

Unearthing Forgotten Values

Toward a Meaningful
Archaeological Practice

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Introduction

In August 2015, I found myself field directing a project on Digby Island in Prince Rupert Harbour in northern British Columbia. Our crew had run through the safety briefing at Seal Cove prior to boarding our helicopter transport to the field. We had to wait. One of the client senior managers wanted to talk with me and the field crew about our objectives for the next few days. He was a typical oil and gas manager: overconfident, white, and mustached. He wanted to know why the field crew couldn't sort out whether seismic testing could take place atop a 6,000-year-old ancestral Tsimshian village. He wanted permission to drive seismic spikes into the cultural shell deposits for subsurface testing of the buried sediments to assess their integrity for supporting large-scale infrastructure.

"It's a recorded site," I said. "We'll need to discuss this with the nations first. Avoidance is best."

He proceeded to explain to me how the seismic testing works, and that the disturbance would be minimal.

"Fuck sakes, you'll do more damage tramping around on it than the seismic testing."

"That's debatable," I said, "but any impact on a recorded archaeological site warrants a permit under the Heritage Conservation Act."

“Bullshit.” He then proceeded to indulge in a fifty-year-old-man snit in front of the field crew comprising local First Nations community members.¹ He screamed. He stomped. He sprayed spittle.

“It’s ancient trash!” he ranted. “But, if you find a golden pyramid jutting through the midden, then, *then* you have something to talk about.”

There it was: the golden pyramid. In an instant, the whole of Indigenous history spread out across North America was erased – their cultural identity dismissed – based on his own imaginings of what constitutes valuable, meaningful cultural heritage, as he derided local Indigenous archaeological sites as trash heaps. His limited understanding of archaeological village sites (their creation, use, and value) and indifference toward the heritage of descendant communities underscore a major chasm in contemporary cultural resource management (CRM) between “progress” and industrial development, which are the priority, and “trash heaps,” which do not matter.

This is a book about the issues besetting the practice of archaeology in the context of cultural resource management and how to begin solving these issues. CRM is an initialism, used predominantly in the United States, referring to the laws, practices, and compliance surrounding the management of archaeological sites. It is also used in Canada, along with terms such as *heritage resource management* (HRM), *commercial archaeology*, *consulting archaeology*, *contract archaeology*, and *corporate archaeology*. All of these terms mean the same thing – that is, archaeology performed as a business – and refer to assessing heritage ahead of any subsurface impacts to the ground.

CRM is, at least aspiringly, focused on protecting and conserving tangible cultural heritage. In British Columbia, this heritage is overwhelmingly Indigenous. Archaeological sites in British Columbia that predate AD 1846 are protected under the provincial Heritage Conservation Act (HCA). The year 1846 was chosen because it represents the assertion of sovereignty by the British Crown over what would become British Columbia. Simply put, according to the act, Indigenous peoples who occupied a place in 1846 hold Aboriginal Title to that place, if they can prove historical use and occupancy.² The protection of pre-1846 archaeological heritage is provided only for tangible archaeological

materials. The Crown, through the BC government, has appointed itself as the authority to oversee this protection, despite the fact that Indigenous Nations never relinquished control of their lands: they never surrendered their land through war; they never signed it away in treaties. In other words, British Columbia is largely unceded Indigenous land.³ But in this province, as in Canada as a whole, Indigenous communities – whether First Nations, Inuit, or Métis – have no legislated protection over *either* tangible or intangible cultural heritage. I maintain, along with Indigenous peoples, that sovereignty over Indigenous heritage should reside with descendant communities. Instead, the colonialist system functions to repress Indigenous sovereignty with respect to managing their heritage. As a settler archaeologist, I benefit from this repression.

THE DISCOURSE OF MANAGEMENT

Archaeologists have several main career options: teaching at a college or university; working for the government (at the provincial or federal level); working in a museum as a curator, collections manager, museum designer, educator, or technician; or working in CRM, whether at a heritage firm or a large environmental/engineering firm, or directly for First Nations. The first requires a PhD; the others often require a master's degree or, in some cases, a professional certificate in archaeology. In an era of cutbacks in public funding, archaeologists are most likely to end up working for a CRM firm or a First Nation rather than the academy or public institutions like museums.

CRM firms exist to provide professional services to landowners, developers, government agencies, and First Nations, who pay to satisfy legal requirements and have their needs addressed. The early days of commercial archaeology in British Columbia were born out of the environmental and conservation movements of the 1960s and 1970s and sought to protect or mitigate archaeological sites prior to development. This work was done largely by university professors and students trying to protect sites despite limited time and provincial budgets. As the regulations increased, along with the demand for “salvage” archaeology, the universities didn't have the capacity to do the work. Besides, what academic wants to go dig thousands of shovel tests in a farmer's field when

they can go somewhere else that is much more “interesting,” excavating a site like Charlie Lake Cave near Fort St. John, for example?

The province adopted a “proponent pays” model for CRM, and many small “ma and pa” consulting outfits established themselves to handle residential and commercial development projects in order to manage cultural heritage under the HCA (Apland 1993; Klassen et al. 2009, 205; Spurling 1986). That legislation was initially designed to protect Indigenous heritage, often referred to as a “resource.” The legislative regulations today, ostensibly created to safeguard these “resources,” serve little purpose other than to require proponents to follow certain requirements prior to development. The goal for proponents is to satisfy these legal requirements as quickly and cheaply as possible so as to be in compliance with the HCA. As the term indicates, the field of cultural resource management assumes that archaeological materials are “resources” that require “management,” much as “natural resources” (formerly known as nature) also require management. This ideological framework is bound up with the history of Western conservation ideals, which originated with concerns about the wanton consumption of nature’s bounty. The idea was that natural resources should be consumed with due attention to their regeneration or preservation for the future. Natural resources come in two types, however: renewable and non-renewable. The former can be regenerated; the latter can’t. And, within this “management” model, the rate of use of renewable resources often far outstrips their ability to regenerate.

In British Columbia, CRM began largely during the early 1980s, following the enactment of the HCA in 1977. By the mid-to-late 1990s and early 2000s, it had emerged as a “proper” business. Early on, people realized that archaeology could be a business outside of the academy.⁴ That is, money could be made by commodifying cultural heritage and framing it as a “cultural or heritage resource.” Yet “cultural resources” are non-renewable: they can either be preserved or destroyed. The question then becomes whether cultural materials are important enough to warrant preservation, and, if so, whether it will suffice to preserve only some of them – an approach known as *mitigation*. Mitigation allows for the preservation of what is often assumed to be a “representative sample”

of the whole for study to produce knowledge from an altered (read: impacted) archaeological site. This assumption is generally unwarranted, given that, in the absence of the whole against which to judge the sample, it is impossible to know whether a sample is representative. In practice, then, mitigation simply amounts to preserving a sample, typically without a clear sense of the larger archaeological context, which could be determined only by the full excavation of a particular site. Sampling archaeological sites through excavation is not unusual in academic research. It provides an opportunity to learn about a site and place while preserving the rest of the site, since such sites are not typically under immediate threat. When sites are within a development footprint, is it enough to sample a small portion while the rest is destroyed for the development-driven project?

