

Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.

PANYC

NEWSLETTER

Number 106, May 2002

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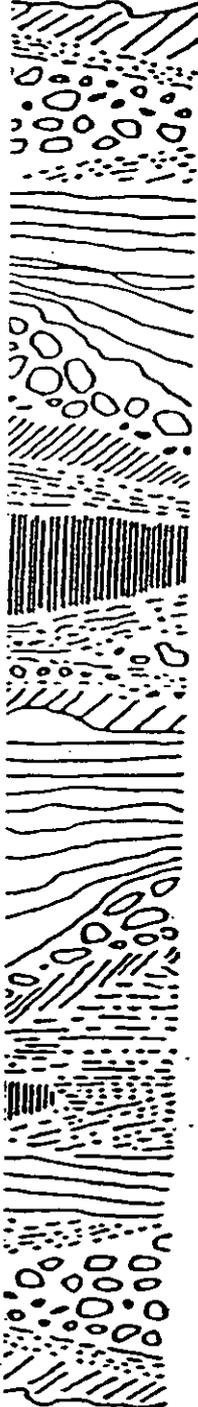
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**PANYC – Professional Archaeologists of New York City
Minutes of the PANYC General Membership Meeting: April 3rd, 2002.**

NOTICE OF UPCOMING MEETINGS: May 22nd, 2002

Room 710, Hunter College North

The intersection of East 68th and Lexington, Manhattan; Turn right out of elevator, go through doors, turn left and go to end of hall, the room is on the right

Executive Board: 6:00 P.M.

General Membership: 6:30 P.M.

President Nan Rothschild called the meeting to order at 6:45 P.M.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Minutes accepted with revisions. Under **NEW BUSINESS:** the last sentence should read "an institution" instead of any institution. Also for clarification: a copy of a letter sent to Geismar of a letter Asadorian sent to Solecki. Under **ACTION:** it should read Historic Battery Park not Battery Park City.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The yearly treasurers report was presented by Pickman. There is a balance of \$1723.36 in the PANYC treasury.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Rothschild stated that monies were allocated to educational institutions for the City Hall Park artifact analysis. This money was not split equally among the institutions. She also reported on the identification of bones in the attic of the Tweed Courthouse as reported in the New York Times. Rothschild decided to write a letter to Bloomberg about having PANYC work together with the current administration to foster a relationship of awareness of archaeological concerns within the city. Rothschild also reported that she wrote a letter to the Federal Transportation Administration having PANYC being a consulting party for the 2nd Avenue subway project. Rothschild also reported that Pickman and Stone had collected comments on the guidelines from the Landmarks meeting. Pickman and Stone will present them to Sutphin and Bankoff and the PANYC membership.

ACTION: Nothing to report.

AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND: Nothing to report.

AWARDS: Cantwell stated that the time has passed for submitting nominations. The committee is deciding on a student award recipient. There were no nominations for the special award.

CITY HALL PARK: See President's report above.

ELECTION: Lattanzi presented the results of the election. Lynn Rakos was elected President, and Chris Ricciardi was elected Vice President. Lattanzi was elected to a second term as Secretary. Arnold Pickman is serving his second term as Treasurer. Executive Board members are as follows Nan Rothschild, Christopher Matthews, Joan Geismar, Linda Stone, Diane Dallal, and Anne-Marie Cantwell. After elections results were read, the meeting was then lead by President Rakos.

EVENTS: Stone reported that she would be resigning as Events Chair. She will try to find a suitable replacement. The Society for Industrial Archaeology meetings will be held in Brooklyn, June 6-10, 2002.

MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY: Nothing to report.

MEMBERSHIP: One membership application was received. Kelly Britt of Columbia University was accepted as our newest member.

MET. CHAPTER NYSAA: Lattanzi stated that the meeting on March 12, 2002 was well attended with 32 people present. Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana diZergera Wall presented a talk on their book, Unearthing Gotham.

NEWSLETTER: Nothing to report.

NYAC: Annual meeting will take place on Friday, April 26th at the NYSAA meeting in Norwich, New York. The monitoring guidelines will hopefully be approved and adopted at the meeting.

PUBLIC PROGRAM: Public program is scheduled for Sunday April 28th 2002 from 1 to 3pm at the Museum of the City of New York. The flyers were mailed out to the membership and mailing list.

PARKS DEPARTMENT: A question came up as to who is responsible for consideration of archaeological resources in New York City Parks. Geismar will contact Adrian Benepe to find out who at the Parks Department is responsible for archaeological concerns.

REPOSITORY: Nothing to report.

URBAN STANDARDS: Nothing to report.

RESEARCH AND PLANNING: Nothing to report.

WEB SITE: Adding updated information to the web site was discussed. Ricciardi offered to host the site on his server in order to make changes whenever we wanted. Stone suggested that we setup an e-mail/web bulletin board for making all the necessary changes. That way everyone can get information in a timely manner. Matthews also offered to investigate the possibility of hosting the web site at Hofstra University.

OLD BUSINESS: Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS: New York City's new plans for Governor's Island were discussed. Rakos stated that she would write a letter to Mayor Bloomberg indicating that the island is archaeologically sensitive and that PANYC would be willing to discuss such issues relating to the island's use. Rakos also suggested trying to find a new meeting place that would be more centrally located. She will look into find a place around the mid-town area. Spritzer mentioned that PANYC should write a letter to the Museum of the City of New York in support of the move to the Tweed Courthouse. Due to PANYC's long-standing relationship with the Museum of the City of New York, it was agreed that a letter in support of the museum's relocations would be sent to Bloomberg.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory D. Lattanzi
PANYC Secretary



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

February 21, 2002

Sherida E. Paulsen, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chairperson Paulsen:

Re: Draft LPC Guidelines for Archaeological Work in
New York City
OPRHP Comments

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) would like to take this opportunity to thank the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for seeking our comments on the draft version of the *Landmarks Preservation Commission Guidelines for Archaeological Work in New York City* (Draft Guidelines). OPRHP applauds the LPC's efforts to complete and disseminate this important document. We feel that it will play an important role in furthering professional level archaeological work in New York City and in helping the public and City agencies understand the archaeological review process.

