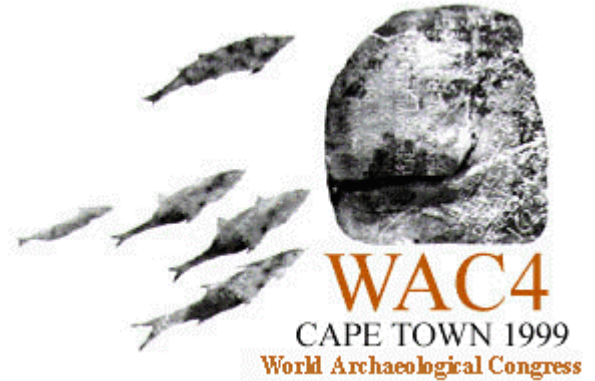


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'Doing Archaeology': Cultural Heritage Management and its role in identifying the link between archaeological practice and theory.

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Cultural heritage management (CHM) is often characterised as simply a practice concerned with the management of monuments and sites. It is something archaeologists 'do', but it not necessarily seen as 'doing archaeology'. Various commentators have noted that CHM is perceived by the majority of the international discipline as a practice distinct from archaeology, and that it has little connection, or even relevance, to the serious business of theorising archaeological practice (see Renfrew 1983; Byrne 1993; Carman 1993; Smith 1993, 1994). It usually seen as having nothing to offer theoretical debates about the direction of the discipline.

In this paper I intend to illustrate the complex inter-relationship between wider understandings of 'archaeology' and the practices of CHM by drawing on a case study from Australian indigenous archaeology and CHM. At the very least CHM is shown to have an impact on archaeological research through its influence on the 'data base'. In effect cultural heritage managers determine the composition of the data base that future researchers will have access to. This is done as it is they that help to decide what should be saved and what destroyed. But on a more complex level, CHM has an interdependent relationship with archaeology through the way in which sites are managed. How sites are managed, and the meanings attributed to sites in this process, establishes an interdependent relationship between mainstream archaeology and CHM. In this relationship CHM not only has an impact on archaeological theory and practice, CHM itself becomes useful as a focus of study to elucidate the links between archaeological practice and theory.

The basic argument of this paper is that archaeologists as professional experts, and archaeological knowledge, have authority in the disposition of material culture. Archaeological expertise exercises a power/knowledge relation that ensures archaeological access to material culture often over many other (albeit not all)

interests with a stake in heritage management. A position of authority in CHM is important for archaeologists as it helps to ensure access to archaeological data. The need to maintain this position has a direct impact on the way in which archaeology and its practices are understood or theorised.

The Case Study: Australian Archaeology - A brief history

Australian archaeology is relatively young, as what the Australian discipline itself identifies as its 'professionalisation' occurred only in the last 40 years (Moser 1995). During the 1960s the first university trained archaeologists arrived from Cambridge and set up university departments and commenced systematic fieldwork. Although Cambridge trained, many of these archaeologists turned to the emerging New Archaeology from the USA to theorise the archaeology of the Aboriginal past. It was argued that this new direction in archaeological theory would offer a rigour previously lacking in Australia (see for example, Megaw 1966; Jones 1968; Mulvaney 1968). Indeed the New Archaeology provided a scientific persona that underscored new claims to professional expertise being made by archaeologists during the 1960s. Certainly by the 1970s processual theory came to dominate the discourse used by the discipline to define itself (Smith 1996), and had become the underpinning position in the new university courses in 'Australian Prehistory' (Moser 1995).

The claims to objectivity and expertise that the new archaeology offered cannot be emphasised enough. The logical positivism of processual theory was to have significant consequences for the development of CHM in Australia. The advent of the professionalisation of the discipline together with its adoption of processualism as its underpinning, and indeed its default, theoretical stance occurred coincidentally with a number of other major developments.

Between 1968 and 1972 major archaeological finds at Lake Mungo pushed accepted dates of the human occupation of Australia back 40,000 years. These discoveries fired public imagination and put, in the words of contemporaries of this period, Australian archaeology on the world map (see for example Mulvaney 1975; Attwood and Edwards 1987). By the time of the Lake Mungo discoveries Australian archaeology could claim both theoretical maturity and access to data of international significance.

In Australia the late 1960s and 1970s also saw the advent of public concern over the environment (Flood 1989). Trade Unions became active in agitating for legislation to protect both the natural and cultural heritage (Burgmann and Burgmann 1998). Alongside of this indigenous Australians were effectively granted citizenship in 1967. From this date Aboriginal politics became an increasingly public issue, and the finds at Lake Mungo were used by Aboriginal activists to argue for the legitimacy of their cultural claims. '40,000 years is a long time' began to appear on protest banners.

