrative of my experience with #blogarch and a “lessons-learned” guide for others hoping to run similar events.

## What is a Blog Carnival

A blogging carnival is essentially a collaborative project amongst bloggers. While this may sound cliché, it is not, no two blog carnivals are alike. That means what I describe as a blogging carnival is a generic description, not hard facts that can be used to characterize what is and is not a blog carnival. Essentially, a blogging carnival is an event were bloggers, using their personal blog, discuss a particular subject or subjects. These responses or links to these responses are then correlated



into a single location, on-line and usually on one of the participating blogs, where everyone else can see what the participants said. It is like a modern day salon where everyone is brought together to discuss a topic or topics, though the meeting space is digital.

Typically, a single blogger will post the topic to be discussed on their blog as a call to participate. They may then solicit responses from other bloggers through email, phone calls, social media, etc. or just use the calling post as a way to garner interest. A deadline will be set and then after it has passed the blogger who posted the subject will make another post of all the responses. This can take the form of just hyperlinks to the relevant posts on other blogs, a narrative describing the points made by others with links, or a multitude of other ways of presenting the results. What they all have in common though, are hyperlinks back to the participants so that others can see what they wrote and potentially learn more about the author(s) and their blog(s). Some of these carnivals are one off events while others run for months or years with the responsibility of posting a new topic and collecting responses moving between participants, one blogger running it one week and another blogger running it the next.

## What Do We Know About Blogging Carnivals

We know almost nothing about blogging carnivals. The published literature on the topic is non-existent. Though I have found reference to them in some papers this is almost exclusively as a side note and as far as my research has found there are no formal examinations of the phenomenon. This might be the first "formal" examination of a blog carnival outside of the Blogosphere. It also may be the last, unless an ethnographer decides to take up the cause. While publications are scarce on the topic, making this simply hearsay, it appears, at least from others in the Blogosphere that blog carnivals are going extinct.

## Archaeology Blog Carnivals

There have been several previous blog carnivals before this one that have involved archaeologists. The most well-known was, [Four Stone](#)

Hearth, [cccxxix](#) an anthropology blogging carnival that did include archaeologists, but was not exclusive to archaeology. It was a rotating carnival in which different blogs would pick a topic every few weeks. According to the website it ran for several years, from October of 2006 to June 2011, through 120 different topics (FSH 2014). Dr. Colleen Morgan ran a similar event to #blogarch about [Blogging and Archaeology](#) (Morgan 2011). It was undertaken in the run up to a 2011 SAA session on blogging and it only ran for a few weeks leading up to the event. My carnival took great inspiration from the 2011 SAA carnival, as discussed below. Another one off carnival was one run by Matt Law about Mistakes in Archaeology (Law 2013a, 2013b) (see [call cccxxx](#) and [responses cccxxxi](#) ). Given the ephemeral nature of the Internet, it is quite possible I am missing other carnivals that have since disappeared, but essentially, archaeology blogging carnivals have been one off events or archaeologists have joined larger ones encompassing a more diverse range of bloggers, e.g. Four Stone Hearth.

## Precedent and Support

A search of the Internet will bring up some resources and “How-To” guides for carnivals. However, there is not much advice on the topic. Moreover, most of the advice one finds on the Internet is so generic that it is not helpful. Most describe what a carnival is and make recommendations like giving your carnival a name, but beyond that there is no depth. Most of the advice is how to use a carnival to get links to rank higher on Google searches. Because of this lack of in-depth guidance most of the steps I took were based on of the examples set by those few existing archaeology blog carnivals and a “trial & error” methodology.

## Idea for a Blogging Carnival

In 2011, Colleen ran the first #blogarch carnival as a lead up to her session on blogging at the 2011 SAA conference. Having participated, I was exposed to the idea of a blog carnival. However, I did not think about creating one until Chris Webster, noted author of [Random Acts of](#)

Science [ccccxxii](#) and CRM podcast, [ccccxxiii](#) decided to run another session on archaeology blogging at this year's SAAs. You can read Chris' chapter for a brief mention of how he was exposed to blogging at Colleen's first Blogging Archaeology SAA session. I had planned on participating in the 2014 Blogging Archaeology session, even writing an abstract for the session. However, living in Scotland I found it was not financially feasible to attend on my budget.

Yet, I was very interested in contributing in some way. After the deadline for submitting abstracts and participating in the SAAs had passed, Chris and I had a conversation before one of the CRM podcasts and he mentioned making an e-book out of the session papers and asking several other people to contribute, me being one of them. That idea is what led to this book, but beyond the book the idea of including those outside of the SAA session led me to think about ways to include a wider audience too. One of the ideas was to do a carnival along the lines of the one I had participated in several years earlier, the first #blogarch, and thus the carnival was born. I would start a blog carnival on the subject of blogging in archaeology to get more people to participate and join in on the conversation about the topic.

## Planning a Carnival

Was there a plan? Yes, do a blog carnival. That was the basic summary of my plans. As already mentioned, I had participated in a carnival before and the Internet did not provide especially helpful information on running one. This led me to be a bit over confident as I believed that having been a participant I could run a carnival. Instead of planning the full carnival out I decided to just jump in, feet first, and run the carnival, except I didn't. I had intended on starting the carnival in October 2013 and for it to run monthly but missed the beginning of the month, an auspicious start. In fact, I missed the first of November as well but decided I needed to get it out there so I launched it on November 5<sup>th</sup> i.e. remember, remember the 5<sup>th</sup> of November.

## The Launch

I launched the Carnival with a [blog post cccxxxiv](#) explaining about why I was doing it, wider participation around the topic of blogging and archaeology, and a set of brief instructions:

Each month leading up to the SAAs I will post a question. If you would like to answer this question, blog about it. Tell us your thoughts and opinions. Please steal the banner above, and link back to this post (wordpress alerts me to links).

Colleen had done her carnival as a weekly event but I wanted to have more time than a few weeks prior to the SAA conference to build momentum and I was not sure I could commit four or five weeks in a row leading up to the conference, as April is a very busy month for me. I had decided I would do mine monthly. Other instructions were:

Also, email me or post the link in the comments (either here or the post with the questions on it). This is so I know about your post and can link to it.

At the end of the month, I will summarize all of the post and add links so that folks can find them all in one place. Hopefully, this will allow us to highlight some great archaeology blogs

I then had to quickly amend those instructions, as they were not clear, to include these additional clarifications:

EDIT- Kelly asked- 'Is there any obligation to take part every month?' Absolutely not, take part as many or as few times as you want. If there is a question you really like, blog about it. If it does not particularly interest you, wait till the next month. It is all up to you.

EDIT- You do not have to be interested in going to the SAAs or an American to participate. We want everyone who blogs or who are interested in blogging to participate, regardless of geographic location.

Moreover, I had never thought of creating a Twitter Hashtag for the event. This was quickly sorted out by others on Twitter and it was decided to use the previous hashtag used for Colleen's Carnival, #blogarch. This in turn became the defacto name of the carnival.

