Archaeological Heritage Management: The Last and Next Half Century

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Programs for the conservation of archaeological sites only emerged in Canada a half century ago, largely in response to a heightened awareness of the need to professionalize archaeology and in recognition of the threat to archaeological resources posed by land development. All provinces and territories in Canada now have heritage management legislation. The various government agencies that were formed because of the legislation along with the cultural heritage management industry now absorb most graduates of Canadian training programs, just as they have for at least two decades in the United States (Canadian Archaeological Association [CAA] 2008; Zeder 1997).

While it is difficult to be precise, the commercial archaeology industry in Canada is likely at least an 80- to 100-million-dollar annual enterprise not including Indigenous monitoring costs (Heritage Business International/Dore 2015) and employs thousands of individuals. Well over 90% of all archaeology conducted today in Canada is commercial in origin and results in thousands of archaeological sites being documented annually.

Detailed accounts of the growth of archaeological heritage management exist for most regions of Canada, notably La Salle and Hutchings (2012) for British Columbia; Langemann (2011) for the Rockies, and Parks Canada and Novak (2007) for National Historic sites; Dyck (2009) for the Prairies, Chabot (2017:Chapter 2) for Manitoba; Coleman and Williamson (1994), Ferris (1998, 2002), Williamson (2000, 2010) for Ontario; and Zorzin (2011) for Quebec. Josh Dent (2012) offered a comparative analysis of the foundation and current operation of heritage management archaeology in Ontario and British Columbia and David Burley (1994) provided an account of our historical failure to enact federal legislation. David Pokotylo and Andrew Mason (2014a, 2014b) provided historical background and a summary of key issues in archaeological heritage management industry in Canada and a history and analysis of future directions about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and archaeological heritage management in Canada.

There are countless challenges and opportunities facing commercial archaeology today and in the future; it is not possible to explore all or even many of these issues in such a short essay. Instead, I will make a few observations about the use of research questions in commercial archaeology and dissemination of what is learned, the escalating role of free

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and prior informed consent in land use development, and future directions.

Production and Dissemination of Knowledge

The realisation to many that research might be undertaken using the commercial model occurred four decades ago during a fierce debate concerning the shortcomings of "client-oriented archaeology," played out in several American journals (e.g., Davis 1972; Fitting 1977, 1978; Goodyear et al. 1978; Holden 1977; Patterson 1978; Raab and Klinger 1977; Raab et al. 1980). The debate focussed on the scientific reliability of technical evaluations, safeguarding professional performance, reliable criteria of significance, profit, balancing interests, peer review, and publication. Responding to an argument that some increase in knowledge from contract archaeology was only the result of a happy coincidence, Trubowitz (1979) argued that any increases in archaeological knowledge and satisfaction of individual research goals are *not* simply secondary effects in contract research but are the motivation that prompted the enactment of American conservation legislation in the first place. Such legislation was meant to assist in the preservation and use of cultural resources for the benefit of citizens and that the significance of the majority of archaeological sites lay in their research potential for contributing knowledge about human history and behaviour. Essential to this perspective was the related notion that research value was an important component of the evaluation of significance of a site and that specific problem-oriented research could occur while satisfying contract and compliance obligations. While we might now challenge this perspective as a product of the "new archaeology", and more particularly as having been oblivious to Indigenous perspectives, the difficulty was always having the time to approach comprehensive salvage excavations of sites found only weeks before with well-formulated research questions. Consultants tended to explore the data that emerged from investigations with a mind to publishing any useful insights, almost exclusively focusing on broad cultural historical questions.

In the intervening 40 years, commercial archaeology has developed in places in Canada into a complex, unwieldy, bureaucratic practice that rewards both efficiency and convention in field methods and interpretation. With the requirement of 100% of all sites excavated in Ontario, for example, regardless of their potential to contribute knowledge, the result is that much work is of very little use to understanding the past. In British Columbia, a small portion of a site might be excavated by hand, which is typically followed by monitoring. There is no role for research design although in large projects with multiple sites, they might be ranked based on their information potential leaving some unexplored. The discipline now comforts itself with the belief that commercial archaeologists are extracting data from the ground in a consultable form that can be examined later by others. Alison Wylie (2017) has recently suggested that archaeologists are particularly successful in mining old datasets for new insights in recognition of the unrealised potential of those data—a perspective that would suggest one need not have started the project with a research question in mind.

There are many models being applied in American commercial archaeology that recognise the role of research design. The Navajo, for example, follow

what they believe to be a sustainable model by evaluating commercial archaeology proposals based on their contribution to understanding their history and the strategies used to acquire the necessary data to achieve that understanding. At times, this means ignoring sites that have little chance of contributing knowledge (Ron Maldonado, personal communication 2018).

