

Chapter 1

ENCOUNTER, ENGAGEMENT, AND OBJECT STORIES

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Figure 1.1 Shadow board #3. (Image credit: U. K. Frederick, 2013)

WHAT THIS ALL MEANS

I turned my attention to a small awl handle, delicately inscribed with a series of dots and lines. I felt certain that a Wahpeton woman had once used that tool at Little Rapids and that its inscriptions conveyed a great deal about her accomplishments to those who understood their meaning.

These words are drawn from Janet Spector's 1993 seminal publication, *What This Awl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeto Dakota Village*. Spector's book, described at the time of publication as 'revolutionary',¹ was motivated by a desire to inject humanity into the way

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she wrote about the past. Central to Spector's project was a quest to personalise the past, to find and express empathy and feelings for people and objects revealed via archaeological investigation, and, most of all, to resist representing the past through detached, distanced, and objective forms of writing.² No greater compliment could be made to the book, in our view, than the words of Carolyn Schommer: 'The young Dakota woman whom Janet Spector writes about was our grandmother. Having worked with Janet on the Little River project, I respect her sensitivity: for us to be involved, as Wahpeto people, was really special.'³

How many archaeologists can truly say that a narrative of their work elicited from a community member, volunteer student, land owner, or government official such a heartfelt and generous response? That is, an empathic response to the archaeologist's place-story rather than a 'thanks' for being 'allowed' to participate in field practice. We, the editors, recognise that personal interactions of field participants and *in situ* accounts and imaginings of field experience are seldom visible in final archaeological field reports or published accounts. The archaeologist often views situated experiences of archaeological work as frivolous and, therefore, 'other' to orthodoxies of expertise and authority. There is often a disjuncture between what occurred during field and laboratory work, such as speculation concerning object meanings, and what is officially reported. We refer to these unreported personalised experiences, anecdotes, and imaginings as 'hidden histories of archaeological practice'. These stories are not 'hidden' because they speak of objects that have yet to be found nor because they are mundane objects overlooked in a discourse of spectacular discovery. They are hidden simply because they are stories that often remain untold.

CASTING SHADOWS

We open this chapter with the image of a shadow board to illustrate the volume's primary concern with making the hidden stories of archaeological practice visible. In pragmatic terms the shadow board is a device for organising and storing tools. As a visual aid it allows the viewer/maker/technician to quickly discern the location of a particular implement as well as determine which tools are present and which, if any, may be missing. In this respect the shadow board also represents a kind of classification system, whereby each tool is categorised and assigned a position that is marked out with an outline or silhouette shape indicating where each tool 'belongs'—pliers hang alongside scissors, hammers reside near screwdrivers, spanners of all sizes fit together, and so on. In the shadow board of this introduction it is evident that all of the objects are missing. That is, all that is left of these objects, all that we now see are 'shadows'—the representation of objects' 'having been'.

From philosophy and physics through to psychoanalysis and art history, the shadow is freighted with a convoluted symbolism and currency.⁴ Perhaps in the simplest rendering the shadow speaks to complex questions

of perception and representation. It defines form but obscures detail. In the shadow the absence of the object is coupled with the presence of the object's projection. So while the shadow of the object may signal a sort of emptiness—the object is gone—this emptiness is also a powerful imaginative force because it invites us to imagine—to fill in the gaps, as it were. For this reason the shadow board is, we feel, an especially apt visual metaphor for the stories told in this collection. We know from our own experiences and through our conversations with colleagues that rich object stories exist, but only the outline of their presence may be discerned in the discourse that dominates the discipline.

Moreover, the shadow board alludes to conventions of representation—a virtual template—by which we allow our disciplinary voice to be constructed, conveyed, and heard. So what are the kinds of stories that lie in the shadows of archaeological knowledge, and what is the shape of things to come?

