“Occupying the land as their forefathers had done for centuries”: An Examination of Aboriginal Rights and Title Litigation for Archaeologists

Erin Hogg

Archaeological evidence has been used to assess pre-contact occupation and use of land rights and resources since the first modern Aboriginal rights and title claim in Canada. Aboriginal rights and title exist on a spectrum based on their connection to the land. Archaeology’s ability to alternately challenge, substantiate, and add temporal dimensions to oral traditions and documentary histories makes it an essential tool in the resolution of Aboriginal rights and title. Archaeologists, as ethics-bound stewards and users of the material record of the past, can learn from the work of judges and lawyers on these claims. This talk frames the history of Aboriginal rights and title jurisprudence through the use and consideration of archaeological evidence by Canadian courts, emphasizing that archaeology does have a role to play in rights and title resolution. Analysis of court decisions emphasizes that archaeological evidence is often useful and relevant. Archaeology’s strengths include evidence of long-term and landscape-scale occupation, as well as complementarities with ethnographies, linguistics, historical records, and oral histories. On the other hand, ambiguities in archaeological inference leave open significant questions at the crux of many cases, including ethnic and chronological specificity, distinctions between direct and down-the-line exchange, and the level of social integration and nationhood among spatially dispersed sites. As governments and courts shift toward territorial approaches in assessing Aboriginal title claims, archaeological evidence, especially when used in conjunction with other forms of evidence, is likely to grow in importance.
Zooarchaeology is the study of animal remains within archaeological contexts; my job is to study the relationship between people and animals through time. Hunting, fishing, foraging, domestication, companionship, and worship are all ways in which we directly interact and relate with animals. In British Columbia, there are unique benefits and drawbacks to investigating these relationships. Preservation can be a massive issue in BC, from acidic soils degrading bones, to the ocean sweeping away coastal sites, to laws that demand zooarchaeological work but do not have disclaimers about how this work should be done. There are also many benefits, including helping First Nations groups reclaim and support their environmental knowledge, and helping to establish temporal and spatial baselines for conservation. There is also an interesting dichotomy between academic zooarchaeology and professional consulting zooarchaeology that I will explore. In my talk, I will provide case studies from sites and projects I have worked on, discussing the challenges, opportunities, and exciting finds I have encountered along the way.

Dwelling in the Wilderness: Catholic Monks and the Land
Jason M. Brown

A monk’s purpose is to seek God, and contemplative monks in the Roman Catholic tradition are specifically called to seek God in place. Drawing from biblical motifs, religious symbols, spiritual teachings and monastic traditions, monastic communities have forged deep and abiding relationships with their rural and wild locales. While many of the studies concerning monasticism’s relationship to land engage historical and theological dimensions, far fewer give adequate voice to the range of lived perspectives of contemporary monks themselves. I argue that contemporary monasticism, rooted in both symbolic religious constructions and powerful spiritual experiences of land, has engaged environmental discourse through ‘bridging,’ a practice which attempts to assimilate environmental discourse into monastic spirituality on its own terms. The monastic sense of place, the question of ‘sacred’ land, and the observation of religious symbols in land demonstrate what I call an embodied
semiotics wherein established religious and environmental discourses are relationally attached to and molded by embodied contact and experience with the land.

In the Footsteps of the Divine: Spatial Explorations of Transformer Sites and Stories of the Salish Sea
Andrew Latimer

Transformer sites are locations that are connected to Coast Salish stories of supernatural beings that travelled through the land, transforming people and animals in order to show moral lessons and create the resources that became vital for the lives of Coast Salish peoples. My research concerns Transformer sites and associated stories in the Salish Sea area, and it will use a multifaceted approach that incorporates ethnographic accounts of Coast Salish sites and stories, and compares them alongside the archaeological record and supporting geological information about the specific sites to understand what Transformer sites mean not only to present day First Nations groups, but also to archaeologists trying to understand the lives and cultures of past peoples in this area. First, spatial mapping of Transformer sites across the Salish Sea gives an understanding of the frequency and extent of this phenomenon. Second, the continuity or disjunction of Transformer narratives between culture groups reflects the relationships between those groups, which can shed light on complex social and political relationships of Coast Salish cultures. Third, understanding why these sites were ascribed spiritual significance can show how a traditional understanding of the landscape aligns with the scientific geological understanding of it. Understanding Transformer sites means recognizing the significance that these natural places had to Indigenous peoples, and represents an aspect of spiritual land use that must be considered in ongoing negotiations between these nations and the Canadian government. Within the story of legendary figures and mythical items are grains of mundane truths and practical knowledge about how past peoples understood their surrounding landscape.
Learning with the Land: Shifting possibilities
Clayton Maitland and Elders sqʷeyeten (Cheryl Gabriel) and lekeyten (Farley Antone)

