Archaeological Collections and the Public—It Isn't All about Us

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ABSTRACT

There is much discussion in archaeological circles about challenges associated with the millions of artifacts generated by fieldwork. Most of these discussions are limited to issues within the profession, such as care of collections, accessibility for research, orphaned collections, and shortcomings in training on collections awareness. An underrecognized third party in these discussions is the public. Despite a broadly held ethos of the importance of archaeology for all, archaeologists have paid comparatively little attention to sharing/exposing collections (and the outcomes of excavations) with audiences outside of the profession. This research discusses negative ramifications of not sharing collections with broader audiences and then presents some options for broadening this much-needed engagement through developing more public outreach efforts, providing alternative uses of collections, collaborating with private collectors, and using digital technology to increase access to collections.

Keywords: collections use, public outreach, education, digital collections

Hay mucho debate en los círculos arqueológicos sobre los desafíos asociados con los millones de artefactos generados por el trabajo de campo. La mayoría de estos debates se limita a temas dentro de la profesión, como la gestión de colecciones, su accesibilidad para la investigación, las colecciones abandonadas, y los defectos en la capacitación sobre la gestión de colecciones. Otra parte poco reconocida en estos debates es el público. A pesar de una muy difundida creencia en la importancia de la arqueología para todos, los arqueólogos han prestado relativamente poca atención a compartir/exponer las colecciones (y los resultados de las excavaciones) con públicos ajenos a la profesión. Esta investigación analiza las ramificaciones negativas de no compartir colecciones con públicos más amplios y luego presenta unas opciones para ampliar este compromiso muy necesario a través del desarrollo de más esfuerzos de divulgación pública, usos alternativos de colecciones, la colaboración con coleccionistas privados, y el uso de la tecnología digital para aumentar el acceso a las colecciones.

Palabras claves: el uso de las colecciones, divulgación pública, capacitación, colecciones digitales

In 2018, 6.1 million people visited the Tate Modern Museum in London.

In 2022, the Rokin subway stop in Amsterdam, Netherlands, averaged 25,000 people a day (a rough approximation would be five to six million passing through the station annually).

What is the relevance of these numbers? Both venues have significant displays of archaeological materials. The fourth floor of the Tate Modern has a permanent exhibit by the artist Mark Dion on materials recovered from the foreshore of the Thames prior to construction of the museum (Figures 1 and 2; Coles and Dion 1999). The Rokin subway station displays approximately 10,000 items (out of 700,000 artifacts) that were recovered from a salvage archaeology project prior to the construction of the subway station in downtown Amsterdam. More generally, they are examples of archaeological collections existing in the public domain that expose millions of people to the stories of the past through material culture.

These examples also open the door to an important question about how archaeologists share their findings with nonarchaeological audiences. There is voluminous literature focused on archaeologists engaging with the public and the world of public archaeology. However, much of that literature focuses on interacting with the public during fieldwork. In the context of this thematic issue, we limit our discussion to the challenge of sharing *collections* with the public. We are focusing on this for two reasons. First, our sense is that the bulk of the discussion about archaeological collections remains within archaeological circles—the collections crisis, managing collections, conserving collections, fostering collections-based research, et cetera—basically, archaeologists talking to other archaeologists and collections managers. Second, on a broader level, if our ethical principles

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Figure 1. Display case of artifacts of the Mark Dion exhibit at the Tate Modern, London (photo by Mark S. Warner).

advocate sharing work with the public (roughly, the Society for American Archaeology [SAA] ethical principle #4; https://www.saa.org/career-practice/ethics-in-professional-archaeology) and prioritize archaeological stewardship "for the benefit of *all* people" (SAA ethical principle #1, emphasis added), we believe that those principles should extend in a more robust manner to collections as well (see Domeischel and Trimble 2019). Moving beyond the SAA's ethical principles, the public use of collections is stipulated in 36 CFR 79§10.a Curation of Federally Owned or Administered Archeological Collections (https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-36/chapter-I/part-79/subpart-C/section-79.10)—albeit with qualifiers protecting cultural patrimony.