This volume makes visible stories and feelings of intimacy otherwise masked behind veils of authority. Central to this project are ways of writing about the present/past, telling stories, and the public presentation of archaeological accounts. The narratives hark back to the work of Janet Spector and beyond that, to James Clifford's and George Marcus' 1986 edited volume *Writing Culture*. The latter book is well known for sparking a 'crisis in representation' in American cultural anthropology and caused anthropologists to scrutinise their texts and develop new ways of working reflexively: 'In essence, the collective message of the book's authors was focused on the authority of the ethnographic text. They questioned the established modes of ethnographic writing that embodied a single authorial voice and thereby, it was argued, a privileged ethnographic gaze. The consequence was—in some quarters—a radical reappraisal of how ethnographies are written.'⁵

We argue for a radical reappraisal of how *archaeologies* are written. This is not to suggest all current archaeological interpretive work is detached, distanced, and objective or that such accounts are necessarily problematic. Far from it. In our view, however, self-styled scientific, rationalist approaches remain dominant in the field. This volume is a call to archaeologists to better assimilate and integrate objective and subjective, popular and academic, first person and third person forms of writing. To recall our earlier metaphor, we are inviting our colleagues to reunite the trowel with its shadow and, in effect, reconfigure the dynamics of archaeology's re-presentation. Whilst we might look within the discipline, to Janet Spector for example, for inspiring ways of rewriting, we would also point to work in other scholarly fields (e.g., material culture studies, science and technology studies, anthropology, sociology, history, heritage studies) and other genres such as autobiography (including works by archaeologists)⁶ and fiction.⁷ This book is a contribution to textual forms emphasising closeness between archaeologist and artefact.

The twenty-four chapter authors presented in the volume reveal and relate personal perspectives concerning archaeological practice. Objects or artefacts act as focal points. The stories tell of excitement and fallibility, object-ive analysis and informed imagination, frivolous yet serious, and ways in which archaeologist and artefact become entangled. Our motivations for compiling the assembled stories are twofold. First, we present a collection of diverse stories and narrative forms that can assist and inspire archaeologists as well as scholars who work with material culture to craft new ways of writing creatively on finds and feelings. We do not argue for personal and engaging accounts of archaeological work as ‘other’ to rational, scientific approaches but rather call for complementary and intertwined forms of blended storytelling. Second, the stories contribute to work being undertaken more broadly in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences concerned with material things. This volume, therefore, makes available to wider nonarchaeologist audiences particular archaeological perspectives and ways of constructing knowledge. The final chapter, an afterword written by Jane Lydon, contextualises the object stories in relation to a broad social sciences and humanities literature.

In this introduction we consider how archaeologists experience things, objects, and artefacts and how hidden histories of field practice are revealed and related.⁸ We draw primarily on the object stories presented in this book (our ‘data’) to discuss how archaeologists encounter, nurture, and write about artefacts with which they become personally connected. To this end our discussion is framed under three sequential topics: discovering affective objects, cultivating objects, and object stories.

DISCOVERING AFFECTIVE OBJECTS

Sociologist/psychologist Sherry Turkle, a scholar who writes on the ‘subjective side’ of people’s relationships with technology, has edited books on things and thinking. In the introduction to an edited volume of autobiographical essays, *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, Turkle tells of her childhood fascination with a ‘memory closet’ of family keepsakes. In each keepsake (a photograph, address book, business card) her childhood self sought clues for locating her father, who had been absent and never spoken of since she was two: ‘I was looking, without awareness, for the one who was missing. I was looking for a trace of my father.’⁹ Turkle’s search might be read as archaeological in nature because it starts with a discovery and then uses found objects to seek answers and formulate new questions.

In Turkle’s childhood quest the dual meanings of ‘discovery’ are evident—that is, discovery as initial encounter with an object or collection and discovery as learning something for the first time. In a simplistic sense one might associate initial encounter with the immediacy of affect and emotion and new learning with a longer-term application of intellect. For the purpose of examining the object stories presented in this volume,

we begin by considering the former meaning of discovery: discovering affective objects.

Archaeology is a discipline that studies the past through material remains. Historically the field has been told through great discoveries and metanarratives, but it is also concerned with small things and not-so-ordinary lives. In this volume we are not concerned with the stories of iconic sites, such as Hiram Bingham's discovery of Machu Picchu in 1911, Tutankhamun's tomb by Howard Carter in 1922, or hominin footprints at Laetoli by Mary Leakey in 1978. Rather, the stories focus on ordinary objects, such as pot sherds, toothpicks, a fragment of statue, and an abandoned industrial machine. How were these objects discovered? What happened in the moment of author-archaeologist and artefact contact?

