Diversity and Inclusion in Archaeology

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Diversity and inclusion in Archaeology

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, a leading professional body for archaeologists in the UK and internationally, writes '*Archaeologists work for all the public, but we know that neither the discipline nor the profession of archaeology reflects wider society. For example, there are fewer women in senior archaeological roles than there are men, and there is less ethnic diversity and representation of people with disabilities in the profession than reflected in archaeology students*.' Its aim is to strive for a profession that is as diverse as the discipline of archaeology (CiFA, 2022).

Archaeology is the study of human activity through the recovery and analysis of material culture.[1] Archaeologists study human prehistory and history, which is by nature extremely diverse. Archaeologists describe and categorise the objects and remains that they recover with various goals in mind. From documenting cultural history to understanding past ways of life and changes in human society.

We all make sense of the world around us by identifying people, things, and situations, and can all be at risk of unconscious bias. This may mean we favour others based on them being 'like us' or make unfavourable decisions on others because they are unlike us.

Who is foregrounded here?

There can be many points of view about the history of a place. Archaeologists carefully recover and examine evidence of the past, but the sheer volume of evidence, lack of time and other constraints often mean that sampling strategies are used. The volume of relatively recent material remains vastly outweighs the volume of material from earlier, deeper deposits. Different strategies may be applied for sampling different levels of the same site. This is conscious bias (in favour of the earlier more scarce remains) but there is scope for unconscious bias also.

In launching the 2021 International Day for Monuments and Sites UNESCO notes that the history of a place can have many points of view (UNESCO, 2021). Different

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[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeology

narratives can come to the forefront and there can be imbalances in recognition, interpretation and conservation of various aspects of the cultural heritage.

A lack of diversity in the profession does have an impact. The archaeological workforce in Europe and the US is overwhelmingly white with few women in senior roles. Draycott and White note, in their paper on 'why the whiteness of archaeology is a problem', that our backgrounds, experiences and mental models shape which questions we ask and how we interpret archaeological evidence (Draycott & White, 2020). The questions that archaeologists ask to affect their sampling strategies on site, which in turn affects how aspects of the heritage of a site and the gender and ethnicity of the people represented on site are studied and documented.

Our backgrounds and experiences also shape how the narrative of an archaeological or historical site is presented. One story may be foregrounded over another. People and aspects of the history of the site may be missing from this story. For example, ask yourself if human remains buried with a sword are male or female. If females are under-represented in burial grounds is this the result of an unconscious (or even conscious bias) as the evidence is interpreted? Often you need to read between the lines when interpretations of past cultures are presented.

Whose heritage is preserved?

UNESCO recommended in 1972 that each State should formulate its policy on the protection of the (intangible) cultural heritage (UNESCO, 1972). This document recommends that each country takes responsibility for the identification of monuments, buildings and areas of national importance, for establishing inventories and ensuring that measures (legal, education and more) are in place for their protection.

In some countries (notably Denmark, the UK, Ireland and France) inventories of nationally important monuments began to be compiled in the 19th Century. Other countries began work more recently informed by the work in other countries and by international conventions. The Council of Europe's Valletta convention (CoE, 1992) provides a definition of the archaeological heritage as "structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects,

monuments of other kinds as well as their context, whether situated on land or under water."

In general, it is probably fair to say that monuments or buildings that really stand out are the first to be identified for protection. Later decisions are generally guided by principles for selection, for example:

- Historic England considers 8 characteristics[2]: Period; Rarity; Documentation/Finds; Group value; Survival/condition; Fragility/vulnerability; Diversity; Potential
- The French Ministry of culture considers: the heritage interest based on historical, artistic, scientific and technical criteria. Rarity, exemplarity, authenticity and integrity of goods are also taken into account.

But the process of selecting heritage for protection is influenced by current thinking and ideas about which monuments and buildings are important do change. 100 years ago, contemporary buildings (such as the modernist house at Greenside or Battersea Power Station[3]) would not have been considered. Similarly, monuments, buildings and places associated with ethnic and religious minorities, women and workers were less likely to be included in official inventories of protected places in the past.

