

## ASSIGNMENT 9

### Archaeology and Society

**A**ssignment 9 is the last in the course and covers the role of archaeology in contemporary society and in the modern world. We also discuss career opportunities in the field. The assignment brings together some of the diverse themes we have covered in Anthropology 3.



#### WHAT LIES AHEAD

#### Assignment Objectives

After completing this assignment, you will be able to:

1. Evaluate and discuss the role of archaeology in the modern world.



#### Work required

Assignment 9 requires completion of all reading for the course, and this assignment.



#### LECTURE: ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MODERN WORLD

The final lecture in the course looks back over the material we have covered, and is an evaluation of what archaeology means in the modern world. We focus on:

- A brief summary of what we have learned in the course,
- Why is archaeology important today?
- What role will archaeology play in your lives in the future, and what about archaeology as a career?
- The ethics and responsibilities of living with the past.

Once you have attended the lecture, please start, as usual, below. There is no Web exercise for this Assignment. You will spend all your time reading in this week's Anthology Section. The material in this assignment is of vital importance to your final essay and to the intellectual legacy you acquire from Anthropology 3.



*The Videoclip on the Web introduces the subject matter of Assignment 9. You might care to view this now ... Then read on here ...*

**THERE IS NO SECOND LECTURE THIS WEEK**



## ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MODERN WORLD

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Archaeology has many uses and applications today, which can be boiled down to two questions and three readings that address them:

- What does archaeology mean to me, as an individual?
- What does it mean to society as a whole, and why should we take it seriously?

Obviously, the first question is individual to you. But since many people ask about career opportunities in the field, we make no apologies for giving you a long reading on the subject:



### *Anthology Section: "Archaeology and You."*

A frank appraisal, which, we hope, causes you to think.

Now an example of how archaeology has direct economic value in today's world.



### *Anthology Section: "Ancient Agriculture at Tiwanaku, Bolivia."*

Then there's the ethics of archaeology, the real question as to whether the past has a future. Nothing epitomizes this better than the sorry case of the Slack Farm site, which I described in an article in *Archaeology Magazine*:



### *Anthology Section: "Tragedy at Slack Farm."*

When you have read this, please go on . . .



## WHO OWNS THE PAST?

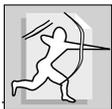
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For generations, archaeologists have assumed that they owned the past. But you actually controls the past? Do archaeologists, and archaeologists alone, have the right to write about an interpret the past? Read:



### *Anthology Section: "Whose Past?"*

Thought provoking reading, which will be discussed in section. Please read on . . .



## AND FINALLY, SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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For all the special interest pleadings and claims of ownership, the material remains of the human past are the collective cultural heritage of all humankind. They are there for us to admire, respect and conserve for future generations. At some point in your future life, you will probably visit one of the great sites of the past, perhaps the Pyramids of Giza, or Teotihuacán, perhaps feel the past reaching out to you, evoking, tantalizing, provoking. Perhaps, too, you may remember some of the things you

have learned in this course. If you do and you have acquired at least some interest in the past, then we have achieved at least one objective of Anthropology 3.

In the hope that you have acquired such an interest, however casual, we end with an evocative reading from a classic work by English traveler Rose Macaulay, whose *Pleasure of Ruins* is one of the few books about enjoying the past worth reading. The point she makes is a simple one: the past is there for all of us to appreciate and enjoy:



***Anthology Section: "The Pleasure of Ruins."***

With this reading, you've come to the end of our shared journey through the remote past.



Please note that your final synthesis-essay is due during finals week. Your TA has given you the topics, which will also be found on the Web Page. Be sure to hand this in on time together with the second half of the Guide and the cover sheet.

**E N D   O F   A S S I G N M E N T   9**

**GOOD LUCK AND GOODBYE!**

## ASSIGNMENT 9: ANTHOLOGY

### 1. ARCHAEOLOGY AND YOU

I became an archaeologist by sheer accident, having entered Cambridge University in England without any idea of potential careers. I was admitted on condition I studied anything except Greek and Latin, for which I had no aptitude whatsoever! So, I took a list of potential subjects and chose archaeology and anthropology on a whim with no intention of making it a career. My first lecturer was a Stone Age archaeologist named Miles Burkitt, who was famous for his classroom stories. He had studied late-Ice Age rock art under the legendary French archaeologist Henri Breuil before 1910. His enthusiastic reminiscences triggered my interest in the past. By chance, while still an undergraduate, I met another famous archaeologist, the African prehistorian Desmond Clark, and ended up working in a museum in Central Africa after I graduated. I have been an archaeologist ever since, a career choice I have never regretted.

#### *ARCHAEOLOGY AS A PROFESSION*

I gave up saying I was an archaeologist at cocktail parties after learning the hard way! Say you are an archaeologist and immediately your questioner brightens up. “How exciting! What a fascinating job,” your new acquaintance almost invariably says. They think you are some kind of Indiana Jones, perpetually traveling to remote lands in search of some archaeological Holy Grail. When you tell them you study stone tools and recently spent three months searching for fossil rodents (which is usually the truth), their eyes glaze over and they often do not believe you. There’s another scenario, too, where the questioner’s eyes light up when they learn of your occupation and he or she asks you, confidentially: “Is it true that the Egyptian Sphinx is 12,000 years old?” Or, “What about the Lost Continent of Atlantis? Isn’t it in the Bahamas?” Or, most common of all: “What’s the latest on the Dead Sea Scrolls?” I must confess I am a coward and say I am a historian, which, in a sense, I am. My interlocutor soon loses interest.

Archaeology still has an aura of romance and spectacular discovery about it, which probably accounts for why many of you took the course that assigned this book in the first place. You learn pretty fast that modern-day archaeology, while often fascinating and sometimes conducted in remote lands, is a highly technical discipline where spectacular discoveries are few and far between. True, exciting finds occasionally hit the headlines, such as the Moche Lords of Sipán or the Uluburun shipwreck, but the fact remains that most archaeologists labor far from the public eye, often on unspectacular and sometimes downright monotonous sites or obscure problems. An Indiana Jones-like personality is certainly not a qualification for archaeology, indeed it has never been. Indiana Jones himself is complete fiction, a

character built up from a group of well-known pioneer archaeologists of the early twentieth century, whose discoveries and adventures were indeed larger than life. Today's archaeologist is about as far from Professor Jones as you can get and probably works a long way from the halls of academe.

What, then, are the qualities that make a good archaeologist in these days of highly specialized research and wide diversity of career options? Qualities of character are as important as academic qualifications, which we discuss subsequently, for you will never become rich as an archaeologist. This is a profession that has its own unique rewards. Money is not one of them.

Anyone wanting to become an archaeologist needs far more than academic credentials (covered below). Here are some essentials:

- *Enthusiasm*, indeed a passion for archaeology and the past, is the baseline for anyone who enters this field. Archaeology thrives on enthusiasm, for the best archaeologists are those with the kind of fire in their bellies that enables them to raise money, overcome major practical obstacles, and carry out their work. Personal charisma breeds good archaeological leaders, provided they have the patience for the small details as well.