The central point that we want to address is the fact that many of the collections that archaeologists generate are effectively publicly owned. The fieldwork was paid for by public funds, and the artifacts are the responsibility of many of our public institutions (for example, the US Forest Service or the US National Park Service, public universities, and many others). However, once collections enter repositories, they seem invisible to the public. The result is a profound suspicion about what happens to the finds. For a discipline that prides itself on being the keepers of our collective heritage, the invisibility of collections has led many to distrust archaeology.

As we enter into this discussion, we recognize that the "general public" can mean many different things. Frankly, there are multiple "publics" with multiple, often conflicting motivations. In any public setting, there are likely to be a variety of opinions; not everyone is going to have the same interests in collections, nor are all groups going to have equal access to what archaeologists do. As we proceed through this work, "the public" should be broadly understood as people with an interest in the past for whatever reason, including educators, schoolchildren, artists, scholars in other disciplines, collectors, and descendant communities.

We also want to be clear about our perspective. The authors of this article are historical archaeologists working in the United States, and we regularly work and collaborate with descendant and local communities in our research projects. For those of us working in the more recent past, cooperation with public stakeholders is essentially baked into our profession. Because we research a past that exists in living memory, our sites are often currently occupied by living descendants, and our main datasets

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Figure 2. Example of one drawer of artifacts as presented in the Mark Dion exhibit, London (photo by Mark S. Warner).

often supplement material and archival evidence with oral histories and interviews with interested community members. Moreover, our job descriptions frequently require us to engage in public outreach. At an institutional level, we even see public collaboration recognized by the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) through multiple awards for outreach, engagement, and service.

A good starting point for our discussion of collections and the public is the classic scene at the end of the first Indiana Jones movie where the Arc of the Covenant is crated up and stored away in a vast warehouse—metaphorically being reburied and never to be seen again. That image illustrates a common perception about what archaeologists do with the things they find. After discovery, recovered items are boxed and hidden away. In some regard, this is accurate, if one thinks about how many artifacts have been on shelves for decades, untouched since they were put there. Yet it also illustrates two bigger problems.

First, "hidden" collections are often read as an ignorant or purposeful attempt by professionals to silence, hide, or co-opt peoples' histories. This issue is a problem between the archaeological community and many North American tribes. Despite several decades of work by many archaeologists to build collaborative relationships, there continues to be a level of distrust between tribes and repositories about what materials are actually on repository shelves (Colwell 2015; Neller 2019; Watkins 2012). Recent missteps by prominent institutions have done little to heal these tensions, and we acknowledge that legal requirements for consultation and repatriation often differ greatly from ethical best practice. We also note that although many discussions have focused on the long-standing tensions between tribes and archaeologists, this issue also crops up in curating the archaeological records of many underrepresented groups in the Americas, particularly with African and Asian diasporic communities (Flewellen et al. 2021; Fong 2020:62; Tamanaha 2023; Voss 2012).

A second issue is the presumption of exclusivity—that is, collections can only be seen and handled by professionals. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that collections are frequently housed far from where they were excavated. For those groups that already face contested authority over their ancestral lands and cultural patrimony, the physical removal of artifacts can be perceived as tantamount to theft. The perception of professional gatekeeping coupled with increased public dialogue around colonialism, stolen heritage, and repatriation has left many descendant communities and segments of the general public questioning whether archaeological research is truly worthwhile (for further discussion, see Hicks 2020; Lydon and Rizvi 2016).

Although we archaeologists like to think of ourselves as trustworthy stewards of the past, many view us with skepticism, and situations where nonarchaeologists actively avoid archaeologists persist. Many archaeologists working in cultural resource management (CRM) are regularly confronted with landowners, project

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managers, construction workers, developers, and others as reluctant collaborators while in the field. This is particularly problematic in working with collectors and avocational archaeologists (Pitblado 2014:341; Pitblado et al. 2022; Reeves 2015; Thomas et al. 2022). Although some professionals are hesitant to engage hobbyists, such avoidance often results in the loss of archaeological information. As a counterpoint, one sustained effort to engage local community members led to the identification and recordation of 43 sites (most on private lands) in two counties in Idaho (Wallen 2016). This master's-level project illustrates what can be gained on a local level through collaboration—and encouraging students to work with their communities early in their graduate careers. This is a small, positive example, but more can be done.

