

Philadelphia
and the
Development
of Americanist
Archaeology

Edited by

DON D. FOWLER *and* DAVID R. WILCOX



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Foreword

PHILADELPHIA HAS NOT FARED WELL in the popular imagination. In leafing through a variety of books on famous quotations, I have found that from Mark Twain (“In Boston they ask, How much does he know? In New York, How much is he worth? In Philadelphia, Who were his parents?”) to Howard Ogden (“Philadelphia: all the filth and corruption of a big city; all the pettiness and insularity of a small town”); from S. J. Perelman (“Philadelphia, a metropolis sometimes known as the City of Brotherly Love, but more accurately as the City of Bleak November Afternoons”) to Stephen Birmingham (“But in Philadelphia, Philadelphians feel, the Right Thing is more natural and more firmly bred in [them] than anywhere else”), and perhaps most famously in the epitaph proposed by W. C. Fields (“On the whole I’d rather be in Philadelphia”), Philadelphia has frequently been mocked for its presumed narrow-mindedness and isolation.

However, in the realm of scholarly leadership, in general, and archaeological advancement, in particular, “the city that loves you back,” according to one of its recent marketing slogans, has played crucial but sometimes underappreciated roles in American intellectual history, especially after the Franklin-Jefferson era. As recent books by Bruce Kuklick (*Puritans in Babylon: The Ancient Near East and American Intellectual Life, 1880–1930*) and Steven Conn (*Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926*), among others, have shown, Philadelphia people and institutions have facilitated the growth of both Old World and New World archaeology.

As the director of one of the institutions that has been an essential part of the fabric of archaeological endeavors in Philadelphia over the past 115 years, I have been delighted to learn new things about the history of the city and even about my own museum from the papers in this volume. I also have been intrigued by the stimulating analyses of some of its most notable archaeologi-

cal figures, many of whom finally receive the attention herein that they obviously deserve.

In recent years, the Society for American Archaeology's biennial Gordon R. Willey Symposium on the History of American Archaeology has brought much needed attention to the history of archaeology. The 2000 Willey Symposium from which this highly useful volume emanates was no exception, and the excellent chapters in this book clearly advance scholarly understandings of the development of American archaeology in both its intellectual and social contexts. Although Gordon Willey did not live to see the appearance of this significant contribution, I am certain that he would have applauded its publication and the richness of the information and interpretations of the role that Philadelphia played in the history of the discipline.

JEREMY A. SABLOFF
Philadelphia, May 2002

Introduction

DON D. FOWLER AND DAVID R. WILCOX

WHEN WE WERE ASKED BY the Society for American Archaeology to organize the third Gordon Willey Symposium in the History of Archaeology, we thought first of the venue where the symposium would occur: Philadelphia. Philadelphians have long been actively involved in the organizing, funding, and doing of archaeology. Much of the organizing, funding, and doing has been carried out through, or the results published by, three vital and venerable cultural institutions, the American Philosophical Society (APS), founded in 1743 (Bell 1997, Carter 1993), the Academy of Natural Sciences, founded 1812 (Nolan 1913), and the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, founded 1893 (Dyson 1998, Winegrad 1993). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines archaeology as “ancient history generally; systematic description or study of antiquities,” and more narrowly as “the scientific study of the remains and monuments of the prehistoric period,” noting that the term was seemingly first used in 1607 but did not come into common usage until after 1851. Prior to that time, “antiquities” was the commonly used term, denoting phenomena studied by “antiquarians.” By whatever name, archaeology in the broad sense has been of interest to Philadelphians for two and a half centuries, and many of them, both through and outside the society, academy, and museum, have made signal contributions thereto over time.

The essays in this volume focus on Philadelphians who were concerned with Americanist archaeology, or in older parlance, the “Archaeology of the New World.” Even before the founding of the University Museum, there was also widespread interest in classical archaeology of the Old World, broadly construed to include Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. This interest, and the individuals and institutions through which they worked, are thor-

oughly described by Dyson (1998), Kuklick (1996), and Winegrad (1993); hence we deliberately limited the symposium to Americanist work.

