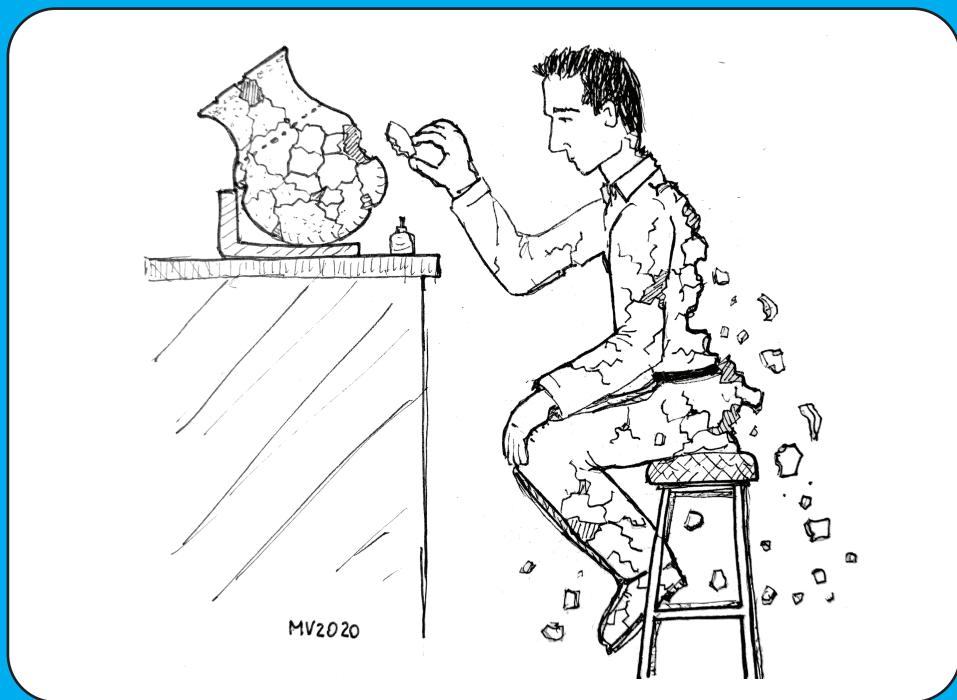


EPOIESEN



A Journal for Creative Engagement
in History and Archaeology

Volume Four

E P O I E S E N

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Creative Engagement
in History and
Archaeology

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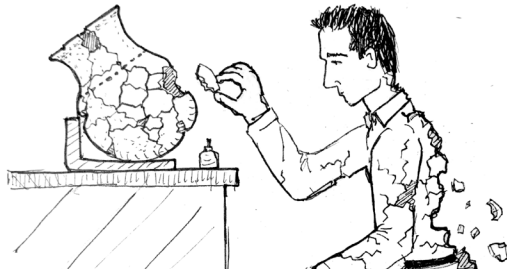
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Editorial Note: Disguise and Revelation

Shawn Graham



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Masthead Image: Marcelo Vitores. *Repair*.

Volume 4

I imagine you sitting in your comfortable chair, looking at your tablet, reading this year's pieces from *Epoiesen*. We're talking. I mention Terry Pratchett - again. "I find there's a connection, here." You give me the benefit of the doubt.

The thing I want you to understand, the thing that I'm trying to say, is what makes the work of Terry Pratchett important - one of the things, at any rate - is that in his satire, Pratchett reveals more about ourselves than we are perhaps comfortable in knowing. That it is wrapped in humour makes it easy to discount and ignore, but it's still there. I will make no apologies for drawing on and reflecting on his work as I try to be the best damned archaeologist I can be. In particular, I am drawn to certain of his characters- certainly, Sam Vimes, the drunk who finds himself pushed to be better than he was, and who wrestles with his demons every day; but also Granny Weatherwax, who has some pretty serious demons of her own. Consider Granny on autobiography:

'I had to learn. All my life. The hard way. And the hard way's pretty hard, but not so hard as the easy way.' (*Lords and Ladies*)

and:

'Everything's got a story in it. Change the story, change the world.'
(*A Hat Full of Sky*)

This year, this year of crisis, we are all learning the hard way. In this year's *Epoiesen*, we are fortunate to share the work of three scholars unafraid to tell their story of learning the hard way, of disguise and revelation. And of how they changed the story.

When I set myself the goal of becoming a classicist, I wanted to be entirely my disguise. I wanted to leave behind the parts of myself I was concealing. I thought that I would not make better friends than with the dead whose books I read. I showed only those parts of myself that fit the role I was playing. I thought that the other parts of me – my childhood, my desires, my frivolities, my strangenesses – would repeal anyone who caught a glimpse of them - Erin L. Thompson

Erin L. Thompson tells her story in relationship to that of Richard Burton, who went in disguise to Medina and Mecca. “Perhaps, like me, what he feared would happen if he went undisguised was not death, but the far more frightening prospect of being seen.” Thompson’s piece prompted a Response from Lee Skallerup Bessette, who recounts her own story of being in disguise, of being an anglophone student at a francophone university in Quebec, and in relationship to the work of the author Dany Laferrière. “Those parts of me I tried to erase are crying, now, to be seen [...] To be seen, they are saying, is to be all of yourself. Those disguises were never really disguises, but attempts to wrest control of the narrative.” Quinn Dombrowski in her Response reminds us,

Identities are forged and reinforced through retelling one’s story, and through interaction with others.” She later adds, “I hope you can spend your time in the company of real people, without giving any thought to the number of feet separating you or how well your mask fits. And I hope you can take a risk, as Thompson put it, on the frightening prospect of being seen.

Disguises, and revelations. In this year of pandemic, what disguises are we struggling to maintain? What do we reveal, inadvertently, as we try to maintain the fictions? And when our defences are finally breached... can we be as brave as these three scholars? Can we change the story? The hard way *is* pretty hard...

The cover art for this year’s Annual is courtesy Marcelo Vitores. Called *‘repair’*, it perhaps encourages us to think through the pieces of our bodies, our experience, to put together new stories, new pasts, in the struggle to understand; to respond to the destruction of pandemic to build something more truthful, to repair ourselves everyday.

Sensibility

Michael Given has gifted us this year with a revelation of landscape that occurs through movement. The landscape pushes back, when we walk it. There is a conversation that happens; the landscape is forged and reforged through our movement, and that movement tells the land what it is. In his walk from Dunning to the Common of Dunning, Given comes to know the landscape where he has conducted seasons of field work anew:

“[...] But these memories were linked together by my route in a way that I had never experienced before: they made me attend to the areas where we had worked from a whole series of different perspectives and angles. Wisdom, then, does not just sit in places: it is acquired and passed on by walking trails attentively”.

In her Response, Rose Ferraby writes,

We walk to think, to connect, to give our minds that freedom to roam. On this journey though, I’m intrigued by the question of how we walk as archaeologists – is the journey about the material past landscape, or about understanding people and the past through reflecting on the self? As archaeologists how does our walking permeate temporal boundaries, reflections reverberating across time and communities? How do our particular forms of attentiveness as we travel allow us to understand the land in different ways?

Like Granny Weatherwax said, ‘Everything’s got a story in it. Change the story, change the world.’

“But what’s the connection with the last piece?” you say.

“Well, it changes the story, too. It changes the archaeological story away from dots-on-a-map to something else. It changes the world to expand how we might know it.”

The piece by the trio Graham, Reinhard, and Kansa invites us to know the landscape, the deep history of place, through music and dance; to take the materials we create as archaeologists and express them not through words, not through dots-on-a-screen, but through a thumping beat that compels us to move and hear the percussive data with our bodies. It disguises the data in sound; because we are not used

to this, it forces us to attend to patterns that might otherwise never be revealed. Granny Weatherwax again: “There’s a kind of magic in masks. Masks conceal one face, but they reveal another.” (*Maskerade*).

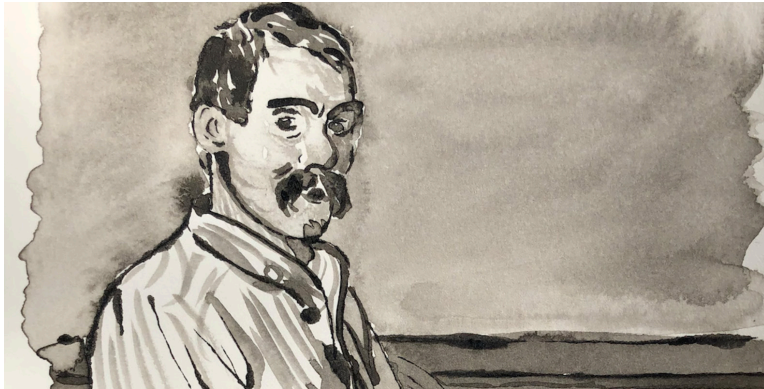
Disguises and revelations; this was 2020 at *Epoiesen*.

~

You nod, satisfied, returning to your tablet. As the snow falls outside, I can hear in my head the echoes of the song, my foot tapping to the beat...

Classicist in Disguise

Erin Thompson



Citation: Thompson, Erin L. 2020.
“Classicist in Disguise” *Epoiesen* DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/epoiesen/2020.1>

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Masthead Image: Portrait of Richard Burton (Erin L. Thompson)



In April 1853, the Englishman Richard Burton changed his clothes in a hotel room in Southampton and became a Muslim man who called himself Abdullah. Abdullah boarded a steamer bound for Cairo, the first step on a pilgrimage to the sites of the Prophet Muhammad's birth and burial, the holy cities of Medina and Mecca. This pilgrimage was forbidden to Burton and all other non-Muslims.

Burton had prepared to be Abdullah for years. He changed his language, his facial expressions, the way he walked and ate and slept. Since even a glass of water could expose him, he had to remember to praise Allah before and after drinking, gulp rather than sip, and clutch the tumbler "as though it were the throat of a foe." He had himself circumcised so that his body would not wordlessly reveal him.

For the rest of his life, Burton signed letters to friends "Haji Abdullah" – Abdullah who has completed the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. The book he wrote when he returned, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*, is the story of the birth of the Haji, the uneasy, twinned merging of Burton and Abdullah.