In an ideal world, collections generated through fieldwork are shared broadly. Certainly, not all materials can and should be shared. Descendant communities should be the voices leading discussion on what not to share, but that still leaves vast amounts of collections on our shelves. So what would our ideal be? Our "ideal" scenario varies depending on the audience, but generally speaking, the more access to information and collections, the better; and this perspective is in line with the SAA's ethical principles noted above. What we would like to do moving forward is highlight some case studies of archaeologists working to share collections. The examples we cite are varied, and they range from multimillion-dollar CRM outreach projects, to art installations, to modest digital initiatives, to state government–supported websites. In doing this, we acknowledge there are many, many other examples out there, but our intent is to offer broad themes of engagement that can be used or adapted by others in the future.

GOING BIG: HIGH EXPOSURE AND HIGH COSTS

> Bring visitors to a museum storeroom and almost without fail they say, "This is better than the exhibits! Why don't you just open the storeroom for display and let us see all of the good stuff!" [Lubar 2017:228].

In some ways an obvious solution to skepticism about hidden collections is "visible storage," whereby collections are openly visible and effectively on display. Indeed, there are many fine examples of such practices such as the Pottery Project at the Arizona State Museum (https://statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibit/pottery-project). It is something to be considered, but there are also real limitations. First, there are significant costs to creating visible storage repositories. Most repositories do not have the space or the thousands of dollars necessary to restructure their facilities. Second, there are many unintended consequences of unlimited access: Lubar also states that "too many objects can impress or overwhelm" (Lubar 2017:233). This would particularly be the case with large archaeological collections, and we can all envision how unmanageable the display of entire assemblages would be. For example, the Rokin subway station display discussed below includes less than 1.4% of the recovered assemblage in approximately 90.3 m^2 of display space (https://belowthesurface.amsterdam/en/pagina/de-rokin-vitrines).

Another issue tempering enthusiasm for visible storage is the question of whether large collections should even be on de facto display. Open collections can be viewed by anyone who enters the spaces in which they are housed. Broad ethical questions would have to be addressed—perhaps even on a collection-by-collection basis—prior to such large-scale opening of collections. Overall, visible storage superficially addresses issues of access to archaeological materials, but it can also be prohibitive, due to cost, preservation concerns, or the inappropriateness of sharing some collections. Additionally, some facilities are simply not publicly accessible spaces.

Below the Surface / Rokin Subway Station

In some ways, the Below the Surface project has it all. The Rokin excavation project was conducted in Amsterdam in advance of the construction of a subway line in the city's core. We are enamored with the project not only because of the many ways that results were shared with the public but also because of the sheer scope of what it accomplished. Project outcomes include an exhaustive account of the excavations, a complete online database of all 700,000 artifacts, an exhibit of over 10,000 artifacts on permanent display in the Rokin subway station (Figures 3 and 4), and a rich online catalog of finds and publications. It is particularly notable that the artifacts on permanent display are grouped by functional types, allowing visitors to learn about the continuity of human experiences at the site over time. In addition, the website has approximately 27,000 artifact photos presented as part of an interactive timeline covering the 100,000 years represented by the finds. Visitors are given the opportunity to descend into the history of the collection in a similar manner to digging down into the stratigraphy. The site also gives viewers the opportunity to "create [one's] own display with the finds," where one can digitally engage with and reorganize the collections for their own insights and view videos about the entire project.

Obviously, the costs of this project are beyond the scope of what many archaeologists are able to do, but we want to highlight the public availability of the database, the quantity of artifacts, and the teams' efforts to share the entirety of the project with whomever is interested. As a sidebar, having artifacts displayed in public settings is not a unique endeavor. Other large-scale public exhibits of archaeological findings can be visited in countries such as Greece, Spain, and Italy, among others (Atlas Obscura 2021, 2023; Livesay 2018).