AMERICANIST RESEARCH AGENDAS

Elsewhere, we have discussed the historical development of Americanist archaeology in terms of changing research agendas centered on a series of questions about the culture histories of Native American peoples (Fowler 2000, Fowler and Wilcox 1999, Wilcox and Fowler 2002). It is useful to summarize that approach here to provide context for the papers in the present volume. The most basic question in Americanist studies, a question extant for over five hundred years, is that of "origins." When Europeans began speculating about the peoples they encountered in the New World in 1492 and after, questions one and two were "When and by what routes did they get here?" Question three was "Who are these people?" That is, "To which populations in the Old World are they related?" Question four was "How can we answer questions one to three?" (Huddleston 1967, Josephy 1991, Milanich and Milbraith 1989, Royal 1992). Five centuries later, those questions are still on the table. As Europeans, and later, Euroamericans, spread across North, Central, and South America in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, they encountered a bewildering variety of native peoples, customs, and languages, as well as tens of thousands of archaeological ruins attesting to a long pre-European culture history of unknown duration but obvious great complexity. Questions five, six, and seven were "How can we account for this complex variety of living peoples, languages, and societies?"; "What are the historical relationships between and among the various ruins?"; and "What are the links (if any) between the ruins and the living native peoples?" Five centuries later, those questions remain on the table.

The history of Americanist archaeology/culture history over the past five centuries can be traced through changing theoretical frameworks, methods of investigation, and accepted canons of evidence (Fowler 2000:23–30, 50–71, 79–103, 233–46). Within archaeology, the central methodological question is "How do you get from the distributions of artifacts, ecofacts [plant and animal remains], and geofacts [soils, sediments, minerals], and their relationships on and in the ground, to valid statements about past human behavior within specific theoretical frameworks?" (Hardesty and Fowler 2001:73; see also Butzer 1982, Clarke 1973). Each theoretical framework carries with it agreed-upon research methods and canons of evidence. These structure how

the “getting from . . . to” is done, as well as the “validity” of each statement about past human behavior. Americanist archaeology qua culture history has also pursued genetic models, attempting to link archaeological remains with populations of humans (living or dead) and extant or reconstructed languages. Nearly all Americanist attempts to answer the origins and culture history questions have made such linkages.

EARLY INQUIRIES

Answers to some or all of our seven questions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were based on speculation derived from the vagaries of biblical, classical, or legendary sources (Huddleston 1967). The development of Enlightenment science brought more structured forms of inquiry and new canons of evidence within a natural science framework. Research agendas for Americanist archaeology began to be formulated in the 1780s by members of the APS. These Enlightenment scholars, especially Benjamin Smith Barton, Peter S. Duponceau, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Rush, had strong anthropological interests within the general Enlightenment concern to develop a “science of man”—anthropology in the broad sense. Anthropology, as it developed within an Enlightenment framework, was—and is—concerned with how humans came to be, how and when they got where they are across the globe, and with their *commensurability*—how and why they are alike and different in their physical makeups, psyches, languages, societies, and cultures (Fowler 2000:15). From the time of Columbus on, the commensurability question was critical: European savants heatedly debated whether Indian peoples were, or were not, fully commensurable with Europeans. If they were judged not to be, that somehow justified, or made easier, conquest, ethnocide, and slavery. The origins issue was critical also since under European’s international law, whichever nation’s people first arrived in a pagan land, that nation had precedence in staking later claims to ownership and exploitation of that land and its peoples. Thus in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it mattered a great deal if one or another Indian population could be shown to have derived from somewhere in Europe or even Asia, since that might impinge on a later claim by Spain, France, or England (Seed 1995).