Using experience from a small school (es.sd42.ca), and Ḵ̓w̱n̓ƛ̓ən (Kwantlen) and Q̓ic̓əy̓ (Katzie) First Nations, stories will be shared about flourishing “learning environments” and deeper possibilities for relationships, community, and “ways of knowing”. It is called, “the school without walls,” striving toward its principles and values and focusing on a pedagogy of Place, Experience, Activity and Mediation, recognizing the Land and all of its relations in the foreground as educator.

Changing the concept of “schooling” encourages community involvement. Emergent learning possibilities have enabled the participation of parents, Elders and educators, and universities and have extended community involvement. What would it look like if we were to provide “lived” learning experiences, engaging in a complete, or expanded ”circle of learning”? What if we were to connect the learning to hands-on activities, to lived interactive and social experiences, using story-telling and engaging all aspects of learning? Discovering this way of thinking and learning broadens understanding, changes the concepts of schooling, redefines leadership, and forms connections/relationships with the Land and our whole community.

Imagine possibilities for indigenous practices imbedded with place and learning. Imagine “schooling” without walls, a “community of learners” who participate in a variety of settings and activities, engage in context, hands-on, real lived experiences. The land, its histories and knowledges, becomes a place for learning: respect; the landscape, plants and animals; the language, culture, and stories of the land; Q̓ic̓əy̓ and Ḵ̓w̱n̓ƛ̓ən First Nations; and change. Curriculum begins with place and expands outward. Learners are confident. Our story is woven into the stories of past, present and future, allowing learners to engage in many learning possibilities and to grow within a broader community.
Exploring Húýat: A Cultural Keystone Place of the Heiltsuk
Dana Lepofsky, Mark Wunsch, Jennifer Carpenter, and Nancy Turner:

There are some cultural landscapes that are inseparably intertwined with the history, identity, and well-being of particular groups today. These connections grow out of generations of people interacting with these landscapes in a myriad of ways. Húýat, on the central coast of British Columbia, is one such place for the Heiltsuk First Nation. Our ethnographic, archaeological, ethnoecological, and videographic work at Húýat over the past eight years was inspired, informed, and guided by Heiltsuk connections to this important place. These connections are embedded in place names, songs, anthropological and archaeological records, oral traditions, and memories. To present these connections in a way that reflects their multi-dimensionality, and to be accessible to the Heiltsuk and other communities, we have assembled a web site and touchscreen now placed in the Heiltsuk community school. In our presentation, we will explore Húýat together by presenting an overview of this web site.

Second Session

Converging or Contradictory Ways of Knowing: Assessing the Scientific Nature of Traditional Knowledge
George Nicholas

In recent years, Traditional Knowledge and its variants (IK, TEK) has provided Western scientists with opportunities to tap into what can be considered a kind of Indigenous Big Data set. TK has been a familiar element of ethnobiology and anthropology but has increasingly gained the attention of the harder sciences, such as climatology. However, many scientists have an uneasy alliance with TK / Indigenous oral histories. On the one hand, these sources are valued when they support or supplement scientific evidence. However, when the situation is reversed, when TK is seen to challenge scientific "truths," its utility is questioned. In this presentation, I first discuss examples of convergence and contradiction between Western and Indigenous Knowledge systems. Second, I examine the consequences of ignoring or misusing TK, which is part of the intangible heritage of Indigenous peoples. Finally, I argue that engagement with
indigenous knowledge can actually improve scientific endeavors in two ways: 1) a commitment to objectivity requires that we increase diversity of ideas we explore; and 2) alternative explanations of observed phenomena can push us toward unanticipated insights.