I first read the *Personal Narrative* during my first weeks at college, as I formulated a disguise of my own. I grew up in Tucson, Arizona, in an Evangelical Christian family. I was also sent to a private Evangelical school, where the teachers were chosen for the strength of their faith rather than their knowledge. We learned about the past so the teachers could warn us about the demons who controlled the ancient Egyptians, and might tempt us away from Christianity, too. I was intrigued by the images of the ancient world. I came to New York to study them from people who wouldn't also tell me about sin.

I spent eleven years at Columbia, completing my undergraduate degree and then a Ph.D. in ancient art history. I learned five languages along with libraries-worth of arcane knowledge. I learned how to drink prosecco at a reception alongside an Egyptian temple, rummage through museum storerooms, and eat asparagus at the high table at a Cambridge college. Yet I always feared that I would make some slip and be unmasked as the imposter I thought I was.

My life was lived at a remove. I checked each impulse against the rules I had ascertained for each situation. I learned what to drink (red wine) and how much (two glasses). I learned that the "goat" in "goat cheese" is a factual descriptor of origin rather than, as I had believed, some sort of playful metaphor. I learned I shouldn't wear my hair in braids when a fellow graduate student informed me he had heard a rumor that I was Amish. Like Burton training himself to be Abdullah, I changed what I wore, what I watched and read, what I knew, and what I said. I changed whom and why I loved. It worked. After a few years, if I admitted that I grew up in Tucson, people's foreheads would wrinkle in confusion.

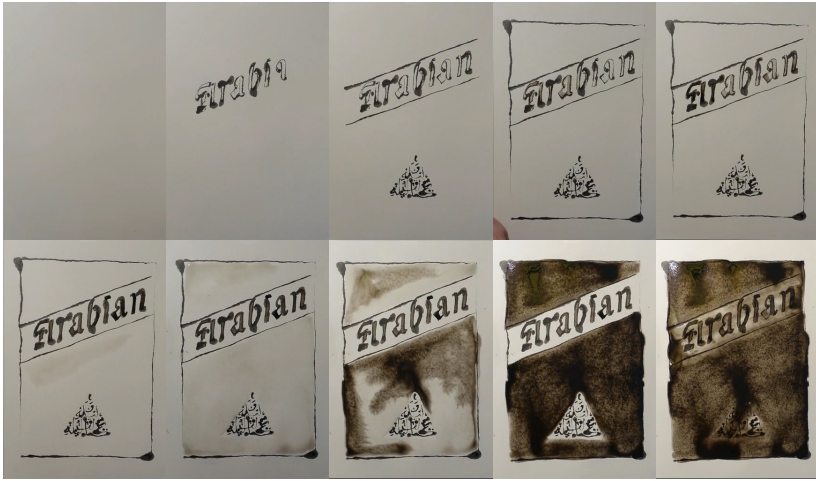


Why did the Haji undertake his pilgrimage? He wrote that he wanted to be the “only living European who has found his way to the Head Quarters of the Moslem Faith.” Only a handful of Europeans who reached Mecca prior to the Haji’s pilgrimage: several wanderers, a kidnapped sailor, a spy. The latest, the German explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, had converted to Islam and visited Mecca in 1814. Burton, too, could have declared conversion and then freely visited Mecca. If the Haji wanted to know Mecca better than Burckhardt, he would have to do something radically different. Like go in disguise.

In the *Personal Narrative*, the Haji explains that he did not want to be seen as a “new” Muslim, “to be pointed at and shunned and cat-eched, an object of suspicion to the many and of contempt to all.” And so, the Haji chose to disguise himself as someone who had been a Muslim for his whole life.

The Haji would spend five months in disguise, steaming to Cairo, sailing in a ship crammed with pilgrims on the Red Sea, and then on camel-back through the desert in a caravan to the holy cities. He had dark hair and eyes, but looking the part wasn’t good enough. He knew fellow pilgrims would “while away the tedium of the road by asking questions,” like the man on board the steamer to Cairo who attacked him with a “hot fire of kind inquiries,” or the persistent camel-tenders in the caravan who, “are never satisfied till they know as much of you as you do of yourself.” So he fabricated a history for himself, one whose mixture of influences and geographies would excuse any gaps in his knowledge, eccentricities in behavior, or mistakes in vocabulary or accent. He described himself as having been born in India of Afghan parents, educated in Burma, and then “sent out to wander.” The structure of his pretended childhood mirrored the reality of his own peripatetic youth. His parents were English, but he was raised mostly in France and Italy. After less than a year at Oxford, he went to India to serve in the army. The Haji was an Englishman who was rarely in England.

He made his disguise more plausible by layering on other disguises. At times he pretended to be a resident of Medina, to avoid a pilgrimage tax on foreigners, and he convinced his camel-tenders that he was Turkish. He also called himself a religious wanderer under a vow to visit all Islamic holy places, after a man he met in Cairo recommended that this would persuade people “that you are a man of rank under a cloud, and you will receive much more civility than perhaps you deserve.” To penetrate one of his disguises was merely to drop through into the next.



I was wandering the stacks of Columbia's main library when I first fell for the Haji. Most of the library's books were swathed in sturdy, dull library bindings, but the seventeen volumes of his *Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments* stood in a row uncovered, each with a bright gilt slash running across its front. Over the next few weeks, I read it all – more than 5,000 pages of creamy paper, the ink of the letters just a little raised, like fine hairs rolling under a stroking hand. Each volume with just a hint of the scent of the long rot of paper.

The Haji published his translation in 1885 – privately, to subscribers only, because by a “plain and literal translation” he meant that he had left in the sex. In fact, he added quite a bit more, with footnotes and essays about the sexual mores he had observed during his travels in Arabic-speaking countries. He was in his early sixties when finishing the translation, and his commentary spools out the observations of a sharp-eyed life.

The Haji was brilliant, funny, sexy. He was the type of person I had come to New York to meet. The fact that he had been dead for more than a hundred years was a relief. It meant he wouldn't expect anything of me. But he could be my role model for how to take a hostile culture by surprise.

The Haji wrote that, when he at last saw the Kaaba, the granite shrine covered by a black curtain which is the holiest site of Islam, of all the worshippers who clung weeping to the curtain, or who pressed

their beating hearts to the stone, none felt for the moment a deeper emotion than did the Haji from the far-north.... But, to confess humbling truth, theirs was the high feeling of religious enthusiasm, mine was the ecstasy of gratified pride.

The Haji felt ecstasy as he penetrated the mysteries of Islam, but he also thought that his emotion was humbling and low in comparison to the “high feeling” of the other worshippers. He got what he thought he wanted, but he wasn’t satisfied with it.

Eight years after I earned my Ph.D., I reached the goal I had set for myself: tenure. Like the Haji, I had worn my disguise well enough to reach my destination. I began to think about the right of academic freedom that I had supposedly won. I could think anything, write anything. But once the ecstasy of gratified pride subsided, I felt hollow, as if my disguise was wrapped around a vanished center.

The Haji, too, seemed unable to say exactly who he was after his pilgrimage. Sometimes he would declare he was indeed a Muslim, and other times deny ever even considering converting to Islam. He wore a leather pouch he wore strung around his neck as he travelled the world, first as an explorer and then serving the Foreign Office as counsel in Africa, Brazil, Damascus, and Italy. When he met Muslims, he opened this pouch and pulled out a certificate signed by the Sheikh of Mecca to prove he had made his pilgrimage. But the pouch around his neck also held a letter from Cardinal Wiseman commending him as a good Catholic. Yet, his devotedly Catholic wife tried all her life to convert him, and succeeded (she thought) only on his deathbed, when he failed to object verbally to a priest administering baptism and last rites both together.

For the rest of his life, some combination of his appearance and his fame made other Europeans continue to think that he looked like an Arab. The poet Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who met him in 1868 in Buenos Aires, noted that the Haji had “a countenance the most hideous I have ever seen, dark, cruel, treacherous, with eyes like a wild beast’s. He reminded me of a black leopard, caged but unforgiving.”

In each of his diplomatic posts, the Haji was dogged by accusations that he did not defend English interests enough, because he was too sympathetic to foreigners. He was caged by the distrust of his supposed fellow Englishmen. He was unforgiving of their suspicion that he could not be fully English after showing himself so eager to conceal his Englishness, even if only for a time.

These suspicions drove him out of the position he had longed for, the counselship at Damascus, where “I was always at home” because “they always treat me as practically one of themselves.” I can hear the longing in that “practically.” Instead, he was posted to Trieste, in what he considered a damp, tedious exile. There, he spent years working on his translation of the *Arabian Nights*.

He died in October 1890. His tomb is in the shape of a Bedouin tent, incongruously pitched in marble in a cemetery outside London, as if he might pull up its pegs and go wandering again.

When I set myself the goal of becoming a classicist, I wanted to be entirely my disguise. I wanted to leave behind the parts of myself I was concealing. I thought that I would not make better friends than with the dead whose books I read. I showed only those parts of myself that fit the role I was playing. I thought that the other parts of me – my childhood, my desires, my frivolities, my strangenesses – would reveal anyone who caught a glimpse of them.

I took the Haji as a role model because I also thought that I was undertaking a pilgrimage, full of suffering and endurance, to obtain a new identity. But now, I see the Haji as a cautionary tale. His life shows what happens when you keep exploring, hoping to find the perfect place for yourself, instead of making someplace imperfect home.

