

Rethinking the Archaeology-Heritage Divide

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Heritage Studies is a relatively modern construct. Its “contours and agenda emerged even more explicitly after World War II, but it was first in the 1980s that it became clearly identified” (Carman and Sørensen 2009: 17). Archaeology and Heritage were, and continue to be, deeply entangled due to the initial remit of heritage, which focused on archaeological sites, materials, and ‘cultural resource management’ or ‘cultural heritage management’ (see Breglia 2006; Gnecco and Schmidt Dias 2017; Smith 2004). Through this heritage engagement, archaeologists have reflected on how and whose perspectives of the past are presented to the public (see e.g., Carman 2002; Sørensen and Carman 2009). With the growing interest and recognition surrounding the intangible aspects of heritage, however, the interchangeability of Archaeology and Heritage has increasingly been drawn into question. The view of heritage as a process rather than a strictly material concern—where, beyond buildings and monuments, heritage instead “engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present” (Smith 2006: 44)—has become widely embraced over the past decade.

Unlike Archaeology, which is often confined to the material (Skeates 2000), Heritage regularly encompasses and crosses perceived dichotomies such as natural/cultural and tangible/intangible. As the differences between the two, in both theory and practice, have become clearer, Heritage has begun to establish itself as a distinct field, moving away from its archaeological and material-based origins (see, for example, Holtorf 2020; Smith 2006; Waterton et al. 2017). In *Taking Archaeology out of Heritage*, Waterton and Smith

(2009) argue that Heritage's beginnings within Archaeology have bound it to a limiting understanding and restricted its disciplinary development beyond its conceptualisation. The initial dependency on Archaeology has led to perceptions of Heritage being an underdeveloped or even 'parasitic' field of historical study, rather than a legitimate discipline in its own right (Carman 2002). The solution Waterton and Smith (2009) proposed was to remove Archaeology from Heritage, allowing Heritage more freedom to move beyond these archaeological confines. For Heritage Studies, these discussions have resulted in reckonings of disciplinary identity that are ongoing.

Bringing Heritage Back to Archaeology – Benefits of Return

Our volume is evidently not the first to engage with the topic of this disciplinary divide; we build upon previous work that allowed Heritage to set itself apart and contributed to a re-theorisation of the relationship between Archaeology and Heritage (e.g., Carman 2002; Holtorf 2012; Smith 1994; Waterton and Smith 2009). A decade on from the initial call to separate these disciplines, we now seek to revisit what we call the 'Archaeology-Heritage Divide' between Archaeology—seen as located in the past; and Heritage—viewed as dealing with 'the past in the present'. Rather than looking to remove Archaeology from Heritage—an exploration essential to establishing Heritage as a standalone field—the papers in this volume now consider the potentials of bringing the two disciplines closer together again. By examining their overlap or separation across theory and practice, the contributions to this volume ultimately advocate for a more nuanced understanding of disciplinary boundaries and aim at achieving more inclusive practice. Our volume concludes with invited commentaries by Shadreck Chirikure and Marie Louise Stig Sørensen—both of whom work across the intersections of Heritage and Archaeology in different ways and in different geographies, providing reflections on their own relationship with and perception of the Archaeology-Heritage Divide.

Approaching the Archaeology-Heritage Divide Today

The ideas spurring this volume resulted from the academic upbringing of

its editors, all of whom have a disciplinary background in Archaeology. Despite taking diverse paths, we have ended up at similar destinations within the realm of Heritage Studies. As archaeologists transitioning to heritage work, we are uneasy looking back, not only at the way our archaeological training taught us to approach the past, but also how it influenced our definition of heritage, and the boundaries between archaeological and heritage research. Archaeology can often position its work in a remote and disconnected past, distancing itself from the present, which is usually left to the heritage professionals to deal with. Heritage work is therefore frequently assumed to start once the excavation process is finished.

As with the “strong thread of dissonance” observed by Smith and Waterton (2009: 5) in response to their volume, our call for contributions prompted a range of similar responses and criticism. It was debated, for example, whether there really was a Divide between Archaeology and Heritage—and hence a necessity for this volume at all. This same polarity featured in our own personal opinions on this matter as they developed throughout the editing process. In proposing this volume, we initially sought to ‘fix’ this perceived Divide; a brash position perhaps borne out of having our positions within Archaeology—and in a sense, our very identities as heritage researchers—questioned by others and even ourselves. Although each of our transitions are unique and specific to the realities of the regions and topics we focus on, we share the experience of sometimes feeling like outsiders or imposters, no matter where we ground our work. While, to some reading this now, the Divide may be imperceptible or questionable, we have fallen head first into the gap between the two disciplines; the resulting sense of ‘otherness’ and uneasiness creating uncertainties that permeate our work.