## Recruitment

Over the course of the carnival several people commented on the high number of respondents, 70+ for some questions. The past carnivals, the ones I had mentioned earlier, had participation in the single digits or at best less than two dozen. I wish I could say that this happened because a lot of people read my blog or that my single post announcing the carnival was enough to create a storm of participation. I wish I could say archaeologists have become more interconnected and that the blog carnival spread like wildfire, but that would be only half true. The other half of that truth is that it took a lot of work to advertise it. I had a list of 350+ archaeology/archaeology-related blogs, not all of them still blogging but it was a starting point. Towards the end of November I took out this list and started contacting the bloggers. This meant looking at their blog, trying to find contact information, Googling names, etc. just to get the info to contact them. While I did find some emails, many times it was hard to find people's contact information. Sometimes this meant leaving comments on blogs, using Twitter (because it is not creepy having a stranger message you on twitter about a blogging carnival), even Facebook messaging (again, not awkward). For around 180 of these blogs I could find no contact information, at least after searching for 10-15 minutes. However, I ended up personally contacting 135 archaeology bloggers, archaeobloggers for short. Only rarely did I leave comments on blogs.

Out of the 72 blogs that participated in the first month a total of 28 (39%) were unsolicited, at least personally by me. That means that there is some interconnection among Archaeobloggers/Facebook/Twitter where these bloggers saw others posting and decided to participate. However, that means 44 (61%) of the participants were ones I personally messaged about participating. I am not sure if the number of unsolicited responses would have been so high if they had not seen the

posts/tweets/mentions from the others. It creates a bit of a feedback effect. If I had not done personal solicitations the first month, which had the greatest participation, there would have been around two dozen participants. It took a lot of work to get this carnival to the level that it reached. Also, that meant that there were 91 bloggers that I contacted who did not participate in the first month, though several did later on.

## Questions Asked

Here is a brief look at the questions asked and why. For the first month I asked a series of questions:

Why blogging?

Why are you still blogging?

In the interest of trying to expand the potential users and to add another perspective to the responses I also asked:

Why have you stopped blogging?

This last question was aimed at some blogs that had gone dormant. I specifically approach several blogs that had not blogged in a long while, several months to several years, to see if they would participate. The following questions were asked for the other months:

December- The good, the bad, and the ugly of blogging. Participants could blog about any of these themes.

January- What are your best (or if you want, your worst) post(s) and why?

February- Was an open question. Participants could blog about any subject they wanted to that related to archaeology blogging.

March- The future of blogging. Participants were encourage to blog about the future of their blog or the future of archaeology blogging in general.

## Reasons for Choosing Questions

The reason I choose the “why blog” question as the first question was because I thought it would be a good start to the carnival. Overall, most of the questions for each month were thought up at the last moment. This is not to say that a lot of thought did not go into them, it did. After posting a question I would then spend the next month thinking about what the next question would be. Sometimes this work out to be great, other times the question was a bit sub-par.

The Good, the bad and the ugly was a play on the movie of the same name. I thought it would be good to see what people liked or disliked about blogging. January’s question was meant to be a way for people to showcase some of their best work. Blogs tend to be followed in a linear fashion. Once someone starts following a blog they will read each new post. However, older posts are not always read. I thought this would provide an opportunity for people’s older work to be brought into the light. The last question, looking towards the future seemed like a positive way to end the carnival, at least to me. It would be a way for us to think about the future instead of the past.

## Killing the Carnival

In February we announced a call for papers for this book. I had thought of using that month’s question as a possible way for people to create practice runs, review ideas, or even start first drafts of papers to go into the book as part of #blogarch. Because this book had only the most general of themes, nothing that could be converted to a single set of questions for #blogarch, I made February’s question an open call to post about anything on blogging. It was a complete failure. That month only received 12 responses compared to:

November - 73

December - 59

January - 42

March - 49

Several of the respondents commented that they were not going to participate for that month. The question just did not inspire them. Others appear to have missed the call for questions in the call for papers for this book. While the responses we did get were excellent, there were far fewer than in the previous months.

## Bring it Back from the Dead and Further Soliciting

After contacting each person personally in November I set up a listserv using MailChimp. MailChimp allows some customization of emails, like using individual names, but for the most part I began to send out template emails to participants. This was at the end of the month to let people know about the most recent summation of posts and to inform them of next month's question. However, I felt I got better response and participation when I hand typed each email. After almost killing the carnival in February I went back to individually emailing participants. At the end of March I started to contact all of those people who had not answered March's question yet to ask them if they would participate in the last month. This resulted in a significant increase in participation over the previous month.

## The Carnival by the Numbers

On a personal level I greatly enjoyed the carnival. In terms of numbers over 200 posts were made over five months. A total of 87 different bloggers participated in the Carnival. Going into the carnival I was hoping to get around two dozen participants and far exceeded that goal. How did the participants feel about it? I am currently collecting those data. The Carnival ended on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 which was the same day that papers for this book were due. I am in the process of creating a survey to gage opinions but the time between this book being published and the carnival ending was too short to collect them and publish them here. Ideally, I will have results out soon about what the participants thought.



If you are interested in reading the responses to each month of #blogarch the responses can be found here:

November [cccxxxv](#)

December [cccxxxvi](#)

January [cccxxxvii](#)

February [cccxxxviii](#)

March [cccxxxix](#)

## Insights and Lessons Learned

The rest of this chapter is going to be spent dissecting the six main lessons I learned from this experience in hopes of providing insights or best practises for people who want to run similar events.

### Deadlines

Given that I started #blogarch on November 5<sup>th</sup> I figured I would keep doing the round-ups on the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month. That way everyone had a full month to answer each question. This had mixed results. Around the first of each month I would get a flurry of people apologizing for being late even though the deadline was the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Placing the deadline a few days after the first of the month allowed the beginning of the month to act as a reminder for some, which was a good thing. Though, I cannot help but worry that some people were put off from posting because they thought the deadline had passed.

I also accepted and added posts after the deadlines. I would just edit the summation blog posts to include links to their posts. Some people joined the carnival part of the way through and so choose to answer previous month's questions, which I added. Others were a few hours, or days, late and they just need a little more time to finish their posts. I would recommend including late posts but still keep a deadline. Without a deadline writing posts gets pushed further and further down the to-do list.

## Advertisement and Soliciting

As mentioned, I used both a mailing list and individual emails to solicit responses and remind people about posting. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. Personal emails get more responses, both in terms of people emailing back and ultimately participating in the carnival. When I first asked people through personal emails, I made specific suggestions in the email about a first post they could do that was relevant to their blog. I felt this helped those who had never participated in a carnival before by giving them a little extra help in writing their first post. However, this takes up a lot of time, as I will discuss next. If you are short on time I would recommend an email list or mass generic emails. A Twitter hashtag allows those people with twitter accounts to follow along and read posts as they come out.

## Time

#blogarch took up much more time than I had anticipated. Collecting the responses and writing the summary took, on average, about a day and half of work for each month. I spent an additional week collecting emails and soliciting participants in November. Creating and managing the email list through MailChimp took several hours of time. The final personal push took about a day and a half of my time emailing and fielding responses. Answering questions and responding to emails took many hours of my time as well. In total, I estimated that running #blogarch took about two and half weeks of eight hour working days. It was much more time than I had initially anticipated. Assume several hours of work for each question posed and summation made.