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

As a measure of digital engagement with collections, we observe that in a 12-month span from 2022 to 2023, the SAA's website had slightly fewer than 345,000 page views (Oona Schmid, personal communication 2023), and in 2020, the SHA's website had approximately 923,000 hits. Almost 81% of the SHA site visits (744,464) were to a single location: the "Historic Glass Bottle Identification & Information Website" (https://sha.org/bottle/). We do not have specific user data on who is visiting the bottle site, but our strong sense is that it is a split between students, professional archaeologists, and nonarchaeologists (antiquarians, bottle collectors, etc.). To build off of this finding, we make two points that are not particularly revealing but that need to be stated. First, there is tremendous interest in material culture, to the extent that collections management software is now regularly marketed, not just to professionals but also to hobbyists and personal collectors

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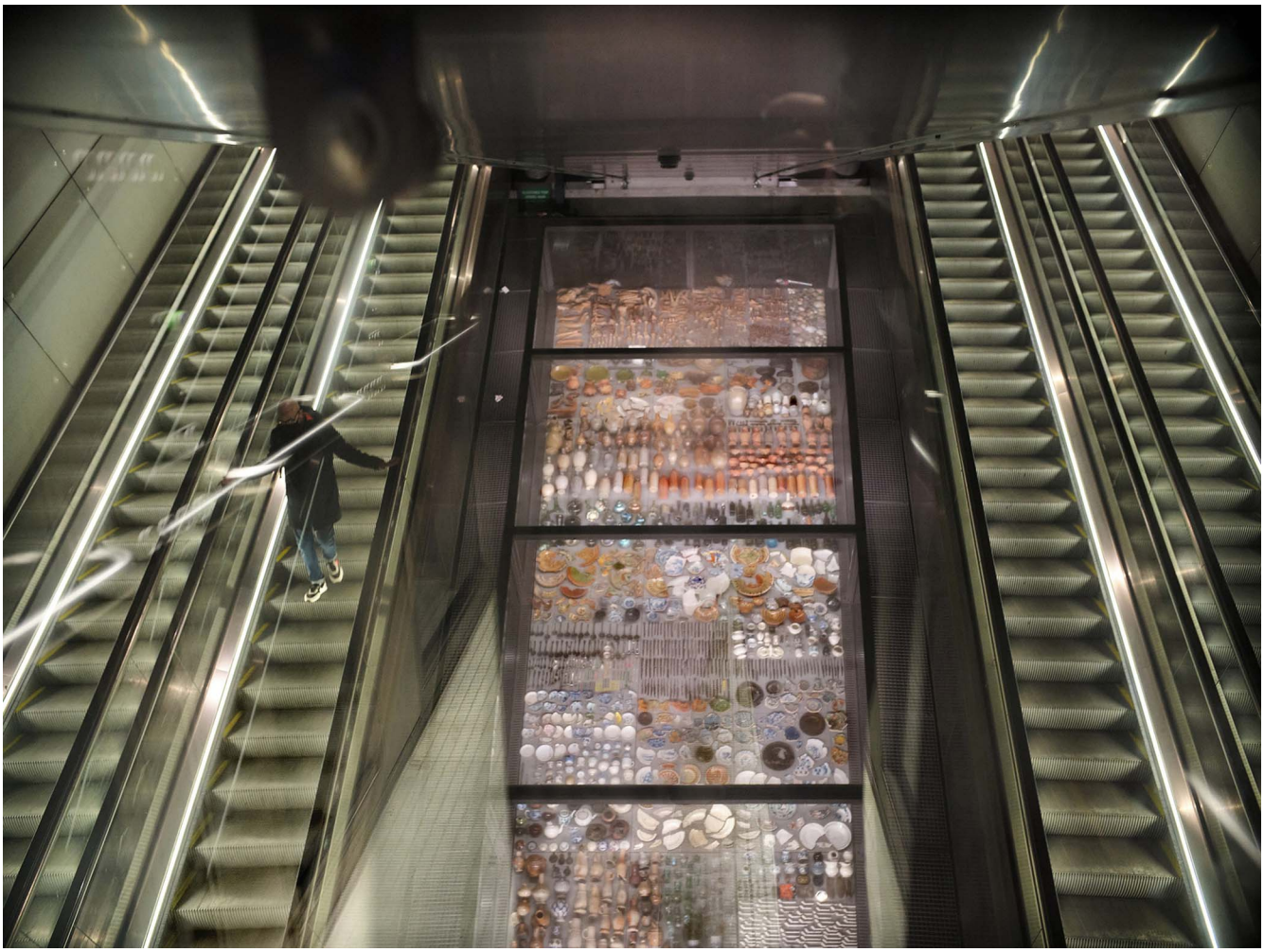

Figure 3. Rokin Subway station display, Amsterdam, Netherlands (photo by Harold Strak).

