



ARCHAEOLOGY

Americanist Archaeologies: 2008 in Review

ABSTRACT A review of published literature, conference proceedings, and Internet sources pertaining to “Americanist archaeology” in 2008 reveals three major themes: conflict, catastrophe, and collaboration. Scholars debated the role of archaeology in planning for and executing military operations in the Middle East while maintaining a vigorous interest in structural and physical violence worldwide. Environmental archaeologists considered the effects of catastrophic events, including new theories over the demise of Clovis cultures. In addition, several major reports and regulations highlighted the complexities of indigenous relations and gender equity in the profession. Enhanced technologies, funding for global initiatives in human rights, economic and environmental sustainability, and creative forms of engagement are reshaping “Americanist archaeology” as a democratic, anthropological, and relevant pursuit. [Keywords: archaeology, annual review, conflict, catastrophe, collaboration]

“**A**ERICANIST ARCHAEOLOGY” is an archaeology that is active, engaged, and political. In 1979, Robert Dunnell used this term in the first of five annual review articles in the *American Journal of Archaeology*. In “Trends in Current Americanist Archaeology” (Dunnell 1979), he defined the phrase as a less provocative, apolitical moniker to describe the literature of the time. Now it seems fitting to revive “Americanist archaeology” in the context of a more progressive era of archaeological activism, both in the United States and abroad.¹ Dunnell identified three key issues in his review of the year 1978: the lack of comprehensive theory, the failure of the new archaeology to produce substantive results, and the growing gap between cultural resource management and academic archaeology. Thirty years later, one might wonder if anything has changed. Many of the same issues remain in 2009, but they have become highly diversified with the globalization of the discipline and the advent of Internet, digital journals, and hypertext to complement traditional formats of print media. Output has increased exponentially. In 2008, archaeologists published more than 75 monographs or edited volumes, 51 North American dissertations, and over 1,000 articles that appeared in 40 major peer-review journals. The

73rd annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) included over 300 sessions and was attended by more than 3,000 registered members.

Topics were wide-ranging in 2008, but, as in 1978, ecological and methodological studies using lithics, ceramics, and environmental data dominated the literature. In 2008, nearly 45 percent of the peer-review articles dealt with these issues (see Table 1). But, although archaeometry was an emerging focus in the 1980s, it has become mainstream, accounting for 12 percent of all articles and surpassing even zooarchaeology and taphonomy in sheer number (see Table 2). Using biomolecular archaeology, geophysics, and satellite imagery to probe the earth’s surface and explore the invisible universe of the gene, researchers today are searching for answers to classic questions of plant and animal domestication, human migration, and the evolution of ancient disease.

In many ways, “Americanist archaeology” is empirically and ontologically very similar to what it was 30 years ago, but today’s researchers are grappling with increasingly difficult issues and are seeking answers to questions with urgent global relevance. Disciplinary debates have real consequences, and the field is more anthropological today than

TABLE 1. Summary of Topics in Peer-Review Articles Published in 2008.

All Topics	<i>n</i>	%
Ecological/environmental (including domestication and diet)	269	26
Archaeological methods	177	17
Technology	122	12
Regional interactions	105	10
Social Relations/representation	77	8
Ethics and archeopolitics	71	7
Symbolic and cognitive	78	8
Biological/physical	50	5
Social Systems/institutions	45	4
Change and transformation	31	3
Total	1025	100

ever before. Three major themes prevailed in the literature of 2008: conflict, catastrophe, and collaboration. I will review each of these themes, highlighting the news, debates, and current status of research. A short section follows, which situates gender studies in the broader context of the profession. Although it is not possible to cover the entire year, the featured themes fairly characterize 2008.

CONFLICT

On the five-year anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, warfare and military themes pervaded the archaeological literature of 2008. Not only were archaeologists increasingly concerned with the political and ethical complexities of archaeological work in war-torn regions but also they addressed the evolutionary and historical roots of warfare and the material, structural, and social construction of vio-

TABLE 2. Summary of Approaches in Peer-Review Articles Published in 2008.