In British Columbia, mitigation entails applying for a permit – a Section 12.4 Site Alteration Permit (SAP) – and conducting an archaeological program to excavate cultural “resources” from the site. Despite SAPs’ potential for destruction, applicants don’t necessarily have to be a “provincially recognized” archaeologist.⁵ A primary problem with site mitigations is that the process was built by settlers to help achieve settler goals, and, importantly, consent from descendant communities is not required in the HCA.⁶

Michael Klassen and his colleagues provide a rich and detailed history of the rise of CRM in British Columbia as it relates to First Nations’ proactive participation and sovereignty (Klassen et al. 2009). It’s a must-read for any consultant. As the authors explain, small firms of the 1980s and 1990s – some of which had established relationships with Indigenous communities – were eventually bought up by larger consulting firms (i.e., transnational corporations) that generally focused on architecture, design, construction, and engineering. These corporations figured it was easier and more cost-effective to house, rather than contract, a complete environmental services team that included archaeologists but also geologists, hydrologists, hydrogeologists, geochemists, biodiversity specialists, social consultants, and biologists. Prior to large development projects, regulators had to approve archaeological assessments, which, in some cases, were conducted as part of larger environmental assessments.

Corporations bet on the fact that archaeology could make them money, if their clients were required to conduct archaeological assessments prior to development and the corporation itself could offer that service as part of a package. Thus, the rise of large consulting firms, mega-projects, and what I call corporate archaeologists.⁷

The inclusion of CRM within these large-scale corporations has made for new challenges for corporate archaeologists, challenges not experienced by retired academics and CRM practitioners from the 1980s and 1990s. This new role finds archaeologists situated “in the middle,” negotiating the space between proponents (i.e., the clients who hired the archaeologists), who want approval of their project, and Indigenous communities, who typically prioritize protection and conservation. When archaeologists made the conscious transition from academia to working for a commercial venture, archaeology became incorporated into a capitalist framework, its values and goals according with those of capitalism.⁸

It costs money to extract artifacts from the ground. Indeed, every aspect of commercial archaeology cost money. From pre-field evaluations to shovel tests to recording and analysing artifacts to final reports – all these activities have a cost, which is sometimes quite substantial. Commercial archaeology has commodified tangible heritage (Burley 1994; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008a; Hamilakis 2007; Shanks and McGuire 1996; Zorzin 2015), and, for any given development project, a commercial archaeologist can charge a client for deliverable archaeological products. Relinquishing control of this process means relinquishing control of these costs. Instead, by hiring archaeological professionals themselves, corporations can ensure that they remain firmly in control of these costs. The company may make decisions to keep costs down, and may clip hours from certain areas in the budget for “efficiency.” My corporate managers used to say to me, “Does the client really need this?” “This” usually referred to any research design – and also including Indigenous communities in the research design and decision-making process – innovative methods, or informative analysis, or even taking the time to craft a narrative to tell a story about past lifeways. Typically, developers are unwilling to fund archaeological research of the sort that

university-based archaeologists conduct – that is, research in the service of knowledge accumulation or data gathering directed by Indigenous communities.⁹

CRM AND THE LIMITS OF PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION

Protective legislation, embodied, in British Columbia, in the HCA, is obviously worthwhile, but it raises the question of who should be responsible for deciding whether cultural materials are worth preserving. Presumably, the answer is the people whose cultural history these materials represent – that is, descendant communities. But, in practice, control of the archaeology (the tangible heritage) is in the hands of non-Indigenous archaeologists who, as a profession, survey, assess, record, and document the archaeology, or the potential for archaeology to exist, in an area. They then make decisions about the relative value of archaeological materials, collect the materials, and take them away for analysis (or, rather, description, which really isn't analysis) and storage. In theory, archaeologists are meant to support the interests of those whose culture is at issue. Yet, properly conducted, archaeological work is expensive, which is why it's been built into a capitalist framework in which proponents can canvass consultants for bids, with the lowest bidder typically doing the work.

Who, then, is responsible for paying for the archaeological work? One possibility is the government, or, more specifically, the people who elect that government and whose interests it serves. The assumption here is that those who live in a country should have an interest in what came before – the history, both natural and human, of the land they now occupy (though I recognize that this can be a contentious issue for settlers). And, of course, by no means do all taxpayers recognize the value of preserving evidence of past lifeways. But even when they do acknowledge the value of insight into the past, they are unlikely to be willing to provide financial support for archaeological work that is conducted not for the purpose of accumulating knowledge but rather on behalf of developers whose goal is to accumulate capital.

The other logical option for paying for archaeological assessments is to place responsibility on the developers themselves. In theory, a truly

independent archaeological assessment – one that conducts archaeology on unceded Indigenous lands with, by, and for descendant communities – would require any developer to obtain free, prior, and informed consent from the First Nations whose territories are within the project footprint. The developer would need to obtain the necessary permits from both the provincial regulatory agency (in British Columbia, the Archaeology Branch) and First Nations (if applicable). Then an archaeological team composed of professional archaeologists and representatives from the First Nations would assess, survey, test, and excavate an archaeological site (if identified) on their own timeline, with the understanding that the archaeologists and the descendant community would function autonomously from the developer: they would determine what needs to be done and would decide when the site has been adequately excavated, and the developer would be obliged to pay the bill, *whatever it may be*.

This is where CRM firms come in: a service industry has developed in association with legislated requirements, in which developers become paying customers. They hire a CRM firm to do the legwork of satisfying the law, and they expect the work to be done as quickly and cheaply as possible and to consist of the bare minimum needed to obtain a permit from the Archaeology Branch. This is the reality of state-run, bureaucratic archaeology, which is part of CRM today: to get into an area, assess it, test if need be, get out, and ship the artifacts, if any, to a museum repository (so they do not sit on the shelves in company offices). The CRM consultant helps the client get through the regulatory hoops, maximize profits, and keep analyses and reporting costs low. Just get the artifacts out of the ground and into a box. Besides, as one of my former managers told me, you can always get some graduate student to analyse the collections. The result: overconsuming and underdigesting of the archaeological record (Welch and Ferris 2014, 101).

