The Field Crew Symposium

A Model for Initial Implementation of a Collaborative Archaeology Project

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Community archaeology—a form of public archaeology that intends to actively engage a specific and often descendant community—has gained momentum in recent years, as archaeologists have convincingly argued for its necessity based on both ethical and epistemic grounds (Atalay 2012). In the words of George Nicholas (1997:85), archaeology must be done "with, for, and by" Indigenous peoples. As Sonya Atalay (2006:284) argues, our research must be "in sync with and contribute to the goals, aims, hopes, and curiosities of the communities whose past and heritage are under study, using methods and practices that are harmonious with their own worldviews, traditional knowledges, and lifeways." Collaborative archaeology projects actively engage local residents, often but not necessarily descendants of the people being studied, in the

ABSTRACT

In recent years, scholars have convincingly argued, on both ethical and epistemic grounds, for the need for archaeological research "with, for, and by" descendant communities. Realizing such collaborative projects, however, is often challenging, and the prospect of beginning such an endeavor intimidating. This article shares a successful methodology implemented in the Xaltocan Archaeological Project (PAX) carried out in 2009–2011 in Mexico. This format—field crew-centered education in the context of excavations, culminating in a public symposium by all team members disseminating preliminary findings—is a simple, manageable way to begin engaging descendants. In addition to describing the symposium format, I discuss how I mitigated two major challenges to its implementation: (1) incentive or compensation (and, thereby, funding) and (2) community members' critical assessments of their own relevant knowledge. I reflect on the impact of the symposium on subsequent collaborative efforts, and I contemplate institutional obstacles that remain for scholars attempting to decolonize archaeological research in Mexico. Finally, I consider how the symposium format could be implemented in other research contexts.

Últimamente, los académicos han argumentado de una manera convincente sobre la necesidad de investigaciones arqueológicas "con, para, y por" las comunidades descendientes con justificaciones éticas y epistémicas. Realizar estos proyectos colaborativos, sin embargo, es difícil y la posibilidad de iniciar tal empeño es un reto formidable. Este artículo comparte una metodología exitosa que fue implementada en el Proyecto Arqueológico Xaltocan (PAX) llevado a cabo en 2009–2011 en México. Este método—educación del equipo de campo en el contexto de las excavaciones, culminando en un simposio al público por parte de todos los miembros del equipo para diseminar los resultados preliminares—es una manera fácil y razonable para empezar a involucrar a los descendientes. Además de describir el método del simposio, relato como mitigué dos retos grandes en su implementación: (1) incentivo o compensación (y por lo tanto, patrocinio) y (2) las evaluaciones negativas de los miembros de la comunidad de su propio conocimiento relevante. Reflexiono sobre el impacto del simposio en el éxito de esfuerzos colaborativos posteriores y contemplo los obstáculos institucionales que quedan para los académicos que quieren decolonizar las investigaciones arqueológicas en México. Finalmente, considero como se podría implementar el método del simposio en otros contextos de investigación.

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production of archaeological knowledge and attempt to return to them some of the control over and benefits of the process of archaeological research. While collaborative research in anthropology may seem straightforward, it necessarily entails a "wide range of complicated connections and involvements that require deep attention to issues of power, ethics, knowledge production, representation, application, and a host of other things," as Eric Lassiter and Samuel Cook (2010:vii) explain. Moreover, the implementation of such efforts varies immensely from context to context, and there is no single "winning formula." Nonetheless, the sharing of project ideas, challenges faced, solutions crafted, and even "failures" despite best intentions (e.g., Rodríguez 2006) can be useful to those scholars planning their own collaborative archaeology endeavors. In that spirit, I share here a case study of a successful methodology that was implemented in the Xaltocan Archaeological Project (PAX) carried out in 2009–2011 in Mexico. This format—crew-based engagement, beginning with education and culminating in a public symposium to disseminate the crew's own interpretations of the field season findings—was but a first step toward collaborative research with the descendant community. It is a simple, manageable way to begin engaging stakeholders and a method that could be adapted for many archaeological research contexts.