Approach	<i>n</i>	%
General archaeology	184	18
Archeometry	124	12
Zooarchaeology/taphonomy	98	10
Geoarchaeology	91	9
Bioarchaeology/forensic archaeology	89	9
Environmental archaeology	51	5
Public archaeology	48	5
Experimental archaeology	47	5
Historical/industrial archaeology	46	4
Biomolecular archaeology	42	4
Philosophical/theoretical	42	4
Geophysical archaeology	38	4
Nautical/maritime archaeology	36	4
Archeobotany	35	3
Simulation/quantitative archaeology	24	2
Landscape archaeology	14	1
Ethnoarchaeology	10	1
Other*	6	1
Total	1025	100

*Other = art history, linguistics, mixed.

lence, including slavery and military strategy. This work is too vast to detail here but includes three stand-alone conferences and eight conference sessions (three at the SAAs, two at the Theoretical Archaeology Group meetings, and three at the World Archaeological Congress [WAC]). More than 100 published articles, numerous oral presentations, and six monographs or edited volumes speak to the importance of violence as a prevailing scholarly concern.

Most of these efforts unsurprisingly centered on the front lines of the Iraq War and on the Middle East, where researchers discussed the political and ethical complexities of research in combat zones, patterns of looting, the recovery of antiquities, and the political embeddedness of archaeological research in nationalist ideologies (Al-Hussainy and Matthews 2008; Emberling and Hanson 2008; Rothfield 2008; Starzmann et al. 2008; Stone and Bajjaly 2008). Although several articles addressed the catastrophic damages of war at archaeological sites and museums, the central debate was an ethical one that threatened a divide between proengagement and anticollaboration archaeologists. Put simply, a proengagement view seeks to minimize damage to cultural resources and local populations through proactive collaboration and planning with the military whereas an anticollaboration view sees any involvement with military officials as subject to scrutiny, particularly where invasion is not sanctioned by the UN Security Council. This argument parallels the debates in cultural anthropology during 2008.

Prompted by the threat of a second (potentially illegal) invasion of Iran by the Bush Administration in the summer of 2008, nearly 2,000 archaeologists and heritage stewards from around the globe debated this issue in the final plenary session of the WAC in Dublin, Ireland. After much discussion, WAC attendees passed a resolution to oppose any military action and refuse to offer any assistance or advice on archaeological issues during the planning of such an attack. Nevertheless, the debate waged at the meeting and was carried to the blogosphere, where it continues to illustrate how deeply divided the archaeology community is over this issue. Collaboration in wars that are not sanctioned by the UN Security Council violates international peace treaties, but noncollaboration violates the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which was finally ratified by the U.S. Senate this year.

The Iraq War has led to greater military collaboration than any time in the history of U.S. archaeology. U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) officials and military personnel have written books on the subject of looting (Bogdanos with Patrick 2005), and some now appear to be attending WAC and SAA meetings. Archaeologists are actively engaged in heritage training on military bases using replica sites, playing cards, and computer-simulated scenarios (Kunkel 2008; Wager et al. 2008). Planning through the DoD Legacy Resources Management Program also entails the identification and management of cultural resources

at military installations and in regions where personnel are deployed (Schenker 2008). Archaeological teams are leading investigations of war crimes, mass graves, and artifact trafficking on behalf of various federal agencies. Some of this work was showcased in the 2008 SAA symposium, "Consideration for Archaeological Property during Military Conflict," chaired by Laurie Rush (2008), in which researchers argued that interdisciplinary cooperation and partnerships between the military and archaeologists are key to managing and protecting cultural resources, educating soldiers, and stemming the tide of looting and antiquities trade.

