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2 **Public Archaeology, The Move** 3 **Towards**

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7 **Introduction**

8 One of the most evident changes brought by the
9 reflexive turn in archaeology is perhaps the move
10 towards public archaeology. Although in its incep-
11 tion public archaeology was primarily related to
12 educational concerns and efforts to attain public
13 outreach (McGimsey 1972; Jameson 1997; Stone
14 & Molyneaux 1994), in recent years it has become
15 more complex to define. This slipperiness has to do
16 with the fact that, as an umbrella term, public
17 archaeology now encompasses a wide array of
18 concepts and purposes (Schadla-Hall 1999;
19 Merriman 2004a; Matsuda & Okamura 2011).
20 This turn towards public archaeology, thus, can
21 be better characterized by a gradual and explicit
22 involvement of archaeology practitioners in
23 different and intertwined levels of educational,
24 political, governmental, and ethical issues. In this
25 sense, it relates to and involves concepts such as
26 development, heritage, applied archaeology, and
27 community archaeology.

Definition and Historical Background

28

29 The term public archaeology attained recognition
30 in the early 1970s with Charles R. McGimsey's
31 publication with this very title (McGimsey 1972).
32 Then, it was mainly meant to address the dangers
33 of destruction of archaeological remains, raise
34 broader awareness about this problem, and sup-
35 port legislative efforts aimed at protecting them
36 (Schadla-Hall 1999). The increasing pressures of
37 development, observed mainly in the United
38 States and European countries, posed
39 a challenge to professionals and state institutions
40 as they were increasingly confronted with the
41 destruction and loss of historical and archaeolog-
42 ical heritage. The rise of independent archaeolog-
43 ical contractors, as well as the participation of
44 some universities in the development process,
45 provided some means to mitigate such destruc-
46 tion and gave rise to Cultural Resource Manage-
47 ment (CRM) or contract archaeology. Known
48 also as heritage management and archaeological
49 resource management, one of the main tenets of
50 CRM archaeology was the preservation of past
51 remains, conceived as a resource belonging to
52 societies (MacManamon & Hatton 2000). The
53 past, henceforth, came to be seen as a public
54 right pertaining to the interests of the whole soci-
55 ety (Carman 2002; Merriman 2004b). As
56 observed by Smith (2004:6), although the equal
57 accessibility and significance to all comers
58 implied by the term "resource" was subsequently
59 challenged, the prolific efforts to develop out-
60 reach and educational programs and prevent the

61 destruction of archaeological remains also con- 109
 62 tributed to make the subject relevant to a broader 110
 63 audience. Additionally, scholars drawing from 111
 64 critical theory emphasized that a reflexive stand 112
 65 oriented to reinforce stakeholder communities’ 113
 66 civic and proactive engagements with the past 114
 67 should be paramount to public archaeology 115
 68 (Leone et al. 1995; Little & Shackel 2007). 116

69 In any case, the term public archaeology
 70 began to take its current shape with the involve-
 71 ment of archaeology in public debates, traversing
 72 the borders of traditional academic archaeology,
 73 to respond to public interests about the past. The
 74 rationalist and political neutrality of scientific
 75 discourse, prevalent in the discipline during
 76 most of the 1960s and 1970s, was fiercely chal-
 77 lenged in the early half of the 1980s. Theoretically,
 78 factions of the post-processual movement
 79 in archaeology, strongly influenced by feminist
 80 and Indigenous discourses, challenged the
 81 authority and ethics of representation of the
 82 “other” and echoed the cultural critique about
 83 the hegemony of the Western academy (Wylie
 84 1982; Hodder 1986; Pels 1999); most of these
 85 critiques called for a more inclusionary archaeo-
 86 logical interpretation, in which Indigenous peo-
 87 ples and different local communities and
 88 stakeholders could participate (Layton 1989;
 89 Hodder et al. 1995). Following the controversies
 90 that arose as a result of the creation of the World
 91 Archaeology Congress (WAC) in 1986, a much
 92 more politicized world emerged for archaeology
 93 (Ucko 1987; Shanks 2004).

