

Introduction to Archaeology: Notes 2  
**History and personalities of archaeology**  
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- Kelly & Thomas Ch. 1
  - First, notice the picture on page 1 of the first chapter
  - who are those goofballs?
    - Alfred Kidder (1885-1963)
      - renowned expert in American Southwest archaeology, did large-scale, highly refined, multidisciplinary work at Pecos Pueblo, later did important work in Guatemala (Maya site of Kaminaljuyú), Bolivia (Tiwanaaku), and elsewhere
      - more on him later
    - Jesse Nusbaum (1887-1975)
      - shown working as a photographer and assistant to Kidder
      - first archaeologist hired by the National Park Service
      - supervisor of Mesa Verde, directed excavations, stabilized and conserved ruins, set up museum exhibitions in the US and Guatemala
  - Archaeology still attracts a slightly unusual sort of person...
- Why does the history of archaeology matter?
  - the answer is similar to why archaeology itself matters
  - One good way to tell where you are now is to look at how you got there
  - What archaeologists do today is largely shaped and responding to what others did before
  - Also, many important ideas in use today come out of debates and problem solving in the past
    - so looking at those debates brings up some central points about archaeological practice
- What is archaeology?
  - Kelly & Thomas (glossary): “The study of the past through the systematic recovery and analysis of material remains”
    - also “It is characterized by an effort to reconstruct the past based on things – artifacts – in their contexts”
    - very true, but what does that mean?
    - attention to context – what is found with what, in what relationships, etc. – is a key feature of why archaeologists learn so much more about the past than looters do
    - we go to great efforts to note clues about what things were discarded at the same or different times, in the same or different places, even down to different parts of a small room, and so on.
    - you will see this paying off again and again throughout the course
  - Alfred Kidder (Thomas, p. 15): "that branch of anthropology which deals with prehistoric peoples"
    - that is, archaeology is the extension of cultural anthropology into the past
    - including all its branches, from interests in social organization to economics to gender roles to art...
- by looking at the general evolution of archaeology as a field, we can see what it once was and (mostly) no longer is

- Discussion of the selective history given in Kelly & Thomas
  - This is not a complete history, but rather some selected examples
    - These are an almost random sampling of the many people who could be mentioned
  - Stage: Very early "archaeology"
    - Nabonidus: last king of the neo-Babylonian Empire (ruled 556-539 BC)
      - some of his story is known from a variety of written records of the time, in cuneiform; he is an unusually well-documented figure
      - Nabonidus was a governor who came to power after several years of struggle for succession following the death of Nebuchadnezzar II, a militarily successful king
      - the Babylonian Empire was overextended; it had recently defeated the Egyptian army to the west but was threatened by the Persians (Iranians) to the east, and had carried out huge renovations in the capital that must have strained the national resources
      - Nabonidus apparently led a revitalization movement, rebuilding several ancient temples and aligning himself with the glories of the ancient past
      - as part of this, he dug into the foundations below some of the temples he restored, in order to find "foundation deposits": caches of dedicatory goods that would identify the king involved with the earlier or original construction, and the gods and rituals associated with it
      - around 543 BC, he recorded his efforts, along with his successful rebuilding, military conquests, and other events, on the "cylinder of Nabonidus", of which two nearly identical copies have been found
      - "I removed the debris of that temple, looked for its old foundation deposit, dug to a depth of eighteen cubits into the ground and then Šamaš, the great lord, revealed to me the original foundations of Ebabbar, the temple which is his favorite dwelling, by disclosing the foundation deposit of Naram-Sin, son of Sargon, which no king among my predecessors had found in three thousand and two hundred years."
      - this often gets him labeled as the first archaeologist
        - because he dug for material evidence to resolve questions about the past
      - he actually wrote that his predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar, had also dug for the foundation deposit, but could not find it
        - so Nabonidus was really just the first archaeologist who found what he was looking for...
      - he collected the foundation deposits, along with some other antiquities, and stored them together at the residence of his daughter
      - but notice that his interest was probably political as much as religious or scholarly
        - these objects would have been powerful links to the glories of the past
        - and he would be gaining status as an important and legitimate leader by recovering them, owning them personally, and allowing people to see them
        - this would help to connect him to the illustrious past rulers in people's minds
    - Is there still a political component to archaeology?
      - who pays for archaeology in Israel? Where? Why?
      - in 1990, Peru opened a huge new archaeological museum in a massive government building (the Museo de la Nacion), even though they already had one in a large historical estate.