Becoming more inclusive

Recognition of the diversity of the cultural heritage and the need to respect other cultures and belief systems has been growing over the last 30-40 years. The Nara document on authenticity (UNESCO, 1994) is perhaps particularly important for extending the definition of heritage; an acceptance of relativism - that recognition of heritage depends on the history and perspective of the community involved; and for recognising the role of local communities especially in relation to inhabited sites. Nara promoted work with indigenous communities enabling them to identify aspects of their cultural heritage that are important.

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[2] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/scheduled-monuments/
[3] https://c20society.org.uk/100-buildings

In 1994, the same year as the Nara conference, UNESCO strategy changed to make the World Heritage List more "representative, balanced and credible" (Luxon, 2019). While the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century (Council of Europe, 2018) argues for democratisation - where value is not only determined by experts or heritage authorities but also by the local population.

National strategy has also changed to reflect these trends, for example Norway's heritage policy today sets out three broad goals (Oldham, M., 2021):

1. Everyone should have the opportunity to engage with and take responsibility for cultural environments.
2. Cultural environments contribute to sustainable development through holistic planning practices.
3. A diversity of cultural environments is a basis for knowledge, experience and use.

Points of view

The history of a place can involve many points of view. In the past certain narratives, and particular points of view, came to the forefront. Some monuments have complex histories involving different communities with different points of view. Addressing difficult and often contested histories involves complex conversations with all the different stakeholders to avoid biased views and interpretations of the past (UNESCO, 2021).

Archaeology content in Europeana

The archaeology content that has been aggregated by [CARARE](#) and is available through Europeana includes:

- Inventories of protected monuments and buildings
- Fieldwork and excavation reports (so called grey literature publications)
- Photographic archives of monuments and buildings
- Artefact collections from museums
- Publications - books, journals, articles etc.
- Various archives

Inventories of protected monuments and buildings
- [Beeldbank van de Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed](#)
- [Swedish National Heritage Board](#)
- [Danish National Agency for Culture](#)
- [National Heritage Institute of the Czech Republic](#)
- [Rijksmonument cards Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed](#)
- [Direction des Monuments et des Sites de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale](#)
- [Muinsuskaitseamet, Estonian National Heritage Board](#)
- [Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia](#)
- [Archaeological Heritage Agency of Iceland](#)
- [National Architectural Heritage Board of Iceland](#)
- [City of Subotica, Serbia](#)
- [Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia](#)

Related
- [Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije](#)

Fieldwork and excavation reports, project archives and publications
- [Archaeology Data Service](#) - fieldwork and excavation reports, project archives, organisation archives, journal archives
- [KNAW-DANS](#) - fieldwork and excavation reports and research project archives
- [Vilnius University Faculty of Communication](#) - images of archaeological sites, excavations, fieldwork and archaeological objects.
- [Discovery Programme](#) - project archives

- [Instituto de Arqueología Ibérica-Universidad de Jaén](#) - images and 3D models of museum objects and archaeological sites
- [Archeologický informační systém České republiky](#) - aerial photography collection, fieldwork archives + 3D models
- [Centre for Educational Technology, Greece](#) - mixed collection of images of museum objects + 3D models of historic buildings.
- [University of Bologna](#) - project archive, collection of images of classical sculptures
- [Israel Antiquities Authority](#) - The result of salvage excavations conducted by the IAA.

Photographic archives
- [Paul Mayheart - historic buildings and building interiors](#)
- [National Heritage Institute, Romania](#)

Other Collections
- [KIM.bl](#)
- [Deutsches Archeologiche Institut](#)
- [Musée d'Archéologie nationale - Domaine national de Saint-Germain-en-Laye](#)
- [The Cyprus Institute - STARC, Cyprus Folk Art Museum](#)
- [The Hunt Museum](#)
- [University of Turku, the Turku Museum Center and the Aboa Vetus et Ars Nova museum (3D digitisation)](#)
- [National Gallery of Slovenia](#)

Other content
- Galleries
- Blogs

Of the content which is published within Europeana:

The inventories of monuments and historic buildings are informed by UNESCO conventions on the protection of the intangible heritage and State policy. Each country takes responsibility for identifying which monuments, buildings and areas to include in their inventories. In recent years countries have responded to international developments recognising the diversity of cultural heritage and the

value of engaging local communities in the process of identifying monuments/buildings for protection. The descriptions of the monuments/buildings in inventories are often built up over time and may include information from surveys (including condition surveys) and excavations as these take place. The language is typically quite formal.