## Collecting Responses

In my directions to participants I asked them to either post a comment to the previous months question or email me to let me know about their posts. However, some people also posted to Twitter and some participants never actually alerted me to their posts. I found them because I followed their blog's RSS feed or because I saw traffic coming

from them in my blog's statistics and investigated. While I did use a spread sheet to track posts, it took extended periods of time trying to sort through Tweets, Comments, Emails, and blog traffic sources to find posts.

In hindsight, I should have created a simple form where people could have posted a link to their contributions. Too many choices caused confusion among participants and more work for myself. I would recommend keeping routes of submission limited to one, with a possible maximum of two. Giving so many choices in my instructions was counterproductive.

## Single or Multiple Hosts

While I had made a call asking if anyone wanted to host one of the months, no one took me up on this offer. That meant that this carnival did not turn into a moving carnival. In terms of ease of finding questions and having a central location this worked out well. Yet, I felt that this hampered building an archaeology blogging community. Several people referred to the #blogarch as Doug's Blogging Carnival. While great for name recognition and possible career devolvement for myself, it meant that some, if not most, of the participants did not see this as communal property. One of my goals was to try and use #blogarch to build up the community of archaeology bloggers. Given the success in asking people personally to participate, in the future I would most likely approach or ask certain bloggers in they would like to host a specific month. I recommend approaching others to host certain questions to build more of a sense of community with your carnivals.

## Planning

Reading through my recap of the carnival you will be aware that there was no extensive pre-planning that went into the carnival. Obviously, more planning improves events and projects but I am not sure how much I could have planned for with #blogarch. Given the lack of advice available or personal narratives like this one to learn from the trial and error method was most likely the best option available. This is not to advocate a rigid schedule. For example, questions may need to be

altered to take into account who participates or issues raised in previous posts. Most of the planning should come in the setup of the carnival e.g. deciding on methods of collecting responses, setting time tables, etc. A well thought out set of instructions can alleviate many of the problems I experienced.

## Final Thoughts

Blogging carnivals are a way to widen participation and build communities. It is certainly not the only way to achieve these ends, nor should it be. However, as more and more of our work as archaeologists moves into the digital world we may need to consider running more of these events. It is my hope that the narrative of how #blogarch was started and ran gives insight to those who participated or are interested in how it developed the way it did. More importantly, I hope the discussion and my experiences of running a blogging carnival can be of use to others who are interested in running one or something similar.

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# Appendix

Posts on Looting Matters mentioned in that Chapter.

Post are in chronological order.

## 2007

Does Looting Matter? (July 17, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/does-looting-matter.html>  
[cccxliv](#)

'Meaningless numbers'? (July 18, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/meaningless-numbers.html>  
[cccxlv](#)

Who are the radical archaeologists? (July 19, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/who-are-radical-archaeologists.html> [cccxvi](#)

The scale of the market for Egyptian antiquities (July 26, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/scale-of-market-for-egyptian.html> [cccxlvii](#)

Brussels Oriental Art Fair III (July 30, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/brussels-oriental-art-fair-iii.html> [cccxlviii](#)

Many Getty Returns? (July 31, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/many-getty-returns.html>  
[cccclix](#)

Due diligence at the St Louis Art Museum (August 18, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/08/due-diligence-at-st-louis-art-museum.html> [ccccl](#)

Can there be a "licit" trade in antiquities? (August 20, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/08/can-there-be-licit-trade-in-antiquities.html> [cccli](#)

Coins and Cyprus (August 23, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/08/coins-and-cyprus.html> [ccclii](#)

Apulian pots and the missing memorandum (August 28, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/08/apulian-pots-and-missing-memorandum.html> [cccliii](#)

Looting in Bulgaria (August 29, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/08/looting-in-bulgaria.html> [cccliv](#)

Minneapolis and Robin Symes (October 1, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/minneapolis-and-robin-symes.html> [ccclv](#)

"Old Collections" at Bonham's (October 15, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/old-collections-at-bonhams.html> [ccclvi](#)

"The Lydian Hoard" revisited (October 19, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/lydian-hoard-revisited.html> [ccclvii](#)

"Lydian" silver at Bonham's (October 22, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/lydian-silver-at-bonhams.html> [ccclviii](#)

Bonham's, Lydian silver and due diligence (October 24, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/bonhams-lydian-silver-and-due-diligence.html> [ccclix](#)

Bonham's, Lydian Silver and a Code of Ethics (October 24, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/bonhams-lydian-silver-and-code-of.html> [ccclx](#)

Bonham's and the Lydian silver kyathos: some unanswered questions (October 26, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/bonhams-and-lydian-silver-kyathos-some.html> [ccclxi](#)

Lydian silver update (October 26, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/lydian-silver-update.html> [ccclxii](#)

Princeton antiquities and Italy: acquisition details (October 27, 2007)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/princeton-antiquities-and-italy.html> [ccclxiii](#)

## **2008**

"An era of scrupulous acquisition policies" (January 7, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/01/era-of-scrupulous-acquisition-policies.html> [ccclxiv](#)

"Elvis" up for auction (July 23, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/07/elvis-up-for-auction.html> [ccclxv](#)

A Big Hunk O'Antiquity: Headlines (July 23, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/07/big-hunk-oantiquity-headlines.html> [ccclxvi](#)

The Graham Geddes Collection at Bonhams (August 8, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/08/graham-geddes-collection-at-bonhams.html> [ccclxvii](#)

"Elvis" and the Graham Geddes Collection (August 21, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/08/elvis-and-graham-geddes-collection.html> [ccclxviii](#)



From Atlanta to Athens: Press Statement (September 25, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/from-atlanta-to-athens-press-statement.html> [ccclxix](#)

From Atlanta to Athens: Press Statement (September 25, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/from-atlanta-to-athens-press-statement.html> [ccclxx](#)

From Atlanta to Athens: The Start of the Trail (September 26, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/from-atlanta-to-athens-start-of-trail.html> [ccclxxi](#)

The Geddes Collection at Bonham's: Publicity (September 26, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/geddes-collection-at-bonhams-publicity.html> [ccclxxii](#)

The Graham Geddes Collection at Auction (September 29, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/graham-geddes-collection-at-auction.html> [ccclxxiii](#)

The Robin Symes Collection at Auction (September 30, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/robin-symes-collection-at-auction.html> [ccclxxiv](#)

The Geddes Collection at Bonham's: A Puzzle (October 1, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/geddes-collection-at-bonhams-puzzle.html> [ccclxxv](#)

Homecomings: Lucanian Pottery (October 6, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/homecomings-lucanian-pottery.html> [ccclxxvi](#)

Francesco Rutelli on Robin Symes (October 9, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/francesco-rutelli-on-robin-symes.html> [ccclxxvii](#)

Bonhams and Robin Symes (October 10, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/bonhams-and-robin-symes.html> [ccclxxviii](#)

Bonhams Responds to Rutelli (October 10, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/bonhams-responds-to-rutelli.html> [ccclxxix](#)

Press Exposure and Bonhams (October 11, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/press-exposure-and-bonhams.html> [ccclxxx](#)

Apulian Pottery at Bonhams (October 11, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/apulian-pottery-at-bonhams.html> [ccclxxxi](#)