In the face of increasing public concern over cultural heritage archaeologists began to heavily lobby State and Federal governments for legislation to protect Aboriginal archaeological sites. The late 1960s and 1970s saw the enactment of heritage legislation in most states, legislation that was either written by archaeologists or in close consultation with them. Aboriginal people, despite their vocal agitation to be part of this process were not consulted. Indeed, in the south-eastern States it was

argued that Aboriginal people were culturally 'extinct', and that thus archaeologists, as 'experts', should act as cultural spokespersons or stewards for Aboriginal heritage.

By the late 1970s CHM was established as a process in most States, and it was archaeologists who were employed to administer the legislation and site registers. It was also archaeologists who were employed as consultants to survey for and assess the value of sites, and to make recommendations about their management.

A review of government archival documents and notes on draft legislation dating back to the 1960s and 1970s reveals that it was archaeologist's claims to scientific expertise, underpinned by the logical positivism of processual theory, that convinced policy makers and bureaucrats of the usefulness of archaeologists in CHM (Smith 1996). As scientific experts archaeologists were regarded as the 'rightful' body of people to act as stewards for what was seen by many in government as a 'dead past'. Politicised Aboriginal agitation for control of their own heritage could be dismissed by policy makers in favour of a body of 'experts' who made claims to objectivity and the production of value free knowledge.

The rise of a professional discipline with claims to scientific expertise occurred at time of increasing conflict and lobbying by Aboriginal and other interest groups over the disposition of Aboriginal material culture. It was the development of CHM that ensured archaeological access to their data in the face of conflicting claims to its ownership.

So far this history has revealed the extent to which CHM is a process which, in Australia at least, works to establish archaeological access to and control over the management of the discipline's data base. However, the development of CHM has had a greater consequence for the Australian discipline. To understand this consequence we need to take an excursion into external disciplinary concerns and examine the role of archaeological knowledge in political and public debate.

Governmentality

As noted previously the 1960s and 1970s saw the advent of a number of interest groups with a stake in the disposition of and meanings given to material culture. Aboriginal interests, for instance, were making claims about the length of their existence in Australia to legitimise various cultural claims and were using the presence of heritage sites to legitimise claims to land ownership. Government bureaucracies and policy makers needed to make sense of these and other competing claims. Archaeologists, who were drawing attention to themselves through their lobbying for heritage legislation, became the obvious translators of these claims for policy makers.

Through the establishment of CHM archaeological knowledge came to play a part in the governance of Aboriginal claims to political legitimacy and, ultimately, their cultural identity. The literature on governmentality, drawing on Foucault's (1991) later work, is useful for theorising this process. The governmentality literature argues that intellectual knowledge is incorporated into the act of governing populations and social problems by 'rendering the world thinkable, taming its intractable reality by subjecting it to the disciplined analyses of thought' (Rose and Miller 1992:182). Importantly, this process is based on liberal modernity which stresses rational

universal 'truths' (Pavlich 1995). Thus, archaeological rationality, emphasised by the logical positivism of processualism, became useful in defining populations (be they indigenous peoples or other groups) through both their 'archaeological' past and the material culture (or heritage objects), which were defined as representing their past.

Archaeological knowledge and values became inextricably tied into the CHM process, and through CHM archaeology became, in Rose and Miller's (1992:175) terms, a 'technology of government', a body of knowledge and expertise which government and bureaucracies mobilise to get things done (Dean 1994). Archaeological expertise determined the value and meaning of Aboriginal cultural heritage, and archaeological knowledge thus helped to govern the legitimacy of Aboriginal claims made on the basis of links to the past and cultural identity. In addition, Aboriginal claims could be usefully depoliticised for policy makers as claims became redefined as technical issues of heritage management (Smith and Campbell 1998).

This process has been strongly contested by Aboriginal people and communities who have questioned the appropriateness of archaeological authority over their heritage and who have demanded that consultation with communities occur as part of both the management and research process (see for example, Langford 1983; Fourmile 1989a, 1989b, 1992; Organ 1994; Ah Kit 1995). In response heritage agencies and the Australian Archaeological Association (AAA) have respectively enacted policies and a code of ethics that make consultation mandatory. Despite this Aboriginal criticism has pointed out that consultation often consists of simply 'telling' Aboriginal communities about research and management projects and tends to lack any element of negotiation (TALC 1995; see also Smith 1996 for discussion of this issue). The continuation of Aboriginal criticism occurs, in part, because Australian archaeology in general has tended to maintain processual theory as its 'default' theoretical position.

The adherence to processual theory tends to contradict consultative policies and codes of ethics (Smith 1995). This is because processual theory can only, given the intellectual boundaries it sets for itself, incorporate knowledge and values constructed within a strict logical positivist framework. This means that Aboriginal knowledge, values and concerns often make little practical sense within either a research or a management process defined by processual theory. As a consequence policies of consultation have not alleviated all Aboriginal concerns about archaeological access and possession of their material culture.