COLLABORATIVE ARCHAEOLOGIES: MORAL AND EPISTEMIC GROUNDS

In the United States, collaborative approaches in archaeology emerged largely out of shifts in the relationship between European and Native Americans and the rise of Native American activism. Randall McGuire (1992) details the history of this relationship, beginning with the colonial Othering and marginalization of First Americans, including the development of colonialist practices of archaeology. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the growth of struggles for Native American self-determination and challenges to archaeologists' control over Indigenous North American pasts (e.g., Deloria 1969). McGuire (1992:827) historicizes such movements, pointing out that Indian activism on issues such as "reburial, repatriation, and control of Indian pasts" reflected longstanding concerns of many Native Americans. The growth of such activism was spurred in part by particular political-economic circumstances, specifically the urban Indian ghettos created by the government in the 1950s. Indian self-awareness and reclaiming of control of Indian pasts resulted in the passage of a number of acts, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), ratified in 1990. NAGPRA mandates the protection of all Native American human remains and associated funerary and sacred objects and requires that material being curated by facilities receiving federal funding be repatriated to a culturally affiliated tribe, if such a request is made.

This legislation dramatically altered the nature of relationships between Native Americans and archaeologists and other scholars, both signaling and setting in motion the decolonization of archaeological practice (Atalay 2006). NAGPRA initially shocked archaeologists and led some to decry the end of North American archaeology. Such fears have not been realized, however, and an entire generation of scholars has now been trained in an academic atmosphere in which, by law, archaeologists are accountable to Indigenous groups (Lippert 2008). Moreover, as Alison Wylie suggested in the 2008 Archeology Division lecture at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting, out of this social and academic context developed a set of inclusive approaches, such as community or collaborative archaeology. Wylie (2008) calls this paradigm shift the "New Archaeology of the (early) twenty-first century." As Atalay (2008, 2012:30) and others (Dowdall and Parrish 2003) argue, this paradigm shift was also driven by internal forces within the discipline, namely postprocessual discourses on reflexivity and multivocality and a growing focus on archaeological ethics and public outreach.

These "New Archaeologists of the twenty-first century" criticized the process of colonization, in which Western scholars were afforded the power to study the past of the "Other," interpreting those pasts using a distinct worldview and epistemology and profiting from such studies through career advancement and the sale and teaching of these pasts to Western audiences (Atalay 2006; Hamilakis and Duke 2007). Using a moral justification, these activist archaeologists sought to decolonize archaeology by engaging in reciprocity and returning control over archaeological research and its profits (material, social, intellectual, and otherwise) to descendant communities (see Smith 1999 for literature on decolonization). No longer could archaeologists profit from the study of another culture's past without any of those benefits going to members of that culture (Moser et al. 2002:221). Collaborative archaeology projects attempt to actively involve local people (including descendants and other stakeholders) as collaborators who help to establish research goals, methods, and products of archaeological research. Such projects are growing in number; several of these initiatives have been outlined in recent volumes (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008a; Dongoske et al. 2000; Marshall 2002; Silliman 2008; Stottman 2010; Swidler et al. 1997). Community archaeology projects were first established and have been most fully developed within North America, particularly in Native American and African-American contexts (Adams 1984; Ferguson 1984; Leone et al. 1987). However, recent years have seen the rise of such projects all over the world, including, for example, in Oceania (Byrne 2012; Clarke 2002; Greer 2010; Greer et al.

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2002; Lilley 2000; Smith and Jackson 2006, 2008), Africa (Meskell 2005; Meskell and Masaku Van Damme 2007; Moser et al. 2002; Ouzman 2005), and Mesoamerica (Ardren 2002; Geurds 2007; Hutson et al. 2014; Maldonado 2011; Rodríguez 2006).

Wylie (2008) contends that such collaborative archaeology efforts are justified not only on moral but also epistemic grounds. Wylie (2008:9) cites a longstanding liberal argument that the inclusion of more diverse perspectives and ideas in scientific inquiry is more likely to reveal errors and biases and result in a fuller understanding of the topic. She elaborates on this argument using standpoint theory, which, simply put, holds that all knowledge is situated: our experiences and understandings of the world around us are conditioned by our social, structural positions (Wylie 2003). The same structural conditions that shape our knowledge also constitute our status as knowers, giving us, as Western archaeologists, cultural capital and privileged epistemic positions (Wylie 2008:11). As Wylie (2008:11) argues, out of these systems emerge the two forms of epistemic injustice or misrecognition that have been detailed by Miranda Fricker (2007). First, relevant knowledge of socially marginalized individuals goes unrecognized, even when it is intelligible as such within dominant norms of knowledge production. Second, dominant knowers may not be able to understand the distinctive forms of knowledge of socially marginalized groups because of the large differences between them. Remedying the first form of epistemic misrecognition is fairly straightforward, and the project detailed in this article worked towards that goal. The second issue is more challenging, necessitating more involved structural shifts, and was beyond the scope of this project, though it is something that Wylie suggests is possible. She cautions, however, against merely inverting the system and blindly ascribing epistemic privilege to socially marginalized groups. These challenges notwithstanding, Wylie suggests that archaeologists may (and should) look for distinct forms of situated knowledge held by descendant and other stakeholder communities, assessing such expertise on a case-by-case basis. Wylie (2008:13) warns,

