interview

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Archaeology and democracy. An interview with Mark P. Leone

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Abstract

What follows is an account of an interview with Mark P. Leone, Professor in the University of Maryland's Department of Anthropology and Director of the Archaeology in Annapolis project. Leone will be well known to many for his work in historical archaeology, for his use of critical theory in archaeology and for the Archaeology in Annapolis project where these interests come together. In the interview Leone explores the development of his approach, from his early work within the New Archaeology, through his growing interest in Marxist approaches to past and present, to his concerns today. This approach combines a commitment to social responsibility with a belief in scientific method. We discuss the ways in which critical archaeology has worked in practice in Annapolis over the past 25 or more years and how it has disrupted dominant modes of discussion and placed new ones more firmly on the agenda. In concluding, Leone offers some of his thoughts on archaeology and the creation of democratic discourse.

Keywords

critical archaeology; democracy; Annapolis; historical archaeology

In a sense, Mark Leone needs no introduction. He has had an acknowledged influence on American archaeology, both in the field of historical archaeology, with which he has become most associated, and more generally. His international reputation is also established. In Britain, for example, his interaction with a developing postprocessual archaeology in the 1980s led to his regular inclusion in standard textbooks, and this is not to mention knowledge of his work elsewhere in the world. Several of his published works have become standard points of reference, perhaps the most generally known being those on ideology and the William Paca Garden (Leone 1984) and on critical archaeology (e.g. Leone, Potter and Shackel 1987), and his various publications on the archaeology of capitalism.

However, although most will know Mark Leone and his work (or aspects of it), the nature of that knowledge varies. In attempting to summarize a career spanning some 40 years,[1] there has been an understandable tendency to categorize and reduce. But the result of this has often been either to misrepresent the nature of his approach to archaeology or to produce conflicting understandings of its character.

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One tendency has been to locate Leone under the banner of postprocessualism. In Britain, Leone's engagement with postprocessual archaeology has been understood as involving the formulation of a critique of the New Archaeology so radical as to represent a near-complete break with that tradition (e.g. Renfrew and Bahn 2000, 42). Some American archaeologists, in contrast, would place Leone as one of many New Archaeologists dissatisfied, but not entirely disillusioned, with aspects of that agenda as it is most often portrayed (e.g. Redman 1999, 65).

Perhaps the key link between Mark Leone and the eclectic interests defining, so far as is possible, postprocessualism is his commitment to a politically and socially aware archaeology with its intellectual ancestry in the Marxist tradition (he has variously been described as neo-Marxist, structural Marxist, mild Marxist, Marxian or otherwise).

His Marxist-inspired approach to historical archaeology is central to what some would describe as a coherent body of work undertaken, by Leone and others, as part of the Annapolis school, although the ascription is as contentious as it is accepted (Hicks 2004, 101, 104 n. 2). What the sobriquet seeks to describe is a body of work of significant influence produced by a group of North American scholars, amongst whom Leone is one of the key figures, and blending aspects of Marxism and critical theory in the archaeological analysis of capitalism.

Several of these labels and descriptions go some way towards describing Leone's archaeology, as he himself makes clear in the interview. But, alone, none of them quite captures the nature of his approach and its development. Providing for an easy understanding of his work, they also tend to ignore much that he has done since the 1980s and much that he had done before.

Leone's approach, as outlined by him in the first part of the interview, grew from his initial training and involvement in the New Archaeology, and the context within which he found himself in researching the prehistory of the south-western United States. From this grew an interest in areas alien to much of the New Archaeology – namely historical archaeology and a concern for social and political consciousness in scholarly work – but through which Leone, nevertheless, has not sought to distance himself from scientific method and hypothesis examination, which he sees as giving archaeology a measure of political independence.

These areas of interest became central to his work in Annapolis, the focus of the second section of the interview. There we discuss the operation of a socially responsible archaeology in practice: its methods, effects and results; and its outcomes in redefining the discourses surrounding archaeology, generating inclusion and conflict at one and the same time.

Finally, the interview strays onto the subjects of autobiography, advocacy and anger. This expands discussion on an archaeology which seeks to locate itself firmly in both the past and the present and to understand better the nature of power in the world of heritage and the means by which discourse surrounding this heritage might be opened up.

Initially, I had hoped to meet up with Mark Leone in person, in 2004, during one of his numerous visits to Europe, but this proved difficult to arrange. As a result, we agreed to conduct the interview with the Atlantic still

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between us, by e-mail, and the discussions took place from early 2005 until early 2006. My edited final text was then read by Leone before publication.

Science and social responsibility

You have been described as the most notable proponent of 'postprocessual' archaeology in the United States (Renfrew and Bahn 2000, 43). Would it be more accurate to consider your approach as having grown organically from the New Archaeology?

All of my archaeological training was within the New Archaeology. I had episodic but intense contacts with Lew Binford and was trained at Arizona by Bill Longacre. I worked with Jim Hill, Fred Plog, and John Fritz. All of my interests were in the transition from hunter/collectors to agriculturalists in the prehistoric Southwest. I was fascinated by Binford's attempt to define ideology and its associated technologies. I did depart from the New Archaeologists over matters of engagement with modern society because I thought there was an important connection to be made. I got this idea from Raymond Thompson's introduction to the history of archaeology in the 19th century and the connection with the origins of geology, palaeontology, biblical criticism, and the place of science in opening up the issue of human origins. This was not an area of interest to the New Archaeologists, but one which fascinated me. The social context of learning archaeology in Arizona involves the extraordinary popular appreciation for archaeology in an intensely conservative state in which Book of Mormon explanations for Native American origins and conservative Baptist interpretations of the Bible dominate intellectual life. In this educational context it is impossible to avoid the social abuse of the past and the importance of scientific treatments of remains.