- *Infinite patience* to carry out fieldwork and other research that can involve slow-moving repetitive tasks and dealing with sometimes- difficult people.
- *A mind that thrives on detail*, since a great deal of archaeology is minutiae—small attributes of stone tools and potsherds, analyzing computerized data, studying tiny details of the past for weeks on end. Both excavation and survey, to say nothing of laboratory work, require great patience and a concern for detail.
- *Adaptability*, an ability to put up with long journeys, sometimes uncomfortable fieldwork, and often primitive living conditions. You need to be fit enough to walk long distances and to thrive on improvisation under difficult conditions. Imagine, for example, filing Land Rover wheel bearings out of nails when you are several hundred miles from a service station so you can get home. I know archaeologists who have done that. They had to.
- *Good organizational skills*, since a great deal of archaeology is logistics and organization, of field crews, site archives, even camp kitchens. A good mind for organization is a great asset.
- *Cultural sensitivity and good people skills* are essential. Many of archaeology's most successful practitioners invest enormous amounts of time in cultivating people and communicating with Native Americans and other cultural groups. Such skills require great patience and sensitivity, but the personal satisfaction and rewards are immense. This is one reason why a background in anthropology is so important to an archaeologist.

- *A commitment to ethical archaeology* is also necessary. Do not become an archaeologist unless you are prepared to adhere to the ethical standards demanded of such professionals.
- *A sense of humor* may seem self-evident, but it is vital, for many archaeologists take themselves far too seriously. Have you ever spent a week writing a paper, then had your computer implode before you have backed up your text? Moments like that beset all field research. That's why archaeologists need senses of humor, because sometimes everything that can go wrong goes wrong—all at once.

The most important considerations are commitment and enthusiasm, which will carry you through almost anything.

In many senses, archaeology is not a profession, but a calling to which many people give their lives. In these days of instant gratification and ardent materialism, there is nothing wrong in that, provided you do not take yourself too seriously.

### ***Deciding to Become an Archaeologist***

I became an archaeologist almost by chance, for the occasional fieldwork experiences I had as an undergraduate were interesting and left me wanting more. This is not like becoming a priest or a nun, or signing up with the military, where a high degree of initial commitment is needed. You can ease your way into the field up to the point when you apply to graduate school and have a great time doing so.

Almost everyone I meet who is contemplating a career in archaeology either encountered the subject in high school or became interested as a result of taking an introductory course at college or university. Many people are lucky enough to have a truly inspiring teacher, who fires them with enthusiasm for a possible career they have never encountered before. What, then, what should you do next once your appetite for the past is whetted?

First, take more courses in archaeology at the upper division level from as broad a cross-section of instructors as possible. Begin with an advanced method and theory course (if that does not turn you off, then you know you are on to something, for such courses are not remarkable for their excitement!). Then take a selection of area courses, so you find out what general areas of specialty interest you and what do not. Remember, if you apply to graduate school, you will need some specific interest as the potential focus of your degree.

Second, give yourself as thorough and as broad an education in general biological and cultural anthropology as possible, both to focus your interests and to see if living people interest you more than dead ones. If you do go on to become a professional, you will never regret this exposure.

Third, take as many courses as you can in related disciplines, so that you emerge with strongly developed multidisciplinary interests. The most important and fascinating problems in archaeology, for example, the origins of agriculture, can only be approached from a multidisciplinary perspective. Much CRM archaeology is strongly multidisciplinary.

Last, gain significant field and laboratory experience while still an undergraduate. Such experience looks good on graduate applications, especially if it is broadly based. Even more important, it allows you to experience the challenges, discomforts, and realities of field and laboratory work before they become your job (and you should think of graduate school as a job). Only a few months ago, I had a student come in to see me who had been all enthusiasm for archaeology. She had gone in the field in the Southwest for a month and hated every moment of it. She still likes archaeology but has decided to enjoy it from afar.

If you take the trouble to acquire a broad-based experience of archaeology in your undergraduate years, you will be well equipped for graduate education and its pathways to a professional career.

### ***Gaining Fieldwork Experience***

“How do I go on a dig?” I am asked this question dozens of times a year, especially when I teach the introductory archaeology course. The good news is that there are more opportunities to go in the field as an undergraduate than ever before, provided you are prepared to make the effort to find them. Begin by taking your department’s field course, if it offers one, then look further afield, using personal contacts and departmental bulletin boards as a start.

### ***Career Opportunities in Archaeology***

This is not a good time to become an academic archaeologist, for jobs are rare and the competition intense. But it is certainly an excellent moment to consider a career in government or the private sector, both of which effectively administer or carry out most archaeology in North America.

### ***Academic Archaeology.***

This field is shrinking. A generation ago, almost all archaeologists were faculty members at academic institutions or worked in museums or research institutions. Purely academic archaeology still dominates both undergraduate and graduate training, and there are many people who enter graduate school with the resolute ambition of becoming a “traditional” research scholar. But growth in academic positions is now very slow. Some programs are even shrinking.

Most archaeology in North America and many parts of Europe is now conducted as CRM projects, much of it mandated by law. This means that most (but certainly not all) academic archaeology in American universities is carried out overseas, most commonly in Europe, Mesoamerica, or the Andes. Over the years, this means that there is intense competition for the rare vacant academic jobs in such well-trodden areas such as Mesoamerica and even more applicants for academic positions in North American archaeology.

A recent study of American archaeologists found that only about 35 percent worked in academia, and the number is shrinking every year. The moral is simple; If you want to become an academic archaeologist, beware of overspecializing or of working in too-crowded fields and have other qualifications such as CRM or computer skills at your disposal.

Museum jobs are rare, especially those that are purely research positions. A career in museum work is rewarding, but hard to come by and requires specialized training in conservation, exhibits, curation, or some other aspect of collections care in addition to academic training.

### ***Cultural Resource Management and Public Archaeology.***

These offer almost open-ended opportunities to those who are seeking a career managing and saving the archaeological record. Time was when academic archaeologists looked down on their CRM colleagues and considered them second-rate intellectual citizens. The reverse has been true, too, for I have met CRM archaeologists who consider academics tweed-suited dilettantes! All this is nonsense, of course, for all archaeologists are concerned with careful stewardship of the human past. The greatest opportunities in archaeology during the next century lie in the public archaeology arena and the private sector, where the challenges are far more demanding than the traditional academic concerns. Adopting to this reality will lead to many changes in undergraduate and graduate curricula in coming years.

If you are interested in public archaeology or CRM, you have the choice of either working in government, or for some form of organization engaged in CRM activity, which can be either a nonprofit group perhaps attached to a museum, college, or university or a for-profit company operating entirely in the private sector. The latter come in many forms and sizes, with larger companies offering the best opportunities and career potential, especially for entry-level archaeologists. Most public archaeology activity operates through government, although a few private-sector firms also specialize in this work. If you choose to work in the public sector, you can find opportunities in many federal government agencies, among them the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Many archaeologists work for state archaeological surveys and other such organizations. Historical societies, such as that in Ohio, often employ archaeologists.

Whichever career track you choose, you will need a sound background in academic archaeology and fieldwork experience as well as suitable degrees to follow a career in these areas. Although you may receive some background training in CRM or public archaeology during your undergraduate or graduate career, much of your training will come on the job or through specialized courses taken as part of your work.