From our review of the Draft Guidelines it is obvious that your staff has put in tremendous time and effort in the preparation of this comprehensive document. The material provided in the appendices should prove to be extremely helpful to your audience and to the professional archaeologists working in New York City. Overall the document covers many of the areas that our staff often finds itself addressing with the general public, and it has stimulated conversation within our office about the potential for updating our own guidelines.

During our review of the Draft Guidelines OPRHP has noted several areas that we would like to comment on for your consideration. While some of these comments are general in nature others are more specific. We hope that you will consider these comments before publishing the final version of the Draft Guidelines.

Our office is referred to on a number of occasions throughout the Draft Guidelines. In several cases we are identified as the OPHRP, while in other areas we are identified as SHPO. While the staff at LPC and others in the archaeological community may be aware that these are both one office with the official title determined by whether a project under review is a state (OPRHP) or Federal (SHPO) undertaking, we feel that this may prove confusing to the general public. Therefore we recommend that we be referred to as OPRHP throughout the document.

We have also noted that while the specific sections of the document are outlined using Arabic numerals, there are several places where references to later sections of the document are made using Roman numerals. This has the potential to cause confusion and we recommend that this be addressed.

In reading the Draft Guidelines, we have noted that the overall flow of the document is interrupted in several areas by the inclusion of additional information sections within the description of the Review Process. For example Section 6.3-Responsibilities of the Archaeologist- is currently located between Sections 6.2 - Archaeological Field Testing, and 6.4 - Field Testing Reports. It seems that Section 6.3 may be better placed either before or after the descriptions of the various stages of research.

In Section 1.1, it is noted that the guidelines have been developed to help applicants navigate the process of archaeological review. OPRHP recommends that it be explicitly stated that this applies to the LPC review process. While our agencies work well together, project sponsors are not always aware that they may eventually need to obtain OPRHP concurrence on determinations and our requirements may be slightly different. Unfortunately, we have encountered this scenario in many municipalities across the state where the applicant believes they have completed all necessary reviews under SEQRA, only to be stalled by the need for an OPRHP review late in the process. Due to this situation OPRHP feels it is important to emphasize that this document outlines the LPC review process and that it may be necessary to contact OPRHP as well.

To help strengthen this point, we recommend that the first step in helping to navigate the review process be "Determine the applicable laws and review agencies that may be involved in a project". Additionally in the step outlining what information must be submitted, we recommend that it be modified to "so that *LPC* review can proceed in a timely manner".

In the last paragraph of Section 1.1 we recommend that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines be referenced as well as the NYAC Standards.

In Section 1.2, regarding the laws governing archaeological review, OPRHP feels it is important that each law is listed separately and a brief explanation is provided for each. To illustrate this a portion of the Draft Guidelines have been modified below (significant recommendations in italics):

1.21 Environmental Review:

- ◊ Federal agencies must adhere to *several laws regarding potential effects to archaeological resources:*
 - ◊ The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) Section 102(2)(c), which requires federal agencies, as well as some projects receiving federal funding, to consider the environmental impacts of their proposed projects and to consider alternatives.
 - ◊ Section 106 of the National Preservation Act of 1966, *as amended, and its implementing regulations requires that Federal Agencies take into account the effect of any undertaking on any district, site, building, structure or object that is included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. An undertaking is defined as any "project activity or program funded in whole or part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a federal agency including (A) those carried out by or on behalf of an agency; (B) those carried out with Federal financial assistance; (C) those requiring a Federal permit, license or approval; and (D) those subject to State or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a Federal agency". Projects needing review under Section 106 will be handled by the State Historic Preservation Office, which in New York is located in the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)*

Later in this same paragraph there is a reference to a site as "useful". We are not comfortable with this terminology and recommend that this passage be modified to read
...The most significant resources are those which will tell us something that will materially add to our knowledge of a particular time or place. The extent to which a site **has potential to provide data for further** archaeological research, determines the **findings of LPC and whether avoidance or data retrieval will be deemed** necessary for that project.

Section 3.0 indicates that archaeological review will be triggered by "certain cases" of federal or state funding. Please note that any state involvement, funding, permits, plan approval etc. will require review under Section 14.09. All such projects need to address historic preservation concerns. OPRHP recommends that the wording in this section be modified to address this discrepancy and also that a sentence be added that makes note of the need to coordinate with all potential review agencies (LPC and OPRHP) at the earliest possible date.

Section 3.1 should be titled "Initial LPC Review" and the initial sentence should indicate that first level review is conducted for all projects under LPC review.

As the Draft Guidelines develop into a more detailed explanation of the review process, we have noted that the term significant archaeological site is used often. OPRHP believes that this term should not be applied in all the cases it has been used, as in a number of places this term seems premature. For example, in the opening sentence of Section 3.2 it is stated that "proposed work could disturb or destroy significant archaeological resources. At this point it is impossible to determine a site's significance so we suggest that this term be dropped from the sentence. Later in this same paragraph the term "likely significance" is used. To keep consistent with generally accepted language we recommend this be changed to "potential significance".

In Section 3.3 the Draft Guidelines refer to "significant archaeological information". We recommend that "information" be changed to "resources" or "deposits". While information will be gathered, the resource or deposit is what will actually be found. In the next sentence we recommend the phrase "...discover what resources are present, and how valuable they are, is by testing" should be changed to "...discover what significant resources are present is by testing".

This same paragraph also includes the phrase "...indicates that significant resources are not present, or not intact...". Since a resource that has lost its integrity is not considered significant, we recommend dropping the word significant from this passage.