We have stepped back from our original aim of dismantling this perceived Divide. As our thinking on the theme developed, in great part thanks to the following papers, several questions surfaced. What is the nature of the relationship between the two disciplines: are they adjacent, overlapping, or does one subsume the other? How do the intentions of pioneers in developing Heritage Studies match with the current state of the discipline? Who benefits from the existing Divide? In light of these, we re-positioned our aims to

highlight the Divide's existence, pointing out the benefits or challenges it brings, and presenting options for trying to understand and approach it in our own practice. While Waterton and Smith (2009) suggested that Archaeology needed to be removed from Heritage in order for Heritage to grow, we argue that Heritage should now return to Archaeology in order for Archaeology to further develop and decolonise.

The Role of the 'Professional' and Relationships to Knowledge Bearers and Communities

To expand the arguments put forth above, the following sections delve into themes that emerged from the papers in this volume. The first interrogates the division between the roles of 'archaeology' versus 'heritage' professionals in their engagement with communities. In Archaeology, community engagement remains mostly a separate sub-discipline. Archaeological engagement with 'the public' is commonly labelled Community/Collaborative or Public Archaeology. These, and related endeavours like Archaeological Heritage Management, have been developed to foster reciprocity between researchers and various stakeholders, sharing experiences and knowledge, and incorporating more diverse methods and perspectives. Despite being an increasingly prevalent tool within modern archaeologists' arsenals, these approaches have remained separated from 'core' archaeological practice. Though the sidelining of Community and Collaborative Archaeologies from 'mainstream' Archaeology has been challenged (e.g., Atalay 2012; Colwell 2016; Grima 2016), it nonetheless suggests that community engagement is optional as opposed to an inherent and essential part of archaeological work. Moreover, as Pikiyari and Schmidt (2016) note, the emergence of Cultural Heritage Management coincided with the separation of communities from archaeological practice—further suggesting the shift in the onus of community engagement away from Archaeology and towards Heritage.

In hypothetically dismantling the disciplinary Divide, Archaeology work undeniably becomes Heritage work, dropping Collaborative, Community, Public, or related labels. Consequently, this engagement with present-day communities becomes an essential and inalienable part of the entire

archaeological process rather than a ‘side-’ or ‘after-project’ left to heritage experts. By interrogating the mandates of Archaeology and Heritage, we not only question the role of ‘communities’, but also of archaeology and heritage professionals and their relationships to various publics and knowledge bearers. Gautam (this volume) explores the pitfalls of viewing Archaeology and Heritage as having separate professional remits—an artefact of the country’s colonial period, in their paper on the Bhima Devi Temple in northern India. The author highlights the impacts of miscommunications between heritage management efforts of the local State Tourism Department on the one hand, and archaeological work done by the Archaeological Survey of India on the other.

Within Archaeology, there tends to be a separation between ‘experts’ (those trained to interpret the past) and ‘audiences’/‘publics’. In Heritage, however, audiences are often seen as the producers of knowledge about the past, with heritage experts acting as facilitators of this process. This division of perceived disciplinary ‘duty’ is largely temporally grounded, with heritage work seen to be more directly targeted towards engagement with communities in the present. Marcone (this volume) presents the case of the Qhapaq Ñan Inca Road Project to highlight the contradictions between the role of archaeologists and the ‘post-patrimonial discourse’—a concept he uses to criticise the hegemonic character of heritage, relativising academic knowledge over the local, and the partial responsibility of Archaeology in turning Heritage into an authoritative instrument. Marcone discusses ‘co-creation’ as one of the main ways to overcome these contradictions, proposing that local narratives be promoted to challenge the official, authoritative narrative, whilst acknowledging the lack of a clear recognition of ‘the local’.

For those working within Heritage, the need to address the discipline’s ‘colonial hangovers’ has become increasingly apparent, as it is steeped in the traditions and histories of the fields from which it has borrowed—and continues to borrow from. The selection and even exclusion of Indigenous and local communities’ voices from Archaeology and Heritage research and communication, for example, is an act of continuing colonialism. Calls for post-colonialist thinking were, in fact, a driving force behind Heritage’s

emergence as a discipline (Carman and Sørensen 2009). Having emerged from Archaeology, Heritage can potentially accelerate decolonising attempts within Archaeology—even if both fields originate in Western academic tradition. Archaeology’s deeply entangled history with colonialism, its complicity in the violence against many communities, and the disciplinary reckoning it has begun to face today, are challenges navigated by Herszberg’s contribution to this volume. Herszberg (this volume, page 138) aims to “disentangle archaeology’s perceived scientific hegemony” in the context of debates surrounding decolonisation and repatriation in museums. In using two seemingly opposing frameworks—proposed by Merryman (1994) and Pantazatos (2015)—Herszberg interrogates the role of the ‘good heritage steward’ and explores whether, in a decolonial context, there is an ethical reason to repatriate. As archaeological and heritage practices attempt to decolonise, we may see the character of these two disciplines being brought together and even questioned, following the examples of cutting-edge research conducted in a diversity of contexts.