Thus, as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, laws designed to protect archaeological heritage enable a situation in which decisions about archaeological value are made by firms that survive by keeping their customers happy, and their customers are people whose interests lie with the destruction of archaeological heritage, not with its protection. One begins to see the problem.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE SETTLER-COLONIAL STATE

In a settler-colonial country such as Canada, the problem with commodification- and profit-driven CRM has another, critically important, dimension. As in settler-colonial countries elsewhere, where settlers attempted to replace the Indigenous population (e.g., Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, countries in Africa), archaeological materials overwhelmingly represent the cultural history of Indigenous peoples, not of the settlers who now “control” the land. Moreover, most settler Canadians continue to view Indigenous people as “other.” Regardless of their attitudes toward Indigenous people, developers are most often seeking permission to destroy a cultural heritage that is not theirs, despite the fact that descendant communities exist today on the same land their ancestors lived on, often for millennia or since time immemorial.

British Columbia is one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse Indigenous regions in North America. More than thirty Indigenous languages are spoken in the province, with each language spoken by a distinct nation (Klassen et al. 2009; McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004). Prior to Confederation and into the early part of the twentieth century, Indigenous peoples in British Columbia were involuntarily organized into nearly 200 bands. Aboriginal affairs and Aboriginal rights became a federal responsibility, regulated by the Indian Act (1876). That act, however, does not cover Indigenous cultural heritage. Rather, under the British North America Act, provincial governments became responsible for lands and resources, including, eventually, Indigenous cultural heritage (Burley 1994). In British Columbia, outside of a few colonial-era treaties on Vancouver Island, Treaty 8 in the northeastern part of the province, and some modern treaties (e.g., Nisga’a, Maa-nulth, Tla’amin, Tsawwassen), most First Nations never signed treaties with the federal government. Therefore, the province of British Columbia exists on unceded Indigenous lands. Given the lack of treaties, questions of Aboriginal Rights and Title (the legal term) have been brought before the courts by politically organized Indigenous communities that argue for their unextinguished rights. For many Indigenous communities, these rights already exist through local protocols, customs, and

governance. Indigenous law is asserted not through the colonial courts, but on the land, through relationships and activities like fishing, hunting, plant collecting, cultivating, tree harvesting, and defending the land from commercial extraction (Martindale and Armstrong 2019; Napoleon 2013; Spice 2016, 2018). In this context of situating Indigenous practices and ideologies ahead of colonial laws and treaties, one could argue that all of Canada is unceded Indigenous land, with local, Indigenous laws and protocols having existed since time out of mind.

Heritage stewardship and questions of jurisdiction have become a sticking point within the larger battle over Aboriginal Rights and Title, and have led to a gap in protection that First Nations have tried to fill themselves. Development proponents fail to understand that Indigenous lands were never conquered, sold, or relinquished, and that title was never extinguished, and so Indigenous people have the right to manage their cultural heritage. Throughout the province, descendant communities are asserting their identity in the face of dispossession. Along the Northwest Coast, this assertion of identity and stewardship for heritage is exemplified through programs like the Guardian Watchmen. Guardian Watchmen programs increase the level of archaeological and cultural protection by being the eyes and ears of their nation. They proactively conduct field assessments, assess vulnerable sites, and record data that improve their nation's inventory database for archaeological sites and cultural heritage areas.¹⁰

Archaeological sites are not isolated entities; they are tied to a larger landscape in which they were made and are imbued with meaning, knowledge, and identity. Indigenous peoples view cultural landscapes as a local constellation of people, places, and natural resources. Indigenous communities' notion of placemaking by living, teaching, and being on the land is often not understood by proponents pushing for development projects that could affect these communities' lifeways and impact their health, happiness, and well-being.

Archaeological research, especially in the service of development, is thus bound up with Indigenous land rights. These rights constitute a huge and highly contested issue, one for which the solution preferred by the settler-colonial state has been consultation – another huge and

highly contested topic (Hanson 2018).¹¹ As presently practised, consultation aims at various forms of compromise, in which Indigenous Nations are, if nothing else, placated or – better yet, from the perspective of the state – co-opted, drawn into the capitalist structures that undergird the settler-colonial state. The state has thus far firmly rejected the prospect of Indigenous sovereignty, in which autonomy – the right to political, economic, and cultural self-determination – is fully restored to Indigenous Nations (see L. Simpson 2017).

Examples of continued dispossession have been explored by Audra Simpson in *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014) and Glen Sean Coulthard in *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014), which focus on the violent transformation of Indigenous social structures and economies prior to colonization into capitalist forms today. Both Simpson and Coulthard discuss legislation, policy, development-driven projects, and legal cases, which continually fail to address structural inequality in Canada (see also L. Simpson 2017). Heritage regulation is another arm of the colonial government that secures access to Indigenous lands (and their natural resources) on behalf of proponents, thus keeping Indigenous owners and stewards of their land at bay and, in effect, supporting continued dispossession.

Coulthard (2014, 30–31) cynically questions why any Indigenous community would ask for “recognition” to self-govern from the dominant entity (i.e., the federal government) when that government has failed to modify, or transcend, the current relationship between these two groups. Obtaining recognition from the government does not change the imbalance of power. When reconciliation is invoked, as the government often likes to do, it’s “framed as the process of individuality and collectively overcoming the harmful ‘legacy’ left in the wake of this past abuse, while leaving the present structure of colonial rule largely unscathed” (Coulthard 2014, 22). The land is central in both Simpson’s and Coulthard’s arguments about how to transform the dominant political economy in Canada. Repatriation of land, which would enable engagement in sustainable local economies, would see Indigenous peoples reconnect with their ancestral lands (Coulthard 2014, 170–71). This would allow for multiple opportunities to use, learn from, and be on the land,

but Coulthard (2014, 171) warns against economic dependency built on extractive capitalism, which is at odds with the central core of most Indigenous relationships with the land.

CRM is a continuation of accumulation by settler colonialism that has dispossessed, and continues to dispossess, Indigenous peoples. When Indigenous archaeologists talk of decolonizing archaeology, and the choir made up of many non-Indigenous archaeologists sings along with them (myself included), it cannot be as social justice warriors, it cannot be a “metonym for social justice,” as Tuck and Yang (2012, 21) clearly stated. Such decolonization requires the repatriation of Indigenous land for Indigenous lifeways. I do think some archaeologists see that, and those who work for, or closely with, First Nations may be advocating and doing the work toward that goal, but, for the present moment, we are still actively engaged in the economy of contemporary settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006). Archaeologists are not in the position to directly dismantle the colonial system, but we can slowly degrade it from the inside, reimagining archaeological practice in a new form. And we can advocate for and support Indigenous peoples in obtaining positions within government and heritage firms to drive change in CRM from the ground up, both in practice and policy (the HCA and other legislation) to reflect Indigenous laws and values.