By the end of the eighteenth century, both the origins and commensurability issues were still important, but in different frames of reference, using different canons of evidence. Enlightenment science required the application of reason and inductive methods of data collection. Earlier ideas about the

origins of the Indians had centered on vague legends about the Lost Tribes of Israel or purported migrations or voyages by one or another European, Asian, or even African group. But in the 1780s, a more scientific data set was required. Scholars in Europe and India were busily demonstrating the existence of, and genetic connections within, various language families and the implications of those connections for culture history. If genetic linguistic connections could be demonstrated between one or more Old World and New World languages, that would be “hard” evidence for determining origins. This approach was taken up by Benjamin Smith Barton (1797, 1809), who attempted a comparative linguistic study of Old and New World languages. It was not successful because he did not have comparable sets of words for each language; sets of “common appellations,” as Jefferson (1944) called them. Jefferson circulated vocabulary lists to develop such data sets. Together with fellow APS member Peter Stephen Duponceau and others, he set in motion an Americanist research agenda item pursued for most of the nineteenth century: a general linguistic classification of American Indian languages, culminating in classifications by the Philadelphia patrician and polymath, Daniel Garrison Brinton (1891; see Darnell 1988, and Darnell, and Hinsley, herein) and John Wesley Powell (1892) of the Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution.

The commensurability issue took on other dimensions. The great French savant Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, and his sycophant apologist Cornelius de Pauw, argued that New World plants and animals, including the Indians, were weaker, less robust, and less fertile than Old World populations. Jefferson’s (1944) *Notes on Virginia*, published in 1784, was written in refutation of Buffon’s assertions, as was the Mexican Jesuit scholar Clavigero’s (1979 [1787]) *History of Mexico* (see Gerbi 1973).

As the nascent United States began its inexorable Westward expansion and European nations continued their worldwide colonialist/imperialist domination of much of the world, and as both began to cope with issues of slavery and ethnocide, anthropological commensurability took on new meanings. Among the books in Benjamin Smith Barton’s library was a copy of the German anatomist Johann Friederich Blumenbach’s (1865 [1786–95]) *Anthropological Treatises* . . . (Ewan 1986:321). It was Blumenbach who established the idea that careful metrical analyses of human crania would provide a true “scientific” basis for distinguishing between “races” and that “cranial capacity,” expressed in cubic centimeters, provided an index of relative intelligence between and among races. The history of the application and misapplication of

craniometry and anthropometry in the service of racism is well-chronicled elsewhere (Barkan 1992, Shipman 1994). Our purpose in noting it has to do with Samuel George Morton, the Philadelphia physician and savant who was a major figure in the development of craniometric studies in relation to culture history (see below).

When Euroamericans began moving beyond the Appalachians into the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, they marveled at the thousands of mysterious burial mounds and earthen structures of the Mound Builders. Who were the Mound Builders, where had they gone, and when? How did they relate to the origins question? Did the ancestors of the historic Indians build mounds, or had some other people(s) done so (Kennedy 1994, Silverberg 1968)? To answer these and related questions about the Indians, the APS issued a circular in 1799 (Jefferson et al. 1799). It called for systematic compilations of linguistic, ethnographic, and historic data on the Indians and the collection of archaeological data including maps, plans, and detailed verbal descriptions. The APS circular, together with Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*, are regarded as charters for American anthropology (Hallowell 1960:16–18).

There were some immediate replies to the archaeological queries in the circular (e.g., Sargent 1799), as summarized by Benjamin Smith Barton (1799). The circular was reprinted, and replies dribbled in for years (e.g., Turner 1802, H. H. Brackenridge 1818, and C. W. Short and M. D. Plate 1818). The APS continued to be actively involved in reporting Americanist anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Wissler 1942, Carter 1993, Goddard 1996), as well as providing research support once the society's grants program was initiated.