Whatever your interests in professional archaeology, I strongly advise you to obtain a background and experience in CRM field- and laboratory work as part of your training.

### ***Academic Qualifications: Graduate School***

An undergraduate degree in archaeology qualifies you to work as a gopher on a CRM excavation or an academic dig and little else, except for giving you a better knowledge than most people have of the human past—not something to denigrate as a source of enlightenment and enjoyment in later life. Many people work on CRM projects for a number of years and live in motels: They even have their own informal newsletter!

Any form of permanent position in archaeology requires a minimum of an M.A., (Master of Arts), which will qualify you for many government and private-sector positions. All academic positions at research universities, and, increasingly, teaching posts require a Ph.D.

Typically, an M.A. in archaeology requires two years of course work and some form of data-based paper and, at some institutions, oral examination. The M.A. may have a specialized slant, such as CRM or historic preservation, but most are general degrees, which prepare you to teach at some two- or four-year colleges and universities and open you to many CRM or government opportunities. The advantage of the M.A. degree is that it gives you a broad background in archaeology, which is essential for any professional. It is the qualification of choice for many government and CRM or public archaeology positions.

The Ph.D is a specialized research degree, which qualifies you as a faculty member to teach at a research university and at many institutions that stress teaching and not research. This is the professional “ticket” for academic archaeologists and is certainly desirable for someone entering government or the private sector, where complex research projects and management decisions are often needed. The typical Ph.D program requires at least two years of comprehensive seminar, course, and field training, followed by comprehensive examinations (written and often oral), M.A. papers, then a formal research proposal and a period of intensive fieldwork that, in written form, constitutes the Ph.D. thesis. The average doctoral program takes about seven years to complete and turns you into a highly specialized professional, with some teaching and research experience. After these

seven years, you then have to find a job in a highly competitive marketplace. Yes, it is a daunting prospect to face seven years or more of genteel poverty, but the intellectual and personal rewards are considerable for someone with a true passion for archaeology and academic research.

Applying to graduate school is a complex process, which lies outside the scope of this book, but some important points are worth thinking about a long time before you compile an application.

Do not consider applying for a graduate program in archaeology unless you have the following:

- An academic record well above average, with in-depth coverage of archaeology and anthropology. An A-minus grade point average is a minimal requirement for good graduate schools; also you need also good GRE scores. A strong background in anthropology and a multidisciplinary perspective are essential.
- Some field experience on a dig or survey.
- An ability to write good, clear English and to speak fluently in public (both skills acquired by experience).
- Strong and meaningful support from at least two qualified archaeologists who are able to write letters for you, who know you really well. The old adage about getting to know your professors is so true. A letter written by someone who knows you both as a person and a student stands out from the crowd.
- A specific research interest, which is spelled out carefully in the statement of intent required on most graduate applications. It is very important that your emerging specialist interests coincide with those of the department of your choice and with the faculty members who work there. For example, it's no use applying to UCSB for Ph.D study in eastern North America. We have no one who teaches it! An obvious point, one would think, but one often ignored.
- A strong passion for archaeology and for teaching as well as research, a realistic expectation as far as the tight job market is concerned, and a moral commitment not to collect artifacts for profit or for personal gain are also essential.

A final word to the wise: If you feel your passion and interest in archaeology waning as you progress through your graduate years, do not hesitate to quit. The experience may be traumatic in the short-term, but there are many people in archaeology who quietly wish they had never chosen a career with seemingly limited prospects. They may not readily admit it, but they are out there. Do not join them!

### ***THOUGHTS ON NOT BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL ARCHAEOLOGIST***

Over many years of teaching archaeology, I have introduced thousands of people to the subject. Only a handful have become professional archaeologists. Most students who pass through my courses go on to an enormous variety of careers—Army rangers, bureaucrats, international businesspeople, lawyers, politicians, real estate tycoons, teachers, and even chefs and pastry cooks. At least two of my former students are in jail! But every one of them is aware of archaeology and its role in the contemporary world, of the remarkable achievements of our ancient forebears. This is by far the most important teaching that I do, of far greater significance than any amount of professional training I may give graduate students.

My task as a beginning teacher is not to recruit people to the field, to create an “in-group” who know all about radiocarbon dating, the archaeology of the central Ohio valley or eastern Siberia, but to help create what the National Science Foundation calls “an informed citizenry.” Many of my students end up with no interest in archaeology whatsoever; they find it boring and irrelevant to their lives (this quite apart from finding me tiresome!). But you can be sure they have heard of the subject and its remarkable achievements and have decided where it fits in their lives. This is, after all, one of the objectives of an undergraduate education.

Having said this, many people take a single course in archaeology and develop an active interest in the subject which endures through the rest of their lives. If you are one of these individuals, you can stay involved, at least tangentially, with archaeology in many ways.

Archaeology depends on informed amateur archaeologists (often called “avocational”), who volunteer on excavations, in laboratories, and in museums. Many highly important contributions to archaeology come from amateur archaeologists, often members of local archaeological societies, who participate in digs and keep an eye out for new discoveries in their areas. There is a strong tradition of amateur scholarship in archaeology, especially in Europe, where some avocationalists have become world authorities on specialized subjects such as ancient rabbit keeping or specific pottery forms—and they publish regularly in academic journals.

Archaeology could not function without volunteers, whether on Earthwatch-supported excavations or through quiet work behind the scenes cataloging artifacts or running lecture programs. If you have a serious interest in volunteering and pursuing archaeology on a regular basis as an amateur, there are many ways to become involved through local organizations such as colleges, museums, archaeological societies and chapters of the Archaeological Institute of America. The Arkansas Archaeological Survey has a long history of successful involvement with amateurs. In these days of highly specialized research and professional scholarship, it is easy to say that there is no place for amateurs. This arrogant statement is nonsense and misses the point. Amateurs bring an extraordinary range of skills to archaeology.

During my career, I have worked with, among others, with an accountant (who straightened out my excavation books), an architect, a professional photographer and artist (who was a godsend in the field), a jeweler (who analyzed gold beads for me), and an expert on slash-and-burn agriculture (who had a passion for environmental history). Your talents are invaluable, and don't take no for an answer! I showed this passage to a colleague, who said that some of his students have gone on to highly successful and lucrative careers in business. Their quiet philanthropy has endowed professorships, paid for excavations, and supported students. Enough said!

Many people develop an interest in the past, which comes to the fore when they travel. Their background in archaeology obtained as an undergraduate enables them to visit famous sites all over the world as an informed observer and to enjoy the achievements of ancient peoples to the fullest. My files are full of postcards and letters from obscure places, like one mailed from Stonehenge: "Thank you for introducing me to archaeology," it reads. "I enjoyed Stonehenge so much more after taking your course." This postcard made my day, for archaeology cannot survive without the involvement and enthusiasm not just of professionals, but of everyone interested in the past. We are all stewards of a priceless, and finite resource, which is vanishing before our eyes.