It is worth noting that significant archaeological heritage management data are published more frequently than we appreciate. When examined in the 1990s, it was found that consultants published in regional journals and newsletters while university-based researchers published in national and international journals (Williamson 2000). This distinction reflected both consultants' frequent contributions to regional and local culture histories, based on vast additions of site data, and their relative absence in contemporary theoretical debates, which were, for the most part, played out by university-based archaeologists in national and international forums. These findings were confirmed recently for the next 15 years in Ontario (MacDonald 2014). On a broader scale, Sarah Herr (2014) noted a similar distinction in where archaeologists publish. In a review of CVs of 120 senior American CRM archaeologists, she found that 12% of their articles are in newsletters, 43% in peer-reviewed journals, and 45% in authored or edited volumes; and that by proportion of articles from 1995 to 2013, CRM folks published 40–48% of the articles in State journals, 8–19% in regional journals and 4–6% in national journals. She also noted that an emerging trend is for American CRM companies to make their grey literature available digitally on their websites. Few Canadian companies do this.

Canadian archaeologists are turning to other forms of media to tell their stories. It might be argued that the emphasis on social media, the various e-bulletins regarding archaeology, and documentaries and television programs about archaeology (e.g., *Wild Archaeology*) have led to an enhanced appreciation of Canada's Indigenous past and present. While exceptionally popular television programs like *Time Team* have advanced that appreciation globally, it has not been without cost. Many archaeological heritage managers in the UK regularly encounter client expectations that their work can be completed in three days!

Indigenous Collaboration—An Historical Comment about Informed Consent

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has resulted in a related significant advance in recognising the objective of securing free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous peoples prior to proceeding with economic development projects, or the studies that lead to their approval. Discussions about consent in advance of archaeological projects were central to country-wide, provincial and territory-based workshops that preceded the CAA adoption of the *Statement of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Heritage*. The Principles in this statement acknowledge our responsibilities to negotiate and respect protocols, developed in consultation with Indigenous communities, relating to the conduct of archaeological activities affecting their culture. The requirement of explicit consent, however, was not agreed to by the archaeological community although it was unmistakable that discussions leading to the statement were the beginning of a process of reconciliation between archaeologists and

owners of the Indigenous past (Nicholson et al. 1996:34). The reticence, in part, came from government agencies regulating the general land use development system in most parts of Canada—agencies that had not yet recognised the legitimate Indigenous interest in land planning and stewardship. While Pokotylo and Mason (2014:1111) noted there is still not a firm legislative context for Indigenous consent and control when it comes to commercial archaeology in Canada (also Klassen et al. 2009:222), the Ontario Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ministry of Indigenous Relations are discussing with municipalities the process by which free and informed prior consent might be obtained from appropriate Indigenous communities by municipalities in advance of all land use development. Some municipal Official Plans now call for protection of significant archaeological sites, as defined by the appropriate Indigenous Nations, and have requirements for monitoring that exceed those outlined in the engagement bulletin issued by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (2011).

Future Directions

In several parts of Canada, professional archaeologists are regularly engaged by First Nations as advisors in their consultation teams or to help undertake archaeology in their jurisdictions. The logical outcome of these trends and developments is the establishment of First Nation-owned commercial archaeology enterprises, perhaps with the aid of non-Indigenous professionals, to undertake the archaeology projects relevant to their treaty lands and traditional territories. Nations in some parts of Canada have done this for decades, for example, the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, whose objective has always been to exercise full control over all aspects of their lives past and present. Twenty years from now, it is likely that non-Indigenous commercial archaeologists will act principally as advisors to these Indigenous enterprises and their own practices may be restricted largely to archaeological projects related to non-Indigenous heritage.

Concomitantly, the range of settler sites coming to our attention is steadily broadening. This is especially true of complex urban and industrial sites, where, because of their scale, logistics, and costs, investigation is possible only in the context of commercial archaeology. These projects are becoming more common (e.g., Martelle et al. 2018) and point to the growth of our profession and willingness to wrestle with "difficult" archaeology to reveal new insights about our past and a new interest in urban stories by residents of cities. Even twenty years ago, in many cases, archaeologists would have written off many of these kinds of sites as too disturbed or unlikely to reveal important data. The development of research designs is essential for urban sites and requires engaging with the complex historical and taphonomic processes that led to their creation in the first place.

Among the many accomplishments of commercial archaeology has been the creation of big data sets that have allowed us to address big research questions. It is also true that commercial archaeology has had a role to play in advancing technologies for the analysis and interpretation of big data. Many companies have focussed on systematising the use of new and innovative high precision field recording and analytical instruments and training their field directors to use them and explore the data to turn them

into meaningful information. We'll need to design new gateways to information to bring the past to others—accessibility of data will be the hallmark of the future (see Ferris, this volume).

Many universities offer limited, specific CRM training, while some observers or participants advocate for enhanced training programs (e.g., La Salle and Hutchings 2012:14). New programs would benefit from including business training for future corporate management roles, especially since the next decade will see a considerable turn-over in the corporate shareholders of the first generation of archaeological heritage management firms. Succession planning requires years of advance work with candidates interested in the art and science of management as well as archaeology.

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