Foreword

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This collection of papers, written by archaeologists working across Canada, but especially in the northern and western parts of the country, reflects the dynamism and creativity of Canadian archaeology at the present time. The authors reject the narrow orthodoxies of the past and express the pleasure and intellectual benefits they have derived from cooperative exchanges with Aboriginal people, most especially those who speak indigenous languages and maintain their cultural heritage. These collaborations in many cases constitute the basis of enduring collegial relations that challenge archaeologists' assumptions, and have expanded the knowledge they have of the past in new and important ways. Everywhere archaeologists are posing the same question: why did they not establish such relations much earlier?

In their introduction, the editors have admirably surveyed the problems currently confronting the practice of Indigenous archaeology. My foreword will set some of the major issues raised by twenty-two subsequent chapters into a historical context and consider their political implications. If there is any gap in these papers, it is their failure to take sufficient account of possible current and future difficulties in relations between archaeologists and Native administrators, politicians, and religious leaders. The fact that this issue does not loom large in these papers suggests that presently there exists a large fund of goodwill on both sides that all concerned must strive to ensure is not squandered. One way to do this is for archaeologists to be clear among themselves about what they are doing and to transmit this understanding to Aboriginal people. For their part, Aboriginal people have already started to express their views to archaeologists, but generally in a unilateral, declarative fashion. Most of Canada's political problems, whether or not they involve Native people, arise as the result of a profound reluctance by all concerned to discuss contentious issues frankly and openly with each other before a major crisis develops.

For a long time archaeologists had little to do with Aboriginal people. This was not because they were artifact-obsessed recluses or WASP bigots, although most of them were white, Anglo-Saxon, and male. Rather, archaeologists were alienated from Aboriginal people above all by the same set of ideas that ensured archaeology's subordination to ethnology within anthropology. The first of these was the "flat history" view of the Native past that had been formulated by evolutionary anthropologists at the Smithsonian Institution during the latter half of the nineteenth century (Meltzer 1983). This theory maintained that all North American Indian cultures were at a primitive stage of development and hence could have changed little prior to the arrival of European colonists. Thus there was no significant prehistory for archaeologists to study. The second subordinating concept was the Boasian claim, supported in Canada by Diamond Jenness (1932: 71), that the primary responsibility of anthropologists must be to record Native cultures and languages before they disappeared. It was alleged, quite erroneously as we have since learned, that archaeological material would remain safe in the ground and could be recovered at a later time. Finally, Boasian anthropologists maintained that archaeology was able to shed light only on the development of material culture, which was of limited value by comparison with ethnographic data for understanding entire Native cultures.

The falseness of these views was exposed by the massive, government-sponsored archaeological excavations that were carried out in the United States during the economic depression of the 1930s in an effort to provide work for the unemployed, and by the culture-historical work that was done across Canada beginning in the 1950s (Noble 1972; Willey and Sabloff 1993: 147-8). These findings documented that changes in the archaeological record had been far more complex than could have been accounted for by only diffusion and migration, and for the first time drew attention to the creativity and adaptive skills of Aboriginal peoples in prehistoric times.

The impact of this discovery initially was blunted by the nomothetic goals of processual archaeology, which valued a general understanding of human behaviour more highly than it did learning about what had happened to specific peoples. Processual archaeology also viewed culture from an ecologically adaptive point of view that emphasized the study of subsistence patterns and other forms of economic behaviour at the expense of an interest in prehistoric beliefs, concepts, and values (Trigger 1989: 289-328). In recent years, however, these limitations have been overcome by a growing interest in religion, ethnic identity, gender biases, and world views, all of which have been drawn together by a diverse movement that has come to be called postprocessual archaeology. Postprocessual archaeology addresses cultural and historical issues

that usually are of more interest to Native people than are ecological ones; hence it is helping to promote a rapprochement between archaeology and Native people, as well as between archaeology and the Euro-Canadian public. As its findings become more widely known, this kind of archaeology is helping to create a better informed and more realistic understanding of Native history and culture (Pringle 1996).

Yet archaeologists and Native people have been compelled to interact mainly as a result of the latter's growing political importance. In many parts of Canada, First Nations have been acquiring administrative controls that give them the power to regulate archaeological research on their own territories. In some provinces of Canada, new legislation concerning human burials, and more liberal interpretations of existing legislation, give Native people considerable power to regulate archaeological research. Artifact repatriation is also providing Native people with a voice in the management of archaeological collections within museums. Growing Native power is forcing archaeologists to learn more about the beliefs, values, and aspirations of living Aboriginal people in order to stay in business.