In Section 3.4 we recommend that description of what mitigation may consist of be modified to "...excavation, redesign, or combination of both". We have found in many instances it is often not possible for a site to be completely avoided, however creative solutions including avoidance of portions of the site combined with some excavation have been utilized successfully.

Under Section 4.0 we recommend replacement of "potentially significant archaeological resources" with "potential archaeological resources" in the first sentence. We feel it is premature to be assessing site significance before any field investigation has occurred. At this point the focus of research should be directed toward identifying if there is even a potential for deposits to exist intact.

OPRHP feels it is unnecessary, and possibly counter productive, to include reference to the number of first level reviews you receive per month. While later indications of the percentage of projects that require field investigation may be appropriate, we are not sure that presentation of raw numbers is appropriate as this number has the potential to change considerably. In our case, the number of initial reviews has almost doubled over the last 5-6

years and inclusion of such data in a document that will hopefully be used for many years may be problematic if LPC sees a similar increase.

In Section 6.1 the first paragraph notes that the purpose of a Documentary Study is to determine if significant intact resources may exist and that this study is the same as what we consider a Phase 1A. A phase 1A is not designed to determine if significant resources may exist, but rather if any resources may exist. The determination of significance can not be made until after at least minimal field-testing has been completed. Therefore we recommend that the word "significant" be dropped from this passage. We also recommend that the word "further" be dropped from the last sentence of this paragraph since this suggests that previous field work has been completed as part of the first level review or Document Study.

The third paragraph of this section indicates "The report must include a discussion of the significance of the specific resource as defined by the National Register." We recommend that "specific resource" be replaced by "suspected resources" since at this point no resources have actually been identified.

In Section 6.2, first sentence, we recommend modifying the sentence to read "...impact on *potentially* significant archaeological resources...". Later in the paragraph we suggest that LPC and OPRHP be added as potential contacts for archaeologists to consult while developing field testing methodology.

In Section 6.4, paragraph 2, it is noted that a Letter from the Field can be used to provide data and "a rationale for mitigation and further steps planned" for sites identified during Field Testing. While it is noted that this letter must be approved by LPC before further work may begin, OPRHP recommends that this passage be expanded to indicate that a complete data retrieval plan (as set forth in Section 6.63 as a complete Scope of Work) needs to be prepared as part of this Letter from the Field, or as a separate document before LPC will provide approval to proceed.

While our comments have recommended reconsideration of use of the word significant in several areas, we recommend that it be added to the first paragraph of Section 6.6. The purpose is to mitigate the loss of *significant* archaeological resources when a prior study has indicated that a project may place *significant* resources at risk.

In Section 6.6.1 we recommend modification of the second sentence to "...does not disturb *or minimizes the disturbance of* the archaeological resources".

In Section 6.63 under the description of what a scope of work should include, we note that research design is listed, but there is no provision that specifically indicates that research questions need to be part of the scope. We have also noted that research questions are not explicitly called for in other areas where mitigation plans have been discussed. Unfortunately we have found that such questions seem to be left out of planning documents on many occasions, even though they are explicitly called for in both the NYAC standards and the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Therefore we recommend that the need for them be explicitly included in these guidelines whenever appropriate.

Additionally we recommend that the Scope of Work include provisions for a safety/security plan if appropriate. We also believe that it should include provisions for dissemination of information to the public, both after completion of fieldwork and during the investigation if feasible. We have seen many successful cases that have included site tours, web pages, press releases with media coverage and other educational and innovative forms of public dissemination that have been used during the compliance review process.

Under Section 6.64 we recommend the addition of a Non-technical Summary as a section of a mitigation report. This provides an easily readable and understandable format for the non-technical reader of a report and helps to disseminate the information gathered to a much wider audience.

Finally, we have noted that in several areas the Draft Guidelines indicate that multiple copies of a report will need to be submitted. While we are aware that there is already a provision for sending copies of mitigation reports to OPRHP, we request that we receive a copy of all reports that include field testing that are completed as part of your review and that provisions for this be incorporated into the guidelines. While we may not have a review responsibility for these projects, we do maintain a research library of cultural resource reports completed across the state, and the addition of works completed for review by LPC would help to make our library more complete. In the same vein we request that you have all sites identified reported to OPRHP so that they may be added to our statewide inventory of archaeological sites and the data available for researchers visiting our facility. We can provide the appropriate forms necessary at your request.

In closing we again applaud you and your staff for the completion of this truly important undertaking. We hope that you find our comments helpful and look forward to working closely with you and your staff in the future. We will be available to discuss or clarify any of comments in greater detail, at your request.

Sincerely,



Douglas P. Mackey
Historic Preservation Program Analyst
Archaeology



Cynthia Blakemore
Historic Preservation Program Analyst
Archaeology



Robert Kuhn
Assistant Director

Cc: Amanda Sutphin, LPC
Arthur Bankoff, LPC

31st Annual Conference, Brooklyn, NY June 6-10, 2002



Your hosts, the members of the Roebling Chapter, are hard at work finalizing arrangements for the 31st annual meeting. Tours will explore not only Brooklyn's prominence as a transportation center but also the many manufacturers and processing plants that support the great metropolis to the west.

As with all SIA tours, the 2002 conference tours are dependent on the willingness of site owners and managers to permit visits. After September 11, many companies and governmental agencies in New York City have new security concerns and requirements. Negotiations with some sites are ongoing as our conference brochure goes to press and, although we hope to receive full commitments from sites now listed only as possibilities, and even add some special surprises, please understand that tour content may change.

We will be making use of the subways and our feet for transportation to many conference events. Please dress comfortably and wear walking shoes. Remember that for tours of factories, hard-soled shoes and long pants are required. If you have your own safety glasses and hearing protection, bring them along. Your registration confirmation will indicate which sites also require hardhats.