- as you entered, you faced a huge golden disk with a fake archaeological design and the logo “El Orgullo de Ser Peruano”
- (The Pride of Being Peruvian)
- do you think there might have been a political motive for promoting archaeology here?
- Stage: Early modern archaeology, arising from "rediscovery" of the classical Roman and Greek texts and civilizations
  - Petrarch: 1304-1374, Italian poet, scholar, traveler, interested in ancient Rome and its monuments
    - Thought that the past was a time of lost greatness, to be studied and learned from
      - comparing medieval Europe to the Roman empire, that was true in many ways
      - he traveled around collected old manuscripts and inscriptions in order to study this lost grandeur
    - played a key role in the early Renaissance: Europe's rediscovery of the past
    - But note the political aspect again: he was a great advocate of the unification of Italy (his own country) and that it should take the lead as the inheritor of the Roman Empire
  - Ciriaco de’Pizzicolli (1391-1455), more specifically devoted to recording and translating monumental inscriptions
  - led to **antiquarianism**: by late 1500s.
    - Mostly interested in the classical past, that is, Rome and Greece,
      - also Egypt, Mesopotamia, etc. that were initially known through Roman and Greek sources
    - example: Giovanni Battista Belzoni
      - authorized British pillager of Egypt
      - story well told in the textbook
      - but at least he wrote things down and tried to figure out what the antiquities meant
    - this developed into
      - **philology**: the study of language, texts, and their literary and historical content
      - and “**classical archaeology**”, emphasizing the world of the Greeks, Romans, and their neighbors described in texts
- Stage: the independent rise of interest in the antiquity of man
  - antiquarianism and classical studies continued
    - they were viewed more as a branch of history and the study of written languages, not related to really ancient times
  - Jacques Boucher de Perthes: 1788-1868, France.
    - Discovered flaked flints that he correctly recognized as being made by people, together with bones of animals that no longer exist
    - argued that therefore people must have existed in the remote past
    - this conflicted with the prevailing biblical age of the earth, created in 4004 BC (Saturday, October 22, at sunset!)
      - calculated by Archbishop Ussher
  - The Royal Society of London accepted his view in 1859
  - the same year that Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*...
    - but note that Darwin was working on biological evolution of species

- and Boucher de Perthes, Lyell, and others were trying to tell how long ago and in what kind of world humans had lived
  - not seen to be closely related issues
- Meanwhile, in Denmark, Christian Thomsen (1788-1865) had developed a theory that the artifacts found there could be classified into three sequential periods
  - Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age
  - based on artifacts collected by antiquarians
- Jens J. A. Worsaae (1821-1885) worked with him and learned the three-age system
  - but was the first person recognized to have done excavations specifically to answer questions
    - like “were these artifacts really made at different times, in this order”?
    - rather than to just collect goodies
  - part of his method was to emphasize the contexts of artifacts
    - that is, by noting that piles of broken shell on the Danish coast consistently contain broken pottery, stone tools, and animal bone
    - he could argue that the piles were created by people, not natural processes
- Stage: "Americanist" archaeology gradually developed along a different, more anthropological line
  - running parallel to the study of the antiquity of man in the Old World
  - Kelly & Thomas's discussion of the origins of Americanist archaeology is good
    - there were lots of mounds in North America, and impressive ruins (not to mention functioning civilizations!) in Central and South America
      - classical texts were not going to explain these
      - archaeology and the study of the living people would have to do that
  - unlike in Europe, study of the sites and artifacts was obviously associated with study of the living Native Americans
    - so archaeology here was linked to anthropology
    - while in Europe it was linked either to classics or to geology and paleontology
    - and it still is.
  - in Europe, archaeology was the study of archaeologist's own past
  - in the New World, it was the study of other people's (Native Americans') past
    - or sometimes a weird effort to give Europeans or Asians the credit for what was found
- Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)
  - note that this was a generation before Boucher de Perthes was born
  - first to excavate a Native American mound - on his own property
  - did it not to collect artifacts, but to answer specific questions about how the mound was built, what it was used for, and who might have made it
  - recorded the stratigraphy! (layering of the soil)
  - concluded that the mound had been built by Native Americans
- Nels Nelson (1875-1964)
  - A local boy: excavated in Ukiah, studied at UC Berkeley
  - conducted detailed survey of sites around the SF Bay