My introduction to postprocessual thought came in the Department of Anthropology at Princeton University where my colleagues in cultural anthropology were former students of Clifford Geertz. Through these, I learned postmodern thought and its authors. Foremost among my colleagues at Princeton was Steve Barnett, who introduced me to Althusser and Lukacs through his (Barnett's) students. The interpretivists had little influence on me, but the Marxists allowed me to continue the intellectual foundations of the New Archaeology into the early modern and modern worlds. They also addressed the functions of archaeology in nation states through the notion of ideology.

It was within this environment that I began to work on Mormon material culture and the LDS (Latter-Day Saints) Church. This was the ideal setting for me to explore cultural ecology, modern religion, the politics of American churches, and ideology. I wrote about Mormon fences, town plans, and then the new Mormon Temple on the Washington, DC Beltway. This was my entry to modern material-culture studies, and because it was regarded as historical archaeology, I began to understand how that field worked.

Almost all of my intellectual thought since about 1981, when I began Archaeology in Annapolis and thus complete engagement with historical archaeology, has been in a postprocessual or postmodern context. Historical archaeology in the United States so consistently refuses to be engaged with the society whose origins it pretends to explore that it does not matter to me

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whether one approaches from the right or from the left. What matters is a sense of political engagement and that can happen from either side. Historical archaeology is so theoretically malnourished that it is inappropriate to address your question within the context of the practice of historical archaeology.

So your approach to archaeology, as it developed, was more of an extension than a rejection of the New Archaeology?
I have never taken a seriously critical position on the New Archaeology, although many people think I have. I have attempted to introduce its insights into understanding the world of European colonialism, including the colonial uses of archaeology itself. This latter involves nationalist uses of origins, sites, monuments, and tourist attractions. If I have a criticism of the New Archaeology at all, it is that it did not engage with historical archaeology or with a reflexive view of its tie to our own society. These latter concerns are very much a part of postmodern philosophy. In that sense I have been deeply influenced by postprocessual thought, but from an almost exclusively neo-Marxist point of view.

How did your movement towards a Marxist-inspired reflexive archaeology relate to developments across the Atlantic at that time?
When I met Ian Hodder and his students at Cambridge around 1979, I immediately understood how important they were to the complete intellectual renovation of archaeology. At that time, it was not clear to me that some were more closely connected to Marxist thought, and some more closely connected to hermeneutic interpretations. Those distinctions became important to me later, although they were already important to the energetic and amazing changes initiated at Cambridge. I fully agreed with the philosophy that showed that archaeological thought and interpretation were functions of modern society, but I came to reserve an important place for the theoretical capacity of the scientific method to maintain some political independence for archaeology. Although this is a conservative position, I believe it is imperative to hold it in the face of irrational interpretations of the past which are laden with colonialist intentions.

I have always considered myself to be the closest of allies with the Cambridge archaeologists because of their clear-eyed view of the role of archaeology in modern political life. They also never gave up their ability to read theory, which American archaeologists claim to do only with difficulty. Obviously, I remain completely allied to the Cambridge-trained archaeologists who have maintained a position on the theoretical left.

A concern for the reflexive connection between past and present is one of the organic themes I see in your work. Your emphasis on independent scientific method in this context can relate, at one and the same time, if differently, both to the New Archaeology and to a Marxist position, for example. But the imperative behind your 'conservative position' clearly falls more on the Marxist side, on engagement in society. I guess you feel a more relativist stance would be politically impotent?
I try to take a firm stand on a relevant and politically engaged use of archaeology. My strong sense is that a hermeneutic stand produces a relativist

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stance which makes it difficult to tell the difference between an archaeology that enhances democracy and one that might enhance totalitarianism. At the moment, archaeologists are engaged by all kinds of governments and professional archaeologists need the kinds of methods and procedures at their disposal which will allow them to say that their conclusions have merits that are different from common opinions offered by ordinary people.

Ordinary people add tremendously to our knowledge of the past, through their questions, particularly when we and they work together to define archaeological objectives. Lay opinions have an important status and are crucial to understanding the meaning of excavated material. None of this is unimportant and archaeologists have frequently and dangerously dismissed the opinions of natives of all kinds in coming to their conclusions. The truth lies best in an alliance between those who are affected by archaeological opinions and those who use scientific precision to create them. I understand as well as anyone that the term 'scientific precision' is philosophically loaded and is politically charged. However, I operate with the assumption that once one views the political implications of a stand such an understanding creates a consciousness in the archaeologist, or scientist, that did not exist before.

And what is the role of this consciousness in relation to scientific practice?
This consciousness is potentially liberating and allows for the use of knowledge in ways that were not formerly accessible. My own stance is to combine scientific hypothesis examination with consciousness so that there is some understanding of the political use of scientific conclusions. The end product should be a willing political use of knowledge with the explicit statement that the knowledge was created through both scientific method and political intent. The political intent is the service of democratic participation.

I tend to think that this stance can be taken more effectively within a Marxist tradition than within the symbolic, interpretivist tradition. I take this position because I think it is imperative that those archaeologists who can address the newest form of creationism, which is called 'intelligent design', do so emphatically. This probably does not involve historical archaeologists, but rather palaeo-anthropologists. The issue of intelligent design is prominent in the United States right now and can be addressed by anyone who understands human evolution and fossil evidence. I raise this because no one will fail to recognize the effort to introduce religion into the classroom, as well as to relativize.