Evaluating the potential costs of military entanglements is another issue. Recent publications in *American Anthropologist* by Steve Silliman (2008) and Keith Brown (2008) recommend caution, implying that working successfully with the military entails acknowledging military cultures and values. Such words are grounds for reflection. Archaeologists have been involved with national governments and their political agendas for many years, as Tobias Richter reviews in his 2008 article, "Espionage and Near Eastern Archaeology: A Historical Survey" (see also Harris and Sadler 2003). From the 1850s to the end of World War II, several key figures in Near Eastern archaeology were involved in spying for their European home governments (and many more were rumored to be). However, as archaeologists and military specialists are increasingly coordinated in their efforts around Geographic Information Systems (GIS), satellite imagery, and remote sensing, it is becoming more difficult to maintain control over the use of heritage information, nor is it clear that control is desirable. Archaeological knowledge is embedded in the long-standing tradition of colonial encounters in the Middle East (Starzmann 2008), and the high-tech actions of today will certainly build on the imperial legacy of the past, even if we do not recognize the outcomes immediately. Archaeologists will continue to acknowledge their own limitations when working in areas of armed conflict and the asymmetrical power relations of any dealings with the military, imperialist states, or dictatorships outside of the United States (Heinz 2008; Sauders 2008; Yahya 2008).

For example, Kamyar Abdi (2008) shows how dictatorship, in particular the cult of personality surrounding Saddam Hussein at the fall of the Ba'athist party, made use of a mythologized archaeological past (see also Atakuman 2008; Moshenska 2008; Wynn 2008; Zarankin and Funari 2008). Archaeologists' academic research contributes indirectly to these regime legacies, such as when evidence from forensically excavated mass graves is used to prosecute war crimes, as several authors illustrate (Cox 2008; Komar 2008; Steele 2008; see also Ballbé and Steadman 2008). This work reminds us that knowledge about the past is a powerful tool of engagement that is difficult for archaeologists to escape, regardless of their political views (Emberling 2008).

The Palestinian Archaeology Working Group, formed five years ago by Lynn Dodd and Ran Boytner, took the theme of engagement in new and more controversial di-

rections this year with their released draft of the Israeli-Palestinian Cultural Heritage Agreement in April. This agreement promotes the idea that archaeology can be used as a tool for peace and collaboration. Authored by Israeli, Palestinian, and foreign archaeologists, the agreement seeks to guide decisions surrounding disputed archaeological materials, protect endangered heritage sites, chart collaborative research, and formulate recommendations for policymakers in future peace accords where the disposition of symbolic resources will play a key role. More work needs to be done, and no doubt these discussions will intensify at the first "Middle East" WAC Inter-Congress to be held in Ramallah in August of 2009.

Warfare in the Middle East and elsewhere had a rippling effect on the rest of archaeology. Working back through time, maritime and historical archaeologists published several important articles on Cold War, World War II, and Civil War sites (Fowler 2008; Gonzalez-Ruibal 2008; Hippensteel 2008; see also Rocchietti 2008 for a Latin American example). The study of structural violence also was carried offshore in a collection of papers in the *International Journal of Archaeology*, which considered the African diaspora at the close of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade. The material consequences of enslavement were explored in research on several notable British shipwrecks (Henderson 2008; Moore and Malcolm 2008; Webster 2008) and colonial plantations in the French West Indies (Kelly 2008). DNA sequencing of La Réunion populations in the Indian Ocean provided additional details of French slave trade on the shore of east Africa. Gemma Berniell-Lee and colleagues (Berniell-Lee et al. 2008) showed that the strong sexual bias in the peopling of La Réunion was the result of admixtures between male settlers and females from incoming enslaved groups.

Several archaeological studies addressing deportation, revitalization, and revolt explored the materiality of responses to violence and hegemonic state control. Using an example from the Southwest Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1680, Matthew Liebmann (2008) presented a reconsideration of Anthony Wallace's revitalization movement model, concluding that such movements are highly negotiated and heterogeneous phenomena that cultivate innovation. Similarly, Pamela Graves (2008) considered iconoclastic attacks on heads and hands of statuary and images in 16th- and 17th-century England to provide an anthropological interpretation of punishment and personhood following revolt.