> If well functioning epistemic communities are to counteract the risks of insularity—of epistemic blindness and social entrenchment, to use Solomon's terms (2008)—they must seek out critical, collaborative engagement with those communities that are most likely to have the resources, not only to fill lacunae and correct specific errors in their substantive beliefs, but to generate a critical standpoint on their own knowledge making and ratifying practices.

While community archaeology approaches have gained favor in recent years, their positive evaluation is not universal. In a somewhat extreme viewpoint, Marina La Salle (2010), for example, argues that collaborative projects serve only to make people more comfortable in continuing an exploitative practice, wherein Westerners benefit from the "Other," a concern also echoed by Wylie (2008). La Salle (2010) maintains that the only way to eliminate such exploitation is to promote self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous communities, and for research (and indeed conversations about whether or not to carry out investigations) to be directed by descendant communities. Those communities could then contract archaeologists to carry out their research. In another direction, Dawdy (2009:132) asserts that public and community archaeologies "are ultimately more self-serving than helpful, and may even be dangerous." She argues that, rather than focusing on tradition and heritage, which are often the foci of community archaeology research, archaeologists should investigate future-oriented problems such as climate change and hunger. Simultaneously, however, she contends that we might assist local communities in the development of archaeological tourism, indicating that there are some points of convergence of opinion.

COLLABORATIVE ARCHAEOLOGIES IN PRACTICE

Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (2008b) suggest that, rather than representing a uniform concept, collaborative archaeologies are best described as a range of strategies that can be placed on a continuum, from a baseline of simply communicating archaeological findings to communities to a "genuine synergy" in which all parties make significant contributions. This continuum is value-laden or hierarchical, with the implication that archaeologists should attempt to move toward fuller collaboration and, thereby, a "more accurate, inclusive, and ethically sound practice" (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008b:1–2). Other scholars have advocated similar objectives. Yellowhorn (2000a, b), for example, argues that minimal reciprocity efforts, such as the employment of local community members as field labor or support staff, are insufficient because such practices often actually prevent stakeholders from occupying more substantive roles in projects. Instead, we must move to capacity-building practices that include training in the full range of archaeological skills, as well as meaningful employment in projects that improve the descendant community, the latter potentially involving community-based heritage programs and archaeotourism. This article proposes a method for taking a small step along this continuum toward fuller collaboration and substantive training.

Archaeologists have also suggested that community reciprocity efforts take a myriad of forms, since each context necessitates a different strategy. There is a general consensus, however, that successful collaborations are built only in the context of a long-term commitment to the community. Scholars also concur that implementation is extremely challenging, particularly in the realm of the funding of such projects (Simpson and Williams 2008). In addition, community archaeologists are largely charting new terrain, and as Simpson and Williams (2008) argue, such programs have yet to be systematically evaluated. Many publications offer "best practices" and detail lessons learned and challenges faced.

Some publications also provide examples of failed community archaeology projects, such as Timoteo Rodríguez's (2006) ethnographic case study on contested notions of space at the Maya site of Kochol. At Kochol, communicative breakdowns and conflict erupted when archaeologists proposed building a community museum in the site center. The archaeologists had conceived of the project as a way to involve community members in the production of archaeological knowledge (Ardren 2002:390) and as a means for the community to profit from archaeological work through tourism-related employment, such as guided site tours and the selling of souvenirs (Rodríguez 2006:164). Many local residents, on the other hand, viewed museum construction

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as the loss of valuable farmland, and the ensuing discussions resulted in the community terminating permission to conduct archaeological research at all. The Kochol case offers useful insight into the potential pitfalls of community archaeology efforts and echoes McGuire's (1994:181) statement that the real challenge in doing the right thing (in consulting with and engaging the people whose past we study) is knowing what the right thing is. As Nicholas and Andrews (1997:9) further remark, we must learn this together. These experiences were taken into account when planning descendant engagement at the central Mexican site of Xaltocan, and I began the collaborative project by first asking residents what archaeology could do for them.

HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT XALTOCAN

Archaeological research at Xaltocan was initiated by Elizabeth Brumfiel and has been modestly collaborative from its inception through the hiring of locals as laborers and the dissemination of findings to residents. Brumfiel began work in 1987 at Xaltocan, which had been continuously occupied since approximately 900 A.D., despite two imperial conquests, first by the Aztecs and later by the Spanish, when Hernán Cortés reportedly burned the town. Xaltocan's residents persevered and even thrived in the colonial economy, exploiting lake resources such as salt, reeds, and fish in the production of goods for market sale (Roush 2005). However, many modern occupants suffered losses to their livelihoods after 1945, when Lake Xaltocan was drained to provide drinking water for Mexico City, although some residents today continue to cook and sell fish tamales and other traditional foods after buying the lacustrine products in the market (Roush 2005). Because occupation has been uninterrupted for over a millennium and because, until the mid-twentieth century, occupation was limited spatially to the confines of the island, the modern town lies directly on top of the archaeological site. Modern residents thus dwell on top of the remains of the past, and residents interact with such vestiges during their daily lives, although, until recently, their knowledge of the site's past was very limited. Artifacts do draw the attention of inhabitants, however, and most households have small collections of figurines, spindle whorls, and other artifacts that have been found on the ground surface or while excavating to build houses and other domestic structures. Because of the continuous nature of occupation, the physical engagement of modern residents with the material remains of the past, and the long history of archaeological research at the site, contemporary inhabitants self-identify as descendants of the site's prehispanic population. This context eliminates one of the common complicating factors for archaeologists wishing to implement community archaeology—asking the question "what community?" (Tully 2007; Pyburn 2011)—since a single population is closely tied to the site's past.

The lengthy occupation also attracted the attention of archaeologists, who were drawn to the site for its potential to elucidate numerous social, political, and economic transitions in the Postclassic and Colonial periods. Brumfiel (2005) initiated work at the site with an intensive survey and test pitting program; nearly 25 years of research by Brumfiel (Brumfiel 1991, 1994, 1997; Brumfiel and Hodge 1996; Nichols et al. 2002) and her collaborators and students Enrique Rodríguez-Alegría (2008, 2010; Rodríguez-Alegría et al. 2013), Christopher Morehart (2010, 2012; Morehart and Eisenberg 2009), Kristin DeLucia (2010, 2011, 2013), John Millhauser (2005; Millhauser et al. 2011), and the author (Brumfiel and Overholtzer 2009; Overholtzer 2013; Overholtzer and Stoner 2011) have illuminated shifts in the household, ritual, and agricultural landscapes over time.

Brumfiel and her collaborators and students hired community members in order to carry out survey and excavations, and they implemented traditional outreach programs, including lecture series, museum exhibits, and site tours for schoolchildren (Brumfiel 2000). Those efforts resulted in a surge in Indigenous pride and valuation of prehispanic history. This pride has also been bolstered by educational outreach programs of the federal government offered at the local cultural center (*Casa de Cultura*), including classes in Nahuatl, folkloric dancing, and art. Attached to the local cultural center is a small community museum, where artifacts from excavations are registered with the Mexican National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and exhibited. Residents created the Historical Association of the Great Kingdom of Xaltocan (*Gran Señorío de Xaltocan*), a group that organizes cultural events in the town, such as the annual International Oratory Contest and the Prehispanic Gastronomic Fair, a combined event that draws participants from countries across Latin America. They have recently installed two statues commemorating Xaltocan's history, which serve as reminders of the town's rich history and cultural heritage. The most recent one, which stands in the center of the town plaza next to the sixteenth -century church, is in the form of the Aztec sun disk or calendar stone, with changes made to the icons to reflect Xaltocan-specific history (Figure 1; see also Morehart 2012). This favorable context—in which many residents are aware of and feel positively about their past—is the one in which the 2009–2011 Xaltocan Archaeological Project was carried out.