Dendochronology at the Mission San Xavier del Bac convento (Tucson, Arizona, USA)
Hannah Herrick

The Spanish Colonial Mission San Xavier del Bac near Tucson, Arizona has been studied extensively for its contribution to the origin and development of Tucson as an urban centre. While the general timeline of construction is understood from historical documentation, suggestions of timber reuse from earlier structures (Fontana 2015) have not been scientifically evaluated. Three vigas (horizontal roof support timbers) and an internal wall beam were sampled for tree-ring analysis and compared to tree-ring chronologies from the nearby Santa Rita and Catalina mountain ranges. Suggested dates for the timbers indicate that behaviours of timber reuse from earlier structures may not be supported in the case of one room, the convento, but chronologies from the Santa Rita and Catalina ranges do cross-date with these and other historic materials from downtown Tucson, suggesting potential for dating of local structures from the same period.

Life and Death in Medieval Portugal
Ellie Gooderham

In archaeology we interpret data to infer on people in the past. A holistic approach is required to link results we see today and understand how these past peoples interacted with their social and physical environment. How the people of Medieval Portugal interacted with their landscape had ramifications to various factors which impact population health, including agricultural practices, medieval healthcare, and urbanization. This presentation will discuss the various mechanisms that impacted how people lived in Medieval Portugal and the health insults they faced.
As it becomes clear that the amount of greenhouse gases emitted to date will lead to climatic changes regardless of future emissions reduction, research on adaptation to climate change has gained momentum (Füssel & Klein, 2006).

Indigenous peoples comprise some of the social units that are disproportionately threatened by a changing climate (Bennett et al., 2014). One of the reasons for this differential risk lies in the ancestral cultural connections between Indigenous peoples and their respective traditional territories and natural resources. As climate change affects Indigenous peoples’ traditional environments, it holds the potential to equally affect Indigenous culture and language (Turner & Spalding, 2013). Aboriginal peoples in Canada and Native populations in the U.S. are already experiencing early harmful effects of climate change (Bennett et al., 2014; CIER, 2008).

During this research project, I have engaged with two North American Indigenous organizations that share similar cultural heritage stewardship and Indigenous self-governance missions — the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre (SRRMC) (Stó:lō Nation, BC) and the Fort Apache Heritage Foundation (FAHF) (White Mountain Apache Tribe, AZ). Engagement through participatory methods aimed at the collaborative development of recommendations for these organizations to best support the communities they serve in adapting to a changing climate.

This primary research objective was accomplished by investigating: i) what climate-induced impacts community members are perceiving to their traditional territories; ii) what are the associated current effects on communities; iii) what are the constraints and opportunities for community adaptation; and iv) given these contexts, what roles the organizations can play to better serve their communities. A secondary research objective includes a qualitative comparison of the two case studies to elucidate common themes pertaining to North American Indigenous organizations’ role in a changing climate.
This research project is ongoing, but data collection and analysis have been finalized. Research methods included literature searches, collaborative engagement with key research participants/collaborators from both participant organizations, semi-structured interviews, organizational documents review and qualitative data analysis (content analysis) using NVivo. Data collection involved the conduction of 27 semi-structured interviews between May and November 2017. Of these 27, 13 were conducted at the SRRMC (Chilliwack, BC) and 14 were conducted at Fort Apache (AZ).

**Landscapes of Restorative Nostalgia: Resettlement, Myth, and Memory in Armenian Cilicia**

**Aurora Camaño**

Forced displacement through both state-enforced population transfer and impelled migration was a consistent element of Byzantine life within the empire itself and its peripheries. Despite this, limited research has been conducted on collective responses to the trauma of involuntary resettlement and the social and structural rebuilding which occurs following relocation. This paper uses the late Svetlana Boym’s conception of ‘restorative nostalgia’ to frame the physical resettlement of Armenians in Cilicia during the 11th and 12th centuries. Through investigating the intersections of forced migration anthropology, the archaeology of built landscapes, and social memory theory, this research suggests that restorative nostalgia, defined by Boym as a “transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home”, was used as a tool for identity construction, management, and expression. This research breaks down three hallmarks for restorative nostalgia within archaeological landscapes using examples found in the Rubenid Armenian Kingdom, and discusses how myth, imagined histories, and memories of the pre-migration past were imprinted and monumentalized within the built landscape of Medieval Armenian Cilicia.
Indigenous people in the past and present have a connection with the land. Previous work by ethnographers and archaeologists have claimed that Plains First Nations were hunter gatherer types who travelled around with no attachment to the land. The Blackfoot or Niitsitapi have asserted that, “[o]ur people knew the places where different plants grew and where game was plentiful. Their lives were nomadic, and their movements were not aimless: they always travelled with a purpose” (Glenbow Museum 2001:5). Blackfoot use of land and their relationship to the land is interwoven into their culture, which is evident, either through intentional or unintentional modification of the landscape, including natural sites of sacred importance. The Blackfoot made observations on the interactions of animals, plants and the environment that has been translated into sacred spaces onto the landscape. I will explore the Blackfoot worldview of the physical and the spiritual world that is expressed onto the landscape as a narrative. These expressions of place are interpreted into oral traditions, traditional knowledge and sacred sites. Place names and stories were used as mnemonic tools to record history, track resources, record traditions, share codes of behavior, map landmarks, to convey territorial markers, and hold knowledge of the landscape’s ecology. The Blackfoot have a collective signature written into their surroundings as evidenced by the many place names, sites and features. The Blackfoot have a defined idea of their place in the world and this is reflected within the storied landscape of Southern Alberta.