## **2. ANCIENT AGRICULTURE AT TIWANAKU, BOLIVIA.**

In the closing centuries of the first millennium AD, the farmers of Tiwanaku on the high plains, the altiplano, in northern Bolivia supported thousands of non-food producers by intensive cultivation of local swamps. When the city was abandoned, the farmers dispersed and their innovative swamp agriculture was forgotten. Today, the local Aymara Indians scratch a living from hillside, where irregular rainfall and winter frosts regularly decimate the meager potato crops from the thin soil. Many of them own lands on the Pampa Koani, the lake floodplain, where boggy conditions and severe frosts alternately rot and freeze growing tubers. 1000 years ago, the landscape was very different, for the floodplain was covered with rows of lush raised gardens intersected with canals. The fields literally burst with a bounty of potatoes, more than enough to feed 50,000 people, many of them non-farmers.

Bolivian archaeologist Oswaldo Rivera and his University of Chicago colleague Alan Kolata teamed up some years ago to investigate the thousands of ridges and depressions that covered the plain around Tiwanaku. They soon discovered that they were looking at a vast, abandoned agricultural system and persuaded a local farmer to allow them to dig out the silted canals on his land, to recreate the ancient raised fields. Despite vigorous opposition from his fellow villagers, the farmer agreed, with dramatic results. The potato plants grew higher than he had ever seen. When a severe frost descended on the Altiplano, the villagers watched over their fields all night. The crops in the hillside were ruined, but the potatoes on the raised field below were barely damaged. At dawn, a thin, white mist covered the plot, protecting the precious crop, a fog blanket caused by the heat retained by the surrounding canals. The mist soon burnt off in the

warm sun, but returned every night the temperature went below zero. Therein lay Tiwanaku's hydrological genius, for her farmers devised a simple, highly effective way of protecting their crops, while planting them in exceptionally productive, well watered and easily fertilized soil.

Rivera and Kolata found that Tiwanaku's rulers invested vast resources in reclaiming flat altiplano land, especially during and after the great drought of the 6th century A.D. By creating ridged fields and carefully conserving the soil, the overseers of huge field systems based on state- founded settlements were able to obtain high crop yields from hitherto unproductive land. Their agricultural systems were part of an extensive network of terraced, stone-walled houses and courtyards, many containing burials. The canals were sophisticated constructions, with a base of cobblestone topped with gravel and impermeable clay, which kept salt from the lake's brackish waters from seeping into the overlying topsoil. These large field systems supported a population of 40,000 to 120,000 people in the 32-square mile Tiwanaku valley alone. Their productivity may have been as high as 400% more than current yields.

The rediscovery of these ancient farming techniques is paying off handsomely among the Aymara. About 1,200 farmers have now redeveloped raised fields and at least another 50 villages want training in prehistoric agriculture. The local diet is improving dramatically, for fish and ducks in the canals provide added nutrition in a country where over half the children suffer from malnutrition.

### 3. TRAGEDY AT SLACK FARM

Like most archaeologists, I have, over the years, developed a numbness to the orgy of site destruction that surrounds us on every side. But a recent story about Slack Farm on the front page of the Los Angeles Times has opened old wounds afresh. "Plunder for Profit, Looters Rob Old Graves and History," the headlines leaped out at me with sickening familiarity. But it was only when I read on that I began to realize the full horror of the events at Slack Farm.

The Slack Farm site lies near Uniontown, Kentucky, on land just opposite the confluence of the Ohio and Wabash rivers. The Slack family, which had for many years owned a house and farm at the site, had allowed no digging for artifacts, although on occasion people stole into the corn fields at night to dig illicitly.

Archaeologists had known about the site for years, knew that it was a large, relatively undisturbed Late Mississippian settlement, judging from surface artifacts, the site dated to sometime between A.D. 1450 and 1650. The farm was of special importance, for it straddled the vital centuries of first European contact with the New World. Cheryl Ann Munson of Indiana University stresses the significance of the farm: she has studied every other large site of this period both up- and downstream. All the other sites have, Munson reports, long since been ravaged by pot hunters.

Yet through last fall, Slack Farm had, remarkably, remained nearly intact, a unique archive of information about Late Mississippian lifeways.

But no more. With the death of Mrs. Slack the property changed hands. The tenant farmers on the site did make some attempt to keep people from looting the place. Last fall, however, ten pot hunters from Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois paid the new owner of the land \$ 10,000 for the right to “excavate” the site. They rented a tractor and began bulldozing their way through the village midden to reach graves. They pushed heaps of bones aside, and dug through dwellings and the potsherds, hearths and stone tools associated with them. Along the way, they left detritus of their own empty— pop- top beer and soda cans — scattered on the ground alongside Late Mississippian pottery fragments. Today, Slack Farm looks like a battlefield—a morass of crude shovel holes and gaping trenches. Broken human bones litter the ground, and fractured artifacts crunch under foot.

Two months passed before local residents complained about the digging. Eventually the Kentucky State Police stepped in and arrested the diggers under a state law that prohibits desecrating a venerated object, such as a human grave. The looters pleaded not guilty to the charge—a misdemeanor—and now await trial. But whatever the court decides’ the archaeological damage is done — and it is staggering.

No one knows how many graves were ravaged, what artifacts were removed, what fine pots or funerary ornaments vanished onto the greedy antiquities market. No signs of the dwellings, hearths and other structures they disturbed remain. A team of archaeologists from the Kentucky Heritage Council, Indiana University and the University of Kentucky, aided by many volunteers, is now trying to assess the damage and record what is left of the site. They are cleaning up the pot hunters’ holes, recording what intact features remain and collecting artifact samples to document and date the settlement more precisely.

The ravagers of Slack Farm had no interest in science or prehistory. They were hunting for artifacts for their personal collections and for money. There is a flourishing market in pipes, pendants, whole pots, and other Mississippian grave furnishings. Under these circumstances, pot hunting can be addictive.

Prehistoric artifact prices are staggering, and rising steeply as the illegal supply especially from overseas-becomes scarcer. A stone ax can fetch as much as \$1,000, a pipe up to \$5,000. A looter who finds a rare type of Mississippian pottery bottle or an embossed copper plate can name his price, and expect to get it. The marketplace is so hungry for antiquities of every kind that a lively underground market in very high quality forgeries grows daily.

In some ways, one can hardly blame land owners for cashing in on the potential of such hidden treasures. They lease rights to companies to mine their land for coal. Why not lease rights to pot hunters to dig for artifacts? Both coal and artifacts can be

regarded as wealth underfoot. But in the case of the prehistoric past the issues are much more complex.

This point was underlined for me when I showed the newspaper account of the Slack Farm tragedy to some friends at a coffee break. I was horrified by some of the reactions. "So what?" shrugged one coffee shop acquaintance. "It's a free country." He expressed what turned out to be a widely held view: it's up to landowners what they do with their property. In my numbness, I had forgotten that many people see nothing wrong with private landowners ravaging the past for profit-as long as laws are not broken.

We have a strange relationship with the prehistoric past in this country. Most Americans, like my friends, have no direct cultural identification or emotional tie with North American prehistory, with Mesa Verde, Cahokia, or the many other brilliant achievements of the American Indian. As far as most people are concerned, history (and North American archaeology, for that matter) began with Lief Erikson, Christopher Columbus and the Pilgrim Fathers. Anything that predates European contact is considered somewhat irrelevant, and often ignored in school.

