Arq. en Aguas Profundas III
Especialización en Patrimonio Cultural Sumergido
Cohorte 2019

Filipe Castro
Bogotá, April 2019

Ethics
Part 1
Marine archaeologists reconstruct historical environments from archaeological sites.
Marine archaeologists destroy the sites they dig. Archaeological sites are buried archives. We describe digging as reading a book by tearing each page read to get to the page below.
Recording is a responsibility.
Sharing raw, primary data is the only guarantee that we are serious.

In his introduction to the Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology (2011), George Bass pointed out that, as a class, archaeologists have a track record of negligence: it seems that we publish about 25% of the sites we destroy. Bass’ assumption is based on a number of studies suggesting that over the last 50 years less than 25% of the materials and results of professional archaeological excavations have been properly published (Boardman 2009), 70% of the Near East excavations have not been published (Atwood 2007 and Owen 2009), and that perhaps 80% of all Italian archaeological materials remain unpublished (Stoddart and Malone 2001). It is difficult to argue that the situation in maritime archaeology is better than those mentioned above.


Treasure hunting secrecy stems from a different cause: treasure hunters cannot afford to let us see what they do the shipwrecks they salvage.

It is said that Geldermalsen was dynamited after the salvage operations to prevent the Indonesian authorities to identify the site and sue the treasure hunters.
Treasure hunting secrecy stems from a different cause: treasure hunters cannot afford to let us see what they do the shipwrecks they salvage.

Archaeology should be primarily a public thing.
The importance of the maritime cultural heritage
It is difficult to imagine a healthy society that is completely oblivious about its past.
Identity, community feelings, a sense of meaning and continuity, are important values for society.

Studies show that most people are happier in an environment that conveys a sense of permanence and stability.
Urban planners claim that the cultural heritage is the “soul” of a landscape. Even bad memories are important for the community.
History is a source of wisdom
The value of History was summarized by Howard Zinn:

If we don’t know our past, we will have to trust our politicians!
The cultural heritage is continuously being created and destroyed.
War is a major cause of destruction,

The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the USA were war crimes, and also crimes against the world cultural heritage.
Byzantine churches were systematically destroyed in the former Soviet block… and now we are destroying Soviet monuments without thinking.
The Chinese Cultural Revolution destroyed and created culture and art.
The American invasion of Iraq...
The Islamic State destructions in the Middle East are perhaps the most recent example...
Economic development is another important cause of the destruction of past material culture.
Palliative measures are often expensive and nobody wants to pay the bills.
Greed is another.
Lack of interest from the authorities…

Artifacts dredged from the Arade River by the harbor authorities without archaeological supervision.

Roman shipwreck dredged at Foz do Arade, 1982. Its cargo of amphorae was salvaged and sold in the 1970s (pers. inf. Robert Marx).
trawling,

AVANT

POUR 3 POISSONS PÊCHÉS, PLUS DE 100 ESPÈCES SACRIFIÉES, REJETÉES MORTES À LA MER. PARMI ELLES, DES ESPÈCES MENACÉES D’EXTINCTION.
...harbor works,
...dredging,
All that survived from an early 16th century Portuguese shipwreck in Madagascar.

...looting,
...treasure hunting,
...and archaeology.
Archaeologists publish less than 25% of the sites they dig (destroy).
Why study and preserve the cultural heritage?

I. Educated societies (with large middle classes) are stronger, healthier, and smarter.
Treasure hunting is the privatization of the underwater cultural heritage.
It is a consequence of inequality and lack of democratic values.
While middle classes are being eroded in the west, they are growing globally.
And middle classes are the consumers of cultural productions: libraries, museums, concert halls, orchestras, opera houses, literary magazines, books...
Why preserve the cultural heritage?

II. “You can’t do much carpentry with your bare hands, and you can’t do much thinking with your bare brain.”
Daniel Dennett’s student Bo Dahlbom.
Why preserve the cultural heritage?

…you can’t do much thinking with your bare brain.”
Bo Dahlbom.

The Cultural Heritage is a powerful source of thinking tools!
James Flynn demonstrated that, with exactly the same bare brains, statistically we score much higher today in IQ tests that we did 80 years ago.

History is a source of wisdom, or it is nothing!
Daniel Dennett contends that thinking tools (and intuition pumps) are apps that we upload to our necktops.
Why preserve the cultural heritage?

III. Cultural identity ensures some diversity in the globalized world.

Diverse societies are smarter.
In the West there is pressure to reduce public funding for research and cut taxes on the wealthier.

US House ‘Science, Space and Technology Committee’ Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) is skeptical of the value of taxpayer-supported research.
This trend is not equal around the world. For instance, America advocates small government and deregulated capitalism; Europe defends that a society dominated by the markets offers less individual and social options.


Paris is famous for its large and widely advertised budget public projects (left Louvre and right Quai d’Orsay). This policy was criticized on an ideological basis, not economic: eg. Fumaroli vs. Jack Lang.
Taxes & Subsidies: “Germany’s public arts funding, for example, allows the country to have 23 times more full-time symphony orchestras per capita than the United States, and approximately 28 times more full-time opera houses.”