Archaeologists and Native people share more than an interest in prehistory. Both stand near the lower end of the Canadian power hierarchy. Traditionally, because archaeologists were Euro-Canadians, they tended to outrank Native people. Permission to excavate Native sites had to be obtained from Euro-Canadian landowners or, on reserves, from Indian agents, but never from Native people. Today, Native people are achieving increasing power to regulate their cultural heritage, which means that archaeologists must seek their permission to perform a growing range of professionally essential tasks. In terms of national and provincial politics, archaeologists constitute a far less important political constituency than do Native people and they are therefore in no position to dictate terms to Native officials and leaders. Euro-Canadian politicians and ordinary citizens provide little support to archaeologists because they agree with Native people about the sanctity of burials and view ceding control over cultural matters to Native people as a less expensive and dangerous way to compensate them for centuries of injustice than giving them extensive political and economic powers. This creates a situation in which either Native people can restrict and control what archaeologists do *or* archaeologists and Native people can learn to work together to their mutual advantage (Kristmanson, Ch. 2; Nicholas, Ch. 6; Webster and Bennett, Ch. 18; Blondin-Andrew, Ch. 21).

In this volume, Winter and Henry (Ch. 14) provide an interesting case study of cooperation between archaeologists and Saanich Indians to protect the latter's cultural heritage from commercial alienation. They call this form of cooperation, which requires compromises from both sides, *dual tracking*. Another example of shared attitudes is the dislike that both archaeologists and Native people feel for archaeological remains being labeled cultural resources. Hanna (Ch. 5), Syms (Ch. 4), and Yellowhorn (Ch. 19), along with the Canadian Archaeological Association, treat this terminology as indicative of an unacceptable commercialization of archaeology and as objectionable in its own right because it ignores the sacred significance that sites and artifacts may have for Native people. On issues such as these, archaeologists and Native people are working together to create cultural policies that incorporate their shared values.

Native people have come to value archaeology for a number of reasons. Archaeological evidence has proved helpful in establishing the historical and legal rights of Native people to their lands in judicial proceedings in both Canada and the United States. In recent years, however, some Canadian judges have slighted the significance and relevance of archaeological testimony in such actions. Involvement in land-claims cases has forced archaeologists to pay very careful attention to the long-neglected question of what the archaeological record can and cannot reveal about ethnicity. There is little discussion of such issues in this volume.

Native people also desire to have their traditional cultural practices recorded, especially as cultural change threatens the survival of traditional patterns of everyday life. Recording such knowledge is the task of ethnographers, but they frequently have little experience dealing with material culture or with human behaviour and beliefs as they relate to landscapes. Archaeological training permits ethnoarchaeological research to be done on these topics that is more satisfactory than are studies carried out by ethnographers.

Finally, many Native groups are anxious to have their oral traditions recorded before these too are forgotten. Ideally this is work for ethnohistorians, but archaeologists are commonly asked

to record oral traditions in the course of their fieldwork and gladly do so because information collected in this fashion is useful for the recovery and interpretation of archaeological data relating to the historical and late pre-contact periods. Hanks (Ch. 11) and Harris (Ch. 12) argue that oral traditions collected among the Dene and Gitksan, respectively, may preserve information about important events that geological and archaeological data suggest may have occurred as long ago as 10,000 years. This leads them to repudiate the widespread anthropological mistrust of oral traditions as sources of accurate historical information relating to all but the most recent past (see Deloria 1996: 179-230). It must be remembered, however, that historical knowledge is encoded in different ways in different Indian cultures, and that in some cultures it is encoded more transparently than in others. Concepts of time and history also vary from one Native group to another (Martin 1987; Nabokov 1996). It is therefore dangerous to assume that the oral traditions of all peoples are necessarily equally valuable or reliable sources of historical, as opposed to cultural, information. In order to avoid being led astray, archaeologists must work closely with ethnologists who understand thoroughly the culture and belief systems of the people they are studying.