The Graham Geddes Collection and Apulian Pottery (October 11, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/graham-geddes-collection-and-apulian.html> [ccclxxxii](#)

Bonhams Withdraws Further Lots (October 14, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/bonhams-withdraws-further-lots.html> [ccclxxxiii](#)

The Geddes Collection at Bonham's: Withdrawn Lots (October 14, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/geddes-collection-at-bonhams-withdrawn.html> [ccclxxxiv](#)

Bonhams Withdraws Further Lots: Update (October 15, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/bonhams-withdraws-further-lots-update.html> [ccclxxxv](#)

Bonhams: "The most important item in the Geddes collection" (October 15, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/bonhams-most-important-item-in-geddes.html> [ccclxxxvi](#)

Elvis and Bonhams: "You'll Be (Going, Going) Gone" (October 16, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/elvis-and-bonhams-youll-be-going-going.html> [ccclxxxvii](#)

Bonhams Withdraws Further Lots: Press Comment (October 16, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/bonhams-withdraws-further-lots-press.html> [ccclxxxviii](#)

The Geddes Collection at Bonhams: Forecast and Results (October 17, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/geddes-collection-at-bonhams-forecast.html> [ccclxxxix](#)

Bonhams: "The session went as well it could ever have" (October 17, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/bonhams-session-went-as-well-it-could.html> [cccxc](#)

Bonhams: Don't Be Miffed With The Italians (October 18, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/bonhams-dont-be-miffed-with-italians.html> [cccxcj](#)

The Graham Geddes Collection: Previous Loans (October 20, 2008)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2008/10/graham-geddes-collection-previous-loans.html> [cccxcii](#)

## **2009**

Corinthian krater recovered from Christie's (June 3, 2009)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2009/06/corinthian-krater-recovered-from.html> [cccxciii](#)

Pots seized in NYC: update (October 30, 2009)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2009/10/pots-seized-in-nyc-update.html> [cccxciv](#)

Pots seized in NYC: comment from Christie's (November 4, 2009)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2009/11/pots-seized-in-nyc-comment-from.html> [cccxcv](#)

Is the "Bulldog" on the Minneapolis case? (November 17, 2009)  
<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2009/11/is-bulldog-on-minneapolis-case.html> [cccxcvi](#)

## 2010

Bonhams and the Medici Statue (April 22, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/bonhams-and-medici-statue.html> [cccxcvii](#)

Bonhams and the Medici Statue: Lot Withdrawn (April 22, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/bonhams-and-medici-statue-lot-withdrawn.html> [cccxcviii](#)

Due Diligence at Bonhams (April 27, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/due-diligence-at-bonhams.html> [cccxcix](#)

Bonhams and the Medici Statue: Additional Information (April 27, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/bonhams-and-medici-statue-additional.html> [cd](#)

An Apulian rhyton from an American private collection (May 8, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/apulian-rhyton-from-american-private.html> [cdi](#)

Medici Archive: Roman Marble Youth (May 12, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/medici-archive-roman-marble-youth.html> [cdii](#)

Christie's and the Medici Dossier: Correction (May 18, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/christies-and-medici-dossier-correction.html> [cdiii](#)

Medusa and the Medici Dossier (May 18, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/medusa-and-medici-dossier.html> [cdiv](#)

Apulian rhyton from the Medici Dossier (May 19, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/apulian-rhyton-from-medici-dossier.html> [cdv](#)

The Medici Dossier and the Identification of "Stolen Artifacts" (May 20, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/medici-dossier-and-identification-of.html> [cdvi](#)

"The transparency of the public auction system led to the identification of stolen artifacts" (May 20, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/transparency-of-public-auction-system.html> [cdvii](#)

"A part of Italy's national heritage and identity" (May 26, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/part-of-italys-national-heritage-and.html> [cdviii](#)

A Dilemma for Christie's (May 27, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/dilemma-for-christies.html> [cdix](#)

Italian Prosecutor: "We want to repatriate those objects" (June 3, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/italian-prosecutor-we-want-to.html> [cdx](#)

Looting Matters: Italian Prosecutor Calls for Return of Antiquities (June 4, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/looting-matters-italian-prosecutor.html> [cdxi](#)

Christie's, the Medici Dossier and William G. Pearlstein (June 7, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/christies-medici-dossier-and-william-g.html> [cdxii](#)

Youth with Cockerel: Collecting History (June 7, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/youth-with-cockerel-collecting-history.html> [cdxiii](#)

Cleveland and Edoardo Almagià (June 7, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/cleveland-and-edoardo-almagia.html> [cdxiv](#)

Apulian pottery and loss of knowledge (June 8, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/apulian-pottery-and-loss-of-knowledge.html> [cdxv](#)

The Medici Dossier: Unresolved Issues (June 10, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/medici-dossier-unresolved-issues.html> [cdxvi](#)

Youth with Cockerel: Lost Value? (June 11, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/youth-with-cockerel-lost-value.html> [cdxvii](#)

The Michael C. Carlos Museum: Unresolved issue with Greece?  
(August 12, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/michael-c-carlos-museum-unresolved.html> [cdxviii](#)

From Crete to Atlanta (August 13, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/from-crete-to-atlanta.html> [cdxix](#)

The Atlanta Pithos and its journey through Switzerland (August 20, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/atlanta-pithos-and-its-journey-through.html> [cdxx](#)

An Attic Red-figured Krater from the Medici Dossier (September 1, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/attic-red-figured-krater-from-medici.html> [cdxxi](#)

Looting Matters: An Attic Krater in Minneapolis (September 3, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/looting-matters-attic-krater-in.html> [cdxxii](#)

The Medici Dossier and Corinthian Pottery (September 4, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/medici-dossier-and-corinthian-pottery.html> [cdxxiii](#)

Looting Matters on PR Newswire 5 (September 13, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/looting-matters-on-pr-newswire-5.html> [cdxxiv](#)

Princeton: further information on the returns (September 22, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/princeton-further-information-on.html> [cdxxv](#)

AAMD President "taken aback" on cultural property debate (December 9, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/aamd-president-taken-aback-on-cultural.html> [cdxxvi](#)

The Medici Dossier and the Minneapolis krater (December 21, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/medici-dossier-and-minneapolis-krater.html> [cdxxvii](#)

Culture Monster and Minneapolis (December 22, 2010)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/culture-monster-and-minneapolis.html> [cdxxviii](#)

## 2011

The "open wound" of surfacing antiquities (January 13, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/open-wound-of-surfacing-antiquities.html> [cdxxix](#)

Dealing in recently-surfaced antiquities? (January 15, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/dealing-in-recently-surfaced.html> [cdxxx](#)

A Corinthian olpe from a (recent) Swiss "collection" (April 15, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/corinthian-olpe-from-recent-swiss.html> [cdxxxi](#)

Polaroids and unresolved issues (April 30, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/polaroids-and-unresolved-issues.html> [cdxxxii](#)

Minneapolis to return krater (September 17, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/09/minneapolis-to-return-krater.html> [cdxxxiii](#)

An Etruscan head on the market (September 24, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/09/etruscan-head-on-market.html> [cdxxxiv](#)

The Schinoussa Archive and Italian Antiquities (October 1, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/schinoussa-archive-and-italian.html> [cdxxxv](#)