I defend the use of scientific method, or at least a method that allows opinions, supernatural forces, and sources of information such as dreams and inspiration to be eliminated and discounted, because there needs to be a way of challenging the unempirical, and the indefensible. Somebody needs to be able to say that there are no spirits in bones that we know of. This is different from respecting the position that there are spirits in bones. We can defend the right but we cannot agree to the existence of what we cannot show.

If intelligent design is an issue more for the palaeo-anthropologist, where should this approach lead the historical archaeologist?
Within this stand, I think it is imperative that historical archaeologists reintroduce subject and subjected peoples, including Native Americans, into the research process. This has already happened among prehistorians and

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Native Americans, but it doesn't exist yet to any serious degree in 17th-century research in the United States. What do Native Americans want to know about European intrusions? This question can be entertained freely without being afraid of claims by Native Americans that they already know the answers. In general, of course, they do; so do we. We can, however, say something new, and must try to.

The same is true with introducing a serious version of Afro-centric questions into African American historical archaeology. No question is truly unscientific. It doesn't matter what the origin of a question is. What matters is respect for the one who asks the questions and a capacity to understand that all questions have political importance. Just because questions are connected to power, doesn't mean that we should shy away from them. Just because questions involve data which are sacred, does not mean that we cannot try to achieve some accommodation with the source of sanctity. I think the issue is engaging with the source of sanctity. This can only be done by asking why people believe the way they do and use material culture in the way they do.

I fear that in historical archaeology we have so emphasized artefacts and things that we have forgotten how to understand that it is their context and meaning that is just as significant as the matrix of the things themselves. The question for me is why we are transfixed by concreteness. Further, once we discovered the symbolic nature of things, why then did we dismiss things as irrelevant to the process of establishing meaning. Neither position is fully defensible. But historical archaeologists are transfixed by things, usually forgetting their meaning. And the postprocessualists are transfixed by meanings and frequently forget that meanings can be constrained by the use of precise methods, including archaeology.

I believe it is important for historical archaeologists to take on the issue of surveillance as defined by the current 'War on Terrorism'. For most of us, this is even more significant than the issue of intelligent design and the accompanying attack on what constitutes evidence and scientific procedure. Historical archaeologists who understand panoptic buildings, Jeremy Bentham, or Foucault on panopticism, certainly understand the role of watching and self-watching. Therefore they have at their disposal opportunities to comment on the current use of watching devices and the self-guiding and self-watching mechanisms which accompany the transformation of citizens into policing agents directed at others and themselves. I argue to historical archaeologists that they should assert their command of material culture and their command of theory in order to link times which we excavate in the 18th and 19th centuries to a critique of what we are living through in Britain and America today.

In order to do this, scholarship needs to be recognized as political. Science needs to be understood to be socially responsible. And social action needs to be defined as understanding the difference between processes that enhance democratic participation and those that are ideological and in the service of hierarchy. It is appropriate to see that these are matters of science handling data, as opposed to ordinary people with opinions and no data. From a leftist point of view, these are matters of right and wrong, and are not about relativist concerns.

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Figure 1 Claudia Rossel, undergraduate student in the University of Maryland's archaeological field school in Annapolis, gives a tour of a site to the mayor of Annapolis, Ellen Moyer, summer 2003. The tour is in the backyard of a private house in Eastport, a 19th-century independent town outside Annapolis that became a suburb of the city in the 1950s. A worried, not disinterested, project director is on the left. Photograph taken by Matthew Palus.

Annapolis: archaeology and social responsibility in practice

So if the origin of a question is not important, the way you address it is – with social responsibility, in pursuit of greater democracy, combining a scientific approach and political consciousness, and engaging in dialogue with those affected by archaeological opinions. This, in other words, is your approach to critical archaeology and Archaeology in Annapolis, right? How do you feel the general aim of a socially responsible archaeology has worked in practice in Annapolis over the past 25 years?

How has the general aim of a socially responsible archaeology worked in practice in Annapolis over the past 25 years?

A socially responsible archaeology has produced eight doctoral dissertations, with five more currently being written, all about Annapolis, and all written through material from the city excavated by Archaeology in Annapolis. These dissertations were produced by graduate students who worked for many years in the city and who have collectively rewritten the history of the city. Four of the dissertations have been published as books. The mayor of the city even gives one of them away routinely to people who want to know how to contribute to understanding the city.

Of the 13 dissertations, seven are devoted to African American historical archaeology. Prior to these, little historical work had been done on black Annapolis. As these dissertations have been finished, others have been added

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Figure 2 African American children from Annapolis public housing work at modular archaeological excavations being taught by Maisha Washington, centre top, summer 2004. The teaching is in the Archaeology in Annapolis Laboratory, adjacent to the William Paca Garden. Photograph taken by Amelia Chisholm.

in an ongoing process that is viewed by several mayors and members of the City Council as a substantial contribution to the city.

Archaeology in Annapolis has been in existence since 1981. I am now training the children of my first students. My first graduate students are nearing 50 and have tenure and more.

I was unprepared for seeing the recapitulation of the Oedipus complex that I myself lived through when I was young. I remember trying to distance myself from Paul Martin when I first got my doctorate. It was a stupid effort from which I more or less recovered. Now, it is being recapitulated in a way that shouldn't surprise me, but does.

And what effects has this body of work had?

Because of all of this scholarship, with virtually all of it producing substantial science news in newspapers and local television along the way, we have certainly heightened the importance of archaeology to people in the city. More to the point, and far more importantly, we have substantially enhanced the sense in the city that African American history exists, is coherent, can be found and understood, and serves as a very important counterbalance to the widely celebrated history of famous, rich, patriotic whites. This is an ongoing process and, although hard to evaluate precisely, clearly has had an impact. My sense is that this work will last several generations as it becomes apparent that Annapolis is an African city as much as it is a European city.