After 1821, with the opening of the Santa Fe Trail into the province of Nuevo Mexico, Americans began to note the thousands of ruins in what came to be called the American Southwest. Who had built and then abandoned the ruins? Where had the people gone? How did the ancient southwesterners relate to the Mound Builders and/or to the ancient civilizations of Mexico (Fowler 2000:50–70)?

By 1846, when the United States invaded Mexico, the basic research agenda for Americanist archaeology was in place. The first major item was the origins question. It was by then generally agreed that the New World had been peopled from northeast Asia, across the Bering Strait, or possibly along the Aleutian, Alaskan, and British Columbian coasts. The issues of when, and which populations had migrated, remained unclear. The second major item centered on the builders of the eastern mounds and the southwestern

ruins. Who were they, and when and where did they go? Were ruins and mounds somehow related? How did either relate to the high civilizations of Mesoamerica? Throughout the nineteenth century, various Philadelphia scholars contributed data and hypotheses toward answers to those questions.

PHILADELPHIA SCHOLARLY INSTITUTIONS

We have already noted the origin and early and continuing anthropological work of the APS. A second major cultural institution is the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, founded in 1812, which continues to the present day. In 1913 the Academy issued a comprehensive 1419-page index (Nolan 1913) of its publications for the first one hundred years. Its two publications series, a *Journal* (appearing intermittently after 1817 and totaling twenty-one volumes by 1913) and *Proceedings* (begun in 1841 and totaling sixty-two volumes by 1913), contain a variety of anthropological articles reflecting changing ethnological and anthropological interests in the United States and Europe in the nineteenth century. For example, there are various articles by Samuel George Morton on human crania, including his initial article, "Observations on a Mode of Ascertaining the Internal Capacity of the Human Cranium" (Morton 1841). Others include George R. Gliddon's (1842) articles on Egyptian human remains. Gliddon was a phrenologist and showman who coauthored the famous polygenist racialist tome *Types of Mankind* with Josiah Nott in 1854 (Nott and Gliddon 1854). Morton, Nott, and Gliddon were at the center of the polygenist versus monogenist battles in the United States in the 1840s and 1850s (see especially Menard 2001, Stanton 1960).

In the 1840s and 1850s, European archaeologists turned their attention to sites they called *kjökkenmöddinger*—kitchen middens—found along rivers or seashores and filled with remains of fish, shellfish, water birds, and artifacts of the peoples who exploited them. A major controversy brewed over the place of the middens in the European prehistoric sequence, widely reported in scholarly and popular venues (Daniel 1976:87–88). Americans reported similar sites in New Jersey and along San Francisco Bay (Ennis 1866, Gabb 1868) to Edward Drinker Cope, the Philadelphia biologist and paleontologist. Ferdinand Vandever Hayden (1866), who had an honorary appointment as geologist and who initiated the first of the civilian-led geographical and geological surveys after the Civil War (Goetzmann 1966), reported the

famed pipestone quarry in what was then Dakota Territory. The quarry had fascinated Euroamerican explorers since George Catlin, for whom the quarry stone, Catlinite, is named (Ewers 1979). Finally, the academy's *Proceedings* contain some of the first articles written by C. C. Abbott (1863), who monomaniacally pursued New World "paleoliths" for decades (Meltzer, this volume).

Edward Drinker Cope, whose long-running and acrimonious feud with O. C. Marsh is famous in the annals of science, was closely affiliated with the Academy. He bought the journal *American Naturalist* in 1877, which he edited until his death in 1897. The journal's subtitle under the Cope aegis was, *Devoted to the Natural Sciences in Their Widest Sense*. Since nineteenth-century anthropology was seen as a natural science, Cope, as had his predecessor, included anthropological and archaeological articles in the journal, as well as a monthly (sometimes bimonthly) column on the latest developments in anthropology and archaeology. The column was successively conducted by Otis T. Mason and Thomas Wilson, both of the U.S. Natural History Museum, followed in 1894 by Henry Mercer (Conn 1998:160–91) of Philadelphia. Upon Cope's death in 1897 (Frazer 1897), the young anthropologist, Frank Russell, conducted the anthropology column until his own untimely death in 1903. The point here is that Cope, based in Philadelphia, provided a major source of current notes and news about developments in anthropology and archaeology, as well as numerous articles on those topics during the crucial period, 1875–1900, in American history when anthropology was crystallizing into a professional discipline (Darnell 1998, 2001; Hinsley, this volume; Conn, this volume).

