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**A CONFLICT OF INTEREST? NEGOTIATING AGENDAS, ETHICS, AND  
CONSEQUENCES REGARDING THE HERITAGE VALUE OF HUMAN REMAINS**

A Dissertation Presented

by

HEIDI J. BAUER-CLAPP

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2016

Anthropology

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HEIDI J. BAUER-CLAPP

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## **DEDICATION**

For Jason and Eli

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## **ABSTRACT**

A CONFLICT OF INTEREST? NEGOTIATING AGENDAS, ETHICS, AND  
CONSEQUENCES REGARDING THE HERITAGE VALUE OF HUMAN REMAINS

MAY 2016

HEIDI J. BAUER-CLAPP, B.A., HAMLINE UNIVERSITY

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Directed by: Professor Elizabeth S. Chilton

Since the mid-twentieth century growing public fascination with a heritage of violence has spurred an increase in sites of conscience and dark tourism. While scholars have demonstrated how this heritage can draw attention to events that may have been marginalized or ignored, little attention has been paid to complex ethical dilemmas involved in the commodification of violence through tourism. Even less attention has been paid to ethical treatment of the remains of victims whose suffering is central to dark tourism.

This dissertation demonstrates how heritage policies and codes of ethics can be strengthened to promote ethical treatment of the dead in heritage contexts, a critical need since the dead can no longer speak for themselves. The central case study involves heritage development on St. Helena island after archaeologists excavated the unmarked graves of individuals who died due to the traumatic conditions of the transatlantic slave trade. This ethnographic case study, set during a period of intense economic and tourism development in St. Helena, illustrates how community members and others decide the fate of the excavated remains and what meaning or value this history has in the present.

Using content analysis of codes of ethics and heritage policies, this dissertation analyzes the efficacy of these resources in addressing on-the-ground issues related to ethical treatment of human remains in heritage contexts. These resources, while providing valuable guidance and insight, reflect problematic power dynamics or cultural assumptions, including privileging Western perspectives. Furthermore, they often fail to consider heritage as a dynamic, fluid, global process.

The anthropological perspective presented here offers new thinking on the impacts of present needs and demands on heritage development, drawing out what had previously been relatively invisible forces of power and capital. I call on stakeholders to interrogate their own efforts in the heritage development process: Who is invited into decision-making processes, who is excluded, and why? In addition, decision-makers may need to look past their own cultural contexts to consider what constitutes ethical treatment of human remains; their knowledge, beliefs, and opinions should not be unquestioned substitutes for the once-living individuals who are the object of heritage projects.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	x
LIST OF TABLES .....	xvi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xvii
CHAPTER	
1. HERITAGE OF VIOLENCE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	1
Introduction .....	1
High Stakes Ethical Terrain.....	3
Research Objectives .....	7
St. Helena Case Study .....	9
Methods .....	11
Roadmap to this Dissertation.....	14
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
Introduction .....	16
Heritage and Tourism Development.....	16
Heritage of Violence .....	19
Materiality .....	24
Resources.....	28
Foundational Resources.....	32
Content Analysis.....	34
Decision-Makers .....	34
Conflict Resolution.....	37
Varying Cultural Contexts .....	41
Conclusion.....	45
3. HERITAGE IN CONTEXT .....	47
Introduction .....	47
St. Helena: Geography and History .....	47

Discovery and Early Settlement.....	48
St. Helena: Population and Social Contexts .....	52
St. Helena: Political Economy .....	53
Sustainable Development .....	55
Sustainable Development: Tourism.....	56
Heritage Development and Promotion.....	57
Slavery and St. Helena .....	59
History of Slavery on St. Helena: Pre-1840.....	59
St. Helena’s Liberated African History .....	61
Liberated African Depot .....	62
Liberated African Cemeteries in Rupert’s Valley.....	67
Archaeological Excavation in Rupert’s Valley .....	68
Current Status of Excavated Human Remains and Objects.....	70
Public Outreach and Education Regarding St. Helena’s Liberated African History .....	70
Conclusion.....	72
4. METHODS.....	74
“Temporary” Storage .....	74
St. Helena Case Study.....	78
The Settings.....	79
Phase One: St. Helena .....	82
Phase Two: United Kingdom.....	83
Phase Three: St. Helena.....	84
Relationships, Not Sites.....	85
Methods.....	86
Interviews: St. Helena and UK.....	86
Interviews: International Slavery Museum.....	88
Participant Observation .....	90
Learning Heritage: St. Helena Primary School Project.....	91
Textual Analysis.....	92
Data Analysis .....	92
Coding Technique.....	94

	Researcher Identity and Relationships .....	95
	Ethics.....	98
5.	HERITAGE IN DEVELOPMENT.....	102
	Introduction .....	102
	Strategies: St. Helena .....	102
	Archaeology-Related Outreach.....	103
	Education and Public Interpretation .....	108
	Consultation .....	113
	“Rest in Peace” .....	118
	Strategies: International Slavery Museum .....	121
	“Humanizing” .....	122
	Education .....	125
	Tourism: A Thematic Bridge.....	129
	Forces and Impacts: St. Helena .....	133
	Economic Development.....	133
	Racism/Colonial Legacies .....	139
	Access and Absences.....	142
	Forces and Impacts: International Slavery Museum.....	148
	Economic .....	148
	Ethics/Museum Image .....	149
	Conclusion.....	150
6.	CONCLUSION.....	152
	Deciding Heritage .....	154
	Efficacy of Existing Resources.....	161
	Identity and Ethics.....	162
	Privileging Interests.....	166
	Contributions .....	169
	Future Directions .....	170
	Concluding Thoughts.....	174

APPENDICES

A. RELEVANT ACRONYMS .....176  
B. TABLE OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS, ST. HELENA AND UK .....177  
C. DEMOGRAPHICS: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS AT ISM.....179

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....180



## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Motivations for developing the heritage of violence or dark tourism site .....	20
2.2 Documents selected for content analysis .....	31
4.1 Categories of interview participants from all phases of research.....	87
5.1 Interpretive panels in “Liberty Bound: Slavery and St. Helena” .....	122

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
3.1 Map of St. Helena in geographical context .....	48
3.2 Detail map of St. Helena .....	51
5.1 St. Helena student exhibit .....	113
5.2 Results from questionnaire developed in advance of formal public consultation....	116
5.3 Responses to the question “Whose heritage does this exhibit represent?” .....	128
5.4 Memorial to the <i>HMS Waterwich</i> .....	143
6.1 Entrance to the memorial at the New York African Burial Ground.....	156
6.2 Unmarked Jewish cemetery at Montjuïc.....	158

## CHAPTER 1

### HERITAGE OF VIOLENCE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### Introduction

Since the end of World War II there has been a growing public fascination with a heritage of violence. This is evidenced by an increase in sites of conscience and “dark tourism,” which involves travel to places of violence, suffering, and death. This growth is a logical yet perhaps unanticipated outcome of the formation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1945, as one of UNESCO’s aims is preventing new violent conflicts through the promotion of heritage, education, and cultural diversity. In addition, communities, developers, and others increasingly view cultural heritage resources, including violent heritage, as potential tools for sustainable economic development through tourism.

Scholars have explored this growing interest in the heritage of violence through a burgeoning body of literature, demonstrating how such heritage draws attention to violent histories that may have been marginalized or ignored. However, little attention has been paid to the complex ethical dilemmas involved in the commodification of violence through tourism. Even less attention has been paid to ethical treatment of the victims of violence whose death, suffering, and bodily remains are central to dark tourism. This reflects a broader reality, a decided lack of attention to theory and method related to the heritage of violence. How should scholars, practitioners, and communities balance the complex and potentially conflicting agendas and consequences that arise when human remains become the object of heritage projects? In this dissertation I demonstrate how

heritage policies and codes of ethics could be strengthened to promote ethical treatment of the dead in heritage contexts, a critical need given the reality that the dead are no longer able to speak for themselves. In addition, I illustrate how communities, scholars, heritage practitioners, and other stakeholders could benefit from developing equitable decision-making processes focused on what constitutes respectful treatment of the dead in varying cultural contexts.

I utilize a case study from St. Helena, a remote British Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic Ocean 1200 miles off the coast of Africa. The St. Helena case study offers an ideal opportunity to examine decision-making processes that emerge when forces of economic development intersect with a heritage of violence. In 2008 archaeologists working on St. Helena disinterred the remains of at least 325 individuals who died and were buried on the island during the transatlantic slave trade. These captive Africans had been “liberated” from illegal slave vessels by the British Royal Navy, then taken to refugee camps on St. Helena. This nearly forgotten aspect of the island’s history is simultaneously being reincorporated into local discourse and promoted for tourism while the island is developing new tourist sites before its first airport opens in 2016.

In this research I employ ethnographic interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis to examine the process of heritage development on St. Helena. I also conduct content analysis of existing codes of ethics and heritage policies to analyze the fit between these resources and on-the-ground issues related to ethical treatment of human remains in a heritage of violence. This dissertation contributes a new anthropological perspective to heritage and dark tourism scholarship by directing critical attention to

visible and invisible impacts of power and capital on decision-making processes and ethical treatment of the dead in the heritage of violence.

### **High Stakes Ethical Terrain**

Traditionally the term “heritage” has invoked a need for preservation, such as efforts to identify and protect sites through UNESCO’s World Heritage List or the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. Recently, however, heritage professionals have moved away from framing heritage as “authentic preservation,” as such efforts result in a rather fixed and uncomplicated presentation of the past (Lowenthal 1985; Smith 2006). Instead, heritage in the modern world has increasingly become a catalyst for community engagement, inspiring more diverse understandings of the past as expressed by a plurality of voices (see for example Daehnke 2007; Smith et al. 2010; Waterton and Watson 2011, 2015). By recognizing and embracing the past as a web of “entangled histories,” this shift allows for a more nuanced view of the past and its significance in the present (Randeria 2002).

Furthermore, communities and developers increasingly position heritage as a “commodity” with potential for economic development (Brockington et al. 2008; Labadi 2011; Silberman 2013; Wilson 2009). Heritage is a particularly compelling tool for tourism development, as cultural heritage tourism can fulfill tourists’ desires for “life-enhancing experiences” (Smith 2005:88). In addition, tourism in general is growing at a rate above the average of other economic markets (United Nation’s World Tourism Organization Tourism Highlights 2014:3-6).

It is impossible to quantify how much of this growth is related to the heritage of

violence or dark tourism, as there is no global tally of these types of sites or activities. However, it is useful to note Williams's (2007) assertion that development of heritage sites and activities commemorating violent pasts has increased since the end of World War II and surged since the 1990s. This increase stems from many factors: shifting political ideologies may allow for public acknowledgement of violent pasts, forgotten events or places may be identified unexpectedly through development projects or excavation, and tourists crave unusual and memorable experiences resulting in particular growth in niche tourism such as dark tourism (see for example Ashworth 2008; Ashworth and Hartman 2005; Dolff-Bonekämper 2002; Smith 2005; Tarlow 2005; Williams 2007).

Humans have a long history of fascination with violence, which can cause remembrances of past violence to feel simultaneously voyeuristic, captivating, and exploitative (Ashworth 2008; Clark 2006; Robb 2009). Indeed, some heritage activities, such as a visit to the London Dungeon, cater to our fascination with violence while obfuscating emotional or educational motivations to remember violent pasts. Other forms of heritage, such as International Holocaust Remembrance Day or what is akin to a pilgrimage to Ground Zero, may forefront memorialization yet are not devoid of the effects of human curiosity, particularly in the age of social media and its selfies and tweets about user experiences (see for example Kleinman and Kleinman 1997; Knudsen 2011; McCormack 2015; Payne 2015).

These factors lend an inherent tension to a heritage of violence, most acutely in its form of dark tourism. Scholars have explored this tension by identifying multiple overlapping needs and demands driving development and consumption of dark tourism such as memorialization, education, or truth-telling (Dolff-Bonekämper 2002; Duffy

2001; Lennon and Foley 2000; Miles 2002; Robb 2009; Sharpley and Stone 2009; Stone 2006, 2011, 2013; Tarlow 2005; Williams 2007). Yet as Clark (2006:135) notes, dark tourism “is still tourism;” even Auschwitz has a commercial outlet (albeit labeled “Bookstore” rather than “Gift Shop” on the museum’s website).

Recently scholars have begun to critique the literature on dark tourism for its focus on description and classification of sites at the expense of broader theorization of social, political, and economic issues (Biran and Hyde 2013; Jamal and Lelo 2011; Pollock 2003; Sharpley and Stone 2009; Stone 2011). As a result, scholars are just beginning to direct critical attention to a range of ethical questions associated with a heritage of violence such as: To whose benefit—and at whose expense—are violent pasts memorialized? What are the ethical implications of commodifying violence? How is the heritage value associated with sites and other material remains of past violence weighed against modern interests in development?

There is a decided lack of attention to the complex and potentially conflicting agendas and consequences that arise when human remains become the object of heritage projects. Human remains have long been viewed as a means to connect past and present, as evident through practices such as preserving and displaying body parts (i.e. relics) of martyred saints. Scholars and practitioners outline the long history of displaying human remains in museums for the purpose of education, making a political statement, or entertainment (see for example Fletcher et al. 2014; Giesen 2013; Lohman and Goodnow 2006; Redman 2016). In other words, historical practice indicates that human remains have a compelling story to “tell” about past violence, yet at present we have an

incomplete understanding of how that story will be told, by whom and to whom, and to whose benefit (see for example Doughty 2011; Renshaw 2011; Silberman 2010).

Williams (2007:38), in his volume on the role of memorial museums in the commemoration of atrocities, ponders whether human remains represent a “fundamental break” from other forms of material culture in the heritage of violence. I argue human remains do in fact occupy a high-stakes ethical terrain worthy of particular critical attention. Consider recent controversies at sites around the globe, including arguments over the final resting place of Richard III, a location likely to generate significant tourist traffic (see for example Burns 2013; Watson 2014; Worsley 2013) or contentious cases of unmarked Jewish cemeteries in Europe, (see for example Colomer 2010; 2013a; Silberman 2010), which stem from uncertain identities of descendants or other decision-makers.

Even in cases where descendants can be identified and involved, political or legal interests may be given more weight than individual human rights or desires of family or community members as bodies are analyzed in the “service of national history” (Crossland 2009a:71). Ongoing tensions regarding treatment of human remains from 9/11 demonstrate the consequences of conflicting or unclear agendas regarding human remains (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2011a; 2011b), which can mar or overshadow efforts to memorialize past violence and its victims.

These cases illustrate Brooks and Rumsey’s (2007:261) assertion that there is a “fine line between socially acceptable and unacceptable treatment of human remains.” Scholars have examined this “fine line” in the context of museums, resulting in more thoughtful collection, display, and curation practices (see for example Cassman et al.



2007; Fletcher et al. 2014; Giesen 2013; Lohman and Goodnow 2006). Yet this critical attention is nearly absent in scholarship on a heritage of violence. Furthermore, resources such as codes of ethics or heritage policies related to the heritage of violence or ethical treatment of the dead, which could help identify the difference between acceptable and unacceptable treatment, are scarce. As a result, scholars are calling for new ways to address ethical issues in the heritage of violence. Stone (2013) cites the need to consider the rights of victims when developing or promoting past violence for dark tourism. Silberman (2010) points to the need for new perspectives on who should care for the dead in heritage, particularly in the absence of a distinct descendant population. Wight (2005) and Stone (2011) argue for research on how dark tourism impacts local communities, which could include survivors of past violence, family members of victims, or descendants.

### **Research Objectives**

In this dissertation I conceptualize heritage as a dynamic and active context in which present communities engage with tangible and intangible aspects of the past. Yet the meanings associated with these aspects of the past are not inherent, they must be identified, cultivated, and shared through the decision-making process of heritage development. Within the heritage of violence, this process centers on opportunities for individuals and communities to engage with material, social, or political dimensions of past violence and consider the meaning of that violence in the present and future. To effectively discuss a heritage of violence, it is critical for me to define what I mean by a “heritage of violence.” However, this act of defining invokes a politics of naming with

which I am uneasy. Defining some acts as violent by default categorizes other acts as “not violent.” I am, therefore, in the powerful position of naming someone’s experience as “violence” or “not violence,” regardless of how the individual experienced or conceptualizes that event. However, avoiding a definition of violence does not dissolve this power, it simply transfers it from the writer to the reader. Understanding this, I theorize violence broadly to include actions that result in physical or emotional harm to individuals. A heritage of violence, then, can include large-scale events such as slavery, genocide, acts of terrorism, or the Holocaust and interpersonal violence such as lynching as well as structural oppression or persecution.

Building on emerging theories proposed by Ashworth (2006, 2008, 2014), Silberman (2010, 2013), and Smith (2006), I frame heritage development as a decision-making process that is intricately connected to and impacted by needs and demands in the present. This research has the following three objectives: (1) to analyze strategies social actors employ in using human remains to stimulate more widespread integration of marginalized, violent pasts into the social and material contexts of modern populations, (2) to explore how these processes are impacted by power dynamics and political economic forces in the modern world, and (3) to evaluate the efficacy of existing resources such as codes of ethics and heritage policies in balancing these impacts to promote respectful treatment of the dead and equitable stakeholder engagement in heritage and tourism contexts.

I offer a holistic, anthropological perspective by positioning myself with theorists such as Rautman and Talalay (2000:2) who argue that “the body” encompasses the physical human form as well as elements representing the human form. I thus expand

existing (albeit limited) conversations on ethical issues related to human remains in heritage to consider indexical signs of bodies, such as photographs, clothing and shoes, hair, data collected from skeletal remains, or images of graves. I posit that this expanded view is more appropriate for the variety of cultural contexts under which a heritage of violence develops around the materiality of the body. Finally, through close attention to visible and invisible influences of capital and power in heritage and tourism development, I aim to provide a foundation for establishing more equitable political, social, and economic networks in tourism and heritage.

### **St. Helena Case Study**

To address my research objectives I utilize a qualitative case study focused on development of the Liberated African heritage of St. Helena, a small British Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic. In the mid-1800s the island served as a place of refuge to approximately 26,000 captive Africans—identified as “Liberated Africans”—rescued from illegal slave vessels by the British Royal Navy. This heritage is simultaneously unique to the island and indelibly linked to the global heritage of the transatlantic slave trade. The 325 individuals excavated by archaeologists in 2008 represent only a fraction of the estimated 8,000 Liberated Africans who died and were buried on St. Helena. A small number of the survivors remained on the island and the rest were involuntarily sent to work as indentured laborers in other British colonies (Pearson et al. 2011).

Until the 2008 excavation, St. Helena’s Liberated African history had been virtually forgotten, locally and globally. The excavation, along with events that followed in its wake, brought this history back into local discourse. In 2014 the St. Helena Tourism

Office began considering the value of marketing the island's history as a place of exile and death for Napoleon, the Liberated Africans, and Boer prisoners of war. Promoting these historical events for tourism requires historical narratives and interpretive sites for tourists' consumption, yet as of January 2016 the form of public interpretation on the Liberated African history of St. Helena was still being debated by community members. In addition, St. Helenians are considering the significance of the Liberated African history and what meaning it has in the present beyond its potential for tourism as they engage in public consultation over the fate of the excavated human remains, which are still in storage on St. Helena.

St. Helenians and others must also weigh interests in memorialization of past violence and preservation of related sites against economic, social, and political needs in the present. Rupert's Valley, the site of the Liberated African refugee camp and the estimated 8,000 unmarked burials of Liberated Africans who died on St. Helena, is essentially the island's industrial park. It contains a wharf, a fish cannery, the island's power station, a fuel storage facility, and a haul road to transport supplies and equipment from the wharf to the airport site. It was construction of this haul road that prompted the 2008 salvage excavation of a portion of the Liberated African cemeteries, as the road needed to pass directly through some of the burials. Future industrial development projects would improve the quality of life for island residents and provide opportunities for sustainable economic development, yet such development would potentially damage or destroy remaining Liberated African burials in Rupert's Valley.

Building on Ashworth (2006, 2008, 2014), Silberman (2010, 2013), and Smith (2006), the St. Helena case study affords an ideal opportunity to examine heritage

development as a decision-making process. In the St. Helena case, decision-makers must disentangle the complexly intertwined aspects of this history to decide how to tell the story (or stories) of the Liberated Africans, who will tell the story and to whom it will be told, and what needs will be filled by telling this story. They must also weigh the value of this heritage against other present needs and demands that could threaten the material aspects of this heritage.

Decision-makers in this and all heritage projects could be termed “stakeholders” but the terms are not synonymous. Stakeholders, as outlined by Zimmerman (2006), are those who have an interest in, are affected by, and have a contribution to make to an issue. As I discuss in chapters four and five, in the St. Helena case, like many global cases, the identity of logical stakeholders is far from clear. For example, the Liberated Africans are part of the African diaspora, which does not give rise to a cohesive, culturally-distinct descendant population. Furthermore, the cultural and biological backgrounds of the approximately 4,000 current residents of St. Helena represent a “multi-racial” diversity “drawn from distant places” including Europe, Asia, and Africa (Yon 2007:12). While some modern residents likely have a genetic connection to the Liberated Africans, only one person characterized themselves as a descendant of sorts during the course of my research. Under these dynamics, it is unclear who should make complex ethical and economic decisions regarding human remains and tourism.

## **Methods**

The research presented in this dissertation is multi-sited and transnational due to St. Helena’s status as a British Overseas Territory—political power, economic capital,

and other resources flow from the UK to St. Helena and back. I focus on the process of heritage development (rather than its end products) to provide a 22-month-long view (July 2013 to May 2015) into issues related to St. Helena's Liberated African heritage, guided by two standpoints: (1) tracing the heritage development *process* is more conducive to understanding specific decisions and potential impacts from present needs and demands; and (2) following Silliman (2008:10), I argue that ethics must be explored as a process—examining the ethical dimensions of the end result of a decision-making process, such as a tourist site, does not adequately reflect the complexities of the ethical dilemma.

To achieve my first two research objectives—analyzing strategies social actors employ in using human remains to stimulate more widespread integration of marginalized, violent pasts into the social and material contexts of modern populations and exploring how these processes are impacted by power dynamics and political economic forces in the modern world—I engaged in ethnographic research, including interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis.

I conducted 41 semi-structured interviews on St. Helena (July-August 2013 and June-August 2014) and 24 semi-structured interviews in the UK (January-April 2014). Interview participants represent a targeted sample focused on two groups, those with a professional interest in St. Helena's heritage (e.g. tourism or heritage personnel, researchers) and those without a specific professional interest in St. Helena's heritage. I also conducted 21 structured interviews with visitors to a special exhibit at the International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool (April 2014). This exhibit represents the first public interpretation of the Liberated African history outside St. Helena.

Interviews with visitors allowed me to explore their responses to particular decisions made by ISM staff related to ethical dimensions of creating a display focused on past violence and strategies staff employed to generate visitor interest in this heritage.

I also engaged in participant observation at community meetings, museums, and public events in the UK and on St. Helena, including formal settings (e.g. meetings organized around a fixed agenda) and informal settings (e.g. conversations between visitors in a museum or local radio broadcasts). In addition, I identified and collected materials for textual analysis, such as tourism reports and brochures, curriculum materials, newspaper articles or editorials, meeting minutes, and development plans.

The unclear stakeholder identities and agendas of the St. Helena case render it an ideal opportunity to achieve my third objective—evaluating whether existing resources such as codes of ethics and heritage policies effectively balance diverse interests in heritage and tourism development to promote ethical treatment of the dead. To meet this objective I conducted content analysis of four codes of ethics or policy documents<sup>1</sup> that could guide the heritage development process, then examined details of the St. Helena case against results of this analysis.

To situate universal and culturally-specific elements of the St. Helena case within broader global conversations on heritage development, I briefly bring in two comparative cases. Each case is characterized by the centrality of human remains, ambiguous descendant populations, efforts to understand past violence in a public context, and

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<sup>1</sup> These codes and policies include the World Archaeological Congress's Vermillion Accord on Human Remains, adopted in 1989 (<http://worldarch.org/code-of-ethics/>); the International Council of Museum's Code of Ethics, adopted in 1986 and revised in 2004 (<http://icom.museum/the-vision/code-of-ethics/>); ICOMOS's Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites, adopted in 2008 ([http://www.icomos.org/charters/interpretation\\_e.pdf](http://www.icomos.org/charters/interpretation_e.pdf)); and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted in 2001 by the United Nation's World Tourism Organization (<http://ethics.unwto.org/en/content/global-code-ethics-tourism>).

competing political economic interests. I consider the New York African Burial Ground, which has been praised for its public interpretation yet marred by controversy over respectful treatment of the human remains and development at the site, and Montjuïc in Barcelona, Spain, a contentious case involving control of a large medieval Jewish necropolis.

### **Roadmap to this Dissertation**

Chapter two locates this research within the field of heritage. In this chapter I demonstrate how the anthropological perspective provided within this dissertation articulates with literature on the political economy of heritage and tourism development and cultural, ethical, and material dimensions of the heritage of violence and dark tourism. I then offer content analysis of existing codes of ethics and heritage policy relevant to a heritage of violence and dark tourism.

Chapter three situates the Liberated African heritage decision-making process in the island's geographical, historical, and cultural context. These elements impact decisions related to heritage development and chapter three provide relevant context for the analysis laid out in subsequent chapters.

In chapter four I outline my methods for data collection and analysis; in chapter five I discuss results. I utilize multiple lines of evidence to produce insight into the ongoing heritage development process on St. Helena. My aim is to outline and analyze questions, themes, issues, conflicts, and processes as they develop rather than their end results.



In chapter six I expand on the content analysis offered in chapter two to examine the efficacy of heritage policies and codes of ethics in promoting respectful treatment of the dead. Through this discussion I situate the St. Helena case in global contexts by comparing and contrasting the details of the St. Helena case with those of the New York African Burial Grounds and Montjuïc. These comparative cases serve to illustrate common concerns, questions, and issues related to the heritage of violence and human remains as well as the need to consider varying cultural contexts. I conclude by reflecting on insights offered through the case studies and analysis of existing resources to offer future directions for transdisciplinary heritage scholarship regarding ethical implications of human remains in heritage development.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I first demonstrate how the anthropological perspective provided within this dissertation articulates with literature on heritage and tourism development, the heritage of violence, and materiality. This literature informs two of my research objectives: (1) to analyze strategies to stimulate new interest in marginalized heritage; and (2) to understand how these efforts are impacted by needs and demands in the modern world. In the second part of this chapter I offer a critique of existing codes of ethics and heritage policy documents that could provide guidance to decision-makers. This discussion further informs my second research objective, as I pay particular attention to how these resources may create or reinforce unbalanced power dynamics. This discussion also lays the foundation for my third objective, analyzing the efficacy of these resources in promoting respectful treatment of the dead and equitable stakeholder engagement in heritage and tourism contexts.