2009–2011 XALTOCAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

The 2009–2011 Xaltocan Archaeological Project was designed to examine the Aztec imperial transition using a bottom-up perspective and through detailed contextual analysis at the microscale. This approach begins with the assumption that all people, regardless of social standing, have agency and the ability to make significant choices that can alter the structure of macro-level processes. This theoretical approach distinguishes this research on Central Mexico from that of many scholars, who employ a model of unidirectional agency in which it is presumed that commoner action is constrained by elite imperial practices (and not the reverse) and that changes in the practices of ordinary people should be viewed as the repercussions of elite actions. The bottom-up perspective of the research meshed extremely well with the bottom-up approach of collaborative archaeology. The project was thus bottom-up in both theory and practice; the investigation focused on ordinary people not represented in historical records in order to make their voices heard, and descendants were engaged in order to establish a politically and socially reflexive mode of archaeology.

In attempting to make archaeological work at Xaltocan more fully collaborative, I began by actively engaging my hired crewmembers, who were members of the local community. While this decision meant that collaboration would be limited to a small

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FIGURE 1. Sculpture erected in Xaltocan's town square by the local historical association.

segment of the descendant population, it greatly facilitated our efforts, since the group that would participate was already assembled and manageable in size. I began with a discussion of priorities to find out what was most important to the descendant community in terms of cultural heritage, local history, and archaeological work. Their answer had two parts. First, they were concerned about the limited nature of local detailed knowledge of the past and of the archaeological research process, even after 25 years of research at the site. They were ashamed that outsiders knew more about their local history than they did. They expressed frustration that archaeologists could pick up a potsherd from the surface and see history and meaning, when they could not. They were aware that such material culture was the physical legacy of that past, but they did not know the specifics of that history, nor could they interpret artifacts. Not all residents had firsthand experience with archaeological fieldwork, and those who did have experience did not understand the entire research process and the role of fieldwork within that process. Even those with 20 years of excavation experience did not know the basic ceramic type sequence. Second, while residents felt that the community was very proud of Xaltocan's history (even if detailed knowledge was admittedly lacking), they thought that knowledge of that history was even more lacking at the broader regional and national levels. Residents knew that, in the prehispanic period, Xaltocan was an important place, as the Otomí capital, and they felt that such fame was overshadowed by their marginal economic status as an Indigenous community in the modern world. Members of the descendant community thus shared a common goal of wide dissemination of knowledge of Xaltocan's past and the site's importance in the prehispanic period. Based on these two priorities, I decided to involve community members more fully in the interpretation and dissemination phases of the project. While community involvement from the very beginning—in project design, for example—is preferable and is the ideal end goal, it was not possible in this case, given project logistics. Retrospectively, I think that beginning with project design would not have been very successful, given the lack of research experience and familiarity among descendants. Engagement in the later phases was a first step and an excellent way to build capacity within the community.

SYMPOSIUM FORMAT

In order to structure the crewmembers' involvement in the interpretation and dissemination of archaeological data from the project, I decided to plan a public symposium at the end of the field season, in May 2010. For the symposium, each crewmember chose a topic of interest based, for example, on a particular archaeological material, archaeological method, or their experience of being part of an archaeological team. They then wrote a talk or presentation based on their interpretation of the topic and delivered their presentation to the community. Participation was optional but encouraged. As facilitator, I supplied background information and slide images to those participants who wanted them, and I gave feedback and encouragement

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FIGURE 2. Teaching the hired crew to draw excavation profiles.

on presentation drafts. I also coordinated the symposium and was a participant. The event was advertised through the state network of cultural centers, through word of mouth, banners and fliers, and through announcements at other cultural events, such as the Annual Oratory Contest and Gastronomic Fair held in Xaltocan in March.

To facilitate participation, the field season was run somewhat like a field school, wherein crewmembers were instructed in archaeological methods, Harris matrices and laws of stratigraphy, and in the identification of archaeological materials (Figure 2). Crewmembers learned diagnostic ceramic types and the basics of human osteology. They were taught why we take cer-



FIGURE 3. Teaching the hired crew about prehispanic and colonial codices using facsimiles.

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FIGURE 4. Crewmembers gathered around the excavation of the remains of an infant buried inside a cooking jar, in order to learn about the potential analyses that could be conducted.