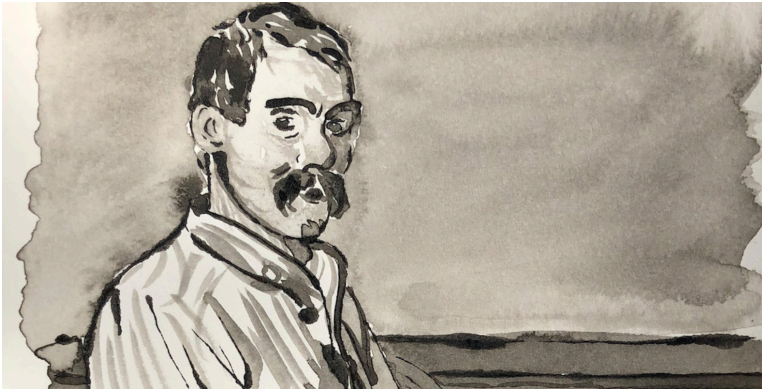
The Haji claimed to fear death if anyone penetrated his disguise, but I don't know if I believe this. If someone discovered that he was not who he claimed to be, couldn't he just have said he was a convert? Or converted on the spot? Perhaps, like me, what he feared would happen if he went undisguised was not death, but the far more frightening prospect of being seen.

On the Artwork

These illustrations are based on an engraving of Burton in disguise from the *Personal Narrative*, a photograph of the cover of the *Arabian Nights* in Columbia's library, and a photograph of Burton. I used Andy Warhol's blotted line technique, which is a way of tracing in which the copyist's choices and the unpredictability of the flow of the ink make unfaithful copies. I aimed to make illustrations that echoed the way I have scrutinized, emulated, and ultimately changed Burton's texts to make them part of my own life.

Classicist in Disguise: First Response

Lee Skallerup Bessette



Lee Skallerup Bessette *Received October 13 2020* Citation: Skallerup Bessette, Lee.
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Masthead Image: Portrait of Richard Burton (Erin L. Thompson)

This piece is a response to Thompson's Classicist in Disguise.



Erin L. Thompson's essay, *A Classist in Disguise* - her own journey away from where she was from, her friendship with an author trying to reinvent himself - resonated with me in a way that was unexpected and opened the portal to a retelling of my own literary friendship and disguises. The dedication for the comeback book from one of my favorite authors, Dany Laferrière, reads: "À tous ceux qui voudraient être quelqu'un d'autre/For everyone who would like to be someone else." The title of the book? *Je suis un écrivain japonais/I am a Japanese Writer*. The author himself, however, was born and raised in Haiti, and then fled to Canada when his work as a journalist made him a target of the dictator who was then in power, Bébé Doc. Laferrière came to Montreal and wrote himself into existence, so to speak, becoming a literary and cultural sensation in Quebec. His novels are all quasi-autobiographical, telling a transparently mediated version of his life. At one point, he quit writing, instead choosing to re-write some of his previous books, much to the frustration of literary critics trying to say anything meaningful about his work.

Which, he clearly stated when he quit writing, was the entire point.

I discovered Dany Laferrière while I was in the process of becoming somebody else, someone in a different language, but instead of changing countries or continents or religions, I drove a short hour and a half south-east from where I grew up to attend a French university. I grew up in Quebec, in the Anglo suburbs on the western side of the Island of Montreal. Ours was a relatively sheltered upbringing despite the political chaos swirling around us. But I was looking to escape, to reinvent myself, to put to good use the years of French immersion I had done. So I left, taking a short drive and moved into a new language, a new world.



(For an analysis of these covers and how sex and race is reflected in this artwork to rewrite the author, read this:

<https://chasinglaferriere.wordpress.com/2012/11/06/how-to/>).

My first year there, one of my friends who also grew up around the Anglophone community teased me about how Anglo I looked: Birks and socks, cargo shorts, oversized men's sweatshirt. Preppy, at least for the mid-1990s. My second or third year I came home and my mom exclaimed when she saw me, "You look so *French*.": dyed red hair cut short, dark-framed glasses, dressed in dark colours. Franco-alternative, I guess.

I worked to erase my accent and speak a passable Québécois French where instead of people asking me if I was from Ontario, they would ask what part of Quebec I was from, not quite able to pin-point the exact geography of the cadence of my accent. I studied Québécois literature, dated Québécois boys, watched Québécois TV, watched American movies overdubbed in French in the theatres as well as home-grown Québécois films. I became almost unrecognizable to my friends back home who had stayed behind and took a more traditional





path, attending McGill or Concordia, recoiling as I tried to greet them with a two-cheek kiss, something I had picked up at school. But I was also always going to be “L’anglaise” at school, too, so neither world felt like home to me.

I read Dany Laferrière describe Montreal and Quebec culture as a foreigner, and those descriptions felt more familiar to me than the ones I read in more traditional Québécois literature. I was an outsider, too, and his version of Montreal, of Quebec, was more similar to my version. He quit writing for a time because he was tired of people trying to limit his writing and identity to, at best, “ethnic” and at worst, “exotic.” Growing up under a dictatorship, where your words were so closely scrutinized, where your life was not your own, not really, the most radical thing he could do was to take full control over his life through his narrative, and exert that control to the fullest extent by ending the narrative. Thankfully for us, his readers, the story wasn’t finished.

I ran away from it, too.

I moved west to Alberta, then south to California, back east to Florida, a little more north to Kentucky, ending up here, now, in

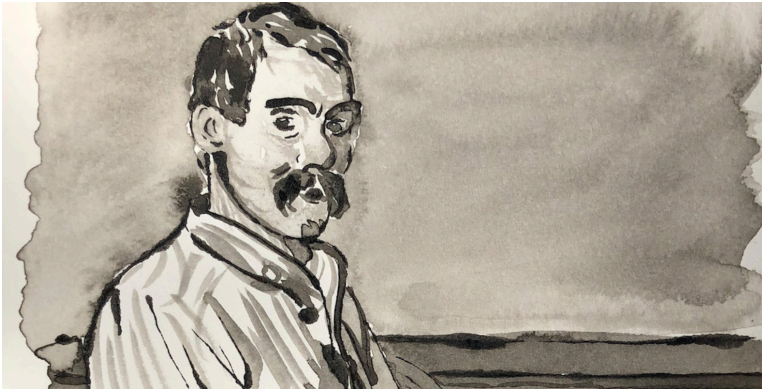
Virginia. A year ago, after living in the States for 15 years, we became US citizens. I am on my second career, after too long being a part of the new faculty majority of adjunct and contingent labor. But the stories, the stories still want to be told anew. I tried to erase them by running from them, but they kept coming back. I couldn't erase who I was, but instead had to come up with a way to incorporate it into myself.

I am an American writer now, I guess, but also a Canadian writer, and a Québécois writer, and a Montreal writer. To be just one of those things is not a disguise but only a narrow sliver of who I am. Those parts of me I tried to erase are crying, now, to be seen. The stories they one whispered are now loudly asserting themselves.

The whole picture is much more complicated, they said. To be seen, they are saying, is to be all of yourself. Those disguises were never really disguises, but attempts to wrest control of the narrative. The easier thing to do was to just tell it.

Classicist in Disguise: Second Response

Quinn Dombrowski



Quinn Dombrowski *Received October 30 2020* Citation: Dombrowski, Quinn. 2020.
“Classicist in Disguise: Second Response” *Epoiesen*
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Masthead Image: Portrait of Richard Burton (Erin L. Thompson)

This piece is a response to Thompson's [Classicist in Disguise](#).

As soon as I finished reading Erin L. Thompson's "Classicist in Disguise", I knew what I'd do for a response. It was the beginning of March 2020, and despite the rapidly deteriorating COVID-19 situation worldwide, I was confident it would blow over quickly.

As someone who grew up in a small town, unpronounceable by outsiders (Puyallup), and best known for being the home of the state fair, "Classicist in Disguise" spoke to me. Even more so, as a person who picked up degrees in Slavic Linguistics plus a Master's of Library and Information Science, spent 10 years working in IT, and had made a shift to a position in a non-English literature department at an institution where the unspoken departmental dress code was far more formal than I was accustomed to, living in Berkeley, CA. I had to choose between my preferred androgyny and my love for bright colors, and so I gave up my pants and hoodies on workdays, and sewed myself a wardrobe of colorful dresses. My kids — then ages 5, 3, and 1— would gape at me when I'd get home from work; they'd never seen me wear a dress before I started this job. But in time, I settled into this split personality: work-me, always in a dress, smiling and nodding through discussions of literary theory where I didn't have the first clue about the theorists or the texts under discussion. And home-me, in hoodies and comfortable pants, parent to three small children, who escaped a rural-turned-suburban town to live the kind of urban life I fantasized about as a kid.

For my response, I was going to sew a dress that combined some of my old Puyallup Fair t-shirts, and some of my kids' drawings printed on fabric. And I was going to wear it to work, take a picture, and write about it all.

A week later, I was no longer going to work. My kids were no longer in school. And so began the strange time warp that stretches on as I



write this, on Thursday, March 24th, 2020. My dresses are gathering dust in the closet. My hoodies are fading from being in constant rotation. I've started to sew new pants, as my old ones no longer fit comfortably after more than seven months of a diet that involves too much beer, Cheez-Its, and eating my feelings in take-out form — I mean, “supporting local businesses”.

During all this time, I haven't stopped thinking about the Haji, or the striking drawings through which Thompson retold his story. I wondered what impact this pandemic, and being cut off from outside human contact, would've had on him. Identities are forged and reinforced through retelling one's story, and through interaction with others. What if the Haji spent seven months, twelve months, eighteen months, only seeing his wife face-to-face? When he emerged back into the world, would he still be the Haji? Or would he have dropped those carefully-learned habits, one after another, as his wife's devout Catholicism wore away at that persona? Would he return to being the Haji, rusty at first, but with increasing fluency? So many people, including myself, still dream of a return to some kind of “normal” even if it has to be a “new normal”. When I dream, in those beautiful stretches of sleep between blunts of insomnia, I still often dream of the subway and train that I used to take to work. My commute: two hours each way, but two hours of peace and quiet, of reading and writing, of becoming my work-self in a space away from family and children. Nobody singing that song that's currently the #1 hit for singing in the car on the way to the first grade learning pod and socially distanced preschool drop-off: “Happy birthday to me, I'm 103, I still go to preschool, but I miss my mommy / My mommy's at work, she fired a jerk, the jerk was so hungry, he ate my homework.”