- [Tours and Events](#)
- [PDF version of Tours & Events, taken from our conference brochure](#) (It is a large file and may take a while to load. You will need the Acrobat Reader software to display and read)
- [Paper Sessions](#)
- [Training session/workshop: Architectural & Engineering Digital Recording Strategies of Historical Structures](#)
- [Hotel and Travel information](#)

Select here for On-line Registration using our Secure Server Payment form

A late registration fee will be imposed on all online conference registrations after May 10, 2002 - Online registration will close at 7:30 am, Eastern Daylight Time on Friday, May 24, 2002.

Note: If you are only taking the Digital Recording Strategies for Historic Structures training session, you do not have to pay the SIA Conference registration fee or the late registration fee.

Select here for a 1-page mail-in registration form (PDF) to print out on your printer to mail with your check to the SIA.

A late registration fee will be imposed on all mailed registrations with a post-mark dated after May 10, 2002 - You should be sure to mail the registration form before May 14, 2002 or else bring it to the registration desk at the conference hotel.

DIGGING IN MANHATTAN

Adam Gopnik was an engaging companion on our walk together exploring the archeological sites of lower Manhattan ("Underfoot," February 4th). But a few points may have got muddled along the way. Gopnik gives one of us, Anne-Marie Cantwell, credit for a study of the evolution of home life in early New York and for the excavation of the Telco site. In fact, both projects are Diana Wall's work. In addition, we did not intend to disparage all contract archeologists. Wall made her living as a contract archeologist for years, and our book, "Unearthing Gotham," is based on some excellent contract studies.

Anne-Marie Cantwell

Diana Wall

New York City

New York

3127102

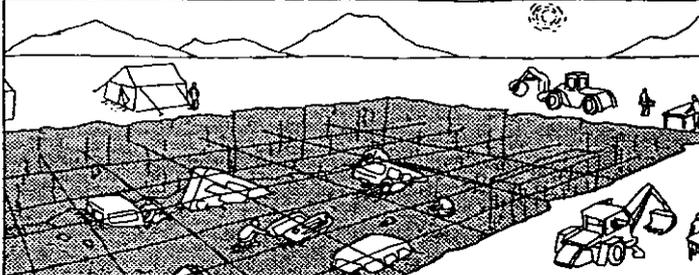
TOM THE DANCING BUG

BY RUBEN BOLLING



S.U.V. Shrine Excavated

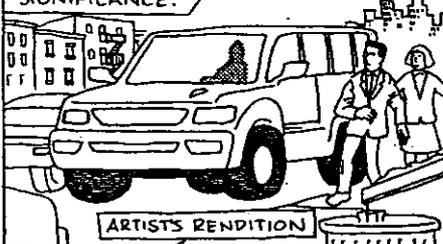
ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE UNCOVERED AN ANCIENT AMERICAN SHRINE TO "S.U.V.s," AMERICANS' BELOVED RELIGIOUS TOTEM VEHICLES, NEAR WHAT WAS ONCE CALLED "DENVER."



THIS IS A RICH DISCOVERY OF WHAT AMERICANS CALLED A "CAR LOT" THAT COULD BE A KEY TO UNRAVELING THE MYSTERY OF THIS ILL-FATED PEOPLE.



S.U.V.s WERE SACRED OBJECTS THAT, MUCH LIKE COWS IN INDIA, CLOGGED AND BEFOULED STREETS, BUT COULD NOT BE THREATENED DUE TO THEIR RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE.



IT IS BELIEVED THAT IT WAS ANCIENT AMERICA'S UNYIELDING WORSHIP OF THESE TOTEMIC VEHICLES THAT LED TO THE OIL WARS OF THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY.

AMERICANS WERE ACTUALLY CONVINCED BY THEIR POLITICAL HIGH PRIESTS THAT THEY SHOULD SACRIFICE THEIR CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT TO APPEASE THE S.U.V.s' INSATIABLE APPETITE FOR "GASOLINE."



MEANWHILE, THIS WINTER DIVERS WILL BE BRAVING BRUTALLY HOT WEATHER TO EXCAVATE AN ANCIENT "PARKING LOT" IN THE SUBMERGED LAND OF "NEW ENGLAND!"



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Ethics and archaeology

Can you dig it?

The growing importance of ethical considerations is transforming archaeology

THE first-world-war battlefields of Belgium and France are dangerous places where, even today, unexploded shells lurk, making excavation a potentially lethal activity. But as archaeologists pick up their trowels, they must consider more than their personal safety. For the trenches, dugouts and tunnels—many containing human remains and personal belongings—are ethical minefields too. In a paper in this month's *Antiquity*, Nicholas Saunders, an anthropologist at University College, London, says that archaeologists on these battlefields face a concentration of all the issues that have concerned archaeology in the past ten to 15 years.

These ethical concerns fall into three broad areas. First, there is the question of how to treat human remains. Over the past few years, archaeologists have often come into conflict with indigenous peoples over the custody and handling of excavated human remains. In Belgium and France the situation is particularly complex because the allied armies included soldiers from a variety of faiths and ethnicities, including Africans, Indians, Australians and Native Americans, all of whose traditions may prefer to treat remains differently.

Next is the question of ownership of artefacts. In the case of first-world-war

sites, local people armed with metal detectors routinely collect medals and other memorabilia. The sale of such items, says Dr Saunders, has provided an important source of income ever since refugees first returned to the area after the conflict. Archaeologists, though, regard such activities as looting. Around the world, the general question of who has the first claim on buried items—local people, the descendants of the original owners or archaeologists—is deeply controversial.

A third ethical problem concerns the preservation of sites. Should battlefields be left alone as memorials, redeveloped for tourism, or preserved for the archaeologists of the future? Archaeologists increasingly consider the third option: in recent years, they have become more selective about what and where they dig, so that they do not preclude investigations by subsequent generations.

In short, archaeologists' investigations frequently pit their interests against those of other people, and the concerns of the present against the possible concerns of the future. As ethical considerations come to matter more, there has been a change in the way the public sees archaeologists, and the way archaeologists see themselves. "We went through a period when

we thought 'Hey, we're scientists, we should be the number one priority here'," says William Lipe, an archaeologist at Washington State University in Pullman. "But most of us have now come to see it differently."