Christie's on cultural property (October 3, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/christies-on-cultural-property.html> [cdxxxvi](#)

Collecting histories and Christie's (November 15, 2011)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/collecting-histories-and-christies.html> [cdxxxvii](#)



## 2012

Items from deceased New York collector returned to Italy (January 23, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/items-from-deceased-new-york-collector.html> [cdxxxviii](#)

Princeton: more on the return (January 23, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/princeton-more-on-return.html> [cdxxxix](#)

Princeton Issues Statement (January 25, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/princeton-issues-statement.html> [cdxli](#)

What has Princeton returned? (January 26, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/what-has-princeton-returned.html> [cdxlii](#)

Planet Princeton Comments (January 27, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/planet-princeton-comments.html> [cdxliii](#)

Princeton: collecting histories needed for further antiquities (January 30, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/princeton-collecting-histories-needed.html> [cdxliv](#)

Princeton and Almagià (February 8, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/princeton-and-almagia.html> [cdxlv](#)

Princeton and transparency (February 23, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/princeton-and-transparency.html> [cdxlvi](#)

Silence from the Met over those fragments (March 27, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/03/silence-from-met-over-those-fragments.html> [cdxlv](#)

Antiquities returned to Italy from New York auction-house (April 26, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/antiquities-returned-to-italy-from-new.html> [cdxlvii](#)

Aegisthus painter pelike returned to Italy (April 27, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/aegisthus-painter-pelike-returned-to.html> [cdxlviii](#)

Met with silence (May 3, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/met-with-silence.html> [cdxlix](#)

The Sarpedon krater: intellectual consequences (May 23, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/sarpedon-krater-intellectual.html> [cdl](#)

Medici Dossier and Christie's (May 31, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/medici-dossier-and-christies.html> [cdli](#)

Christie's Ignores Italy? (June 7, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/christies-ignores-italy.html> [cdlii](#)

Tom Campbell and transparency (June 8, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/tom-campbell-and-transparency.html> [cdliii](#)

Christie's and the unsold Canosan kraters (June 12, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/christies-and-unsold-canosan-kraters.html> [cdliv](#)

Princeton Returns: a discussion (June 25, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/princeton-returns-discussion.html> [cdlv](#)

Silent Met: where did the fragments surface? (July 23, 2012)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/silent-met-where-did-fragments-surface.html> [cdlvi](#)

## **2013**

Princeton update (January 14, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/princeton-update.html> [cdlvii](#)

From Greece to Atlanta: overview (January 19, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/from-greece-to-atlanta-overview.html> [cdlviii](#)

Villanovan bronze hut from an undisclosed source? (January 25, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/villanovan-bronze-hut-from-undisclosed.html> [cdlix](#)

Bothmer fragments on the AAMD Object Register (February 23, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/bothmer-fragments-on-aamd-object.html> [cdlx](#)

Bothmer fragments raising questions about transparency (February 28, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/bothmer-fragments-raising-questions.html> [cdlxi](#)

Bothmer Fragments Linked to Rome (March 8, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/bothmer-fragments-linked-to-rome.html> [cdlxii](#)

Two Canosan kraters returned to Italy (May 22, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/two-canosan-kraters-returned-to-italy.html> [cdlxiii](#)

A Gnathian Krater from the Swiss Art Market (May 24, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/a-gnathian-krater-from-swiss-art-market.html> [cdlxiv](#)

An East Greek Bronze Warrior from the Medici Dossier (June 1, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/an-east-greek-bronze-warrior-from.html> [cdlxv](#)

Recently surfaced antiquities on the market (June 7, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/recently-surfaced-antiquities-on-market.html> [cdlxvi](#)

The Art Loss Register and Antiquities (June 8, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/the-art-loss-register-and-antiquities.html> [cdlxvii](#)

Images of the Bothmer fragments (June 19, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/images-of-bothmer-fragments.html> [cdlxviii](#)

Christie's and recently surfaced antiquities (July 6, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/07/christies-and-recently-surfaced.html> [cdlxix](#)

New York to return further Bothmer cup fragments (July 31, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/07/new-york-to-return-further-bothmer-cup.html> [cdlxx](#)

Pot Fragments Matter (August 30, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/08/pot-fragments-matter.html> [cdlxxi](#)

The Symes Pan (December 9, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/12/the-symes-pan.html> [cdlxxii](#)

The Cleveland Apollo (September 28, 2013)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2013/09/the-cleveland-apollo.html>  
[cdlxxiii](#)

## **2014**

The Medici Archive and a London sale (March 28, 2014)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03/the-medici-archive-and-london-sale.html> [cdlxxiv](#)

Becchina, Medici and the London market (April 2, 2014)

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2014/04/becchina-medici-and-london-market.html> [cdlxxv](#)

## PR Newswire Press Releases

1. Looting Matters: Why Does the Return of the Euphronios Krater to its Original Home Awaken Debate?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-why-does-the-return-of-the-euphronios-krater-to-its-original-home-awaken-debate-61883767.html> [cdlxxvi](#)

2. Looting Matters: Is UK Cultural Property for Sale to the Highest Bidder?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-is-uk-cultural-property-for-sale-to-the-highest-bidder-61953352.html> [cdlxxvii](#)

3. Looting Matters: Why Is Switzerland Featured so Frequently in the Return of Antiquities

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-why-is-switzerland-featured-so-frequently-in-the-return-of-antiquities-61658057.html> [cdlxxviii](#)

4. Looting Matters: Is the Archaeology of the Balkans Under Threat?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-is-the-archaeology-of-the-balkans-under-threat-62018402.html> [cdlxxix](#)

5. Looting Matters: Why is Greece Reclaiming so Much Cultural Property?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-why-is-greece-reclaiming-so-much-cultural-property-62106927.html> [cdlxxx](#)

6. Looting Matters: The New Acropolis Museum Opens in Athens, Greece

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-the-new-acropolis-museum-opens-in-athens-greece-61816977.html> [cdlxxxi](#)

7. Looting Matters: Why are Ancient Coins From Cyprus Featured in a Suit Against the US Department of State?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-why-are-ancient-coins-from-cyprus-featured-in-a-suit-against-the-us-department-of-state-61896222.html> [cdlxxxii](#)

8. Looting Matters: Why Do Antiquities From Iraq Continue to Surface on the Market?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-why-do-antiquities-from-iraq-continue-to-surface-on-the-market-62222392.html> [cdlxxxiii](#)

9. Looting Matters: Will Those Involved in the Medici Conspiracy Face Trial?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-will-those-involved-in-the-medici-conspiracy-face-trial-62278717.html> [cdlxxxiv](#)

10. Looting Matters: Are New Museums Acquisition Policies Having an Impact on Private Collectors?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-are-new-museums-acquisition-policies-having-an-impact-on-private-collectors-62183697.html> [cdlxxxv](#)

11. Looting Matters: Where are the Sculptures Stolen from Albania?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-where-are-the-sculptures-stolen-from-albania-62280142.html> [cdlxxxvi](#)

12. Looting Matters: Are Toxic Antiquities From India Surfacing on the Market?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-are-toxic-antiquities-from-india-surfacing-on-the-market-62081272.html> [cdlxxxvii](#)