In *The Beneficiary*, which examines the idea that our fate is causally linked with the distant suffering of others through globalization and capitalism, Bruce Robbins (2017) stated: “You cannot see anything as wrong unless and until you can see or at least sense that it can be otherwise” (12). Archaeology as it is practised today within development capitalism is shaped largely by Euro-Canadian values tied to colonial beginnings. Acknowledging that archaeologists are the beneficiaries of inequalities in the archaeological system is a first step in addressing this issue. Recognizing the historical imbalance of power intersecting development, archaeology, heritage management, regulators, and Indigenous communities is critical, since no work that archaeologists do is apolitical (Berreman 1968; McGuire 2008). There are other ways of knowing and doing archaeology, and archaeologists can help facilitate meaningful and relevant archaeological stories for, with, and by Indigenous com-

munities (Nicholas 1997). A shift in control of power, ownership, equity, and process must occur if we are to transform archaeological practice into an inclusive and safe space where compassion and Indigenous values drive archaeological work.¹² Social responsibility is an important component of the work archaeologists do, as archaeology is not done in isolation from current events, politics, or economics, and there are larger, international political narratives that tie into what CRM archaeologists are doing locally each day on the ground. Those who practise archaeology can look to each other for support, but, also, we have to be cognizant of how we in British Columbia learn to practise archaeology, who teaches us, and how we are conditioned to practise the craft. There are no easy answers, but human values can be recentred within archaeological practice by asking ourselves, why do we do archaeology, for whom do we do it, and how best can it be done (Nicholas 2014, 137)? A lot of good can come from compassionate, human values being reinserted into archaeological practice, but is it enough?

This book touches on a number of highly complex topics, among them the meaning of decolonization, Indigenous land rights and sovereignty, capitalism, and the continuing support of the state for projects that will contribute to climate change. A full exploration of such topics is the work of an entire library, not a single book; thus, the intention here is to consider these topics within the context of an exploration of the role of archaeology in contributing to a maintenance of the status quo. By acknowledging and critiquing that role, this book doesn't merely argue that the situation needs to change; it also discusses ways in which we, as archaeologists, can contribute to that change. Such a discussion is critical because, until we understand that change is possible, we will not likely work toward it.

I acknowledge that I am not an Indigenous person: I am a settler archaeologist who works for an Indigenous-owned heritage management firm. I am not writing this book from any other perspective than that of a practising archaeologist who is profoundly dissatisfied with the degree to which archaeology is used to undermine the interests of those whose material culture it allegedly seeks to preserve and interpret. My experience both with university-based archaeological fieldwork and with

CRM archaeology has led me to conclude that the current situation is deeply disrespectful and ultimately unethical and oppressive.

But I also believe that errors, once recognized, can be corrected, and my hope is that this book may help to chart a new course for professional archaeology.

1

Birth of an Anthropologist

I was conceived, as an anthropologist, in the Lau Group of Fiji. Moored off the tiny island of Vanua Vatu, the *Tai Kabara* was finally still. Still was good. Still was calm. For twenty hours, this ship had lurched and plunged its way through the South Pacific. I had not been able to stand and had resigned myself to the stern of the boat, lying atop cargo and holding onto the railing along the starboard side. My stomach ached from all the dry heaving, and my breath reeked. But here I was, in Fiji, en route to the more traditional islands of the Lau Group, which are separated from the eastern side of Fiji by the artificial boundary between Melanesia and Polynesia.

Earlier, prior to departure, I had eaten a late breakfast of fried eggs, toast, and mango juice. Once we were removed from the safety of Suva Harbour and into the open ocean, my stomach turned, and I began convulsing. The little ship soared atop the crest of waves and back down again. I tried to make it to the head on the ship, but I quickly realized others had beaten me to it. I bolted to the back deck, threw myself up against the railing, and heaved.

A bit of runny egg hit a Fijian. “*Neu!*” he shouted.

I attempted to put my hand up in an apology, but I had only one goal: cast everything out of my body. Lying in the fetal position atop a crate, looking out along the starboard side, the ocean spray misting me now and again, I tilted my head to see the stars. Blazing stars by the billions, oh, so clear, as if I could look deep into time, seeing the beginning of the universe, or perhaps the ancient light, just hitting me now, from when Fijian ancestors first sailed to Lau. The stars looked like a dome across the sky, its edges absorbed into the horizon. The Southern Cross shone brightly. I mustered my remaining strength and turned to gaze at the moon, which was bouncing, zigging, and zagging across the sky, sliding violently back and forth behind the ship’s mast, and I began to hurl nothingness once more into the deep, cerulean sea.

I should provide some personal context. I’m male, “white” (i.e., of various ethnicities), arguably middle class, born and raised in Florida. I’m third-generation American. My father was a dentist and instructor at a small community college turned university. In his later years, he served as a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve in Tampa. He has since retired from both positions. My mother raised me and my two younger sisters while my father was in private practice. When he left his dental practice to teach, she went back to school and ultimately earned a master’s in education. She was a Kindergarten teacher for over twenty years and retired in 2021 during the pandemic. My own family now includes two sons, whom I love dearly.

I grew up in the small, racially divided town of Starke. Witnessing racism and experiencing prejudice impacted my thinking as young person. A sense of social justice was instilled in me at an early age, and I did act on it at times, despite the consequences for me among my white “peers.” In 1993, when I was fourteen, my family moved to Melbourne, Florida, and I went to high school near what had been Zora Neale Hurston’s home, where she wrote *Mules and Men* (1935), an influential ethnography for me in my university years. But I didn’t know that back then.

The prologue that I am weaving in this chapter combines my personal history and formative experiences and my understanding of anthropology and archaeology. I consider myself an anthropological



FIGURE 1.1 Towns and archaeological site in the southeastern United States mentioned in the text. | Created by Walter Homewood via Natural Earth.

archaeologist, and I will often flip between calling myself an archaeologist or an anthropologist. Anthropology adopts a comparative approach to better understand societies and cultures by examining differences and similarities in how cultures are structured and how people construct meaning in their everyday lives. When anthropologists talk about *culture*, they are referring to symbol-based learned behaviour.¹ In other words, there is meaning behind tangible materials made in a community and intangibles ways of being (normalized social behaviours) learned as children. Children are enculturated into the community in which they are born, as they examine, challenge, and develop an understanding of themselves and their community.²

Archaeology is the study of such communities through material culture. I use archaeological methods, combined with both anthropological and archaeological theory, to understand the past lifeways of humans. Within the context of methodological trends, both anthropology and archaeology were “scientized,” and once archaeology and anthropology were assimilated into science in the late 1950s and early 1960s, its human roots begin to erode, with the researcher cast in the role of distant and

“objective” observer. The processual approach – a positivist, scientific approach to explaining factors that promote cultural change viewed in the archaeological record – dominated archaeology for decades, especially in North America (Trigger 2000, 298–303). Processualists, practitioners of the “New Archaeology,” dismissed the notion that living members of descendant cultures might have anything to contribute to the discipline of archaeology (Trigger 1980, 667; Trigger 2000, 408–11). These positivist approaches ultimately came into question – among anthropologists somewhat earlier than among archaeologists – and the disciplines’ claim to “scientific” status was the main target of early Indigenous critiques, most notably by Vine Deloria Jr. (1969). Beginning in the 1970s, post-processual critiques challenged archaeologists through a variety of specific interpretive frameworks that continually developed between the 1980s and the early 2000s. When I use the term *anthropological archaeologist*, I am arguing for the restoration of the anthropological into the archaeological. This theme – the need to rehumanize, or re-anthropologize, archaeology – is woven throughout the book (see Tax 1975).

