

Community Archaeology, Academism and Humanity

Lolita Nikolova

The Art Institute of Salt Lake City - Salt Lake City, Utah (USA)

lnikol@iianthropology.org

Summary

The development of the archaeology of the 21st century is a mission not only of continuing integration of archaeology with the all other humanistic academic disciplines and also with the people's everydayness as one of the strongest means of enculturation. However, the profession of archaeologists (as field and lab specialists, researchers or teachers) has some peculiarities that create opportunities for hierarchical pressure over the community of archaeologists, and it is our common responsibility continually to re-humanize archaeology, especially in cases in which the power erodes its core principals.

We may need to think about at least two equally important and interrelated meanings of community archaeology: first – the community of archaeologists, and second – public archaeology. Archaeology as a discipline can develop the most successfully in the 21st century not by building hierarchical visible and invisible coalitions with visible and invisible social practices and mechanism of conflicting people, institutions and individuals, but by building multiscale community archaeology with embedded humanity and academism at any level. A primary role in this mission has the non-for-profit organizations, which will be in the focus of our communication.

[Slide 1]

Introduction

The 21st century is the period of reevaluation of the humanity as a strategy to reconnect the people **[Slide 2]**. Described in many cases as aggressive, the technology makes us steadily dependant on it. Although it looks like more than ever we, the people, are connected through Internet, in reality we have been disconnecting with each other gradually. The technological human connections are not real connections and they may damage even our social brain (Nikolova, 2009b). Then, it becomes essential today to find those perspectives of development of the individuals that make them use effectively the time for both – adapting constantly to the changing technology and reconnecting people through live contacts.

[Slide 3] In the context of the above paradigm the problems of community archaeology are becoming leading in the archaeology of 21st century. In ways in which we develop community archaeology, in the same way we will develop generally the science of archaeology. If we make more efforts for development of community archaeology, it will be more likely to gain advance in reconnecting people and rehumanization over dehumanizing role of technology and commercialization of the profession of archaeology.

Scientific inquiry of community archaeology

[Slide 4] The today's understanding of community archaeology, applies mostly public archaeology as opportunity to interconnect non-archaeologists with the academic field of archaeology - see e.g. Community archaeology (online). As it was proposed in my abstract for this Conference (the same as above), I would like to offer to expand the

definition of community archaeology and to include not only public archaeology but also another meaning – the community of archaeologists. In my opinion if we develop both aspects in interaction, it will be for the general progress of archaeology.

The formal reason for expanding the definition of community archaeology is the fact, that Internet allows us today to interact with the archaeological information but to have it online the archaeologists need to develop *community skills* – to feel the materials that they discover not as a capital for professional advance and achievement but as means for sharing community knowledge. The ontological background for such community skills is the fact, that in most of the cases the archaeologists' salaries come from the taxpayers and the archaeological heritage in most of the countries belongs to the nations. From cognitive perspectives, development of community skills among the archaeologists is most essential today for the science of archaeology since the records increase, the publishers increase, we become more and more unable to get even short information for what has been excavating and publishing even in big countries unless popular publishing houses have been not involved. Most curiously, instead stimulating humanity in archaeology Foundations and Publishing houses have been trying to invade archaeology with their very narrow commercial goals (e.g. Nikolova, 2009a). So, we depend on our archaeological self-awareness whether we will continue to follow the best of archaeology as a humanistic and community oriented science or the narrow commercial and careerist interests will damage it fatally.

[Slide 5] Scheme 1 gives the two main dimensions of humanity as megadiscipline - general valuation of technology effect and constant agenda of reconnecting people. In particular, the public archaeology includes on the side of the technological effect Internet

archaeology and all other media, while through field school, internship and volunteering in museums, for instance, can be build the live communities of friends of archaeologies. Both directions embody enculturation and socialization as a long-life educational process.

[Slide 6] The community archaeology as a community of archaeologists includes on the side of the technological effect academic and public contacts through Internet and publishing. The media connect both sub-field of community archaeology, while the social meetings, guest-lectures and other form of live contacts may develop the community and integrity skills. The social problem is the fact that in life the community makers in many cases have as partners coalition makers and the interactions could become dysfunctional or corrupted.

[Slide 7] Scheme 2 provides some paths toward community archaeology – from background skills (honesty, integrity, knowledge and professional skills through proved community skills toward academism and entering the field of community archaeology in the megafield of humanity.

Archaeology as a field to develop and improve community skills of archaeologists

[Slide 8] Community archaeology is essential in both aspects of the actual human behavior – technological and reconnectivity/rehumanization. Today the Internet provides opportunity the information from archaeological excavations and museums to enter every home if we make a minimal effort – just to place for a few hours the results and finds on one of the numerous free websites if we do not have own domain. However, basic contemporary excavations are not available online, although in some cases they have been generously funded for publication even with questionable academic contents (e.g. Nikolova, 2009a). There are whole groups of archaeologists that almost act as coalitions

and obviously do not feel that what they have been excavating is interesting for sharing information with the world through the global web, and not only for publishing in an academic format. The psychology of such archaeologists is very simple – the publication in academic format gives them these citations that make them feel scientists, valuable and even unique. In many cases such psychology acts together with a specific social behavior of people who look at archaeology not as a field of community interactions but a place where they can build unique social identity, popularity through citation and of course, gain a sort of power used for building visible and invisible coalitions and specific, non-community relationships, which in many cases damage badly honest and most respectful people.

One of the ways to break this pattern that comes from the period of the Cold War is to stimulate and invite in archaeology young people who have a strong record of community activity. We may believe that such young archaeologists will continue their behavior even in the field of archaeology where today there are strong signs of decommunitization.