CATASTROPHE

If the apocalypse of war is not troublesome enough, there is always Mother Nature. We were reminded of this on the morning of October 7, 2008, when a small asteroid exploded over Africa, leaving a wind-blown trail in the sky. Although small meteorites collide with the earth all the time, the 2008 TC3 asteroid made news because it was the first to

be detected before it hit, calling attention to the lack of any global emergency response. Potential catastrophes such as these were on the minds of archaeologists as debates over environmental impacts heated up in the realms of Paleoindian studies and cultural ecological histories worldwide. At least 52 articles, 17 presentations at the SAAs, and two monographs dealt with the archaeology of catastrophe, disruption, and transformation. Although cataclysmic claims are frequently met with skepticism by archaeologists, when they occurred they certainly affected human lives, with implications for cultural upheavals in the past and academic ones in the present.

A prime example is the Clovis Comet Hypothesis. After years of searching for pre-Clovis sites and debating offshore migrations, in 2008 researchers turned their attention to the demise of Clovis culture. First proposed by Richard Firestone and a 25-member team in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* late in 2007, proponents of the Clovis Comet Hypothesis argue that one or more comets exploded over North America at 12,900 years ago, triggering the Younger Dryas and Pleistocene faunal extinctions. The post-Clovis populations followed suit. Climatologists believe that the direct cause of the 1,300-year cold spell was a sudden rush of fresh water into the North Atlantic that slowed the circulation of the earth's oceans, but they have long debated its source. An extraterrestrial impact could be the key to solving this mystery, but Paleoindian researchers are still skeptical. A crater of sufficient size to suggest that an extraterrestrial "hit" could have destabilized global climates has yet to be found.

Instead, the proponents of the comet hypothesis have detected only traces of an extraterrestrial impact: tiny microspherules, nanodiamonds, and fullerenes in a carbon-rich layer of sediment at the base of the "black mat," an organic package that marks the beginning of the Younger Dryas. These diamond-studded sediments have been recovered from nearly fifty Clovis-age sites across the continent (Kennett et al. 2009) and are associated in some areas with evidence for intense regional wildfires and massive sediment wasting (Kennett et al. 2008). C. Vance Haynes (2008) concedes with some skepticism that something catastrophic happened, but without direct proof in the form of a crater, the debate will likely continue into 2009 and beyond. As David Meltzer advises, it is wise "to keep a firewall between two distinct questions: Is there indisputable geological evidence of an impact? If there is, then what were its consequences?" (2009:56). Archaeologists need only consider the long arc of the dinosaur-impact debate, which has emerged once again with new evidence for volcanic causes.

Extraterrestrial threats in 2008 were balanced by those coming from within or beneath the Earth's crust. Published articles and papers in 2008 featured the incredible resiliency of human societies in the face of volcanic disasters in the past. This was the theme of the edited volume, *Living under the Shadow: Cultural Impacts of Volcanic Eruptions*, edited by John Grattan and Robin Torrence (2008). Unlike comets,

volcanic eruptions leave clear signatures that can be dated, correlated, and characterized using standard archaeological and geochemical techniques. Archaeologists can link these cataclysmic events to behavioral, demographic, and social responses, finding that environmental disasters often trigger major changes in religious world views (Chester and Duncan 2008; Jennings 2008). Volcanoes also are implicated in several prehistoric migrations and sudden ruptures in technological traditions (Fedele et al. 2008; Petrie and Torrence 2008). In North America, the Mount Churchill eruptions have been linked to a radical switch in weapon technology and a ripple effect of population movements to the south with subsequent migrations of peripheral Athapascans to northern California and the U.S. Southwest (Froese et al. 2008). Such dramatic events are commemorated in oral traditions and can serve to assist in volcano hazard assessment and mitigation, as several authors point out (Blukis 2008; Cronin and Cashman 2008).

Other catastrophic events such as tsunamis can be more difficult to detect. As a form of collateral damage related to volcanic activity, they rank as high or higher than their progenitor. The explosive eruption at Santorini in the Aegean Sea during the second millennium B.C.E. is one example. Although researchers have long suspected that the eruption was accompanied by a devastating tsunami that impacted neighboring coastal settlements, no reliable evidence of such an event could be found. Hendrik Bruins and colleagues (2008) finally discovered this evidence in geological deposits on neighboring islands, which are characterized by a mixture of geological materials including volcanic ash and archaeological settlement debris.