Panel Session

Land and Seascape Identities of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Adaptation
Michelle Montgomery, Charlotte Coté, Jessica Hernandez, Clarita Lefthand-Begay
Throughout history, the ultimate criterion for survival of Indigenous nations has been adaptation, which has sustained community resilience and survival. It is imperative to build on how Indigenous peoples are the essential catalyst for the four pillars of Indigenous ways of knowing — 1) respect, 2) deep listening, 3) reciprocity and 4) community collectivism. Climate change and lack of access to traditional land and seascapes have impacted community health and well-being. As a result, it is imperative to provide insights on Indigenous peoples’ approaches to sustainability and resilience across the medicine line in search for mitigation and adaptation efforts. The goal of our panel is to illustrate how land and seascape identities are in unison with notions of indigenous climate change adaptation strategies and lived experiences (i.e., traditional food sovereignty, cultural and traditional practices). Our conversation will build on the ontological basis for ethics and axiology, the moral nature of Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

**Dr. Michelle Montgomery** (Haliwa Saponi/Eastern Band Cherokee) is an Assistant Professor at the University of Washington Tacoma, School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences in American Indian Studies and Ethnic, Gender and Labor Studies. Dr. Montgomery’s research focuses on adaptation to climate change, environmental ethics connected to land-base Indigenous identities, Indigenous cultural autonomy, critical race theory, tribal critical race theory and bioethics related to sociocultural and environmental health disparities within American Indian/Alaska Native/First Nations communities.

**Dr. Charlotte Coté** is Associate Professor in the Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Washington. She is a member of the Tseshah (Nuu-chah-nulth) First Nation on Vancouver Island. Dr. Coté has dedicated her personal and academic life to creating awareness around Indigenous health and wellness issues. She is the author of Spirits of Our Whaling Ancestors. Revitalizing Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth Traditions, a book that examines issues around Indigenous self-determination, eco-colonialism, food hegemony, and food sovereignty. Dr. Coté is currently completing her next book titled, Uu-a-thluk (taking care of): Revitalizing Indigenous Foodways and Restoring Health and Wellness in Northwest Coast Native Communities. She is the founder and chair of the UW and Na’ah Illahee Fund’s "Living Breath of wałał̲̲̲?ałtxʷ" Indigenous Foods Symposium.
Jessica Hernandez (Zapotec & Ch’ort’i’) is a doctoral student at the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences at the University of Washington’s College of Environment. She holds a dual bachelors from the University of California, Berkeley in Oceanography (emphasis on biomechanics and fisheries) and Italian Studies and two Masters degrees from the University of Washington in Marine and Environmental Affairs and Environmental and Forest Sciences. Her Ph.D. project aims to indigenize conservation in a changing climate by centering indigenous voices, experiences, and principles through community-based participatory research practices.

Clarita Lefthand-Begay is a citizen of the Navajo Nation and an Assistant Professor at the University of Washington’s Information School. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on protection of indigenous knowledge in the United States, tribal water security, and climate health and resiliency. Indigenous knowledge systems are foundational to each of her projects. She is currently the Director of the Tribal Water Security Project, which examines the water insecurity challenges faced by tribes in the United States and around the globe. As a researcher and tribal community member, Clarita supports efforts to strengthen tribal wellbeing while respecting and honoring self-determination and cultural revitalization.