For archaeologists, encountering artefacts takes place in many contexts. Typically archaeologists find artefacts whilst undertaking excavations or field survey or whilst examining institutional collections. This is the case for many of the objects discussed in this book. Some were recovered via excavation—grass remnants of a Neolithic basket from Turkey, a stone-lined fireplace in a Neolithic house in Korea, a Viking toy boat from Dublin, a marble finger detached from a classical Greek statue, a sherd of Polynesian pottery from Samoa, and a group of Roman ceramic fragments from England. The obsidian stemmed artefact from New Britain, Papua New Guinea, was also found during excavation but in this instance was salvaged when a bulldozer exposed it. Some artefacts were encountered during field survey, such as the Acheulian hand axe in Jordan, an abandoned machinery 'claw' at Chernobyl, a vernacular door at a Ugandan refugee camp, and a rock engraving of a man with a hat and pipe in Australia. A further group of artefacts were encountered in institutional collections—a Bronze Age axe at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge; ivory toothpicks in the Ivoryton Library, Connecticut, United States; a cake of spinifex resin at the South Australian Museum; a wood and iron–nail club at the Hursville Museum, Australia; and prints of the iconic Australian Sandman panel van stored in the South Australian archives. For Heather Law Pezzarossi, the collection that is the origin of her story is her own flea market–acquired assemblage of tintypes.

Some artefacts discussed in this volume arise from other forms of encounter. A number of the object stories concern gifts. Emma Waterton tells of a copper vessel given to her by a Nepalese man, Karma Gurung, during fieldwork. Anne Clarke tells of a model canoe, painted by Hazel Lalara, which commemorates their boating (mis)adventure in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Australia. Lynnette Russell tells of two miniature sperm whales carved by her colleague and friend John Bradley. Finally, there are three narratives that tell of artefacts that emerge outside of traditional forms of archaeology—a brass dinner bell that is a family heirloom; the end of a plastic straw, evocative of a friend's wedding, salted into a bucket

during an archaeological excavation; and the scent of an iconic cologne that becomes entwined in a search for former Indonesian President Sukarno.

How did each author choose her/his respective artefact? How did the artefacts become lodged in the author's minds? What role did bodily interaction and the senses play? For most authors the *visual* was the primary mode of initial encounter: For Robin Torrence the obsidian stemmed tool was first revealed in a photograph, for Ralph Mills it was observing potter's marks on Roman ceramics, for Sarah Nelson it was being shown the stone-lined hearth in an already excavated site; and for Tracy Ireland it was recognising a rock engraving motif already familiar to her. In many of the chapters the authors describe how 'their' artefacts were encountered through a combination of sight and *touch*: Heather Law Pezzarossi's collection of tintypes hold powerful visual and tactile qualities, Ruth Tringham's Neolithic basket was made visible by the scrape of a trowel, the cool-on-the-skin feel of ivory for Alexandra Kelly, and Allison Mickel's Acheulian axe, which had to be picked up, closely inspected, and held in her palm before it could be categorically identified. Some authors tell of initial handling of an artefact, inevitably museum pieces, requiring the use of gloves: the bronze axe for Rachel Crellin, the Aboriginal club for Paul Irish, the ivory toothpicks for Alexander Kelly, and the cake of spinifex resin for Heidi Pitman. Each author expresses a sense of frustration concerning the way gloves create a feeling of distance and separation from objects. Finally, one of the artefacts encounters is dominated by *smell*: waft of cologne, Shalimar de Guerlain, discussed by Denis Byrne. *Sound* and *taste* are less apparent in these stories but are not entirely absent: the noise of footsteps on fallen leaves and the rustle of coats and cameras are the sounds of the forest for Robert Maxwell, Tracy Ireland puts tongue to ceramic, and elsewhere trowels scrape dirt and a bell rings. In other examples the author conjures sensations: Tom Sapienza reimagines the sound of bowls breaking on a hard floor surface, and Ursula Frederick anticipates the feel of shag pile carpet against the skin in a 1970s automobile. The senses are at the forefront of first experiences with artefacts, and in turn, artefacts engender closeness through affective effects.

A further theme in this collection is the association of artefacts with personal life events. Faced with disaster, Emma Waterton selects childhood toys to be rescued in the heat of the moment, whereas for Annie Clarke, near disaster is embedded in the gift of a model boat. Harold Mytum is drawn to a tenth-century toy boat because it recollects a treasured childhood toy boat his father gave him. Tracy Ireland is drawn to the rock engraving because it evokes her early career in archaeology. Likewise, Ralph Mills re-enlivens ceramic sherds he excavated in his early archaeological field practice. For Lynnette Russell, the miniature sperm whales continue a lifelong love of whales.