tain kinds of samples and about the possible analyses that can be done on various artifact and ecofact types. They learned the basic political and economic history of Xaltocan. On a few occasions we gathered around facsimiles of codices to talk about prehispanic Central Mexican cosmology and religion (Figure 3), but, otherwise, all teaching was done in the context of excavations. Particular finds provided natural opportunities to discuss multiple topics; a burial, for example, naturally led to discussions of burial practices, beliefs about death and the afterlife, human osteology, and the various samples we took from human remains and the analyses for which they were used (e.g., ancient DNA and radiocarbon dating) (Figure 4). One crewmember, who showed interest in archaeological illustrations and a talent for drawing, was given instruction and proved to be a very talented illustrator who was then employed in the laboratory during the analysis phase (Figure 5). This individual now offers archaeological illustration services to archaeologists in Mexico. Throughout excavations, unit directors promoted informal discussion and interpretation of archaeological finds. As a result of this education and fieldwork environment, crewmembers engaged in some impressive interpretation "at trowel's edge," to use Ian Hodder's (1997) term, and many of these findings were included in the



FIGURE 5. Juan Joel Viveros Sánchez, a crewmember who was trained in archaeological illustrating.

symposium talks. Furthermore, the discussions in the excavation units also improved my own ongoing interpretation.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

In implementing this collaborative archaeology project at Xaltocan, I faced two major challenges, one anticipated and one unexpected. I foresaw one possible impediment regarding incentive and compensation. That is, as archaeology students and professors, we have significant incentives motivating our participation in archaeological research. We earn degrees, receive salaries, gain upward mobility, and earn social capital through publications. Members of the descendant community involved in our archaeological projects often earn salaries for their contribution to fieldwork, but we must carefully consider and plan the benefits of fuller participation in our projects, such as in the interpretation and dissemination of archaeological findings. Project members must be adequately compensated for their work in those phases of the project, since time spent writing or delivering a presentation is time not spent on other wage-bearing activities. The majority of Xaltocan residents engage in some kind of commerce, such as producing and selling food or other goods, or perform piecework, such as making jeans and other clothing items for which they receive a wage per item produced; effort devoted to archaeological projects necessarily takes away from time they can dedicate to those wage-earning activities. Thus, at a bare minimum, the budget for the archaeological project had to include resources devoted to salaries of team members while they wrote up and delivered results to the community. In the case of the public symposium planned for PAX, this only amounted to salaries for approximately four days, since training and most interpretation happened in the context of excavations. Discussion of the longer-term benefits also needed to be facilitated, and plans were put into action during

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FIGURE 6. Symposium announcement (translated to English).

the field season for a more permanent dissemination medium: an exhibition in the local community museum.

An unforeseen challenge lay in community members' critical assessments of their own relevant knowledge. Put simply, many residents did not feel that they had the necessary knowledge to interpret archaeological remains or to write an interpretation, and they were very nervous about the prospect of participating in the symposium. While I acknowledge that the in-field training they received could be improved and lengthened, and in the future I may consider implementing more formal lectures, I communicated to them that I strongly disagreed that they were ill prepared. I felt that they had knowledge in several areas that made them extremely well equipped to interpret everyday life in the past at Xaltocan, and in fact, on several topics, I felt that they were better prepared than I was. For example, residents have detailed knowledge of the agricultural season, including understandings of seasonality, carrying capacity of the earth, and the kinds of crops that will grow in the somewhat salty soil. They share physical understandings of the landscape around them and the regional context within which Xaltocan is located, including relative proximity to other towns, many of which have prehispanic antecedents. They possess embodied understandings of many of the activities that were central to everyday life in the prehispanic and colonial past, including the grinding of corn on the *metate* and the burning of *sacahuistle* grass for fuel for cooking fires, since wood was a scarce resource on the island. Some crewmembers have lived in adobe houses and remember their temperature-regulating characteristics and the smells, sounds, and feel of life inside them. Elders remember daily life at Xaltocan before the island was drained, and some earned their living as fishermen. While we did not have any residents older than 60 on the team, the stories of elders had been passed down to their children and were retold by crewmembers. Residents were not cognizant of the interpretive value of these kinds of information, since much of that was common or shared knowledge and was considered unremarkable. In order to emphasize the importance of that knowledge and to empower my crewmembers—and because that information was indeed valuable for my research—I conducted videotaped interviews with crewmembers on those topics.

Residents were also nervous about giving their talks in front of a large audience, since many of them had little or no experience giving speeches. Public speaking skills are highly valued in the community, however, and the town hosts an international oratory contest, so crewmembers saw the value in going beyond their comfort zones to present their results. Because the local cultural center often hosts symposia and lectures, it was a culturally appropriate and valued event at Xaltocan. In order to calm nerves and ensure a successful symposium, we held two optional practice sessions in the week prior. Confidence remained a challenge, and the issue merits further attention for future projects and field seasons, but the interviews and practice sessions did help.