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From the beginning of Archaeology in Annapolis, I deliberately worked with newspaper reporters, television reporters, the university's media specialists, and magazine editors to produce science news. This was one of the hardest tasks we undertook. The key to successful science news is to rehearse graduate students and undergraduates in a storyline. Science news is not human-interest news. Science news is about discovery and because archaeology discovers things, there must be a clear relationship between the things coming out of the ground and a fairly modest immediate meaning. Bigger meanings come later, after analysis. Since 1982 we have produced many dozens of stories in virtually all media. This has made everyone proud and allows people to look to archaeologists as a source of intelligent news. This has been a substantial way of communicating immediate results to all readers and viewers. It requires substantial discipline to speak to reporters, particularly to TV anchors, so that the news stays news and not human interest.

How would you define the contribution that has come from making archaeology news?
We have made three serious contributions to the city. By all odds, the most important has been lowering the wall around archaeology. When we started in 1981, archaeology was an arcane science. Now it is a popular, loved, and appreciated form of new knowledge. When we started Archaeology in Public in Annapolis, it was virtually unique in that we said that talking to people about the meaning of archaeology was just as important as excavation itself. We did this, of course, because of the critiques that archaeology was essentially political and all uses of it were. We did not speak in public because of a sense of fiscal obligation.

The second major contribution was our understanding that the city was designed and built from 1695 on to today as a volume. It is a baroque city with political intent in its design. We understood the Paca Garden, the other period gardens, and the late 17th-century street design as a whole. None of this had ever been said before. Although these discoveries have become internationally famous, they are completely disregarded and even dismissed by local city planners, historic preservationists, and even the public at large in Annapolis. To these people, our discoveries in this area are unimportant.

Locally and nationally our work with African American heritage is the most famous and appreciated. This work has attracted many people in the black community to archaeology and is routinely accepted as providing useful knowledge to black people. Some historic preservationists and local archaeologists sneer at our discovery of the remains of West African spirit practices. But the discoveries are so widely accepted that even the local sceptics are becoming silent.

So there has been some resistance to what you have been saying?
Archaeology in Annapolis has been criticized by local preservationists and local archaeologists for inadequate reporting of our work. Sometimes we are accused of inattention to CRM reporting standards and of avoiding local permitting procedures. These accusations led local preservationists to an attempt to regulate where archaeology can be done by us. They also led to

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an attempt to prevent excavation in the historic district. It is very important that the preservationists, local archaeologists, and local historians constantly criticized our leftist conclusions, frequently damning them as Marxist. As a result, we were only able to mount exhibits of artefacts in the local black museum, which is the Banneker-Douglass Museum, the State of Maryland's Center for African American History and Culture.

What lies at the root of this opposition?
What caused this resistance? In talking this over with Laurajane Smith (see Smith 2004), she thought that we had disturbed the dominant discourse. This discourse considers archaeology as subsidiary to history as discovered through documents and considers Annapolis a white, patriotic, European city. Our work shows it to be as much African as European, substantially racist, and as Catholic as it is Protestant. We certainly did alter the dominant discourse, as a proclamation of the City Council has shown (see appendix).

And, beyond newspapers and television, how have you sought to expand this disruption and develop work that is socially responsible?
There is no theoretical discourse in archaeology to define socially responsible action. I have turned time and again to Habermas for help here and usually define the ultimate goal as enhancing democratic processes. His work on expanding political discourse has meant the most to our project. Habermas stresses mutual access to discourse, use of common languages, absence of prohibiting rules, and toleration of divergent opinions.

Invoking Habermas has meant making archaeology widely available and accessible. Initially we produced free tours of open archaeological sites given by very well-trained students. The training was by a theatre producer who showed people how to speak in ordinary English and intelligently, but not with jargon. That worked well, but was temporary.

Now, we frequently use Web access and the vast majority of our Web-based guides and information can be found throughout the University of Maryland's Department of Anthropology Web address.[2] A very good streaming video on our work with West African spirit practices exists on the On-line Academy of the Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture.[3] The same address features Maisha Washington teaching archaeology to African American youngsters in Annapolis through the Banneker Douglass Museum in the city.

Substantial material from Annapolis appears in the most established of all the basic introductory archaeology textbooks. David Thomas and Robert Kelly, Brian Fagan, Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, and Robert Scherer and Wendy Ashmore all use substantial material from Annapolis in their texts. Many feature the public program, thus reaching undergraduates around the English-speaking world.

The more social impact we have the more we set off political charges. Currently, conservative Republicans control Historic Annapolis Foundation, which was the university's partner in Archaeology in Annapolis until the end of 2003. The archaeological project was removed from their property and allowed no place in their new museum. These were political decisions and

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Figure 3 Brian Ostahowski and Peter Matranga give tours to a family visiting on a public day in summer of 2004 in Eastport, just outside the historic district of Annapolis. The family owning the private house gave permission for an extensive excavation in their 19th-century backyard. The site was open over two weekends to all visitors. All tours were given by Maryland undergraduates. Photograph taken by Matthew Palus.

were not unexpected. Alternatively, strong support has come from a largely African American part of the city and the alderwoman representing this ward has promoted our active participation in the archaeology of this area which was home to a Civil War encampment staffed by African Americans. There is an active interest in the community's archaeological and oral history and the alderwoman has offered to learn oral-history techniques and has led the way to African American seniors who may see a partnership with the university as promoting their interests.