Seismic disruptions are equally difficult to detect and link to social transformations. Nevertheless, Eric Force (2008) mapped the distributions of ancient civilizations against the southern tectonic boundaries of the Eurasian plate, showing broad correspondences between instances of cultural complexity and tectonics. Ian Hutchinson and Aron Crowell (2008) also linked radiocarbon records of land-level change and village abandonment to detect two seismic events in the Alaskan Subduction Zone during the late Holocene. And finally, Omram Garazhian and Leila Papoli Yazdi showed how ethnoarchaeology can be used as a tool to detect postseismic disaster burial practices in the past (2008). These studies provide hope for renewed efforts for paleoseismology in 2009; however, linking these momentous but largely invisible events to major social transformations in the past will continue to be a challenge.

Publications on catastrophes in 2008 build on an enormous corpus of interdisciplinary literature dealing with institutional collapse and the powerful capacities of human agency when faced with rapid and irreversible change. One implication seems to be that catastrophes are cascading, like rapidly falling dominoes—a message that resonates with contemporary fears of environmental and social collapse. This may be so, but the intangibles of crisis have rarely been addressed until now (Jennings 2008; Liebmann

2008). Although human agency is frequently invoked in responses to catastrophes, these disasters always come at a cost. Michelle Hegmon and colleagues (2008) explored this issue through a consideration of suffering and how to measure it archaeologically. This study not only compares the nature, scale, and tempo of environmentally induced transformation among the Mimbres, Mesa Verde, and Hohokam regions of the U.S. Southwest using the tenets of Resilience Theory but also asks why some changes are much more dramatic than others (Hegmon et al. 2008:313). They argue that the collapse of the Hohokam at the end of the Classic Period (ca. C.E. 1450) was accompanied by a “rigidity trap”: a conservative attachment to tradition, technology, and place that put them on a path to physical stress and protracted, intergenerational suffering until finally the system disintegrated.

COLLABORATION

The widespread economic, political, and cultural changes that have taken place over the past several decades make it essential for archaeology to grapple with issues of collaboration and human rights. At least four monographs or edited volumes, 15 conference sessions, seven journal articles, and 128 papers dealt with action, emancipatory, and indigenous archaeologies in 2008. This includes the plenary session of the 2008 SAAs in Vancouver, sponsored by the Committee on Native American Relations, which focused on collaboration with First Nations and Native American communities. The *SAA Archaeological Record* also featured international collaboration in its March and May issues.

In becoming more global, researchers have been thinking locally in their attempts to make a difference in the world—what Donald Hardesty (2007) calls a “global-change archaeology” when applied to sustainability issues. Jeremy Sabloff (2008) similarly called for an “action archaeology” that helps farmers increase crop yields, guides communities in development, and aids city planners, a model that has been adopted on a large scale by the Arizona State University Global Institute of Sustainability (the brainchild of Charles Redman et al.). In many ways, this research represents the new face of evolutionary and systems archaeology. Researchers are employing high-tech agent-based models, genetics, and archaeological data to investigate complex human-environmental systems and ecological niche construction in the past (Altaweel 2008; Conolly et al. 2008; Hegmon et al. 2008). New initiatives in the National Science Foundation are fueling much of this research.

In social archaeology, the major emphasis in 2008 was on two issues: emancipation and collaboration. Emancipatory or activist archaeologies employ socially responsible scholarship in an attempt to elevate human dignity, confront inequality, and challenge oppressive legacies of dictatorship, colonialism, and class struggle (Saitta 2008). Building on a large body of existing literature, publications in 2008 confronted the capitalist motivations and structures of the discipline, calling for a politically engaged practice

that improves the lives of people in the communities where archaeologists work (Hamilakis and Duke 2008; McGuire 2008). Many of the archaeologists contributing to this line of research have been trained or inspired by Mark Leone’s work at Annapolis. To honor this achievement, Leone received the Society for Historical Archaeology James Deetz Book Award in 2008 for *Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis*, published in 2005. Using specific examples from Annapolis and an activist, participatory approach, Leone and colleagues seek to explain the virtues and fallacies of mid-20th-century capitalist economic theories (Leone et al. 2008).