Archaeology is now changing dramatically, says Karen Vitelli, an archaeologist at Indiana University. Dr Vitelli also chairs the ethics committee of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) and is editor of a forthcoming book on archaeological ethics. She was one of the first archaeologists to integrate the study of ethics into archaeological training, and it has now, she says, become a standard part of many degree courses. At the same time, archaeological societies around the world (including the SAA) have adopted codes of ethics to regulate their members. What has brought about this transformation?

Skeletons in the closet

Ethics and archaeology began to collide relatively recently. The modern discipline traces its roots back to the gentleman amateurs of the early 19th century, who brought statues, columns, mummies and trinkets back as souvenirs from their travels around the Mediterranean. Subsequent generations of archaeologists have tended to regard men such as Giovanni Belzoni—a one-time circus strong-man who shipped Egyptian antiquities back to the British Museum in London—as little better than tomb-robbers.

Belzoni was the first European to enter the temple at Abu Simbel. He rediscovered the entrance to the Great Pyramid and found five tombs in the Valley of the Kings, including that of Seti I. An excerpt from his

- ▶ best selling book of 1820 gives a flavour of the antiquarian practices of the time:

Surrounded by bodies, by heaps of mummies in all directions; which previous to my being accustomed to the sight, impressed me with horror... I was choked with mummies, and I could not pass without putting my face in contact with that of some decayed Egyptian; but as the passage inclined downwards, my own weight helped me on; however, I could not help being covered with bones, legs, arms and heads rolling from above. Thus I proceeded from one cave to another, all full of mummies piled in various ways, some standing, some lying, some piled on their heads. The purpose of my researches was to rob the Egyptians of their papyri; of which I found a few hidden in their breasts, under their arms, above their knees, or on the legs, and covered by the numerous folds of cloth that envelop the mummy.

By the early 20th century, however, archaeologists had begun to adopt the methodology of science. Increasing emphasis was placed on the accurate measurement and description of sites and publication of results in archaeological journals. Technological advances—such as the advent of radiocarbon dating—led to further refinements, and the “new archaeology” movement of the 1960s promoted quantitative methods such as statistical analysis. The transformation of archaeology, from tomb-robbing by amateurs into a coherent scientific discipline, was complete.

Paradoxically, the ethical arguments over the treatment of human remains, the ownership of artefacts and responsibility to future generations, all stem in part from archaeology’s new-found scientific authority. Having eschewed their dubious forebears, archaeologists reinvented themselves as respectable scientists in search of truth. Who could argue with that?

Bones of contention

Plenty of people, it turned out. Archaeologists’ most public conflicts have been with indigenous peoples over the appropriate treatment of human remains. The most infamous example is that of Kennewick Man, a 9,300-year-old skeleton found in 1996 in a riverbank near the town of Kennewick in Washington state. Intriguingly, its skeletal characteristics are very different from those of modern Native Americans, making Kennewick Man of particular interest to archaeologists trying to understand the peopling of the Americas.

Five Native American tribes, however, claim Kennewick Man as an ancestor under the provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). This law was passed in 1990 to allow Native Americans to remove ancestors’ bones, and objects associated with burials and religious practice, from museum collections. A legal battle has rumbled ever since. Granting the remains of Kennewick Man to the Native Americans

would deny archaeologists access to an important source of information; but granting them to the scientists would amount to a direct repudiation of the Native Americans’ oral history, which is thought to go back 10,000 years.

The passing of NAGPRA demonstrated that science’s authority over the dead is not absolute. However scientifically respectable their methods, archaeologists have been forced to acknowledge that they do not operate in a vacuum, and must take the values of others into account, not least because they will otherwise be denied access to important data. Attitudes are changing as a result. Dr Vitelli says that several of her students who are studying bioanthropology, which involves the examination of skeletal remains, are now questioning whether they want to continue in that field, for both ethical and practical reasons.



Kennewick Man, and other similar cases, are not entirely representative. In some cases, indigenous peoples and archaeologists have co-operated and reached compromises. Donald Ryan, an archaeologist at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, gives one example of how things are changing. Working with Egyptian archaeologists, he excavated six tombs in the Valley of the Kings during the 1990s, including one previously explored by Belzoni. Once their work was complete, the archaeologists cleaned up the tombs, many of which had been ravaged by floods and looting. They placed the mummies in new wooden boxes and sealed the entrances. As a result, says Dr Ryan, it was felt that a bit of order and dignity had been restored.

Before they break ground, archaeologists should talk to local people and try to

identify areas where their interests coincide, suggests Dr Vitelli. “It’s very hard for many of us, since it means giving up control and authority,” she says.

Artefacts on eBay

Another area where archaeologists have invoked their scientific authority is to take a firm stand against looting. Looters irretrievably destroy evidence about the context in which artefacts are found, even if the artefacts are subsequently recovered. Similarly, archaeologists have spoken out against the trade in antiquities. Ancient artefacts sold as *objets d’art* fetch high prices and thus provide an incentive for looters—who are armed and violent in some cases.

In addition to the damage and loss of context caused by looting, private ownership of artefacts can prevent archaeologists from gaining access for research purposes. It may also prevent future archaeologists from verifying previous findings. This, notes Mark Lynott, an archaeologist at the National Park Service’s Midwest Archaeological Centre in Lincoln, Nebraska, is vital if archaeology is to be truly scientific. To avoid appearing either unscientific or complicit with the activities of looters, many archaeologists choose deliberately to ignore data from objects in private collections—whatever their significance. Archaeologists remain divided over how museums should acquire and display ancient artefacts of uncertain provenance, for fear that this might encourage looters.