In recent years, anthropology has striven to be more inclusive and more relevant to and useful in everyday life.³ Today, anthropologists represent many nationalities, numerous ethnicities, and various genders and sexual orientations. Anthropology is much more diverse today, and is better for it: the discipline reflects multiple voices of its practitioners, who have varied backgrounds and distinct experiences. That said, equity remains an issue in positions of power and influence (Hodgetts et al. 2020).⁴ Still, the work anthropologists do, in partnership with the communities they work within and with, provides access to alternative realities, which are brought forth through their scholarship, as well as a space for marginalized voices. I believe that compassion may be generated through this process, and that this may, in turn, engender deeper or more empathetic feelings for the lives of our fellow humans, allowing us to better understand their experiences. This insight and understanding can contribute to the creation of a more caring society, one in which ignorance of others can be erased through connection and compassion. Anthropologists can shine a spotlight on lived lives in hopes of illuminating socially underrepresented communities and can advocate on their

behalf (or alongside them) to inform the broader society – and the “experts” within it – about the complex issues at play.

All of my archaeological experience has been working with heritage that is not my own; rather, it is the heritage of Indigenous descendant communities with whom I am privileged to work and live. I work closely with living communities who have deep ties to the spaces and places where we conduct archaeology and learn more about their ancestors. In doing so, I think about those who came out of largely processual archaeological programs and were the early forerunners of cultural resource management. They have strongly influenced the historical development of CRM archaeological practice, one that has been, and continues to be, dominated by processual assumptions long after they have been supplanted in academic archaeology. Indeed, even now, my experience is that CRM centres methods and results on the tangible and on client-driven needs, while not acknowledging either the socio-cultural world we inhabit when we perform archaeology or the value of Indigenous knowledge from descendant communities. These practitioners seem to have little awareness of how their work may be viewed by others (e.g., media, governments, Indigenous communities) and insufficient concern about making sure no harm comes to the Indigenous communities who privilege them as guests in their territories.

Possessing self-awareness is critical for anthropologists and archaeologists. We need to recognize that we are not influenced solely by kin, but also by others in our lives – friends, colleagues, lovers, teachers. Through our recursive interactions, they all inform us about our world, our surroundings, how we think, speak, eat, laugh, and play. This was true for me, both as I pursued my undergraduate degree and a master’s in anthropology at the University of Florida (UF), and when I undertook a PhD at Simon Fraser University. It was at UF where I first received an opportunity to live and work with people culturally different from me. I was given an opportunity to be a research assistant and travel to the Lau Group in Fiji. Working closely with Sharyn Jones (a PhD student at the time), I contributed to her ethnoarchaeological investigations on the social relationships surrounding food, women, and fishing that make up the subsistence economy of a small Fijian village (Jones 2009; O’Day

2004). This experience, and the stories from my time there, helped me develop personally and understand archaeology more fully and how to better perform it.

ASHORE IN THE LAU GROUP, FIJI

Once on shore in the small but important village of Tubou on Lakeba Island, I was a new person. It was early morning, and we found our accommodations at “Jack’s Guest House” with our host family, Jack, Sera, and their daughter, Lusi. We organized our belongings in the *vale* (house). Soon after our arrival, we were served fresh fruits, curry mangrove crab in a bisque-like broth, tea, and Nescafé instant coffee, which I eventually learned to enjoy.⁵ Once full, I took in the sights and sounds of village life in Tubou. I always remember how clean and manicured the village paths were – a sign of respect from the people toward their chief (and toward the king of Lau). I was greeted with “*bula*” everywhere I turned. I was a curiosity. A ghost. A *palagi* (foreigner). People wanted to know why I was there, my purpose.⁶ I easily spoke with them.

Sharyn, Patrick O’Day (also a PhD student, and at the time, Sharyn’s husband), and Fiji Museum archaeologist Sepeti Matararaba (known

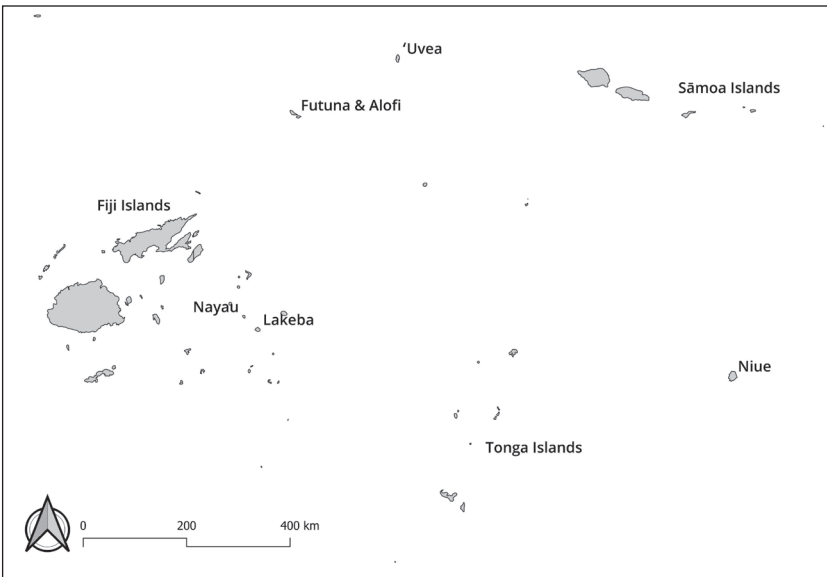


FIGURE 1.2 Fiji and Tonga. | Created by Walter Homewood via Natural Earth.

as Mata) had arranged for us to meet with kin of Ratu Mara, the local high-ranking chief, for a *sevusevu* to seek permission to conduct research on the nearby islands of Aiwa Lailai, Aiwa Levu, and Nayau and to discuss our being there. A *sevusevu* is typically performed when guests arrive in a Fijian village, and it includes a ritual presentation of kava (*Piper methysticum*) to the local hereditary chief (*Ratu* or *Tu'i*). Kava (*yaqona* in Fijian) is a popular crop cultivated across most of Polynesia as well as in some areas of Melanesia and Micronesia.⁷ It's a mild narcotic that can numb one's mouth and cause temporary loss of feeling in the extremities. *Yaqona* can be consumed formally, as during *sevusevu*, or, more commonly, informally in the evenings. It is drunk mostly by men, but I have been in informal kava circles where women drank alongside us. In more conservative villages, the women in the *vale* might sit behind a *tapa* (bark) cloth curtain in the kitchen, and we would slide the *bilo* (coconut cup) of *yaqona* to them.