Collaboration can be liberating for archaeologists and communities alike, as many recent publications have shown (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2007; Kerber 2006), but archaeologists called attention to some of the complexities and shortcomings of collaborative research in 2008. Problems revolve around navigating responsibilities, evaluating multiple narratives, and establishing criteria of accountability (Habu et al. 2008). Shadreck Chirikure and Gilbert Pwiti (2008) reviewed some of the challenges of defining *community*, determining who is indigenous, and sorting competing interests. These problems, the authors argued, have diminished the utility of the collaborative approach. Faye Simpson and Howard Williams (2008) also contend that criteria and methodologies for evaluating the efficacy of community-based projects have yet to be designed, and they suggest two possibilities: self-reflexivity and ethnoarchaeological analysis.

Community-based and indigenous archaeologies share many goals in the engagement of indigenous people, but an indigenous archaeology seeks also to incorporate nativist, or non-Western, approaches in the development of theory and interpretation. In 2008, Robert McGhee challenged the epistemological basis of this endeavor, arguing that difficulties arise when archaeologists consent to claims of indigenous exceptionalism and incorporate these assumptions into archaeological practice. He maintains that exceptionalism allows indigenous individuals and groups to assume proprietary rights over their history that are not available to other groups.

In several other instances, researchers showcased the positive side of collaboration using advanced archaeological techniques. Lynley Wallis and colleagues used geophysical survey in Australia to locate suitable places for the reburial of repatriated remains (Wallis et al. 2008), whereas Peter Mills and colleagues employed nondestructive energy-dispersive X-ray fluorescence to characterize the Mauna Kea Adze quarry complex in Hawai’i (Mills et al. 2008). Chemical characterization of sources by archaeologists can provide useful information to tribal entities in legal battles for land, water, and mineral rights, resulting in what T. J. Ferguson (2003) refers to as “reciprocal archaeology,” wherein archaeologists produce results that meet specific community needs.

Although community-based archaeology seems to predominate in conferences and the published literature, the

often supercharged and highly polarized debate over unaffiliated human remains was firmly entrenched in the continuing legalistic discourse over the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). NAGPRA was a momentous turning point in U.S. archaeology as it ushered in a new era of cooperation with Native American tribes, but in 2008 a proposed amendment to the law threatened to reopen these old wounds. This debate centers on the implementation of the act and the disposition of over 100,000 unaffiliated human remains in museum collections.

Although NAGPRA provides a process for museums and Federal agencies to return native ancestors and sacred items to their people, nearly everyone agrees that there are many problems of implementation. These issues were highlighted in a report released by the Makah Indian Tribe and the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO) in June of 2008. Among other things, the report cites a lack of funding, training, and technology as major roadblocks, and it suggests that further statutory or regulatory action is warranted to address ongoing implementation problems. A major focus of the report was the disposition of culturally unidentifiable human remains and associated funerary objects.

As this report was being compiled, a new draft regulation was being written by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DoI). This regulation is intended to address the issue of unaffiliated remains pending recommendations from the NAGPRA Repatriation Review Committee. The review committee was formed by Section 8 of the act to monitor the implementation of the repatriation process and provide recommendations for the disposition of these remains. The committee submitted its recommendations to the *Federal Register* in June of 2000 after nearly six years of work and a great deal of input from tribal leaders, agency officials, private citizens, and other stakeholders such as the SAA and NATHPO (see 65 FR 36462). The critical passages of the recommendation outlined a series of priorities for repatriation and proposed a model of implementation that emphasized collaboration among regional consortia. The guiding principles were that the new regulation be respectful, equitable, doable, and enforceable. The regulation should fall within the intent of the statute and create a fair process that could be implemented on a national scale.

After so much effort, many were surprised to see that key passages of the recommendation were ignored in the draft version of the final regulation that appeared for comment in the *Federal Register* in October of 2007 (see 72 FR 58582). Dissatisfaction revolved around several key issues. First, the regulation included unclear wording. The terms *cultural relatedness*, *geographic affiliation*, and *region* were left undefined. Second, the consortia model for addressing regional issues was not adopted. This was a major omission given that unaffiliated individuals and items may be claimed by multiple parties, and disputes would only lead to further complexities in implementing and enforcing the act. Finally, strict time limits for museums and state agencies to comply with the new regulation did not include

funding to implement mandated consultation. In short, the draft regulation compromised nearly all of the principles set forth by the review committee, who unanimously expressed their concerns to DoI officials in comments and meetings.