A recent twist to the antiquities trade has come with the advent of Internet auction houses such as eBay. A number of archaeological societies, including the SAA and the Archaeological Institute of America, have asked online auction houses to outlaw the trading of antiquities, to little effect. The problem with policing this trade is that many items have been in private hands for decades, or even centuries, and were originally acquired under very different circumstances. As it is not possible to put the objects back into the ground, says Dr Vitelli, the trading of these items is tolerated. But this provides a loophole for unscrupulous dealers: even though many countries now strictly control the export of antiquities, dealers can simply claim that an item is from an old private collection.

In February, Frederick Schultz, an antiquities dealer, was found guilty by a New York court of conspiring to receive stolen Egyptian antiquities. Mr Schultz claimed that the items he was offering for sale came from the 1920s collection of an Englishman called Thomas Alcock. The US Attorney’s Office concluded that “the evidence at trial established that the ‘Thomas Alcock Collection’ was a complete fiction.” Mr Schultz has launched an appeal.

This case, though, has heartened archaeologists. The fact that a New York

► court was prepared to uphold an Egyptian patrimony law banning the trade in antiquities unearthed since 1983 is seen as an important victory for opponents of antiquities trading. Furthermore, says Dr Lynott, the discussion over the ethics of trading antiquities has started to change attitudes. The debate has marginalised the people who are willing to engage in such trade. Even so, says Dr Vitelli, it is not clear that archaeologists' opposition to antiquities trading has helped to save sites or to diminish looting.

Moreover, when it comes to the provenance of antiquities, archaeologists themselves are not always standing on terribly firm ethical ground. Many of the items in museums today were, after all, removed by people like Belzoni. "I look at objects in the British Museum, think about how they were removed, and think that's really horrible," says Dr Lynott. "But had they not been removed at that time, they might not be available for study today."

Belzoni was working within the laws of the period. And at the time he was plundering the Valley of the Kings, local Egyptians were merrily using mummies as firewood. The dilemma for archaeology is that carting off artefacts for display in museums on the other side of the world smacks of cultural imperialism; but so does demanding that indigenous people treat artefacts in a way that western archaeologists approve of.

Between past and future

Alongside the debates over the handling of human remains and artefacts, archaeologists have also been grappling with their responsibilities to future practitioners of their science. A central paradox of archaeology is that discovery involves destruction; investigation requires intrusion. Where should archaeologists draw the line when deciding how much of an important site to excavate, if they are not to hinder future investigations?

If the field is scientifically healthy, says Dr Lipe, archaeologists will ask new questions in future and have better methods. Dr Lipe is one of the pioneers of the "conservation model" of archaeology. This is a logical outgrowth of the new archaeology movement of the 1960s, and stresses the careful, well justified and frugal use of archaeological resources, in contrast to the exhaustive excavation of important sites.

Most archaeologists, says Dr Lipe, have had the experience of trying to discover something new about a site that was completely excavated—only to find that the question they wanted to ask had not occurred to the original archaeologists. The intellectual health of the field, he says, depends on being able to address new questions or readdress old ones. "Archaeologists must be conservative in how they themselves use the archaeological record,

as a matter of ethics."

This approach has been bolstered by the advent of non-destructive geophysical surveying techniques—such as ground-penetrating radar—that enable archaeologists to identify and target small areas of interest. Progress in analytical techniques also means that archaeologists can learn a great deal from small amounts of material, provided it is carefully chosen. The result is a move away from the complete excavation of sites towards a more selective, sampling approach.

Belzoni's last laugh

It is deeply ironic that it has taken so long for archaeologists, investigators of the relics of the past, to recognise that archaeological standards, too, are products of their time. Dr Lynott says these are changing almost from year to year. Changing values mean that every generation of archaeolo-



gists inevitably regards its predecessors as crude and insensitive. "We see this looking back just a generation or two—we don't have to go back as far as Belzoni," he says.

Future archaeologists may be less critical of Belzoni. Dr Ryan believes Belzoni has been unfairly vilified. He points out that Belzoni went to the trouble of making detailed measurements, drawings and maps of the tombs he found, which was more than most of his contemporaries did. In a period when there were no archaeological standards whatsoever, Dr Ryan argues, Belzoni was not merely a man of his time, he was far ahead of it.

Today, archaeology is in the midst of a second metamorphosis. Having transformed itself internally—into a science—it is now being reshaped by external social, cultural and political forces. But it is still a work in progress. "What we're seeing now

is the emergence of additional voices that have legitimate claims on what is done to and with the archaeological record," says Dr Lipe. Dr Vitelli, meanwhile, insists that her students regard the current debate as a chance to reinvent archaeology. For example, the investigation of first-world-war battlefields (which have yet to receive much attention from professional archaeologists) offers a chance to develop new approaches in which the interests of all parties are taken into account. Such battlefields are unique, notes Dr Saunders, because they provide an opportunity to perform archaeological investigations within the context of an abundance of historical documents—personal letters, diaries, maps, photographs and military records. "We have an opportunity here to create a new kind of archaeology—to make it anthropologically informed from the beginning," he says.

Double standards abound, however. Dr Saunders' suggestion in 1999 that soldiers' remains and artefacts on first-world-war battlefields should be treated in the same way as those of Australian Aborigines or Native Americans was, he says, initially greeted with bewilderment. But things are starting to change. Already, there are signs of compromises between professional archaeologists, and amateur investigators and relic collectors.

Today, amateurs acknowledge the need to seek respectable backing. One amateur group, known as The Diggers, began investigating battlefields near Ypres in 1992. Its members do not claim to be professionals, but the group operates under a licence from Belgium's institute of national archaeology, works with a local museum, and deals with human remains in conjunction with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Widespread public enthusiasm for all things archaeological—another relatively recent development—also gives archaeologists cause for optimism about the future. To illustrate how much things have changed during the course of her career, Dr Vitelli gives the example of the Franchthi Cave in southern Greece, a site with deposits spanning the period from 30,000BC to 3,000BC. Dr Vitelli worked at the site during the 1970s and, 30 years later, having become involved in archaeological ethics, she returned to the local village of Koilada and offered to give a talk about what had been found. The mayor approved and Dr Vitelli ended up speaking to a packed house in the village school.