I like kava. I enjoy drinking it. Holding the *bilo*, feeling its smooth coconut base, which has been sanded and fitted to my hand, I ask for "high tide" (a full bowl). Sure, it tastes like liquid wood, but I enjoy the peppery tang and the comradery and stories that take place around the kava bowl. It's an opportunity to bond and laugh and show your personality after a long day of work. This work may have been in the garden, mending nets, doing household chores, or doing archaeology.

In Fijian culture, the *sevusevu* is part of local protocols, and it is required when individuals arrive in a village that is not their father's (Shaver and Sosis 2014). For the stranger to gain acceptance, a *sevusevu* is conducted to discuss the reasons for their presence in the village and ultimately to gain approval by the host chief. Acceptance during the *sevusevu* symbolizes that the host chief and his village will offer hospitality and protection during one's stay.

Mata prepared us. He said we would not talk in the beginning. He would introduce us once we were seated in front of the host chief. We should not make eye contact with *Ratu*, averting our gaze until the *sevusevu* is done and he specifically addresses us. When we enter the *vale*, we should humbly approach the chief, carrying our bodies low to ground, practically crawling in to greet him, and then sit cross-legged, heads down, eyes on our feet. Those were all our instructions. I entered head

down, hands clasped together tightly, and navigated myself to my spot on the side. The *tanoa* (kava serving bowl) was across from me, and some very large Fijian men were in front of me. We were in a circle, and all discussion clipped by me quickly in Fijian, specifically the local Lauan dialect.

Within the conversation, I picked up pieces of Fijian: an *io* (yes) here, a *vinaka* (good) there, a *vanua* (land) or *kuro* (pottery) peppered about. Sentences were bookended by “hmms,” “aahs,” and such. Finally, the chief spoke to Sharyn and Pat. He mentioned how he liked the flagging tape from the last visit, that it marked where we had been and how to navigate in the island forests. We all laughed. We drank kava and he welcomed us into Tubou, and he opened up the entire Lau Group to us. We were free to move about the village, the island, and beyond. If we were to seek accommodation in another village, another *sevusevu* would be performed with the local ranking chief.

Our reason for staying in Fiji was academic. Sharyn was conducting research for her PhD in ethnoarchaeology, and my own cultural education began immediately. The research program we were conducting centred on questions steeped in archaeology and Western science. But simply by being present, I started to understand other ways of knowing and being in the world. The *sevusevu* was the first introduction to this learning, which included the impact of my presence and behaviour in a community. It was after the *sevusevu* that I understood the necessity of adopting local customs, learning the language, and following protocols when working as a guest in another’s backyard. I was so ignorant and had so much to learn, and I knew that I would never understand more than a fraction of life there. I’d spend about six months over the next two years working and living in the Lau Islands. It fundamentally shaped me as an individual.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHEAST: WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE?

I didn’t start out as a Pacific archaeologist. The seed was actually planted September 11, 2001, around 8:00 a.m., in the basement of Marsden Library at the University of Florida. I was happily searching for ethnographic texts for my hunter-gatherer-fisher class taught by Ken Sassaman.

Soon, I would be pulled into my supervisor's office to watch the dreadful events of that day. Prior to that, unaware of the historical importance of that day, I soaked up the musky scent of old books, clambering among the stacks, searching for and thumbing through ethnographies. Before most students had eaten breakfast, I had come across the Lau Islands of Fiji through two ethnographies, by Laura Thompson (1940) and A.M. Hocart (1929). These two books opened a world unknown to me. I didn't realize at the time that my friends, Sharyn and Pat, both PhD students, were conducting an ethnoarchaeological research program there; all I knew was that they were in Fiji for the semester. I had always been interested in the history and lifeways in the South Pacific. Intrigued by these texts, I checked them out for my term paper. Little did I know that, less than a year later, I too would be in Fiji.

I began my archaeological training in the southeastern United States. When I was nineteen, I volunteered in the laboratory of Ken Sassaman, who had recently been hired by the university. Although an undergraduate, I didn't want just to read textbooks; I wanted to get hands-on experience. Ken gave me the opportunity to sort bags of cultural shell deposits from archaeological sites he had excavated in Georgia and South Carolina. I kept showing up. I would volunteer three days a week. Ken was somewhat surprised by this effort. My free labour in the lab turned into an opportunity to do field research on the Savannah River, working on a site where the first pottery was produced in the southeastern United States, about 4,500 years old ago (Sassaman 1993, 2006). This was on Stallings Island (Site 9CB1), on the Savannah River, which marked the border between Georgia and South Carolina. It was a wonderful experience: my first archaeological dig, with precise research objectives and archaeological methods to be learned on the job. It was fun. I learned tons. Ken was (and still is) an excellent teacher and mentor. Because of him, I met interesting archaeologists such as Dan Elliot, Al Goodyear, and Dennis Stanford, among others. I ate outstanding South Carolina barbecue and drank gallons of sweet tea. An important moment during that fieldwork was when we uncovered ancestral (human) remains in an excavation unit. The remains had been previously disturbed by looters, digging into graves in search of burial goods. We could determine the nature of the disturbance by the jumbled condition of the graves: dirt

and artifacts were tossed aside as the looters hastily dug for “valuable” belongings. Desecration of the site was also evinced by looter pits. One pit that we excavated contained a snack wrapper coming out of a hole near the zygomatic arch of a skull: a light snack for the grave robbers.

My first experience with Indigenous North Americans was at Stallings Island. This was in the very late 1990s, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was a relatively new piece of legislation.⁸ Being only a second-year university student, I wasn’t a part of the discussion between Ken and a tribal representative who appeared on behalf of the local Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns. The state of Georgia does not have any “federally recognized tribes” within its borders.⁹ My memory is faint, but I recall a representative from this council coming to the site to examine the ancestral remains we had uncovered. She came, saw them, had a discussion with Ken, and left. As quickly as she appeared, she was gone. The ancestral remains were reburied on site.