Most of the great anthropology and natural history museums in America and Europe were established in the nineteenth century (Barber 1980, Conn 1998, Fowler 2003, Sheets-Pyenson 1988). Both the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago (Wilcox 2002) and the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania (Kuklick 1896) were created between 1889 and 1893. They were similar in being founded by wealthy and prominent citizens of the two cities, but with very different aspirations. The Field Museum was to be a general natural history museum designed to compete with the American Museum of Natural History in New York (Nash and Feinman 2002), while the University Museum focused on archaeology, primarily Old World (Dyson 1998, Kuklick 1996). Over the past century, the University Museum has grown into one of the great anthropology museums of the world. The

story of its origin is discussed in this volume by Hinsley, and Danien and King. Its early, if abortive, efforts to initiate an Americanist program are discussed in this volume by Wilcox (see also Rowe 1954).

THE PAPERS

To sum up, Americanist anthropology and archaeology began toward the end of the eighteenth century. Key roles in the beginnings and the subsequent development of the disciplines were played by Philadelphians and by individuals closely affiliated with Philadelphia cultural institutions, such as Thomas Jefferson. Philadelphians and their cultural institutions played major roles in the development of not only Americanist anthropology and archaeology but world anthropology and archaeology throughout the twentieth century and continue to do so into the new millennium. The papers herein provide further context for understanding the development of Americanist archaeology as well as biographical sketches of a number of individuals prominent in the doing of archaeology and creating the institutions within which most of the work was done.

Curtis Hinsley presents an overview of and context for the development of archaeology in Philadelphia in the crucial years as anthropology and archaeology were in transition toward professionalism. He also provides insight into the often conflicting interpersonal relationships that are part of institution building, in this instance the University Museum. Regna Darnell reviews the roles played by Philadelphia linguist and anthropologist Daniel Garrison Brinton as Americanist anthropology and archaeology became professionalized. A key element in all this was how the fields and their subfields were to be defined. Debates over nomenclature occupied American anthropologists and archaeologists from the 1870s until after 1910. At stake, as in other disciplines (Collins 1998), were different theoretical frameworks and the methodologies and canons of evidence that flow from them. The “winning” framework would dominate Americanist anthropology for decades (Darnell 1998, 2001). Elin Danien and Eleanor King have written a welcome and useful biography of the inimitable Sara Yorke Stevenson, who had everything to do with the development and success of the University Museum.

David Meltzer provides an insightful analysis of C. C. Abbott’s attempts to demonstrate the existence of “paleoliths,” stone tools similar to those in Middle Pleistocene river gravels in Europe that were thought, by context, to indicate great antiquity. Abbott operated on the general typological assump-

tion that look-alikes are alike. His paleoliths looked like the hand axes being retrieved from the European gravels. If both were the same age, the implications for the origins issue and peopling of the New World were enormous. But look-alikes don't necessarily arise from the same causes and need not be of the same age. And therein lies Abbott's tale.

David Wilcox's chapter on Frank Hamilton Cushing reviews a famous incident in Americanist archaeology: the accusation that Cushing, regarded by many as a genius, but by others as a charlatan, faked artifacts. Cushing's archaeological work in Florida was funded by prominent Philadelphians and sponsored both by the University Museum and the Smithsonian Institution. The incident highlights the fragility of scientific reputations in an era before the process of professionalization had created a firm consensus on the canons of evidence that apply in such cases. A central concern in archaeology is the trustworthiness of data. Charges of fakery or "sloppy" excavation techniques immediately raise the issue of trust and its implication for the individual's reputation and the soundness of her/his scientific claims (Fowler and Salter 2004). Judging where the truth lies is a challenge for all of us.