So most Americans of non-Indian descent tend to think of prehistoric Indian sites in impersonal, remote ways. Most would protest vigorously at the destruction of an important, privately owned, historic site from pioneer days, or shudder at the very thought of someone looting their neighbor's great-grandmother's grave. But a long abandoned prehistoric Indian village and the graves of the people who once lived there are a different matter.

It would be naive to think that Slack Farm is an isolated incident. Looting and pot hunting have been endemic in the South east since the depression days of the 1930s, and were rife in the Southwest in the early years of this century. Reports from elsewhere in Kentucky, and from Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, testify to widespread vandalism directed against archaeological sites of every time period over the entire length of the Ohio Valley.

But there is far more to the Slack Farm tragedy than the material destruction of hundreds of prehistoric graves-or of an entire archaeological site. For days after reading the news stories, I was haunted by the staggering scientific loss at Slack Farm.

To understand the dimensions of that loss one must realize that the Mississippian culture was a brilliant efflorescence of late prehistoric life in the Midwest and the South. Cahokia, Moundville and other great centers testify to that culture's extraordinary elaboration of public constructions and brilliant art traditions in ceramics, copper and shell. The first Mississippian communities appeared after A.D. 750, at just about the time when maize farming took hold in eastern North America. Mississippian culture was past its apogee in many regions when Europeans first penetrated the Midwest in the seventeenth century.

Many questions about this ancient society remain unanswered. Most excavations have focused, fairly naturally, on a few town sites and their mounds and spectacular monuments. Very few villages or cemeteries have been investigated especially with the full apparatus of modern, hi-tech archaeology. The well-preserved deposits at Slack Farm offered one of the few chances for such a painstaking investigation.

As in other Mississippian communities, the people who lived at Slack Farm probably enjoyed close and constant economic, political and social relationships with other villages and hamlets up and down the Ohio. But most of these sites also have been destroyed by looters. Until late last year, Slack Farm had been our best chance to study the dynamics of this Mississippian society.

Some of the fine Mississippian pots from Slack Farm so coveted by collectors are identical to vessels made in Arkansas, far from the Ohio valley. Some of the copper and marine shell ornaments prized by looters attest to even more distant trade for copper either with the Great Lakes area or the Appalachians, for marine shells with the Atlantic or Gulf coasts.

It may be news to looters, but the fragmentary bones they cast aside are a real treasure trove of potential information on Mississippian diet and disease, of vital genetic data about the biological relationships between prehistoric Americans, of evidence on ancient warfare. We now have the scientific techniques to probe such questions. Unfortunately, most of the vital clues for doing so vanished when the site was destroyed.

Slack Farm straddles the vital centuries of European contact with American Indians. We know this because glass beads, brass tinklers and other European artifacts have come from the surface of the ravaged settlement. These finds testify to some form of indirect, or perhaps even direct, contact between the Slack Farm people and early European traders and explorers. Studying such imports requires a detailed knowledge of their precise archaeological context. The looted holes at Slack Farm remind us that we may never understand the true nature of these early contacts.

We still know little about the complex relationships between Europeans and Native Americans five centuries ago. What changes in culture resulted from European contact? Did exotic diseases decimate Midwestern populations? Were the Late Mississippians in the Ohio Valley the ancestors of one of the historic tribes of the Midwest and Southeast? What goods were traded between whites and Indians, and how did this new trade affect relationships between indigenous societies? The looted burials and village deposits at Slack Farm might have helped find some of the answers to these questions. They cannot help us now.

When historians look back at the history of archaeology in the late twentieth century, they will be struck by a tragic irony. The seventies and eighties were the

decades when archaeologists finally developed the scientific technology to attack fundamental questions about the past. Yet the same scientists were powerless to stem the tidal wave of destruction that swept away the very data they could now study to its full potential.

The only bright side of the Slack Farm affair is the public outcry aroused locally by the looting. This protest led to new state legislation in Kentucky, which now makes it a felony to desecrate a human grave, regardless of the race or antiquity of the person buried. Yet, in Indiana similar legislative efforts failed. In surrounding states, no one is tackling the legal, ethical and archaeological problem of site vandalism.

It's not making front page headlines, but looting on the scale of Slack Farm is commonplace in nearly every state—from the Bering Strait to the U.S. Virgin Islands, especially on private lands. The fact is that we and our friends are not making enough noise about this insidious scandal society tolerates in its midst. No one else is going to do it for us, so we had better raise our voices very loudly before it is too late.

In a way I feel like Nero, blithely fiddling while Rome burns. Only this time it is not Rome that is at stake, but the priceless and finite past. The Slack Farm affair has made me wonder for the first time if, perhaps, it is already too late.

#### **4. WHOSE PAST?**

Archaeologists are scientists, who use scientific methods from many disciplines to reconstruct human history from about 2.5 million years ago up to the very threshold of modern times. We archaeologists have a linear view of history, and think of the past in evolutionary terms, as a long chronicle of complex, very diverse human biological and cultural evolution. A century ago, pioneer anthropologists thought of such evolution in very simplistic terms, for they often assumed that all human societies had developed from the very simple, epitomized by the Australian Aborigines, through a stage of village farming (The Tonga of Central Africa), to the ultimate pinnacle of human achievement: modern industrial civilization. Such unilinear perspectives on human evolution with all their racist overtones, have long been discredited. The modern evolutionary perspective recognizes that human biological and cultural evolution proceeded along many diverse strands, that the archaeology of today is a unique way of studying the beginnings of human diversity in the remote past.

For years, archaeologists assumed that science offered the only viable perspective on the past, partly because they felt that science was more important than traditional history, and the only legitimate way to study the human past. Furthermore, most archaeologists are Westerners, their discipline a product of Western civilization. Many of them wear cultural blinders, which make it hard for them to envisage alternative perspectives on the past held with equal passion by other societies, other groups. Archaeologists have also taken a forthright stand on science

because of the widespread popularity of pseudo-archaeologies, which preach that ancient astronauts once colonized earth, or that early civilizations flourished under Antarctic ice 12,000 years ago. Such archaeologies are specious nonsense, and a far cry from legitimate claims about the ways in which people learn about the past voiced by native Americans, Australian Aborigines, and other groups.

Many native Americans consider archaeology an irrelevant insult to their history. They point to their own origin legends, to their world view, which is based on a cyclical, not a linear, view of time. Southwestern kivas, for example, like those at Chaco Canyon or Mesa Verde, are symbolic representations of the primordial underworld from which humans emerged to people the earth. "In the beginning there was only Tokpella, Endless Space ... Only Tawa, the Sun Spirit, existed, along with some lesser gods. There were no people then, merely insect-like creatures who lived in a dark cave deep in the earth," says a Hopi origin myth. Tawa led the creatures through two levels of the world. Eventually they climbed up a bamboo stalk through the sipapuni, the doorway in the sky, into the Upper World. There the gods gave them corn and told them to place a small sipapuni in the floor of each kiva. Kivas symbolize the layered Pueblo Indian world. Here, to this day, people discuss the affairs of the community, decided when to plant and harvest crops, plan rituals and train the young. In a Pueblo Indian world, where time is measured by the passing of the seasons, by times of rainfall, planting, and harvest, the linear view of the past espoused by archaeologists seems irrelevant. History is closely tied to the fact of human existence, to an expectation that present and future generations will inherit the same world as their ancestors.