We suggest that in all initial encounters there are powerful affective forces at work. Some moments of discovery erupt with emotion (pleasure

for Allison Mickel, humility for Emma Waterton, anxiety for Steve Brown). For other authors artefacts require longer engagements before becoming embedded in minds and bodies. Whether it is an immediate sensation or a slow-burning attachment that grows, we suggest that the feelings generated in these entanglements are worthy of our attention. The relations between object and archaeologist fostered through archaeological encounters not only inform our knowledge and interpretation of the artefacts to hand but also act rhizomatically to connect us with other objects, places, people, and materials. It is to ways in which artefact and archaeologist accommodate one another that we now turn.

CULTIVATING OBJECTS

We think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with.¹⁰

In *Evocative Objects* Turkle brings together two key ideas: ‘objects as companions to our emotional lives’ and ‘objects as provocations for thought’.¹¹ Both ideas are evident in the *Object Stories* collection because the archaeologists and their artefacts assemble different mixes of emotion and intellect. In the stories these qualities are not represented as binaries but rather revealed as entwined (e.g., in notions of emotional intelligence and gut instinct). Emotion and intellect are starting points for our discussion on how our archaeologists and their artefacts, following initial encounter, became entangled. More broadly, our interest is in the ways artefacts engender intimacy.

Heather Law Pezzarossi keeps a collection of tintypes in a desk drawer and occasionally eyeballs the ‘sombre strangers’ that stare back. Who were these people? What are their stories? Law Pezzarossi’s engagement with the images is both emotional (love of the objects, desire to know the subjects) and intellectual (the historical and social context of tintypes, the technology of their material production). Equally, Tracy Ireland talks of how a rock engraving can render the past seductive and desirable—romantic even—and simultaneously provide evidence with which to fashion a narrative connecting a road and the life stories of convict workers. There are levels of introspection and investigation in the writings of Ireland and Law Pezzarossi, as with all authors in this volume, that reveal something of the way archaeologists and artefacts cultivate one another.

We are reminded here of Daniel Miller’s posthumanist aphorism: we make stuff as much as stuff makes us.¹² In the mutuality of making in our stories, emotions are at the fore. Heidi Pitman, Ralph Mills, and Tom Sapienza scrutinise spinifex resin and pottery fragments, touch them and examine them, like Law Pezzarossi, and search via sensual, empathic, and intellectual means for in/visible stories of past people, behaviours, and events. Material memories are cultivated and accumulate to such an extent that fact/fiction accounts can be constructed. Anxiety can bind archaeologist and artefact. Giovanna Vitelli tells of how the family’s brass dinner

bell is a call to greater diligence as archaeologist and family archivist. For Paul Irish the wooden club is a revelatory artefact necessary to hit home the fact that ‘deep time’ Aboriginal culture is everywhere present in his home city of Sydney. Some artefacts stand in for guilt—for example, the guilt of unfinished field reports (no names mentioned). Finally, many of the authors associate their objects with love—for example, a love for whales (Lynette Russell) and for Greece (Lesley Beaumont). Artefacts as ‘object lessons’ are also companions to emotional lives.¹³

‘Discovering’ as meaning learning new information about an artefact is also a pathway to the coconstitution of archaeologist and artefact. Artefacts provoke archaeologists to think deeply about materials and contextual histories. With subtlety or force they cultivate in the archaeologist a desire to know more. For Denis Byrne, the quest to learn more of Shalimar de Guerlain is a means to tracing President Sukarno. For Lesley Beaumont, an excavated over-life-size white marble finger, the only evidence of a possible cult statue of Apollo, ‘makes’ her want to know more of the role of the sanctuary at Kato Phana and to discover hitherto unfamiliar meanings of deities to the contemporary Chian community. For Alexandra Kelly, ivory toothpicks reveal a cruel and gruesome history of elephant slaughter and trade. These authors draw on scholarly research skills and artefacts to get the measure of history. The artefacts provoke searches for new knowledge, but in all of their library and Internet searches, the sensual and emotive endure. Intellect and emotion are concurrently inculcated in the cultivation of stuff.