That moment was the only engagement or interaction I ever had with any Indigenous peoples of the southeastern United States. I found that odd, given that we were on the cusp of the twenty-first century, a time when archaeologists were increasingly recognizing the importance of engagement with local Indigenous peoples. That said, I was well aware of the horrid history of Indigenous-settler relations in the area, including legislation under President Andrew Jackson that had led to the violent removal of Native Americans from their homes, setting them on a forced migration along the Trail of Tears, and decimating Indigenous populations throughout the South.¹⁰ Still, I continued to question the situation in my head: Why weren’t we doing more? Why aren’t Indigenous people involved? With the hubris of a privileged university student, I questioned the lack of engagement of local Indigenous people. I wanted the Indigenous representative (and her community) to be part of what we were doing. I wanted to know more about Indigenous communities in the South, and my own deep ignorance frustrated me. I didn’t even know what I *needed* to know to contribute to different practices and outcomes in archaeology. I was a sophomore at the University of Florida trying to learn the ropes of field methods and techniques. I was con-

cerned with recording sediment correctly, identifying a cultural occupation layer, or drawing a detailed profile. Hell, I was just learning how to use a trowel properly.

Looking back, I understand that this was the beginning of my dismay with the way archaeological practice closes the door to other ways of knowledge and other understandings. Although I didn't fully understand it, that moment has never left me – that feeling of ignorance and not fully realizing why archaeology was the way it was. All I knew was that I didn't want to dig alone. I wanted my archaeology to be anthropology, or I too would consider it nothing (see Willey and Phillips 1958, 2). I wanted to be surrounded by people and learn from them about their history, if they would have me.

I had to experience archaeological practice that way so I could begin to awaken to principles of community-based archaeology. Community-based archaeology is community-driven research that produces results relevant for the communities involved (Atalay 2012, 10). It uses methods (and theory) from archaeology but also Indigenous knowledge to drive research questions – or, perhaps more accurately, it centres Indigenous epistemologies within archaeological project goals that Indigenous communities will find of interest. It does not necessarily reject Western ways of knowing (see L. Smith 2012, 41); rather, it creates the space for multiple ways of knowing and being (Nicholas 2018a). It's an approach that brings knowledge holders together – whether they be archaeologists, anthropologists, or local community knowledge holders – to solve problems, answer questions, and/or deal with potential impacts to cultural heritage. It seemed – and seems – to me self-evident that white settler archaeologists were doing themselves, and everyone else, a disservice by barring entry by others into the secret club of archaeologists.

FIRST LESSONS FROM FIJI

During my graduate training, I lived and worked in communities across the South Pacific, largely in Fiji and Tonga, with other experiences in Sāmoa and Papua New Guinea. That was the life. Digging, swimming, fishing, gardening, drinking grog, and living in the village among the local people. Those experiences shaped my thinking, and they moulded

my being as an anthropological archaeologist. I made mistakes. I cried. I laughed and smiled. I sang and danced. It was in the South Pacific that I learned my craft. But, more importantly, I learned how to be socialized into a Polynesian community (Morton 1996): to be present and listen. I learned how to explain ideas, teach in another language (as best I could), and find meaning in the work I was doing. I also saw very clearly how, as an outsider, I had an impact in a community – both good and bad. When you're working in a Polynesian community like Lau or Tonga, it's invasive. You're in their backyards. Literally. You're in their gardens, their *'api*, conducting archaeological excavations. Being so close together generates new ways of knowing and teaching. Working side by side with descendant communities, not only conducting archaeological investigations but also going fishing, planting taro, taking care of the children, and playing in their village as a guest, was profound for me. It made me feel alive. It made the archaeology feel true.

Working and living within an Indigenous community affects the archaeological work. On Nayau Island, in the Southern Lau Group of Fiji, Sharyn Jones's PhD research was both archaeological and ethnographic: a direct historical approach was employed to understand the contemporary practices of local Lauan people and those of their ancestors, by studying archaeological materials, specifically zooarchaeological remains. Local people were involved in the research, as archaeological assistants conducting excavations in old village sites, and as interlocutors, knowledge keepers, and participants, sharing their insights into subsistence practices, hierarchy, and identity in contemporary times through interviews. Many households even kept their food remains for a week so that their rubbish (i.e., the faunal remains) could be recorded by Sharyn. She then made comparisons between zooarchaeological samples from archaeological sites and contemporary collections of food waste in multiple households. Insights into the past could be drawn from contemporary practices that help illuminate the more muddled social aspects of the archaeological record.

Because of our presence, conversations were constantly had in the village revolving around the research we were doing and what it was we were trying to learn. This led to engaging discussions on local Lauan

history, food, fishing, gardening, family relationships, Lauan language and culture, rugby, and archaeology. A wonderful consequence of doing archaeology within the community was that we had curious children come by and work with us. Lauan children would come by the site at Namasiasi on Nayau Island and help me excavate. Working with children and young people let them see first-hand what we were doing. They would then go home in the evenings and share this knowledge, their interests, and questions with their family. In this way, archaeological information and conversations crossed inter-generational lines.

My closest family of friends included Sepesa Caloti, his wife, Rusila, and their sons, Toro and Lagi. The boys would often bring their friends from school to the site, where I would teach them, and they would teach me. My field time was open to them. Children between six and thirteen years old would show up and want to participate. A few of the older ones even skipped school to hang out and work with us. I'd involve them by showing them what we were looking for in the screens. I'd show them how we excavated, gave them trowels, showed them how and why we were doing this and that. Sharyn and Pat, too, were always welcoming of the children, and we eventually went to the school on Nayau and gave a little talk about why we were there, what our research goals were, and why we were interested in their history and daily life. We donated books to the school library and learned about what the teachers needed.

I was amazed that, after just a couple of days in the field, the kids seemed to quickly master excavation techniques. I've taught field schools to university-age students, and it's taken me four to six weeks to get them to harness the skills Lauan children learned quickly. The children demonstrated such a remarkable aptitude. But they also taught me. I learned vocabulary in the local language, games, daily village gossip, and stories. While I was working alongside the children, I kept wondering, if they're so interested and like doing this kind of work, what opportunities were going to be available to them when they grew older. Was this going to be a one-time shot where some foreigner shows up, has an exchange, and then goes away, never to be heard from or seen again? For my part, the latter was a distinct possibility. I understood that, as a graduate student, I might not be able to access funding that would give me the



FIGURE 1.3 Author holding an ugavule, also known as a coconut crab, alongside Sepeti Matararaba on Aiwa Levu, 2002. | Photo courtesy of author.

opportunity to go back, since grants are both competitive and political. So, I did what I could, focused on each day and on spending each moment with them.