As an example of a native American creation story, here is an Iroquois Thanksgiving address, Kano'honyohko, "let it be used for greeting," which gives you some idea of the complexity of these myths:

### **Prologue: The People**

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- [1] And now today, on this our day
- [2] We see the light of another dawn spreading over the earth.
- [3] He who in the sky dwells gave us this kind of light to make us happy.
- [4] Now we have entered the council house. He decided, "This is where the people will gather, those who follow my way"
- [5] The first thing we always do when we come together is to greet one another.
- [6] Today a number of people have arrived at the place our forefathers established long ago.

- [7] It is the place where the tribes comprising the Iroquois Confederacy stiff meet, and where the Onondaga meet separately.
- [8] So let us now join our minds together as one and greet one another in the prescribed way. And so our minds shall be.

## The Earth

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- [9] And now we shall speak about another thing: the place from which our voices go forth.
- [10] First we mention the earth, the island he created for the Indians.
- [11] He decided, "People will live in different settlements here and there from one generation to the next."
- [12] He provided everything that is on earth, the one we call our Mother,
- [13] For he planted all the things that grow here. When it turns warm again and the planted things begin to grow, the people who remain on the earth are contented in their minds.
- [14] The first thing we see every year is the sap flowering from a certain tree. We call it the maple, and it is the leading tree in the forest.
- [15] He decided, "People will come together and give thanks when they see the sap flowering, the people who still remain."
- [16] And it has come to pass. At the prescribed time we did come together and thanked him, he who in the sky dwells, our Creator.
- [17] And now another thing. He decided, "There will be berries hanging close to the earth. It starts with the strawberry." The time of the strawberry is important, because that is when our Creator decided to send his word back to the people remaining on the earth,
- [18] At that time long ago our Creator's word, the word is still understand, alighted on the earth.
- [19] It is guiding us today, and it will continue to do so all our days. For our Creator's word still comes to us from the time it first alighted, the time when the strawberries were beginning to ripen.
- [20] Indeed we saw them again at the prescribed time this year, and this brought us together in a gathering to rejoice and to thank our Creator for what he did so many years ago.
- [21] And now another thing he left us. He decided that people should have food.

- [22] “They will make it their business, those who remain on the earth, to plant crops. And at certain time it will happen:
- [23] They will place the seeds underground.” That is what he gave the people for food, he who in the sky dwells.
- [24] These are the life-giving plants: corn, beans, and squash-native squash. He gave us these plants for food. He decided, “These will strengthen the breath of those who remain on the earth.
- [25] They will bring contentments to the people. And he also decided that when the people see the food crops again, they should come together and give thanks to him in the sky dwells. They should address the Creator with the Four Sacred Rites, which he provided expressly for this purpose, he who in the sky dwells. “They will do this when they see the food crops growing again.”
- [26] And indeed it took place. At the prescribed time we came together and thanked him, he who in the sky dwells. It was the gathering he had expressly provided for this purpose: it consists of the Four Sacred Rites, which he brought to us from his world. And it continues even to today. So let us again bring our minds together as one and express our gratitude.
- [27] He also provided medicinal plants. He decided, “Whenever the need arises and people are sick, medicines can be used to help them prolong their days.”
- [28] And indeed they are still growing. When the wind turns warm, we always see them. It is all coming to pass as he planned it, he who in the sky dwells.
- [29] Also among the things he created are creeks, rivers, and springs and the various larger bodies of water here and there, some of them very large. He decided, “These will bring strength to the earth and contentment to the people who remain on the earth.”
- [30] And this also he decided. “There will be fish moving about the water, and people will subsist on them and obtain their happiness from them. Their breath will be strengthened by them.” And it is still going on.
- [31] He also created many kinds of wild animals, and he determined that they would benefit the people remaining on the earth.
- [32] Among the animals is the deer, which is the leader of the wild animals.
- [33] He decided, “Venison will be used to flavor the soup the people make when the Four Sacred Rites are celebrated. It will make the soup taste good. So the warriors should go out and bring a deer down for this purpose.”

- [34] We still see the wild animals from time to time approaching our settlements as they roam about.
- [35] Different wild animals keep returning, and the breath of the people is strengthened by them.
- [36] All of these things are contained by the earth, our Mother, as we call her, that which supports our feet.
- [37] And now, for many things that she holds, let us join our minds together as one and give thanks for the earth, our Mother, as we call her, that which supports our feet. And so our minds shall be.

### **The Thunderers**

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- [38] And now we shall speak about another thing: the time when he completed the island for the people born here.
- [39] When he made the island for the people to dwell on, he created such a vast area that he thought the people might need some helpers.
- [40] The first ones he appointed were those that come from the west, our Grandfathers, as we call them.
- [41] They are the Thunderers, and we call them our Grandfathers.
- [42] He gave them the power to carry water around with them. They have a responsibility to replenish the springs, the creeks, the rivers, and the larger bodies of water, the lakes.
- [43] They supply all of the fresh water, our Grandfathers who come from the west.
- [44] And this we also understand: when he made the island for us, there were certain creatures roaming about that he did not create, and he saw that they could bring harm to the people born on the earth.
- [45] And this too became a responsibility of our Grandfathers, who come from the west. Our Creator forced the creatures underground and appointed the Thunderers to keep them there so that they would never emerge again to threaten the people who remain on the earth.
- [46] And up to the present time they are still carrying out the duties he assigned them, he who in the sky dwells.
- [47] Truly, they are carrying out all their duties, and they too bring us happiness. So let us join our minds together as one and thank the ones we call our Grandfathers, those who come from the west. And so our minds shall be.

## The Sun

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- [48] And now we shall speak about another thing.
- [49] He decided, "Light will shine over the creation at certain times as the people remaining on the earth move about. People will do what they have to do for their well-being during these times." A great deal depends on the light, and so he appointed him, the Sun, our Elder Brother, the Sun.
- [50] He gave him the power to provide light and to warm the circulating winds so that all the planted things would thrive and benefit the people remaining on the earth.
- [51] And up to the present time we have been obtaining our happiness from there. It is all coming to pass as it was planned for our Elder Brother, the Sun.
- [52] So let those of us who have gathered join our minds together as one and thank him in the prescribed way, the Sun who gives us light. And so our minds shall be.

### *Working with Native Americans*

For all the differences between archaeologists and native Americans, they share a common cause in their desire to preserve archaeological sites and sacred places from industrial development and looting. This means that they now work together closely in many ways. Some Southwestern tribes and other groups now maintain archaeology units, which work closely with tribal elders to preserve sacred places, the burial sites of ancestors, and sites generally. For example, the Hopi tribe's Cultural Preservation Office have used existing historic preservation legislation as a way of ensuring input into management decisions about archaeological sites on their reservations, and in adjacent areas.