We suggest that in all of our stories there is a sense of accommodation—being accommodating and being accommodated—not only between archaeologist and artefact(s) but also between other people, places, species, and forces that initial encounter generates.¹⁴ The notion of accommodation points to entangled and recursive processes—mixtures of intellect and emotion—whereby archaeologist and artefact are in continuous states of becoming, reshaping, and merging. In this mix there are forces and energies at play—affect, emotion, agency—that underpin the sense of accommodation author/artefacts achieve. At times accommodation between archaeologist and artefact achieves a sense of equilibrium, but on other occasions, as in Giovanna Vitelli’s story, there is disruption. Equilibrium and disruption point to the dynamic nature of making stuff and being made by stuff. Cultivating objects is a fraught and rewarding pastime.

OBJECT STORIES

A narrative is a representation of events that is shaped, organised, and coloured, presenting those events and the people involved in them from a certain perspective or perspectives and, thereby, giving narrative structure—coherence, meaningfulness, and evaluative and emotional import—to what is narrated.¹⁵

What is meant by narrative? Put simply, narrative refers to a story that can be told.¹⁶ The quote above, taken from the work of philosopher Peter Goldie, describes narrative structure. In our view all of the object stories in this volume have narrative structure: they are written in the first person and are unambiguously multiperspectival; they not only present the viewpoint of the archaeologist-author but also reveal something of the perspective of the artefact—quite literally in Heidi Pitman’s story. We also see in these narratives coherence, meaningfulness, and evaluative and emotional import. Emotional import injects humanity into the texts, and emotional import is what, for us, makes these stories stand out from much archaeological literature.

Thus, once artefacts are discovered and cultivated, how and in what form can archaeologists turn them into narrative? We suggest that intellect and emotion, agency and affect do not end with setting out on the storytelling part of journey but rather continuously infuse narratives as they are put to paper or electronically constructed, crafted, edited, and finalised for publication. In this collection of essays we recognise four interweaving narrative forms.

First and foremost the stories incorporate autobiography: they are personal narratives. They are also more than autobiographical in their use of auto-ethnography, a research method of analysis and interpretation using the researcher’s autobiographic data to investigate others’ practice as well as reflection to develop analytical insights.¹⁷ Some authors apply this method via reference to their childhoods (Mytum, Waterton, Russell). Childhood practices are re-envisaged in order to explain how objects play a significant role in shaping personal interests (e.g., whales for Lynette Russell), understanding material encounter, and the long-term importance of childhood attachments to possessions. Other authors draw on their earlier archaeological selves (Ireland, Irish, Mills) to juxtapose past innocence with accumulated present-day knowledge and experience. Harold Mytum reflects on the politics of early-career exclusion and latter-career inclusion in Irish archaeology. For Denis Byrne, archaeological fieldwork is styled in the form of investigative travelogue. Additionally, some of these stories (Brown, Clarke, Ireland) incorporate elements of ethnographies of archaeological practice.

Complementing the use of auto-ethnographic methods are object-life history approaches. The stories are infused with Arjun Appadurai’s notion of the ‘social life of things’ and Igor Kopytoff’s concept of ‘the cultural biography of things’.¹⁸ Artefacts become enlivened through text as artefact lives are retold. The life story of specific artefacts is the focus of some stories: a brass bell for Giovanna Vitelli, a wooden club for Paul Irish, a tin can for John Giblin, a bronze axe for Rachel Crellin. Some artefacts are pointers to broader historical and social contexts. For Lesley Beaumont, this is literally the case with a marble finger. For Steve Brown,

a penis straw focuses attention on the sociality of in-field excavation practice. For Robert Maxwell, radioactivity emitted from a discarded industrial machine evidences the catastrophe, dangers, and discourses that make Chernobyl. For Robin Torrence, a stone tool takes on different roles according to who speaks for it—archaeologist, worker, or company manager. For Allison Mickel, a stone tool stands in for career direction.

For some of our archaeologist-authors the choice of narrative structure is creative imagining and fiction. Janet Spector writes of how an awl might have been used and lost in order to convey a sense of Dakota culture. Heidi Pitman gives voice and human qualities to a cake of spinifex resin in order to impart a sense of liveliness. Sarah Nelson draws from her full-length novel, *Spirit Bird Journey*,¹⁹ to turn a few excavated rock-information into a potent human drama. Tom Sapienza, Rachel Crellin, and Ralph Mills create imagined stories that turn scant archaeological data into real-life episodes.