Living and working in Lau, I learned that local Lauans possessed a sense of community connection to their heritage. Through archaeology, combined with oral traditions and knowledge, stories unfolded about past lifeways reflected in the archaeological record. Conversations took place around the kava bowl, in homes, or around the *lovo* (earth oven). I recall butchering a *puaka* (pig) with other men, which was to be cooked with other foodstuffs such as *dalo* (taro), *tavioka* (cassava), *kumala* (sweet potato), and *uto* (breadfruit). During the meal preparation, conversations turned to pigs in the past, how to see their arrival archaeologically and use through time. Stratigraphy within an archaeological site is a great way to document events, the passing of time. Often an archaeological

feature like a *lovo* can be seen in the wall of an excavation unit. This method of cooking is used today, much as it was nearly 3,000 years ago when the community's ancestors first sailed into Lau.

The opportunity to discuss past lifeways was always there within the community. But more than that, the effort to show that Lauan heritage and identity exist today as they once did in the past was demonstrated to me by people in the community encouraging me to use the language, participate in fishing, and share in local humour. As a guest in the host community, I wanted to act with courtesy, learn the language, and be observant of custom and protocol. Doing so was important, because it allowed me to share in people's lives as they opened their doors to me. I had to learn how to sit, how to dress, when to eat, who eats when, where people stand, how to talk to women, how to talk to men, how to talk to elders, how to talk to youths. These are all things that you learn when you're a guest in another community.

This "being in a place" provided a cultural context for the archaeological materials excavated, not only from the information people shared during interviews but also through the practical knowledge they demonstrated through their daily routines of food production and participation in village life. Combining archaeological practice with ethnography and ethnohistory, researchers are able to more fully realize and enhance the understanding of past lifeways, including social issues related to local Lauan foodways, hierarchy, and identity (Jones 2009). For example, fish are classified and understood collectively by their specific names, behaviour, and value. On Nayau, certain fish are highly prized for their "sweetness" (Jones 2009, 145). Such an insight helps archaeologists provide alternative interpretations about archaeological fish remains, as size may not be the only variable for selecting and targeting certain fish. Rather, taste or sweetness plays an important role. So, while fish remains can be counted, weighted, and identified by species, understanding personal preference and taste, and how it might be reflected in the archaeological record, can be gleaned only by working with communities. Along with questions of taste, other aspects of food consumption may not make it into the archaeological record. Women in Lau are excellent fishers and hold deep knowledge about both intertidal and pelagic species. When they collect and eat invertebrates as snacks while fishing,

this behaviour is not reflected in the archaeological record because the by-products of snacking (i.e., the shells) rarely make it back to the village to be deposited in the shell midden (cultural shell deposits). The preparation of a *lovo* is typically men's work, and they are used for feasts (typically once a week, perhaps on a Sunday, but for other occasions as well). We learned that reef fish are hardly ever prepared in a *lovo*, and this knowledge meant that we could interpret the remains of small reef fish associated with an archaeological *lovo* as the remnants of snacks eaten during *lovo* preparation (Jones 2009, 146). Thus, faunal remains identified in the archaeological record that prove difficult to interpret may be better understood when researchers apply knowledge obtained from living with and learning from descendant communities whose daily activities provide rich insight into past lifeways.

FULL-BODIED ANTHROPOLOGY

The opportunity to travel with Sharyn Jones and Pat O'Day as a research assistant in Fiji exposed me to another world – one I had only read about. My training at the University of Florida was in an integrative four-field approach to anthropology. I was able to draw on this holistic approach, which comprised archaeology, linguistics, physical anthropology, and ethnography (cultural/social anthropology), to more deeply understand the past, while living and working in the present with descendant communities. During my second field excursion to Lau, I was reading *Hawaiki, Ancestral Polynesia* (2001) by Patrick Kirch and Roger Green, which is a rich, textured history drawing from archaeology, comparative ethnography, and reconstructions of ancestral Polynesian languages to create the social world of past Polynesian lifeways. I was literally in Hawaiki, the ancestral Polynesian homeland of Polynesian peoples and cultures, which Lau was initially a part of, along with Tonga, when the first Lapita ancestors showed up on the shores (Connaughton 2015). Working there, I was able to live in the culture myself and compare my experiences to those of other anthropologists (e.g., Hocart 1929; Thompson 1940).

While in the field, I was learning Fijian, learning the history, learning how to communicate with those I worked alongside as we excavated their heritage. I was learning how to do archaeology with and within

descendant communities. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I was being trained as a community archaeologist – that is, on projects where descendant communities participate and contribute to the archaeological program. I was learning first-hand from those who accepted us as guests in Lau. This was the type of archaeology I wanted: a full-bodied anthropology with relevance and meaning for local communities. I was using a four-field approach with guidance and teachings from the community of people around me.

This experience would translate well when I was back at university. I was shy in the classroom during my first year in graduate school. I felt that the other students, who had come from all over the world, some from pre-eminent universities, understood better than me the theoretical texts and literature we were reading. They were intelligent. It was not until I stepped foot on the islands in Fiji that my learning began to take a deeply meaningful turn. I could now challenge the anthropological discourse and bring my own lived experiences into the discussions in class. Living and working in Fiji expanded my classroom so I could draw on the knowledge shared with me in the field and engage with my peers and with the literature we were learning in the academy.

In Lau, I was fishing each day with my friends, helping in the garden, feeding pigs, and playing rugby on the beach. I helped in the kitchen when the women would allow me. I was a novelty and was often made fun of (in good humour) as I tried to do simple things, like butcher a chicken. Rusila would tease me and make Sharyn and the other women laugh. While sitting outside on pandanus mats in the village, cutting pandanus with bivalves for future weavings, we'd watch Sepesa, Pat, and the other men come ashore to unload their fishing gear and nets. I'd get up to help, but Rusila would tell me to stay and sit, saying that I was "soft, like a jellyfish," making Sharyn and the women cry with laughter. "Sit. Sit down. You are like a limpet."

I remember one evening on the beach near Salia that, for me, encapsulates full-bodied anthropology. It was a Sunday. We had participated in the service that morning, which was done in both Fijian and English, since we were guests. We then took part in the Sunday feast, which was typical Lauan fare cooked in the *lovo*. There were the staples like taro, cassava, and sweet potato but also a variety of inshore fish, shellfish, and

seaweed. *Palusmai*, *rourou*, and various fruits were also set before us. Food was plentiful, and the communal aspect of eating together crossed many social and cultural boundaries reflecting status and one's identity in the village (Jones 2009, 2015). Afterwards we went on a hike to Narocivo with Sepesa. Upon our return, Sepesa and Rusila wanted us to take pictures of them with our fancy cameras in their formal Fijian attire. So, we obliged and later mailed them the photographs. That night on the beach, the skies were crystal clear, and the moon was out. The fire provided warmth as the soft, cool breeze came off the ocean. We were all stretched out on the beach sharing stories. We had spent the day together like family. We would be back to excavating tomorrow, but the peacefulness of that memory of sitting beside the fire with everyone is something that can't be captured in an anthropological text. It can't be analysed, deconstructed, or interpreted in the classroom. It has to be lived and felt.

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