William Osborne, 2004

Democracy problem: the production of one hour of opera may cost more than most people can afford.
Europeans tend to see society as an organism that cannot survive without intellectual elites.

Recruiting, training, and stimulating intellectual elites requires public funding (e.g. taxpayer-supported research.)
We build things from the top down. We need intellectual elites. And they need culture, history, art, philosophy…
Europeans try to regulate capitalism because they believe that it destroys traditional culture and ways of living; that it is a leveling force that makes the world homogenous.
Capitalism may breed alienation, uniformity and conformism.
Ray Kroc, one of the founders of McDonald’s, (...) angered by some of his franchises: “We have found out ... that we cannot trust some people who are nonconformists. We will make conformists out of them in a hurry. ... The organization cannot trust the individual; the individual must trust the organization.” The very nature of a mass market is conformity in both product and customer.

The value of archaeological ship remains
To be or not to be intrusive

I. Research excavations: carried out to study, understand the past, and answer research questions.

San Juan (1565) shipwreck, excavated by Parks Canada.
To be or not to be intrusive.

II. Emergency excavations: carried out to save and rescue what can be saved and rescued from destruction by contractors and developers.

Newport Ship, saved by the City of Newport.
III. Assessments: carried out on sites that have been destroyed, for instance, by treasure hunters.

Playa Damas shipwreck, repeatedly salvaged by treasure hunters.
To be or not to be intrusive

IV. Conservation in situ: when sites are preserved for posterity.

*Grace Dieu*: reconstruction of what it may have looked like in the 1420s.

In the early 20th century.

Today.
Preservation in situ (is not forever)
Archaeological diving parks
Investigations can be through drawing, photography, wreck survey, biological survey, or historical research. In 2013, Ships’ Timbers Adopted the Flying Foam wreck under the NAS Adopt a Wreck Scheme.

Image Above: Flying Foam Wreck February, 2015
Museums

Nanhai No. 1
Mary Rose, 1545
Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde
Bodrum Museum
Turkey
1. Often shipwreck timbers are ugly and not interesting to the public;
2. It is difficult to design a museum that attracts the same public regularly;
3. The treatment and retreatment of waterlogged wood is expensive.

The answer is *creativity*. 
The evolution of ideas is wasteful and feeds on the chaos and randomness of brainstorming. Creativity has always been a part of archaeological thought, and images are less secret than 20 years ago. A lot must still be done regarding copyright restrictions (fair use) to the use of archaeological images. Art is a solution for the promotion and interpretation of archaeological data.
Trends: We can safely say that technology is changing everything, including museums
School books & interactive sites
Publications

- Primary data
- Reports
- Peer Reviewed Papers
- Books
- Documentaries
- Magazines
Other publics

Archaeology including increasingly multiple publics and multiple narratives about archaeological remains.
I. Contract Archaeology

Contract archaeology firms have amazing archives, with large amounts of information that can be analyzed and data mined.
II. Public Archaeology

Promoting the debate “surrounding archaeological and heritage issues as they relate to the wider world of politics, ethics, government, social questions, education, management, economics and philosophy.”

Wikipedia
III. Didactic Archaeology

Promoting archaeological sites as learning environments that encourage the public – which includes K-12 students – to ask questions, wide and narrow and research them through archaeology.
IV. Critical Archaeology

Trying to provoke critical thinking and engage the public on debates on social issues such as power structures, class struggle, or inequality and ecology.
V. Community Archaeology

Engaging local, descendant, or ideologically related communities in the development of projects around archaeological sites.

Hodder’s work at Çatalhöyük
The internet

- Primary data
- Reports
- Peer Reviewed Papers
- Books
- Documentaries
- Magazines
- The internet
Reconstruction of past environments

- Reports
- Peer Reviewed Papers
- Books
- Documentaries
- Magazines
- Cartoons
- Scale Models
- Virtual Models

- Descriptive
- Interactive
- Games
Reconstructing Historical Environments
Virtual reconstructions of the past are excellent strategies to share archaeological data.
Different approaches…
Reconstructions can be cartoonish, like the Belgium 1960s’ Blake and Mortimer adventures…
Spielberg used a lot of these cartoons as sources of inspiration
Neolithic House

1/1 Models
Scale Models
Pitfalls: reconstructions must be as accurate as possible, and indicate what we know and what we are deducing.

**Anastylosis** (from the Ancient Greek: αναστήλωσις, -εως; ανα, ana = "again", and στηλόω = "to erect (a stela or building)") is an archaeological term for a reconstruction technique whereby a ruined building or monument is restored using the original architectural elements to the greatest degree possible.
Nobody knows if this is even close to the original.
Pitfalls: cultural bias

Often reconstructions picture men as strong and powerful and women as less important, taking care of children...
Pitfalls

Biased reconstructions
American author David Macaulay made a famous parody about the dangers of overinterpretation...
Archaeology is about our history. It celebrates life and diversity: culture, taste, history, and civilization. It must be shared, cherished, and present in everyday life. It is the story of us, our families, friends, regions, countries, neighbors, and Humanity.
Questions?