- tried to reconstruct aspects of the Native American lifestyle by considering what resources would have been near these sites
- if you ever go to Ikea in Emeryville, note the road it is on: Shellmound road.
- if you drive south towards Berkeley, near where highways 80 and 880 come together, on the bay side, there is a huge pale blue building that is a mail sorting facility. There used to be a major shellmound there, too
- worked long for the American Museum of Natural History, an early professional archaeologist
  - at a time when the task was to find sites, do minor excavations to get some general information, and suggest the broad outlines of the local prehistory
- Alfred Vincent Kidder (1885-1963)
  - (in the first picture today)
  - emphasized the detailed study of ceramics
  - Pecos Pueblo: 10 seasons of stratigraphic excavations, established a basic chronology for the Southwest
  - Huge, multidisciplinary study of Maya in Mexico (Chichen Itzá) and Guatemala (Kaminaljuyú) for the Carnegie Institution
  - emphasized coordinating many different specialists, from cultural anthropologists to botanists, zoologists, geologists, and so on large projects
    - now a common practice
  - smaller but important excavations at Tiwanaku in Bolivia
  - saw archaeology as the extension of anthropology into the prehistoric past
    - again, now that is the standard view
    - at least among Americanist archaeologists
- James Ford (1911-1968)
  - WPA (Work Projects Administration) excavations in the Southeast during the depression (1930s)
  - Especially Poverty Point
  - systematized the method of seriation to create a general chronology for the Southeast
- Kelly & Thomas mention Gertrude Caton-Thompson (1888-1985)
  - First Egyptologist to work in residential sites
  - Showed the Great Zimbabwe was medieval (AD 1200-1500) by using stratigraphy to associate historical trade beads with the construction and use of the site
    - and showed the almost all of the artifacts used there were indigenous African, not classical or foreign
    - undermined the colonialist viewpoint
- Many, many other pioneers and founders that Thomas could have mentioned; a few random additions:
  - Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890)
    - German discoverer and excavator of Mycenae and Troy, around 1870
    - after he had become a rich businessman and citizen of California!
    - an major early application of problem-oriented archaeology in classical studies: wanted to check the truth of Homer's Illiad (about the war on Troy)

- he got the place right, but dug right through the Homeric layers he was looking for and mistook much older material for the period of the Trojan war
- Sir Flinders Petrie (1853-1942)
  - first systematic, problem-oriented Egyptologist
- Max Uhle (1856-1944)
  - German, then US, founder of systematic archaeology in South America
  - explored and excavated many, many sites
  - first one to get a broad but well-founded general idea of what was there in South American prehistory
- Alfred L. Kroeber (1876-1960)
  - anthropologist and archaeologist at UC Berkeley
  - with Kidder and Nelson, established scientific archaeology in the Southwest
  - then worked with Peruvian material that Uhle was sending back to Berkeley, establishing the general chronology we still use
  - also known as the friend and protector of Ishi, the last Yahi Indian.
- Julio C. Tello (1880-1947)
  - the *Peruvian* founder of archaeology in South America...
  - a highland Quechua-speaking "Indio" who made it in the very racist, classist establishment in Peru
  - rival of Uhle's, and reasonably successful politician
  - Uhle and other Europeans had mostly looked at the Peruvian coast, where sites were accessible from European port cities
  - Tello's goal was to show that the highlands were the true origin of complex society in the Andes
    - the high Andes were Tello's own origin, and were associated with the disrespected rural Andean peasantry
    - again, this was scientific archaeology for a distinctly political, social purpose in the present
  - Tello's name is still known to every high school student in Peru, while in Peru, you have to be a specialist to have heard of Uhle...
- Dame Kathleen Mary Kenyon (1906-1978)
  - worked with Caton-Thompson at Great Zimbabwe
  - excavated at Jericho
    - didn't find evidence of the biblical story of "the fall of the walls of Jericho"
    - but better yet: found a much, much older stone wall and tower that is still the earliest known architecture of that scale
    - and evidence of the early shift from foraging to farming
- the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century "scientific" revolution(s) in archaeology
  - shift from just describing changes in artifacts over time
    - often explained as due simply to migrations or influences of different groups
    - to trying to explain the past in a systematic way
    - and using research designs based on the scientific method to test the explanations
- W.W. Taylor (1913-1997): agitated for a more scientific approach