#### **Heritage and Tourism Development**

Many heritage practitioners recognize that heritage is not found but made and is essentially meaningless unless it is shared or promoted (see for example Ashworth 2006; Graham et al. 2000; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Smith 2006). By its very nature, then, heritage-making is a social activity ideal for facilitating community engagement. Heritage tourism is also a popular tool for sustainable economic development—the social

aspects of heritage align well with tourism practices and promoting the past through tourism creates a “product” that is flexible, unique, locally-based and cannot be depleted (Ashworth 2006; Ryan 2005)

Over the last two decades, interest in developing and promoting heritage for tourism has led to efforts by practitioners to quantify heritage assets and assign value to them (e.g. Brockington et al. 2008; Labadi 2011; Silberman 2013; Wilson 2009). For example, the World Bank now factors culture into economic development schemes, utilizing methods and formulas to calculate a fiscal value of culture; this view of culture as an “opportunity for investment” inevitably positions culture as a “public good” rather than a shared value (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 163).

Heritage and tourism professionals cite other potential benefits to local communities of increased heritage tourism beyond direct tourism revenue, such as improved medical facilities or roads (Raabová et al. 2013). Paradoxically, however, lack of development in a location can be an asset in calculating tourism potential—the seemingly untouched character of a place equates authentic heritage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 163). Furthermore, an increased number of tourists, combined with the pressure to commercialize culture for tourism, makes it difficult to maintain the environment, atmosphere, or tradition that drew tourists to that destination in the first place (Ashworth 2006; Reisinger 2013; Starr 2010).

These value models and paradoxes underline the reality that heritage is built around decision-making processes. Scholars note how heritage development processes or decisions may be influenced by or serve to reinforce political or economic goals in the modern world (see for example Ashworth 2014; Raabová et al. 2013; Silberman 2010;

Silverman 2011; Willems 2014; Winter 2015). In addition, decision-makers inevitably must consider development and preservation as two intertwined but potentially competing sets of needs and demands (Ashworth 2014; Willems 2014). On the one hand, heritage development could align tourism and community engagement around mutually-beneficial aims by opening communities, particularly marginalized ones, to new influences and opportunities for political and economic advancement (Long and Labadi 2010; Ryan 2005) On the other hand, globalized tourism development practices can further concentrate existing power and capital without wide-spread local benefit (Hjalager 2007; Lyon and Wells 2012; Pi-Sunyer and Thomas 2005; Sharpley and Telfer 2002; Silberman 2013; Starr 2010). Research suggests that the negative impacts of globalized tourism are more deeply felt in postcolonial locations or among marginalized populations such as indigenous communities, as these spaces are already characterized by unbalanced power structures and a lack of external support networks (Jacobs 1996; Macleod 2004; Royle 2010; Starr 2010). Furthermore, common tourism practices such as “branding” and outsourcing the management of sites can leave local populations at risk of exploitation, even within the very actions (e.g. tourism promotion) they think will provide them with economic profit or new opportunities (see for example Higgins-Desbiolles 2005).

Critiques of heritage development practices address power from several perspectives. Harrison (2008) identifies “predatory” approaches to heritage that benefits some at the expense of others. Smith (2006) calls attention to the “authorized heritage discourse” that governs or manages heritage experiences, with “expert” voices privileged over others. These critical examinations of heritage build on earlier scholarship by

Lowenthal (1985), Wright (1985), Hewison (1985), and Graham et al. (2000), among others; collectively, these works have inspired recent innovative interrogations of the heritage development process (see for example Waterton and Watson 2015). These efforts are similar to scholarship on decolonizing archaeological practices and representation of indigenous peoples, which has been foundational to efforts to transform power relationships (see for example Atalay 2012; Atalay et al. 2014; Habu et al. 2008; Killion 2007; Lonetree 2012; Silliman 2008). Yet this concern with power, control, and exploitation has been slow to develop in scholarship on dark tourism and the heritage of violence.

### **Heritage of Violence**

The heritage of violence embodies the complexly intertwined needs and demands of heritage in general outlined above. Recognizing past violence potentially opens modern communities up to new experiences, knowledge, or opportunities. However, this heritage is not immune from the potential for exploitation. In fact, I argue that this form of heritage is perhaps most at risk for exploitation due to the undeniable significance of human curiosity in the heritage of violence and dark tourism: West (2004:11, 66) refers to curiosity-driven interest in violence as “recreational grief” or “mourning sickness;” Ashworth (2008:241) goes so far as to characterizes dark tourism as “edutainment” or “trivialization of the serious” to satisfy various goals in the present.

As a result, I assert that needs and demands driving development of the heritage of violence must be viewed through a different lens than forces behind general heritage development, but I do not mean to suggest that such needs and demands are easily

isolated and analyzed. There is no formula for developing a heritage of violence because there is no single reason to memorialize violence (Dolff-Bonekämper 2002; Moore 2009; Williams 2007). However, while motivations to develop a heritage of violence are simultaneously diverse, expansive, overlapping, and potentially conflicting, there is often a common thread of using heritage to bridge real or perceived distances between past and present populations. Table 2.1 outlines the most common motivations for developing the heritage of violence and provides examples of each.

**Table 2.1: Motivations for developing a heritage of violence or dark tourism sites**

<b>Motivation to develop the heritage of violence</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Memorialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genocide memorials in Rwanda (Doughty 2011)</li> <li>• Memorials of civilian aerial bombing sites (Moshenska 2009)</li> <li>• Memorial museums (Williams 2007)</li> </ul>
“Truth-telling” (although there is often the lingering question of whose truth is being told)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicting historical narratives at memorials to the Cambodian genocide (Ledgerwood 1997; Scion 2011)</li> <li>• Commemoration as a form of political narrative (Moore 2009)</li> <li>• Reframing the historical narrative of the Wounded Knee massacre site (Pesantubbee 2006)</li> </ul>
Warning (as in the association of the idea “never again” with many sites)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holocaust memorials (Cole 1999; Edkins 2003; Miles 2002; Young 1994)</li> <li>• Rwandan genocide memorials (Caplan 2007)</li> </ul>
Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using genocide memorials to promote healing and reconciliation (Long and Reeves 2009)</li> </ul>
Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark tourism as recreation (Dann 2005; Robb 2009)</li> <li>• Touring battlefield sites (Seaton 2000)</li> <li>• Tourism at former prison sites (Strange and Kempa 2003; Tunbridge 2005)</li> </ul>

Ashworth (2008:234) considers these diverse motivations to illustrate potential strategies to connect past and present populations: there are “victim tourism” sites, where visitors are encouraged to identify with the experience of victims of violence, or “mea culpa tourism” which is framed around the perspective(s) of perpetrators of violence,

offering modern populations a sense of “reconciliation or resolution.” These strategies are echoed in Knudsen’s (2011:58) discussion of potential perspectives of the tourist: one could possess a consumer-based “tourist gaze” or an ethical view motivated by efforts to “relate to others” out of a sense of “responsibility.”

These potentially contrasting strategies are evident in much of the heritage developed around the transatlantic slave trade, the violent history at the heart of the St. Helena case study. Like other forms of violent heritage, sites related to the transatlantic slave trade and slavery are increasing, both in terms of new sites, such as Louisiana’s Whitney Plantation ([www.whitneyplantation.com/](http://www.whitneyplantation.com/)), and in reinterpretation of existing sites to include narratives related to the transatlantic slave trade or slavery (Cubitt at al. 2011; Gallas and Perry 2015; Horton and Horton 2011; and Jackson 2012 provide examples of sites and approaches). Scholars have identified this heritage as a valuable lens through which to examine racism, marginalization, and political and economic exploitation in both the past and present (see for example Agbe-Davies 2007; Agorsah 1996; Battle-Baptiste 2010; Blakey 1998, 2010; Blakey and Rankin-Hill 2004; Dann and Seaton 2001; Diène 2001; La Roche and Blakey 1997; Lovejoy and Bowser 2013; Quirk 2009). Yet understanding how this heritage is developed and for whose benefit requires close attention to needs and demands driving this development.

So-called “victim tourism” directs attention to African captives victimized by slavery. But even well-intentioned sites or narratives run the risk of painting African captives as simply victims, with no agency, personality, or individuality. The horrific reality of the transatlantic slave trade, of course, resulted in millions of African captives being bought and sold against their will, but memorializing this history can position

African captives as passive rather than active agents. For example, many memorial sites or museums often include graphic images depicting physical violence African captives experienced; moving as such images may be in the mind of the viewer, they may concomitantly reduce African captives to the status of “passive victim” (Cubitt et al. 2011:7). As an alternative, Jackson (2012) demonstrates how focusing on the culture and practices of the enslaved, along with voices of descendants, avoids over-emphasis on the restrictions (i.e. victimizing aspects) of slavery.

There are concerns regarding “mea culpa tourism” as well, not the least of which is how this form of tourism prioritizes interests of the perpetrators of violence (or those who identify with them). For example, some forms of public history about the transatlantic slave trade in the UK, such as the William Wilberforce House in Hull, privilege the accomplishments of white, male abolitionists in narratives on abolition (Beech 2001). This abolition myth distracts from the experience of the enslaved and marginalizes or even ignores others working for abolition; it also places the focus on the process of abolition, which ignores or obfuscates individual or national profit from the slave trade (Cubitt et al. 2011:3).

These concerns are echoed in a paradox of the heritage of violence in general and that of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery in particular. If violent pasts such as slavery are *not* commemorated or discussed publicly, critics could view these absences as a suppression of history (see for example Eichstadt and Small’s [2002] analysis of how slavery is systematically erased from historical narratives at Southern plantation sites). Conversely, public interpretation regarding slavery could be viewed by critics as “compromised truth” due to commercial interests or a desire not to offend some visitors



(Dann and Seaton 2001:20). Furthermore, developers may wish for sites on the heritage of violence to be part of a “larger history” yet public interpretation may privilege the visitor experience at the expense of the rights and dignity of victims of past violence, the “afflicted other” (Knudsen 2011:56).

In some ways, what Ashworth (2006:3) describes as the “multifaceted nature of heritage” makes these paradoxes inevitable. Heritage is a dynamic nexus of “social phenomenon and material reality” (Chilton and Mason 2010:1) and what is interesting, attractive, or palatable to one individual or group may not be to others. Recognizing this, one recent trend for museums in general and memorial museums in particular is to promote dialogue among visitors framed around the multivocal nature of the past (see for example Kreps 2003; Watson et. al 2007; Witcomb 2015; Williams 2007). This sense of “shared authority” avoids privileging certain perspectives or historical narratives (Adair et al. 2011; Firsch 1990). One prominent example is the approach of Sites of Conscience, a network of sites using memorialization of past violence, suffering, or oppression to engage visitors on issues of human rights in the past and present (see Ševčenko 2004 for a general overview; Abrams 2007 provides an example from the Lower East Side Tenement Museum). Sites in this network are developed under a central set of guiding questions and principles—using the power of place to spark visitor interest and empathy; developing initial and ongoing forums of communication; and focusing on individual human experiences—yet each site reflects individual cultural and historic circumstances (Ševčenko 2004:14).

In summary, it is not enough to simply tell a story about the past; heritage developers must direct critical attention to how and why the story is told. To further

expand on this idea I turn now to discussion of materiality in heritage, as material aspects of heritage offer great potential to bridge real or perceived distances between past and present. Discussion in the next section also demonstrates how and why human remains may become the object of heritage projects.

### **Materiality**

Materiality is critical to developing a heritage of violence and dark tourism, as illustrated by three themes in the literature. First, material culture can function as a form of “proof” that such violent events did indeed occur (see for example Bruner 1996; Linenthal 1995; Miles 2002; Moore 2009; Stone 2006). Second, violent heritage or dark tourism sites must be “encoded” differently; the materiality of past violence signifies that this is a unique category of heritage, a different sort of visitor experience (see for example Ashworth and Hartmann 2005; Clark 2006; Knudsen 2011; Williams 2007). Finally, objects function as “mnemonic devices” to conjure imaginings and “preinscribed information” for the visitor about past violent events (Robb 2009:55). In many ways visitors to dark tourism sites have been preparing for the visit, intentionally or not, long before the visit itself; previously absorbed information and messages about past violent are accessed by visitors when they view sites or objects first-hand (Clark 2006).

Kunz (1997:51), referring to a visit to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, illustrates how material culture is such an integral part of the heritage of violence:

One never knows what will unlock the key to empathy. For many it is the thousands of shoes stolen from Auschwitz gassing victims displayed in a heap. Others note the small size of the cattle car into which Germans and their local henchman packed Jews bound for the death camps. For me, it was the occasional color photograph amidst the many

black and white ones. Black and white snaps always seem at one remove. The glaring presentness of color erases the distance between what happened to those people then and us, giving the Holocaust an instant immediacy.

Material culture, then, facilitates a confrontation with past violence, which may allow now-voiceless victims of past violence the “power to be heard, to be seen, to be felt, and to be responded to” (Remmler 2005:43).

This power is perhaps most potent in human remains. As discussed in chapter one, I conceptualize human remains broadly to include tangible remains of the body as well as indexical signs of bodies such as photographs, clothes, or graves. At the most fundamental level, the physical presence of human remains or indexical signs of human remains in certain contexts (e.g. mass graves or crematoria) signal that violence occurred in that place, providing evidence of what may have been ignored or denied (see for example Doughty 2011; Ledgerwood 1987; Renshaw 2011; Sturdy Colls 2015). Furthermore, bodies or indexical signs of bodies can feature tangible proof of violent pasts (e.g. bullet holes) that can attest to various forms of suffering or violence (Bauer-Clapp and Pérez 2014; Moore 2009; Moshenska 2009).

Broadly speaking, human remains and indexical signs of human remains provide unique, universally-recognized representations of human life that can transcend space and time (Alberti et al. 2009; Sofaer 2006; Verdery 1999). Verdery (1999) presents two somewhat contrasting yet complementary ideas about why the bodies of the dead make effective symbols. First, she argues that the materiality of a body is central to its potential as a symbol. After death, bodies are physically present at a place because someone intentionally placed—or left—the bodies there. Bodies can thus be manipulated and used in a strategic manner and, because their materiality transcends time, the past becomes

immediately present (Verdery 1999:27). However, she also argues that the “significance of corpses has less to do with their concreteness than with how people think about them” (Verdery 1999:28). It is precisely the individual and cultural construction of meaning onto a body that gives the body political and symbolic power—the body in and of itself is not nearly as important as the meaning placed on it. In other words, bodies of the dead make effective narrative devices because they are portable, powerful loci of meaning. History, and its associated memories and meanings, can be both imagined and narrated using human remains.

Here again we see the need for critical attention to heritage as a decision-making process. Tangible remains of the past can variously animate, support, affirm, stagnate, contradict, or humanize understandings of past violence, among other impacts. These impacts all depend on how developers promote and visitors experience the interplay between object and narrative (Morgan 2012). For example, one narrative technique in the heritage of violence is to position the visitor as witness to violence. Such witnessing depends on “staging” at the site (Knudsen 2011) and, it should be noted, is not limited to the use of human remains. Yet when applied to human remains, this narrative device can be particularly powerful, as evident in sites related to the Rwandan genocide (Doughty 2011; Robb 2009). Bodies of victims at some sites are left where they died, positioning visitors as “witnesses” to the chaos and horror of death, bloodstains and all.

While this use of bodies may be effective, it is not unproblematic. When used in the ways discussed here, victims of violence have lost their individual identity—they become part of the nameless, faceless mass of victims. Families and communities may be denied the opportunity to complete mourning activities, as the bodies of the dead cannot

be touched, washed, cremated, or buried. In addition, the act of representing the past through human remains or other objects is a form of “authorship” (Renshaw 2011:14). Verdery (2009) and Morgan (2012) discuss how the materiality of bodies and objects may make them good to think with, while Renshaw (2011:183) outlines how objects associated with bodies, such as pocket watches recovered with bodies of victims from the Spanish Civil War, can humanize victims. However, there may be a disconnect between developers’ intended goals for these humanizing narratives and visitors’ interpretation(s) of them (Dolff-Bonekämper 2002; Robb 2009; Tarlow; Williams 2007). The message(s) offered by the narrative “may not be heard, if heard not noticed, and if noticed not understood in the way intended” (Ashworth 2008:241). In other words, visitors can use these narrative devices to develop an imagined history that bears little resemblance to actual events.

In addition, in the interest of telling a compelling story about the past, the presentation of human bodies runs the risk of creating a sensational display that may actually desensitize the visitor or normalize violence (Moore 2009:51). Furthermore, using the remains of victims or indexical signs of human remains to tell stories about past violence renders victims of violence as narrative props. Doss (2008:41), referring to memorials to victims of 9/11 and the Oklahoma City bombing, states: “their deaths were manipulated to sustain political assumptions of national innocence and legitimize national security agendas.” While any heritage can assume a nationalist agenda, particular use of particular types of bodies in violent heritage conveys particular messages—Linenthal (2003:16-17) discusses how references to children who died during the Oklahoma City

bombing reinforced the narrative that victims of this event were innocents, which in turn positioned the event as an assault on America, an “innocent nation in a wicked world.”

This leads to a central concern of this dissertation: what constitutes ethical treatment of human remains in heritage, and who gets to decide? To address this question I turn now to discussion of resources that could guide the heritage development process.

### **Resources**

Anthropologists recognize diverse cultural ideas and practices regarding the remains of the dead, ranging from carefully washing remains to burning the bodies of the dead to prohibitions on viewing photographs or even speaking the name of the dead. These varying ideas and practices arise out of diverse cultural contexts; as a result, anthropologists understandably look with caution on a universal concept of rights of the dead. It is therefore not surprising that there is no overarching code of ethics or set of best practices regarding human remains in heritage contexts. This does not, however, mean that this absence is unproblematic, nor does it mean that existing, albeit limited, resources are sufficient for ethical heritage development. The challenge, then, is to consider how new guidelines could be developed to promote equitable decision-making processes in a variety of contexts while critically examining the efficacy of existing resources.

In order to gauge the scope and content of existing resources that could potentially guide decision-makers I surveyed codes of ethics and heritage policies. In the remainder of this chapter I offer a critique of these resources. This critique was informed by Peräkylä’s (2005) approach to analyzing texts and Waterton et al.’s (2006) critical analysis of the Burra Charter. This charter—officially known as the Australia ICOMOS

Charter for Places of Cultural Significance—establishes best practices for identifying and managing cultural heritage sites. It has been used by heritage professionals internationally for heritage management and conservation, shaping heritage development processes around the globe. The critical interrogation of this document developed by Waterton et al. (2006) revealed how this text may promote competition for authority among stakeholders rather than facilitate equitable participation. For example, the Charter utilizes language that positions community members as the “audience” rather than stakeholders with equal standing. In developing my content analysis, I also drew from Baird’s (2014) argument for why distinctions matter when seeking to understand how discourse impacts heritage development and heritage practices—details shape discourse, and it is important to consider consequences that may arise when certain details are present or absent

I utilize this content analysis to examine potential impacts of present needs and demands on heritage development processes. There is no code of ethics for dark tourism or heritage policies specific to a heritage of violence, so to in selecting resources for content analysis I first considered the identity of decision-makers, then the types of resources these decision-makers might use. Regarding decision-makers, I considered three categories of individuals with varying degrees of overlap: (1) academics and other heritage professionals; (2) communities and, more broadly, the public; and (3) tourism. I do not consider these groups mutually exclusive—heritage professionals and academics are part of communities, for example. Yet these broadly-conceived categories have different codes of ethics or heritage policies associated with them, which must be considered independently.

I first considered how archaeologists excavate remains, scientists study those remains to learn new information about past violent events, and museum personnel or other heritage professionals draw upon this new information to develop public interpretation about past violence, which may involve display of the human remains or indexical signs of human remains. With this in mind I reviewed a variety of codes related to the excavation, study, and/or display of human remains. Second, as a form of heritage, the heritage of violence is a shared community resource that could be developed or preserved to achieve various goals. To better understand this I examined broad heritage policies designed to help communities recognize, protect, and develop heritage resources, such as UNESCO's 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (hereafter referred to as the World Heritage Convention) and the Nara Document on Authenticity. I also looked to resources that discussed heritage specifically in the context of sustainable economic development such as the Toyoma Proposal on Heritage and Sustainable Development. While it is true that these sorts of documents are utilized by heritage professionals as much, if not more, than communities, they are designed to identify heritage resources to protect and hold in trust for communities and the general public. I thus utilize these resources to understand a community's rights and responsibilities regarding heritage development. The third category,, tourism, is characterized by a sense of commodification; to understand this I examined resources related to tourism development (i.e. creating sites for tourists) or consumption (i.e. visiting tourism sites).

Reviewing these resources reinforced the scarcity of codes or policies that could provide guidance to decision-makers regarding ethical treatment of human remains in



heritage or tourism contexts. While there is no code of ethics for dark tourism Stone (2011, 2013), among others, has called for increased attention to ethical issues in the development and consumption of dark tourism. UNESCO, the dominant voice in heritage development, has adopted no fewer than 29 Conventions on cultural, scientific or educational heritage resources, yet only one—the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage—mentions human remains specifically. This Convention urges respectful treatment of underwater shipwrecks by divers and others, as the wrecks may include human remains.

From resources that do exist, I selected four that I considered relevant to the three categories outline above on which to focus my critique (see Table 2.2). To represent academic or other professional interests, I chose the Vermillion Accord on Human Remains and the International Council of Museum’s Code of Ethics. The Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites outlines rights and responsibilities of communities and, more broadly, the public. Tourism is represented by the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, a document offering ethical principles on both tourism development and the practice of tourism.

**Table 2.2: Documents selected for content analysis**

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Sponsoring Organization</b>	<b>Year Adopted</b>
Vermillion Accord on Human Remains	World Archaeological Congress (WAC)	1989
Code of Ethics	International Council of Museums	1986 (revised 2004)
Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites	International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)	2008
Global Code of Ethics for Tourism	United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	2001

## Foundational Resources

Before I discuss my content analysis of these four resources I offer discussion of two specific heritage documents—UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention and ICOMOS’s Nara Document on Authenticity—that are broader than the four documents I discuss in depth in this chapter, yet the potential impact of these two documents on the process of heritage development warrants attention.

The World Heritage Convention guides the action of 191 Member States related to recognizing and preserving cultural and natural heritage (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/>). The document defines cultural or natural heritage, provides guidelines on recognizing and protecting these resources, and promotes heritage resources as valuable world heritage assets, not just assets valuable to individual States. This last principle is summed up in the World Heritage Convention as “outstanding universal value,” an idea that drives the practices and attitudes promoted by the Convention. The outstanding universal value of heritage is “increasingly threatened” requiring Member States to “preserve,” “safeguard,” and “protect” because the “deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world” (World Heritage Convention). In other words, Member States must take action to protect something valuable to the world at large. However, it is important to note that the World Heritage Convention, as well as other codes of ethics and heritage policy documents in general, were produced in Western contexts. As such, strict adherence to guidelines promoted by the World Heritage Convention thus potentially privileges some forms of heritage or ethical stances over others. For example, the World Heritage List is dominated by

European sites in general, while even non-European sites often conform to Western ideas regarding “outstanding universal value” required for nomination to the List (see for example Labadi 2007, 2010, 2013; Meskell 2013; Strasser 2002; Willems 2014).

The Nara Document on Authenticity, adopted by ICOMOS in 1994 and hereafter referred to as the Nara Document, offers a view of heritage and heritage protection that reflects a wider sense of cultural diversity than the World Heritage Convention. This document points to “forces of globalization and homogenization” impacting cultural identity and developed through “aggressive nationalism and the suppression of the cultures of minorities;” these actions require efforts to “clarify and illuminate the collective memory of humanity” (Principle 4). Use of the phrase “collective memory of humanity” is significant because it promotes heritage as more than “monuments,” “buildings,” “sites,” or “natural features” as defined by the World Heritage Convention—in other words, places are significant *because of* what people think about them.

The second section of the Nara Document is labeled “Cultural Diversity and Heritage Diversity” and positions diversity itself as something to be recognized and valued. Furthermore, Principle 6 acknowledges potential conflicts in the heritage development process, calling for “acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties.” Perhaps most significant for this dissertation, the Nara Document differentiates between the community or communities that “generated” cultural heritage and the community that “cares for it” (Principle 8) and advocates for a non-fixed approach to heritage resources appropriate for “the cultural contexts in which they belong” (Principle 11). In other words, modern day decision makers may be caretakers of heritage even if they are not part of the group that experienced these events in the past;

the modern community's approach to heritage preservation and development would logically reflect their own cultural values and contexts. Principle 8 goes on to state that caretaking communities should balance "their own requirements with those of other cultural communities" which suggests, however, that the views of the modern community should not be promoted at the expense of other communities, including those of the past.

### **Content Analysis**

Returning to discussion of the four codes of ethics and heritage policy documents outlined in Table 2.2, I now offer content analysis of these resources. My critique of these documents focused on three questions: (1) How do these codes of ethics or heritage policy documents assign decision-making power? (2) What guidance is provided to resolve potential conflicts? (3) How do these codes of ethics or heritage policy documents account for varying cultural contexts?

### **Decision-Makers**

For two documents, the identity of decision-makers is assigned indirectly. The Vermillion Accord features six principles written in passive language, as in, for example: "1. Respect for the mortal remains of the dead shall be accorded to all, irrespective of origin, race, religion, nationality, custom and tradition." This decree does not specify who should show this respect, simply that it is due. Understanding, however, that the Vermillion Accord was adopted by the World Archaeology Congress suggests that archaeologists are the target constituent (i.e. decision-makers). Likewise, with the Code of Ethics for the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the identity of decision-

makers is not specified, but the preamble (p. ii) for the Code indicates that “[i]n joining the organisation, ICOM members undertake to abide by this code.” Members (i.e. museum personnel) therefore are the target constituent and, by default, in the position of decision-makers.

The ICOMOS Charter is more direct in identifying decision-makers. Principle 6 on Inclusiveness calls for “collaboration between heritage professionals, host and associated communities, and other stakeholders” (p. 12). Principle 6.1 further elaborates that the “multidisciplinary expertise of scholars, community members, conservation experts, governmental authorities, site managers and interpreters, tourism operators, and other professionals should be integrated in the formulation of interpretation and presentation programmes” (p. 12).

The Code of Ethics for the World Tourism Organization is the most expansive in identifying decision-makers. The Preamble to this document states:

all the stakeholders in tourism development—national, regional and local administrations, enterprises, business associations, works in the sector, non-governmental organizations and bodies of all kinds belonging to the tourism industry, as well as host communities, the media and the tourists themselves, have different albeit interdependent responsibilities in the individual and societal development of tourism and...the formulation of their individual rights and duties will contribute to meeting this aim.