Archaeological interpretation has always had political implications. In Nazi Germany, prewar Japan, and the Soviet Union, it was controlled to varying degrees by the government for political purposes. In other countries, support by archaeologists for national and colonial agendas has resulted in the deliberate distortion of archaeological evidence or in unconscious biases producing unwarranted archaeological support for particular causes (Kohl and Fawcett 1995).

Archaeologists have also combated what they believed were antiquated and erroneous beliefs. In the nineteenth century, Paleolithic archaeologists, most notably Gabriel de Mortillet, wished to supplant biblically derived creationist beliefs concerning human origins with evolutionary accounts based on archaeological findings. They believed this to be a way to replace inherited privileges sanctioned by traditional religious beliefs with a new and more rational social order. Whether they preferred economic liberalism or socialism, nineteenth-century evolutionary archaeologists sought to promote political as well as intellectual progress by replacing a mythological understanding of human history with one based on scientific evidence.

Today, most archaeologists would agree with historians that there is no single version of human history. Men and women, rich and poor, young and old, and members of different ethnic groups will interpret the same event differently. Yet there is a difference between, on the one hand, multiple versions of history, each of which corresponds with the evidence and is correct from its own point of view, and, on the other hand, interpretations based on evidence of greater and lesser completeness and accuracy and on more or less sound reasoning. There is the possibility that sound histories written from different perspectives can be combined into a more comprehensive whole, while erroneous versions of history can only be replaced by more accurate ones.

It has long been recognized that the interpretation of archaeological data relating to Native North Americans has been distorted by various colonial biases (Silverberg 1968). The major aim of my paper "Archaeology and the Image of the American Indian" (1980) was to argue that such biases not only characterize the early development of the discipline (when they are spectacularly obvious), but continue to influence archaeological interpretation to the present day. In the same paper I reaffirmed a long-standing personal conviction that, even if the interpretation of archaeological data is forever subject to bias, these data constrain the archaeologists' imagination, and over time will steer the interpretation of the past in a more realistic direction (Trigger 1967). While subjective factors play an important role in the interpretation of archaeological data, they do not, as some extreme subjectivists argue, prevent archaeology from moving towards a more objective understanding of the past. Subjectivity and truth are not mutually exclusive.

Yet no particular interpretation is likely to prove equally satisfactory to everyone. Robert McGhee (Ch. 16) points out that some Native people object that archaeology makes them appear too much as peoples of the past. This can be overcome by archaeologists indicating continuities between past and present and showing how these continuities enrich both Native and Euro-Canadian life at the present time. Native objections that suggesting a Siberian origin for their ancestors turns them into immigrants like anyone else are less easily accommodated, given the large amount of archaeological and other forms of evidence that support the historical truth of this position. The fear that archaeological findings might undermine respect for Native elders raises the

issue of what role archaeological findings should play in relation to Aboriginal or any other type of politics. It may well be true that elders are playing an important and positive role in helping to stabilize many Native communities at a time of rapid cultural change. Yet all members of Native communities may not view the role of elders in such a positive light, and future generations may have still different interpretations of the role played by elders at the present time. For archaeologists to take sides in political issues of this sort risks interference in Native life than may be scarcely less patronizing than the interference of Indian agents and missionaries was in the past.

McGhee also states that an important role of archaeology is to challenge myths. I agree. Yet the examples he cites relate to very damaging false claims that Euro-American archaeologists have made about Native peoples and their history. Can archaeologists refute the myths of one ethnic group while refusing to treat the beliefs of another group in a similarly critical manner? This becomes especially important when archaeological finds contradict strongly held indigenous beliefs concerning their history and where they may have lived in the past. If archaeologists knowingly treat the beliefs of Indians differently from those of Euro-Canadians, there is a danger that the discipline will descend into mythography, political opportunism, and bad science. Under these circumstances, the only morally defensible option is for archaeologists to report the truth as determined to the best of their ability (von Gernet 1994: 14). This leaves all individuals free to decide how they will interpret archaeological findings in accordance with their personal beliefs. Native fundamentalists may reject such findings in favour of their traditional beliefs; other Native people may treat archaeological findings as a welcome substitute for such beliefs, while still others may seek to reconcile the two.