It was impossible to get a haircut in Berkeley for the longest time, and even now, I'm not thrilled at the prospect of that much contact with another person. When my hair gets long enough to annoy me, I grab the scissors and started chopping. Early on, I dyed it bright green, so I could reduce myself to a hovering face in Zoom, with the help of a bright-green turtleneck and matching bed sheet behind me. By September, I'd grown bored, so I went with dark blue. I keep telling myself I'll get a proper haircut and dye my hair back to its natural color as soon as it's feasible to return to work. But sometimes, during the too-numerous insomnia hours of the night, I wonder if that day will

ever come. Or when it does, will this experience have changed me too much to be able to go back to how I was before?

A strange and surprising refuge throughout all this has been “Animal Crossing: New Horizons”, a Nintendo Switch game that I picked up in March as a way to coerce my 6-year-old into practicing his reading. After watching him play for a month, I started an account of my own. Sure, virtual Quinn, resident of “the best” (as my kid named our family’s island), has messy, short, green pandemic hair. But besides that, she’s been an anchor of my other life. Every day, even when I can’t be bothered to do much more than grab whatever’s at the top of my unfolded laundry heap, I thoughtfully pick out a new outfit for virtual Quinn. I’ve often played the game with my system settings configured for the other languages of my department — ones I understand well, like Spanish and Russian, along with the ones I know less well, like French, Italian, and German. It reminds me of walking through the hallways of my department’s building, overhearing snippets of conversation. Some I can follow, others I can’t, but it feels like home. Or, at least, a “home” for the part of me that feels adrift while fielding requests for another waffle, or adjudicating a squabble over whose turn it is to play the Switch.

I hope you’re reading this from a place where you know how this ends. Where you can treat this as a snapshot from a strange and increasingly distant time. I hope you’re reading this from some better world that we’ve created in the wake of all this — one, dare I hope, more like Animal Crossing than where we are today, facing massive social inequality, relentless police violence against our Black neighbors, staring down an election and... whatever comes next. Okay, so maybe you’re not waking up every day to seek out the company of a cheerful pink hamster named Apple, or a grumpy but lovable bald eagle named Apollo. I hope you can spend your time in the company of real people, without giving any thought to the number of feet separating you or how well your mask fits. And I hope you can take a risk, as Thompson put it, on the frightening prospect of being seen. Maintaining your carefully crafted persona might be easier mediated by a screen — given the right virtual background, noise-canceling headphones, and a bedroom door that locks to keep the rest of your life at bay. But it makes for an emptier life, and at the end of the day, talking virtual animals fall so very short as neighbors, colleagues, or friends.



Walking from Dunning to the Common of Dunning

Michael Given



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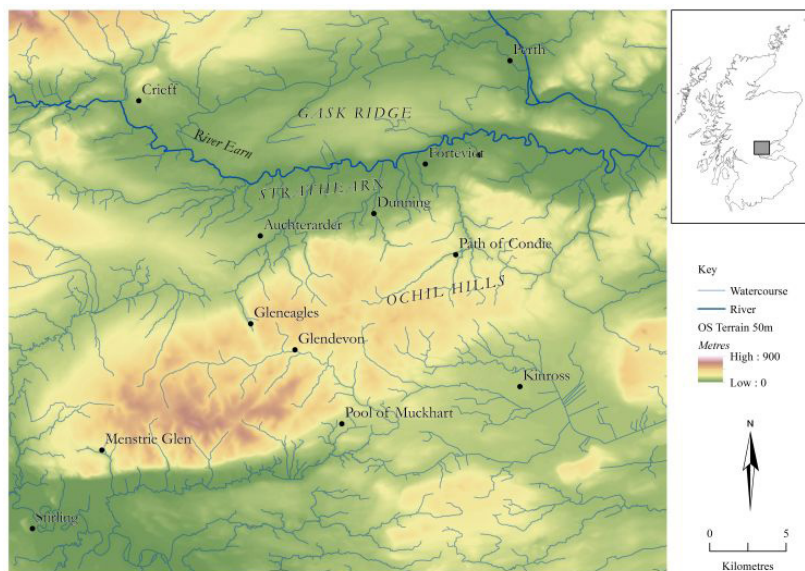
Masthead Image: Fieldwalkers above Keltie Wood, August 2009 (Michael Given)

Preamble

On 30 June 2016 I walked from Dunning to the Common of Dunning in the Ochil Hills of Perthshire in central Scotland. My overt aim was to trace the route of the 18th-century (and earlier) cattle and their herders from the lowland farms and estates of Dunning to their shared summer grazing up on the Common of Dunning. Much more than that, though, I wanted to experiment with new ways of engaging with and writing about landscape, moving away from the representation of a supposedly external landscape through photographs, maps and text (Hamilakis, 2013: 195). Instead, my idea was to use those same media to communicate a landscape performed as an active engagement among topography, plants, birds, soils, camera, my walking and sensing body, turf and stone dykes, fieldwalkers, farmers, rocks, colleagues, GPS satellites, memories, weather and many, many more.



Fieldwalking above Scores Farm, 12 June 2010 (Michael Given)



Location map (from Given et al., 2019: 85). Background: EDINA Digimap. (Oscar Aldred)

Below I present the narrative I wrote in my notebook while walking, along with automated photos taken by a GoPro camera, my route recorded by a GPS, and a range of other photos and maps from the wider field project. Before that, I will lay out the academic, social and landscape context of my walk, explore the sensory, performative and technological attributes of walking, and explain my methods. After the narrative, I will reflect on bodily engagement with landscape and how to communicate that.

The walk took place during the last of ten seasons of walkover survey carried out as one relatively minor component of the University of Glasgow's Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot field school and research project. The northern slopes of the Ochil Hills, looking over the valley floor of Strathearn, were rich in evidence for Iron Age hillforts, post-Medieval agriculture and pastoralism, and all sorts of issues of mobility, interaction and complex interconnection. Of particular interest was the relationship between arable cultivation and the twice-annual passage of cattle in the 17th-19th centuries.

In 2016, the challenge we faced was how to write up these ten seasons of systematic but small-scale and rather slow-moving walkover, where training students and facilitating in situ landscape interpretation

took priority over speed and coverage. By then our core team was Oscar Aldred (aerial archaeology and mobility), Kevin Grant (historical archaeology and biography), Peter McNiven (place-names and landscape naming), Tessa Poller (Iron Age and memory), and myself (walkover survey and interaction). In that brief 2016 season we spent several days walking, discussing and planning our publications. In our final discussion, we decided that part of our agreed solution was a thorough descriptive and analytical narrative in a conventional academic format (subsequently published as Given et al. 2019). But that, we all agreed, should be complemented by more creative and experimental narratives exploring the themes of mobility, place, interaction, and memory.

One way of stimulating such narratives is through walking, hence my being dispatched up the hill the next day. Walking is more than a bounded human activity directed by the brain and effected through the legs. It is an ongoing collaborative performance, where eyes, feet, muscles, legs and arms interact with the changing surface of the ground and respond accordingly (Wylie, 2007: 166). These connections and ongoing material encounters continually create movement and change, new connections, new shared bodies and ‘thickets’ of action (Lorimer, 2005: 88-89). The rhythms of walking are not banal repetitions but a rich and varied attunement between body and terrain that constantly senses, responds and adjusts (Vergunst, 2008: 115-17). Because of its utility in engendering connection and change, walking makes the perfect site for learning, particularly when accompanied by productive activities and listening to the narratives of those who have walked the trail and performed the actions before (Legat, 2008).

The key interface in all these relationships and actions is the surface of the ground. This interface between walker and the world is textured with information, variation, hazards and the actions of those track builders and travellers who have gone before you, as felt through the soles of your feet and your muscles and bones (Vergunst, 2008: 114; Gibson, 2015: 431). Working within this interface, we are ‘grounded’, ‘in touch with our surroundings’ (Ingold, 2004: 330). We interact with the traces of our human and nonhuman predecessors, and our footprints rework those textures for others to follow, interact with and learn from (Legat, 2008: 44-46). There are many such textures in my narrative below.



Fieldwalking in Keltie estate, 14 August 2012 (Michael Given)

There can be interesting cultural variations in this interaction. Ingold has noted the role of boots and western culture in coming between us and the ground (2004). So did the military engineer Edmund Burt, stationed in Inverness in the late 1720s to build a series of military roads across the Highlands. In one of his letters he notes the differences between his own passage across a bog and that of his Highlander guide:

I was harassed on this slough, by winding about from place to place, to find such tufts as were within my stride or leap, in my heavy boots with high heels; which, by my spring, when the little hillocks were too far asunder, broke the turf, and then I threw myself down toward the next protuberance: but to my guide it seemed nothing; he was light of body, shod with flat brogues, wide in the soles, and accustomed to a particular step, suited to the occasion. (Burt, 1998 [1754]: 166).

Whatever common experiences of boots or tussock-jumping I might have with Edmund Burt, what follows is not phenomenology. I have no claim or desire to represent past human (or indeed bovine) experience based on my own. I am more interested in cultural differences than putative human universals (Johnson, 2012: 277), and reject any

Heideggerian nostalgia for local, bounded experience as somehow more ‘authentic’ than the interconnected world that constitutes human society (Wylie, 2007: 181-82; Ingold, 2011: 12). There is one aspect of the critique of phenomenological approaches in archaeology, however, that is very relevant here. I was, at least on the face of it, a single white male, apparently using his solitary landscape experience to represent that of a range of very different others (Johnson, 2012: 277). This is worth bearing in mind as you read, and I will return to it after the narrative. Perhaps there were other landscape actors up there with me, both human and nonhuman.