13. Looting Matters: Italy continues to celebrate the return of antiquities

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-italy-continues-to-celebrate-the-return-of-antiquities-63275462.html> [cdlxxxviii](#)

14. Looting Matters: Egypt Puts Pressure on French Museum

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-egypt-puts-pressure-on-french-museum-63856292.html> [cdlxxxix](#)

15. Looting Matters: Why Did the Met Purchase an Object to Return It to Egypt?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-why-did-the-met-purchase-an-object-to-return-it-to-egypt-67616377.html> [cdxc](#)

16. Looting Matters: Should Auction-Houses Be More Careful Over Antiquities?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-should-auction-houses-be-more-careful-over-antiquities-69380567.html> [cdxcii](#)

17. Looting Matters: Are Import Restrictions on Italian Antiquities Working?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-are-import-restrictions-on-italian-antiquities-working-70627327.html> [cdxciii](#)

18. Looting Matters: Coin Dealers and Collectors Lose Case Against the US State Department

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-coin-dealers-and-collectors-lose-case-against-the-us-state-department-76177687.html> [cdxciv](#)

19. Looting Matters: Antiquities Returned to Italy

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-antiquities-returned-to-italy-78525457.html> [cdxcv](#)

20. Looting Matters: Archaeological Institute Offers Views on Italian Antiquities

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-archaeological-institute-offers-views-on-italian-antiquities-79065482.html> [cdxcvi](#)

21. Looting Matters: Sale of Antiquities on a Downturn

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-sale-of-antiquities-on-a-downturn-81006217.html> [cdxcvii](#)



22. Looting Matters: The Fano Athlete and Its Acquisition by the Getty  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-the-fano-athlete-and-its-acquisition-by-the-getty-81725167.html> [cdxcvii](#)

23. Looting Matters: The Return of Antiquities to Italy and the Swiss Connection

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-the-return-of-antiquities-to-italy-and-the-swiss-connection-82391612.html> [cdxcviii](#)

24. Looting Matters: The Corrupting Influence of Forged Antiquities

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-the-corrupting-influence-of-forged-antiquities-83646522.html> [cdxcix](#)

25. Looting Matters: Do Coin Collectors Care About the Archaeology of Cyprus?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-do-coin-collectors-care-about-the-archaeology-of-cyprus-84779592.html> [cd](#)

26. Looting Matters: Why Are Antiquities From Iraq Continuing to Appear on the Market?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-why-are-antiquities-from-iraq-continuing-to-appear-on-the-market-86613262.html> [cdi](#)

27. Looting Matters: Why Has a Coffin Been Returned to Egypt?

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-why-has-a-coffin-been-returned-to-egypt-88563512.html> [cdii](#)

28. Looting Matters: Returning Sicilian Antiquities

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-returning-sicilian-antiquities-89270837.html> [cdiii](#)

29. Looting Matters: The Miho Museum and Italy

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-the-miho-museum-and-italy-89776462.html> [cdiv](#)

30. Looting Matters: Protecting the Cultural Heritage of Italy  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-protecting-the-cultural-heritage-of-italy-91036994.html> [dv](#)
31. Looting Matters: Bonhams Withdraws Roman Statue From Auction  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-bonhams-withdraws-roman-statue-from-auction-91914934.html> [dvi](#)
32. Looting Matters: Toxic Antiquities and Photographic Evidence  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-toxic-antiquities-and-photographic-evidence-92510214.html> [dvii](#)
33. Looting Matters: Toxic Antiquities in the Market Place  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-toxic-antiquities-in-the-market-place-94588439.html> [dviii](#)
34. Looting Matters: Italian Prosecutor Calls for Return of Antiquities  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-italian-prosecutor-calls-for-return-of-antiquities-95620419.html> [dix](#)
35. Looting Matters: Antiquities Sales Increase  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-antiquities-sales-increase-96658089.html> [dx](#)
36. Looting Matters: Greek Pots, Madrid and the Medici Dossier  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-greek-pots-madrid-and-the-medici-dossier-98608484.html> [dxi](#)
37. Looting Matters: Colosseum Setting for Return of Antiquities  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-colosseum-setting-for-return-of-antiquities-99109824.html> [dxii](#)
38. Looting Matters: Antiquities and the Invasion of Kuwait  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-antiquities-and-the-invasion-of-kuwait-100626689.html> [dxiii](#)
39. Looting Matters: An Attic Krater in Minneapolis  
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-an-attic-krater-in-minneapolis-102155889.html> [dxiv](#)

40. Looting Matters: Protecting the Archaeological Heritage of Greece

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-protecting-the-archaeological-heritage-of-greece-102628664.html> [dxv](#)

41. Looting Matters: Rome Trial of Marion True Dropped

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-rome-trial-of-marion-true-dropped-105033799.html> [dxvi](#)

42. Looting Matters: The Treasure Act and the Crosby Garrett Helmet

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-the-treasure-act-and-the-crosby-garrett-helmet-109229319.html> [dxvii](#)

43. Looting Matters: Zeus Returns to Italy

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-zeus-returns-to-italy-110848314.html> [dxviii](#)

44. Looting Matters: Looting in Spain

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-looting-in-spain-112077849.html> [dxix](#)

45. Looting Matters: US Extends Agreement With Italy over Antiquities

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/looting-matters-us-extends-agreement-with-italy-over-antiquities-114366669.html> [dxx](#)

# Archived Links

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<sup>i</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140208165829/http://darkageology.wordpress.com/>

<sup>ii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140322112940/http://www.tumblr.com/about>

<sup>iii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140417134734/http://en.wordpress.com/stats/>

<sup>iv</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140418034043/http://www.medievalists.net/>

<sup>v</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140212205903/http://www.britishscienceassociation.org/years-nsew>

<sup>vi</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140330021156/http://www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk/>

<sup>vii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140409232759/http://www.publicengagementt.ac.uk/>

<sup>viii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140410210002/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

<sup>ix</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140225142529/http://scienceblogs.com/aardvarchaeology/>

<sup>x</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140204024119/http://floasche.wordpress.com/>

<sup>xi</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140320135614/http://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/>

<sup>xii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140418171824/http://scienceblogs.com/aardvarchaeology/2014/03/10/and-yet-another-gold-foil-figure-die-from-zealand/>

<sup>xiii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140208165829/http://darkageology.wordpress.com/>

<sup>xiv</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140320133535/http://bonesdontlie.wordpress.com/>

<sup>xv</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140201224824/http://farmingunearthed.wordpress.com/>

<sup>xvi</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140409205215/http://ejarchaeology.wordpress.com/>

<sup>xvii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20130713005155/http://castlesandcoprolites.blogspot.co.uk>

<sup>xviii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20130524181401/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/>

<sup>xix</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140111100409/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/2011/07/15/for-the-love-of-clay/>

<sup>xx</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20130822163507/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/2011/11/29/cosmeston-2011-the-movie/>

<sup>xxi</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20131111120140/http://www.thamesdiscovery.org/frog-blog-archive>

<sup>xxii</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20140418173831/http://www.archaeologicalawards.com/2012/07/10/best-community-archaeology-project-2012/>