The fieldwork and excavation reports are records of interventions on archaeological monuments and historic buildings. Each report is a scientific account of the methodology, findings and the particular constraints under which the work was completed. Much fieldwork is carried out by professional teams (mainly) in advance of development, some by research teams, with a small proportion carried out by amateurs. In general, the work follows professional codes of conduct which, this being a relatively small profession, are influenced by international developments and working groups such as those of the European Archaeological Council on National Research Frameworks and Development-Led Archaeology.

The photographic archives published in Europeana include images of monuments and buildings identified in inventories as being of national or international significance, and sometimes interior details of those monuments.

The other collections include items from museum catalogues and the results of 3D digitisation projects.

User generated content such as galleries and blog posts should be covered by Europeana's Editorial policy.

Next steps

CARARE's members and data partners will be invited to give their feedback on this report and to suggest the next steps.

References

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UNESCO, 1972, Recommendation concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13087&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO, 2021, International Day for Monuments and Sites 2021 - Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures: https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2274

William White and Catherine Draycott, 2020, Why the Whiteness of Archaeology is a Problem: https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/archaeology-diversity/

Other materials and Case Studies

Our World Heritage, Diversities and genders debate**:** https://www.ourworldheritage.org/diversities_and_genders/. This debate highlights exclusionary processes at play at World Heritage sites, as well as to highlight new and innovative approaches to address them

Characterising and capturing the diversity of place https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Characterising_and_capturing_the_diversity_of_place

Council of Europe, Coffee talks on heritage and diversity, undated, https://rm.coe.int/16806ae4a4. T
he "coffee talks" organised as part of the "European Union/Council of Europe Joint Action - Support to the Promotion of Cultural Diversity in Kosovo (PCDK)" are an example of how dialogue helps us to become familiar with and appreciate our own culture and those of the other communities. By bringing together people from different backgrounds to discuss topics relevant to heritage and diversity, these talks have also contributed to promoting a better understanding of the role and importance of cultural heritage.

Historic England Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality Case studies

https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/about/strategy-ide-nov20-mar23/
- **Case study: The aim of Pride of Place** was to identify, document and increase awareness of the significance of LGBTQ+ histories and heritage in relation to England's buildings and landscapes. https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/lgbtq-heritage-project/
- **Case study: Disability in Time and Place** set out to show how the lives of people with disabilities are part of the heritage all around us. From leper chapels built in the 1100s to protests about accessibility in the 1980s, the built environment is linked to the stories of people with disabilities, hidden and well-known. https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/disability-history/

- **Case study: Feversham Primary School** children named themselves Heritage Hunters as they explored the history of the people and places on their doorstep. Supported by Heritage Schools, the children interviewed local people, worked with a historian and even made a film about their discoveries. They used maps and trade directories to explore streets and buildings around their school. https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/in-your-area/yorkshire/bradford-school-heritage-project/

- **Case Study 4: 'Connecting People and Places'**. A partnership with the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust Historic England has worked with the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust over several years. In 2019 we provided funding for them to run a project to increase our understanding of the buildings and places that have been designed by or are important to people from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. A team of aspiring architects, underpinned by guidance and support from qualified architects, researched and documented historic places across England. https://www.blueprintforall.org/what-we-do/enriching-society/connecting-people-and-places-project/

- **Case study: Legacy West Midlands** collects the stories of the diverse migrant communities of Handsworth in Birmingham. It understands the importance of Black and Minority Ethnic communities having the power to shape their own narrative and share their own stories. Over the last decade they have become experts in creating a heritage offer which is accessible to local people. https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/debate/recent/why-is-a-diverse-and-inclusive-workplace-essential/when-the-penny-dropped/

- **Case Study 6: Working with Moseley Muslim Community Association on Heritage at Risk** - When the Moseley Muslim Community Association purchased the former School of Art from Birmingham City Council in 1984 it was a in a sorry state of disrepair with a flooded basement and deteriorating stonework. The association then embarked on years of repairs. The building was finally brought back into use thanks to a grant from Historic England and funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/in-your-area/midlands/heritage-at-risk-2019/

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