The chapter by Lawrence Aten and Jerald Milanich describes the work of certainly one of the most colorful early Americanist archaeologists, from Philadelphia or elsewhere. Clarence B. Moore's work on the Mound Builders problem, traveling by steamboat throughout the Southeast for three decades, was a major accomplishment. Most of his results were originally published by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia or in Cope's *American Naturalist*, and many are now being republished by the University of Alabama Press.

Frances Joan Mathien chronicles one of the many connections of Philadelphia archaeologists, or archaeological aficionados, with the North American Southwest, in this case Lucy Wilson. While her work was not well known at the time, it was important not only in results but in linking Wilson and the Philadelphia Commercial Museum with Edgar Lee Hewett, founder of the School of American Archaeology (later the School of American Research) in Santa Fe. Mathien brings Lucy Wilson's work into the context of her times and recognizes her contribution to southwestern archaeology.

Finally, Robert Schuyler provides an excellent summary of a part of the long and varied career of a unique and outstanding Americanist archaeologist, John L. Cotter. In his earlier career, Cotter made significant contributions to the origins issue. His 1930s work at the famed Clovis Site in New Mexico, published by the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, remains

as a major contribution to the definition of what many have seen as the culture carried by the first migrants into the New World (Cotter 1937, 1938). Schuyler focuses on Cotter's later career as a very important developer and shaper of American historical archaeology, the archaeology of those who migrated, willingly or unwillingly, to the New World generally after 1492. Here too Cotter's contributions were signal, helping to put historical archaeology on the sound methodological and theoretical basis it now enjoys.

Steven Conn provides a summary and analysis of the papers in the volume from the perspective of a historian of cultural institutions, and Alice B. Kehoe provides a different view from the perspective of an archaeologist and sociologist of knowledge. Both help us realize the importance of the contributions to Americanist archaeology that Philadelphians and their cultural institutions have made for two centuries. We hope that this volume will stimulate even greater interest in the history of Philadelphia archaeology and the institutions developed to pursue archaeological studies. Key factors are the relationships between archaeologists and patrons, whose similar but sometimes conflicting motives reveal why the trajectories of anthropological inquiry have followed certain pathways and not others.

Abbreviations

AAP	Alexander Agassiz Papers, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University
AIA	Archaeological Institute of America
APS	American Philosophical Society
BAE	Bureau of American Ethnology
BEF	Babylonian Exploration Fund
BMA/CAC	Brooklyn Museum of Art, Culin Archival Collection
CC	Cushing-to-Culin correspondence
CCA/PU	Charles Conrad Abbott Papers, Princeton University
CT/MSP	Cyrus Thomas Papers, Mound Survey Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.)
DAB	Dictionary of American Biography
FWP/HU	Frederic Ward Putnam Papers, Harvard University
GFW/OCA	George Frederick Wright Papers, Oberlin College Archives
HCM/BCHS	Henry C. Mercer Papers, Bucks County Historical Society
HFL	Huntington Free Library
HFL/CLB	Huntington Free Library, Cushing Letter Book
HAE	Hemenway Archaeological Expedition
MP	Mercer Papers, Mercer Museum, Doylestown, Pennsylvania
NAA	National Anthropological Archives
PEHC	Peabody-Essex Museum, Hemenway Collection
PHE	Phoebe Hearst Expedition
PMP/HU	Peabody Museum Papers, Harvard University
RDS/UC	Rollin D. Salisbury Papers, University of Chicago
SAR	School of American Research
SHA	Society for Historical Archaeology

SWM	Southwest Museum
UPM	University of Pennsylvania, Museum Archives
WHH/SIA	William H. Holmes Papers, Smithsonian Institution Archives