This document also singles out local communities in a way the others do not. Article 4.1 states “Tourism resources belong to the common heritage of mankind; the communities in whose territories they are situated have particular rights and obligations to them.” Article 5.1 states: “Local populations should be associated with tourism activities and share equitably in the economic, social and cultural benefits they generate,

and particularly in the creation of direct and indirect jobs resulting from them.” This call for local populations to benefit from tourism is echoed in Article 9.5:

As an irreplaceable factor of solidarity in the development and dynamic growth of international exchanges, multinational enterprises of the tourism industry should not exploit the dominant positions they sometimes occupy; they should avoid becoming the vehicles of cultural and social models artificially imposed on the host communities; in exchange for their freedom to invest and trade which should be fully recognized, they should involve themselves in local development, avoiding, by the excessive repatriation of their profits or their induced imports, a reduction of their contribution to the economies in which they are established.

Collectively, these statements position local community members as active participants in tourism development who should not be subject to top-down mandates from absent or distant multinational entities; concomitantly, these multinational entities should also avoid “excessive repatriation” of profits away from the local community (although “excessive” is undefined). While these statements acknowledge rights of local communities, they also require active, invested interest—communities must stake their territory in the tourism development process.

But this raises the question of how “local community” is defined. For example, would diasporic communities be considered tourists or members of the local community? And how would their needs and demands be balanced with others? Orser (2007) outlines the complexity of diasporic group identity and the role of technology in connecting these individuals to each other and, potentially, the “home” community. Place, which brought diasporic communities together in the past, may therefore be less significant as other forms of and locations for connection and identity formation develop. However, place can still occupy a privileged position in diasporic identity; heritage tourism is for many

an act of pilgrimage, motivated by a desire to experience a place first-hand (Reed 2015). In dark tourism, the “authenticity” of places where violence occurred elevates the experiences in the mind of the visitor (Stone 2006). If a pilgrimage is an act of homecoming, a visit by a member of the African diaspora to an “authentic” site related to slavery in Africa takes on a meaning that visiting a site in the US would not (Mowatt and Chancellor 2011). In these instances, who is the “local community” and who is the “tourist”?

### **Conflict Resolution**

If decision-makers *can* be identified, using the resources discussed here or through other means, what guidance do these resources provide on how to resolve the nearly inevitable conflicts that arise in the process of heritage development? On this question the four resources provide both big picture and situation-specific guidance.

All four directly or indirectly promote the value of collaboration and cooperation. The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism states “public and private stakeholders in tourism development should cooperate in the implementation of these principles and monitor their effective applications” (Article 10.1). The ICOMOS Charter calls for a collaborative view of history, yet provides little guidance on how such collaborations should be developed. Principle 3.3 states: “Interpretation should...take into account all groups that have contributed to the historical and cultural significance of the site” (p. 9). The Code of Ethics for Museums promotes collaboration and cooperation, but only with other museum personnel or academics, through Principle 3 on Shared Expertise: “Members of the museum profession have an obligation to share their knowledge and experience with

colleagues, scholars and students in relevant fields. They should respect and acknowledge those from whom they have learned and should pass on such advancements in techniques and experiences that may be of benefit to others” (Principle 3.9, p. 7). Principle 3.10 adds an obligation to consult as well as cooperate: “Museum personnel should acknowledge and endorse the need for cooperation and consultation between institutions with similar interests and collecting practices. This is particularly so with institutes of higher education and certain public utilities where research may generate important collections for which there is no long-term security” (p. 7).

With this language, the Code of Ethics for Museums positions collaboration and consultation as necessary and valuable only between colleagues. There is no discussion of collaboration, cooperation, or consultation between museums and other entities such as local communities, political leaders, descendants, or other stakeholders. The ICOMOS Charter seems to call for consultation, but careful reading suggests this is a potentially hollow call. Principle 6.3 states: “Plans for expansion or revision of interpretation and presentation programmes should be open for public comment and involvement. It is the right and responsibility of all to make their opinions and perspectives known” (p. 12). On the one hand, similar to the discussion on decision-makers, we see local communities (and others) presented with rights and responsibilities simultaneously. Those who wish to be involved appear to have a point of entry. Yet as Nissley and King (2014:20) note, there is a tendency among developers to confuse consultation with public participation. Inviting public comment may appear to check the consultation box, but unless decision-makers adopt consultation as a process of “reasoning together” public participation may come to nothing (Nissley and King 2014:11).



Collaboration and consultation are complex processes, particularly in the context of heritage when individuals or stakeholders may hold different heritage values (see for example Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Nissley and King 2014; Silliman 2008). The four documents discussed here do not provide sufficient guidance to facilitate that process. In addition, two of the documents single out human remains as particularly sensitive forms of material culture that require special consideration or collaboration but again provide no specific guidance on how to achieve these goals. Principle 5 of the Vermillion Accord states: “Agreement on the disposition of fossil, skeletal, mummified and other remains shall be reached by negotiation on the basis of mutual respect for the legitimate concerns of communities for the proper disposition of their ancestors, as well as the legitimate concerns of science and education.” The Code of Ethics for Museums has three Principles addressing culturally-sensitive materials, including Principle 4.4 addressing requests to remove human remains or other objects from public display: “Requests for removal from public display of human remains or material of sacred significance from the originating communities must be addressed expeditiously with respect and sensitivity. Requests for the return of such materials should be addressed similarly. Museum policies should clearly define the process for responding to such requests” (p. 8). It is up to individual museums, then, to determine how to handle these instances.

Potential conflicts could also arise around economic exploitation of heritage resources. In addition to calls in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism for multinational tourism companies to refrain from “exploiting their dominant position” (Article 9.5), as discussed above, the ICOMOS Charter includes one Principle suggesting that economic

interests should not be privileged above other heritage values. Principle 5.3 states: “Interpretation and presentation should serve a wide range of conservation, educational and cultural objectives. The success of an interpretive programme should not be evaluated solely on the basis of visitor attendance figures or revenue” (p. 11).

Only the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism includes a specific process for disputes that cannot be resolved. Article 10.3 states: “stakeholders should demonstrate their intention to refer any disputes concerning the application or interpretation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism for conciliation to an impartial third body known as the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.”

While these documents appear to value collaboration, cooperation, and even consultation, there is little guidance for developing these practices, including identifying who should be involved. Furthermore, the language of each document establishes or reinforces differences between stakeholder groups (e.g. local community, archaeologist, museum personnel, tourists) rather than positioning all stakeholders as a collective that may hold common goals. This point is particularly important to consider critically in the heritage of violence. Narratives separating “us” and “them” may in fact serve to perpetuate or reignite the conflicts underlying the original violent event (Caplan 2007; Moore 2009). Conversely, Knudsen (2011:2) considers how use of “we” in interpretive text, without a contrasting “them,” invites all to commemorate, as it is “all inclusive” (Knudsen 2011:62).

This strategy may be more feasible with violent events further in the past, where stakeholders are less likely to represent specific identities such as victim, perpetrator, survivor, or family member. In cases of more recent violence, it is easier to understand

how those who fall into such categories will experience a place of violence differently from those who have no direct connection to the event. For example, memorials may be, for family members, “sacred sites of bereavement and, often, burial” (Doss 2008:40). Indeed, this appears to be at the heart of conflicts at the 9/11 Memorial Museum between family members and museum developers. Unidentified human remains are stored at a site that includes a museum and gift shop; family members may view the site as akin to a cemetery and do not wish to confront souvenir-buying tourists during their visit (see for example Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2011a; 2011b; Swain 2014).

In some cultural contexts, however, the passage of time does not diminish the sacredness of a site that bears the remains of victims of violence. Kelman (2013) describes development of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, managed by the National Park Service, including efforts by American Indian tribes to locate, retrieve, and rebury the remains of victims. Tribal representatives negotiated control of the reburial site, as they did not want the National Park Service to dictate who “walked the sacred ground;” descendants considered it their duty, over 150 years after the massacre occurred, to memorialize their ancestors and assure no further disturbance to their remains (Kelman 2013:268).

### **Varying Cultural Contexts**

Heritage develops under varying cultural contexts. What is acceptable or palatable in one situation may not be in a different time or place. Codes of ethics and heritage policies must therefore be flexible and expansive enough to allow decision-makers to adapt them to a variety of decisions in differing—and changing—cultural contexts.

The ICOMOS Charter is most direct and comprehensive in establishing the need to consider culture when making decisions about heritage interpretation. For example, Principle 3.1 states that “[i]nterpretation...should consider all aspects of the site’s cultural, social, and environmental significance and values” (p. 9). This Charter also acknowledges how cultural practices and knowledge can be as significant as scientific knowledge, as indicated in Principle 2: “Interpretation and presentation should be based on evidence gathered through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions” (p. 8). This sentiment is echoed in Principle 6 of the Vermillion Accord: “The express recognition that the concerns of various ethnic groups, as well as those of science are legitimate and to be respected, will permit acceptable agreements to be reached and honored.” As discussed in the previous section on decision-makers, this passive language provides no guidance on how such agreements are to be reached or by whom.

The ICOMOS Charter encourages decision-makers to think cross-culturally: “The cross-cultural significance of heritage sites, as well as the range of perspectives about them based on scholarly research, ancient records, and living traditions, should be considered in the formulation of interpretive programmes” (ICOMOS Charter p. 9: Principle 3.6). The Global Codes of Ethics for Tourism also validates the cross-cultural value of heritage and tourism: “Tourism...when practiced with a sufficiently open mind...is an irreplaceable factor of self-education, mutual tolerance and for learning about the legitimate differences between peoples and cultures and their diversity” (Article 2.1).

Recognizing diverse cultural contexts requires broad thinking about what constitutes the remains of the dead. In some cultural contexts displaying the remains of the dead could be violating a strict taboo; in others it may be considered a sign of honor or veneration. Displaying photos of the dead is, in some cultural contexts, as ethically or emotionally problematic as displaying remains of the dead.

Two of the four documents discussed here imply that different items of material culture may warrant special consideration. Principle 5 of the Vermillion Accord states: “Agreement on the disposition of fossil, skeletal, mummified and other remains shall be reached by negotiation on the basis of mutual respect for the legitimate concerns of communities for the proper disposition of their ancestors, as well as the legitimate concerns of science and education.” While the phrase “other remains” suggests that there could be other objects or types of objects worth consideration, such as clothing or photographs, placing this phrase in context with “fossil, skeletal, mummified” focuses the reader’s attention on physical remains of the dead body.

The ICOMOS Charter cites the value of various forms of intangible heritage through Principle 3.5: “Intangible elements of a site’s heritage such as cultural and spiritual traditions, stories, music, dance, theater, literature, visual arts, local customs and culinary heritage should be considered in its interpretation” (p. 9). Here, the absence of any context referencing human remains calls into question whether decision-makers would consider burial customs, mourning rituals, or other cultural practices regarding the dead as intangible heritage.

While language in the Vermillion Accord and the ICOMOS Charter offer particular attention to concerns of culture in heritage, there is little in these four

documents to suggest to decision-makers that what constitutes respectful treatment of the dead requires particular attention to cultural contexts. When the heritage under development dates to a different time or place, decision-makers may need such direct prompts to interrogate their own cultural ideas or biases regarding respectful treatment of the dead.

The Code of Ethics for Museums offers the most robust discussion of human remains as culturally-sensitive objects. Principle 2.5 (p. 3) cites both cultural and scientific needs regarding human remains: “Collections of human remains and material of sacred significance should be acquired only if they can be housed securely and cared for respectfully. This must be accomplished in a manner consistent with professional standards and the interests and beliefs of members of the community, ethnic or religious groups from which the objects originated, where these are known.” However, the phrase “where these are known” is passive in nature; a reader could interpret this to mean that the concerns of communities should be followed only if they are already known—there is no follow-up directive to seek out this information if it is not known. The same phrasing is used in Principle 3.7 (p. 7): “Research on human remains and materials of sacred significance must be accomplished in a manner consistent with professional standards and take into account the interests and beliefs of the community, ethnic or religious groups from whom the objects originated, where these are known”.

The phrase “where known” is echoed again in Principle 4.3 (p. 8) but here it is followed by an appeal to a common human dignity: “Human remains and materials of sacred significance must be displayed in a manner consistent with professional standards and, where known, taking into account the interests and beliefs of members of the

community, ethnic or religious groups from whom the objects originated. They must be presented with great tact and respect for the feelings of human dignity held by all peoples.”

This appeal to human dignity, which could be read as a statement on human rights, is reflected in the Global Codes of Ethics for Tourism. Article 2.2 states that “[t]ourism activities...should promote human rights.” This is followed by Article 2.3, which calls attention to the unethical practice of exploitation and human trafficking for tourism (e.g. sex tourism) yet the words, unintentionally, are perhaps the most relevant to promoting respectful treatment of human remains in the context of the heritage of violence or dark tourism: “The exploitation of human beings in any form...conflicts with the fundamental aims of tourism.”

### **Conclusion**

Heritage has the potential to draw individuals and communities together, and indeed that is the suggested goal of using the heritage of violence and associated material culture to bridge real or perceived distances between past and present populations. But identity, positionality, and narrative development is crucial in the heritage of violence, when stakeholders could be victims of, perpetrators of, witnesses to, or completely distant from past violence. These diverse and potentially overlapping or blurred identities complicate the process of identifying decision-makers in the heritage development process. Furthermore, the ever-increasing commodification of heritage resources can create or intensify unbalanced power dynamics or political economic influences on the heritage development process.

In spite of these complex dynamics, critical attention to ethics and the potential for exploitation is currently lacking in scholarship on the heritage of violence and dark tourism. Scholarship on issues such as power dynamics in repatriation under NAGPRA has resulted in more productive stakeholder relationships (e.g. Bernstein 2010; Lippert 2006; Silliman 2008); I aim for my research to expand the scope of this scholarship to consider the decision-making process when human remains are the object of heritage development projects.

I return to the critique of existing resources in chapter six. In the next chapter I provide historic, cultural, and geographic details to provide context for this discussion.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **HERITAGE IN CONTEXT**

#### **Introduction**

Heritage is tied to place—the landscape, culture, environment, communication outlets, political structures, and economic systems, among other factors, shape the way heritage is recognized, developed, and shared. As such, any critical analysis of heritage development must occur in context; in the case of my research, understanding the process of heritage development regarding St. Helena’s Liberated African history requires some knowledge of past and present contexts on St. Helena. St. Helena’s history, geography, and culture are generally little known, so this chapter provides a brief overview of these elements as context for the analysis laid out in subsequent chapters. This is not intended to be an ethnography of St. Helena, although much of the information presented here and sources cited were gathered during my fieldwork on the island.

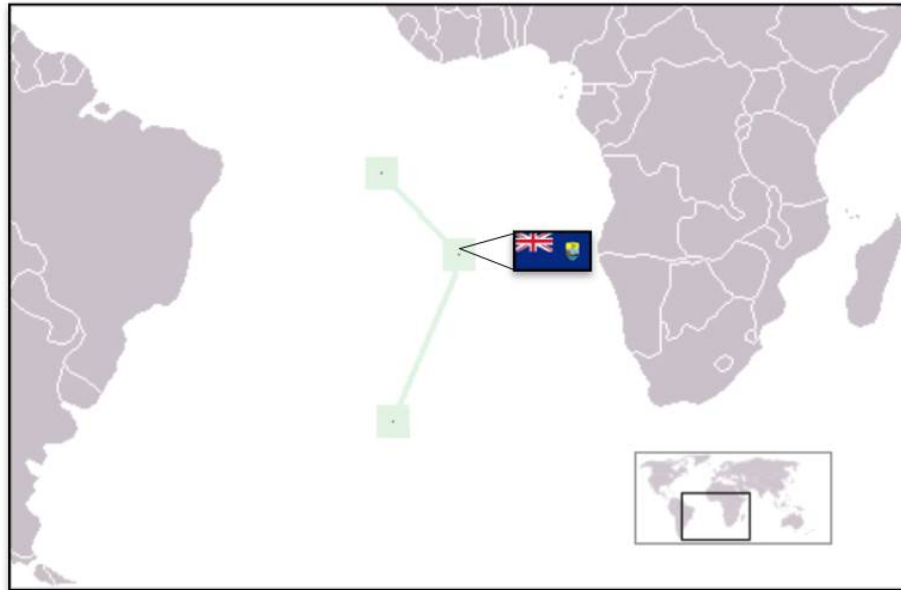
#### **St. Helena: Geography and History**

St. Helena is a 47-square mile island, measuring 6 miles by 10 miles, in the South Atlantic Ocean. It is a volcanic island with a rugged landscape: peaks rise as high as 2,690 ft. and much of the coastline consists of sheer cliffs. Located 703 miles from Ascension Island, approximately 1200 miles from the southwest coast of Africa and over 1800 miles from the coast of South America, it is currently one of the most remote places in the world. The nearest commercial airport is in Cape Town, South Africa, a journey of at least five days by ship from St. Helena. A small number of visitors arrive via private

yacht but most travel from Cape Ton on the *RMS St. Helena*, which also ferries all commercial and personal cargo, from automobiles to oranges to electronics.

**FIGURE 3.1: Map of St. Helena in geographical context**

*St. Helena is marked by the St. Helena flag; also highlighted are the island's associated dependent territories Ascension Island (to the north) and Tristan da Cunha (to the south).*



**Discovery and Early Settlement**

St. Helena was discovered, uninhabited, by the Portuguese in 1502. The first permanent settlement on St. Helena was established by the British in 1659, headed by the East India Company. Aside from a brief period of Dutch occupation in 1673, St. Helena has remained under British possession since 1659. Throughout its settled history, St. Helena has served as a provisioning station in the South Atlantic. The island's position at the center of several South Atlantic currents means that ships crossing this part of the ocean generally pass by St. Helena. In the late 1700s and early 1800s over one thousand ships stopped at the island annually to replenish food and water supplies, so much of the

island's attention was focused on anticipating and meeting the needs of outsiders; during this time it was also known as the "Brothel of the South Atlantic" (Pearson 2011). Much of the island's architecture dates to these early days of settlement, leading the St. Helena Visitor's Guide, produced by St. Helena Tourism, to describe the capital of Jamestown and its historic buildings as "the quintessential Atlantic port."

In the early years of permanent settlement the island's population included settlers, military garrisons, and slaves, the later of which which comprised the largest portion of the population. By the end of the 1700s there were over 3000 residents on St. Helena. The island's remote location resulted in management challenges for the local governor and UK-based directors of the East India Company, as communication was slow, mutiny by the garrisons on the island was a persistent threat, and unanticipated supply needs could not be met quickly (Janisch 1908). However, this extreme isolation made the island a useful outpost for exiles. St. Helena's most famous exile, Napoleon, arrived in 1815, after which the island's population temporarily grew to over 6000 with the increased number of garrisons sent to defend a feared invasion by the French. Napoleon died on St. Helena in 1821 and was buried there until his body was returned to France in 1840; his empty tomb is still a prominent feature of the island's historical landscape and a popular tourist attraction. In 1890 Dinuzulu, a South African Zulu chief, was exiled on St. Helena and in the early 1900s approximately 5000 Boer prisoners of war were sent from South Africa.

After the India Act of 1833 control of St. Helena transferred from the East India Company to the United Kingdom, establishing the island as an official Crown Colony. At this time the island faced dwindling population numbers as the garrisons, which had

already been reduced after the death of Napoleon, were dispersed. Most civil servants of the East India Company were dismissed; after losing the high salaries associated with Company positions these individuals left the island or competed with other island residents for low-paying wage labor (Gosse 1990; Mellis 1875). Departure of the East India Company also resulted in the loss of Company trade, which reduced the number of ships stopping at St. Helena's port; numbers were further reduced when the Suez Canal opened in 1869. Gosse (1990:330) describes the opening of the Suez Canal as a blow "from which St. Helena has never recovered." The one thousand ships calling annually, typical of the late 1700s and early 1800s, fell to only 200 ships in 1890 (Gill and Teale 1999).

Through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century St. Helena suffered from the same economic woes as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gosse (1990) describes a shipping monopoly that created artificially high prices, pests and invasive species plaguing crops on the island, and low wages for many of the island's residents, leaving few residents able to purchase or grow sufficient food for themselves and their families. Residents experienced a period of stability, however, as the island's flax industry, which originated in the early 1900s with crops introduced from New Zealand, surged due to demand for rope and twine during the two world wars. The island also held a contract to supply the British Postal Service with twine, but this ended in 1966, marking a point of economic decline that has continued until the present day (Weaver 2002). Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the only industry to remain consistently profitable is the sale of stamps, particularly first day covers, due to their relative rarity (Gosse 1990; Weaver 2002).

**FIGURE 3.2: Detail map of St. Helena**

*In 2014 this was the main map distributed by St. Helena Tourism. It features sites promoted as major tourist destinations; sites related to the island's Liberated African history are not included. Image courtesy of St. Helena Tourism.*



After nearly 150 years as a British Crown Colony, St. Helena was reclassified as a British Dependent Territory under the British Nationality Act of 1981. With this, the British citizenship granted to residents of St. Helena under the Royal Charter of 1673 was stripped away. As a result, the island's residents lost the right of abode in Britain, a privilege many took advantage of to seek higher rates of pay than the island could provide. The British Overseas Territory Act of 2002 reclassified St. Helena (along with

other British Dependent Territories) yet again, this time as British Overseas Territories. The Act also restored British citizenship to the island's residents.

### **St. Helena: Population and Social Contexts**

In the latest official census, taken in 2008, St. Helena's population numbered 4,257 individuals (unless otherwise noted, all information on St. Helena's population is from St. Helena and Dependencies: Statistical Yearbook 2012-13). The capital of Jamestown, which includes less than one-fourth of the island's population, is the only official town on St. Helena; the remainder of the population is concentrated in several residential districts or dispersed in isolated rural dwellings. From a high of nearly 10,000 occupants (including nearly 5,000 Boer Prisoners of War) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, St. Helena's population has shrunk in recent decades due to a combination of low birth rates and labor out-migration, with residents aged 20-40 migrating at the highest rate.

Beginning in 2003, death rates have exceeded birth rates. In the 2012 fiscal year the birth rate was 7.8 per 1000 population members and the death rate was 11.8 per 1000 population members. Currently, St. Helena's population growth ranks 173rd out 233 countries globally (CIA World Factbook). Furthermore, the population distribution by age shows a relatively high percentage of the population in "economically inactive" categories (i.e. children and those aged 65 and older). Taken in combination, these statistics describe a population with slowly decreasing numbers in typical wage-earning categories and a steady rise in the average age of residents. This trend towards increasing average age of residents remains true even as the island's population experiences modest recent growth, with an estimated 4,442 residents in 2014 (St. Helena Government 2014).

Those born on St. Helena hold British citizenship and the national language is English. A St. Helena Tourism brochure cheerfully describes the “historical legacy of British, African, Chinese, Dutch, Portuguese and other influences” that results in a “harmonious mix of cultures and races...but with a distinct character.” Yet in reality this “mix of cultures and races” is a product of centuries of social organization primarily based on race and/or geographical origins: Settlers who held high posts within the East India Company and later the Colony of St. Helena were of European origin; slaves held on the island were generally from Madagascar or India; some African captives liberated from illegal slave ships found refuge on the island; and indentured laborers were imported from China beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to provide cheap labor. The modern population of St. Helena is comprised of multiple diasporic populations that have integrated to varying degrees, resulting in a process Yon (2007) describes as a unique form of “race-making” on St. Helena. This process is further complicated by cycles of migration off the island, motivated by periods of economic despair; those who moved away (who now comprise the St. Helena diaspora), find their identities in “flux” as the world beyond St. Helena has no easy way of identifying and categorizing their multiple geographic origins (i.e. “racial” characteristics) (Yon 2007).

### **St. Helena: Political Economy**

While the Queen is the official head of state, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) of the UK government is responsible for the interests of all overseas territories. The Queen’s official representative on the island is the Governor, who is assisted by other officials such as the Attorney General and Chief Secretary (posts

generally held by ex-pats from the UK). Local residents have no control over the choice of Governor or other high-ranking officials, but they do vote for members of the island's Legislative Council (LegCo). The Governor approves bills passed by LegCo and leads its subsidiary Executive Council (ExCo), which is tasked with providing guidance to the Governor. A Constitutional revision in 2009 eliminated the Governor's power to enact an Ordinance without approval from LegCo although even under the revised Constitution it is still possible for the Governor to act without or against the advice of ExCo.

While St. Helena is no longer a colony of the UK, it is financially dependent on the UK. Aid to St. Helena is provided primarily under the auspices of the UK Department for International Development (DfID). Annual aid packages include funds to support nearly 50% of the operating budget of the St. Helena Government and a shipping subsidy to cover losses incurred by the *RMS St. Helena* (currently the *RMS St. Helena* is the only means of regularly ferrying passengers and cargo to the island, therefore it is a vital support system regardless of whether it turns a profit.). During the island's 2011 Fiscal Year DfID provided a total of £26.3 million in aid and subsidies (St. Helena Government 2013a). These grant-in-aid monies from DfID include restrictions and oversight on how funds are spent, which leaves LegCo with little actual power regarding budget issues.

The island relies in part on this budgetary aid due to the poor local economy. High import levels, significant out-migration of the labor force, and poor infrastructure leave few options for economic development on the island. Between 2000 and 2010 St. Helena's growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was in the bottom 20% globally (St. Helena Government 2012). Unemployment is low (2% in 2012) yet wages for local jobs also remain low. For example, the starting salary for a full-time secondary school teacher



was £8,801, or about \$13,000 (as advertised in *The Sentinel*, June 5, 2014). By contrast, positions advertised internationally (i.e. to ex-pats, not residents of St. Helena) in early 2015 (via st.helenacareers.com) featured annual salaries ranging from £35,000 to £85,000, with additional benefits not available to those on local contract such as funds to cover costs of relocation and funds for annual leave. While these discrepancies in wages may not seem significant given global statistics on wealth disparity, it is important to consider the impact on social dynamics when nearly all jobs in the highest wage-earning categories on this small island are held by non-residents, primarily white individuals from the UK.

### **Sustainable Development**

St. Helena's Sustainable Development Plan, approved in 2012 by SHG, is labeled "the island's highest level planning document" outlining the "strategic vision for the island over the next ten years" (St. Helena Government 2012: 4). This document outlines three National Goals for the island: "1. A vibrant economy providing opportunities for all to participate; 2. Strong community and family life; 3. Effective management of the environment." To address the first of these goals, SHG also adopted a Sustainable Economic Development Plan in 2012, which states that the key to achieving development goals is investment from and growth in the private sector. Enterprise St. Helena (ESH), a non-governmental organization (NGO), is charged with implementing the Sustainable Economic Development Plan. However, ESH's status as an NGO is somewhat of a misnomer, as it is funded by SHG and DfID. ESH's website states that it is at "arms-length from the St. Helena Government" and one of its printed publications states the

organization “should implement Government Policy with minimal amounts of Government interference” (Enterprise St. Helena 2013: 2).