A related, but different question is how archaeologists should react to the sort of claims that the Aboriginal scholar Vine Deloria, Jr., has made in his recent book *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (1996). This book not only attacks Euro-American archaeological interpretations of the past (which, like all scientific theories, are not sacrosanct), but also grossly characterizes and rejects, often on the basis of woefully inadequate understanding, scientific method in its broadest sense. Are archaeologists—in the name of cultural relativism, or because of guilt over past treatment of Native people—to accept the legitimacy of Deloria's position on the ground that there is no way to judge claims of differing assertions about the past? It must never be forgotten that to reject the scientific method is to abandon any means for refuting the claims being made by fascists, sexists, racists, and Indian-haters. Neither scholarship nor society, I would maintain, can afford that sort of extreme relativism.

Another of the dangers of postprocessual trends in archaeology has been a tendency to revive a Boasian view of cultures as monolithic, superorganic entities, rather than treating them as the sum total of learned ideas and habits that guide individuals' thoughts and behaviours. The monolithic view, in turn, encourages a belief that culture is something that does not change. Such a position has been habitually popular with political conservatives and nationalists.

We all know that archaeologists have many different views about the goals, methods, and practices of their discipline. However, some archaeologists and some Native people like to believe that there is a single standard version of each Native culture, which generally resembles that found in late nineteenth-century ethnographies. They also believe that the authenticity of individual and group behaviour can be evaluated in terms of its approximation to such a norm. Yet it is clear that there is presently as wide a range of individual behaviour and beliefs in Native societies as in non-Native ones and no obvious basis for judging some forms to be more authentic than others. Change is not a violation of culture but the realization of a potential that is inherent in all forms of learned behaviour. Likewise, authenticity is an inner state of mind, not an externally measurable attribute of culture. That being so, it makes little sense for archaeologists to treat the beliefs of Native fundamentalists differently from the way they treat those of Christian or Jewish fundamentalists. Traditionalists have a right to express their own beliefs, and band publications and cultural centres may, as their Native editors and directors judge best, chose to express traditional views of their history alongside, or to the exclusion, of those of archaeologists.

But archaeologists also have a responsibility to educate Native people honestly and frankly about their findings as these relate to Native history and culture. It is then, as Syms (Ch. 15) argues in his paper on Native internships in museums, up to individuals to decide what they wish to believe. There is, in fact, evidence that a growing number of Native people regard the arch-

aeological study of their past as culturally enriching and empowering rather, than as threatening. Provided that Native people have the resources to study and promote their own versions of their cultures, archaeologists are neither betraying a trust nor engaging in cultural genocide, as some traditionalists and their Euro-Canadian supporters claim, by trying to convey to Native people a clearer understanding of how they work and what they are finding out about Native history.

One dichotomy that remains real, intolerable, and inadequately challenged is that between Native people and archaeologists. The papers presented in this volume collectively document how hard many Canadian archaeologists are working to blunt this dichotomy by coopting Native people as colleagues in their research. While this has happened at least partly because Native governments are demanding Native participation in research, these papers testify to the intellectual benefits archaeologists are deriving from such cooperation. One concrete benefit has been the growing attention that archaeologists, especially in western and northern Canada, have been paying to the Aboriginal archaeology of the recent past—the period that is of most interest to Native people. The benefits of this sort of research, which include an enriched understanding of the past by both Natives and archaeologists, recording vanishing cultures, and empowering Native groups, are documented in Part 2 of this book (Denton, Ch. 7; Kritsch and Andre, Ch. 8; Greer, Ch. 9; Andrews and Zoe, Ch. 10; Henderson, Ch. 13). Webster and Bennett (Ch. 18) and Blondin-Andrew (Ch. 21) document Inuit and Dene interest in their own history and traditional culture, and point out the benefits of archaeologists learning to cooperate with the work Aboriginal researchers are doing on these topics. Both papers stress the special importance both for professional archaeologists and for Aboriginals of involving young Native people in research of this sort. From the point of view of professional archaeology, detailed knowledge of the archaeology of the late prehistoric and historical periods, which Euro-Canadian archaeologists once largely ignored, is vital if archaeology is to document the changes in Native life that followed the arrival of the Europeans and the early fur trade. Only in this way can it be learned in what ways Native cultures were altered and not altered by European contact, and to what degree ethnographic accounts describe Native cultures as they were prior to that encounter.