The SAA Board also challenged the legality of the new regulation, arguing that it exceeded the authority granted by the statute and contradicted the intention of the law. Statements by Dean Snow (2008) and Keith Kintigh (2008) in the *SAA Archaeological Record* reminded readers that NAGPRA was intended to balance the interests of traditional cultures and the scientific community, and this is where the issue becomes difficult, particularly within the SAA. Although NAGPRA issues are the focus of the SAA Repatriation Committee, they are nearly impossible to separate from other concerns of the SAA Committee on Native American Relations.

GENDER AND THE PROFESSION

Before concluding this year's review, I should mention the numerous published articles on gender-related issues and the activities of the AAA Committee on the Status of Women in Anthropology and the SAA Committee on the Status of Women in Archaeology. The September volume of the *SAA Archaeological Record* focused on the topic of gender and the activities of the SAA Committee, and in May the AAA Committee released their Academic Climate Report addressing issues of gender equity in the profession (Wasson et al. 2008). The 2008 *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* also devoted attention to lingering assumptions about the organization of gender roles and identities worldwide (Brumfiel 2008). Among other things, archaeologists continued to probe long-held assumptions about gender and explored several emerging themes including childhood, sexual politics, queer theory, and archaeologies of the body and desire (Baxter 2008; Dawdy and Weyhing 2008; Geller 2008; Joyce 2008; Loren 2008; Voss 2008a, 2008b, 2008c).

Various reports and discussions in 2008 highlight the ongoing challenges of parenting, mentorship, and dual-career objectives, which affect men and women alike but are experienced more negatively by women. Although many women report that their status as mothers can help them to establish rapport in research communities, they also feel that motherhood is still undervalued in academic circles (Wasson et al. 2008). The enormous pressure on women to advance professionally during their reproductive years places them at a distinct disadvantage relative to male peers. Studies and discussions of mentorship show that although gendered guidance is important for graduate and undergraduate training, female faculty feel overly burdened by advising in comparison to their male counterparts (Baxter et al. 2008; Wasson et al. 2008). Past battles to obtain gender equity in the workplace also have come with a price as archaeologists struggle to maintain dual-career relationships in academia, private, and governmental sectors (Van Dyke

2008). A report this year produced by Stanford's Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research shows that academic couples comprise 36 percent of the professoriate in the 13 research universities that it surveyed (Schiebinger et al. 2008). At the same time, the AAA's Academic Climate Report found that nearly 40 percent of respondents ($n = 935$) were dissatisfied with the effectiveness of dual-career policies and opportunities at their institutions (Wasson et al. 2008:99). These are all issues that, although three decades old, are only now being acknowledged as serious and persistent problems.

CONCLUSION

As Indiana Jones heads into retirement, passing on the whip of adventure to a new generation of Hollywood archaeologists, the year 2008 is marked by some fairly heavy themes. Articles on conflict and warfare dominated, followed closely by catastrophes and controversies over human rights and community-based initiatives, and although it is impossible to fully characterize the year, these three themes were recurrent in publications, conferences, and reports or debates. Archaeologists have become increasingly self-reflective on the eve of Lewis Binford's Lifetime Achievement Award, presented at the 2008 SAA meetings in Vancouver, but this reflexivity is accompanied by a vibrant new hope for the future. New technologies coupled with mandates to make archaeology more relevant are leading the way in multi- and transdisciplinary research, themes that are sure to emerge in coming years.

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NOTE

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1. The use of this term in no way implies that the current research cited in this document is specifically Americanist or may be claimed by U.S. approaches or traditions. Rather, as U.S. archaeology today is more global in orientation, it is also more political, and vice versa. My use of the term acknowledges Dunnell's previous contribution while recognizing the engagement of the discipline with contemporary political and social issues.

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