### **Sustainable Development: Tourism**

ESH focuses economic development on three areas: tourism, traditional industry, and training and up-skilling. All are tied to efforts to increase private sector investment, particularly external investors who will bring “finance, expertise and international marketing networks which will make significant new investments across the island’s economy” (Enterprise St. Helena 2013:5). Tourism has been part of St. Helena’s economic development plans for decades, as evidenced by tourism reports and management plans drafted in 1993, 2006, and 2011. However, the island’s extreme isolation and limited transportation options meant tourism could only expect modest increases without a significant change. For example, in 2012 2,063 tourists visited the island and, while 2013 boasted an increase of 10%, this only amounted to an additional 28 visitors (St. Helena Government 2013b).

In an effort to grow tourism into a source of sustainable economic development on St. Helena, in November 2011 DfID pledged more than £240 million to construct an airport on St. Helena, which would be the first airport on the island. Airport construction began in 2012 and commercial air flights are scheduled to commence in May 2016. The seemingly positive global tourism statistics cited in chapter two help explain why St. Helena has staked its economic future on tourism, even though figures from the St. Helena Government indicate that tourism revenue accounted for only 4.5% of the island’s GDP in 2009-10 (St. Helena Government 2013a). The expectation is that, once the airport

makes it easier to reach St. Helena, the island's unique character, stunning physical landscapes, and geographic remoteness will attract "high impact" (i.e. high spending) tourists (St. Helena Government 2012). To meet the anticipated and significant increase in tourism numbers, St. Helena Tourism, operating under the auspices of Enterprise St. Helena, aims to improve existing tourism offerings, such as increased public interpretation at historic sites, and support new development, such as mountain bike trails.

### **Heritage Development and Promotion**

Several organizations or institutions on St. Helena have an interest in the island's heritage. The National Trust was organized in 2002 and currently operates with a staff of approximately 20 individuals to "promote the appreciation, protection and enhancement of St. Helena's unique environmental and cultural heritage," among other objectives (St. Helena National Trust 2016). The Trust maintains a register of historic buildings, posted to the organization's website; the website also identifies the Trust's main activity related to cultural heritage as maintenance of a series of trails to cultural and natural sites. While the Trust does develop some public interpretation at heritage sites, most signage at historic and cultural sites is provided by St. Helena Tourism, evident via their logo on this signage. Eight member organizations, including the St. Helena Heritage Society, work in cooperation with the National Trust to identify, protect, and promote environmental and cultural resources. Many of these member organizations were founded before the National Trust, including the St. Helena Heritage Society, which has been operating since 1979; collaboration with the National Trust allows these organizations to

share resources and coordinate activities to some extent but the level of active cooperation varies (St. Helena National Trust 2016).

The St. Helena Heritage Society founded the Museum of St. Helena, which opened in 2002 (Museum of St. Helena). The Museum occupies an 18<sup>th</sup> century stone building in central Jamestown; exhibits related to the island's history are displayed on two floors. A combination of permanent and temporary exhibitions “encourage repeat visits from islanders as well as tourists” (St. Helena National Trust 2016). Typically open three days a week, the museum adds special opening times when a cruise ship is visiting or when the *RMS St. Helena* is in harbor. Admission to the Museum is free (a donation box is available to visitors) and museum staff told me this helps facilitate visits from school groups. Since opening in 2002 approximately 14,000 visitors have visited the museum, although there are no statistics to identify how many of these visits are from residents and how many are from tourists (St. Helena National Trust 2016). In addition to the St. Helena Heritage Society, financial support for the Museum is provided by the St. Helena Government and the UK-based Friends of St. Helena.

Additional resources relevant to St. Helena's history, culture, and heritage include the Archives, which holds records on St. Helena's churches, government, newspapers, deeds, and censuses, among other resources. The Archives, located in Jamestown, are open to the public; the collection is not catalogued or digitized, although Smith (1995) provides an overview of manuscripts held in the Archives as well as other repositories such as the British Library. A selection of books, reports, and other published and unpublished resources related to St. Helena's history are available from the St. Helena Library, also located in Jamestown.

Having summarized the broad historical background, contemporary development concerns, and heritage organizations I now turn to the case study at hand: St. Helena's Liberated African history.

### **Slavery and St. Helena**

The island has two distinct historical connections to slavery. Until 1832 it was legal for slaves to be bought and sold on St. Helena. Then, beginning in 1840, the island served as a place of refuge for captive Africans liberated from illegal slave vessels in the South Atlantic. My dissertation research focuses on heritage development related to the island's second historical connection to slavery, yet, as I discuss in more detail in chapter five, many individuals (locally and globally) blend, confuse, or conflate these two historical events. I therefore draw a distinction in the remainder of this chapter between St. Helena's two historical connections to slavery.

#### **History of Slavery on St. Helena: Pre-1840**

From nearly the earliest days of St. Helena's settlement, slaves have been held on the island. Initially there were strict bans on importing new slaves to ensure that "negroes" would not outnumber "Europeans" on the island and thus attempt to mutiny, although the labor demands of developing and maintaining a settlement on the island eventually caused this restriction to be lifted (Jackson 1903). It should be noted that while historical records refer to "negro" slaves on St. Helena, these were not African captives typical of the Middle Passage. St. Helena settlers sent vessels to Madagascar for the specific purpose of obtaining slaves, while East India Company bases in India sent

natives of that country to St. Helena as slaves (Ashmole and Ashmole 2000). In addition, English ships trading to Madagascar were levied taxes which included leaving “one negro slave” on the island (Jackson 1903:24). For a period, the largest portion of the island’s population was comprised of slaves; population statistics from 1814 list “European Inhabitants 736, Garrison 891, Free Blacks 420, Slaves 1293, Chinese 247” (copy of Company’s instructions to Sir Hudson Lowe as governor Jan. 19, 1816, quoted in Janisch 1908:218).

The threat of mutiny, combined with the high proportion of slaves within St. Helena’s population, resulted in harsh punishments for real or imagined transgressions by slaves on the island. For example, Jackson (1903:65) quotes historical records outlining punishments, which included 100 lashes for any attempt to run away, castration for any adult male slave accused of striking a white person with his hand, and death for striking a white male with a weapon. Company correspondence dated Dec. 16, 1695, detailed three executions on the island in response to a planned uprising, including one slave hanged in chains on the side of a cliff and left to starve to death in view of the island’s main settlement (quoted in Janisch 1908:61).

Legislation passed on the island in 1792 outlined new requirements of masters and mistresses towards their slaves, including providing medical care and legal consequences for “heavier punishment than was authorized for the offence” (quoted in Jackson 1903:67). While this legislation may have improved living conditions for slaves on St. Helena, the practice of owning slaves continued on the island after the British government outlawed the slave trade in 1807. The 1792 legislation, which temporarily banned import of new slaves, also prompted the Company to bring indentured laborers to

St. Helena from China to meet the continued demand for cheap labor (Gosse 1990). Sir Hudson Lowe, governor of St. Helena from 1816 to 1821, argued for the abolition of slavery on the island, pointing out that it was the only location under British rule where slavery still existed (Gosse 1990). Yet total abolition would have deprived the island of what was considered a critical source of labor and, as slaves still outnumbered non-slaves, whites were concerned with potential consequences should the island's entire slave population be emancipated at once on the tiny, isolated island (Jackson 1903).

Eventually, Lowe—with the backing of a committee of slave-owners—passed a law stating: “All children born of a slave woman from and after Christmas Day 1818 were free, but considered as apprentices to the proprietors of the mothers, if males, until the age of eighteen years; and if females, until the age of sixteen years.” (quoted in Jackson 1903:68). In 1832 the East India Company abolished slavery on the island and purchased freedom for the 614 remaining enslaved individuals (at a cost of just over £28,000) (Gosse 1990). The price of an individual's freedom was considered a debt owed to the Company; at a time when wages on the island were low and work was scarce it was nearly impossible for individuals to pay off this debt, however, and eventually all debts related to emancipation were relieved (Fox 2014).

### **St. Helena's Liberated African History**

In 1807 Britain passed an Act of Parliament to end British participation in the transatlantic slave trade, although this of course did not end the slave trade itself. Beginning in 1839, Britain passed a series of acts granting the British Royal Navy authority to detain ships illegally trading African captives. Because many ships were

detained in the South Atlantic, St. Helena was ideally situated to support the efforts of the Royal Navy. Correspondence between St. Helena and the UK traces the establishment in 1840 of a Vice-Admiralty Court on the island for the purpose of holding trials related to these captured vessels. These records, along with report from medical personnel, indicate how the island also served as a place of refuge for the over 26,000 captive Africans ‘liberated’ from these ships over several decades by the West African Squadron of the British Royal Navy.

In 1840 the island’s then-governor, Major-General George Middlemore, was concerned that the island’s resources were insufficient for relatively large numbers of Liberated Africans arriving on the island on unpredictable timetables (Gosse 1990). This concern was not borne out in the early days of the Vice-Admiralty Court, as the first ships captured by the Royal Navy held few or no slaves (Pearson 2011). However, by August of 1841 at least 1,824 Liberated Africans had been sent to St. Helena (Gosse 1990). At a time when the island’s population was just over 4,000 people, this was a considerable number of refugees for the island’s limited resources to support. On the other hand, the West African Squadron brought some economic relief to the island, which served as its base, while management of the refugee camp, known as the Liberated African Depot, provided employment for some St. Helenians (Gosse 1990).

### **Liberated African Depot**

Initially, vessels captured by the West African Squadron were brought to Lemon Valley on St. Helena. The few St. Helenian residents of the Valley had been relocated to provide an isolated quarantine station and refugee camp for the Liberated Africans,



known as the Liberated African Depot. The large number of Liberated Africans arriving on the island soon overwhelmed the available space in small Lemon Valley. For a short time, those who were ill were quarantined within ships anchored offshore, but quickly even this option was not sufficient. As a result of deplorable conditions on the slave vessels, many Liberated Africans died prior to or shortly after arriving on St. Helena. Communicable disease and malnutrition were the major causes of death (Witkin 2011).

Bishop John Gray visited St. Helena in 1848, during which time he went aboard a ship bearing Liberated Africans to St. Helena. While he describes the scene with compassion for the Liberated Africans he begins by referring to these human beings as “cargo” (Gray 1849):

The cargo was a particularly healthy one, the number of deaths being only about one a-day. Two were lying dead upon the deck, and one had the day before jumped overboard. Everything was done by the officers and crew in charge to keep the ship clean; but you can conceive better than I can describe what the condition of such a mass of human beings must be in so small a space. The deck was entirely covered with them. They had a worn look, and wasted appearance, and were moved into the boats like bales of goods, apparently without any will of their own. I crept down between decks to the place where they were usually stowed away. It might be between three and four feet high, and the atmosphere was most offensive, although not occupied by one-third of the usual number.

John Mellis (1875), a government official stationed on St. Helena, offers more detail on the physical state of Liberated Africans arriving at Rupert’s Valley:

A visit to a full-freighted slaveship arriving at St. Helena is not easily to be forgotten; a scene so intensified in all that is horrible almost defies description. The vessel, scarcely a hundred tons burthen at most, contains perhaps little short of a thousand souls, which have been closely packed, for many weeks together, in the hottest and most polluted of atmospheres. I went on board one of these ships as she cast

anchor off Rupert's Valley in 1861, and the whole deck as I picked my way from end to end, in order to avoid treading upon them, was thickly strewn with the dead, dying and starved bodies of what seemed to me to be a species of ape which I had never seen before. One's sensations of horror were certainly lessened by the impossibility of realizing that the miserable, helpless objects being picked up from the deck and handed over the ship's side, one by one, living, dying, and dead alike, were really human beings. Their arms and legs were worn down to about the size of walking-sticks. Many died as they passed from ship to boat, and, indeed, the work of unloading had to be proceeded with so quickly that there was no time to separate the dead from the living.

Early in the Depot's history, George McHenry, a doctor stationed with the Depot, wrote a letter describing how the bodies of deceased Liberated Africans were no longer being buried far out at sea, but rather closer to vessels anchored off-shore in Lemon Valley, which would likely create new problems: "As the vessel is not very distant from the beach, the probability is that the bodies will be driven ashore and what the result may be I leave to yourselves to judge." (quoted in Pearson 2011).

Lemon Valley is steep and rocky, as is most of the island's surface, which, in combination with the Valley's small size, left little space sufficient for burial on land. The need for greater space for both the living and dead among the Liberated Africans prompted authorities to move the Depot to Rupert's Valley in the early 1840s. While Rupert's featured more space and easier access to Jamestown providing for the needs of the Liberated Africans was still a challenge. For example, access to fresh water was not initially available in Rupert's Valley; it wasn't until 1852 that pipelines were constructed to carry fresh water to the Valley (Pearson 2011b).

A few maps and plans, produced while the Liberated African Depot was active in Rupert's Valley, detail what little infrastructure supported the camp. These documents

show the location and form of wooden platform tents, which served as shelter for the Liberated Africans. Other structures included a wooden hospital building and stone building identified in an 1885 survey as “No. 1 Building.” This building is the only structure from the Liberated African Establishment still standing; Pearson (2011b) cites local tradition identifying the building as a hospital, but its precise history is unknown and currently the building features no historical marker acknowledging its connection to the Liberated African Establishment.

Between 1840 and 1864 St. Helena received approximately 26,000 Liberated Africans; the highest occupancy of the Liberated African Depot during this time was over 3,000 people (Pearson 2011b). Pearson and Jeffs (2011) estimate that approximately 8,000 of these individuals died and were buried on the island. Early in the Depot’s history, surviving Liberated Africans were absorbed into St. Helena’s population, primarily as servants, apprentices, or militia members (Gosse 1990). While the isolated island may have welcomed some new laborers, the island’s struggling economy and limited resources could not support every surviving Liberated African. In the early 1840s Liberated Africans were offered the option to voluntarily emigrate to the West Indian colonies of Guiana, Jamaica, and Trinidad, although their status was that of indentured laborers expected to pay back the cost of their transport and upkeep. However, by the mid-1840s the policy of voluntary emigration was abandoned; from that point on Liberated Africans were emigrated (forcibly or voluntarily), with the majority going to West Indian colonies and a small number sent to West Africa (Pearson 2011b).

Estimates of the number of surviving Liberated Africans who remained on St. Helena range from approximately 500 to around 1,000 (Gosse 1990; Jackson 1903;

Pearson 2011b). Whatever the actual number, records related to these individuals are scarce. For those who remained on the island, the identity of “Liberated African” remained even after the Establishment closed. For example, Death Registers from as late as the 1890s identify individuals as “African” or “Liberated African.” Residents of St. Helena who had previously been held as slaves until granted emancipation were identified as “Emancipated Slave” or “Slave.” This is significant because, while modern populations often fail to recognize the historical distinction between “Liberated African” and “Emancipated Slave,” in St. Helena’s historical context these labels refer to two distinct and mutually exclusive groups. Mellis (1875:81) described the Liberated African population of St. Helena in the 1870s as such: “with the ‘native’ they do not blend, but live apart in little colonies or settlements; not half a dozen instances of intermarriage have occurred during thirty years, and the ‘natives’ still consider themselves superior.” At this point in St. Helena’s history “native” referred to the “colored” (non-European) population (Schulenburg 2003); Mellis’s comment thus outlines how the Liberated Africans kept themselves apart (or were kept apart from) even other “colored” residents of the island.

Jackson (1903) identifies at least five surviving Liberated Africans, including some details on their lives and a photograph of all five, but virtually all historical records relating to the Liberated Africans lack details on individual or family names, geographical origins, or cultural connections; even Jackson’s volume includes such details for only a few individuals. There are a number of reasons why it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for European officials to collection such data on St. Helena, such as language differences. Regardless of the reasons, the end result is that the

Liberated Africans, as identified in St. Helena's historical records, are represented by little more than numbers of individuals arriving on various ships.

### **Liberated African Cemeteries in Rupert's Valley**

Two historical maps of Rupert's Valley, Mellis's 1861 map and Palmer's 1872 revision (available via Pearson 2011b), include reference to cemeteries in the Valley. Mellis identifies one area within Rupert's as an "African Grave Yard" with an "[a]ddition to graveyard since 1851" marked. A second area is labeled "Old African Grave Yard" (quoted in Pearson 2011b). Palmer's map identifies these burials as "Old Burial Ground (Liberated Slaves)" but places them in different locations than Mellis (quoted in Pearson 2011b). Cemetery boundaries on both maps are indistinct and there is no indication that these burial grounds were marked at any point during or after the Liberated African Depot's tenure, nor does it seem individual burials were marked within the cemeteries (Pearson 2011b). Pearson and Jeff's (2011) estimate of approximately 8,000 Liberated Africans who died on St. Helena is based on extrapolating mortality rates from the 1840s (which are known from historical records) through the remainder of the Depot's existence, when the number of arriving Liberated Africans is available from historical records but not mortality statistics.

Aside from the Liberated African Depot, Rupert's Valley remained relatively unsettled and undeveloped until the mid-1900s, so it is not surprising that there is little record of burials being disturbed until 1984, even though the precise location and parameters of the cemeteries was unknown. Schulenburg (2003) describes the 1984 event and its aftermath, when workers constructing a new power station in Rupert's Valley

disturbed a number of unmarked graves. A formal complaint was made to the vicar in Jamestown and construction halted while a commission of enquiry responded to community objections to continued work at the site. One objection was that disturbing these graves would be “discriminatory” and “if the graves and remains belonged to more important people, there would be no question of disturbing them” (quoted in Schulenburg 2003:26). However, St. Helena has on several occasions relocated burials for development or other needs, a fact cited by the Commission in its decision to move forward with construction of the power station: “Graveyards of non-slaves in Jamestown have been put to other uses in the past by Government, with no recorded disagreement from the Church or the majority of the people” (quoted in Schulenburg 2003:26). The human remains disturbed in 1984 were reburied in an unconsecrated section of the cemetery at St. Paul’s Cathedral, the largest cemetery on the island. The report of the 1984 Commission features what is perhaps the first public appeal to commemorate St. Helena’s Liberated Africa history, recommending that a memorial to the “memory of the Liberated Slaves” be erected (quoted in Schulenburg 2003:26).

### **Archaeological Excavation in Rupert’s Valley**

The first archaeological excavations in Rupert’s Valley began in 2006, when test pits and trenches were dug by contracted archaeology firms based off -island as part of preliminary planning and environmental impact assessment for the proposed airport project (Pearson 2011a). While the airport itself was proposed in a different location on St. Helena, Rupert’s Valley served as the only feasible connection between the Valley’s harbor, where materials and equipment would arrive, and the construction site. Therefore

if the airport project moved forward, it would require a haul road and other infrastructure in Rupert's Valley.

Test excavations in 2006, 2007, and 2008 provided enough evidence to denote the location and approximate boundaries of the two unmarked graveyards associated with the Liberated African Depot (Jeffs 2011). Burials encountered during excavations in 2006 were removed, placed in wooden coffins, and reinterred in the unconsecrated section of St. Paul's Cathedral (Jeffs 2011). One burial was uncovered in 2007, which was recorded and photographed, after which the remains were reburied in situ; no burials were uncovered during 2008 testing (Jeffs 2011).

As plans to construct an airport on St. Helena moved forward it became apparent that the necessary haul road in Rupert's Valley would run through a portion of one of the Liberated African burial grounds. To carry supplies from Rupert's Bay to the airport construction site required connecting two points, between which lay rocky, steep terrain. These factors left essentially one viable route, which cut through the known parameters of the grave yard. After exploring several potential options, the airport development team, in consultation with archaeologists, decided to remove the burials within the footprint of the proposed haul road. Continued erosion on a slope adjacent to this footprint left a small number of additional burials at risk of exposure, therefore these were to be removed as well as a protective measure (Pearson 2011a). To complete this work, a commercial archaeology excavation was commissioned by the British Government under the auspices of DfID over four months in 2008. The excavation comprised a 100m x 30m area, uncovering the remains of at least 325 individuals and over 100 individual or groups of objects (Pearson et al. 2011).

### **Current Status of Excavated Human Remains and Objects**

As of January 2016 the human remains excavated in 2008 remained in storage on St. Helena. In 2008 and 2009 two phases of osteological analysis were completed on St. Helena; the results are presented in Pearson et al. 2011. An additional scientific team comprised of two PhD students collected skeletal data in 2012, including extracting a tooth from each skeleton for isotopic analysis aimed at determining geographical origins within Western Africa (EuroTAST 2011). The excavated objects, which include beads, buttons, coins, bottles, and fragments of textiles, were transferred by SHG to the UK for analysis, with the exception of larger pieces of wood from coffin burials; as of January 2016, the objects are curated at the International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool, England. A small number of the objects were displayed in a special exhibit on St. Helena's Liberated African history, titled "Liberty Bound: Slavery and St. Helena," which I discuss further in chapters four and five.

### **Public Outreach and Education Regarding St. Helena's Liberated African History**

The ISM exhibit, which ran April 2014 to April 2015, represents the most significant public outreach effort to date related to St. Helena's Liberated African history. Prior to the ISM exhibit, the Museum of St. Helena (located in Jamestown, St. Helena's capital) in 2013 hosted an exhibit titled "St. Helena, Slavery and the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade," which outlined the island's two distinct historical connections to slavery (i.e. slavery was legal on the island until 1832 and beginning in 1840 Liberated Africans who had been freed from illegal slave vessels were housed on



the island). During the 2008 excavation, the archaeologists organized an Open Day to allow residents of St. Helena to view the excavation in progress and ask questions about the project. An estimated 400 people attended Open Day; the Rupert's Valley excavation was the first (and to date, only) professional archaeological excavation on St. Helena, so Open Day was for many attendees their first exposure to archaeology (*St. Helena Independent* 8 August, 2008:3-4).

The 2008 excavations provided a wealth of new information about the island's Liberated African history, which has in many ways inspired new or renewed existing local interest in this history; this new information has certainly reshaped the historical narrative by providing greater detail. In addition, public attention on the island and beyond is focused on decisions to be made regarding reburial of the excavated remains and potential memorialization of the Liberated Africans. Discussion regarding the location and form of reburial began even before the excavation concluded in 2008. Pearson and Jeffs were commissioned by SHG to develop plans for an ossuary to be located in Rupert's Valley, close to the remaining unexcavated Liberated African graves (*St. Helena Independent* 31 August 2012). Plans were completed, funds were allocated by DfID, and planning permission was granted but no action was taken; eventually planning permission expired in November 2014. As of January 2016 discussions are ongoing regarding reburial of the human remains and promoting St. Helena's Liberated African heritage for both locals and tourists.

## **Conclusion**

The context within which St. Helena's Liberated African heritage is being developed is both unique and universal. Until the airport opens, the island remains one of the most isolated places in the world and faces challenges similar to other small island economies, such as outward migration and limited options for economic development. The British government has made a significant investment in St. Helena's future airport, leaving the island under tremendous pressure to develop a tourism economy and create an international profile for the island. Currently the island's connection to Napoleon dominates its international image, similar to other "mono" heritage such as the Moai statues of Easter Island. Yet the dominance of Napoleon, combined with lack of knowledge on other aspects of St. Helena's history essentially creates a blank canvas for heritage development; narratives can be focused or even altered for both local and tourist audiences to suite tastes rather than truth. In spite of local and global interest in the Liberated African heritage and pressure to develop new tourism sites, the reality of everyday life on St. Helena is often a more pressing demand than heritage, as residents struggle with low wages, high costs of living, isolation and social inequalities. Finally, the Liberated Africans are part of the global African diaspora, which results in both complexity and uncertainty in identifying heritage stakeholders and defining "community" related to this heritage, a challenge faced by countless sites around the globe. These factors directly and indirectly impact the process of heritage development and, in turn, decisions made about the fate of the Liberated African human remains.

In the next chapter I outline my research methods and expand on my research objectives to provide further context for the research results and recommendations I discuss in chapters five and six.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODS

#### “Temporary” Storage

The large wooden door to the old Pipe Building in Jamestown, St. Helena, creaked as it opened, revealing a large, single-room interior. The walls of the building are thick stone and mortar; I expected the air to feel and smell damp but the space was surprisingly cool and dry. A porthole-style window high above the door has no glass, which allows fresh air to circulate through the space, regulating the temperature and humidity of the large room in a low-tech manner. This and a few other small windows allow some sunlight into the otherwise dark interior, as there are no interior lights. In the part of the room nearest to the door machinery pieces litter wood and metal shelves and an old-fashioned steam engine sits off to one side. The St. Helena Heritage Society had acquired this building with the intention of developing a museum on the island’s flax industry; the antiquated steam engine was brought here for that purpose but, since 2008, these plans have been on hold.

Walking past the machinery and steam engine inside the Pipe Building, so named because it was used to store pipes for a period, took me to the rear two-thirds of the room. High ceilings gave the illusion of greater space than the floor plan allows, yet simultaneously the interior of the room held greater volume than I could envision from the exterior appearance of the building. The rear portion of the room was being used to store the human remains of at least 325 individuals excavated in 2008 from Rupert’s Valley. These children, men, and women died either on illegal slave vessels or in the

refugee camps of St. Helena, both places completely unfamiliar to them and far from their homes in Africa. They died of malnutrition, communicable disease, and possibly violence and were buried, often hastily and in most cases without coffins, in unmarked graves; the youngest individuals in these boxes were newborn (or stillborn) infants and the oldest was 35-40 years of age, with the greatest number (46%) between 9-12 years old at the time of death (Witkin 2011).

Once initial osteological analysis of the remains was completed after the 2008 excavation, researchers moved the cardboard boxes containing the remains to the Pipe Building for what all parties involved considered “temporary” storage. The Pipe Building was chosen because it was virtually the only option on the island with sufficient space and adequate curatorial conditions (e.g. consistent and acceptable temperature and humidity). When I visited the space in 2014 the remains had been in storage for nearly six years, with no clear timeline or plan for permanent disposition.

The cardboard boxes, bearing black writing—dates, initials, symbols such as stars, all suggesting abbreviated forms of field identification details—were neatly stacked on wooden pallets or shelves similar to those holding the bits of machinery elsewhere in the room. Although the space bore no evidence of flooding this storage arrangement would offer some degree of protection for the boxes if water or moisture appeared on the floor. Each pallet, which is covered by a tarp, held two stacks of cardboard boxes piled about seven feet high; there were roughly ten pallets spread throughout the room. Pallets were placed next to each other, often with little space in between. As I walked through I was reminded of the experience of walking through library stacks placed close together,

looking up to locate a book high on the shelf yet taking care not to bump into the opposite shelf looming close behind me.