Interpretation of the Past (for the Present)

Another central theme is the question of where Heritage is located in archaeological interpretations of the past. Archaeologists are often not taught to interpret objects from the past as the heritage of their time (see, for example, Hodder and Hutson 2003; Hoskins 2013; Menzel 2017). Rather, Archaeology has tended to group these objects as ‘cultures’, an approach which still permeates our thinking and interpretations of the past, although this has been challenged (see Beaudry and Hicks 2012; Govier and Steel 2021; Hodder 1985; Jones 1997). This way of interpreting the past is to the detriment of present-day identities, which do not easily connect with these archaeological ‘cultures’. Many Indigenous communities face significant issues related to archaeological interpretations of pre-colonial ‘cultures’ of the past, which—perhaps too comfortably—fail to break through colonial history and link up with present-day descendants (see Antczak et. al 2013; Antczak 2018; Boomert 2016; Forte 2014; Jones in Insoll 2007). Ideas of knowledge and co-production, and their role in Archaeological and Heritage research, were addressed by Stein (this volume), specifically in relation to Indigenous

communities in North America, as a way of addressing these harms. Stein calls upon Heritage to act as a bridge, foregrounding Indigenous perspectives in archaeological interpretation through a framework of survivance (Vizenor 1994).

While also touching upon the role of the professional and their relationship to communities, Burlingame and Pappmehl-Dufay (this volume) focus on the Archaeology-Heritage Divide through the distinction in knowledge-sharing, with Archaeology being concerned with scientific dissemination, and heritage professionals involved in interpretation and communication to wider publics. Exploring Swedish archaeological and heritage-making practices, they present collaborative storytelling as a solution to this division, relating how information is conveyed between excavation and exhibition, researchers and audiences.

(Im)materiality

The study of ‘material culture’ lies at the heart of archaeological work. While this remains indispensable, it has reinforced a divide between those who study these material remains—e.g., Archaeology, but also Architecture and Art History, among others, and those looking into what is deemed immaterial—e.g., Anthropology, ethnography, folklore, among many more. While Heritage shares much of its emphasis on the material past with Archaeology (e.g., Breglia 2006), the past is also expressed in forms that do not take any material shape.

Beyond an ideological separation, Stewart Rose (this volume, page 121) problematizes the “very physically designated divergences in the material divides of museological collections” critiquing the separation of museums in Oxford. Interrogating the colonial origins of this separation, Stewart Rose (this volume, page 107) suggests that the (immaterial) disciplinary boundaries in academia should be addressed in part through a restructuring of our (material) museological collections, with Heritage—an “all-encompassing field” —positioned to bridge these divisions.

The concept of (im)materiality is also targeted by Daly, who challenges

the Archaeology-Heritage Divide by examining notions of (im)permanence in tattoos and tattooing. The paper highlights the difficulties in drawing clear lines between Archaeology and Heritage, as the practices surrounding tattooing in both the archaeological record and the present-day, transcend rigid disciplinary boundaries. The (im)permanence of tattooing exists within what we may define as Archaeology as well as Heritage, and resists falling comfortably within the ambit of only one of the disciplines.

Conclusion

Since understandings of Archaeology, Heritage, and their intersections vary across contexts and geographies, interactions between both disciplines will inevitably change depending on how each is perceived and defined. This volume draws on contributions from Europe, Asia, South and North America—each offering a regionally-derived perspective of the relationship between the disciplines, yet with strikingly similar emerging themes.

Neither the editors of this volume, nor the authors who contributed to this work with their invaluable case studies, consider fully merging the two fields as the primary solution to the issues arising from the Divide. Nevertheless, as archaeologists and heritage professionals, we believe that this artificial distance harmfully polarises what we consider to be adjacent if not overlapping disciplines, and can negatively impact the practice of both fields. The current contraposition locks Archaeology in the dungeons of the past and can limit its activity to ‘studying the data and materials’—a false conceit considering that recovered objects hum, vibrant with life in networks of memory and identity, long before they are uncovered by archaeologists. Meanwhile, Heritage is located in the present, with much of its work concerned with tying up the loose ends of archaeological work, whereas it could be involved in the entire archaeological process—from project design to implementation, interpretation, and evaluation. We strongly consider this argument to be a powerful heuristic tool that can help improve and decolonise both disciplines by thinking beyond fixed categories and involving past and present knowledge bearers in the process of the creation, interpretation, recovery, and continued use of heritage.

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