94 Authors such as Michael Shanks and Christo- 109
 95 pher Tilley (1992) and Mark Leone and col- 110
 96 leagues (Leone et al. 1987, 1995), for example, 111
 97 emphasized the need for a critical appraisal of the 112
 98 interrelationship between archaeology and poli- 113
 99 tics and to understand the power relations 114
 100 established discursively through historical and 115
 101 archaeological knowledge (see also McGuire 116
 102 2008). Advocating for an inclusion of the differ-
 103 ent emerging voices, then, these contributions set
 104 an interpretive movement that came to call into
 105 question the prevalent authority over the past
 106 held by the discipline. With the advent of politics
 107 of identity and recognition, the past became
 108 a realm of contestation in which a variety of

contemporary interests became interweaved. 109
 Thus, steering public archaeology in new direc- 110
 tions, the reflexive turn established by an overt 111
 critique to objectivity, rationalism, and scientific 112
 archaeology coalesced with the politics of cul- 113
 tural recognition and provided the basis for 114
 a more inclusive debate, raising issues and cate- 115
 gories such as identity, ethnicity, and so forth. 116

Key Issues/Current Debates 117

The move towards public archaeology has 118
 brought a new array of themes and topics to the 119
 discussion about archaeological practice and the- 120
 oretical consideration. Prominent in the current 121
 debate related to this recent turn in the archaeo- 122
 logical inquiry are the discussions about transna- 123
 tionalism, tourism, sustainable development, 124
 commodification of cultural resources, and 125
 global–local relationships (Smith 2006). The 126
 impact that this reflexive trend had on archaeo- 127
 logical practice can be scrutinized at least in two 128
 interrelated aspects: collaboration and heritage. 129
 On the one hand, emanating from various angles, 130
 critiques to academic authority pushed archaeol- 131
 ogists to reconsider their position as the only 132
 stewards of the past and prompted them to engage 133
 in collaborative programs with a wide array of 134
 Indigenous and local communities (Faulkner 135
 2000; Colwell-Chanthaphonh & Ferguson 2010; 136
 Gnecco & Ayala 2011). Thus, a more nuanced 137
 perspective about public archaeology, although 138
 still involving educational and legislative 139
 aspects, now incorporates ethical concerns and 140
 acknowledges that the practice of “scientific 141
 archaeology” can no longer be the only authori- 142
 tative voice about the past. Moreover, in investi- 143
 gating the past, archaeologists need to be aware 144
 about social, “racial,” political, and other ten- 145
 sions emerging from dissonant interpretations of 146
 the past; the practice of public archaeology, 147
 therefore, also incorporates components of ethics 148
 and sociopolitical accountability. 149

On the other hand, although still concerned 150
 about protecting the past, public archaeology 151
 now actively engages in issues related to the 152
 management of sites through a nuanced 153

154 understanding of cultural and archaeological her- 202
155 itage. Heritage, as a concept, has recently made 203
156 its way to the core of archaeological theory. 204
157 Closely related to the politics of recognition men- 205
158 tioned above, the concept of heritage has recently 206
159 opened a new and vigorous debate, expanding the 207
160 considerations of what constitutes the public and, 208
161 therefore, what public archaeology or archaeo- 209
162 logical practice should entail. The involvement 210
163 of different communities of stakeholders that 211
164 stepped forward to express interests or concerns 212
165 about archaeological sites and archaeological dis- 213
166 course constituted a new challenge for the disci- 214
167 pline (Russell 2006; Smith 2006). Barbara 215
168 Bender's (1998) seminal work about the emblem- 216
169 atic archaeological site of Stonehenge provides 217
170 an exemplary approach to the analysis of the 218
171 historically dynamic contexts that stakeholders 219
172 (including archaeologists) can become involved 220
173 in. Eluding the essentialist thought that com- 221
174 monly portrays Indigenous peoples and descen- 222
175 dant communities as the only "other voices" that 223
176 come forward to question archaeology, Bender's 224
177 work also reflects on the formation of new groups 225
178 of stakeholders and the politics that surround 226
179 them. By the same token, critical awareness 227
180 about the decisions, interpretation, and manage- 228
181 ment of cultural and archaeological heritage 229
182 acquired global connotations through the increas- 230
183 ing myriad of stakeholders as well as 231
184 a burgeoning tourist industry related to the con- 232
185 sumption of the past. 233