The Pipe Building is adjacent to the St. Helena prison and shares a wall with a portion of this building. From the outside it was difficult to judge which portion of the building was the prison and which was the Pipe Building. Located on the edge of Jamestown, St. Helena's bustling capital, center of government and commerce, and home to approximately 900 people, the Pipe Building sits alongside a narrow road leading to a busy petrol filling station. Across the road the volcanic cliffs that form Jamestown's valley setting rise steeply; rocks of various sizes at the base of the cliff attest to the frequent small-scale rockslides. The tucked-away location of the Pipe Building provides a degree of privacy, yet inside the sounds of Jamestown filtered through the windows. Even with the door closed the background noise provided a sense of human contact and community that I found comforting as I walked among the boxes. Overall, the space resembled a carefully organized yet too-small garage acting as a holding space for household contents during a move—it is an adequate, practical solution, given St. Helena's extremely limited space and resources, yet it is clearly a transitory existence, as this was never meant to be the final resting place for the Liberated African human remains after the excavation.

Through the course of this research project I came to view the Pipe Building and its current contents as the physical manifestation of my research themes and concerns. Complexly intertwined needs and demands in the present led archaeologists to excavate the human remains, analyze those remains, and place them in storage; additionally

complex needs and demands impact their fate, including how their story will be told, by whom and to whom, and for what purpose.

These human remains were constantly present yet easily forgotten; who they were and who should care for them was difficult to define. The Pipe Building itself is situated nearly at the heart of St. Helena's modern community life, yet marginalized to such an extent that, on my first trip to the island in 2013, few current residents seemed aware of its function as a storage space for human remains. The building's location in Jamestown is separated by a high volcanic cliff and a journey of at least 15 minutes by car from Rupert's Valley, the site from which archaeologists excavated the remains in 2008. It is unimaginably distant, both geographically and culturally, from Africa, the presumed once-homeland of those whose remains are stored within the Pipe Building as well as others still buried in unmarked graves in Rupert's Valley.

Furthermore, the human remains resting within the boxes simultaneously represent once-living individuals who suffered a horrific fate far from home, tangible and potent symbols of a nearly-forgotten aspect of St. Helena's history, and a problem to be solved, as their storage in the Pipe Building is, after all, "temporary." An economic development project led to their current position within the Pipe Building; their fate was being decided by stakeholders with a variety of interests in this situation, who often operated with what appeared to be good intentions but with limited resources and under unclear or potentially conflicting agendas.

## **St. Helena Case Study**

In my ethnographic case study I first examine strategies social actors employ in using human remains to stimulate more widespread integration of marginalized, violent pasts into the social and material contexts of modern populations. I then theorize how these processes are impacted by needs and demands in the modern world. Finally, I analyze the efficacy of existing resources such as codes of ethics and heritage policies in balancing these impacts to promote respectful treatment of the dead in heritage and tourism contexts. Through these efforts I outline the circumstances that led the Liberated African human remains to occupy the shelves of the Pipe Building, identify various stakeholders working to decide their ultimate fate (as well as those who may be excluded from or absent in this process), discuss specific decisions and factors impacting how those decisions are made, and analyze how the St. Helena community and others are crafting narratives about the island's Liberated African history, for various purposes, using the human remains and other elements of material culture.

I utilize interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis to examine the process of heritage development; I provide a 22-month-long view (July 2013 to May 2015) into development of St. Helena's Liberated African heritage. I was interested in the decision-making process that shaped heritage development, rather than analysis of final "products" such as tourist sites or memorials. To sufficiently analyze the efficacy of existing codes of ethics and heritage policies I needed to identify and follow issues, questions, and concerns as they occurred, not as they were eventually solved or dropped. Shifts in opinion or decisions, subtle impacts from forces of economic development, or



nuances of power dynamics, among other factors, may not be evident in heritage products, but they may be through critical attention to the process.

Specific details of the St. Helena case are unique, yet the underlying themes, motivations, and questions are common to many cases around the globe. In this dissertation I weave these details and generalities together to offer a new anthropological perspective in heritage and dark tourism scholarship, a perspective informed by directing critical attention to visible and invisible impacts of power and capital on decision-making processes and ethical treatment of the dead in the heritage of violence. In this chapter I outline my research locations and methods; in chapter five I discuss research results from the St. Helena case study.

### **The Settings**

While my ethnographic research produced a case study of St. Helena, the research was not centered specifically or exclusively within St. Helena's boundaries. This broadly-conceived research design reflects both circumstances of the St. Helena case study as well as shifting understandings of place in a modern, globalized world. In the context of my research I sought to understand ideas, opinions, and actions related to three interconnected topics: (1) economic development on St. Helena; (2) St. Helena's heritage; and (3) St. Helena's Liberated African history. While these topics centered on St. Helena, forces impacting them were not limited to the island. For example, as a British Overseas Territory (and former British colony), St. Helena's past, present, and future are intricately connected to the UK; its dependent status further complicates political economic systems, power dynamics, local identity, and a multitude of other

factors. Furthermore, the island's Liberated African history is part of the vast global network of the African diaspora.

Both St. Helena's postcolonial status and connections to the African diaspora required a research plan that acknowledged how cultures are increasingly "in circulation" (Marcus 1998:5). While Marcus's (1998) concept of multi-sited research provided a useful starting point, I needed to move beyond this model, as my interests are in the relationships between people, places, and events, which does not translate to definable and discreet "sites." My research design needed to be nimble and expansive to account for a web of connections extending from St. Helena's shores to various global locations and from the past into the present and on to the future.

Gille (2001), building on Massey (1994), offers a model to study social relationships that developed historically among sites. In this view, sites are not static, having experienced "particular intersection[s] of social relations" that positions them within a "global ethnography" (Gille 2001:327). This allows the researcher to trace how relationships between people and places have changed, then investigate the source(s) of such change. Gille (2001:324) offers a reimagining of Geertz's assertion that we don't study villages, we study in villages; she shifts the focus of study to social relationships that develop among and between relevant places, which requires the research to move outside the "village."

This model centered on relationships and change articulates well with my case study for three reasons. First, change is a constant theme of my research focused on St. Helena due to the island's postcolonial status and the impending introduction of the island's first airport. Second, this model fits well with my focus in this dissertation on the

process of heritage development, which alters what is or what was into something else. Finally, focusing on relationships allows me to consider social, political, or economic networks not tied to specific, definable sites. For example, St. Helena's Liberated African heritage is clearly connected to Africa, yet at present the connection is so undefined and tenuous that it does not point to a particular site or sites within Africa. My relationship-centered research design facilitates inquiry into the significance of relationships between St. Helena, the UK, Africa, or other places, including potential implications of non-existent, hidden, or ignored relationships, even if the places themselves do not translate to specific places on a map.

My research, therefore, focuses on places in St. Helena, the UK, and beyond as sites but also as loci in networks of changing relationships. The relationships, interactions, and networks between places are the subject of study as much as the places themselves. My research began in St. Helena (July-August 2013); during this phase of fieldwork it became apparent that understanding St. Helena's heritage development process or modern economic and political situation required work beyond the island. To better conceptualize how St. Helena's interests, issues, and histories were interconnected with the UK I designed a second phase of research in the UK (January-April 2014). I concluded with more fieldwork on St. Helena (June-August 2014). I view these phases as punctuated periods of particular focus set amidst a longer period of inquiry into intersecting social, economic, and political facets of these sites and the broader global community.

## **Phase One: St. Helena**

In the first phase of my research I had two main objectives. First, I viewed this initial visit as a way to introduce myself to the community and gauge community interest in my proposed research. I had no intention of moving forward with the research if community members did not seem receptive, particularly considering St. Helena's postcolonial, dependent status. I had read letters to the editor published in St. Helena's local newspapers critiquing one or another of a long line of expert consultants brought to the island (by whom, and at whose not insignificant expense was a frequent subject of such critiques) to offer an opinion on an issue or problem, then were never heard from again. With this in mind I arranged my first research phase around opportunities to listen to community members through casual conversations on the streets of St. Helena, coffee shops, or other gathering places, as well as during the five-day voyages to and from the island on the *RMS St. Helena*. I thought it important to listen more than talk during this phase as I did not want to convey the message that I thought St. Helena had a "problem" I was there to solve.

My second objective in this first phase of research was to understand the Liberated African heritage development process in its early stages. I knew from reading local newspapers, tourism publications, and St. Helena's strategic plan for economic development that tourism-related projects would be ramping up in 2014-15 in order to be ready for the anticipated airport opening in early 2016. Beginning my research in 2013 allowed me to gauge community and international interest in the Liberated African history before significant efforts to recognize, promote, and share this heritage were launched by stakeholders. I sought to identify who was already interested in this history

and why, the scope and nature of discourse up to that point related to the Liberated African history, and how these circumstances compared to other forms of heritage and tourism already in place or in development on the island.

### **Phase Two: United Kingdom**

My primary goal for this stage of research (January-April 2014) was investigating UK-based interests in St. Helena, both those related to the island's Liberated African history and broader political, economic, or social interests. While focused in the UK, defining "the field" in this phase of research required me to broadly conceptualize places and people relevant to my research goals. Most political and economic interests were based in London, including DfID, the marketing group hired by St. Helena Tourism, networks of potential economic investors in the island, the St. Helena All-Party Parliamentary Group, St. Helena's UK representative, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the British government.

Social and historical interests were sited more broadly in the UK. The International Slavery Museum in Liverpool launched a special exhibit on St. Helena's Liberated African history during the course of my fieldwork in the UK and the museum was a primary research location during this phase. Two UK-based groups that factored into my research had virtually no physical or geographical boundaries while still overlapping to some degree. Friends of St. Helena is a non-profit group organized in part "to provide information about St. Helena, including its history, culture, environment and current affairs" (Friends of St. Helena). This group includes historians and other researchers (many of whom have produced St. Helena-related publications), members of

the St. Helena diaspora, and individuals with a historical family connection to the island, among others, all scattered geographically in the UK and beyond. Members of the St. Helena diaspora are similarly dispersed throughout the UK and elsewhere, including pockets of people in Cape Town, Canada, and the US, among other places. Due to St. Helena's status as a British Overseas Territory and strong British identity on the island, for the purpose of this research I focused on members of the Friends of St. Helena and the St. Helena diaspora currently residing in the UK.

During this phase of research I also connected with researchers engaged in projects related to St. Helena's Liberated African history. This included archaeologists involved in the 2008 excavations and subsequent analysis as well as a group of PhD Fellows and their research supervisors working within the collaborative EuroTAST network. This research network, organized to "explore the history, archaeology and new genetics of the Transatlantic Slave trade" includes four PhD projects utilizing data collected from Liberated African skeletal remains archaeologists excavated on St. Helena in 2008 (EuroTAST 2011).

### **Phase Three: St. Helena**

This phase of research in St. Helena (June-August 2014) allowed me to expand on data gathered during phase one. The St. Helena exhibit at the International Slavery Museum opened between phases one and three of my research; the launch of this exhibit generated modest publicity off the island (primarily driven by ISM) and on the island (Wallis 2014). In addition, the launch date for the airport was drawing closer, resulting in a greater sense of urgency to develop tourism sites in 2014 and 2015. As a result, data

gathered during phase three allowed me to understand how ideas, attitudes, and actions related to St. Helena's Liberated African heritage may have changed. Phase three also facilitated more direct focus on political, social, and economic relationships. By this point I had analyzed data from phases one and two and could incorporate interview questions or other research elements to refine, expand, and verify patterns that emerged from existing data.

### **Relationships, Not Sites**

With a case study focused on St. Helena's Liberated African heritage, the absence in my research design of sites in Africa and members of the African diaspora requires an explanation. First, my primary interest in this research was in tracing the heritage development process in action, which placed my focus on St. Helena and the UK as sites where these processes were taking place. Second, Africa, as outlined above, is the geographic place of origin for Liberated Africans; historical records indicate that the Liberated Africans likely originated in West Africa. Yet at present a more precise geographic or cultural point of origin is tenuous at best. Researchers in the EuroTAST network are attempting to use DNA and isotopic analysis to refine geographical points of origin, but at present the connection between St. Helena's Liberated African heritage and Africa remains significant yet virtually unexplorable. Yet under Gille's concept of fieldwork, outlined above, this research considers the significance and impact of relationships (or lack thereof) without situating fieldwork in physical spaces implicated in such relationships. Social, political, economic, and historical intersections between Africa, the African diaspora, St. Helena, and the UK in both the past and present

permeate nearly every aspect of this research, which raise important questions. For example, how might the lack of African stakeholders in decision-making processes impact development of St. Helena's Liberated African heritage? The nature of real, imagined, or ignored relationships between Africa, St. Helena, and the African diaspora is a point I discuss in further detail in chapter five.

## **Methods**

### **Interviews: St. Helena and UK**

I conducted 14 semi-structured interviews during phase one, 24 during phase two, and 27 during phase three. Interview participants represent a targeted sample focused on two groups: those with a professional interest in St. Helena's heritage (e.g. tourism or heritage personnel, researchers) and those without a specific professional interest in St. Helena's heritage (see Table 4.1 for an overview of interview participants from all research phases). All interview participants were selected via nonprobability sampling, as I sought to collect cultural data rather than individual data (Bernard 2011; Guest et al. 2006). In addition, at least a portion of the research participants represent what Delaney (2007) identifies as "elites," or those who hold particular knowledge, such as tourism professionals or government officials. This non-statistical sample provided qualitative data from individuals with a variety of personal or professional interests in tourism and heritage on St. Helena as well as individuals representing a variety of ages and socioeconomic categories.



**Table 4.1: Categories of interview participants from all phases of research**

<b>Participant Category</b>	<b>Phase One: St. Helena</b>	<b>Phase Two: UK</b>	<b>Phase Three: St. Helena</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Specific professional interest in St. Helena's heritage/tourism development	8	17	10	35
No specific professional interest in St. Helena's heritage/tourism development	6	7	17	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65</b>

Furthermore, during phase three interviews on St. Helena, I sought a broad geographical distribution. Pearson and Jeffs (2016 forthcoming) point to the common practice of researchers or consultants on St. Helena focusing their efforts on Jamestown, the island's capital, generally out of convenience. However, while small, St. Helena features eight population districts; historically these districts have been characterized by specific social identities (Hogenstijn and van Middelkoop 2002). Recent developments on the island such as increased ownership of automobiles and a centralized secondary school have reduced these regional distinctions, yet it is problematic to assume that the ideas and opinions of those living in Jamestown (the only region of the island guaranteed to be in contact with tourists and other outsiders, since that is where they come ashore) reflect those of St. Helena's population as a whole. Of the 27 interviews I conducted on St. Helena during phase three, 22 were with permanent residents of the island, representing six of the eight residential districts; only three of these individuals were residents of Jamestown. Furthermore, I included interviews with two residents of Rupert's Valley which, due to its low population numbers, is not considered a distinct residential area yet it is clearly a location of obvious significance in my research.

Specific interview questions varied somewhat based on the interlocutor, but in general all semi-structured interviews focused on four lines of inquiry. First, I asked

interview participants how they conceived of and defined heritage, including its potential value in the present. Second, I sought to understand whether people saw value in the Liberated African heritage and why (or why not). What did they know about this history and how did they learn it? Did they see this history connected in any way to their own heritage? Did they think people should learn about the Liberated African history and if so, why, and how? Third, I asked people to describe their participation (or lack thereof) in St. Helena's heritage development process. Were they involved directly, and if so, under what circumstances? Did they feel excluded from these processes, and how? Finally, I investigated decision-making processes, including decisions to be made, challenges to making these decisions, and tools (e.g. regional and national laws, heritage texts, codes of ethics, models from other sites) consulted when making decisions. Most interviews took place in settings such as homes, offices, or coffee shops but some interviews on St. Helena took place while walking through St. Helena's landscapes or buildings relevant to the island's heritage, which facilitated more detailed discussion of these heritage resources.

### **Interviews: International Slavery Museum**

During phase two research in the UK I conducted 21 structured interviews with visitors to a special exhibit at the International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool (April 2014). This exhibit, the first public interpretation of the Liberated African history outside St. Helena, was titled "Liberty Bound: Slavery on St. Helena," an intentional reference to the irony of the phrase "Liberated African." The content included nine

interpretive panels, two display cases with objects from the 2008 excavation, and a three-minute video about the excavation.

Structured interviews with visitors complemented semi-structured interviews with ISM's director and staff as well as others who contributed to the exhibits tone and content. What I wanted to know was how the museum chose to tell this story, whether people felt connected to this history, and why or why not? I also wanted to understand how visitor experiences may have been shaped by specific decisions regarding exhibit content. In developing my structured interview questions I chose not to include direct reference to decisions made by museum staff regarding the content of the exhibit. Rather, I found it more useful to see if visitors recognized and articulated these ethical issues unprompted by me. For example, I did not ask if visitors thought the museum should have included images of skeletal remains, but did ask if there was anything they wish had been included in "Liberty Bound" but was not.

These 21 interviews represent a convenience sample, taken from visitors who appeared to read at least two of the nine panels of text in "Liberty Bound." All interview participants were asked the same questions, including a series of demographic questions (age, sex, level of education, occupation, nationality, and self-identified ethnic identity). Interviews were conducted 1-on-1 or in groups, depending on the configuration of the visiting party and, with permission, interviews were recorded with an audio recorder. Each interview participant received an individual interview number so responses could be associated with individuals. My shortest interview was 5:27 and the longest was 26:08, with a mean of 11:02.

## Participant Observation

I engaged in participant observation at community meetings, museums, and public events in the UK and on St. Helena, including formal and informal settings. Participant observation in the UK was confined to particular settings, as everyday life in the UK was not a relevant factor in my research. Examples of settings for participant observation in the UK include one of a series of regular meetings for potential investors in St. Helena development projects and a EuroTAST symposium. These settings provided opportunities to access processes, institutions, and information generally inaccessible to the public, as outlined in Ortner (2010). Following methods for observing tours and tourists outlined by Seaton (2002; 2000) I also engaged in participant observation during my research at the International Slavery Museum. I observed visitor interactions with the St. Helena exhibit, such as body language or which aspects of the exhibit attracted the most attention, the manner in which visitors interacted with each other, and how these actions might differ between the St. Helena exhibit and other exhibits in the museum.

Participant observation in St. Helena, unlike fieldwork in the UK, was a constant process. Observations in informal everyday settings such as conversations with individuals or groups over tea or a meal, dialogue between teachers in the break room of St. Helena schools, questions people asked after stopping me in the streets, or the content of local radio broadcasts were punctuated by observations at formal events, such as meetings between stakeholders working to determine the fate of the excavated human remains.

Each of my four voyages traveling between Cape Town and St. Helena on the *RMS St. Helena* (five days in duration for each voyage) offered opportunities for

participant observation as well, categorized in roughly two ways. First, the five days passengers spend on the ship is relatively unstructured time in which St. Helenians, tourists, ex-pats, and others are essentially forced to interact with each other. These close quarters provide unique opportunities for observing social hierarchies and power dynamics, which often reflect broader lived realities (see Cameron 2001 p. 161-179 for an overview of techniques to identify social relations in talk). Second, the ship represents a microcosm of St. Helena's public image; the ship is decorated with photographs, maps, and historical images and each day's activities include at least one documentary about the island. Collectively, these elements create a sense of "St. Helena-ness": What does the island look like? Who lives there? What aspects of its history are important? Residents and outsiders alike absorb these messages repeatedly without space or reason to question their accuracy or significance; how might this impact interest in certain aspects of St. Helena's history?

### **Learning Heritage: St. Helena Primary School Project**

During phase three I initiated a project with St. Helena's three primary schools, which offered the opportunity to observe the process of heritage development and decision-making in action. I spent four weeks working with students ages 10-11 to research, design, and create an exhibit on the Liberated African history, which we installed in the Museum of St. Helena. Students grappled with the same ethical questions as exhibit developers at ISM, such as whether to display images of human remains. I did not conduct interviews with the students but rather listened to how they talked with each other about the project, noted the questions they asked me or their teachers, and identified

decisions students needed to make and how they reached those decisions. My work in the schools also offered the opportunity to observe the teachers' responses to the material and their students as well as conversations regarding how these lessons on the Liberated Africans fit within their yearly history curriculum. Once completed, the students' exhibit on the Liberated Africans was open to the public for one week, during which time I observed how residents and tourists interacted with the exhibit content, similar to my methods at the International Slavery Museum.

### **Textual Analysis**

I identified and collected materials for textual analysis, such as tourism reports and brochures, curriculum materials, newspaper articles or editorials, meeting minutes and development plans. Materials were collected in person at sites such as the St. Helena Archives, the British Library, the St. Helena Library, and the Museum of St. Helena, and from online sources such as the websites of the St. Helena Government, the UK's Department for International Development, and Enterprise St. Helena. Additional materials were collected from magazines and other print publications (e.g. St. Helena Tourism ads), UK government publications, and online publications, such as a blog produced by the St. Helena Tourism Office.

### **Data Analysis**

Participant observation and textual analysis provided lines of evidence which could be martialed with interview data to develop a more comprehensive view of the heritage development process. In addition to my main research objectives—analyze

strategies to bring the past more meaningfully into the present; identify impacts of present needs and demands on these efforts; and evaluate the efficacy of existing resources guiding heritage decision-makers—I sought to investigate three specific points of comparison in the data: (1) points of similarity and departure between “authorized” forms of discourse (e.g. government press releases) and “unauthorized” discourse (e.g. St. Helena’s independent, volunteer-run community radio station); (2) instances where an individual’s discourse and actions are at odds with one another or change in different settings; and (3) ethical dilemmas and decisions to be made that are not acknowledged or articulated directly.

“Narrative” became a significant concept in my data analysis in two forms. First, I viewed all data as a form of narrative; Peräkylä (2005) outlines a model of qualitative research focused on interviews and other materials as well as the interplay between these elements that I found particularly useful for my research purposes. I considered how interviews, participant observation, and texts formed a narrative through which to trace and analyze the process of heritage development related to St. Helena’s Liberated African history. Second, I sought to understand how narratives of past violence are shaped, by whom and for whom, and for what purpose. Following Tedlock (1991), I explored how (and ideally, why) individuals participated in the process of heritage development, as well as who excluded themselves or who was excluded by others from this process.

I analyzed all data forms through coding. Each phase of fieldwork was followed by a period in which I transcribed interviews and coded interviews, field notes, and texts. Punctuating the fieldwork phases in this manner allowed me to make comparisons within each phase as well as between each phase. I could trace how issues, questions, interests,

ideas, challenges, and conflicts emerged, changed, shifted, were resolved, or dropped out through time or between different populations. This method of data analysis also facilitated inquiry into intersecting factors such as political, social, or economic influences, including how these factors changed through time or in different settings.

In addition, this repeated pattern of gathering and then analyzing data allowed me to incorporate findings from one phase of research into subsequent phases. While not following a traditional grounded theory model, under which I would have coded and analyzed data while still actively engaged in data collection in each phase, this pattern facilitated comparisons between data sets or inquiry on the accuracy or relevancy of my themes. For example, I could compare decisions made by ISM staff regarding ethical elements of the St. Helena exhibit with perceptions those in St. Helena held regarding ethical decisions or dilemmas, or I could gauge whether power dynamics or economic influences were more or less “visible” in certain settings or were addressed more or less directly by certain social actors.

### **Coding Technique**

I utilized a cut and sort method of coding, as described in Ryan and Bernard (2003:94-96). I initially highlighted significant phrases or quotes, then grouped similar texts based on repeated words or phrases to identify themes. I then reviewed all data to refine my themes and identify subthemes, considering Bogdan and Biklen’s (1982:153) question, “What does this remind me of?” Furthermore, I offered critical attention to what was missing in my data: what was left out of narratives or texts, and were these



omissions intentional or unintentional? (see for example Joseph 2015; Ryan and Bernard 2003).

### **Researcher Identity and Relationships**

During research design, I became increasingly concerned about the social and political implications of my status as an American researcher of white European origins working on a project related to African heritage primarily in a postcolonial location whose population can perhaps be best described as “non-white.” The learning opportunities that seemed likely to arise from this case study were a perfect fit with my research objectives, yet that alone was not sufficient justification to launch this research project.

As mentioned previously, my first phase of research on St. Helena served in part to gauge community interest in my project. While St. Helena’s Liberated African history was at that time relatively invisible, I learned that my general interests in heritage and tourism development articulated well with concerns already raised by tourism and heritage professionals and community members alike: What forms of tourism could be promoted based on existing sites and infrastructure? What new forms could be developed and promoted, and how? Who would benefit from these forms of tourism and who had something to lose?

In subsequent research phases I sought ways to align my research methods and data with community interests. For example, in phase three the project I launched with the island’s primary schools satisfied specific curriculum objectives that would have been challenging for teachers to meet, given the limited scope of information available on the

island's Liberated African history, particularly materials appropriate for the 10-11 year old students. In addition, I collaborated with individuals who were initially the drivers of efforts to commemorate the island's Liberated African history and decide the fate of the excavated human remains. I asked these individuals what information would be useful to know as they moved forward with community consultation and heritage development efforts. We then crafted a brief questionnaire which was distributed at my public talk at the Museum of St. Helena and to visitors to the students' Liberated African exhibit installed at the museum. These questionnaires generated responses from 57 individuals; all findings were shared with research collaborators before I left the island.

Through the course of my research I became less concerned about how people of color (which includes most St. Helenians) or white British ex-pats would respond to my white, American identity. It is illogical for me to assume that my identity had no impact on my social relations or the data I collected, but my perception is that these impacts were limited by two factors. First, I sought to foster research relationships rather than research extractions where I would have come for information and left once I had received it. I socialized with research participants more frequently than I "worked" with them, particularly on St. Helena. When possible and appropriate, I shared research data or results, such as providing ISM with results of my research with visitors (the museum did not have the budget or personnel to collect data on visitor responses to the St. Helena exhibit). I also wrote a blog post for St. Helena's tourism website (Bauer-Clapp 2014a) and an article for the Friends of St. Helena newsletter (Bauer-Clapp 2014b), each sharing results of a portion of my research. Second, my work in the island's primary schools placed me and my work in a very visible position right from the start of phase three

research. I began working in the schools during my second week on the island and by my third week I had been interviewed by a popular local radio host regarding this project. From that point on nearly every time I introduced myself the individual responded with some variation of “I heard you on the radio—you’re the lady working in the school, right?” Word had traveled fast about who I was and my work in the schools appeared to add a degree of legitimacy to my intentions.