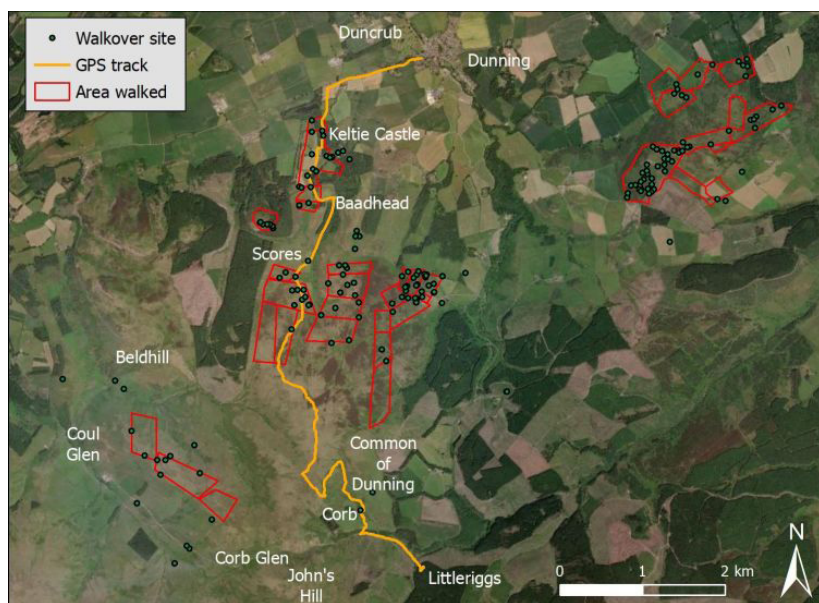
The most conspicuous aspect of my methodology was that I was weighed down with kit: a GoPro camera on a large bracket sagging from my shoulder, taking oblique photos of my right ear every minute; a hand-held GPS round my neck recording my route; my SLR camera for when I wanted more purposive photographs; map and compass; and, most importantly, notebook and pen. All this is emphatically not a technological barrier between me and the ‘authentic’ landscape. Rather, it was all part of the relational landscape: these artefacts and their various digital and analogue products were contributors to that ongoing, continuous negotiation between my feet, legs, muscles and balance, surface textures, paths, terrain, numerical abstractions such as grid references and bearings, and the wider social context (Lorimer and Lund, 2003).

It is certainly true, of course, that such tools can be used to transform personal experience in the landscape into authoritative fact, like the British Museum mission’s notebooks in 19th-century Cyprus (Nikolaou, 2017: 85), or the industrialised processes of some commercial archaeology today (Caraher, 2019: 375). My aim was to subvert these tools of objectivization and use them to attend to and work with the landscape, and to incorporate something of that attention and collaboration into the experience of you, the reader and viewer.

For most of the walk I was experiencing landscape where I had worked over ten seasons. This meant it was full of fieldwork memories: for the archaeological surveyor, wisdom unquestionably sits in places (Basso, 1996). But these memories were linked together by my route in a way that I had never experienced before: they made me attend to the areas where we had worked from a whole series of different perspectives and angles. Wisdom, then, does not just sit in places: it is acquired and passed on by walking trails attentively (Legat, 2008: 47).

The narrative evidently reflects my interests, but it also explores and responds to the stimuli in the landscape that awake those interests, such as paths, surfaces, birds, trees, sounds and smells, and the evidence for 18th-century agriculture and pastoralism.

I wrote the narrative as I moved, stopping whenever something struck me. I typed it up the same night with only very minimal editing, to try and keep any freshness and spontaneity of the landscape engagement that it might express.



Map of 'areas walked' and 'sites' from the walkover survey (2007-2015), with the GPS track of the walk on 30 June 2016. Background: ESRI. (Michael Given)

Dunning to the Common of Dunning

9.05am. Western Edge of Dunning

The GoPro attached, I'm dropped off by Tessa and Pablo on the outskirts of Dunning, to walk from Dunning to the Common of Dunning, following the route of the post-Medieval cattle herders. The first part is a short walk along the route of the Medieval road connecting Dunning with the Burgh of Auchterarder, now the B8062. I walk past the sign for Duncrub, the site of the Medieval estate, trying not to think about what the car drivers think of me with my GoPro sagging over my right shoulder and GPS dangling from my neck. The lone ash tree way up at Scores Farm is really clear from down here.



The walker/author writing at the beginning of the walk, with the GoPro on his shoulder
(Pablo Llopis)

On my right is a handsome stone field wall, the stonework nicely picked out by the sun. There are tall oaks, sycamores and Scots pines on the left, along with the the continuous chatter of woodland birds: chaffinch, blue tit, wren, plus house martins darting past - the sound disrupted by the regular cars passing along the road.

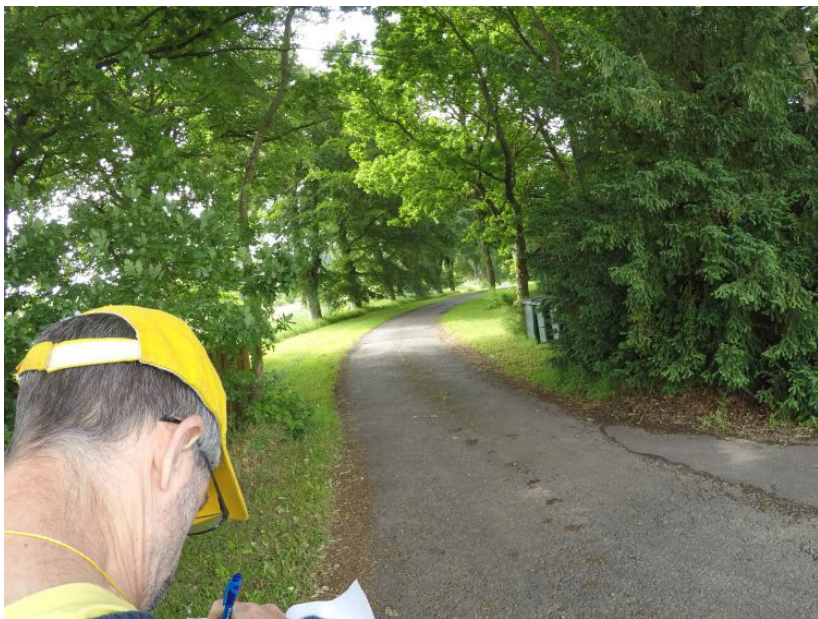
The wind in a small sycamore by the road sounds loud in my ears, while distant chaffinches and woodpigeons call from the wood beyond the pea field on my right. The tree up at Scores Farm is still very prominent.

I pass Millhaugh, though I can't quite see the excavations from the road. There's a passing tractor and the continuous rushing sound of the burn at Millhaugh, then a blast of wind from a truck.

'Maggie Wall burnt here as a witch, 1657'. The monument is on a knoll by the road, with a wide view all round, from the Highland line in the North to the Ochils in the South. Many people would have seen her burn.



Maggie Wall



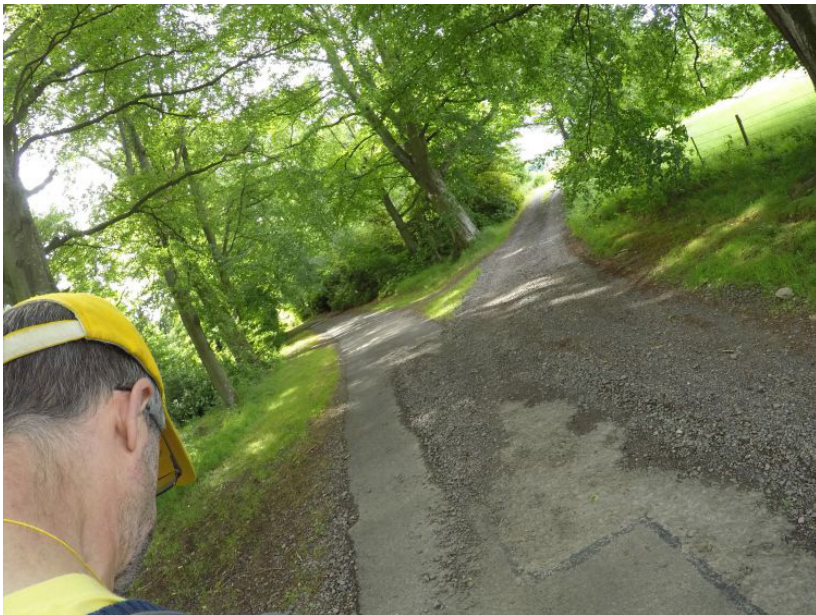
Avenue

9.30am. Turn off to Keltie Castle

The turn off is marked by a beautiful, mature oak tree - a noisy one, too, in this wind. The avenue to Keltie Castle is attractive and inviting: the gentle curves and a line of estate-planted beeches lead both eye and feet along it. On the right is mixed woodland, mainly beeches, full of the song of chaffinches, dunnocks and a song thrush, with house martins swooping over patches of grass and a robin lurking in the undergrowth - all overlain by the wind in the beeches, rising and falling.

The avenue sweeps round past the overgrown mill lade, among oaks and beeches, with a first view over the square stone-walled improved fields of 19th-century Wester Keltie. The road is tarmacked and an easy, if solid, walk, and the smooth curves and roaring beeches continue to lead me along it. But then it forks off to the left, and I can't continue. That way lies Keltie Castle, and I'm not invited.

Four years ago, we were invited, and spent an incredibly wet day exploring the 19th-century landscape, carefully arranged to allow glimpses of the castle through the trees, but not trying to hide the complex industrial organisation of the fuller's earth works.



Choice



Survey Team at the fuller's earth tanks, with Keltie Castle behind, 15 August 2012



Improved fields



Gatepost

Instead, I fork right up a stone track, the difference immediately felt even through my heavy walking boots. I pass through the Western Keltie farmyard and out onto the improved fields that we surveyed four years ago - and am immediately greeted by the repeating calls of the carrion crows and the cries of the lambs.

My route continues up the rutted farm track, with its strange right angles as it respects the grid of the 19th-century improved fields. One short section is a hollow way, with oaks along one side. Could this be an older stretch? In the next field I cause a small stampede from the herd of cattle we met yesterday, including the famous bull who crushed a rival to death. Fortunately I don't seem to be in the competition. Half of the tree at Scores Farm is visible up above the skyline in front of me.

I'm passing out of the topmost 19th-century stone dyke, very dilapidated here, though there's a beautiful miniature rowan growing out of the top of the gatepost. I hear sheep and lambs, carrion crows calling, distant wrens and willow warblers, an aeroplane, and the wind in the trees and in my ears. Baadhead Farm is just appearing through the ash trees along the burn.