186 This global trend of cultural consumption 234
187 closely relates to a process of shrinking of dis- 235
188 tances which – fueled by a burgeoning and con-
189 stant flux of peoples, goods, information, and
190 capital – consolidated globalization as
191 a phenomenon with a wide array of economic,
192 cultural, and political implications worldwide.
193 For many, globalization meant the standardiza-
194 tion of culture as well as economics, with the
195 consequent establishment of a single dominant
196 and global cultural order; however, contradicting
197 the fears of homogenization predicted as part of
198 the effects of globalization, the blooming of cul-
199 tural diversity set under the auspices of multicul-
200 turalism amounted to define tourism as one of the
201 key themes in archaeological theory (Merriman

202; Meskell 2005). Consequently, archaeolo- 202
203 gists have started to turn their attention to the
204 relationship of the discipline with the heritage
205 and tourism industries. Related to this current
206 trend, tourism and cultural recreation have
207 become central to archaeologists as the public
208 increasingly demands the articulation of new nar-
209 ratives about the past (Holtorf 2005).

210 As heritage or cultural tourism consolidates as
211 one of the most important global industries (Urry
212 2002), the interest in archaeological heritage has
213 gradually increased over the last few decades.
214 With a burgeoning demand of cultural consump-
215 tion fostered by an exponentially increasing flux
216 of capital and peoples, tourism promoted archae-
217 ological heritage to new dimensions. Addition-
218 ally, the gradual involvement of different
219 stakeholders and local communities in heritage
220 issues brought up several concerns regarding
221 property and propriety of heritage. Archaeolo-
222 gists, in this sense, have been pushed to explore
223 ever more complex and intertwined relationships
224 involving individuals, communities, states, and
225 global agencies at different scales. Local under-
226 standings of heritage values, however, as demon-
227 strated by different scholars, can differ
228 significantly from those parameters conceived
229 as universal. The past, once aptly depicted as
230 a "foreign country" (Lowenthal 2003), became
231 the arena in which active – and sometimes disso-
232 nant – social constructions continuously take
233 place through heritage and tourism and, there-
234 fore, have opened new lines of debate regarding
235 its ownership and stewardship (Smith 2006).

236 International Perspectives

237 Arguably, then, heritage tourism has become one
238 of the most profitable industries of recent decades
239 and a global force that increasingly extends its
240 branches throughout the world (Hoffman et al.
241 2002; Higuera 2008). As part of this global trend
242 in which archaeological heritage is now involved,
243 the heritage industry included in the core of
244 developmental policies of global organizations
245 such as the World Bank has been endowed
246 a reputation of being a determinant factor for

247 economic growth, especially for developing
248 countries (Meskell 2005; Lafrenz 2008).
249 Whereas it is often argued that heritage can play
250 a significant role in overcoming economic adver-
251 sities, less is said about its detrimental effects on
252 local communities. While some argue for the
253 necessity of making useable pasts, as something
254 that can be assessed to provide economic profit-
255 ability, others question the beneficiaries of these
256 profits (Lafrenz 2009). As the expectations of
257 tourism and heritage industries have risen, the
258 attempts to attain the inscription of sites in the
259 prestigious World Heritage Site list by different
260 country parties have also escalated. A large per-
261 centage of recent nominations, related to the
262 aforementioned search for economic growth,
263 have to do with the fact that the attempt to gain
264 such a reputable designation will help to promote
265 heritage sites as marketable tourist sites.

266 In this sense, with an exponential number of
267 new local sites and museums that now compete to
268 attain some recognition while others focus on
269 maintaining their high profiles and well-
270 preserved statuses, the values and principles for
271 such recognitions and other tenets heralded by
272 global organizations are being called into ques-
273 tion. Questioning the set of values that have com-
274 monly been used to define cultural and
275 archaeological heritage, some archaeologists
276 now actively work to emphasize local views and
277 values regarding the past (Faulker 2000). Chal-
278 lenging previous top-down perspectives that
279 were mainly concerned with a rather monumental
280 and conservationist view of archaeological heri-
281 tage, the intervention of new stakeholders
282 established the need for archaeologists to under-
283 stand the emergence of new relationships
284 between local interests and global demands
285 (Hodder 2003). Whereas international agencies
286 and organizations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS,
287 and WHC had advanced important contributions
288 to deal with issues deeply affecting cultural heri-
289 tage, such as looting and trafficking of archaeo-
290 logical remains, a new approach to heritage also
291 emphasizes ethical concerns pertaining to cul-
292 tural property and human rights (Brodie et al.
293 2000; Brodie & Walker 2002; Silverman & Fair-
294 child Ruggles 2007).