The second way is the grants and funds for projects and publications to be given to archaeologists with strong and repeatedly proved community skills.

The third way is increasing the role of ethics as an educational discipline in Archaeology. It is a paradox that the students in archaeology usually demonstrate strong community skills especially on-site research, although such skills often almost disappear when they enter the professional field of archaeology.

Community archaeology and academism

The development of technology and Internet make us think that in fact today even academism depends on community archaeology. The academism means a quality knowledge and honest ethical relationships. As most of the records of public archaeology show for instance, the public archeology is committed to quality knowledge - e.g. CAF (online). We cannot say the same for all academic publications today. Their quality decreases gradually and as a matter of fact we are at point in which the academism as a general framework for archaeologists needs to gain experience from the public archaeology. Today many public websites are much more informative that academic publications.

[Slide 9] For the above perspective, the community archaeology as a field of crossing of all aspects of archaeology could essentially change the whole discipline of archaeology.

[Slide 10] Towards demythologization of community archaeology

To build the community archaeology field we need to go through the process of demythologization of the idea that in fact the water is in the bottle, but we just do not see it. In this section we would point to three myths.

1. One of the myths of community archaeology as community of archaeologists is the membership and participation in meetings of non-for profit organizations.

As a matter of fact the organizations depend on people, then, the membership and participation itself is not a sign of community archaeology. The power, corruption and personal interests make today all kinds of organizations a problem for understanding of archaeology as a humanistic discipline in general. The community archaeology would be

more revealable in the field of invisible relationships and behavior of the individuals. In this case we can build a dichotomy community v/s coalition. Within one and the same organization we may have members who are community makers and coalitions' makers. In other words, not the organizations but people are those who build the community. One and the same organization could be an example of community archaeology and could be in fact a dangerous social body against community archaeology.

2. The websites themselves are not a sign of community archaeology.

Essential for the websites is the contents. Specific careerist or commercial interests can damage contents of every website. The community archaeology is committed to integrity and academic knowledge. I big progress has been doing youtube.com in direction of connected the archaeologists with archaeologists and non-archaeologists - e.g. Archaeological Discoveries (online). Our website includes more than 800 volunteering webpages on archaeology and humanity (Nikolova 2009b).

However, many websites have been building for commercial goals. In addition, even Wikipedia has been using for distribution of a fraud information - e.g. Dabene treasure (online) (see Nikolova 2005-2009). And if there are signs of corruption, we usually later discover coalitions and disintegrity, respectively non-community archaeology.

3. The academic publication itself does not indicate community archaeology.

Because of Internet, today every academic book can become a record of public archaeology. Self-education and enculturation have been developed to a level of revolutionization of the human understanding of education as a life-long mandatory

process. But does every piece of academic publication apply the ideals of community archaeology?

No. One of the reasons is the fact, but the academic fraud invaded even the archaeological academic literature (e.g. Nikolova, 2008-2009, 2009a). As it is well known, the academic fraud is any used and not cited literature. There are groups of authors that have been practicing academic fraud obviously without any self-awareness that they have been doing something wrong.

In addition, to gain funds, archaeologists even with big titles have been hiding competitive discoveries and publications and there are members of editorial boards that do not allow publications of given authors. With pattern coming from Past, such authors however, seem that undervalue community archaeology and its opportunity if not to eliminate, at least to help the isolation of such deviations from the main direction of development of archaeology as a humanitarian and progressive science.

[Slide 11] The theoretical perspective of present archaeology point to two different directions of its development: Fragmented (Deviated) and Community archaeology (Scheme 3). The community archaeology provides free or easy (library, low cost) access to academic, complete and quality knowledge. The archaeologists are characterized by critical self-awareness, integrity and honesty. In case of fragmented archaeology there is usually limited access or no access, the academic knowledge is deformed, damaged or missing and the personalities are usually self-fish, with no critical self-awareness.

[Slide 12] Conclusions

Following the above arguments we can make the following conclusions:

1. Today it is not enough to say the society is in crisis. In fact it is not completely true. The society is a tree of life born millions years ago, and as any tree there are always old and new leaves, and old and new branches. If archaeology would not want to become a dead branch, it needs to develop in directions of the progress, which is the water of the societal framework. And the progress of archaeology depends completely on community archaeology.

2. In light of 21st century science of humanity as a megadiscipline, archaeology develops as an integrative discipline in which the academic, professional and community aspects interact to a level of building a complex image without borderlines but with quality activities.

3. Community archaeology can be defined as a subfield with two directions of development that interact with each other – public archaeology and community of archaeologists. In fact because we do not have in reality strong community of archaeologists, which is very well demonstrated on Internet, the last becomes an ideal. For many reasons, the community of archaeologists especially during the last years has been fragmented either in small groups of friends or in groups of coalitions, some of which have been damaging the progress of archaeology through a corrupted use of visible and invisible power.

4. It is impossible to have a successful public archaeology if the archaeology relies on contacts with public only and not on contacts and interactions among the archaeologists themselves based on honesty and integrity. Then, if we want to have a successful public archaeology, we need to develop the community of archaeologists. Such development means not only critical self-awareness, but general critical approach.

However, such critical approach often damages the archaeologists, then, to constitute community of archaeologists we just have to believe that there will come more people who will have similar understanding like that of the author. And it is: **[Slide 13]** Archaeology was born as community archaeology and can remain community archaeology, but only if in the field of archaeology works only people with community skills and with understanding that archaeology is not a place for practicing humanity and connecting people with people – through ethical knowledge, honesty and integrity.

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