(e.g., https://www.catalogit.app/products/personal, https://info.ehive.com/, https://www.collectiveaccess.org/). Second, virtual collections will reach *a lot* of people—generally, more than a physical exhibit. To delve into the many ways collections are shared digitally is, in some regards, impossible; most museums and repositories have some virtual presence, be that online exhibits, social media accounts, or digitized catalogs. To explore the vast variety of ways people are making materials digitally accessible is well beyond what we can address here. However, we do want to present two examples of sharing collections in manageable and cost-effective formats.

Historical Japanese Ceramic Comparative Collection

Online archaeological collections have established themselves as important tools for artifact identification, comparative and collaborative undertakings, and information dissemination. Moreover, public enthusiasm for the types of material object documentation and engagement made possible through digital tools is growing. Amid the volume of well-crafted virtual exhibits and open collections being created on scales from national institutions to hobbyists using open- and closed-source software to document personal collections, the Historical Japanese Ceramic Comparative Collection (HJCCC) offers one example of how digital engagement might look, depending on evolving audiences and purpose.

The HJCCC was launched in 2018 (Figure 5). Created in partnership with the Center for Digital Inquiry and Learning (CDIL) at the University of Idaho and from materials curated at the Burke Museum at the University of Washington and the Asian American Comparative Collection (AACC) at the University of Idaho, the site was one of the first digital resources devoted to nineteenth- and twentieth-century archaeological Japanese ceramics. Unlike material culture studies in many other subdisciplines, Japanese ceramic analysis remains a burgeoning specialty that has only recently received sustained attention from North American archaeologists, primarily within the field of Japanese diaspora archaeology (Camp 2021:888; Lau-Ozawa and Ross 2021:577). As a result, many of the HJCCC's core goals are admittedly academic in nature: to assist in Japanese ceramic identification, to encourage the establishment of standardized and culturally appropriate terminology, and to promote further research and collaboration. The use of a digital platform, however, allowed each of these

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Figure 4. Detail of Rokin Subway station exhibit, Amsterdam, Netherlands (photo courtesy of Monuments and Archaeology City of Amsterdam).

goals to be sites for potential broader engagement rather than narrow scholarly dissemination.

In the hopes of attracting CRM practitioners, researchers in related fields, nonacademic experts, and transnational audiences, the site was designed to be easy to navigate and to provide multiple access points to the core content. In the five years since its launch, the HJCCC has been visited around 25,000 times and has generated user feedback that continues to shape its iterations. For instance, a central tenet of the site has been to promote the use of Japanese language terms for describing ceramic vessel form and design. These terms were originally presented as transliterations, but kanji was later added at the suggestion of users who pointed out its greater specificity and familiarity for Japanese language speakers. More recently, monitoring the number of visits to different artifact pages revealed more-than-expected engagement with Japanese export (as opposed to domestic) wares. Email correspondence directed through the site confirmed user interest in these types of wares, a fact that is guiding content additions. Both of these relatively simple examples suggest that digital collections can be designed as responsive tools for building shared knowledge bases and for gauging popular interest in various aspects of collections research.

In the case of the HJCCC, the ability to shape content to user interests is made possible by the partnership at the core of the site. Few large assemblages of well-documented nineteenth-century Japanese ceramics exist in North America, and so building the HJCCC from multiple repository collections was essential to provide a robust sample of artifacts. As larger projects such as the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS) have shown, collaborations such as the HJCCC create a way for dispersed institutions to contribute to centralized information hubs that reach larger audiences. The rural location of the AACC, which houses many of the objects on the HJCCC, for example, may be cost and time prohibitive for many potential visitors. Digital collections sourced from multiple institutions can both lower accessibility barriers and integrate smaller collections that might otherwise remain overlooked on repository shelves.