Baadhead Farm from Rossie Law, 16 August 2012 (Michael Given)

I follow a sheep trailing half its fleece on the ground into the farm, hearing the chaffinches and the wind in the copse of Scots pines that stands above the farm. This was a great early 19th-century venture into improved stock breeding, with the elegant curved walling joining two older buildings adding a touch of class to the yard. I'm beginning to feel like a cup of tea, but will press on to Scores Farm, whose tree is demanding I stop there and make it a landmark of this walk.

Up past the dark ranks of a tree farm of Sitka spruce, with a distant buzzard calling and the smell of young bracken.

10.12am. Gate at the top of the forestry plantation

We would always stop here when coming up with the students, partly for a breather, and partly to ask, 'What do you see?' They would look suspiciously up the hill, and perhaps suggest that might be something by the big tree. Apart from that, it was just a hill. Asked the same thing in the afternoon on the way down, and their faces would (often!) light up with the realisation of how much they could now read in the landscape after a day of engagement with it. They could spot enclosures, paths and cattle tracks, and talk about the interaction of soil, conifers, grass, farmers, cows, birds, herders, slope, water...

If the GoPro shows an odd close up photo of a forest fence, that's because I was having a pee against it.



Students walking up to Scores Farm, 5 May 2010



Fence

The wind in the Sitka spruce is a much more smooth and even hissing, very different from the rustle and clatter of the oaks and sycamores down in the estate policies. In front of me I'm hearing the meadow pipits, though there are still chaffinches calling behind me. The buzzard is still somewhere nearby.

10.25am. Scores Farm

Scores Farm, and a well-earned cup of mint tea from my stainless steel thermos, plus some Patterson's Rough Oatcakes bought in Sainsburys in Glasgow and transferred to a tupperware.

Sitting with the ash tree rustling in the wind behind me, there's a great view of the excavation site at Millhaugh with its two white tents, down at the edge of the valley floor below me. Last night I gave the students a talk on landscape archaeology and what we've been doing up here since 2007. Scores Farm always makes a good example: it's a substantial 18th-century complex with a range of rooms and a yard, a very solid square structure that is perhaps earlier, a later sheep pen built in the rubble, a small grain drying kiln, and of course the ash tree.



Scores tree



Prehistoric site of Millhaugh being cleared of its topsoil, 8 June 2016. The arrow points out the tree at Scores Farm (Kenny Brophy)

The tree is great for getting the students to think about nonhuman players in the landscape, and the importance of landmarks within a known landscape. One of the student supervisors mentioned that you could see this tree from the excavation site, and suddenly everyone in the front couple of rows got very excited and started crying out, ‘The Tree! It’s The Tree!’ All on its own, this tree had become a known and meaningful landmark for the excavators 4km away on the valley floor.

After my tea and oatcakes, silently watched by the GoPro, I set off again. From Scores Farm there’s a beautiful path, cut into the hillslope where necessary and sweeping round the spurs at a pleasant gradient. Turf dykes bound the pre-improvement enclosures on each side of me. The path swings round a spur and traverses down towards Thorter Burn, and as soon as I come round the corner I hear the sound of the burn, rising and falling slightly with the wind. On the far side, five cattle tracks converge to ford the burn, carefully excluded from the enclosures as they come down the hill. Four years ago we did two wide transects up this hillslope, with a gap in the middle. It seemed a sensible sampling of the slope. Yesterday, Tessa, Steve, Kevin, Oscar, Marie and I came up to show Oscar what his aerial archaeology looked like on the ground, and to discuss how we would publish it all. And of course we found two beautiful farmsteads, one down by the burn, and the other with a large rectangular yard, right in the gap between the transects.



Scores Farmstead above Scores, 29 June 2016 (Tessa Poller)



Path

There's a splatter of a little waterfall as I cross the burn. What with that and the wind in my ears I can't hear the skylarks and meadow pipits any more. But on the other side an angry mistle thrush rattles at me, and I hear the meadow pipits again and distant sheep.

The path was hard to follow for a while, but the next stretch sweeps round a spur, zigzags carefully and heads on up the slope, all at a steady and comfortable gradient. There's a turf bank on the right now, and more enclosures starting 20m to my left. Was this corridor the route for the cattle?

I pause to change the GPS batteries, as a skylark sings above me. The GoPro will need doing soon as well. This wasn't a problem in the 18th century.

11.05am. Above the enclosures

This point seems to mark the end of the enclosures. I've lost the path now; I've just been following a sheep track running along a turf dyke. There are meadow pipits and skylarks everywhere; I'm glad I don't have to count them.

I'm relying on sheep tracks now. They're a bit meandering, and not much more than one boot wide, but they're better than the grassy tussocks and clumps of heather that lie on each side.

Coming over a rise, I catch a first sight of the wind turbines on the far side of Coul Glen. The question I'm trying to figure out is, where did the herders take the cattle from Keltie up to the Common of Dunning? The cattle tracks are very clear down by Scores Farm, where the cattle were funnelled between the enclosures. But up here they could spread out across the broad hillslope, so they were never concentrated enough to dig out the parallel V-shaped ditches that mark their repeated passage further down.

I'm following what I think is a sensible route, not losing height unnecessarily, with the intention of heading left and east across the head of Scores Burn. In fact, I've just found a quad bike track which seems to be doing the same thing.

It turned out that the quad bike track had a mind of its own, but I've found quite a good sheep track - for the moment, at least.

The sheep track wandered away, and I'm now humping over hummocks. There's a great view to the south-west, which means I'm totally exposed to the wind, and am having hat problems.



Cattle creating a track through the bracken on Beldhill, 29 June 2016 (Michael Given)



Cattle at Beldhill, looking across to the Hillend enclosures, 29 June 2016
(Michael Given)



Tussocks

A bit further on, and I'm looking down (with tears in my eyes from the wind) onto the 18th-century enclosures at Hillend, and the long ridgeline running up and South that we surveyed two years ago. One of the rounded knolls ahead of me must be Corb Law, and so beyond them will be the steep-sided Corb Glen. I'm making faster progress than I thought.

The wonderful parachuting song of the skylarks is continually in my ears. I'm coming down to cross a boggy area, where I can see the bog cotton shining white and waving in the wind. It is pleasantly springy underfoot as I squelch across the sphagnum moss, but then I have to do some tussock jumping to stay dry.

11.45am. An unexpected path

I've just met a quad bike track, but it's suspiciously sunk in, and there's a nice curve around the side of the knoll in front of me.

Yes indeed, this path is much too clever and comfortable to be a quad bike path.

The wind is cold and strong, there are some solid grey clouds and a few spots of rain. Time for a coat. Two minutes later I'm trying to put on my waterproof trousers with them blowing out like a double windsock.



Rain

A skylark kindly starts singing to tell me the shower is almost over. This path is smooth and comfortable, and helps me make good progress. There are occasional sheep shelters dug into the bank on its left-hand side, but they're clearly not much use on this slope in a south-westerly. It's good to put my hood back down. They're noisy things; you can hear nothing but them scraping on your ears. Now I can hear the wind in the grass, sheep and lambs, and the ever-present skylarks and meadow pipits.

So: where does this path go?

The path forks. The quad bikes seem to go right, while the cutting in the slope goes left. I'm going left.

It peters out soon, and I meet a fence. I think I've been led astray and am too far to the West, so I turn South-East and follow the fence.

12.15pm. Corb Law

Well, here's a magic spot. I'm on the top of Corb Law, where three fences show where Keltie Estate, Coul Farm and Corb meet. Opposite, across Corb Glen to the South, is John's Hill, where a perfect circle crowns the summit and marks the spot where four parishes meet. Down below to



Common of Dunning

the East is the rich green of Corb Farm and the Common of Dunning, the destination of the herds coming up from Keltie and the other low-land estates. North-West is Chapel Hill, named not for a local chapel but because its income went to support a priest in Glasgow Cathedral. The green slopes of the valley are filled with turf dykes and enclosures, and the calling of crows and lambs.

I move off the top of the hill to find some shelter from the wind and have my lunch. Greek olives, German rye bread, Moroccan-style hummus. It doesn't seem right, somehow. Of course a shower comes along immediately, but as it passes the sun shines on the pastures of Corb Farm and the Common of Dunning, and the grass glows with an astonishing, almost translucent bright green - all the more so because of the browns and greys of the moorland and harvested spruce all round it. Looking down at this vivid green lying in its sheltered bowl, it becomes clear why the Common of Dunning was so valued as summer grazing from at least the Medieval period onwards.

After my lunch I'm tempted to head straight down the steep hillslope to Corb Farm, but no herder would ever take cows down a slope so steep. So I retrace my steps slightly to head North again, and find an easier way down to the green valley floor.



Corb



Funnel



Circular sheep fank in front of Corb Farm, 24 June 2015 (Michael Given)

I pass across Snowgoat Glen (more a ravine than a glen, and ‘gote’ was Scots for a watercourse), and it now seems clear that the best route to bring cattle over would be to cross east well before I did, and come down Corb Burn to Corb Farm and the Common that way. Opposite me, on the flank of Chapel Hill, is a beautiful example of a cattle route funnelled between two enclosures. Perhaps the cattle from Keltie met up with those from Findony further north and passed down this corridor.

As I come towards Corb Farm, with its barn roof covering a 19th-century farmyard with two ranges, the swish of the wind in the spruces behind the farm is very striking; at first I thought it was water. The carrion crows are very busy here, particularly up in the enclosures on the East side of Corb Burn. Peter, our placenames expert, says that Corb is from Gaelic *crob* or *crobh*, a hand or claw. I’m disappointed it’s not corbie, a crow.

1.30pm. Forestry road

As I stand on the forestry road just South of Corb Farm, I listen to a duet between sheep and crows, backed by the wind in the spruces - very different from up on the moor. The sheep are stocked very densely, as can be seen by the quantities of dung I’ve just been stepping through. This might partly explain why it’s so green, but on the other other hand, the land is clearly rich enough to support such a density of sheep.