All these can be seen as ways of producing a socially responsible archaeology.

Presumably one of the reasons that you and your colleagues have been able to make a difference is that Archaeology in Annapolis has been a relatively long-lived and sustained effort. How much of a struggle has it been to cross barriers between archaeologist and community? Was a sustained commitment to people and place fundamental in this? Also, how, for you, has this process worked in reverse – have you found your own discourse disrupted in any way? What is it that the community teaches the archaeologist?

There is very little theory to act as a guide in answering these questions. I can begin to structure some answer by saying that I had hoped to address several constituencies as I and my students worked in Annapolis. Initially I saw the city as consisting of residents and tourists. Now, I see it as three

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classes: wealthy newcomers, white middle-class natives, and two groups of African Americans – middle-class and relatively poor. I also saw something I would call the general public. By this, I meant the audience I could reach by using newspapers and television. This audience was local and national. I saw historical archaeologists as a separate constituency. Then I saw the archaeological profession, dominated by prehistorians and CRM archaeologists, as a separate constituency. All of my colleagues, including some acting as administrators, in the University of Maryland were a very important, even pivotal, constituency. This last constituency is born of over 30 years' teaching at the university and certainly included my colleagues in the Department of Anthropology.

While these are the constituencies, I used some general ideas for addressing them. I always thought it was important to have a clear idea of what I was disproving. In addition, I also wanted to know how what I was proving could then be disproved. This is just the old scientific paradigm that we all learned decades ago. What I actually did was to insist on having a foil: 'This is what we thought we knew and it is really this other thing that is the truth'. There is nothing mysterious about operating this way, except that virtually no historical archaeologists do this. It is also the case that historic preservation virtually never operates this way either.

I have always liked the way I was told Copernicus worked. He asked, 'What is the nature of night, and how is it produced?' We all know what the result was and most of us know what the social result was as well. He made a lot of enemies and so did Galileo. In fact, when it's all said and done, Galileo's enemies still exist and are hardly repentant. A really good question speaks from common sense and, because it does, the results can be expected to produce vast social turmoil. It is that turmoil that I was unprepared for.

I learned this mode of scientific argument in my first archaeology course from Raymond Thompson at the University of Arizona. I have never forgotten it and I find it very useful. This is in general the way good prehistoric archaeologists work. It is not the way most historical archaeologists work. I tried to introduce this mode of logic into historical archaeology both in public in Annapolis and in our scholarship from Annapolis.

Common-sense questions and social turmoil – for Annapolis, what sort of questions are we talking about and with what results?

In Annapolis, I wanted to know why the poor did not rebel. I wanted to know where citizenship ended and where being an outcast began. What are you when you are not a citizen but are still an American? I also wanted to know why historical archaeology is so politically passive when it claims to ask such profoundly important questions.

If this is where I started, I ended in quite a different place. These questions have interrupted the dominant discourse of the city, where whites see blacks as in the early stages of citizenship and as being helped along by whites themselves, who in their liberal generosity tried to make blacks like whites. I also saw that the idea of citizenship was largely an ideology from about 1750, long before it was a political fact, and that the reality was a fossilized class structure that permitted very little change from poverty to wealth. In fact,

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Annapolis is a city in which the vast majority of people got poorer and poorer from about 1750 onward. It is still a highly structured class environment.

These were entirely unacceptable observations and brought substantial criticism from the preservation establishment which wanted distance from the questions. The observations brought anger from the local archaeological environment and from the avocational historians and archaeologists who worked locally. I responded to all of this with some effort at diplomacy and courtesy. I also tried to ignore a great deal of the reaction.

At one point about six years ago, the local regulators of historic preservation attempted to drive Archaeology in Annapolis out of the city with legal means and succeeded. They actually tried to silence our work and succeeded temporarily. This should never have come as a surprise, but it did.

Now, what did this teach me? Tenure in the university is essential at times like this. Knowing that you can't be fired for offending people with your message provides great security. I remember in particular the hollow statements made during the WAC1 scandals, when some actually claimed that academic freedom is meaningless. Well, it may be to some, but when accompanied by tenure, it allowed considerable protection to me in a hostile environment. I also learned that I felt great loyalty to the university which protected me when I needed it in Annapolis. Not only was my constituency here appreciative of all aspects of our outreach to the public, but the university's lawyers were immensely helpful when I needed them.

Autobiography, anger and advocacy: heritage and historical archaeology in America, Europe and beyond

In recent years you've been involved in summer study visits to Europe with students.[4] *What are your thoughts in comparing approaches to heritage in Europe with those in America?*

In general, the greatest success for historical archaeology in the United States has come through exploring the conditions of African Americans in the diaspora. This exploration is now almost 30 years old and began shortly after the move of historical archaeology from history into anthropology. Historical archaeology in the United States has been concerned with slavery on plantations and in cities for decades. The problems involved foodways, living conditions, construction techniques, income, attempts at freedom, and many other areas. Substantial progress has been made in defining parts of the many African cultures that were shanghaied during the diaspora and that survived in the New World. Good scholars now write about diasporic conditions, creole cultures, syncretistic traditions, and hybridity. Although historical archaeology is only a tentative part of African American studies now in the United States, its contributions are real even though archaeological uses of appropriate theories are not yet robust.

African American historical archaeology is recognized now by many middle-class African Americans, as well as many poorer African-Americans who have middle-class aspirations, as a legitimate way for people to build, negotiate, claim, and proclaim a different heritage for themselves in North America, regardless of whether it is called African or creole.