295 In this scenario, as heritage has become the
296 axis where these contemporary social under-
297 standings and active constructions of the past
298 come together, public archaeology confronts
299 a wide array of challenges in its efforts to engage
300 with different communities and stakeholders.
301 Related to this, by drawing away from conserva-
302 tive approaches to heritage, public archaeology
303 has also highlighted the importance of including
304 different criteria and considerations, other than
305 those defined by the World Heritage Convention
306 in the definition of valuable heritage sites (Cleere
307 1996; Lafrenz 2008). As a result, heritage orga-
308 nizations and state agencies have been compelled
309 to take into consideration a more dynamic and
310 diversified understanding in which cultural and
311 heritage value could be also related to political
312 restitution or economic leverage and well-being.
313 Nonetheless, although different countries have
314 adopted the globally sponsored efforts towards
315 the recognition of their Indigenous peoples, for
316 many of these populations, to attain such recog-
317 nition implies a compliance with guidelines of
318 authenticity in order for them to prove cultural
319 and genealogical continuity so that they may be
320 conferred with the rights to cultural ancestry
(Clifford 1988; Hale 1999). 321

322 Thus, some of the questions still to be
323 addressed regarding the intersection of public
324 archaeology and tourism are related to the new
325 power relationships and cultural dynamics pro-
326 voked by the commodification of cultural heri-
327 tage. For instance, the demand for authentic
328 experiences related to this global trend of cultural
329 consumption has commonly driven heritage man-
330 agers, cultural planners, and tourism-related pol-
331 icy makers to resort to the use of archaeological
332 discourse to recast “authentic” – or rather essen-
333 tialist – views of culture (Castañeda 1996;
334 Benavides 2004; Hamilakis 2008). This is partic-
335 ularly the case for Indigenous peoples and other
336 historically marginalized communities that,
337 related to their cultural and political struggle,
338 opt or are compelled to resort to heritage and
339 cultural tourism as strategies to boost their econ-
340 omies (Meskell 2005; Lafrenz 2008); in this
341 sense, Indigenous peoples remain commonly
342 represented as passively reproducing a colonial

343 imaginary in the realm of heritage. Furthermore,
344 it has been generally the case that most of the
345 countries whose archaeological heritage is
346 administrated by state and centralized agencies
347 not only tend to emphasize its economic impor-
348 tance for local development, as part of their pol-
349 icies, but also – and primarily – to reify it as the
350 legitimate roots of nationhood (Rowan & Baram
351 2004; Hamilakis 2008). Therefore, despite the
352 fact that these strategies have prompted
353 a successful public recognition of multiple ethnic
354 groups, which is one of the reasons why they
355 became widely adopted as part of different state
356 policies, they also exert powerful constrains and
357 fixities determined by the very demands posed by
358 consumption.

359 Different collaborative projects between local
360 communities and archaeologists have, therefore,
361 been caught up in a series of paradoxes. On the
362 one hand, collaborative projects struggle to pro-
363 tect archaeological sites and to confront the
364 destructive threats of development and some-
365 times, ironically, even harmful effects of tourism;
366 as it was noted, “cultural tourism can pose
367 a significant challenge to the management of
368 heritage sites, as visitors can have positive and
369 negative impacts, and increased visitation means
370 increased responsibility, especially in terms of
371 on-site safety” (Smith & Burke 2007:239). On
372 the other hand, public archaeology projects that
373 involve working with economically disadvan-
374 taged communities often involve efforts relating
375 to political empowerment and identity issues as
376 well as attempting to orient their efforts to pro-
377 mote heritage tourism opportunities as part of
378 these communities’ social and economic sustain-
379 ability. In that sense, the move towards public
380 archaeology needs to be understood as an ongo-
381 ing process in which the practice of archaeology
382 itself becomes reconfigured. It comes as no sur-
383 prise that public archaeology, as part of its
384 response to these new challenges, has adopted
385 and stressed the importance of a rather involved
386 take on the politics surrounding the conceptual-
387 ization of the audiences towards whom our work
388 is directed, which – at its turn – implies a strong
389 reflexive slant towards ethics.