Texas Beyond History

One of the most successful and longest-standing websites that emphasizes archaeology and collections is Texas Beyond History (TBH). What is compelling about the site is that it provides a variety of resources for audiences that range from professional archaeologists, to elementary school teachers, to people interested in Texas history. It functions as a research and reference tool for archaeologists throughout the state and region, but it is also an archaeological outreach tool that operates on multiple levels. The site focuses extensively on

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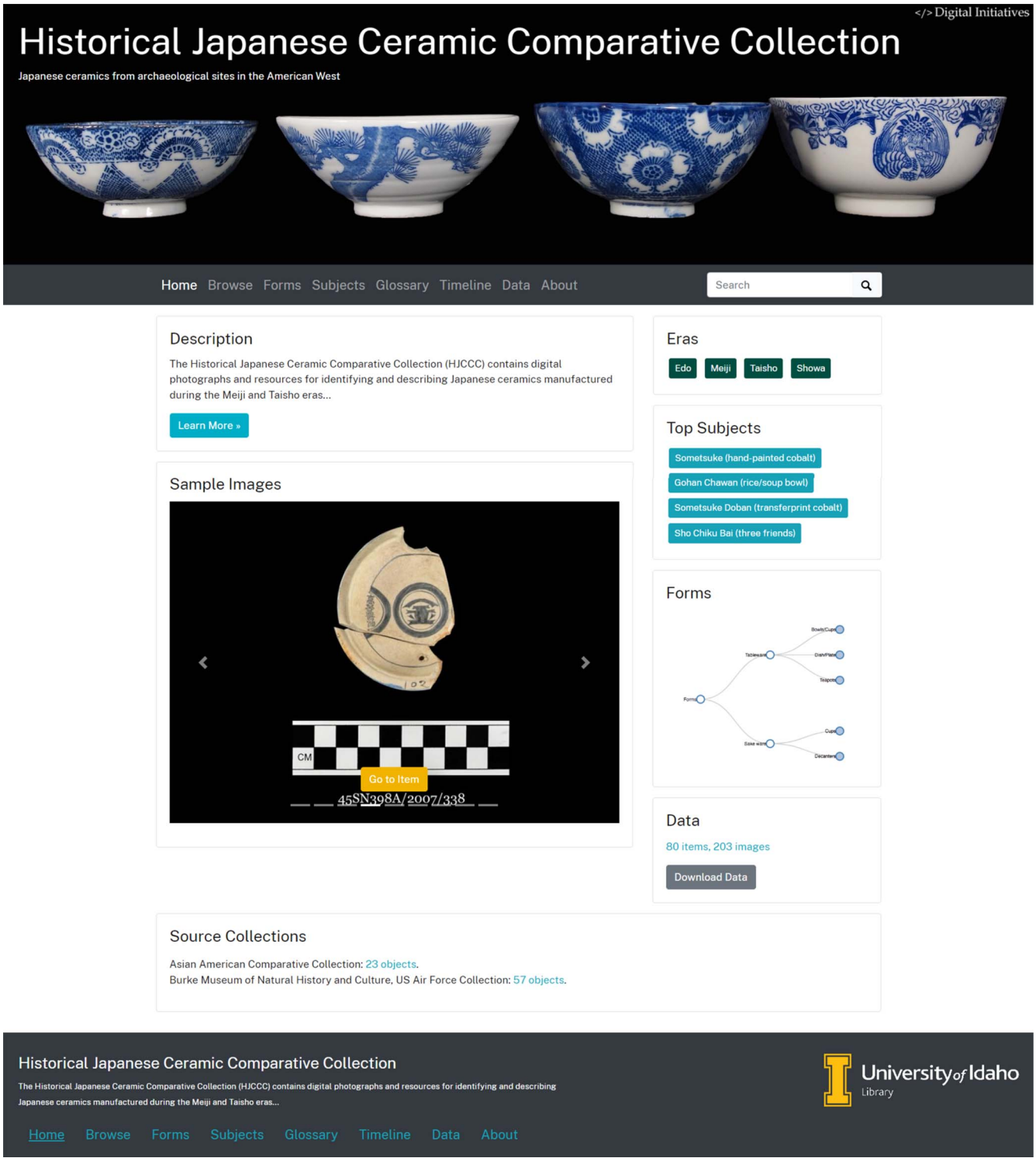

Figure 5. Example artifact page for the Historical Japanese Ceramic Comparative Collection.

archaeological collections. It includes web pages that present typologies of stone tools, as well as more eclectic sections featuring recovered objects such as the "Icons of Texas Cultural Heritage" or assemblages of materials from particular sites throughout the state.