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This kind of archaeology expands scholarly understanding and frequently enters community work, but founders when approaching advocacy. There is both a substantial reluctance on the part of archaeologists to be advocates for another culture, and a noticeable absence of theories that can be invoked to rationalize such a step. In other words, there is no theory of power inside this part of archaeology which would allow the most knowledgeable scholars, or those most inclined to act, to justify or rationalize their desire. There is an absence of understanding about theories of consciousness that would aid this growing dilemma.

And how does this situation in North America compare with historical archaeology and heritage across the Atlantic?

For five years I have run, mostly successfully, a three-week course in Belgium and northern France devoted to the archaeological basis for the uses of heritage in tourism and museum settings. The course was initially conceptualized by the Ename Center for Heritage Studies which is sponsored by the government of East Flanders in Belgium, now successfully directed by Neil A. Silberman. The course is devoted to seeing how heritage sites are made and dressed for public use. The course includes the memorials, museums, battlefields, and cemeteries of World War I around Ypres. The course also includes a visit to the D-Day beaches in Normandy, the American Cemetery just above the beaches, and the Peace Museum at Caen. There is some archaeology associated with all of these sites of commemoration. There is also an enormous amount of archaeology associated with tourist settings like Bruges and other period sites.

Because my American students live in the towns and cities we visit, it is apparent to all of us that the Europeans we are with in Belgium and northern France feel completely integrated into the settings that might be considered archaeological. Belgians feel that they own the remains of World War I. The French obviously feel they own the physical remains of World War II. The archaeology is entirely theirs. This is different from the removal felt by most Americans when they see North American historical archaeology from Jamestown or Williamsburg. It might be about Americans, but it isn't of Americans. It doesn't make us understand our history any better. The reason for this is not clear and it is not yet intellectualized either. The point here is that historical archaeology in the United States and in Europe, including Britain, has an untheorized relationship with today.

The second course I am involved with meets in southern Italy in January. It begins in Ascea and travels north to Paestum, Pompeii, Naples, Rome, and Florence. The ruins around Naples are connected by an above-ground commuter train called the *Circumvesuviana*. When you visit these famous sites in the morning you are with schoolkids on the train going to school, in the evening with commuting workers, on the weekend with housewives doing their shopping. I got the impression that these ruins, which their neighbourhoods surround completely, are largely irrelevant. I never got this feeling in Rome or Florence, but there the ruins are physically isolated and it was hard to notice whether or not everyday Italians thought much about tourist attractions. In southern Italy it is quite clear that the ruins are

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irrelevant. They are not disregarded or vandalized, but they are not visited or understood either. It is as though everyone in and around Naples has forgotten what Vesuvius once did, and that it could recur at any time. While I cannot explain this sense of irrelevance, I did notice it.

There are examples here of both the perceived irrelevance of the past and of pasts which have some significant form of meaning in the present. How do we move forward in understanding these connections, or lack thereof?
The casual observations about Belgium, Normandy, and Italy are entirely informal. However, they serve to remind me that in order to have archaeological remains connected to living populations, there has to be an intellectually viable message. Because historical archaeology is not comparative and because it largely disregards scientific methods, it is very hard to figure out how our field can unify explorations of the past with issues in the present. We have an increasingly widespread use of and popular appreciation for historical archaeology, but a weak rationale to explain the connection, and virtually no rationale for pursuing an extension of the use of our field. For example, we are dependent upon the invocation of popular demands, or the haphazard connection to the powerless or to the disappeareds of history, to justify historical archaeology in any location. We have a long way to go to connect worthwhile sets of events like the three rationales above with powerful enough scientific theories to make serious discoveries about capitalism, colonialism, modern nation-building, or any other generalizing idea that might lead to more powerful conclusions.

When we characterize our current condition accurately from an intellectual point of view, I believe we have an important place from which to depart into a successful future. This characterization involves seeing that our liveliest work is an analysis of power in heritage management (Anderson 1996; Friedman 1992; Casteneda 1996) that can be joined to autobiographical creations of heritage for individual historical archaeologists (Schrire 1995).

Could you expand on this, on the analysis of power in heritage management and on autobiography?
In order to characterize our present status, I begin with Quetzil Castaneda's *In the museum of Maya culture* (1996). His is an appropriately articulated presentation of a place for archaeology, including historical archaeology, from which we can view the positive and negative consequences of our work. On the surface, Castaneda's volume is a contextual analysis of the results of an unreflective century of archaeology in the Maya area of Yucatan. On closer examination, he presents an important look at how archaeological and anthropological explorations shape the view of themselves for the people among whom we work. Castaneda's strength is not an indictment of anthropological achievements, but rather a vivid description of our impact and the unfortunate changes that we can effect. It takes little imagination to see how a model can be built for historical archaeology's future work by turning Castaneda's description into an archaeological opportunity. I have attempted to do this in a new prologue to the reprinting of my own and Parker Potter's *The recovery of meaning* (2003).

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The second location for our intellectual advance is provided by Carmel Schrire's *Digging through darkness* (1995). On the surface this is a unique autobiographical enterprise. At a deeper level this book is a penetrating model for how archaeological problems and solutions are found by any practitioner. Any archaeologist leads a life like the one described for herself by Carmel Schrire. Most of us, however, are unused to using aspects of our own lives at a conscious level to articulate problems and potential answers within the scientific field.

The third place to stand is that most clearly articulated by Jonathan Friedman in 'The past in the future. History and the politics of identity' (1992). In this well-known piece Friedman insists on the contemporary creation of pasts and always sees the positive and negative impact on peoples who are colonized either by having their identity destroyed or warped, or by post-colonials who are reversing the process but not necessarily freeing themselves from it. Like Castaneda, Friedman sees the historical process as a colonizing one, and like Castaneda, he uses the term 'mirroring'.