My phenotypically white appearance did lead to one unexpected pattern within my research. On more than one occasion other white Westerners, including ex-pats working on the island, tourists, or individuals in the UK, communicated what I can only describe as racist or racially-biased messages to me. For example, “She was a St. Helenian, but a bright girl” (PO, 3/24/14). I can only assume these individuals would have chosen their words differently, or remained silent on these topics altogether, had I been a person of color.

One additional challenge related to my positionality was the fact that in many instances I was interviewing or researching my peers—I had much in common with archaeologists, museum staff, or heritage personnel based on my academic background, experience with repatriation, and previous work in museums. Some interviews took on a form of shorthand, with interlocutors referencing an idea or technique with which they assumed I was familiar. Stanton (2006) describes a similar experience in her ethnographic study of public historians; like Stanton, I only later realized, when transcribing interviews, that my familiarity with the subject matter at times prevented me from asking clarifying or follow-up questions. In summary, whether as a result of my

skin color, academic training, or other elements of my identity, those I worked with during the course of my research were “others” or “not quite others” to varying degrees.

### **Ethics**

In this dissertation, which is focused on identifying ethical issues and ethical choices, I recognize my own ethical obligation to support (or at least not impede) the process of heritage development in St. Helena. By capturing heritage development in action, I am exposing decisions and decision-makers in a manner that likely will not be reflected in the end heritage “product.” In other words, by adopting Silliman’s (2008) model of examining ethics “in action,” including specific questions, problems, conflicts, or decisions that were part of the decision-making process,, this dissertation lays bare details that might otherwise have remained invisible. As such, my research methodology is characterized by specific choices that do not blur the details of the heritage process but may provide a level of anonymity to social actors.

I utilize a blended approach to interview identifications (see Appendix B). Some individual identities are impossible to obscure, as they occupy specific positions which, without identifying details, renders any data they provide relatively meaningless. For example, I conducted multiple interviews with the director of the International Slavery Museum, which provided rich data on ethical dilemmas the museum faced in developing their special exhibit on St. Helena’s Liberated African history. Yet these data lose contextual value if I choose not to name the museum or identify the interview participant’s role (by way of professional title) in the decision-making process. In these instances individuals provided permission to use their titles or other identifying details.

For most interview participants, I omit potentially identifying details such as gender or age. This inevitably limits my analysis of ethnographic data, as the lack of demographic detail prohibits potentially useful comparisons within or between categories of individuals. However, St. Helena is a small community (with a population of fewer than 4500) which, combined with its extreme isolation, results in community members knowing many details about each other's lives and identities, including former residents who now live in the UK. As such, I felt it necessary to minimize personal details I share about research participants, yet I realize individual identities may be apparent in spite of my attempts to mask them through atypically broad or absent demographic details.

With this in mind, I sought transparency whenever possible in the research process. I followed conventional ethical principles for working with human research subjects and obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for all aspects of research with human subjects. Research protocols included providing relevant research details to each potential research participants and proceeding with interviews or other research methods only upon obtaining written or verbal consent. However, after considering cultural circumstances, I did not obtain parental consent from children I worked with in St. Helena schools. During my first visit to the island I learned that parental involvement in education on St. Helena is generally low, so asking teachers to send home and retrieve signed parental consent forms seemed an onerous burden. Furthermore, during this first visit community members were welcoming and receptive to my informal interactions, but any attempt to formalize relationships (e.g. written consent forms) was generally met by skepticism or suspicion. After consulting with local teachers, it seemed likely that parents would not object to my presence in the classroom if

it was perceived as informal, but introducing a formal consent form would generate tension or suspicion. Furthermore, my interactions with students were in group settings under constant supervision of at least one teacher. I did not interview children individually or use direct quotes from any children I worked with in the St. Helena schools.

Two additional facets of this research warranted attention to ethical issues. First, my focus on human remains necessitated specific methodological protocols. Taking cues from my work on repatriation under NAGPRA, I chose not to show images of human remains in my interviews, public presentations, or other elements of my research. Showing interview participants an image of skeletal remains from the excavations and asking for responses to these images may have yielded valuable qualitative data, but I considered the ethical risks too great to include this method.

There was one notable exception to this protocol, however. When working with the school children to research and design a museum exhibit on St. Helena's Liberated African history, some, but not all, students and teachers were interested in utilizing images of skeletal remains. Several students argued that these images made the history more "interesting" and "important." However, I learned during my first phase of research that St. Helenians have an uneasy relationship with the dead, evident through frequent discussion of haunted places or potential negative consequences from close encounters with the dead. After consultation with the teachers, I decided to offer these images for student use, but under controlled conditions. I first explained to students what the images contained (human skeletons in the process of being excavated from a cemetery, with some images featuring skeletons of children). I told them I had placed the images of

skeletal remains in an envelope in a designated location and if they chose to view the images, this was the space for doing so. I also requested they respect their classmates who chose not to view the images.

Second, by writing about past violence, I run the risk of perpetuating that violence in the present. My own presentation of the evidence of violence and conflicts associated with its heritage could sensationalize these details in a manner that is self-serving or attention-getting, both practices I seek to critique in this dissertation. With this in mind, I adopted Nordstrom and Martin's (1992) framework for portraying violence ethically, a framework built on universal human dignity and close attention to power dynamics. My greatest concern in conducting and presenting my research is representing individuals, both living and dead, in a manner that preserves their autonomy and dignity without privileging my own interests.

## CHAPTER 5

### HERITAGE IN DEVELOPMENT

*“I think that they want to glorify it a bit. Or gorify it, one of the two.”*

- From interview with SH 1\_07 (8/1/13, St. Helenian, heritage professional)

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I present results related to two of the three research objectives I outlined in chapter one. I first discuss results of my analysis of strategies social actors employ in using human remains to stimulate more widespread integration of marginalized, violent pasts into the social and material contexts of modern populations. I then theorize how these processes are impacted by power dynamics and political economic forces in the modern world. In chapter six I draw on these research results to discuss my third research objective, evaluating the efficacy of existing resources, as part of my reflection on lessons learned through this research and suggestions for future directions.

#### **Strategies: St. Helena**

I think there is some value in telling this story a little more publicly, but who would recognize it [that value] and who would get involved with it at the end of the day, that's hard to say, isn't it? Because it's too easy to wash your hands of it...people don't see there's a value for them in something, you know. Just because that happened years and years ago people don't want to give it any thought. I never gave it any thought or talked about it until now. (UK\_06, 1/28/14, St. Helena diaspora, Government)



St. Helena's Liberated African heritage represents a marginalized aspect of history that has, in recent years, begun to receive more attention from local and international audiences. The circumstances regarding how and why this Liberated African history is receiving greater attention are in a sense unique. Yet these circumstances also reflect broader global trends to explicate the role of slavery or colonialism in the industrial development and success of Western societies, both through our understanding of history (see for example Baptist 2014; Williams 1994) and public engagement with history (see for example Eichstedt and Small 2002; Horton and Horton 2006; Wallace 2006). In the St. Helena case study, the increased attention to the Liberated African history is due in part to deliberate efforts by academics, politicians, heritage professionals, and other stakeholders—both on the island and beyond—to stimulate new interest in this history after the 2008 excavations. In the next section I discuss strategies to stimulate more widespread recognition and integration of marginalized, violent pasts into the social and material consciousness of modern populations.

### **Archaeology-Related Outreach**

During the nearly four-month excavation in 2008 local media published periodic updates on the project (see *St. Helena Independent* 20 June 2008:3; *St. Helena Independent* 8 August:3-4; *St. Helena Independent* 22 August 2008:26). These updates included details on excavation techniques and finds as well as photos from the excavation, including human remains, and provided new knowledge to the local community regarding archaeology in general and the Liberated Africans in particular. As

discussed in chapter three, archaeologists also held an Open Day at the excavation site in Rupert's Valley, which granted residents of St. Helena the opportunity to see the excavation first-hand. Some residents also participated directly in the excavation as paid staff or short-term volunteers; volunteers were solicited through announcements in the local newspapers, among other outreach efforts (see for example *St. Helena Herald* 28 March 2008:20). At the end of the excavation one of the archaeologists gave a public talk to summarize the process and preliminary findings, which was attended by about 50 people (*St. Helena Independent* 12 September 2008:6). When researchers returned to the island in 2012 to continue analyzing the skeletal remains they offered four additional public talks at the Museum of St. Helena.

These outreach efforts were frequently referenced in my 2013 and 2014 interviews, particularly Open Day. People described feeling an emotional connection to this history after seeing the skeletal remains. SH 2\_08 (7/4/14, St. Helenian, education/media) said seeing the skeletons on Open Day “illustrate[d] how each person buried there had a story.” For SH 2\_09 (7/7/14, St. Helena permanent resident, government), seeing the “care being taken with the remains” led her to abandon her previous opinion that “disturbing the graves was wrong.” Another resident noted the “solemn faces of the archaeologists working at the site. It was clear they took the job very seriously. [There were] tears in the eyes of some St Helenians as they moved through the site and looked at the skeletons. It became very real” (SH 2\_25, 7/29/14, St. Helenian, government). One resident who volunteered for a day at the dig said he did so because “my family is half black and half white. This is my history” (SH 2\_27, 7/30/14, St. Helenian, government). His pride in both this identity and his participation in the

excavation was evident during my interview. He said when he first arrived at the site he cautioned the archaeologists to “be careful, these are my people.” During his time at the dig he said he excavated a nearly complete skeleton and “somewhere in the storage room there is a box with my initials on it, that’s the one I brought up.” (SH 2\_27, 7/30/14, St. Helenian, government).

These responses are not particularly surprising, as scholars have demonstrated the appeal of archaeological outreach for the public and the relative success of such outreach in stimulating new interest in the past from communities while simultaneously reshaping questions archaeologists ask about the past to be more relevant to modern communities (see for example Little and Shackel 2007, 2014; Shackel and Chambers 2004). Those who visited Open Day or attended other outreach efforts also articulated a new sense of curiosity or urgency to learn more about this history, as stated, for example, by this heritage professional: “[N]ow that the bones have been dug up it’s important for people to know that background. We never really had that information before and we can get it all now, so we need to make sure we do something with it”. (SH 2\_22, 7/25/14, St. Helenian, resident).

However, not everyone attended Open Day or the other public outreach events. Some now viewed their lack of attendance at Open Day as a missed opportunity to learn more about archaeology and the Liberated African history but cited feelings of fear or emotional hesitation over seeing skeletal remains. One individual said she didn’t go to Open Day but “wishes I would have. I wasn’t sure I would want to look at the skeletons as they were being excavated. I don’t know, I suppose I thought it would be upsetting, so I didn’t go” (SH 2\_15, 7/27/14, St. Helenian, professional interest in tourism). Others

speculated on reasons some residents may have stayed away from Open Day, citing the same motivations of fear or emotional hesitation. For example, one St. Helenian heritage professional said “in all the pictures that I've seen [of Open Day] there's no old people. No, like, elderly people. I don't know if I am too traditional, but we believe that in a place with graves you get pulled. Or you get spooked, or you get like haunted a little. So there wasn't very many of the older generation.” (SH 1\_07, 8/1/13, St. Helenian, heritage professional).

Interview data regarding Open Day yielded one of the most interesting finds of my fieldwork. On four separate occasions individuals described seeing two skeletons on Open Day. This description reflects the details common to all four accounts: “I saw the mother and baby buried together, where the mother is cradling the baby in her arms, like she’s trying to protect it.” (PO, 7/27/15). The skeletons described are featured in an image used on the cover of Pearson et al. (2011) and other accounts of the excavation; the image shows an adult skeleton and the skeleton of a young child buried on their sides, positioned face-to-face, with the faces almost touching. Everyone who talked about this image with me described the individuals as mother and child, and the four individuals I mention above described the “mother” cradling “her child,” yet the image clearly shows that the arms of the adult do not touch the child. In other words, the act of “protection” these four individuals described, with visible emotion, was imagined rather than an accurate reflection of facts. Yet it was clearly a humanizing point of connection between past and present; intentional or not, seeing these two skeletons inspired people in the present to see these unnamed past peoples as individuals capable of emotion. That sense of emotion then inspired concern and curiosity in modern populations. One interview

participant who described seeing these two skeletons said “details such as that brought home the meaning of slavery, the pain, more dramatically” (SH 2\_09, 7/7/14).

This echoes Renshaw’s (2011) discussion of the excavation of graves from the Spanish Civil War. She notes how archaeologists developed imagined intimacies—such as conversations or embraces—between individuals based on close proximity of bodies in mass graves while skeletal evidence of human actions—such as arms placed in a manner suggesting resistance to violence—provoked new awareness of the scope and impact of this past violence (Renshaw 2011:152-3)

Emotional resonance was also evident from interview participants who did not discuss the two skeletons buried together, such as this individual speaking of Open Day and her thoughts on reburial of the excavated remains:

Viewing how people were buried created very emotional ties. People were buried quickly but not likely mourned—the human remains need to be reinterred with the solemnity all burials deserve. And we need to do it in a way that leaves a mark, that creates identities. The Liberated Africans are nameless, faceless people because there is nothing visual right now. There are things buried with the bodies and that’s what made their story real for me, we need to use these elements to give people an identity. (SH 2\_10, 7/8/14, St. Helenian, tourism professional)

Those who attended Open Day or sought some other opportunity to engage with the Liberated African history appear to have been moved by those experiences. People spoke with emotion about viewing skeletal remains during Open Day, which had taken place at least five years prior to when I spoke with people in 2013 or 2014. However, I also suggest that the emotion of this experience was more meaningful for individuals than a factual story. The individuals who shared (inaccurate) details of the image of two skeletons buried side-by-side had likely seen that image several times, as it was one of

the most commonly used images related to the Liberated African history. That these individuals retained their emotionally-based view of this image (mother cradling child) in spite of evidence to the contrary suggests that strategies catered towards emotion were more likely to foster connections between past and present populations.

### **Education and Public Interpretation**

During interviews I conducted in the UK and during my second trip to St. Helena (in 2014) I asked all 20 interview participants who grew up on St. Helena if they were taught local history in the St. Helena schools. No one I spoke with felt they learned a significant amount of local history in the St. Helena schools and 12 interlocutors specified that they learned little or no local history in the St. Helena school system. Until recently, St. Helena's curriculum followed British standards, but teachers and administrators have been making efforts to include more local history in the curriculum; as a result, information on slavery and the Liberated Africans is now part of the Year 5/6 (late primary school) history curriculum. For one school administrator I interviewed, this represented an important strategy to stimulate new interest in this history: "Teachers have to learn history in order to teach it. I think this helps us better appreciate what's happened in the past. It starts with the teachers, then moves to the students, and on to the community from there" (SH 2\_23, 7/25/14, St. Helenian, education/media).

However, this effort to include more local history in St. Helena's curriculum is hampered by the challenge of scarce resources. The school administrator said teaching resources on local history topics were scarce—"there's not much out there besides Napoleon" (SH 2\_23, 7/25/14, St. Helenian, education/media). She said many teachers

need more information themselves in order to teach about St. Helena, as “many didn’t get much local history in school or, if they did, it was so long ago they don’t remember enough detail.” During various phases of research I also had the opportunity to talk informally with approximately 12 teachers from St. Helena’s primary and secondary schools, who elaborated on the challenges they face. General history textbooks (which teachers told me are often from British publishers) do not include information on St. Helena’s history. A local scholar has written some information packets for teachers but these are not updated on a regular basis nor are they expansive with regards to the island’s diverse history. Teacher access to external resources is limited, as importing reading materials, films, or other media is an expensive and lengthy process.

Furthermore, teachers have extremely limited access to the internet or printers. Thus, when teachers are asked to teach new topics there are few, if any, outlets for teachers to find information if the subject is unfamiliar to them or gather resources for student use.

I experienced this challenge first-hand during my work in the St. Helena primary schools. When students expressed an interest in archaeology or a specific aspect of the Liberated African history I could indulge that interest only if it aligned with materials I brought with me. I was forced to divert much of the students’ curiosity back to topics related to the resources I had on hand. In essence, teachers’ strategies to stimulate student interest were only successful if the students’ curiosity fell into very prescribed directions.

For a time teachers, students, St. Helenians and tourists could learn about St. Helena’s historical connection to slavery through a special exhibit at the Museum of St. Helena. This exhibit, which was displayed for about a year, included information on the Liberated African history as well as slaves held on St. Helena. However, the temporary

exhibit (which I viewed in 2013) was removed in 2014. Several interview participants discussed the potential for new public interpretation and education to stimulate interest in this history. For example, one participant cited a shared sense of humanity and said telling this story would “give them [the Liberated Africans] their souls back, make them people again” (UK\_12, 2/1/14, St. Helena diaspora). Others pointed to the violence of slavery as reason to learn more: “there is something to exposing the evil of slavery...there’s a job in making people aware this is unacceptable” (UK\_15, 3/19/14, St. Helena diaspora). And finally, while only one interlocutor described himself as a descendent of the Liberated Africans others did reference a more general connection between modern residents of St. Helena and the Liberated Africans: “These people suffered a great deal and we should do right by them...We are descended from these people, some of us, even if we don’t think about it. These people were treated horribly and we need to make these things known” (SH 2\_25, 7/29/14, St. Helenian, government).

My research inadvertently served as an informal education strategy to connect modern populations with the Liberated African history. I was interviewed multiple times on each of the two local radio stations and each interview involved a brief overview of the island’s Liberated African history; after each interview people would stop me on the street to ask more about the Liberated African history or share a detail about their own family connection to slavery. (In all cases, I learned that these family connections were to slaves held on St. Helena prior to emancipation in 1832. With the exception of the individual referenced earlier in this chapter who participated in the 2008 excavation no one I spoke with on St. Helena or in the UK acknowledged a family or genetic connection to the Liberated Africans). I offered a public talk on my research and the



Liberated African history at the Museum of St. Helena during each of my two visits, which were attended by a total of approximately 75 people. I also presented a talk to the Legislative Council of the St. Helena Government, which included basic information on the Liberated African history and associated sites or buildings, some of which lifelong residents of St. Helena on the Council said they did not already know. After this talk, one individual who grew up in Rupert's Valley said he didn't know that a particular building in the Valley is the only surviving structure from the Liberated African Establishment; he said "people need to know this so they can touch that history, feel it for themselves, and not just let these important places go to waste" (PO, 7/11/14).

In addition, during the course of my 2014 fieldwork in St. Helena I worked with Year 5/6 students from all three primary schools to develop an exhibit on the Liberated Africans. This project served to fulfil teachers' curriculum objectives while providing a new form of public interpretation for St. Helenians and tourists. The exhibit was on display at the Museum of St. Helena for one week and was visited by over 120 individuals, including three school groups. (For comparison, in the two weeks preceding this exhibit a total of 70 people visited the Museum.) I came to understand this work as an example of the philosophy articulated by the school administrator: "It starts with the teachers, then moves to the students, and on to the community from there" (SH 2\_23, 7/25/14, St. Helenian, education/media).

My research and public outreach efforts were also featured in four articles published in *The Sentinel* newspaper, each of which included some background on the island's Liberated African history (see Henry 2013; Henry 2014a, b; Clarke 2014). Two of these articles are evidence of strategies to stimulate interest in this history by playing

on curiosity, with particularly complex ethical implications. To accompany these two articles, staff of *The Sentinel* included images of skeletal remains which, while likely to attract readers' attention, were not integral to the topic of the article. One article (Henry 2013) described my background and interest in the Liberated African history, accompanied by a photo of me, a closely-cropped image of commingled remains, and a skeleton in a broken coffin, the last two from the 2008 excavation. The second story (Clarke 2014) profiled the student-produced museum exhibit on the Liberated Africans. As part of this exhibit, students intentionally placed images of skeletal remains behind a screen so visitors were able to choose whether or not to view them. Students also had a panel of text informing visitors that images of skeletal remains were on the other side of the screen (visible in Figure 5.1). The news article about the exhibit featured photos of these images, with no mention of the efforts students took to protect those who did not wish to view these images.

Examined collectively, these education and public interpretation strategies appear to be successful in their efforts to generate interest in St. Helena's Liberated African history. However, these efforts were essentially informal and opportunistic, with no overarching common vision or goals. Each social actor (myself included) appeared to adopt an education/public engagement strategy that best suited the opportunity at hand, rather than first identifying information worth sharing, then seeking appropriate methods to do so. Our disconnected and potentially contradictory strategies may have in fact resulted in more confusion in modern populations rather than clarity, as evidenced by how frequently my interviews included questions from interview participants on basic facts related to the Liberated African history.

**Figure 5.1: St. Helena Student Exhibit**

*A portion of the exhibit on the Liberated Africans designed by St. Helena students and installed at the Museum of St. Helena. The text panel on the left informs visitors that images of human remains are displayed on the other side of the panel.*



**Consultation**

[T]here was a lot of media buzz about it locally, even internationally last year. And we basically went back to, it was a small group of individuals locally, we just kept saying “okay, but if you give us the time to do this, we can do it, differently.” I’m tempted to use the words bigger and better...but bigger and better may not necessarily be what the island wants. I think there’s interest from people who would like to study the remains, there’s the other thing of “let’s reinter them,” others who are saying that it should be a memorial, others who think we should go and have a whole visitor interpretation center, and maybe a mixture of all these different elements will come together. (SH 1\_06, 7/30/13, St. Helenian, government)

Responsibility to oversee permanent disposition of the excavated Liberated African human remains lies with St. Helena’s Air Access Office, the office serving as the communications and operational link between airport construction contractors and St. Helena Government. Air Access assumes this responsibility because the human remains

were disturbed during construction of the airport haul road, which is an airport infrastructure project. Permanent disposition of the remains is therefore considered an airport mitigation project, similar to Air Access-directed projects to replace vegetation disturbed by airport construction-related activities.

Initially, reburial was slated for an ossuary in Rupert's Valley; the plan for this was developed by archaeologists from the 2008 excavation (*St. Helena Independent* August 31, 2012:18). However, delays in the airport project led stakeholders to reconsider this option as long-term development plans for the Valley continued to change as demands of the airport project changed. As one government official explains:

Since then [2008] we've been in a sort of holding pattern...there's been an ossuary proposed, it was given planning permission I think in 2008. And we've actually asked them to hold off on doing that because, at the time, knowing that there was going to be an airport, they tried to find a quiet corner in Rupert's...so it wasn't an ideal site, but it would have served its purpose. We think there are far better sites that will become freed up once the airport project is finished. (SH 1\_06, 7/30/13, St. Helenian, government)

This delay in the reburial process granted time for stakeholders to attempt to stimulate wider interest in the reburial issue and consider a broader range of options regarding reburial, as summarized by a different government official:

[T]hey're beginning to think about something a bit bigger than just an ossuary...there are a number of ways I think you could do more. You could have a small museum, you could have a garden of remembrance, you could tie it into the island's history, and how the island eventually did get rid of slavery, all these kind of things. So I think it's really interesting. (SH 1\_05, 7/29/13, Non-St. Helenian, government)

In July 2014 Air Access partnered with the St. Helena National Trust, the Environmental and Natural Resources Division of St. Helena Government, and the St.

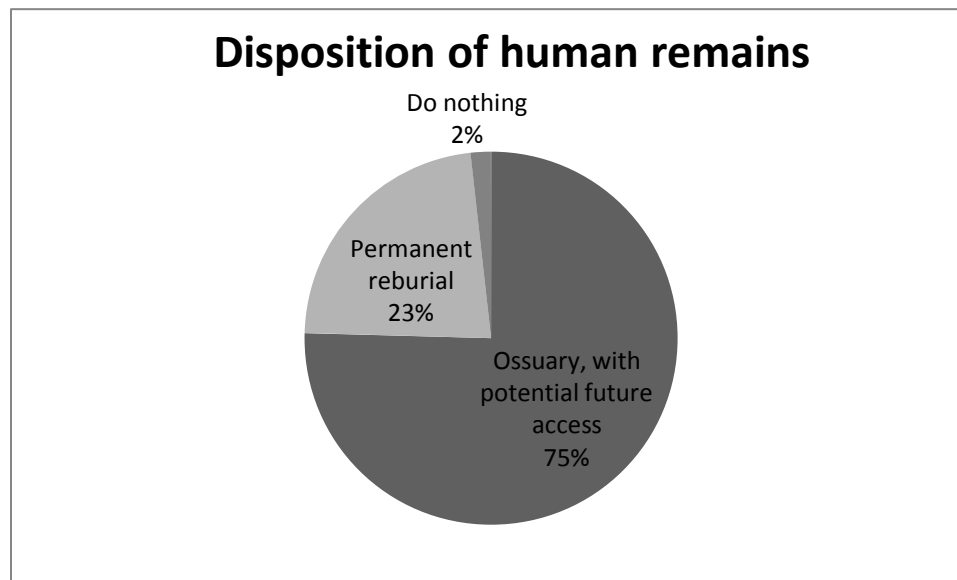
Helena Heritage Society, among others, to embark on a plan of public consultation regarding permanent disposition of the Liberated African human remains. The group, organized under the name Liberated African Working Group, sought to develop a new plan for reburial of the Liberated African human remains, including location, timeline, form of reburial, and whether additional research would be allowed.

During my research I worked with this group to develop a questionnaire to gauge community interests and concerns, which would form the foundation for more detailed and expansive consultation efforts. This questionnaire was distributed to audience members at a public talk on the Liberated Africans I gave on July 17, 2014, and to visitors to the exhibit on the Liberated Africans designed with me by Year 5/6 students. I received 57 responses to this questionnaire, which represents a convenience sample comprised of two-thirds permanent residents and one-third non-permanent residents (e.g. ex-pats on temporary contract or tourists). Results of the question regarding reburial, which favor placing the human remains in an ossuary with potential future access, are indicated in Figure 5.2.

The Liberated African Working Group engaged in more formal consultation in March 2015. The consultation format, dates, locations, and objectives were communicated publicly by members of the consultation group through a variety of media, including news articles, a call-in show on each of the island's two radio stations, and posts on Facebook and other social media (see for example Gunnell 2015, which includes the image of commingled skeletal remains from the excavation mentioned earlier in this chapter). Consultation efforts included an online survey open to anyone around the globe with internet access, short interviews with individuals on the island, and formal feedback

forms distributed to over 20 international experts on archaeology, history of the African diaspora, or repatriation.

**Figure 5.2: Results from questionnaire developed in advance of formal public consultation (n = 57)**



Results from all 254 respondents were compiled and analyzed by the Liberated African Working Group, then published in the two local newspapers (Graham 2015; *St. Helena Independent* 22 May 2015:27). In contrast to results from my 2014 questionnaire shown in Figure 5.2, only 22% of respondents in this consultation process favored placing the remains in an ossuary; 65% favored permanent reburial. While I have no specific data to offer regarding this discrepancy, I suspect it is a matter of timing. My questionnaire was completed early in the public consultation process when the focus was primarily on the plans archaeologists previously developed to rebury the remains in an ossuary in Rupert's. The government had granted planning permission, so early public discussion pointed to those plans as a model that could simply be updated. However, as

public consultation expanded, the question was essentially opened up again and other options beyond an ossuary were discussed.