Track

The forestry road is hard, stony, sharp and uncomfortable. It takes a straight but unresponsive line to the Dunning-Yetts o'Muckhart road and the Littleriggs forestry commission car park, where I am to meet Tessa at 2pm. I'm 15 minutes early, so I sit on a stump of presumably spruce and listen to the very different sounds of the wind in the tree farm spruces and a little stand of young beeches by the car park, both capped by a robin singing from the spruces.

Like the nose-to-tail cows, I've been led all the way from Dunning to the Common of Dunning, by all sorts of roads, tracks, paths, sheep tracks, dykes and fences, many of them helpful and more or less leading in the right direction. And I'm very grateful. Without them I'd still be floundering among the tussocks up there on the moor.



Stumps



Tessa



Five hours reduced to 49 seconds: video compilation of the GoPro photos taken at one-minute intervals. Here is a direct link to the video:
<https://epoiesen.library.carleton.ca/imgs/Given/Given30-Visual-re-run.mp4>

Postamble

What really struck me on re-reading this narrative four years later was the diversity of participants in my walk, how place-specific many of them were, and how clearly you could hear those different places. Birds, trees, cattle and farmers all have their own favoured habitats, which are created and re-created not just by terrain and weather but by the habitus and history of plants, livestock, wild animals and humans. The medium of sound is particularly powerful in negotiating this complex mosaic: directional hearing allows the walker to distinguish moorland and farmland, for example, and different types of woodland.

The diversity of the paths that variously led and misled me across the landscape was astonishing, from formal networks of B-roads and estate drives to the more contingent meshworks of paths created through the agencies of cattle, sheep, walkers and quad bikes (Nuninger et al., 2020). All the time I was negotiating with these different landscape agents, deciding whose footprints to follow, being refused entry in one direction and led astray in another. For many walkers, including 18th-century cattle herders, negotiating a route is far more complex than following a marked road: one path peters out, and you cast around till you find another, until that too no longer serves your purpose and you need to branch out again.

How does my experience on 30 June 2016 translate into a deeper understanding of past landscapes? It has taught me how vital it is to engage with the specificities of place and path, which texture the ground and create the mosaic of practice and memory that constitutes landscape. By walking, we are not just responding and adjusting to the texture of the ground as a mechanical operation: we are setting up and continually renewing an interaction between our own movement and that of our predecessors, materialised in the dense, tangled network of routes, paths and footprints (Legat, 2008; Aldred, 2014; Gibson, 2015). Without past cattle, herders, quadbikes, dyke-builders, fencers, sheep, farmers and tussock-jumpers, my landscape experience would be dramatically different. Without past footprints, hoofmarks and tree roots, there is no landscape.

What footprints did I and my technological collaborators bring to this landscape? So often archaeological photography captures and enframes the landscape, erasing the experience of the field-worker and replacing it with representations of sites and features and

archaeologically constructed landscapes (Hamilakis et al., 2009). We originally thought the GoPro would provide a tidy sequence of such frames, representing a route rather than a site, a line rather than a dot. Its agency went far beyond our intentions, though. It sat like an incubus on my shoulder, peering out at the landscape past my right ear, tilting the horizon at a drunken angle, and occasionally staring up at the clouds or down at the ground. Worst of all, it insistently and annoyingly placed me and my ridiculous yellow hat in the otherwise pristine landscape. The guilty party has been captured on camera: the archaeologist is inescapably part of the landscape.

Perhaps I was the stereotypical western white male imposing his narrow-minded representation of the landscape on others, like that archetypal ‘phenomenologist of Wessex, wandering lonely as a cloud’ (Johnson, 2012: 277). But perhaps, in some respects, I wasn’t. After ten seasons of walkover survey, the landscape for me was full of other voices and actions: the cheeriness of students working in a downpour; the farmer pointing out significant trees; the cattle heading nose to tail up the hillside; the colleague demonstrating how well an experienced eye can read the archaeological landscape; the aural texture created by dense and complex bird song; the landowner who knows exactly where and in what weather an unwary Land-Rover gets stuck. Even up on the high moor, I was never walking alone.

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Walking from Dunning to the Common of Dunning: First Response

Rose Ferraby



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Masthead Image Fieldwalkers above Keltie Wood, August 2009 (Michael Given)

This piece is a response to Given's Walking from Dunning to the Common of Dunning.

This has been a comfortable walk, I realise. Perhaps not for Michael, who suffered some damp weather, wind, bog bouncing and sheep poo. But I enjoyed following the journey, my mind furrowing into the nature of the land that was gradually revealed along the way.

There is something poetic about the title of this piece, especially the grounding repeat of 'Dunning to the Common of Dunning'; an echo of the sagas or old stories seeped in place. It conjures a journey, a journey of the self as much as anything else, appropriate for Michael's journey as a way of understanding the way we walk, the way we understand place by our journey through it. The idea of walking in a landscape to connect in different ways is a path well trodden in archaeology, cultural geography and anthropology. We walk to think, to connect, to give our minds that freedom to roam. On this journey though, I'm intrigued by the question of how we walk as archaeologists – is the journey about the material past landscape, or about understanding people and the past through reflecting on the self? As archaeologists how does our walking permeate temporal boundaries, reflections reverberating across time and communities? How do our particular forms of attentiveness as we travel allow us to understand the land in different ways?

Michael's notebook observations are familiar; not in terms of the place, but more the terrain they rove across: they are the thoughts of an archaeologist. And this, I realise, is what makes this walk comfortable for me: I am accompanying another archaeologist. There is a language we speak, even if we aren't aware of it; a rogue mixture of the technological, topographical, geological, ecological and temporal. There is a way of looking at landscapes that constantly zoom back and forth between geographical and temporal scales; between ancient features,

what a student said, the wind, an oatcake. Narratives navigate between strange way-markers. And there is an attention to detail, a keenness to represent things with a clarity and explanation. The observations also reveal our disciplinary musings on how we integrate aspects of technology into archaeological processes, and how these might add to, or take from more subjective responses to the world around us. I was intrigued how Michael's narrative and his memories of bringing new students to this landscape, revealed the cumulative habits we learn in our experiences of archaeological fieldwork. Walking in transects becomes the norm for 'coverage', eyes flash between the detailed 'down' looking for finds, and the open 'out' to check context and position. For those of us who have done geophysics, this is made more intense by a linear, regular pace of walking; an awareness of gait.

The idea of paths is also discussed in Michael's narrative. He is following the modern map – the formal route – whilst aware of the old ways sunk by the hooves of generations of transhumance, and more recent, temporary human and non-human tracks that weave through the grass along the way. Thinking into the tread of those who have gone before requires a close, attentive observation of the ground – an earthbound geography (Lorimer 2006). To think about a route is to recognise that you are not the first to walk it; a recognition of the various communities that inhabit and pass through it, and you are therefore just a small, interconnected part of its story.

There is recognition here of the connections to wider communities and attention to other voices at play in this landscape. This acts to firmly take the writing away from the territory of 'A Lone Enraptured Male' (Jamie 2008). For those of us seeking to respond to and communicate our relationship to landscape, we are forced to consider the nature of our encounters, our particular gaze. Here, in the journey across the hills, Michael negotiates this by openly puzzling the pitfalls of voice, temporality, change. It becomes part of the wider reflection on this act of journeying, including how technology develops particular ways of seeing, such as the habit of his GoPro to capture his yellow hat in every shot. By vocalising these problems, we are invited to participate. The walk becomes an inviting set of questions, rather than a neat set of answers.

And I guess that is what archaeology is all about: curiosity, wonder, piecing things together, working in a team, asking questions and listening. Archaeology can be – *should be* – an attentive, grounded, thoughtful and kind process, reflecting empathy for the land and everything that connects with it.

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Datacore

Shawn Graham, Andrew Reinhard, and Eric Kansa



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In the middle of the field...

Standing in a late summer field in Italy; the heat of the day lifts the scent of the tilled earth, crickets buzz, and in the distance, the sound of the occasional lorry trundling down the secondary road. The regular clicks of the magnetometer provide the metronome for the day's work. Sweat on my brow, careful step after careful step, a human-machine scanning beam moving across the face of the earth. Click... click... click.

R. Murray Schafer taught us to attend to the way ambient noises overlaid or intersected with physical spaces (1994) to understand more of the meanings of space. Tim Ingold suggested that 'scapes' of all kinds create the temporal experience of space (1993). Archaeological field work is a sensual experience: it engages our senses in the moment of the creation of data, and it requires a sensual imagination to create an archaeological landscape from these pulses of electro-magnetic radiation, mixing together with more tacit materials like potsherds - and even potsherds require sensual engagement to be activated, rubbing between the fingers to feel the slip, the grit, to trigger our knowledge of past encounters with the texture, the physicality, of this detritus.

A sensual engagement with the past is an archaeological act of imagination.

click

Archaeology is necessarily a creative act. Like Pete Townsend smashing a guitar after a show, its destruction is creative: there is no assemblage, no active agencement ("a collection of things which have been gathered together or assembled", Wikipedia helpfully glosses) without the destruction wrought by archaeological method. But it's a creative act that always seems to be secondary; we seem to be embarrassed by the act of creation. If we weren't, there'd be more projects like

Soundmarks (Ferraby and St. John, <https://soundmarks.co.uk/>), or for instance work like that of all of the contributors to a special issue of *Internet Archaeology* on the intersections of art and (digital) archaeology, which demonstrate something of what we're missing when we don't attend to creation (<https://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue44/index.html>).

So we are, in some corners and despite everything, comfortable with the idea that there is a role for creative expression in archaeology; that the archaeology (the things that emerge as a result of archaeological method) emerges in creative ways, different for each practitioner.

click

...we sense more than we see.

In this piece, we want to consider the re-activation of digital data through sound as a way of fostering a sensual engagement with archaeological imagination.