Finally, we recognise in this collection the use of ‘blended forms’. Here we do not mean what in archaeological assemblage analysis would be categorised as ‘other’; rather, blended or hybrid forms are consciously styled narrative structures used to convey a multitemporal sense of the past event and present-day encounter. Ruth Tringham uses Neolithic basket fragments to ‘jump and pivot’, to counter-pose and juxtapose events at Neolithic Çatalhöyük with the formal archaeological account. Past and present, now and then, become poetic in their styling and interpenetrations. Lynette Russell draws on her collection of whale paraphernalia—objects, books, experiences, childhood—to reveal how she is simultaneously archaeologist and whale romantic.

IMAGES TELL STORIES TOO

We have suggested that considerable pleasure and value may be gained by writing and reading about artefacts and archaeological practice through a narrative mode. Like text, images hold enormous potential in this regard. Whether presented individually, in composite form, or as a series, images convey information and insight, but like the objects they picture, they also elicit questions and contribute to archaeological debate. In this volume images are used in a complementary manner to work in dialogue with the text they accompany. Not only do these drawings and photographs document and display artefacts, they also convey vital clues about the context of artefact-archaeologist engagement. We see Rachel Crellin wielding the axe, Tracy Ireland photographing the man with the pipe, and Harold Mytum working alongside his Viking ship.

The hand is a central motif in this visual language of encounter, reminding us of the importance of the embodied nature of our practice. Lesley Beaumont’s image, for example, is a powerful evocation of the warmth she feels towards her object and all that it represents. The image shows a marble finger entwined within Beaumont’s own, thereby conflating flesh and stone

as though one. The photograph of Lynette Russell's hands tenderly cupping two small whale carvings conveys a similar attention to the sensations of materiality. As well as emphasising the haptic dimensions of archaeological work, images such as these highlight how artefacts can forge and embody real connections to other people. Paul Irish explores this as he describes how his curiosity for a *boondi* club and its origins led him to the image of Joe Anderson, an important Aboriginal man and rights campaigner active in 1930s Sydney. In this example we see how images and objects can be powerful conduits of cross-cultural exchange. Essays by Brown, Mickel, and Torrence demonstrate this further; by including images of artefacts held by friends, informants, and/or co-workers, they establish the value we place on the relationships generated through our shared entanglements.

It is clear, then, that the images in this volume act as more than illustrations illuminating text; they also communicate their own nexus of associations. These connections are sometimes subtly rendered and require attentive consideration. Nevertheless, as Kitty Hauser has suggested in the case of photographs, images are replete with the marks and signs of previous events and activities.²⁰ That is, although they appear to depict a singular moment, photographs are in fact suffused with multiple times and places. The photograph of a young Ralph Mills (Figure 17.1) provides one such example.

Upon reading Mills' text we come to know that his opening photograph depicts a summer's day in 1968 soon after he and his father began excavating a Romano-British burial in North Kent. At their feet in the foreground of the image is a small collection of artefacts, recently excavated and arranged sometime prior to the release of the camera's shutter. These particular artefacts are believed to have been deposited near where the photograph was taken, only many centuries earlier. They are evidence of a second-century AD Roman settlement, but how they came to lie beneath the earth alongside the A2 road suggests even further places and times that are anterior to the moment depicted in the image. In other words, there are multiple temporalities represented within this photograph. Furthermore, the narrative arc does not flow only in the direction of the past. We learn that the photograph was subsequently published in the *Kent Gazette* and that some forty-five years later the new trowel that appeared in the photograph now resides in Leeds, diminished in size from all of the other layers of soil, in various other places, it has scraped back. We could go on excavating this image for traces of different times and spatialities, but the point is, as Hauser notes, photographs are 'always really parts of stories'.²¹ That is, every image offers multiple narrative possibilities. The viewer is left to imagine what came before and after the moment recorded in the image.