THE PROJECT OUTCOME

In the end, all but two crewmembers decided to participate in the symposium, which we titled "Discovering Ancient Xaltocan: Finds and Experiences of the Archaeological Excavations of 2009–2010" (Figures 6 and 7). The 13 resulting talks ranged widely, from personal accounts of the experience of being on an archaeological team, to chronology and diagnostic ceramic

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FIGURE 7. Luis González Sánchez delivering his talk, titled "Nosotros los descendientes" ("We the descendants"). Video URL: http://soar.wichita.edu/handle/10057/11052

types, to background information on how archaeological research is done, to very specific interpretations of a kind of archaeological artifact, to political commentary on archaeology, community pride, and community activism (see Figure 7, Supplemental Video 1). I asked the crew to decide what my talk should be, and they proposed an overview of the process of designing and carrying out an archaeological project in Mexico—including research design, applying for grants and permissions, fieldwork, interpretation, and dissemination. The symposium program was as follows:

Lisa Overholtzer, "Domestic Spaces and Everyday Practices at Postclassic Xaltocan"
Luis González Sánchez, "We the Descendants"
Andrés Zamorano Sánchez, "Methods of Excavation"
Juan Carlos Zamorano Sánchez, "Ceramics in Archaeology"
Isidro Sánchez Aldana, "Aztec Black-on-Orange Ceramics"
Nidia Archundia Sánchez, "Obsidian at Xaltocan"
Juan Joel Viveros Sánchez, "Lip Plugs"
Juana Arenas Ramírez, "Copper Artifacts at Xaltocan"
Georgina Ibarra Arzave, "Postclassic Houses at Xaltocan"
José Cruz Cobos, "Aztec II Burials"
Ibeth Robles Rizo, "My Teammates"
Imelda Palmas Martínez, "My Experiences in the Excavations"
Aldo González Lobato, "Pride"

The symposium was attended by more than 75 people and was well received within the community and region. All the crew-members gave insightful talks, and the questions posed by audience members demonstrated that they were equally engaged. At the symposium we invited those attending to visit us in the laboratory in subsequent months to see archaeological analyses in action, and many people did. Overall, the symposium was a great success. In fact, after the symposium model was presented at a professional conference in Calgary in 2010, it was implemented as a community archaeology strategy by archaeologist Scott Hutson at his project at the Maya sites of Ucí and Cansahcab in Yucatán, Mexico (Hutson et al. 2014).

The next step in moving archaeology along the collaborative continuum and ensuring that archaeological research benefits the descendants of the people we study was the creation of an exhibit in the local museum that would disseminate our major findings. The symposium was a success, residents remarked, but it was not permanent. I returned in the summer of 2013 to work on this exhibit in consultation and collaboration with the descendant community, including the staff of the cultural center and museum, members of the local historical association, local elected officials, and other interested residents. I was accompanied by students and fellow faculty from Wichita State University (WSU), including the director of the museum studies program at WSU, and came with funding from the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the David and Sally Jackman Foundation, and the Lowell D. Holmes Museum of Anthropology. We arranged meetings with the aforementioned local groups to show a scale model of a proposed layout and to elicit ideas for the exhibit's main message, presentation style, and artifacts to be displayed. Many individuals returned regularly once the project was underway to offer additional suggestions. We hired a small number of residents as consultants and contractors for the project, and the local historical association mobilized residents to donate unused stone for the cause. The completed exhibit features an authentic full-scale replica of an excavated Aztec-period house, complete with burials placed under plexiglass windows in the exterior patio (Figure 8). Display cases throughout the room exhibit artifacts and educate visitors about the archaeological research process. This exhibit was placed in a room within the museum that had been constructed several years prior by the community with the intention of exhibiting artifacts but not completed due to lack of funds. We were fortunate in having this space and the

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FIGURE 8. Figure 8. The completed replica house museum exhibit hall in Xaltocan.

support of the museum staff, who ensured that all artifacts were properly accessioned and registered with INAH. This exhibit fits within a larger local project to renovate the cultural center, build a large community center, and construct stalls within the town plaza for the sale of food and tourist items. The museum exhibit opened in September 2013 with great fanfare, a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and tours for the general public and special invited guests from the municipal and state levels of government. This exhibit now provides a permanent interface between the archaeological project and the broader community, creating continuity between field seasons.