"It was standing room only: priests, teachers, schoolchildren. They stayed for an hour-long talk in 98-degree heat," she says. "They were interested in learning about us and why we came to their village. The mayor realised they weren't ready for it 30 years ago. And neither were we. And now we all are." ■

April 28, 2002

A Clash of Symbols: Defining Holy Sites on Faith

By STEPHEN KINZER

HATRED and violence are hardly new in the Holy Land, but the battle raging around the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is especially heart-rending for many religious believers. Few events symbolize the tragedy of the current conflict more poignantly than the military siege at the place where the Prince of Peace was born. But was he?

"It's very doubtful that Jesus was born in Bethlehem," said Hershel Shanks, editor of the magazine *Biblical Archaeology Review*. "He's always referred to as the Nazarene, not the Bethlehemite. But there were very clear reasons for putting him in Bethlehem. He was supposed to be the scion of David who came back and gave us salvation, and since David was born in Bethlehem there was a desire to put Jesus there. This doesn't reduce the power of symbolic stories, but it's not historic reality."

The Middle East conflict is in part about conflicting narratives. Some of these narratives are as current as today's news, pitting the rage of a nation that views itself as occupied against that of another that sees itself under mortal threat. Others are historical, encompassing questions like whether Palestinians were pushed off their land when Israel was founded in 1947 or left of their own accord. But it is the clash of religious narratives that can arouse the most passionate emotion and controversy, and sacred places are at their heart.

History and religious tradition clash not just at the Church of the Nativity, but at many other sites in the Holy Land. One is the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, from which, according to Muslim tradition, Muhammad ascended to Heaven. It is considered the third holiest site in Islam, after Mecca and Medina.

"The Koran says Muhammad traveled to 'the farthest mosque' and ascended from there to Heaven," said Mr. Shanks. "The fact is that when he died, there was no mosque at that site in Jerusalem. It was built 50 years after he died. It's filled with elaborate inscriptions in beautiful Arabic script, but there's no mention of Muhammad's ascension because the tradition had not yet arisen. It emerged later because of a political fight the Muslims had. The Jerusalem cadre wanted to denigrate Mecca, so they said the 'farthest mosque' was in their town."

Archaeologists have made discoveries that challenge fundamental traditions of Judaism as well as those of Christianity and Islam. One who teaches at Tel Aviv University, Ze'ev Herzog, published an article in 1999 asserting that historical evidence about the emergence of the Jewish people tells a story "radically different" from what most Jews are taught to believe.

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"The Israelites were never in Egypt, did not wander in the desert, did not conquer the land [of Israel] in a military campaign and did not pass it on to the 12 tribes of Israel," Mr. Herzog wrote. "Perhaps even harder to swallow is that the united monarchy of David and Solomon, which is described in the Bible as a regional power, was at most a small tribal kingdom. And it will come as an unpleasant shock to many that the early Israelite religion adopted monotheism only in the waning period of the monarchy and not at Mount Sinai."

NONE of these iconoclastic assertions is universally accepted. They do, however, offer a new sort of challenge to religious belief. In the past, secularists sought to challenge dogma by the use of rational argument, claiming, for example, that miracles described in the Bible are scientifically impossible. These arguments, a staple of philosophical discourse at least since the Enlightenment, provoke an obvious response. Believers say they are motivated by faith, and faith is more powerful than any argument devised by mortals.

No one will presumably ever be able to prove or disprove such fundamental religious principles as the existence of God. Questions about the historical accuracy of scripture, however, can be answered with greater certainty today than a century ago, when the science of archaeology was in its infancy. It is likely that, in years to come, new techniques and excavations will add considerably to the body of evidence that archaeologists have now assembled.

This trend is important beyond the boundaries of science because of the power these questions have to inflame emotions and motivate warring powers in the Middle East. The conflict there is about many things, but some of the most resonant have to do with the rights of various religions to control their sacred sites. The provocative questions that archaeologists have raised about these sites are in some ways comparable to the challenge that Darwinism posed to religious beliefs about creation.

Religious scholars and theologians have reacted in various ways to the discoveries of Biblical archaeologists. Some reject them out of hand. Others accept them but insist that they do not require any revision of religious belief.

One problem these discoveries pose is that, like many scientific discoveries, they are still subject to dispute. J. Rufus Fears, a professor of classics at the University of Oklahoma, said he is not convinced by assertions that Jesus could not have been born in Bethlehem. He asserted that even discoveries that contradict ancient tradition are not of shattering importance.

"There is certainly a tremendous gap between archaeological knowledge and what people want to believe from tradition," Professor Fears said, "but there are also gaps in what archaeologists think they can prove. Even when they can prove something or make it more likely, that does not in any way undermine the deep attachment that people have to these places."

Professor Fears said he did not believe that fighting in the Middle East was truly motivated by the desire to control holy sites, or by any other religious motive. If that is true, then no amount of discovery or proof will affect the

course of the conflict.

"These arguments over protecting sites are used as excuses," Professor Fears said. "They're symptoms of much deeper problems. But the religious overlay does point up an inherent contradiction that's obvious and very disturbing. You have war raging in the places where Jesus and other great religious figures preached their message of peace. You can hardly imagine a greater contradiction than that."

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ON THE WEB

May 16, 2002

It's a Boulder, All Right, but Was It Once a Border?

By SARAH KERSHAW

If only this were a simple story about a rock, the happy tale of a 10,000-year-old New York City artifact that is finally, in 2002, getting its proper due.

But the rock in question is Arbitration Rock, a glacial boulder the size of a Volkswagen Beetle that tumbled down onto a patch of salty marshland during the Ice Age and landed somewhere near what is now the Brooklyn-Queens border. Centuries later, in 1769, the rock was used, along with a heap of stones and an oak tree, to mark the border between Kings and Queens Counties, ending a bitter boundary war that had festered for more than 100 years.