Frederick addresses something of this imaginative potential when she talks of viewing the 'blueprints' of a classic Australian automobile. These drawings are effectively bare engineering schematics, but they

urge her to reflect on how the lines have been filled out when the design is translated into material substance. This same exercise of envisioning two-dimensional form as three-dimensional matter is required whenever we look at an archaeological drawing or classificatory type, such as those used by Harold Mytum and Giovanna Vitelli. This reminds us above all that images are objects also. As W. J. T. Mitchell recalls, images matter not only because they ‘are important and make demands. But they are themselves matter . . . they are always embodied in material objects, in things.’²² This is brought home to us by Heather Law Pezzarossi’s contribution on tintypes. Compelling portraits in their own right, these images are so poignant as objects of remembrance precisely because they can be held in the hand and against the heart. Their circulation as objects reveals much about the early links between photography and consumption, and their unique embellishments reveal how the individual can be made present even within and through technologies of mass production. Finally, the author demonstrates the significant exchange value of these historic artefacts, in the first instance as tangible memento-mori gifted between loved ones and, today, traded at flea markets as artefacts of anonymous American identities.

For several other authors in the volume representational form is a focus for their essay. Clarke’s linocut print and small canoe are as central to the story of being shipwrecked and saved as are the words she commits to the page. In fact Clarke’s story shows how art became a language of mutual conversation for the author and her Indigenous colleague to express their relief and connection over the ordeal they experienced. The canoe Hazel gifted Anne is a sculptural form that resonates in the image-narrative of Anne’s print. In this way we begin to see how objects beget objects and stories beget stories. Indeed, as identified earlier, it is our express hope that this volume will elicit similar narrative approaches amongst our colleagues throughout the world.

OUR STORIES

Archaeologists . . . work closely with materials in the course of excavation, in ways that make them highly attentive to the possibilities of both the narrative capabilities of objects, and the limits to the capacity of matter to produce theoretical insights.²³

How did we-the-editors become entangled with this assemblage of stories and authors? How did we choose the contributors, and how did they choose us? In our initial formulations of the volume we began with a set of eight Australian-based authors (Brown, Byrne, Clarke, Frederick, Ireland, Irish, Pitman, and Sapienza) and thence set out to capture archaeologist-object stories that represented geographical, temporal, disciplinary, and object-material diversity. In addition, we hoped to include a mix of established scholars and recent graduates across different

generations. Of the twenty-four authors, half are either PhD candidates or have recently completed their doctorates, and many of the authors are highly regarded in archaeology's global community.

Although the British Museum may well have sought to tell *A History of the World in 100 Objects*,²⁴ our less lofty goals were to represent pluralism and difference within archaeology. Ultimately we approached many more archaeologists than those appearing here, either through recommendations (i.e., a snowballing technique) or 'cold-call' e-mails to prospective authors, out of whom a further sixteen (as well as Jane Lydon, the author of the 'afterword'—Chapter 26) provided chapters for this volume. Fifteen of the twenty-four authors are women, and a number of us (including editors) identify as GLBT. We suggest that this diversity emphasises the important place of feminist and queer scholarly communities as well as contemporary archaeologies in shaping alternative modes of academic writing, representation, and inclusion. Similarly, although we did not set out to have the volume dominated by Australian authors, the volume highlights the important archaeological work and plurality of voice that exists beyond the scholarship of the northern hemisphere.

Many of the objects discussed are products of the modern era and connect with the subdisciplines of historic archaeology and contemporary archaeology. The oldest object represented here is an axe, hundreds of thousands of years old (Mickel), whereas the youngest is a plastic straw (Brown). There are a number of overlapping artefact types—for example, pottery sherds (Mills, Sapienza), hand axes (Crellin, Mickel), model boats (Clarke, Mytum), markings (Ireland, Frederick, and, less obviously, Spector, Vitelli, Irish) and representations of penises (Brown, Torrence). And the material types are diverse—stone, wood, bone, ceramic, metal, plastic, and some stuff is less obviously material: vapour, radioactivity.

Table 1.1 is a summary of artefacts, material types, locations, and subdisciplines the chapters represent. The table is intended to assist those with particular subdisciplinary preferences or material fetishes to select chapters of greatest interest, though the writing genres are applicable to all subfields of archaeology and all types of finds. The chapters are not ordered in a particularly interpretive way—they are alphabetical by author Christian name—and therefore may be read in any sequence. The chapters are written in plain English, accessible styles, and do not require background knowledge of archaeology. In our view they are suited to reading by nonarchaeologists purely for their story value, for the information they share, and for enjoyment. For those with knowledge of archaeology and material culture studies, the stories reference a variety of theory and methods in the social sciences and humanities.