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[xxiii](https://web.archive.org/web/20130530115656/http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/lyminge/)https://web.archive.org/web/20130530115656/http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/lyminge/  
[xxiv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174354/http://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/oct/30/lyminge-kent-anglo-saxon-hall?CMP=twf_gu)https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174354/http://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/oct/30/lyminge-kent-anglo-saxon-hall?CMP=twf\_gu  
[xxv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174536/http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/lyminge/2012/09/07/the-end-of-a-wonderful-season-of-digging-discoveries-and-many-new-friends/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174536/http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/lyminge/2012/09/07/the-end-of-a-wonderful-season-of-digging-discoveries-and-many-new-friends/  
[xxvi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140410185026/http://guerillaarchaeology.wordpress.com/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140410185026/http://guerillaarchaeology.wordpress.com/  
[xxvii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174820/http://guerillaarchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/10/02/the-guerrilla-archaeology-glastonbury-experience-from-a-student-perspective-or-my-free-holiday-making-rings/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174820/http://guerillaarchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/10/02/the-guerrilla-archaeology-glastonbury-experience-from-a-student-perspective-or-my-free-holiday-making-rings/  
[xxviii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140309031220/http://dougсарchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/10/28/jobs-in-british-archaeology-2012-13-draft/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140309031220/http://dougсарchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/10/28/jobs-in-british-archaeology-2012-13-draft/  
[xxix](https://web.archive.org/web/20140208063433/http://archaeologyoftombraider.com/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140208063433/http://archaeologyoftombraider.com/  
[xxx](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418175210/http://darkageology.wordpress.com/2014/02/26/215/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140418175210/http://darkageology.wordpress.com/2014/02/26/215/  
[xxxi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140320133535/http://www.bonesdontlie.com/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140320133535/http://www.bonesdontlie.com/  
[xxxii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140311004453/http://www.royalarchinst.org/publications/journal)https://web.archive.org/web/20140311004453/http://www.royalarchinst.org/publications/journal  
[xxxiii](https://web.archive.org/web/20131205113909/http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=ANT)https://web.archive.org/web/20131205113909/http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=ANT  
[xxxiv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140208022113/http://journal.antiquity.ac.uk/archive)https://web.archive.org/web/20140208022113/http://journal.antiquity.ac.uk/archive  
[xxxv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140209145711/http://intarch.ac.uk/) https://web.archive.org/web/20140209145711/http://intarch.ac.uk/  
[xxxvi](https://web.archive.org/web/20130521131021/http://be-ja.org/) https://web.archive.org/web/20130521131021/http://be-ja.org/  
[xxxvii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140405153824/http://dougсарchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/what-is-the-deal-with-the-nacirema-aaa-viewer-stats-and-the-relevance-of-anthropology/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140405153824/http://dougсарchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/what-is-the-deal-with-the-nacirema-aaa-viewer-stats-and-the-relevance-of-anthropology/  
[xxxviii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140411173531/http://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/14/why-decorate-early-anglo-saxon-pots/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140411173531/http://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/14/why-decorate-early-anglo-saxon-pots/  
[xxxix](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418180307/http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/encounteringimagery/11.Howard_Ruth.pdf)https://web.archive.org/web/20140418180307/http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/encounteringimagery/11.Howard\_Ruth.pdf  
[xl](https://web.archive.org/web/20140410221934/http://dougсарchaeology.wordpress.com/2014/03/04/youre-blogging-people-are-reading-but-what-impact-are-you-having-blogarch/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140410221934/http://dougсарchaeology.wordpress.com/2014/03/04/youre-blogging-people-are-reading-but-what-impact-are-you-having-blogarch/  
[xli](https://web.archive.org/web/20140309032859/http://digitaldigging.net/lies-damned-lies-statistics/)https://web.archive.org/web/20140309032859/http://digitaldigging.net/lies-damned-lies-statistics/  
[xlii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140208022113/http://journal.antiquity.ac.uk/archive)https://web.archive.org/web/20140208022113/http://journal.antiquity.ac.uk/archive  
[xliii](http://guerillaarchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/10/02/the-guerrilla-archaeology-glastonbury-experience-from-a-student-perspective-or-my-free-holiday-making-rings/) http://guerillaarchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/10/02/the-guerrilla-archaeology-glastonbury-experience-from-a-student-perspective-or-my-free-holiday-making-rings/

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[xliv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140420115638/http://darkageology.wordpress.com/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140420115638/http://darkageology.wordpress.com/>

[xlv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418173831/http://www.archaeologicalawards.com/2012/07/10/best-community-archaeology-project-2012/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140418173831/http://www.archaeologicalawards.com/2012/07/10/best-community-archaeology-project-2012/>

[xlvi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140210214024/http://www.britishtscienceassociation.org/national-science-engineering-week)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140210214024/http://www.britishtscienceassociation.org/national-science-engineering-week>

[xlvii](https://web.archive.org/web/20130521131021/http://be-ja.org/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20130521131021/http://be-ja.org/>

[xlviii](https://web.archive.org/web/20131205113909/http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=ANT)<https://web.archive.org/web/20131205113909/http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=ANT>

[xlix](https://web.archive.org/web/20140330021156/http://www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140330021156/http://www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk/>

[l](https://web.archive.org/web/20130822163507/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/2011/11/29/cosmeston-2011-the-movie/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20130822163507/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/2011/11/29/cosmeston-2011-the-movie/>

[li](https://web.archive.org/web/20131111120140/http://www.thamesdiscovery.org/frog-blog-archive)<https://web.archive.org/web/20131111120140/http://www.thamesdiscovery.org/frog-blog-archive>

[lii](https://web.archive.org/web/20130524181401/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20130524181401/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/>

[liii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140410185026/http://guerillaarchaeology.wordpress.com/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140410185026/http://guerillaarchaeology.wordpress.com/>

[liv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140424100514/http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100202100434/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2006/06_49/)[https://web.archive.org/web/20140424100514/http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100202100434/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2006/06\\_49/](https://web.archive.org/web/20140424100514/http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100202100434/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2006/06_49/)

[lv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140209145711/http://intarch.ac.uk/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140209145711/http://intarch.ac.uk/>

[lvi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140409205215/http://ejarchaeology.wordpress.com/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140409205215/http://ejarchaeology.wordpress.com/>

[lvii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174354/http://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/oct/30/lyminge-kent-anglo-saxon-hall?CMP=tw_t_gu)[https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174354/http://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/oct/30/lyminge-kent-anglo-saxon-hall?CMP=tw\\_t\\_gu](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174354/http://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/oct/30/lyminge-kent-anglo-saxon-hall?CMP=tw_t_gu)

[lviii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174536/http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/lyminge/2012/09/07/the-end-of-a-wonderful-season-of-digging-discoveries-and-many-new-friends/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140418174536/http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/lyminge/2012/09/07/the-end-of-a-wonderful-season-of-digging-discoveries-and-many-new-friends/>

[lix](https://web.archive.org/web/20130530115656/http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/lyminge/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20130530115656/http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/lyminge/>

[lx](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418034043/http://www.medievalists.net/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140418034043/http://www.medievalists.net/>