The Hopi are trying to participate in the decision-making process as it affects their ancestral sites. Their tribe-funded Cultural Preservation Office includes a tribal archaeologist, project archaeologists, a transcriber, and Hopi research specialists. Its mandate is to preserve the "spiritual and cultural essence of the Hopi, encompassing . . . archaeology, ethnology, recovery of stolen sacred artifacts, farming, and the preservation of the Hopi language." As far as archaeology is concerned, the Cultural Preservation Office is developing appropriate ways for villages, clans, and religious societies to participate in ongoing research activities. Since clan histories are ritual knowledge, rarely shared with members of other clans, let alone non Indians, involvement of Hopi elders, the guardians of sacred knowledge, is vital. The Cultural Preservation Office works closely with an advisory group of representatives from each Hopi community, from clans, priesthoods, and religious societies, people who possess vital information for the management of cultural resources. The consultation process is very time-consuming, but essential to overcome the suspicions that

many Hopi have of archaeologists and other Western scientists. For example, the Hopi have stated that their participation in the process does not mean that they endorse a specific project or development. Their interest is in protecting as many sites as possible, not in facilitating their destruction. They will never condone the destruction of a site, but they will recommend mitigation through scientific study, on the grounds that a written report of an ancient site is better than no record at all, so that their memory is not lost for ever.

The Hopi definition of what is a site worth preserving is far wider than that of archaeologists. In legal terms, they, and other native American groups, define every ancestral archaeological site as a traditional cultural property to be protected and left alone. The same term “traditional cultural property” is applied to shrines, sacred sites, springs, quarries, also prehistoric land forms with place names commemorating prehistoric or historic events. Thus, archaeological sites play a central role in the transmission and retention of Hopi culture. Sites can be associated with broad patterns of Hopi history such as clan migrations, with ancestors significant in the Hopi past, as places with the potential to yield valuable historical information. In practical terms, this broad definition, which many archaeologists now accept, raises interesting problems. For example, the Hopi want sites registered in the state archaeological data bases, but they want to keep the location of certain cultural properties a secret. Both the archaeologists and the Hopi are working to develop accurate ways of defining sites which respect these concerns.

While many Native Americans are interested in preserving sites, they are not interested in archaeology as such. But the Hopi are interested in archaeology, in how archaeologists collect data, and how they analyze it. Some elders want to compare archaeological findings with their own system of knowledge. Points of agreement between archaeological and traditional data are often explained in the context of Hopi ritual knowledge. For instance, Hopi prophecies of a time when even the ash left by the ancestors will be used to prove their claims have been connected to the flotation methods used to dissect ancient hearths. Many archaeologists use the Hopi for developing ethnographic analogies with earlier peoples like the Anasazi. But they have done so inconsistently, and without the kind of intellectual rigor that the complexities of Hopi understanding of the ancient cultures of the Southwest demands.

The Hopi want to be treated as peers in archaeological research so that “their knowledge, values, and beliefs are respected in the same way that archaeologists respect one another when they differ in research methods or interpretations,” writes archaeologist T.J. Ferguson. They do not want to censor ideas or impose research designs on archaeologists. But they believe that not all information should be divulged, and that not all information is suitable for direct tribal involvement, Hopi standards as to what constitutes legitimate research are slowly evolving, as all parties involved become more familiar with one another, and as archaeology itself evolves. At the same time, tribal members may feel new needs to acquire information about

their past. Says Vernon Masayesva, Hopi tribal chairman: "When we talk about cultural preservation, it's not just because we want to save something, I think it's because we don't want to forget who we are as Hopis ... You will never know who you are unless you know where you came from. You never know where you are going unless you understand where you have been."

### *The Repatriation Issue*

Many Indian communities are incensed by the excavation of ancient burials and have pushed for laws forbidding such activity and compelling reburial or repatriation of excavated skeletons to their descendants. Their activist policies and a growing public awareness of the complex issues involved led to passage of the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.

The 1990 Act establishes two main requirements. First, all federal agencies and museums receiving federal funds are required to inventory their holdings of Native American human remains and associated funerary objects. This inventorying process also requires that agencies and museums establish, as best they can, whether their individual holdings have cultural affiliation, or, in the case of skeletons, lineal descendants with living Native American groups. If they do establish such relationships, then they are required to notify the relevant Native American organization of the existence of the materials, and to offer them the opportunity to repatriate them. Even if they have no cultural affiliation with museum holdings, or disagree with the museums identifications, a group can still request repatriation.

The second requirement protects all Native American graves and other cultural objects found within archaeological sites on federal and tribal land. This requirement encourages the in-situ preservation of archaeological sites, or at least those parts of them that contain graves. It also requires anyone carrying out archaeological investigation on federal and tribal lands to consult with affiliated or potentially affiliated Native Americans concerning the treatment and disposition of any finds, whether made during formal investigations or by accident. The Repatriation Act also stipulates that illegal trafficking in human remains or cultural objects may result in criminal penalties, authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to set up a grant program to assist museums and Indian tribes in complying with the law, and authorizes the development of regulations to administer the provisions of the Act in consultation with a national review committee.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act will have a profound effect on the way in which American archaeologists go about their business, for it mandates a level of consultation and concern for Native American rights that is far greater than has been the norm in the United States. This is quite apart from the scientific impact on the study of ancient Native American populations. There may be as many as 600,000 Native American human skeletons in museums, histori-

cal societies, universities, and private collections. There are some 18,500 in the Smithsonian Institution alone.

Native Americans feel deeply about repatriation for many complex reasons, if nothing else because they are concerned to preserve old traditions and values as a way of addressing current social ills. The scientists, for their part, are afraid that they will lose their data base, which, from their perspective, is an intellectual crime.

There will be no quick resolution of the repatriation issue, however promptly and sensitively archaeologists and their institutions respond to Native American concerns and comply with the provisions of the 1990 Act. Many of the issues are inchoate, of great moral importance and sensitivity, and address basic questions about the morality of all archaeological research. Only one thing is certain no archaeologist in North America, and probably elsewhere, will be able to excavate a prehistoric or historic burial without the most careful and sensitive preparation. This involves working closely with native peoples in ways that archaeologists have not imagined until recently. And nothing but good can come of this.

Collaboration between native peoples and archaeologists involves far more than management and mitigation. It involves profound respect and sensitivity toward the values and expectations of others in the interests of the long-term public good.

## **5. THE PLEASURE OF RUINS BY ROSE MACAULAY.**

The human race is, and has always been, ruin-minded. The literature of all ages has found beauty in the dark and violent forces, physical and spiritual, of which ruin is one symbol. The symbols change; the need does not. Oedipus, Clytemnestra, Atreus, Medea, children slain and served up in pies to their parents, all the atrocious horrors of Greek drama, of Seneca, of Dante's hell, of Tasso, of the Elizabethans and Jacobean — these have a profoundly ruinous and welcome gloom, far greater than that of the romantic ruined towers, the bats, toads and ghosts that were so fashionable in eighteenth-century poetry. Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster, Ford, have all the properties — mass murder, torture, rape, loathsome dungeons and caves, haunted castles, minatory ghosts, witches, blasted heaths, blindings, madness, owls and flitting bats, adders and speckled toads, monstrous passions, suicide, revenge; it is indeed a ruined and ruinous world they inhabit and portray, and no eighteenth century ruin-poet can hold a candle to them. The ghastly owl shrieks his baleful note in both; the horrid worms twine about the cold corpse in the mouldering grave; there was not much that the later century could add.

What it did add was a kind of cheerful enjoyment of the dismal scene, a brisk, approving gaiety, expressed in firm octosyllabic or decasyllabic lines, with satisfied enumerations of the gloomy objects perceived; and a good moral at the end, as in Dyer's Grongar Hill...