In concluding, we recognise that each of us strongly shape the narratives we, as archaeologists, present—'our stories'. As the volume makes clear, individual selfhood inevitably and unavoidably shapes what we see,

Table 1.1 Summary of authors and objects, places, and times

| <i>Author</i> | <i>Artefact</i> | <i>Material</i> | <i>Location</i> | <i>Subdiscipline</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Alexandra Kelly | toothpick | ivory | Africa/USA | historic |
| Allison Mickel | hand axe | stone | Jordan | Pleistocene/ Acheulian |
| Anne Clarke | model boat | wood | Australia | contemporary/ indigenous |
| Denis Byrne | perfume | vapour | Indonesia | contemporary |
| Emma Waterton | cup | copper | Nepal | contemporary/ indigenous |
| Giovanna Vitelli | bell | brass | United States | historic |
| Harold Mytum | toy boat | wood | Ireland | Viking |
| Heather Law Pezzarossi | photographs | metal & emulsion | United States | historic |
| Heidi Pitman | cake of resin | plant | Australia | historic/indigenous |
| John Giblin | can | metal | Uganda | contemporary |
| Lesley Beaumont | finger | marble | Greece | classical |
| Lynette Russell | whale | bone | Australia | contemporary |
| Paul Irish | club | wood & iron | Australia | historic/indigenous |
| Rachel Crellin | axe | bronze | United Kingdom | Bronze Age |
| Ralph Mills | pot fragments | ceramic | England | Roman |
| Robert Maxwell | machine | iron | Ukraine | contemporary/ industrial |
| Robin Torrence | stemmed tool | obsidian | New Britain | Holocene |
| Ruth Tringham | basket | plant | Turkey | Neolithic |
| Sarah Nelson | hearth | stone | Korea | Neolithic |
| Steve Brown | straw | plastic | Australia | contemporary |
| Tom Sapienza | pot fragment | ceramic | Polynesia | indigenous |
| Tracy Ireland | engraving | sandstone | Australia | historic |
| Ursula Frederick | car design | paper | Australia | contemporary |

hear, feel, and come to know about the objects we encounter. Individual human agency and object agency are powerful forces. Harnessing these forces and publishing our experiences of hidden histories of archaeological practice can reinforce, counter, or add diversity to the grand narratives of archaeology.

NOTES

1. Ian Hodder, quoted in Spector (1993), rear cover.
2. *Ibid.*, 1.
3. *Ibid.*, rear cover.
4. Stoichita (1997).
5. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), 203. For discussion of related issues in writing history, see Curthoys and Docker (2010).
6. For example, autobiographies produced in later life by archaeologists such as John Mulvaney (2011), Aileen Fox (2000), Stanley South (2007), and Mortimer Wheeler (1955).
7. For example, Auel (1980), Brooks (2011), Butala (2000), Mitchener (1965), and Nelson (1999).
8. We use the terms ‘artefact’ and ‘object’ as synonymous—that is, material items made or handled by humans. We recognise ‘things’ as a broader category applicable to material and nonmaterial things, including thoughts and feelings (e.g., Hodder 2012, 218).
9. Turkle (2007), 3–4.
10. *Ibid.*, 5.

11. *Ibid.*, 5.
12. Stuff, like things, is a broad category referring primarily to solid entities made or used by humans, but can be extended to mean thoughts and feelings, smells and sounds—things as flows of matter, energy, and information (Hodder 2012, 218).
13. Tracy Ireland and Jane Lydon (2005, 2) use the phrase ‘object lessons’ to mean to reveal ‘the power of objects, places and landscape to focus emotion and define world views’.
14. Here we are drawing Miller’s (2010, 92–96) ideas concerning ‘home’.
15. Goldie (2012), 8.
16. *Ibid.*, 2.
17. Chang (2008); Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett (2008), 94.
18. Appadurai (1986); Kopytoff (1986).
19. Nelson (1999).
20. Hauser (2007).
21. *Ibid.*, 76.
22. Mitchell (2005), 108.
23. Harvey and Knox (2014), 13.
24. MacGregor (2010).