[lxi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140111100409/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/2011/07/15/for-the-love-of-clay/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140111100409/http://cosmestonarchaeology.co.uk/2011/07/15/for-the-love-of-clay/>

[lxii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140208063433/http://archaeologyoftombraider.com/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140208063433/http://archaeologyoftombraider.com/>

[lxiii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140320133535/http://bonesdontlie.wordpress.com/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140320133535/http://bonesdontlie.wordpress.com/>

[lxiv](https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://bonesdontlie.wordpress.com/)[https://web.archive.org/web/\\*/http://bonesdontlie.wordpress.com/](https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://bonesdontlie.wordpress.com/)

[lxv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140414000537/http://www.publicengagementt.ac.uk/what)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140414000537/http://www.publicengagementt.ac.uk/what>

[lxvi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140424101531/http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/encounteringimagery/11.Howard_Ruth.pdf)[https://web.archive.org/web/20140424101531/http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/encounteringimagery/11.Howard\\_Ruth.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20140424101531/http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/encounteringimagery/11.Howard_Ruth.pdf)

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[lxvii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140420064101/http://darkageology.wordpress.com/2014/02/26/215/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140420064101/http://darkageology.wordpress.com/2014/02/26/215/>

[lxviii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140309031220/http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/10/28/jobs-in-british-archaeology-2012-13-draft/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140309031220/http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/10/28/jobs-in-british-archaeology-2012-13-draft/>

[lxix](https://web.archive.org/web/20140405153824/http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/what-is-the-deal-with-the-nacirema-aaa-viewer-stats-and-the-relevance-of-anthropology/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140405153824/http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/what-is-the-deal-with-the-nacirema-aaa-viewer-stats-and-the-relevance-of-anthropology/>

[lxx](https://web.archive.org/web/20140410221934/http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/2014/03/04/youre-blogging-people-are-reading-but-what-impact-are-you-having-blogarch/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140410221934/http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/2014/03/04/youre-blogging-people-are-reading-but-what-impact-are-you-having-blogarch/>

[lxxi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140309032859/http://digitaldigging.net/lies-damned-lies-statistics/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140309032859/http://digitaldigging.net/lies-damned-lies-statistics/>

[lxxii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140311004453/http://www.royalarchinst.org/publications/journal)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140311004453/http://www.royalarchinst.org/publications/journal>

[lxxiii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140225142529/http://scienceblogs.com/aardvarchaeology/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140225142529/http://scienceblogs.com/aardvarchaeology/>

[lxxiv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418171824/http://scienceblogs.com/aardvarchaeology/2014/03/10/and-yet-another-gold-foil-figure-die-from-zealand/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140418171824/http://scienceblogs.com/aardvarchaeology/2014/03/10/and-yet-another-gold-foil-figure-die-from-zealand/>

[lxxv](https://web.archive.org/web/20130713005155/http://castlesandcoprolites.blogspot.co.uk)<https://web.archive.org/web/20130713005155/http://castlesandcoprolites.blogspot.co.uk>

[lxxvi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140322112940/http://www.tumblr.com/about)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140322112940/http://www.tumblr.com/about>

[lxxvii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140411173531/http://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/14/why-decorate-early-anglo-saxon-pots/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140411173531/http://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2013/07/14/why-decorate-early-anglo-saxon-pots/>

[lxxviii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140320135614/http://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140320135614/http://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/>

[lxxix](https://web.archive.org/web/20140421184855/http://en.wordpress.com/stats/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140421184855/http://en.wordpress.com/stats/>

[lxxx](https://web.archive.org/web/20140424103442/http://anthroslug.blogspot.co.uk/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140424103442/http://anthroslug.blogspot.co.uk/>

[lxxxi](https://web.archive.org/web/20140320140316/http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140320140316/http://dougsarchaeology.wordpress.com/>

[lxxxii](https://web.archive.org/web/20131021041249/http://www.digtech-llc.com/blog/)<https://web.archive.org/web/20131021041249/http://www.digtech-llc.com/blog/>

[lxxxiii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140209035322/http://www.cyberjournalist.net/news/000215.php)<https://web.archive.org/web/20140209035322/http://www.cyberjournalist.net/news/000215.php>

[lxxxiv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140312054222/http://www.cracked.com/article_20795_6-things-movies-dont-show-you-about-being-archeologist.html)[https://web.archive.org/web/20140312054222/http://www.cracked.com/article\\_20795\\_6-things-movies-dont-show-you-about-being-archeologist.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20140312054222/http://www.cracked.com/article_20795_6-things-movies-dont-show-you-about-being-archeologist.html)

[lxxxv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140419090614/http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/science/2008-05-14-indiana-jones-archaeology_N.htm)[https://web.archive.org/web/20140419090614/http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/science/2008-05-14-indiana-jones-archaeology\\_N.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20140419090614/http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/science/2008-05-14-indiana-jones-archaeology_N.htm)

[lxxxvi](https://web.archive.org/web/20130820122039/http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/archaeology/index.jsp)[https://web.archive.org/web/20130820122039/http://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/archaeology/index.jsp](https://web.archive.org/web/20130820122039/http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/archaeology/index.jsp)

[lxxxvii](https://web.archive.org/web/20131127113050/http://rpanet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=3)<https://web.archive.org/web/20131127113050/http://rpanet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=3>

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[lxxxviii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140419090907/http://www.digtech-llc.com/blog/208-blogging-carnival-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly) <https://web.archive.org/web/20140419090907/http://www.digtech-llc.com/blog/208-blogging-carnival-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly>

[lxxxix](https://web.archive.org/web/20140320140504/http://www.poweredbyosteons.org/) <https://web.archive.org/web/20140320140504/http://www.poweredbyosteons.org/>

[xc](https://web.archive.org/web/20140407142238/http://uwf.edu/anthropology/) <https://web.archive.org/web/20140407142238/http://uwf.edu/anthropology/>

[xci](https://web.archive.org/web/20140214135701/http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org/) <https://web.archive.org/web/20140214135701/http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org/>

[xcii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140320140504/http://www.poweredbyosteons.org/) <https://web.archive.org/web/20140320140504/http://www.poweredbyosteons.org/>

[xciii](https://web.archive.org/web/20140301235927/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Runway) [https://web.archive.org/web/20140301235927/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project\\_Runway](https://web.archive.org/web/20140301235927/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Runway)

[xciv](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418222932/https://www.academia.edu/4095129/Presenting_Anthropology_Syllabus_Grad_Proseminar) [https://web.archive.org/web/20140418222932/https://www.academia.edu/4095129/Presenting\\_Anthropology\\_Syllabus\\_Grad\\_Proseminar\\_](https://web.archive.org/web/20140418222932/https://www.academia.edu/4095129/Presenting_Anthropology_Syllabus_Grad_Proseminar)

[xcv](https://web.archive.org/web/20130820140713/http://ethnographymatters.net/tag/syllabus-as-essay-2/) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130820140713/http://ethnographymatters.net/tag/syllabus-as-essay-2/>

[xcvi](https://web.archive.org/web/20130125015413/http://www.poweredbyosteons.org/2013/01/presenting-anthropology-weeks-1-2.html) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130125015413/http://www.poweredbyosteons.org/2013/01/presenting-anthropology-weeks-1-2.html>

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