

A Long and Winding Road

*Kathryn MacFarland, Doctoral Candidate,
School of Anthropology, University of Arizona*

My life has been profoundly impacted by the School of Anthropology. When I was first asked to submit a piece for this Centennial edition, I immediately thought to myself: how can I possibly find the words to concisely paint a picture of the ways that anthropology has changed my life? How should I describe my wonderful and long-lasting relationships with professors, staff, and fellow students I have had the sincere pleasure of knowing and working with over the last 14 years, let alone express my appreciation for the training and knowledge I have acquired? The logical approach, perhaps tainted by my archaeological training, would be to give a linear account of my time here, beginning from my first class as a fledgling freshman at the University of Arizona in 2001, and closing this piece with my current status, a Ph.D. candidate who is working on dissertation data collection. I promise I won't do this, not only because that kind of story is boring, but also because my journey has not been linear. My interests have meandered, guided by my curiosity for ancient peo-

ples and the way that they lived their lives and the many ways we can study and answer questions about them. Perhaps my experience could be envisioned as a piece of rope- many strands coiled together to make a whole. At times one interest was emphasized over another, but all have made me what I am today.

Like many archaeologists, I was first drawn to the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean; I took a class on Egyptian archaeology my second semester here and I was in heaven. After entertaining my thirst for knowledge privately and outside of school for most of my life, I couldn't believe that I had found a way to not only learn history and archaeology, but to also earn a degree in this field. With guidance from the Honors College in my second year, I broadened my archaeological pursuits to include classes in Anthropology, and volunteer at the Arizona State Museum (ASM) with Arthur Vokes, curator of the Repository Collections.

While at this point my studies were still in the culture history learning stages of archaeological training, but fast approach-

ing specializations, a new interest overtook me- the practicality of archaeological concerns-what happens to the stuff once it's excavated? How do we care for objects and keep track of artifacts so that researchers can request access and study them? How does one adeptly describe an artifact for a catalog card and not sound like a three-year old? The fascinating world of American Southwest archaeology was handed to me on a platter while working at the museum. Arthur introduced me to this world; with unending patience answering questions asked repeatedly by all of his students. Through time he and the other staff members have taught me just how powerful a resource an institution like the ASM can be for preserving the past, but also making excavated materials available for the future. My desire for hands-on learning was sated with this position, which later turned into paid work, in-between classes. Now as a graduate student, I have had the pleasure to continue my relationship with the ASM, taking on more responsibilities, learning how to rehabilitate legacy collections, and the ins and outs of curating an active archaeological repository.

At the beginning of my experience here, I took every Classics class I could that was related to

archaeology. Even when I had to take a semester off for family reasons, David Soren allowed me to sit in on his Etruscan archaeology class- I didn't want to miss out on any opportunity to learn more about a people so mysterious and appealing that I truly wanted to learn as much about them as possible. Dr. Soren ultimately did two very important things for me: 1) he invited me on my first dig; and 2) introduced me to John Olsen, then the Department Head of Anthropology. I was a budding Anthropologist, gaining an interest in and appreciation for archaeology immediately surrounding me (Southwest), but still couldn't shake my interests in the Classical world. For me, the double major in Anthropology and Classics was a perfect fit. In any case, Dr. Soren told me to go talk with John Olsen about the possibility of scholarships to help pay for the trip to Chianciano Terme, Italy. What transpired at that meeting was more important than learning about the departmental scholarships; John listened to my story, took my aspirations seriously and encouraged me to continue expanding my knowledge of the past by learning about East Asian and Chinese archaeology.

My first dig was, as you would expect: wonderful, eye-opening,

exciting, filled with friendship and not dampened in the slightest by the fact that we found nothing in our excavation trench. My first time out of the country, while brief, was enough to teach me that I loved archaeology in all its forms: museums/curation, academic, research, field work. This experience was a perfect springboard from which to continue learning the specifics of archaeological analysis, excavation strategies, learn about more cultures.

Where my time at the University of the Arizona up to this point were foundational, the next years were formative. I met Barbara Mills in a Ceramic Analysis seminar and she became my Senior Honors Thesis advisor. I took classes with John, learned about the Scythians, a group of people who Herodotus spoke about, in a fascinating point of intersection for my wide interests which ultimately sparked my dissertation research, identifying and studying their religion. I also started learning about zooarchaeology with Barnet Pavao-Zuckerman, formalized my knowledge of American Southwest archaeology, ending up working with Chuck Adams and Rich Lange as an Assistant Crew Chief for the Homolo'vi Research Project excavations at Chevelon Pueblo. My experiences up to this point