Yet archaeology will not be a decolonized discipline until there are a substantial number of fully qualified and practicing Native archaeologists. I have no doubt that the introduction of even a small number of Native professional archaeologists into the discipline would change it in important, unanticipated, and interesting ways. To bring this about, young Native people must be encouraged to become interested in archaeology and be assured that there is a place for them in a discipline that long seemed closed to Native people. Only after substantial numbers of Native people have become professional archaeologists will prehistoric archaeology be equipped to participate fully in the multilateral intellectual exchanges of a North America that is once again becoming as multiethnic and multicultural as it was prior to European dominance.

I agree with Michael Asch (Ch. 20) that Native people have a preeminent moral right to be the custodians of their cultural heritage. They are acquiring the legal right to control both Native and European cultural remains as reserves and traditional lands are recognized as self-governing units, as well as the right to monitor the treatment of human remains over much larger areas. Yet every national or ethnic heritage is also part of the universal cultural heritage of all human beings. Increasingly it is being understood around the world that jurisdiction over artifacts and sites does not confer absolute power on a government to destroy, exploit, or ignore such a heritage. Nor does it empower such governments to determine how such remains may be interpreted, much as individuals or groups may wish their own cultural values to prevail in such interpretations and their particular world view to be accepted as valid (Lawson, Ch. 3; Andrews et al., Ch. 17). Accepting control of archaeological heritage involves accepting responsibility to protect that heritage in as much conformity with international standards as economic conditions will permit (Yellowhorn, Ch. 19). The Archaeology Department set up by the Navajo Nation in the United States provides a model of how an adequately funded Native group can manage its archaeological heritage.

As the result of their long and increasingly successful struggle for ethnic, cultural, and physical survival, Native people in Canada have produced a generation of political leaders that includes some of this country's most effective politicians. These represent many different constituencies and hold various views with respect to many issues, some of which relate to

archaeology. It would be as great a mistake to conclude that all of these leaders are well disposed towards archaeology as to believe that all Native scholars are. Some may oppose archaeology because they believe it is hostile to, or irrelevant for, Native people, others to score political points. Archaeologists will increasingly find themselves having to deal not only with Native administrators, but also with various factions, not all of whom can be satisfied by any policy they may adopt.

Archaeologists generally tend to be rather naive about political matters. If they are to operate in this new, increasingly politicized environment, it is important that they receive training in how to deal with Native politicians and Native people generally. That, however, requires a more self-conscious and informed set of ideas concerning the goals of archaeology and the ethics and social responsibility that such goals entail. These principles must be defined interactively as archaeologists discuss among themselves and with Native people what they are doing. But to be successful these must also be principles with which archaeologists can concur both professionally and ethically, not merely a strategy for dealing with Native people. The statement of ethics recently drawn up by the Canadian Archaeological Association provides a good example of how this process should take place. The best defence against political manipulation by Native people or anyone else is for archaeologists to know what they stand for and why. That, in turn, requires a healthy self-awareness.

Archaeologists must also guard against making well-meaning gestures or giving in to demands from parts of the Native community when doing so is scientifically indefensible. For example, in some cases it may make sense to give protohistoric archaeological cultures tribal names, as Syms suggests (Ch. 4). Yet in many parts of Canada, the late pre-contact and protohistoric periods were a time of rapid social and cultural change. The name *Wendat* (Huron) is first attested as being applied to a confederacy of four or five tribes in southern Ontario early in the seventeenth century. Yet it is far from certain how many of these tribes or their constituent units would have called themselves *Wendat* fifty years earlier. While it is probably harmless to call the immediate predecessors of all the groups that came together in northern Simcoe County by the early seventeenth century proto-Huron, the same term necessarily embraces the archaeologically indistinguishable ancestors of the historical *Tionontati* (Petun) peoples who lived west of the Huron when these groups were first contacted by the French. Long ago I argued that correlating ethnicity and material culture was so problematical that it was preferable to give all Iroquoian archaeological cultures non-ethnic names (Trigger 1970). Although this practice may run counter to how some Native people wish to view their history, I remain convinced that it is the only responsible course for archaeologists to follow in many cases.

Growing contacts with Native people are not only expanding our awareness of what archaeology can do but compelling archaeologists to define themselves and their goals with greater precision and clarity. This book documents a major step foreward in the creation of better relations between archaeologists and Native people, and of an archaeology that is being enriched as a result of its spiritual decolonization.

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