The strength of all three positions comes from a willingness to see the process of creating pasts not as an open-ended set of reflections from professionals and seekers in the present, but rather as one that has temporal and spatial positions for those who tell stories about themselves, and about others. In other words, historical speaking is a process of establishing power and taking it away. It is this process that is a matter of life and death for Jonathan Friedman. It is one in which historical archaeologists are beginning to be better grounded.

If I were part of the process by which historical archaeology generates a future for people in colonial circumstances, or freeing themselves from colonial masters, and of professionals attempting to create knowledge of where they or we stand, I would work these three well-articulated positions with and for each other.

And how might one do this?

An archaeologist can begin by asking where his or her questions come from. One can also begin by asking what the modern conditions are for those among whom one works as an archaeologist. One also asks, where is the archaeology that can be done? These are three questions to be used simultaneously. The questions depend on three assumptions: one always works in a community; most communities have archaeology; and a human being has opinions, motivations, and emotions. All of these operate on each other all the time. The three authors I just cited – Castaneda, Schrire, and Friedman – provide sophistication in entering all three areas. An archaeologist enters all three automatically, even though clarity may take months or years to achieve on what a community thinks, where its archaeology is, and how one is motivated by or about what one does.

Archaeology in Annapolis is beginning to explore excavation, archival work, and oral history in an African American suburb of Annapolis called Parole. The original Parole was a Union prisoner-of-war camp for up to 30,000 Confederate soldiers. At the time of the Civil War the camp was served by African Americans living locally. They became permanent residents

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and now are almost exclusively the descendent community who are the residents of modern Parole. Parole's community leaders want, even command, archaeology for the community. Several community leaders have invited the university's project in, have begun to locate appropriate places to excavate, and have offered the services of the most prominent local AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church to be the headquarters of the project. The community members so far involved want to know where Parole was and how old it is. It turns out that the community has shifted locations and that its borders or boundaries are not clear. They want to know when and they want to know where they were, and therefore they want to know who they are. More to the point, they want control over these definitions and they want to use archaeology and oral history to create the kind of precision that preservationists in white Annapolis have used for 50 years in defining their identity and thus their property values, the shapes of their buildings, the rate of change to these, and the values composing their prestige.

Using Jonathan Friedman, the community wants to control the space and time of its mirrors, and who holds them. Using Schrire, I could see that I am pleased that archaeology has value that is expressed locally. Using Castaneda, all parties must watch the play of data against hopes and vice versa so that the process of an emerging past is seen as one that defines value, and is thus one that involves power and its shifting locales.

This example serves to show how the elements of a position can come into play as a community and a group of archaeologists talk with each other through archaeology. Although the details are not worked out and may contain philosophical flaws, these are three very good theoretically sound sources to return to time and again to think through the shifting positions we take and are taken to. Thus historical archaeologists have an emerging body of sound theory written for us to rely on. I recommend that American and British historical archaeologists, as well as those in other countries, rely on these ideas as they work through how we are linked through science, practice, and problems.

Your mention of autobiography and of motivations and emotions reminds me of your paper 'Walter Taylor as model' (Leone 2003) – that was about how anger can play a productive, guiding role in our work, right?

R.G. Collingwood's autobiography is my inspiration and guide for describing how one decides to intervene in scholarly debates. I use this to build upon Schrire. Collingwood argues that it is important for a scholar and scientist to know and reveal why he or she decided to take up a question. It is in this sense that I refer to autobiography. I have intervened in debates regarding the use of American history in outdoor history museums because I was annoyed and disappointed at how little impact scholarly work, particularly archaeology, had on what Americans were taught at Colonial Williamsburg, the country's premier outdoor history museum. I was annoyed and even angry at the persistent presentation of formal landscapes in Annapolis as flat, as maps, and as baroque, when virtually everything baroque is about illusions, power, and perspective. For this set of relationships I took on the presentation of the past to the public in Annapolis, and also attempted to correct the image of

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the city so that people understood that it was built as a volume using the rules of perspective to create illusions.

Much of American society is built on the illusion of democratic participation. This illusion is not confronted by outdoor history museums or by historical archaeology, and the absence of such a confrontation bothered me a great deal. The rhetoric of American democracy is not addressed by the scholars who see their role as guaranteeing the accuracy of these American institutions, including historical archaeology. Rather, it is the surface that appears to be believed in. I have not found the surface believable and the gap between democratic rationales and the reality of political and economic exclusion in the United States made me angry because I began to feel that our work misguided others and, as a result, also became dull. We do not pierce the rhetoric that is the face of American society now, especially with a political administration given to exerting excessive authority, to spying, and to new forms of surveillance. I bring this set of motivations to the table because they are mine. I am not asking others to share them. I am revealing them as part of a strategy for creating research within historical archaeology. Once one knows one's motivations and the emotional reactions behind them, one can adopt or formulate hypotheses which, when adjusted to the reality of data, can be used to advocate a different view of American society.

Collingwood's aim was to show that his work was about preserving democratic purposes within parliamentary government. For that reason he wanted to show that there were political motivations behind his work, as well as substantial political naivety behind the work of his opponents who accidentally supported totalitarianism. My own work attempts to weld politics, alternative understandings of the past, and sound archaeological methods. My hope is to combine these in such a way that democratic participation is enhanced but without so much relativism as to empower abuses of the past that harm subject peoples.