The degree of continuing Aboriginal questioning over the management of heritage items provides us with a point of focus through which the consequences of CHM on the Australian discipline may be understood. Despite very real attempts by the Australian discipline to meet Aboriginal demands, Aboriginal activists remain sceptical and continue to lobby the discipline. CHM has, in effect, inhibited the theoretical development of the discipline as it is the practices of CHM which work to define theoretical debate. It is archaeological involvement, and the position of authority held by archaeologists and archaeological knowledge in CHM that helps hinder effective theoretical debate and development.

In underpinning Aboriginal heritage legislation and the governmental role of archaeological knowledge processual theory defines the intellectual and practical boundaries of any debate or conflict. Most importantly for archaeology, processual

values have ensured both management and research archaeology has, as the discipline terms it, a 'relevance'. Although this relevance is never really defined, it is a pervasive discourse within the discipline (see for example Ford 1973; Fritz 1973; King 1977). In a sense archaeology is a rather intellectually insecure discipline in so far as it can never really replicate its experiments or research processes as excavation is a method that reveals information while in effect destroying significant aspects of the data base. Further, the discipline deals with the intangibilities of 'the past', which makes the desired linkage between archaeology and the natural sciences problematic. However, the physicality of material culture renders archaeological knowledge tangible, 'evidential' and thus 'real'. The idea that processual theory gives archaeology relevance is revealing in so far as processual theory gives archaeology authority, an authority that underpins and is reinforced by its role in the governance of material culture and the meanings assigned to it. Its privileged position over the management of material culture assures access to the data base, and access to those 'things' that symbolise the discipline's 'relevance', authority and, ultimately, its identity as an objective science.

Archaeological knowledge became privileged in the CHM process through its ability to invoke scientific claims to objective expertise. The authority of archaeological knowledge became symbolised by archaeological control and possession of material culture through the privileged position of archaeologists in the management processes. In a sense the role of archaeological knowledge in the governance of Aboriginal political interests and cultural claims works also to govern the claims of archaeologists. To adopt new theoretical positions, such as those offered by postprocessualists or other post-modernists, may undermine the authority of archaeological claims to expert knowledge. The position of archaeologists in the governance of material culture is based on claims to objectivity, a public acknowledgment of the subjectivity of research must undermine the legitimacy of archaeological knowledge in the eyes of government bureaucracies. If authority is undermined, the position of archaeologists and their knowledge in CHM is put in jeopardy and ultimately the access of archaeologists to their data base becomes problematic.

In Australia theoretical debate is limited and looked upon as ultimately a bit suspect and unnecessary. Indeed the international postprocessual debate has had little impact within Australia (Burke et al 1994; Smith 1995). Those that debate theory are often reviled as failing 'to do' archaeology — a crushing criticism in the Australian context — as to theorise too much is to jeopardise access to data. Ironically enough, archaeologists involved in CHM are themselves criticised for not 'doing archaeology' either - doubly ironic as it is the 'doing' of CHM that makes the 'doing' of archaeology possible. It is CHM that protects archaeological data and reinforces the discipline's identity as an expert, 'relevant' and authoritative practice.

To summarise, it is CHM in Australia that has, via the authority of processual science, provided archaeologists with access to their data. This authority is also predicated on the usefulness of archaeological knowledge in governing certain aspects of Aboriginal interests and their cultural and political claims. However, it is the need to maintain this authority that impacts on theoretical debate and ultimately archaeological practice in Australia. Not only must an appropriate authoritative discourse be maintained, but so must an archaeological practice that emphasises the

systematic rigour of 'objective' research. CHM exercises this influence on archaeological practice and theory quite directly through the whole process of permit applications.

To undertake any form of research in most States it is a legal requirement that all researchers apply for permits. Archaeologists who vet and approve permits are regularly in a position to influence how research is conducted and routinely set requirements predicated on processualist assumptions about the nature of the discipline. Assumptions that are daily reinforced by the assessing archaeologist's own position in the CHM process. This process was written into legislation often at the behest of archaeologists themselves, precisely so that they could regulate the standard of archaeological work (Smith 1996).

Conclusion

The Australian case study details how it is that CHM in addition to protecting the archaeological data base, actually protects archaeological access to it. However, in offering this protection archaeologists involved in CHM become the regulators of archaeological practice and theory. This case study also reveals that CHM is the point at which archaeology comes into direct contact and conflict with governments and a range of interest groups with a stake in material culture. It illustrates that it is through CHM that extra-disciplinary concerns and groups can have an impact on archaeological practice and theory. Indeed, it reveals that the practice of CHM has a direct consequence for the development of theoretical debate and understanding, that in effect 'doing' CHM is 'doing' archaeology.

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