What happened to the rock over the ensuing 233 years is a swirling historical mystery that was supposed to have been solved in 2000, when city officials ended a seven-year archaeological hunt, dug deep into the ground and hoisted a huge rock out of the earth with a crane.

While its very name, Arbitration, suggests that this is a rock about settling things, the boulder, now in the backyard of an 18th-century house in Queens, is itself the subject of a dispute just a month before it is to be officially unveiled and celebrated as the real Arbitration Rock.

The conflicting views on Arbitration Rock and the boulder sitting behind a fence at the Vander Ende-Onderdonk House in Ridgewood, Queens, could leave a person questing for the truth feeling a bit like Sisyphus.

"There is no question about it," said William Asadorian, an archaeologist and Queens historian who led the seven-year mission to find Arbitration Rock. "The rock that we came across is the one in question."

"Arbitration Rock has disappeared," James Riker, a historian who grew up on the Queens side of the line, in what was called Newtown, wrote in 1852.

The boulder, he insisted, "was blown to pieces and removed, by individuals who probably know not its value as an ancient and important landmark."

"The old Rock is still in existence," Henry R. Stiles, a Brooklyn historian wrote 28 years later, in 1880, after a search party formed on the Brooklyn side of the border, in the town of Bushwick, went looking for the rock and claimed to have found it.

"No one is 100 percent certain," Bob Singleton, a Queens historian and a descendant of settlers who lived on the Queens side in the 1700's, said last week.

"It's bona fide Arbitration Rock," said Stanley Cogan, the official historian of Queens, standing firmly by the findings of the 21st-century search party.

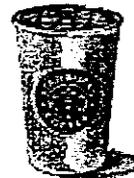
"Arbitration Rock? What's that?" said Ron Schweiger, the official historian of Brooklyn, who was appointed in January 2001, a year after the boulder was excavated.

Some of the mystery hovering over the rock stems from the fact that Arbitration, large as it is, was missing for almost a century.

There is widespread agreement that the heap of stones with a stake in the middle that was also used to define the 1769 border between Brooklyn and Queens, known as Arbitration Heap, is long gone.

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But Arbitration Rock was so sturdy, so seemingly unmovable. How could it have disappeared?

In 1900, about 20 years after the Brooklyn search party located what was described as Arbitration Rock, it apparently was photographed, on Onderdonk Avenue, near Flushing Avenue, in Ridgewood, along the original Brooklyn-Queens boundary. (But at least one historian has questioned the authenticity of the photograph, saying the background was "mysteriously wiped out.")

Then the rock was lost again. It was pictured again in 1919, poking out of the ground and under the foot of Charles Underhill Powell, a historian who was chief of the Queens County Topographical Bureau.

Then it was forgotten. Because meanwhile, there were other troubles on the Brooklyn-Queens border, where the boundary line — drawn before the rapid residential development of Ridgewood in the 1900's — was leading to vexing problems.

Time was, the straight Brooklyn-Queens boundary line was running through the middle of houses and some people had kitchens in Queens and living rooms in Brooklyn, in addition to facing confusion about voting and tax rates.

So in 1925, the New York State Legislature redrew the Brooklyn-Queens border into a jagged line that still exists. Thus, Arbitration Rock wound up in Queens.

But by then, the rock had been lost again, perhaps paved over by streets, according to one theory. No one was really sure.

And no one seemed to care much until Mr. Asadorian began his search, leading the city's Department of Environmental Protection to dig into Onderdonk Avenue.

He began the search after seeing the 1919 photograph of the rock at the library.

"I always wondered what became of it," he said.

Using survey and real estate maps that dated back centuries, Mr. Asadorian led city officials — who agreed to dig for the rock before a utility company was to work on the area — to the boulder. (The dig was financed by the Queens borough president's office and was estimated to have cost \$10,000.)

But because others in the past presumably had access to the same maps and could not find Arbitration, and because the boulder that was excavated was found slightly east of the original location, some historians say what was unearthed may be another rock. There were other glacial boulders in the area.

The clincher for Brian Merlis, a Brooklyn historian who has written seven books about the borough, involves initials that were supposedly carved into the rock in 1769, when it was used to mark the border. They were N for Newtown, on the Queens side, and B for Bushwick, on the Brooklyn side, or so the story goes.

Those initials have not been found on the boulder that was dug up in 2000; nor did they appear in either of the two historical photographs.

"If it doesn't have the initials on it, it's not the rock," Mr. Merlis said.

But Mr. Asadorian said the initials might have been scratched into the granite rock, not chiseled, and that would account for their disappearance over time. Another historian said there was no proof that the rock had initials on it in the first place.

Then there is the question of where the rock should live out the rest of its life, a subject that touched off an interborough quarrel when the rock was dug out and moved, a few hundred feet southeast, along the 1769 Brooklyn-Queens boundary line to the Onderdonk House.

"In Queens, of course," said Mr. Cogan, the official Queens historian, adding that while it was once on

the border, the boulder has been in Queens for 77 years, since the boundaries were redrawn.

"It should be cut in half and the other half should be a monument in Brooklyn," said Mr. Merlis, only half joking. "I think Brooklyn might need to look into this."

He added: "You know, they made all this effort to dig up a 10,000-year-old rock and now the rock is being disputed. I guess we'll just add another 100 years to the whole thing."

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PANYC EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT – May – August, 2002

EVENT	SPEAKER	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT	FEE
Capture: Native Americans and the Photographic Image	exhibit	thru 7/21		National Museum of the American Indian	212-514-3712	free
Splendid Isolation: Art of Easter Island	exhibit	thru 8/4		Metropolitan Museum of Art	212-570-3949	admission

If any members have events which they would like listed, please contact Kelly Britt, 452 Riverside Drive, Unit 1, NY, NY 10027, e-mail: one-kb239@columbia.edu

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