Future Directions

390

The objectives of public archaeology largely
391 remain framed within the original goals, namely,
392 committed to reaching broader and more diverse
393 audience whose needs and demands regarding the
394 past can be advanced and supported by the work
395 of archaeologists. As part of this, public archae-
396 ology is still concerned with the protection and
397 preservation of archaeological heritage and seeks
398 to provide adequate management plans to
399 respond to tourism global needs, for instance,
400 while keeping the balance between tourism
401 expectations and the carrying capacity of archae-
402 ological sites. Nonetheless, public archaeology is
403 also becoming increasingly involved in collabo-
404 rative efforts to yield more inclusive consider-
405 ations of local perceptions of the past, as part of
406 the categorization of archaeological sites as
407 global tourist destinations. Practitioners involved
408 in public archaeology are also aware that such
409 categorization cannot be fulfilled by any stan-
410 dardized set of practices nor unique codes or
411 universal paradigms. Arguably, the present
412 times are characterized by highly politicized con-
413 texts in which claims to heritage and identity,
414 however controversial, are part of a struggle for
415 power and still rely very heavily on discourses
416 about the past. Regardless of the aforementioned
417 paradoxes, or perhaps precisely because of them,
418 public archaeology is gradually moving to
419 include developers and tourist operators, as well
420 as state agencies, educational partners, and legis-
421 lators as part of the equation (Hoffman et al.
422 2002:31). Therefore, it can be said that what
423 public archaeology now faces is an urgent need
424 to reconsider previous notions of what has been
425 understood by “the public,” in order to achieve
426 even wider conceptualizations.
427

In this sense, if one contends that public
428 archaeology is mainly meant to take care of the
429 public interest in the past, then it will also be
430 necessary to acknowledge the impossibility of
431 considering a general, single, and homogeneous
432 public (McGuire 2008:86–7). It follows from
433 here that archaeologists need to keep considering
434 who this public is – or rather, who the different
435 audiences we are addressing and responding to
436

437 are – and the ways in which it/they become
 438 constituted, as well as to recognize the effects,
 439 influences, and contentions fostered by
 440 a burgeoning process of globalization upon the
 441 public’s interests in the past. It is crucial,
 442 therefore, to take into account the power relation-
 443 ships displayed between micro and macro levels
 444 (stakeholder communities, state agencies, and
 445 global organizations or corporations) and the
 446 way national or global entities’ decisions and
 447 actions equally impact archaeological resources
 448 and upon the different audiences’ criteria of value
 449 and importance of the past. In order to advance its
 450 goals and attain a fully fledged engagement of
 451 archaeology with the different stakeholders and
 452 constituencies interested in the past, it will be
 453 necessary to weave all those parameters into
 454 some of the common themes that have, thus far,
 455 characterized public archaeology. Then, any
 456 education outreach projects oriented to the
 457 valuing of the past (and its preservation), as
 458 well as any attempt to use archaeology as an
 459 effective way to overcome economic imbalances
 460 or prompt political action by lobbying for
 461 recognition of previously disenfranchised
 462 communities, will need to make sense of the
 463 conditions and differences in which these
 464 activities are going to be carried out as part of
 465 this engagement.

466 **Cross-References**

- 467 ▶ [Archaeology Museums and the Public](#)
- 468 ▶ [Community Archaeology](#)
- 469 ▶ [Heritage Tourism and the Marketplace](#)
- 470 ▶ [Heritage Values and Education](#)
- 471 ▶ [Heritage, Public Perceptions of](#)
- 472 ▶ [Local Communities and Archaeology](#)
- 473 ▶ [Public and Archaeology](#)
- 474 ▶ [Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage](#)
- 475 ▶ [World Archaeological Congress \(WAC\)](#)
- 476 ▶ [World Archaeological Congress \(WAC\) and](#)
- 477 [Cultural Heritage Management](#)
- 478 ▶ [World Heritage and Human Rights](#)

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