Cristina Wood writes,

Whereas soundscapes paint with 'found' sounds—the auditory snapshot of a location at a given time, at a given place—sonification is an act of translation, or re-mediation and so is the aural equivalent of mapping, graphing, or charting to tell a story. I propose that sonification can also be an act of de-formance, or the deliberate re-interpretation of a text, and that this is a reminder of the constructed nature of data (Wood 2019)

Sonification maps aspects of the information against things like timbre, scale, instrumentation, rhythm, and beats-per-minute to highlight aspects of the data that a visual representation might not pick up. It's also partly about making something strange—we've become so used to visual representations of information that we don't necessarily recognize the ways assumptions about it are encoded in the visual grammars of barcharts and graphs. By trying to represent archaeological information in sound, we have to think through all of those basic decisions and elaborate on their implications. Historians like Michael Kramer sonify historical images to understand how the historical gaze has been constructed (Kramer and Noël 2020; Kramer 2018). "I did not see this until I heard it" they write...

...the use of digital sound design has made it possible to “amplify the meaning” of a historical event [...] by inviting us “to hear an image while listening to its digitized data”, [we establish] a new kind of historical hermeneutics of visual sources. (Kramer & Noël 2020)

In a similar vein, while we are not sonifying images, in our discussion below we detail how we sonified the digital traces of the archaeological engagement with Poggio Civitate and expressed this ‘soundscape’ within particular genres that themselves have implications for state-of-mind and engagement. Going further, we see this kind of transgressive bleeding of data across different states of being and different modalities as being an act of seeding creativity, and we will conclude by suggesting other digital modes that could be similarly seeded.

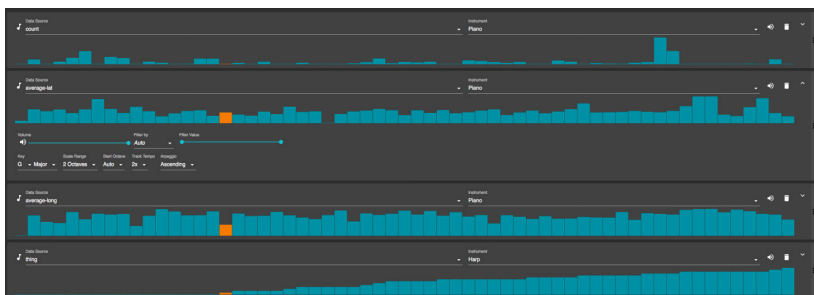
[...] sonification also points to some interesting, if rather strange and philosophical, methodological questions about history itself. We might say that history itself is acousmatic, in the sense that we can never precisely return to the origin point of a historical activity once it has passed. Instead, we are always listening (and looking) back to it through its artifactual representations, which are resonances of the original. As Jean-Luc Nancy argues, “To listen is *tendre l’oreille*. – literally, to stretch the ear.” [S]onification asks us to extend our senses, to heighten our awareness about an artifact, an archive, and history itself in terms of how we access it (Kramer & Noël 2020)

We might argue that using any kind of digital trace as a seed for remediation in another medium/mode stretches our conceptual ears similarly.

click

Data...

“The ‘click track’ “is a series of audio cues used to synchronize sound recordings [...] The click track originated in early sound movies, where optical marks were made on the film to indicate precise timings for musical accompaniment. It can also serve a purpose similar to a metronome, as in the music industry, where it is often used during recording sessions and live performances” Wikipedia.



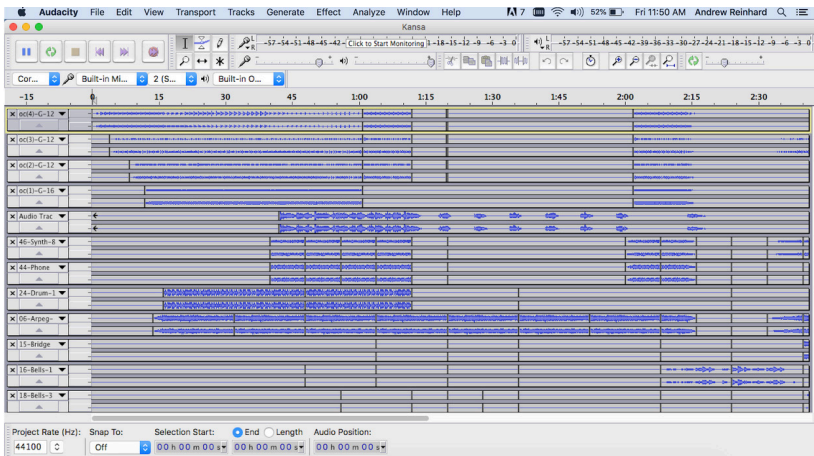
What is the click track of archaeology? What keeps us all in sync?

It isn't 'time', however recorded. Dates smear. They're unsteady, dependent, relative. Extraordinary effort is required to reconcile dates and dating systems (just look at the heroic work of perio.do). No, the click track, the thing that keeps us all in line, is perhaps 'the context' or locus. It is a single row in a database.

In our experiment, we began by using data downloaded from Open Context, from the excavations at Poggio Civitate, but loaded into the web-toy TwoTone. TwoTone is a simple tool for mapping one column of data to a single voice. One row, one whole note. *Click...click...click*. The data is simple counts of objects from Poggio Civitate, which were rendered as arpeggiated piano lines over three octaves (ie, the count was scaled to a note on the 88 key keyboard, and then that note was used as the anchor for the arpeggio); average latitude and average longitude were calculated for each class of thing thereby making a chord, and then each class of object had its own unique value (thus the further into the database we progress, the higher the note). Why did we arpeggiate? The arpeggio is a nod back to the original confusion and messiness of excavation (especially a *training* excavation, as Poggio Civitate was).

We took these four original tracks based on the 3,000-year-old data and began to play, iterating through a couple of versions, ultimately remixing a 5-minute piece that has movements isolating one of the four data threads, which sometimes crash together like waves of building data, yet are linked together. The final mix moves along at 120 bpm, a dance music standard.

The remix was accomplished using the open source Audacity audio software application. The first four tracks are the piano parts generated by TwoTone, staggered in such a way as to introduce the data bit-by-bit,



and then merged with 16 other tracks—overburden or matrix. In the beginning, they are harmonious and in time, but because of subtle variations in bpm, by the time the song ends the data have become messy and frenetic, a reflection of the scattered pieces within the archaeological record, something that happens over time. Each movement in the song corresponds to an isolated data thread from one of the original piano parts, which then loops back in with the others to see how they relate.

Listen:

<https://archive.org/details/reflexivity-instrumental-1>

Kramer again:

...I propose a more adventurous mode of data sonification in which artistic tactics of collage, fusion, Cagean “chance operations,” and formal experimentation might allow historians to hear things in their artifacts, evidence, and data that they might not otherwise perceive. Why not embrace the full potential of computers as re-representation machines? Why constrain our capacities to perceive previously unnoticed aspects of the archival record through creative digital manipulations of our materials?” (Kramer & Noël 2020)

3,000 years ago, at a plateau in the tufa landscape of southern Etruria, people lived their lives, only to have their debris carefully collected, studied, systematized, counted, digitized, and exposed online. No longer things but data, these counts and spaces were mapped to simple sonic dimensions using a web-toy, making a moderately pleasing experience. Remixed, the music moves us, enchants us, towards pausing and thinking through the material, the labour, the meanings, of a digital archaeology (Perry 2019). Should this song ever be performed in a club, the dancers would then be embodying our archaeological knowledge of Poggio in their movements, in the flows and subtle actions/reactions their bodies make across the floor. In dancing, we achieve a different kind of knowledge of the world, that reconnects us with the physicality of the world (eg Block and Kissel 2001). The eruptions of deep time into the present (Fredengren 2016) – such as that encountered at an archaeological site – are weird and taxing and require a certain kind of trained imagination to engage with. But by turning the data into music, we let go of our authority over imagination, and let the dancers perform what they know.

Was this a good strategy for sonification? Doesn't matter.

This playful sonification of data allows us to see archaeological material with fresh eyes . . . errrrrr ears . . . and by doing so restores the enchantment we once felt at the start of a new project, or of being interested in archaeology in the first place. Restoring the notion of wonder into three middle-aged archaeologists is no small feat, but the act of play enabled us to approach a wealth of artifacts from one site we know quite well, and realize that we didn't know it quite like this. Using the new music bridges the gap between humans past and present and in dancing we (and hopefully you) embody the data we present. It's a new connection to something old, and is experienced by bodies.

... In my view, and to my ears, it is in the artful interplay of computer operations and the human sensorium, in using aesthetic approaches to the computational transit between image and sound, seeing and hearing, that we might discover the past most robustly.”
(Kramer & Noël 2020)

click...click...click The human/machine scans across the landscape, marching to the click track set by the demands of magnetometry. The results of the magnetometry inspire our best guess where to dig; we

dig with inexperienced students and help them tell the story of their trench; we smoosh all this indeterminacy into rigid boxes on a digital recording sheet. Each beam of data, each collapse of possibilities to a single point, each point of data in a database, is a seed from which an encounter with the archaeological uncanny can grow.

...core

There are at least 50 wikipedia articles about English words with the suffix -core . Core, from *coeur*, meaning the heart of the matter. From the apple core, we get the seeds that form the orchard. From the datacore, we get..... what, precisely? “Datacore” is suggestive of various musical styles that create music based on data sets. Datacore seems like it should also be a synonym for a database. Could datacore mean more? Could these seeds in our archaeological databases be used to generate other kinds of art? Data-driven 2- and 3-D visual and sonic painting (as in the work of Ferraby & St. John)? Could it be soundscapes at an active dig or lab? Or ambient recordings in a modern landscape containing an ancient site? Perhaps archaeologists think too much about a kind of data being used for a kind of result. Opening data up to other interpretations through non-traditional methods and means could both delight and surprise, adding more context from both human and machine as we work towards a more complete understanding of what it is we do, we collect, we analyze

click

As I walk across the field, I stop to take a break, setting the magnetometer down carefully. There are poppies growing in this field, their seed pods little rattles on the end of impossibly long stems. I pick one, and flick its cap off with my thumb. Little seeds spill out, and are wafted away on the soft breeze. I can't imagine - not yet - what's under my feet. I resume my task.

click... click... click...

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