Of the 164 individuals, or 65 %, favoring permanent reburial, 45% favored immediate reburial while 35% favored further research on the remains prior to reburial. In addition, 77% of those favoring reburial thought the remains should be reburied in Rupert's Valley. Based on these findings the Liberated African Working Group identified a plot of land in Rupert's Valley that would become available for permanent reburial once airport construction was completed and temporary equipment and facilities related to construction were removed; the group also released an Expression of Interest to solicit preliminary drawings for a memorial on the reburial site (*The Sentinel* 8 October 2015: 9). In addition, despite the preference among consultees for immediate reburial over further study prior to reburial, the Liberated African Working Group was, in September 2015, in conversation with at least one major research institution interested in studying the excavated remains (personal communication, SH 2\_13, 9/9/15, St. Helenian, professional interest in heritage).

In contrast with the opportunistic nature of education and public engagement efforts discussed in the previous section, consultation represents a collaborative effort organized by a variety of decision-makers around a common goal—to identify a location, timeline, and format for reburial of the Liberated African skeletal remains. While this group made considerable efforts to reach out to the general public, including efforts to connect with individuals and groups beyond St. Helena, the responses they received were from a fairly narrow group: primarily individuals from St. Helena and non-St. Helenian

Westerners such as targeted experts or those in the UK with an interest in St. Helena's history.

It is important to note that opinions from Africans and members of the African diaspora were nearly absent. As a result, this was a matter of well-intentioned individuals making decisions about a group they considered the Other and about a history with which they had unclear connections. However, this reality was not highlighted when the Working Group presented their findings. It was therefore easy for residents or others to overlook this absence. Furthermore, conversations between group members and scholars interested in studying the excavated human remains indicate that the group did not feel obligated to strictly follow results of the consultation process, which favored immediate reburial without further study. While I do not seek to devalue the significance of these consultation efforts, I do question the usefulness of the results in addressing the ethical dilemmas posed by reburial and memorialization.

### **“Rest in Peace”**

The length of time between excavation of the human remains and reburial generated criticism among St. Helenians. In my interviews these negative responses ranged from mild disappointment that reburial was taking so long to public accusations of apathy or disrespect. An example of the later is a 14 September 2012 editorial in the *St. Helena Independent*, written by Bernice Olsson, an elected member of the St. Helena Legislative Council. A portion of this editorial appeared under the heading “Some Dignity Would Not Hurt”:

For four years the bones of a large number of people have been kept in boxes in the Pipe Store. They were rescued



slaves who were removed from their graves in Rupert's Valley, in 2008, to make way for the haul road, which goes to the airport. The government has been asked why these people have not been respected and given a proper and dignified reburial. The reply has been that they are not a priority and they will not be reburied until the airport is finished in 2015, seven years after they were disinterred. In our modern time this is a cruel, unacceptable and disrespectful way to treat people especially those who have died. We would not treat our own family ancestors in this way. Perhaps we should talk to the rest of the world about this shabby, inhumane treatment? Importantly, the way we treat our dead, especially those who came from overseas, says a lot about who we are.

One week later the *St. Helena Independent* (21 September 2012) included a staff editorial urging resolution for “a situation where human remains have been treated in such a disrespectful manner.” This editorial, titled “The Saga of the Liberated Africans Continues,” was accompanied by an image of a Black man with a chain around his neck. While this image had no direct connection to St. Helena (i.e. it was not taken on St. Helena and does not feature a Liberated African) it was clearly used to capture readers' attention, similar to the images in *The Sentinel* discussed previously. The 21 September 2012 issue of the *St. Helena Independent* included another lengthier editorial outlining what the writer viewed as the two sides to the debate—waiting to rebury and immediate reburial—while acknowledging that in essence both camps “appear to want the same thing...a suitable resting place [and] monument and/or other memorial to the Liberated Africans who were rescued but came to St. Helena only to die from the unspeakable deprivations they were forced to endure” (Thompson 2012:13).

The sense of urgency evident in public discourse was echoed in the private comments of seven individuals I interviewed (from both St. Helena and the UK) who used the phrase “rest in peace” when sharing thoughts on what should happen to the

human remains. I came to consider the phrase “rest in peace” and similar iterations as both a product of strategies to stimulate emotional interest in this heritage and strategies to stimulate interest in and of themselves. In other words, these comments represent both a call to action and a response to such a call from others. However, these comments lacked sufficient specificity to establish a definitive strategy. For example, one interview participant said “these people [the Liberated Africans] suffered a great deal and we should do right by them.” (SH 2\_25, 7/29/14, St. Helenian, government). When these types of phrases appear in my ethnographic data they are not followed by discussion of what “rest in peace” or “do right by them” means in this, or any context, nor are they presented as part of an active agenda to inspire particular action.

Several interview participants who were not native to St. Helena conveyed the idea that St. Helenians needed to be the decision-makers in this heritage development process. For example, one non-St. Helenian heritage professional working on the island said, “I hope the government has a conscience, and I hope that the St. Helena people can be brought to see that, even if they’re not direct ancestors, it is something that happened on the island and this is where they can make a stand and they can make a gesture to the world. And I think that’s very important.” (SH 1\_08, 8/2/13, Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional). Yet the “gesture” was not specific, nor was the process by which St. Helenians could be “brought to see” the significance of this history. I return to this discussion later in this chapter to theorize impacts of colonial legacies on the identity of decision-makers.

### **Strategies: International Slavery Museum**

I shift now to discussion of strategies employed by the International Slavery Museum in developing the special exhibit on St. Helena's Liberated African History. I came to consider my research at the International Slavery Museum (ISM) as a case study within a case study and so I present it as such. Exhibit development followed a narrowly focused and logical progression of decisions and events—initial interest, research, exhibit design, opening to the public, closure—that the broader St. Helena case cannot possibly follow. This provided a new lens through which to analysis strategies and theorize impacts.

“Liberty Bound: Slavery on St. Helena” opened at ISM, which is located in Liverpool, England, in April 2014 and ran for one year. Exhibit development was a collaboration between ISM staff, St. Helena Government, the Museum of St. Helena, and Dr. Andrew Pearson, one of the project leaders from the 2008 excavation. “Liberty Bound: Slavery and St. Helena” featured nine interpretive panels of text, maps, and images (see Table 5.1 for an overview of each panel) The exhibit also included two display cases containing objects excavated from St. Helena's Liberated African cemeteries. The larger of the two cases featured objects buried with a newborn baby and an adolescent male, including coins, textile fragments, buttons, and remnants of a leather baby shoe. The smaller case contained a range of objects from the excavation but not identified as buried with specific individuals; objects included beads, tin identification tickets, an iron nail, and medicine bottles. Visitors were also able to view a three minute video on the excavation and analysis of the skeletal remains.

**Table 5.1: Interpretive panels in “Liberty Bound: Slavery and St. Helena”**

<b>Panel Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
Liberty Bound: Slavery and St. Helena	Introductory panel to provide an overview of the exhibit and acknowledge exhibit collaborators and sponsors.
History	General history of St. Helena, including discovery in 1502 and early connections to the East India Company.
St. Helena: Key Facts	Statistics on the island’s size, population, key sites, and current status as a British Overseas Territory.
Under the Trees: Slavery on St. Helena	Outlines the history of slavery on St. Helena, which was legal until 1839. The phrase “Under the Trees” is a reference to slave auctions on the island which took place under a set of trees in Jamestown, the island’s capital.
Chasing Liberation	Provides history on the UK’s connection to the transatlantic slave trade and efforts by the British Royal Navy to suppress the trade after it was outlawed.
<i>HMS Waterwitch</i>	Operated by the British Navy, the <i>HMS Waterwitch</i> captured more than 40 ships carrying at least 3,000 captive Africans.
The Liberated African Establishment	Once captured, illegal slave vessels were brought to St. Helena. Surviving African captives were granted refuge in the Liberated African Establishment.
Legacies	Details the fate of surviving Liberated Africans, the majority of whom were sent as laborers to British colonies in the Caribbean. This panel also informs visitors that the excavated Liberated African human remains are currently in storage on St. Helena, with ongoing discussions on how to memorialize these individuals on the island.
Excavation	Outlines the context of the 2008 salvage excavation, findings, and new knowledge gained from analysis of these finds.

### **“Humanizing”**

I interviewed the Director of the International Slavery Museum twice, first in January 2014 while the St. Helena exhibit was in development and again in April 2014 when the exhibit opened to the public. In this first interview the Director said he saw potential in the story of the Liberated Africans to add a new dimension to the museum’s global narrative of the transatlantic slave trade, one that humanized the African captives. In these interviews we also discussed strategies to connect Museum visitors, who are primarily British and white, with St. Helena’s Liberated African history. Exhibit developers originally considered using images of skeletal remains in the exhibit, including the image of the woman and child buried together (discussed earlier in this

chapter). The Director said these images “can get across the individualness of it. That is something that we have looked at...the story of St. Helena is not a well-known one. To get across those personal stories, that is a perfect picture” (UK\_05, 1/24/14). Yet exhibit developers had to grapple with ethical issues, particularly given the violent nature of this history and the exploitation of African captives through the Transatlantic slave trade. As the Director explained, “there are sensitivities regarding human remains, but it's more specific with ISM because of who the individuals were” (UK\_05, 1/24/14). One exhibit developer I interviewed said the biggest challenge in producing the “Liberty Bound” exhibit was “sensitivities around dealing with human remains” (UK\_22, 4/8/14, Non-St. Helenian, staff of International Slavery Museum). In the end, exhibit developers decided against using images of human remains, a decision the Director said was motivated by their original ethical concern about further exploiting the individuals pictured as well as an effort to not offend museum visitors. (UK\_05, 4/3/14).

Because the museum chose not to display images of skeletal remains, the material culture included with the exhibit, as indexical signs of human remains, served as the only tangible reference to the thousands of Liberated Africans who died and were buried on St. Helena. However, decisions regarding which objects to use and why represented difficult ethical choices similar to those regarding use of images of human remains:

We decided to go for, and this was mainly to do with the objects associated with the burials, there was one of an infant and one of an adolescent male as well, and that was quite difficult, because obviously, again, of all the types of remains, to have children...[but] it developed the story of kin and that there was a kind of loving environment, even in this harsh environment. Whereas for some of the adult remains, you probably wouldn't be able to tell that story. And we had limited space, so...the main burial [discussed in the exhibit] is the skeleton or the remains of the

newborn. Now that will be sensitive as well. Especially for people, as a parent...it's very, very difficult subject matter. I just thought it was too much to show the actual images. I just thought it was a step too far...when it comes to the remains of children, and the thing is, they are children, this is the thing, you have to humanize them. (UK\_05, 4/3/14)

For the exhibit developer I interviewed, these sensitivities were important to consider, yet the main goal was still to present an accurate picture of this violent history. This individual said the staff sought to approach the topic "sensitively and with respect. But obviously you don't want to...not include something because while you...want to tell the truth about what happened, you don't want to hide these things. You've got to be open about things but obviously it's just a balance I think" (UK\_22, 4/8/14, Non-St. Helenian, staff of International Slavery Museum).

These humanizing efforts on the one hand reflect what some heritage scholars refer to as the "Anne Frank effect," which draws attention to individual experiences as a way for people in the present to connect to events of the past involving an otherwise overwhelming number of victims (Felder et al. 2015). On the other hand, it is important to note the structural violence inherent in the reality that this history involving African captives needs to be "humanized" at all. That ISM staff recognized the need to foster this emotional connection between past and present speaks to the marginalized nature of this heritage and the people at its center.

The Museum's strategy to use these objects to humanize individuals seems to be successful, based on my ethnographic data. I observed at least 600 visitors pass through the St. Helena exhibit and while fewer than 50 engaged with any of the text panels for any length of time, nearly everyone stopped to look at the two display cases. In addition to observing visitors engage with the objects in the display cases, the resonance of the

objects was apparent in my interviews (see Appendix C for demographic information on interview participants). For example, one visitor said “[i]t was very shocking to see, particularly [the] exhibit with the babies and the adolescents and the little artifacts that had been buried with them, and I just think, you know, every one of those is a human being, and how tragic it must have been” (LB\_19, 4/10/14). One individual acknowledged the museum’s efforts to humanize this history even though exhibit text did not reference this strategy directly: “[I]t’s quite touching, you’ve got all the little artifacts and things like that, which does tend to humanize it” (LB\_21, 4/10/14). Here again there is a connection to Renshaw(2011:156), particularly her account of observing excavations at Spanish Civil War mass graves; when objects were uncovered with a body she began to conceptualize that skeleton as an individual rather than simply part of the commingled array of skeletons. She argues that if violence denies the humanity and identity of victims, these humanizing acts in the present counter the effects of that violence (Renshaw 2011:227). This strategy was at the heart of actions and decisions by ISM staff: they conceptualized the St. Helena exhibit as a way to connect the Liberated African history to the broader global history of the transatlantic slave trade while emphasizing the humanness and individuality of the Liberated Africans themselves.

### **Education**

Efforts by ISM to humanize the often unimaginable scope of the transatlantic slave trade were connected to an interest in educating visitors about this history. The Director explained the museum’s philosophy as follows: “[C]onsidering how sensitive [slavery] is, it's about telling it as it is, but not just doing it, doing it for a reason, so we

always believe what we show in ISM is to make a difference and to look at issues today, rather than just being a static museum on the subject of slavery” (UK\_05, 1/24/14).

This strategy to educate visitors was successful with some of the visitors I interviewed. At least one-third of these interlocutors emphasized the importance of teaching children about past violence. Using terms such as “the next generation,” “children,” “young people” or “all these youngsters running around us,” visitors singled out this group as the most important in forming a connection with the past: “I think it’s vital because prejudice still exists today, in many forms, and I think if we don’t educate children to recognize prejudice and to see that there is, you know, a human in every person, whatever their race, their color, their creed, then I don’t think there’s much hope for mankind, quite honestly” (LB\_19, 4/10/14). Over 50% of visitors I interviewed connected the history of the Liberated African to slavery in the modern world. Said one visitor: “There’s still slavery, so much slavery in the world today, you have to be able to see that it is still here. Very often not in so public a form as it was 200 years ago, but it’s still here, definitely”(LB\_16, 4/8/14).

While some strategies in exhibit design clearly did resonate with visitors, this is not an uncomplicated success story. As I discussed previously, few museum visitors seemed to engage with the exhibit beyond the display cases. This could be a result of visitor disinterest, challenging exhibit design, or museum fatigue, as “Liberty Bound” was at the end of the third and final gallery within ISM. I only requested interviews with visitors whom I observed reading more than two panels in “Liberty Bound” so I have no data to offer on why other visitors did not engage with the exhibit. But for those who did



spend time in the exhibit, my data indicate various efforts to distance themselves from the Liberated African history in addition to efforts to connect to this history.

When asked “Do you see any part of your heritage in this exhibit?” one visitor simply responded “No” (LB\_16, 4/8/14). Another visitor, who herself appeared very engaged with the exhibit, offered thoughts on why other visitors might not be so engaged: “I think we don’t respect history, if it’s not ours. We don’t think too much of somebody else’s” (LB\_15, 4/8/14). Another visitor, who incidentally spent a considerable amount of time in the exhibit and represents my longest interview, essentially dismissed the value of heritage carte blanche: “[Heritage is an] idea for intellectuals, a posh idea. And heritage, in this city [Liverpool], people care more about their football team, they couldn’t care a tinker’s cuss about heritage” (LB\_17, 4/9/14). While not articulated directly, this individual’s presence at the museum demonstrates that, in his opinion, heritage does indeed matter and that there was value in the efforts of a white British man in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to learn about experiences of African individuals centuries earlier.

However, many of the primarily white British visitors struggled to respond to the historical narrative of the Liberated Africans, which both validated and complicated the British role in the transatlantic slave trade. For example, one white British interview participant offered alternatives to the hegemonic narrative of white Europeans enslaving black Africans through the transatlantic slave trade, an example of what Smith (2011) identifies as “emotional distancing,” potentially to alleviate guilt or other negative feelings associated with this history: “[The UK] paid a lot of money to other people to stop [slavery]. We’re talking about years where we paid. And then, British people died, sailors and things like that, to stop slavery as well...[Y]ou know, the Muslims enslaved

white people that they found, and Africans were enslaving other people” (LB\_05, 4/5/14). Another white British visitor said: “[The] British got enslaved as well, didn't they, and taken up” (LB\_04, 4/5/14). These responses illustrate how the primarily white British audience apparently struggled to simultaneously experience the exhibit as both “victim tourism” and “mea culpa” tourism (Ashworth 2008:234) as discussed in chapter two. If white British visitors embraced strategies to humanize the suffering of African captives in the transatlantic slave trade and empathize with victims, they had to admit the role of the British nation in this suffering; embracing select details in the historical narrative (e.g. the British tried to stop the slave trade) may have allowed these visitors to feel empathy without admitting guilt.

Figure 5.3 shows the most common responses interlocutors provided to my question of whose heritage the Liberated Africans represented. It is clear the primarily white British audience did not consider this “their” heritage, or at least not theirs alone.

**Figure 5.3: Responses to the question “Whose heritage does this exhibit represent?”**  
*Created via Wordle using an algorithm that scales the size of the text to the frequency with which a response was provided.*



### **Tourism: A Thematic Bridge**

I now shift from discussing my first objective, analyzing strategies, to discussing my second objective, theorizing potential impacts on heritage development from needs, demands, and social realities in the present. I came to view tourism as a point of connection between these realms. On the one hand, efforts to grow heritage tourism on St. Helena represent a strategy to stimulate new interest in the island's heritage resources, including its Liberated African history. On the other hand, pressure to grow tourism into a sustainable form of economic development positioned political economic forces of tourism to make a significant impact on how the story of the Liberated Africans would be told and to whom. In March 2014 I attended a meeting of potential investors in St. Helena's economy during which one potential investor said, "tourism is everybody's business" (participant observation at UK investor's meeting, 3/20/14). This summarizes what I experienced during my fieldwork, where conversations almost inevitably turned to tourism, including discussion of the tourism potential of the Liberated African history, criticism that pinning the island's future on the tourism market was ill-advised and doomed to fail, or speculating on how increased tourism would impact the island community.

Speaking specifically about tourism development, one government official in the UK said:

Looking at providing quality and quantity in combination, for visitors...will involve building a sufficient range of attractions on the island, and that really is about actually a coherent itinerary for visitors to make sure there are enough activities and attractions that will keep them busy, so they can add value to the economy...so investment is really

about increasing the sort of marketing of the island, and that will be the kind of key element towards which the tourism office will be working. (UK\_24, 5/2/14, Non-St. Helenian, government)

Tourism strategies produced prior to the 2008 excavations do not include the Liberated African history as a potential tourism asset (Kelly and Robinson Tourism Consultants 2006; Rendel Economic Studies Group 1993). The 2012-15 Tourism Strategy, however, identified increased visibility of the island's connection to the transatlantic slave trade as a "major opportunity for interpretation" that will cater to "well-educated, well-traveled European, American, and African visitors" (Enterprise St. Helena 2011:65). The report does not define what makes a potential visitor "well-educated" or "well-traveled" not provide suggestions on how the island's Liberated African heritage will be marketed to these groups.

Tourism literature available during my 2013 and 2014 fieldwork visibly promotes this history. One of the two main tourism brochures (titled "Discover") states: "Recently, excavations have uncovered the Island's role in the era of slavery, particularly during abolition when slave ships were intercepted and the slaves brought to St. Helena and freed." While this brochure makes no mention of Rupert's Valley (for tourism related to the Liberated Africans or for any other reason), Lemon Valley is mentioned: "Lemon Valley: This popular island location—ideal for swimming and camping—was one of two island sites where over 25,000 slaves were liberated. Many of the buildings from that period still stand amidst scrub and wild mango." However, the Liberated African history is not part of the tourist map highlighting significant cultural, geographical, or historical sites (see Figure 3.2).

In addition, tourists (or St. Helenians, for that matter) drawn to Lemon Valley by interest in the Liberated African history will not find any further information within the valley itself. The buildings referenced in the tourism brochure do not feature signage or other public interpretation for visitors to learn more about the location's history regarding the Liberated Africans or specific historical use of the buildings and ruins in the valley. Furthermore, I participated in a guided hike through Lemon Valley sponsored by the St. Helena Tourism Office and led by an individual with ties to the heritage industry; when I asked him about the Valley's Liberated African history or the use of buildings still standing in the Valley, he said he had no knowledge on those topics.

For comparison, other aspects of St. Helena's heritage featured prominently in tourism brochures and on the tourism map do include some public interpretation on site. Yet through my textual analysis of these materials I found that most information on St. Helena's heritage is presented in resources geared for tourists or other outsiders, not St. Helenians. Information on Napoleon, Boer prisoners of war, the East India Company, and High Knoll Fort, along with other built heritage, is available through tourism publications, travel media such as articles or blogs, the tourism office's website and signage at sites on the island. Hallways and other public spaces on the *RMS St. Helena* feature historic photos or maps and images of significant places on the island; selected elements of the island's history were featured in some fashion in all the St. Helena documentaries the ship's staff played for passengers during each of my four voyages. Heritage is thus prominently portrayed to outsiders as a significant feature of the island. As one tourism professional suggested, the past is "how we get outsiders interested" (SH 2\_06, 6/26/14, St. Helenian, tourism professional). The relative wealth of information

regarding the island's history presented to tourists, compared with scarce information available to local residents, caused one St. Helenian to observe that "tourists know more about our history than we do" (SH 2\_23, 7/25/14, St. Helenian, education/media). It is also important to note the selective aspects of these presentations, an example of Smith's (2006) authorized heritage discourse: the St. Helena on display reflects a carefully crafted historical and political national identity.

But views on what that history is or should be are changing. Local discourse on developing St. Helena's Liberated African history for tourism, including interest in public interpretation, were characterized by conflicting ideas regarding the focus, process, and goals of heritage development. . At least eight individuals asked me about the potential of the Liberated African heritage to draw American tourists, all expressing hope that this could draw in more American tourists. I interviewed St. Helena's director of tourism in 2013 and 2014; in 2014 she said the biggest development with slavery and tourism since our last conversation was to include that history with other elements of island history such as Napoleon and the Boer imprisonments under dark-tourism themed promotions (SH 2\_04, 6/26/14, Non-St. Helenian, tourism professional). In other words, it may not be the specific facts of the Liberated African history that tourists found appealing but rather its general association with violence. Another heritage professional pointed directly to the inherently macabre aspects of the Liberated African history as a potential attraction. He advocated that any public interpretation on the island include images of the excavated skeletal remains and potentially some of the excavated human remains. As he explained, "the whole thing is shocking, so why not shock people?" (SH 2\_13, 7/18/14, St. Helenian, professional interest in heritage).

However, two other heritage professionals questioned whether it would be ethical or effective to promote this heritage. Referring to interests in developing public interpretation, one heritage professional said “I think that they want to glorify it a bit. Or glorify it, one of the two” (SH 1\_07, 8/1/13, St. Helenian, heritage professional). Another heritage professional questioned the feasibility of tourism motivated by interest in St. Helena’s Liberated African history:

They’re not going to come here just for that, I mean it’s not Liberia, Monrovia, it’s not some of the slave islands...places like that where it’s relatively easy to get there. It’s going to cost you an arm and a leg to come here, just for the experience of standing in a valley where this happened, and being quiet for a few minutes and seeing the ossuary or mausoleum or whatever it ends up being, I can’t see that being hundreds and hundreds of people. I can see, what I fear, is that it’s going to become a stop, a rather macabre sort of sensationalist type of thing, “oh yes, I must go see that as well as everything else.” (SH 1\_08, 8/2/13, Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional)

My ethnographic data suggest that tourism represented both the biggest hope for and greatest threat to St. Helena’s future. Within this contradiction, promoting the Liberated African history for tourism was viewed as both logical development of an existing resource and potential exploitation of this history for little or no positive results.

## **Forces and Impacts: St. Helena**

### **Economic Development**

As discussed in chapter three, St. Helena is financially dependent on the UK and options for sustainable economic development are limited. Furthermore, the airport and related infrastructure will significantly improve St. Helenians’ access to medical care, communication systems, information, and the outside world itself. As a result, potential

conflicts between development and preservation, a common issue at many locations around the world, took on a particularly personal tone in the St. Helena case study. For example, the centuries of extreme isolation that preceded the airport established a certain character for St. Helena referenced by locals, tourism brochures, and media accounts such as travel blogs or features pieces. One travel writer described Jamestown as a “perfectly preserved Georgian village” (Pritchard 2008:22). Another writes “it was hard to imagine a quainter capital” (Stratton 2013).

While this “quaintness” may be a draw for tourism, it essentially freezes the local population into a particular image and lifestyle, which directly limits their options for education, medical care, and employment, among other things. One interview participant turned this idea of quaintness back on itself to express support for economic development through the airport and tourism: “We have to change. This island will die, we can’t afford to be this quaint little place anymore” (SH 2\_17, 7/24/14, St. Helena permanent resident, Government). Another referenced discourse questioning whether the opening of the airport will “spoil” St. Helena’s charm (see for example Honeywell 2014): “We’re already spoiled, we’re withering away here” (SH 2\_08, 7/4/14, St. Helenian, education/media).

One government official (SH 2\_01, 6/18/14, Non-St. Helenian, government) cited development as one of the biggest threats to heritage. Without a clear plan of action or authority regarding heritage resources, proposed development projects were not effectively evaluated for their impact on built or cultural heritage. One individual with a personal interest in St. Helena’s heritage pointed out that there is “nothing in government with specific responsibility for culture, there is no minister of culture” (SH 2\_013,



7/18/14). A government official offered a more detailed observation, saying that protection of cultural heritage does not fit under any of the five committees of St. Helena Government's Legislative Council so there is no clear decision-maker within SHG regarding questions of heritage (PO, 7/24/14). However, the same government official who cited development as the biggest threat to heritage cautioned against situating heritage protection within St. Helena Government, as this model would make SHG responsible for policing its own numerous development projects (SH 2\_01, 6/18/14, Non-St. Helenian, government).