How does one achieve such a democratic situation in archaeology? Earlier you observed a general lack of advocacy in historical archaeology, and you also discussed Parole, and this perhaps brings us back to my earlier question about working with communities in Annapolis and about how much a sustained commitment matters. Perhaps there is something specific about Archaeology in Annapolis that has allowed an advocatory role to emerge on the initiative of the community itself. Is the key thing here trust?

Many communities around the world have claimed the archaeological process as their own because they have seen either its destructive side, described well by Castaneda and Friedman, or because they have seen its capacity to support nationalist consciousness, described by Anderson, as well as Friedman. People in Annapolis had been concerned with archaeology long before I and my students began working there in 1981. It was a practical event long before it was a university-sponsored operation with academic overtones. Familiarity with its products probably generated expectations of what could be produced and who would control the results. Certainly long and continuing public discussions and public funding of archaeology have generated a discourse, most of which has been friendly, but some of which has been intensely antagonistic. The antagonisms have been between people

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of European descent, not with African Americans. I would prefer not to include words like trust in my description. It isn't that I don't know how to define it; it's that it should be called by some other name better defined by Habermas's work on open discourse. Open speech environments create a level playing field by requiring equal opportunities for speaking, clear rules of engagement, no unintelligible speech, and no predetermined hierarchy. This does not mean throwing professionalism away. It also doesn't mean throwing science away.

We've been focusing here on autobiography and on specific communities, but you also mentioned that you favour a historical archaeology which is comparative in global terms and in terms of themes like capitalism and so on. And, for you, this is clearly not just an intellectual issue, but one of the ability of archaeology to engage in the politics of the present day. How do you react, then, to recent critiques of grand narratives in historical archaeology, suggesting that they privilege the dominant classes, mask diversity, 'flatten out' interpretation and compromise the post-colonial project by refusing to focus on truly local histories (as summarized by, e.g., Gilchrist 2005)? Where do global process, autobiography and community meet?

In citing Castaneda, Schrire, Friedman, and Anderson I have tried to signal how I would design a global historical archaeology. I would make it somewhat autobiographical, in the way Schrire takes her questions from her background. I would tie it to the creation of monuments of the past of emerging colonial elites, as suggested by Benedict Anderson. I would tie it to suppressed peoples by using Friedman to understand that it is important to know how a people came to be marginalized the way they currently are. Then, having combined all of these, I think it is possible to see that each is writing about colonialism and the larger process of submerging peoples around the world in a class structure. The purpose of doing historical archaeology would then come out of an individual archaeologist finding what he and she finds compelling and entering a conversation with a community about how that community was made and wants to remake its identity. None of this involves old-fashioned grand narratives or flattened interpretations. Nor does this privilege local histories at the expense of generalizing understandings of the colonial world. Rather, the larger process is the establishment of an enhancement of the democratic process through conscious understanding of how people came to be in the position in which they find themselves now.

Appendix. Extracts from Resolution No. R-19–05 of the City Council of Annapolis (first read 16 June 2005)

Recognition of the Archaeology in Annapolis Project and its Director, Professor Mark P. Leone

For the purpose of recognizing Professor Mark P. Leone, his leadership as Director of the Archaeology in Annapolis project, the contributions of the University of Maryland to the project, and the many archaeologists who have helped to make the Archaeology in Annapolis project successful.

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Whereas, the work of Archaeology in Annapolis has been done in close collaboration with many members of the Annapolis African American community, and

Whereas, over 330 undergraduate archaeologists have been trained in Annapolis through the University of Maryland's field school since 1982, and

Whereas, eight Ph.D. dissertations have been written, and seven books have been published as a result of the work of the members of Archaeology in Annapolis, and

Whereas, many of these books and accompanying scientific articles have altered the public and professional perception of African American history in our City by using the field of anthropology, and

Whereas, these efforts of historical archaeology in Annapolis have provided a new way of seeing that Annapolis has a dense, extensive, and often hidden African American past in many of its great houses and elsewhere, and

Whereas, these efforts have expanded the positive visibility of the City and its potential as a destination place for heritage tourism, and

Whereas, there is a strong desire to teach young African Americans the archaeology that reveals their past, and the often secretly held history of Annapolis, and

Whereas, the work has created hands-on destination experiences for young African Americans and other students using the new perceptions of African American life provided by anthropology, and

Whereas, Mark Leone has achieved national and international recognition resulting from his innovative anthropological work in African American Annapolis, which in turn has expanded the positive visibility of Annapolis in the international scholarly community.

Now therefore be it resolved by the Annapolis City Council that the City . . . expresses its appreciation to the University of Maryland's President, to the University's Department of Anthropology, to the many archaeologists who are or have been a part of the Archaeology in Annapolis project, and especially to Project Director, Professor Mark P. Leone.

And be it further resolved by the Annapolis City Council that the City of Annapolis encourages the ongoing commitment of the University's archaeologists to continue their work throughout the City of Annapolis.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

[1] Mark Leone's CV can be found at http://www.bsos.umd.edu/anth/faculty/mleone/MLVita.htm (last visited 26 February 2006).

[2] http://www.bsos.umd.edu/anth – under 'Field schools and research programs' (last visited 26 February 2006).

[3] http://anacostia.si.edu/Online_Academy/Academy/academy.htm (last visited 26 February 2006) – if you have trouble with the link, please visit http://anacostia.si.edu, select the

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Online Academy, enter the Online Academy, and then select the Scholars tab. The video link will appear at the bottom of the screen.

[4] http://www.bsos.umd.edu/anth/CoursePages/Leone_0505_448E.html (last visited 26 February 2006).

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