had convinced me, absolutely, that I wanted to pursue archaeology as a career. I was completely happy when digging at Chevelon, and subsequently at Creswell Pueblo with Lisa Young (Figure 1). The undergrad thesis research I was doing under Barbara's guidance made me even more comfortable with the decision to pursue graduate work in Anthropology. Mike Schiffer's assistance with the experimental aspects of this project broadened my understanding of the possibilities of incorporating studies in modern material culture with studies of the past. Now, this research is a chapter in a forthcoming edited volume (MacFarland 2016). Throughout all this time, John worked with me, helping me develop interests in central Eurasia. In my last semester, he made sure I was exposed to all time periods, but he also had me read Sergei Rudenko's (1970) *Frozen Tombs of Siberia*, the book-style report of the Pazyryk excavations. I was hooked. First of all, the kurgan tumulus burials had been frozen in permafrost, so wood, felt, and leather artifacts like saddles were preserved from ca. 500 BC! Second, the Pazyryk culture matched up with Herodotus's description of Scythians in *The History* written about 480 BC. Third, they dressed up their hors-



Figure 69: Photo of the Creswell Pueblo excavation crew on July 4, 2006. This was a National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates with the University of Michigan. I'm in the first row, second from the left, with the braids. Image courtesy of Kathryn MacFarland.

es in masks to transform them into other animals, like reindeer and “griffins.” The possibility that these people were trading with the ancient Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Chinese was fascinating to me. I was drawn to the idea that relationships amongst the Scythians and all these other cultures may have been more dynamic and inter-related than previously realized.

I have devoted a great deal of space describing the ways in which the Anthropology department helped me prepare to enter the professional world. I do this because it is personally important

to me to express just how much this early training set me up for success in my graduate work. No doubt I worked very hard and diligently for this, but I consider myself extremely lucky to have been accepted to the School of Anthropology for the Ph.D. track program in 2008. John accepted me to work with him on unpacking the Scythian (a term I use in a broad sense- there are many historical names for them) culture. My graduate experience has been completely different from the undergraduate years, as it should be. I have expanded my interests to include Geographic Information

Systems (GIS), Archaeometallurgy, and developing new ways to study the religion of the inhabitants of north central Eurasia in the Iron Age (ca. 1,000- 100 BCE). I have had so much fun expanding my knowledge of topics such as Paleoindian archaeology, Geoarchaeology, Anthropological and Archaeological Theory, ancient technology. I have learned to teach multiple topics in person and online, and mentor students as an academic advisor/mentor.

I also immediately took advantage of the opportunity to expand my knowledge of the publication process by starting Grad school as the Layout Editor for *Arizona Anthropologist*, a position I held for four years. It was a wonderful introduction to the nitty-gritty of how articles get published: the review process, editing, layout, and final production of finished product. Once our editor, Victoria Phaneuf, graduated I became the editor, seeing the process from yet a new angle. These positions prepared me for my current role as Editorial Assistant for the SAA's new journal, *Advances in Archaeological Practice*. Now, I am experiencing the work flow and publication process for an international journal, and have, for survival reasons, learned to edit thoroughly and efficiently like the wind! This

experience even helped me gather my courage and submit my first peer-reviewed article, co-authored with Arthur, on our process to rehabilitate archaeological legacy projects (MacFarland and Vokes 2015). No matter the outcome, I have now pushed past another professionalization hurdle that when I first started college I never imagined I would accomplish.

I am so grateful for the accumulation of my experiences with the School of Anthropology, the relationships I have built and maintained with professors, staff, fellow students, and museum curators. The fact that my wide ranging interests were encouraged and seen as an asset, has made my training as an Anthropologist a happy one that is always interesting. I have gotten so much out of the School of Anthropology, and benefitted from the good relationship between this and the other departments on campus, encouraging interdisciplinary studies. I am honored to contribute an essay that explains the effect that this institution has had on the long-term career of one of its eager students. I have truly had a long and winding road with the School of Anthropology, and I wouldn't have it any other way. With the guidance and opportunities I have received, I feel that I am being pre-

pared to tackle the next stages of my career. I look forward to celebrating many milestones with the department in the years to come, and to make the people who have invested so much in my education proud.

References

MacFarland, Kathryn, and Arthur W. Vokes

2015 *Archaeology of an Archaeological Legacy Project*. Under review with *Advances in Archaeological Practice*.

MacFarland, Kathryn

(In Press) Structured Learning:

Laterality, Directionality, and Community "Openness" in Point of Pines. In *Renewing the 'Search for Structure: New Frameworks and techniques in Instrumental Ceramic Analysis*, edited by Charles Hartley and Alan Greene. Sheffield, Equinox Publishing.

Rudenko, Sergei

1970 *Frozen Tombs of Siberia: The Pazyryk Burials of Iron Age Horsemen*. Translated by M. W. Thompson. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.