- Wrote a scathing indictment of the work of the current generation of archaeologists when he was just a grad student, published in 1948
- his general claim was that archaeologists were talking about anthropology, but not doing it
  - they were focusing too much on chronology
  - on spectacular buildings, objects, and practices rather than social organization
  - on describing details, rather than developing generalizations relevant to other anthropologists or people in general
  - comparing objects and styles like antiquarians, instead of thinking about what they meant about how people lived, like anthropologists
- and also that they were not using rigorous enough methods to really support their conclusions
- he proposed that archaeologists should use a "conjunctive" approach:
  - excavate *larger areas* and look at *patterns within sites*, in order to understand the evidence in the context of what was going on overall at the site and in the society
    - instead of digging a few small test pits and moving on to another site, then comparing them
    - how would you know whether the debris from your test pit reflected
      - the garbage outside a peasant farmer's kitchen
      - a potter's house
      - an industrial-scale pottery shop
      - a temple
      - a palace
      - a backyard garden
      - or (worst of all) dirt and artifacts dug up elsewhere and piled there as fill...?
  - *quantify* their data so that conclusions could be based on solid evidence, not general impressions
  - use a *hypothesis-testing approach* like the hard sciences in order to come to well-supported conclusions or discard faulty ones
  - pay attention to the *less dramatic aspects* of the record, like food garbage and manufacturing waste (stone flakes in addition to finished tools, etc.)
  - use more qualified *specialists* for analysis
  - write *detailed, systematic site reports* so that others could fully evaluate or reanalyze the findings
- This caused a big stir, but did not develop much of a following at the time
- H. Marie Wormington (1914-1994)
  - Paleoindian archaeology in North America
  - one of the first successful female archaeologists in the US
- Lewis R. Binford (1930- ): again agitated for a more scientific approach - but this time the field was ready for change
  - he succeeded in really stirring up a lot of new research and changing how archaeologists worked
  - Binford and his crowd (there were many in this movement) promoted the "New Archaeology"

- much of which was an update of Taylor's conjunctive approach, although they generally did not credit him with it
- they felt that archaeologists should
  - interpret evidence in terms of culture and behavior
    - for example, they pointed out that pottery styles don't just change over time, spread from one place to another, influence each other, etc. by themselves
    - instead, these are reflections of things going on with the people who made and used them
  - study living people in order to make more realistic models of what the archaeological evidence means
    - like studying Nunamiut Eskimo stone workers in order to draw better conclusions from the distribution of stone flakes in archaeological sites
  - use a formal hypothesis-testing approach in order to come to well-supported conclusions
  - quantify their data
  - use random sampling to collect data that is truly representative of the site or culture being studied
    - if you intentionally dig all your pits in ruined temples, you get a skewed view of what was going on!
  - emphasize interpreting societies and technologies as adaptations to their environments
    - an OK approach, but now recognized to be limited
  - we'll see more of this later
- Today, most of Taylor's, Binford's, and the other New Archaeologists' better insights have been incorporated into mainstream archaeology
  - now called “processual archaeology”
- As an example of today's mainstream archaeology, Kelly & Thomas offer Kathleen Deagan
  - there are hundreds of others he could have picked
  - increasing role of women in archaeology
    - now over half the students, but still not half of the senior positions
  - increasing role of historical archaeology
  - archaeology of minority groups, groups marginalized by the dominant society and poorly documented in writing
  - archaeology of cultures in contact, conflict, change, accommodation
    - do you pick up on today's political context here?
  - increasing importance of connecting archaeology with the public (although this has always been there...)
- Archaeology (like maybe all academic fields) is prone to fashions, opposed camps, tempests-in-a-teapot
  - Archaeology is done by people
    - who sometimes act like scientists seeking the truth, and sometimes don't
    - who have their own personal agendas, want to get ahead, etc.
    - big egos are not rare in this field (or others)
  - some people advance themselves by making a lot of noise



- "publish or perish" encourages polemics, arguments, posturing; claiming to be new, better, revolutionary
  - these are a way to get published and noticed
  - in addition to the slower, harder work of substantive research
- also, general ideas, concepts, approaches are widely useful, regardless of one's area or subject specialty
  - so publishing these gets you wider attention
  - and is viewed as more influential, significant, prestigious than more specific, concrete work of narrower interest
- there is usually a genuinely important issue at stake, but the academic system does tend to blow debates out of proportion
- How do people make a point? By exaggerating, overstating, being extreme
  - this makes the idea clear
  - makes its importance and relevance obvious
  - gets people thinking, talking, writing about it
  - eventually leads to a more moderate version becoming accepted
  - which might not have happened without the initial overstatement
  - example: Michael Moseley's "Maritime foundations of civilization"
- All this debate adjusts the general consensus or direction of the field
- Next time we will look more at the anthropological, philosophical, and methodological approaches that drive and organize archaeology today