Moving forward, efforts to intensify collaboration—and specifically to empower residents through specialized training and to give them more control over the research—will face another, more formidable challenge. INAH, the governing body that oversees archaeological research, specifically prohibits professional training outside of the National Educational System of universities, although they do allow the hiring of community members for project labor. This policy precludes many of the capacity-building education efforts championed by Yellowhorn (2000a, b). Most residents of Xaltocan, a low-income marginalized Indigenous community, do not have the financial means or cultural capital that would allow them to enter the university system, and, thus, Mexican government policy effectively maintains their marginal positions. Such restrictions create major obstacles to our encouragement of the training and development of Indigenous archaeologists at Xaltocan. Mexican archaeology continues to be nationalist in orientation, as Bruce Trigger wrote in 1984, and while archaeological work since the Mexican revolution has glorified Mexico's Indigenous past, "this policy of integrating Indian peasants into Mexican life by dignifying their past seems to have become a substitute for the far-reaching economic and social reforms that were promised by the revolution" (Trigger 1984:359). Writing more recently, Federico Navarrete (2011:43) discusses how the state's monopoly on the prehispanic past, combined with *mestizaje* (racial mixing) ideologies and Mexico's cosmopolitanism—"proven by the capacity of its elites to construct a scientific discourse, true to Western cannons, about their own past"—has paradoxically excluded Indigenous groups from participation in archaeological heritage. Like Navarrete, it is my sincere hope that postcolonial approaches will be taken up by Mexican scholars and that official policies will be put into place to facilitate the return of the control over and benefits of archaeological research to native descendants. In the meantime, as archaeologists, we can conduct such education on an informal basis in the legally safe context of paid field labor.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The collaborative archaeology project presented here does not eliminate inequalities in archaeological research. While I maintain that the descendant community benefited from its existence, I am simultaneously gaining from organizing the symposium by writing this article and by having presented an earlier version of it at an international archaeology conference. However, the symposium format as implemented at Xaltocan does make a small contribution, moving the level of descendant community participation slightly further along the continuum toward full collaboration. It is a simple first step in the engagement of Xaltocan residents in the archaeological research process.

Moving forward, there are several ways in which collaborative archaeology at Xaltocan could be improved. First, including the descendant community in the design phase of future projects would be preferable. The inclusion of team members and community leaders in interpretation and dissemination and the creation of a permanent museum exhibit at the site have facilitated this next step by increasing community knowledge

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of archaeological practice and the potential for archaeological research. In particular, some residents now better understand the kinds of research questions that can be asked and the kinds of data that can be obtained using various analytical techniques. Future projects should also expand participation or involvement to include a broader segment of the community. The logistical and practical challenges of doing so, however, will be far greater. Incentive and compensation will likely be larger issues, for example, and the project will be significantly more expensive. Finally, perhaps the most looming and exigent issue is the legal one surrounding capacity building and the training of local residents in archaeological methods and interpretation, given INAH bylaws. We might also begin to work more intensively with schoolchildren as a way to engender interest in archaeology as a potential career path, though such a strategy would require additional research into national and international resources to support their education. These challenges notwithstanding, the symposium project was an excellent first step and has laid the foundation for increased collaboration at Xaltocan.

The crewmember symposium is a successful format that could be easily implemented in a variety of contexts. It is a natural extension of any project that hires local laborers, and it is not particularly expensive, time consuming, or challenging. I attribute part of the success of the next stage of community engagement at Xaltocan—the museum project—and the ease with which we were able to get people involved, to acquire donations of stone for the replica house foundation, and to find community members with relevant expertise, e.g., in constructing reed roofs, to the first stage of the symposium. I anticipate that implementation of the symposium format at other archaeological sites would be most successful in contexts where, similar to Xaltocan, residents already have some interest in, and perhaps identification with, the past and where they are familiar with colloquia or public lectures. Alternatively, dissemination could take other forms with which residents were more comfortable or that were more highly valued: storytelling, less formal discussion of findings at community meetings, or lessons for schoolchildren, for example. Regardless, crewmembers would similarly interpret the archaeological findings and disseminate them to their own community. Moreover, the educational component in the context of a field project would be similar and equally valuable in promoting further collaboration in subsequent efforts.

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Data Availability Statement

The data on which this research is based, including video of the symposium and video and photographs of the museum exhibition, are archived at the Lowell D. Holmes Museum of Anthropology in Wichita, Kansas. To contact the museum, please visit http://holmes.anthropology.museum/.

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