As the century proceeded, fashionable gloom increased. By 1745 it was a mode which young poets adopted with fervour. . . ruin, horror, gloom, adders, toads, bats, screech-owls, ivy, wasted towers, Gothic romance, multiplied cheerfully, in poetry, prose and paint. The vast ruined vaults of Piranesi soared before nostalgic eyes; the dark roads stretched back to a formidably romantic past that haunted the mind, an escape from the utilitarian present; before the century's end there was to be Goethe, innumerable writers of Gothic romances, and Hubert Robert of the Ruins, who saw little else worth his painting, and even put the Louvre into picturesque wreckage, as Joseph Gandy later put the Bank of England. Painters, poets, novelists and the general public had come to express articulately what they had from the earliest times unconsciously felt—that there's a fascination frantic in a ruin that's romantic.

Should they desire to know why, Diderot could tell them. He exhorted Robert (one would think unnecessarily) to realize that ruins have a poetry of their own. "You don't know", he said. "Why ruins give so much pleasure. I will tell you . . . Everything dissolves, everything perishes, everything passes, only time goes on . . . How old the world is. I walk between two eternities. . . What is my existence in comparison with this crumbling stone?"

Be that as it may, the realization of mortality does seem to have been the dominant emotion to which ruins then led; or possibly it was only the emotion best understood.

Today we are perhaps more objective: we consider the ruined building itself, its age and its history - the visible effects of history in terms of decay. More simply, ruin is part of the general Weltschmerz, Sehnsucht, malaise, nostalgia, Angst, frustration, sickness, passion of the human soul; it is the eternal symbol. Literature and art have always carried it; it has had as a fashion, its UPS and downs, but the constant mood and appetite is there. The symptoms do, however, vary at different stages of history and culture; and early in the eighteenth century one charming new symptom emerged. The wind of fashion blew (who can predict when or why it blows?), and it was natural that the active and outdoor British should be blown by it from their contemplation of ruin in pictures and literature and ancient abbeys into their gardens and parks, where they could throw up new ruins of their own. . . . Producing new Tivolis, ruined temples and all, proved an immensely charming occupation for estate owners, and ruins came into their own as objects in a landscape, picturesque and exciting in themselves and artistic in their relation to the design of the whole.

So began the fashion of building artificial ruins, which raged over Europe through the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth . . . ruins, classical, Gothic, and even Chinese, sprang up in every fashionable gentleman's grounds, in Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. . . garden vistas terminated in ruined objects, classical temples adorned lakes, Baalbek, Palmyra and Paestum lifted their towers on wooded slopes, Gothic castles, bearing "the true rust

of the Barons' Wars" were commissioned as lodges in parks; cowsheds and dairies, built Roman-ruin-fashion, stood in the cattle yards, landscapes were laid out with ruined temples or abbeys at advantageous points, and ruined hermitages, complete with hermit, hidden in thickets. It was a delicious game; everyone in the fashionable world played it. . . .

The architects rose to this new opportunity for their skill, and the ruins went up. First the fortified Gothic castles and farms, unruined, like Vanbrugh's fortified buildings at Castle Howard; then Lord Bathurst's Alfreds Hall, a sham ruined castle set in woods in his grounds; there followed sham facades innumerable, rising, blandly and naively sly, charmingly and tranquilly hypocritical shells, on what their constructors called eminences. . . . All have the interest of commemorating a period taste, of having once gratified that eternal ruin-appetite which consumes the febrile and fantastic human mind. . . . The hobby has persisted sporadically into our own day, though our present surfeit of real ruins has now probably halted it. . . . Not that the ruin craving has past; indeed, its unconscious urge may be working, with inverted zest, to create more of them in all lands. Literature and art are still ruin-grounded; still the bat flits. . . . But it may be hard, in the future, to treat ruins as toys. . . .

New ruins have not yet acquired the weathered patina of age, the true rust of the barons' wars, not yet put on their ivy, nor equipped themselves with the appropriate bestiary of lizards, bats, screech-owls, serpents, speckled toads and little foxes which, as has been so frequently observed by ruin-explorers, hold high revel in the precincts of old ruins (such revelling. . . though noted with pleasure. . . is seldom described in detail; possibly the jackal waltzes with the toad, the lizard with the fox, while the screech-owl supplies the music and they all glory and drink deep among the tumbled capitals). But new ruins are for a time stark and bare, vegetationless and creatureless; blackened and torn, they smell of fire and mortality.

It will not be for long. Very soon trees will be thrusting through the empty window sockets, the rose bay and fennel blossoming within the broken walls, the brambles tangling outside them. Very soon the ruin will be enjungled, engulfed, and the appropriate creatures will revel. Even ruins in city streets win, if they are left alone, come, soon or late, to the same fate. Month by month it grows harder to trace the streets around them; here, we see, is the lane of tangled briars that was a street of warehouses; there, in those jungled caverns stood the large tailor's shop; where those grassy paths cross, a board swings, bearing the name of a tavern. We stumble among stone foundations and fragments of cellar walls, among the ghosts of the exiled merchants and publicans who there carried on their gainful trades. Shells of churches gape empty; over broken altars the small yellow dandelions make their pattern. All this will presently be; but at first there is only the ruin; a mass of torn, charred prayer books strew the stone floor; the statues, tumbled from their niches, have broken in pieces; rafters and rubble pile knee-deep. But often the ruin has put on, in its catastrophic tipsy chaos, a bizarre new charm. What was last week a drab little house

has become a steep flight of stairs winding up in the open between gaily coloured walls, tiled lavatories, interiors bright and intimate like a Dutch picture or a stage set; the stairway climbs up and up, undaunted, to the roofless summit where it meets the sky. The house has put on melodrama; people stop to stare; here is a domestic scene wide open for all to enjoy. Tomorrow or tonight, the gazers feel, their own dwelling may be even as this. Last night the house was scenic; flames leaping to the sky, today it is squalid and worn, but out of its dereliction it flaunts the flags of what is left.

The larger ruins are more sad; they have lost more. Nothing can have been more melancholy than the first shattered aspect of the destroyed abbeys before they took on the long patience and endurance of time; they were murdered bodies, their wounds gaped and bled. Their tragedy was like the tragedy of the revolution destroyed chateaux of France, or the burnt great houses of Ireland, or the cities razed of old by conquerors; the silence brooded heavily round them, as the silence broods over the garden and woods of uprooted Coole. Burnt Hafod crumbled on the mountain like a staunchless grief; Appuldurcombe disintegrated beautifully in all the morbid shades of a fading bruise; Seaton Delaval is swallowed and exquisite in death; Holland House a wrecked Whig dream among gardens. The bombed churches and cathedrals of Europe give us, on the whole, nothing but resented sadness, like the bombed cities. All the same Monte Cassino put on with wreckage a new dignity, a beauty scarcely in the circumstances bearable; it looked finer than at any time since its last restorations. Caen, Rouen, Coventry, the City churches, the German and Belgian cathedrals, brooded in stark gauntness redeemed only a little by pride; one reflects that with just such pangs of anger and loss people in other centuries looked on those ruins newly made which today have mellowed into ruin plus beau que la beauti.

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