The TBH website also features two sections for children and teachers, which make local archaeology accessible and relevant to the next generation. TBH introduces archaeology to Texas students well before they haphazardly stumble into a college-level Anthropology 100 course looking for a social science credit. TBH

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provides archaeology adjacent lesson plans for primary and secondary school teachers that can be used in conjunction with the website and that fit into existing multidisciplinary course content. The lesson plans cover a wide array of archaeological topics, and they are designed to meet Texas curriculum standards in various fields of study, including language arts, social studies, math, science, and art. The significance of including lesson plans for teachers as *part* of the website is enormous. Teachers comment that they frequently receive "hands-on" teaching materials on a variety of subjects, but they are of limited use to them because of the lack of associated information on how to use them. Without lesson plans, teachers have to explore the context of the materials themselves—something that teachers simply do not have the time to do during the school year. By introducing kids to archaeology outside of the confines of Hollywood media, and by showing them that what they are already learning is archaeology adjacent, TBH aims to foster students' lifelong interest in the past.

Finally, there are many other websites that share archaeological research and collections. A useful reference for archaeologists in this realm is the SAA's website, which has a compilation of links to other public-oriented archaeological resources (https://www.saa.org/education-outreach/public-outreach/centers-public-archaeology).

ON THE GROUND IN LOCAL SETTINGS

Although big projects such as the Rokin subway example garner a great deal of attention, some of the most impactful work is done on smaller scales. The adage "think globally, act locally" is appropriate for framing this segment, and it is also the way that most of us should and will operate (see Stapp and Longenecker [2021] for a broad synthesis of local collaborative works). What we present in this section are examples of effective, collections-centered outreach that derives from and celebrates local efforts.

Oregon Archaeology Roadshow

For the past decade, archaeologists at Portland State University have hosted an event titled "The Archaeology Roadshow." This event covers many aspects of archaeology, ranging from hands-on demonstrations—such stone tool making—to discussions about the use of oral traditions and written records and displays of collections from recent projects. Another significant component of the event is an open invitation for members of the public to bring artifacts for experts to examine. The intent of this engagement "is to establish personal connections between archaeologists and collectors in order to highlight, in a non-judgmental way, the issues around artifact collecting. The Roadshow provides an opportunity to educate visitors about the ethical and legal implications of artifact collecting" (Butler et al. 2021:7). In short, it creates a "teaching moment" that serves to engage with community members about collecting. It also has proven to be popular, with approximately 7,500 people attending between 2012 and 2021. The organizers comment that the Archaeology Roadshow is a way to communicate the outcomes of the work that is done with public funds, thereby lessening the public's suspicion about archaeology (Butler et al. 2021; see also Thomas and Langlitz 2016).

The *Artifacts of Outlander* Exhibit

At the time of this writing, the TV series *Ancient Apocalypse* is generating much hand wringing on the part of archaeologists (Sandweiss 2022). Before that, the series *American Diggers* and *Ancient Aliens* caused consternation among archaeologists. In contrast to the many examples of fraught relationships between archaeology and popular culture is the exhibit that the Maryland Archaeology Conservation Laboratory (MAC) created based on the *Outlander* books and TV series.

The idea for the *Artifacts of Outlander* project came from a MAC lab staff member. As they reported, it was the synthesis of (1) the MAC lab staff members' collective interest in the *Outlander* books and (2) the fact that they were actively working with material culture that was contemporaneous to the books' settings. Put simply, the outreach project was a side project for the staff, who stated, "What started as a plan to fill one case in the local library for two months turned into an ongoing multiyear project to keep up with the public's interest" (Rivers Cofield and Shaffer 2019:338). The unexpected outcome of building an exhibit that linked a popular series with archaeological collections was that it became the most popular outreach program ever created by the MAC Lab and Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum; the project was available to an audience of more than 100,000 people (Rivers Cofield and Shaffer 2019:350). Due to the unexpected level of interest in the physical display, the MAC staff also ended up creating an associated website (https://apps.jefpat.maryland.gov/outlander/index.html), which is largely a digitally interactive version of the physical display.

THE TAKEAWAYS: THINKING PRACTICALLY ABOUT SHARING COLLECTIONS

This article has just scratched the surface on how collections are and can be shared with outside audiences, and entire books could be written about this subject. However, in this theme issue, which takes a future-focused view of collections, we thought it essential to highlight the importance of sharing collections with nonarchaeological audiences. To do so can help address the lack of trust that many have with archaeologists and perhaps foster communication with those who are skeptical about archaeological research. As far as practical next steps are concerned, our overriding message is to engage in ways that are reasonable and feasible within a given working situation, scope of collections, budget, and personnel availability.

Of course, what can and cannot be done is largely determined by finances. The Rokin archaeology project cost approximately six million euros, which were budgeted as part of the compliance project. In a similar vein, the Texas Beyond History website was initially created as a partnership between two entities, but it is now supported financially by multiple organizations, including numerous CRM firms with interests in preserving Texas heritage. The other three projects were more modest-scale endeavors, generally originating from one or two individuals. The HJCCC was created with a $4,000 internal fellowship, but it was based on previous research conducted for a master's thesis. The Archaeology Roadshow and the *Outlander* exhibits were also created with

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relatively modest funding. Virginia Butler estimates that the roadshow originally cost $8,000–$10,000, but now hard costs are $2,000–$3,000. Sara Rivers Cofield estimated total materials costs for the *Outlander* exhibit were $5,000. The additional cost to be recognized is labor. The Archaeology Roadshow now employs one part-time staff member, and three people spent four to six weeks developing the *Outlander* exhibit. In other words, material costs were modest, but labor costs were somewhat more extensive.

In terms of specific next steps, we offer the following possible action items:

- Think about collections as tools for broadening our base of supporters and advocates.
  - Open repository lab doors though events such as monthly public lab days.
  - Encourage State Historic Preservation Offices to make collections explicitly part of state "archaeology day/month" events. Include ongoing collections-focused events such as public lab days, and consider developing a "finds liaison officer" program where the public can come to state offices with questions about artifacts.
  - Work with private individuals and collectors following the models of Pitblado, Reeves, and others (Pitblado 2014; Pitblado et al. 2022; Reeves 2015; Thomas et al. 2022). Projects such as these go a long way to building trust with archaeologists rather than suspicion.
  - Consider avenues for relationship building through hosting events such as Oregon's Archaeology Roadshow.
- When possible, think digitally.
  - As funds are available, continue to digitize collections, perhaps with a selective focus on thematic groups of materials such as the HJCCC.
  - Think about avenues for online exhibitions or reference resources. We presented one example—the HJCCC website—noted the lithics typology at TBH and the MAC lab's online *Outlander* exhibit, and alluded to the SHA bottle guide, but the discipline could use many, many more online resources. The world is going digital, and online is clearly the venue of choice to reach the greatest number of people.
- Share. Do not just store.
  - Encourage alternative use of collections. This can take many forms, such as public art (see the Tate Modern example), educational programming with schools, and use of deaccessioned/culled artifacts (see Domeischel and Waggle 2020).
  - Support general audience publications on the collections that are currently being stored either publicly or privately. Examples are self-published books on bottles of the British Military or a guide to bone toothbrushes (Bown and Addams 2015; Mattick 2009).

Ultimately our intention is not to create a proscriptive listing of things people need to do; instead, our hope is that these are catalysts for thinking creatively about the collections for which archaeologists are responsible and encouraging a broader ethos of opening the doors to collections. We recognize that what we are saying is not new; indeed, the National Park Service produced a technical brief on this exact issue many years ago (Moyer 2006), but the message needs to be repeated. Collections remain an underutilized resource as an entrée for outreach. By one estimate, we have 1.44 billion artifacts housed in various US institutions (Childs 2022:225; a figure that many archaeologists consider to be a conservative estimate). Most of these collections were generated through publicly funded fieldwork. These collections are both an obligation and an opportunity. The obligation is that we need to continue to demonstrate the research and teaching value of these collections in venues other than academic journals. The opportunity with collections is that they are readily accessible and that they can be used in a myriad of ways to connect archaeology with audiences and to share the materials that we are so passionate about.

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