By focusing the broader tension between preservation and development on decisions regarding the Liberated African heritage, I came to understand how protection of unmarked burials in Rupert's was positioned against improving the quality of life for current St. Helenians and sustainable economic development. Comments at public meetings combined with discourse on the high cost of the airport and pressure to meet construction deadlines led to suggestions that development in Rupert's would not be stopped if concerns arose over damage to heritage resources. When I asked one heritage and tourism professional if all the necessary projects would come together for the airport to open on schedule the response was, "It's got to. There's no other option" (SH 1\_02, 7/29/13, Non-St. Helenian, tourism professional). One government official said that implementation of the Rupert's Master Plan has a strict timeline, with no room for archaeological (or other) delays, not to mention a lack of funding for additional excavation. This official said "I don't think anything will get in the way of the Rupert's development" and questioned the ethics of that reality (PO 6/23/14). In the same vein, a heritage professional said that while there were archaeological protocols in place to

protect the remaining unmarked burials during on-going development projects, he questioned “how closely the protocols would be followed if the developers are trying to stick to a budget and timeline” (SH 2\_07, 7/2/14, Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional). Indeed, in 2012 and 2014 additional human remains were uncovered in Rupert’s Valley in the context of development projects; in each case work was temporarily stopped while heritage professionals removed the disturbed remains to place them in storage, after which development work resumed (Pipe 2012; St. Helena Government Press Release 16 December 2014).

In July 2014 I attended a meeting among government and heritage officials regarding options for reburying the excavated human remains. These decision-makers appeared to operate under the idea that any conversation regarding reburial needed to take into consideration the Rupert’s Valley master plan for development. In other words, heritage resources or decisions about heritage resources would defer to development plans rather than development plans being altered to accommodate or protect heritage resources. This reflects a broader pattern regarding St. Helena’s heritage and social actors with an interest in heritage. The island’s heritage is clearly identified and positioned as something to be valued, both as a source of local pride and something to which tourists may be drawn. Yet resources dedicated to heritage protection are scarce, leaving those with an interest in the island’s heritage struggling to prioritize their efforts and subject to criticism from those on the island and abroad that not enough is being done to protect heritage. Furthermore, the island’s permanent residents face low wages, unequal social structures, and the typical problems of everyday life. I recognized that efforts to protect and preserve St. Helena’s heritage, when coming from St. Helenians, were often met with

indifference from their fellow residents, who felt they had bigger things to worry about. When such efforts came from non-St. Helenians—primarily British ex-pats on a one or two year contract—St. Helenians could respond with outright hostility, viewing it as one more example of an outsider thinking they know best. But as some interview participants noted, St. Helena’s post-colonial population did still, consciously or not, signal in various ways that the opinions of outsiders were more valuable than those of locals, so in some instances St. Helenians simply distanced themselves from the process and left the decision-making to others. In short, those with a personal or professional interest in St. Helena’s heritage faced often unpredictable challenges or criticisms that differed depending on their identity and the identity of other parties (e.g. St. Helenian or ex-pat) with few resources—financial, social, legislative, or otherwise—to support their efforts.

This has direct implications for development of St. Helena’s Liberated African heritage. Most of St. Helena’s Liberated African history is tied to Rupert’s Valley, which still contains the unmarked burials of an estimated 8,000 individuals. For many interview participants, this raised the question of whether Rupert’s is the most appropriate site for reburial and public interpretation. During data analysis I came to frame this question of reburial location as a conflict between competing strategies of authenticity and aesthetics. Those who favored reburial (and accompanying memorial) in Rupert’s cited a sense of authenticity as their motivation. For example, “there may be different ways of reburying them but I will not accept anything other than putting them back there [in Rupert’s Valley]. It’s where they came ashore and where they were buried” (SH 2\_27, 7/30/14, St. Helenian, government). Another stated “I think they should be placed where they came from. And that is Rupert's. And Rupert's should become...I don't know...something a

little more sacred than just a power station and a road. You know what I mean?" (SH 1\_07, 8/1/13, St. Helenian, heritage professional).

While the term "aesthetics" was not used by anyone during the course of my fieldwork it does seem to capture the range of concerns raised by those who questioned Rupert's as the appropriate location for reburial and memorialization. Four individuals, all government or heritage personnel, used the term "industrial" to describe Rupert's and cited that description to question reburial in the Valley. Yet even those who questioned reburial in Rupert's seemed interested in balancing authenticity with aesthetics. The same four individuals who characterized Rupert's as "industrial" mentioned Lemon Valley (which served as the original Liberated African Establishment before officials moved it to Rupert's Valley), as a possible alternative. For example:

[I]t's almost better to choose somewhere like Lemon Valley, where a lot of other slaves died, who didn't survive the quarantine process...Okay, you're removing them from where they were, you can still see very evidently the physical evidence of the graveyard in Rupert's, but is it right to draw focus to that in what's going to be a very public, industrial location? (SH 1\_08, 8/2/13, Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional)

With no clear direction on how to balance authenticity and aesthetics, public consultation presented decision-makers with an opportunity to cut through differing opinions and forge a plan of action. That they were able to involve 254 individuals in the consultation process, given limited communication outlets and the many reasons locals distance themselves from heritage decision-making processes, is a success. Yet challenges related to lack of resources and tensions between preservation and development remain.

## **Racism/Colonial Legacies**

In analyzing my data it was relatively easy to identify potential impacts from development efforts, as development, particularly that related to the airport and tourism, was ever-present in nearly all forms of discourse related to St. Helena. Other potential impacts were more difficult to elucidate, even when discussed directly by interview participants.

Interview participants discussed continuing legacies of St. Helena's colonial past in various contexts. SH 2\_05 (6/26/14, St. Helenian, education/media) said she thought residents distanced themselves from decisions such as the fate of the Liberated African remains because they are used to a government system in which their opinions do not matter. Furthermore, three interview participants on St. Helena used the phrase "dependency culture" to describe the historical relationship between St. Helena residents and the British or St. Helena government, with the result being that St. Helenians look to others to make decisions. SH 2\_09 (7/7/14, government), of European origin but a resident of St. Helena for over 30 years, said she thought this attitude extended to St. Helenians thinking that ideas or products from overseas were better than local options. In the case of the Liberated Africans, she suggested that local residents would look to the opinion of outside "experts" rather than trust their own opinion on questions or issues. SH 2\_10 (7/8/14, St. Helenian, tourism professional) said local residents need to break away from the idea that "someone else needs to do something" and start taking initiative to do something themselves.

Yet my interviews with government officials in the UK suggest that St. Helenians had reason to question whether their opinions really mattered or would be respected. For

example, I asked an official with responsibility for St. Helena in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if that office would be involved with decisions regarding the Liberated African heritage or the fate of the excavated human remains; the response was no, this was a matter to be decided locally, but the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would become involved if an “incident” develops over decision(s) regarding reburial and/or treatment of the remains (UK\_13, 1/31/14, Non-St. Helenian, government). This clearly demonstrated how the local St. Helena community may have autonomy on some issues, but only up to a point.

Modern issues of race and identity also surfaced during my interviews. Two native St. Helenians referred to “slave mentality” among local (non-white) residents, which caused them to act and feel deferential to (white) colonial or post-colonial officials (SH 2\_19, 7/22/14, St. Helenian, resident; SH 2\_21, 7/22/14; St. Helenian, education/media). While slave mentality was presented by these two individuals as a thing of the past, lingering racial and colonial legacies were evident in my ethnographic data. I observed older St. Helenian women refer to younger white women as “ma’am” (even ones they knew well) without extending the same formality to native St. Helenians. One St. Helenian government official (SH 2\_16, 7/24/14, St. Helenian, government) explained to me that “experts” from the UK were often called “white ants” by local residents, a reference to a termite (also called white ants) infestation that originated in the 1800s and continues to destroy buildings, historical documents in the archives, and any other plant fiber-based resource; the implication behind referring to ex-pats as “white ants” is that this invasive species destroys things St. Helenians value.

However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, several non-St. Helenians I interviewed specifically assigned decision-making power to the local community, with some citing the need to overcome colonial legacies as the catalyst for this opinion. One European researcher, when asked what should happen to the excavated skeletal remains, said, “I think that is something only the local community can decide on...I just feel like a guest, with no power...[In the past] you had such power as a researcher, but that’s not the case anymore” (UK\_01, 1/21/14, Non-St. Helenian, researcher). To be clear, this individual was not lamenting the lack of power researchers carry in the present but rather pointing to this less-powerful position as the intended result of decolonizing efforts in research contexts. Yet I observed essentially a “hands-off” attitude regarding what happens to the remains once researchers have completed their studies. Furthermore, one British official working on St. Helena said current government officials with European heritage do not have the “right to an individual opinion on reburial, since we are representatives of the enslaving colonial power” (SH 2\_07, 7/2/14, Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional). I must note, however, that one European researcher involved in the 2008 excavation has been involved in the public consultation process, including facilitating consultation with international experts, so this “hands-off” view is not held by all non-St. Helenian stakeholders.

Race was further addressed indirectly by some of my interlocutors in this research, such as SH 2\_11 (7/10/14, St. Helenian, resident), who said she thought even among modern residents “there is a stigma attached to being descended from slaves.” Observations related to race cut across age categories, as this statement from SH 2\_11, in her 20s, is similar to thoughts from UK\_15 (3/31/14, St. Helena diaspora), who grew up

on St. Helena and has lived in the UK for over 30 years. This individual addressed race more directly and stated, “to be British, as Saints feel they are, is to be White.” Both these indirect and direct references to race indicate how African aspect of St. Helena’s Liberated African heritage was something to distance one’s self from. I discuss race in context with the heritage decision-making process further in the next section.

### **Access and Absences**

Decision about St. Helena’s Liberated African heritage can of course only be made by those who are part of the decision-making process; by default, this also limits the identity of decision-makers to those who know that decisions even need to be made in the first place. As discussed earlier, lack of information regarding St. Helena’s history was a common theme in my ethnographic data. One interview participant, a lifelong resident of the island, pointed out that when it comes to history, “we live in a very sterile environment,” as there are few physical reminders of St. Helena’s history on the island (SH 2\_10, 7/8/14, St. Helenian, tourism professional). Another participant, who grew up on St. Helena and now lives in the UK, indicated that it was easy to “forget” about the island’s connections to slavery, as “there’s nothing to remind people of slavery” (UK\_15, 3/31/14, St. Helena diaspora). The only public site on the island connected to the Liberated African history is a monument in Jamestown to the *Waterwich*, a ship in the West African Squadron that featured prominently in the Squadron’s efforts to rescue captive Africans. However, while this monument is in a public space the inscription is difficult to read (see Figure 5.4), leaving community members and tourists alike with virtually no publicly-accessible information about the Liberated Africans.



**Figure 5.4: Memorial to the HMS Waterwich**

*This memorial is displayed in Jamestown; landscaping around the memorial make it difficult to read the weathered inscription.*



Updates on the excavation and its findings published in the local newspapers did serve to increase local knowledge about this history and, perhaps, satisfy curiosity. Yet

these accounts were available only to those who read the local newspapers. Depending on the generation, literacy rates on St. Helena vary, and the cost of purchasing a newspaper (90p for *St. Helena Independent* or £1 for *The Sentinel*) was not insignificant, given the minimum wage for those over age 18 is £2.30/hr.

During my ethnographic interviews, six interlocutors (all current or former residents of the island) indicated that they knew about the cemeteries in Rupert's prior to the excavation and suggested that "everyone" knew the burials were there even before the excavation. Yet ten other interview participants (all current or former residents of the island) indicated they were not aware of these burials prior to the 2008 excavations. Given this contradiction, some individuals may have distanced themselves from the decision-making process because they did not know this history existed or because they knew very little about something they thought "everyone" else already knew. Collectively, the relative invisibility of St. Helena's heritage perpetuates a vicious cycle: people are not involved in heritage development because they do not know there is heritage that needs preserving or developing, while continued lack of involvement in heritage development furthers the historical invisibility.

A significant absence in my ethnographic data is the presence of African voices or perspectives. On the one hand, this absence is not surprising, as my research design did not include African or African-American participants. On the other hand, in spite of the centrality of the Liberated Africans, Africa was scarcely mentioned by interview participants, particularly in fieldwork on St. Helena. The connection between the Liberated African heritage and Africa was most evident in interviews conducted at the International Slavery Museum. As indicated in Figure 5.2, "Slaves" is the most common

response to the question of whose heritage the Liberated African history represents; “Africans” is the third most common, with “St. Helena” and “everybody” tied for second. These frequent references to “slaves” and “Africans” are perhaps not surprising, given that I interviewed museum visitors after they had already toured two galleries devoted to African history and the history of the transatlantic slave trade. Yet the reference to “slaves” in particular suggest that this history is most significant to a group which cannot possibly have a voice in its development, as the “slaves” of the transatlantic slave trade are no longer living.

In my interviews with individuals on St. Helena or in the UK, references to Africa or the African diaspora could be sorted into two categories: (1) interview participants questioned whether Africans or African-Americans represented a potential tourism market for St. Helena’s Liberated African history; and (2) interview participants questioned how specific information about African origins may impact the reburial process. Regarding the former, interview participants and others I spoke with frequently asked me if I thought African-Americans would come to St. Helena if there was a memorial or public interpretation to the Liberated Africans. Some pointed to the success of other tourism sites related to the transatlantic slave trade, such as this government official on St. Helena:

I’m pretty sure they [St. Helena Tourism] would become very interested in a kind of expanded, revised ossuary, with a linked historical interpretation site or something like that...I was struck, it was in the [*London Times*] last year, where Sierra Leone had quite a big project to revamp Freetown Fort and things like that, and clearly they see them as quite a big tourist opportunity. And St. Helena will never be of that size, but St. Helena was very fundamental in ending slavery. (SH 1\_05, 7/29/13, Non-St. Helenian, government)

One interview participant in the UK with a personal interest in St. Helena's heritage pointed to interest in Napoleon as a possible model for tourism development: "You know, people go around castles and all this sort of thing. So I would have thought and expected, just as clearly as they see the Napoleon issue as being very much tourism related, I would have expected that this would have been also something which could, with sensitivity, become tourism related" (UK\_07, 1/28/14, Non-St. Helenian, personal interest in St. Helena history). However, recall the comments from one heritage professional I cited earlier who questioned the feasibility of developing tourism solely on interest in the Liberated African history (SH 1\_08, 8/2/13, Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional).

While outside the scope of this research, this does raise interesting questions regarding African perspectives on this heritage. Would modern residents of parts of Africa from which many captive Africans were taken or members of the African diaspora feel a sense of connection to the Liberated Africans? Would such a connection inspire a sense of responsibility to protect this heritage or a right to be involved in decision-making processes? How might these claims to rights and responsibilities be received on St. Helena? Liberated Africans from St. Helena were frequently sent to other British colonies in the West Indies—how does this historical fact alter the global dimensions of this narrative? The often complex and conflicted development of the New York African Burial Grounds, one of the comparative cases I discuss in chapter six, illustrates an African-centered approach to heritage, hinting at how development of St. Helena's Liberated African history might be different with other stakeholders involved.

Discourse related to the potential impact of "African-ness" on reburial came through questions about whether a site in Africa was actually the more appropriate

location for reburial of the Liberated African remains or if Christian burial customs would be appropriate during eventual reburial ceremonies. The comments of one heritage professional are representative of questions related to the appropriateness of a Christian burial for these individuals from Africa: “Why should we assume because we’re Christian, they were too? Why should we impose a Christian burial on them?” (SH 2\_09, 7/7/14, St. Helena permanent resident, Government). This sense of religious uncertainty is common in a heritage of violence, when a desire to remember is intricately connected to a spiritual-based mourning ritual. Religious conflicts arise even within seemingly established sites and narratives—Auschwitz has been a site of spiritual tensions such as Christian visitors wishing to mourn on site according to their own traditions (Jacobs 2004; Webber 2006). Such uncertainty also underscores the complexity of determining what constitutes respectful treatment of the dead in different cultural contexts and through time—would treatment of the dead deemed ethical by modern populations have been viewed the same by the once-living individuals receiving this treatment?

Within my research, when people raised the question of potential reburial in Africa the conversation generally did not go very far, as individuals noted that no one knows exactly where in Africa the Liberated Africans came from. Some individuals theorized the logistical challenges of reburying the Liberated African in Africa, such as one individual who said that even if we did know more about the African origins of the Liberated Africans reburial would depend on a strong diplomatic connection between the African country or countries and St. Helena or the UK (UK\_21, 3/28/14, Non-St. Helenian, professional interest in tourism).

Documents related to the consultation process carried out by the Working Group in early 2015 do not include repatriation of the Liberated African remains to Africa or reburial at a site in Africa as one of the options under consideration. Furthermore, these documents state that there is no descendent or successor community on St. Helena because there is no visibly “African” community, glossing over the fact that Liberated Africans who remained on St. Helena are undoubtedly represented in the modern population’s genetic make-up. Overall, voices representing Africa or the African diaspora are nearly absent in the decision-making process. When Africa did come up, it was generally in the talk by non-Africans dismissing or trying to characterize the “African-ness” of this heritage.

### **Forces and Impacts: International Slavery Museum**

#### **Economic**

The director of the International Slavery Museum acknowledged that their St. Helena exhibit might not have moved forward without £10,000 provided by the St. Helena Government (UK\_05, 1/24/14). For ISM, these funds were critical at a time when museums are struggling financially, particularly those such as ISM that do not charge admission. For St. Helena, the ISM exhibit represented a chance to increase the island’s international profile on the eve of the airport opening. The UK is a target tourism market for St. Helena, so spending £10,000 for at least one year of exposure at a high-profile, high-traffic institution in the UK such as ISM likely seemed like a bargain. One staff member at ISM summed the situation up: “The government of St. Helena is very keen to get that exposure...for people to find out about it. And obviously from a tourism point of

view in the next few years that will be very important” (UK\_22, 4/8/14, Non-St. Helenian, staff of International Slavery Museum). One tourism professional on St. Helena said the ISM exhibit was “one way of getting very, very good exposure for St. Helena” (SH 1\_02, 7/29/13, Non-St. Helenian, tourism professional).

My interviews with collaborative partners, including those in SHG and St. Helena tourism, indicate that they were consulted on decisions, yet the final say in everything related to the exhibit was held by ISM. Furthermore, while SHG did contribute financial support for the exhibit in the hopes of generating potential tourism interest in St. Helena, none of the collaborators indicated that SHG had significant influence over the decision-making process. It is worth noting, however, that the introductory panel in the exhibit features the St. Helena Tourism logo next to the list of collaborative partners. Regardless of their degree of influence on the decision-making process, the “stamp” of St. Helena tourism was evident in the final product. In addition to the logo, many of the images featured on the interpretive panels were the same images of lush vegetation or picturesque vistas featured prominently in tourism promotional materials, rendering the Liberated African exhibit a subtle (or perhaps not-so-subtle) form of tourism advertising.

### **Ethics/Museum Image**

Ethical concerns over using images of skeletal remains in the ISM exhibit, discussed earlier in this chapter, impacted the title of the exhibit itself. The museum went through several titles before settling on “Liberty Bound: Slavery on St. Helena.” The Director said “the original title had the word ‘death’ in it, which apparently marketing don’t like using the word ‘death’” (UK\_05, 4/3/14). The marketing team’s fear of

alienating or offending potential visitors through use of the word “death” illustrates ideas over “compromised truth” (Dann and Seaton 2001:20) discussed in chapter two: commercial interests may trump historical accuracy in an effort to draw in as large an audience as possible.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have presented data from my ethnographic research related to St. Helena’s Liberated African history to discuss strategies social actors employed to stimulate new interest in this history as well as potential impacts from political or economic forces on these strategies or the heritage decision-making process. Social actors employed these various strategies, deliberately or opportunistically, to generate interest in the Liberated African heritage, primarily playing on human curiosity. Some strategies, such as using human remains or indexical signs of human remains to humanize the Liberated Africans, were relatively successful in moving this history in from the margins. Yet social relationships shaped by racial or post-colonial dynamics impacted the connection people felt to this heritage, potentially offsetting connections fostered through humanizing narratives. Furthermore, these distances between modern populations and the Liberated Africans result in uncertainty regarding who has rights and responsibilities for this heritage; tourism often became the way to settle such uncertainties, with decision-makers considering what would make this history interesting or accessible to tourists.

These data advance our understanding of the various needs and demands shaping the heritage development process, particularly relatively invisible forces of power and capital. In addition, the ethnographic case study illustrates ethical issues that may arise



when human remains become the object of heritage projects, including the complexity of recognizing what constitutes respectful treatment of the dead in varying cultural contexts. In the next chapter I further reflect on lessons learned from this dissertation, discuss how the results could help establish more equitable heritage decision-making practices, and offer suggestions for future research directions.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have framed heritage development as a decision-making process. This lens offers new perspectives on heritage development in the present and demonstrates how communities and others are driven by diverse needs and demands that must be negotiated and reconciled. In addition, this dissertation contributes to the ongoing work of bioarchaeologists and others who have long understood the potential human remains hold to provide new information about the past. The research offers a detailed and nuanced understanding of human remains in the context of heritage to demonstrate how human remains hold significant potential to bridge real or imagined distances between modern and past populations; the research also demonstrates how this potential may be offset by structural violence such as racism or other social and economic dynamics. Furthermore, this research draws critical attention to particularly high-stakes ethical terrain—the complexity of determining what constitutes respectful treatment of the dead in the context of commodified heritage or dark tourism development.

The results presented in this dissertation address the research objectives I outlined, yet also emphasize the significance of a different question in a way I did not anticipate. In this dissertation I ask: if human remains can help tell the story of past violence, how will that story be told, by whom and to whom, and to whose benefit? This research illustrates how “by whom” is not an easy question to answer as well as potential impacts the identity of decision-makers has on the heritage development process. For the St. Helena case, the diasporic nature of the heritage of slavery means that those who

likely had the closest connection to the Liberated Africans—members of the African diaspora—occupy an unclear and nearly invisible role in the heritage development process. Those in closest proximity to the heritage—residents of St. Helena—essentially had this heritage imposed on them when the story reemerged in the context of a development project. As such, the Liberated African history does not represent a cherished, shared past that brings social actors together. Rather, this was a problem to be solved, particularly the question of how and where to rebury the excavated human remains, with the potential to deepen social and temporal divisions, further marginalizing this history and the Liberated Africans. Ultimately, these results speak to the position of human remains in a heritage of violence, but they also effectively illustrate a broader reality—what some call “heritage” may to others be merely a bureaucratic exercise.

In this concluding chapter I discuss results of the St. Helena case study alongside two comparative cases—the New York African Burial Ground and the unmarked Jewish cemetery at Montjuïc, Barcelona. I selected these two cases because they feature common details (i.e. the centrality of human remains in heritage development, efforts to commemorate violent pasts, and tensions in decision-making processes) while offering expanded geographical and temporal perspectives. These comparative cases further situate the St. Helena case in global conversations regarding a heritage of violence and what constitutes ethical treatment of human remains. Collectively the case studies demonstrate the complex geography and culture of heritage in the modern world.

In this chapter I also use the depth and breadth provided by these case studies to address my third research objective: evaluating the efficacy of existing resources to promote ethical treatment of the dead in heritage contexts. I follow this discussion with a

summary of the contributions of this dissertation, ideas on future research directions regarding human remains and a heritage of violence, and concluding thoughts.

### **Deciding Heritage**

Each case study discussed here—St. Helena, the New York African Burial Ground (NYABG), and Montjuïc—involves questions of whose heritage is at stake and how to memorialize violent past events. Difficulties in defining community, descendent, diaspora, heritage, identity, etc., add complexity to the answers to these questions. In each case, these unclear definitions r, leave little to no clarity as to who has legal or ethical rights to make decisions and who has responsibilities regarding this heritage. As I discuss below, unlike St. Helena, in the cases of Montjuïc and the NYABG, modern groups or individuals have identified themselves as descendants or associated community members and claimed the right to make decisions based on these identifications.

The NYABG, located in what is now the heart of the financial district in New York City, was used as the burial grounds for free and enslaved individuals of African descent in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When the burial grounds was rediscovered during construction activities in the 1990s some African-American residents of New York City organized to assert their identity as the descendent community and stop what they viewed as desecration of a significant historical site. It is important to note that claims of descendent status were not based on biology—while it is possible modern African-American residents of New York City are descended from those buried in the NYABG direct descent is not certain. Rather, activists identifying themselves as the descendent community acted out of a shared cultural affiliation with those buried in the NYABG.

This claim to stakeholder status was initially contentious, but researchers, government officials, heritage professionals, community members, and other stakeholders were able to reach some agreement on the course of action for research, reburial, and memorialization. The turning point in this process seems to be the researchers' commitment to seek out and honor to the greatest extent possible the wishes of those who identified themselves as the descendent community. The scientific director said this project represents "part of the common heritage and group identity of African Americans who came together as a distinct group" (Blakey 1998:54). A critical detail in this case is that researchers did not require "proof" that those who consider themselves descendants are indeed direct descendants of the individuals represented by the excavated human remains. Rather, it was self-interest and involvement that defined the descendant community, a direct contrast with the St. Helena case where connections to Africa were absent and there was no sense of shared identity to unite decision-makers. In addition, the New York descendent community saw value in analysis of the skeletal remains and all parties seemed to support the idea of memorializing these individuals and developing public interpretation on this history. At present a portion of the original burial grounds is a National Park Service site featuring a museum and memorial where the excavated human remains were reburied; the site was visited by over 450,000 individuals between 2010 and 2014 (National Park Service Annual Park Recreation Visitation).

**Figure 6.1: Entrance to the memorial at the New York African Burial Ground**



The Montjuïc case also features individuals and groups in the present claiming the right to make decisions about the fate of remains buried at the site. Montjuïc is a hill in Barcelona that includes a medieval Jewish cemetery predating the pogroms and Spanish Inquisition. It is therefore a symbol of the structural, cultural, and direct violence experienced by early Jewish populations in Spain. City officials in Barcelona have developed plans to open the cemetery for public interpretation, but public protests by modern Orthodox Jewish groups have successfully shut down these efforts (Clos 2011). Like the NYABG, modern Jewish groups claim the right to make decisions about this heritage based on shared cultural identity with those buried at Montjuïc. However, this

claim to stakeholder status is questioned by researchers, political officials, and others. As Silberman (2010) points out, by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Spain's Jewish population was effectively eliminated through direct violence, conversion, or expulsion. Modern Jews may consider themselves culturally affiliated with those buried in Montjuïc's Jewish cemetery, but non-Jewish modern residents of Barcelona (who are descended from converts to Christianity) are more likely to have a biological connection to those buried at Montjuïc. This raises the question of who has a greater claim to the right and the responsibility to make decisions regarding this site, its heritage, and the human remains it contains—those with a biological connection or those with a sense of shared cultural identity?

Furthermore, modern Jewish groups indicate that they see no value in archaeological excavation at the site or analysis of skeletal remains and consider these excavations a violation of religious views that prohibit disturbing the remains of the dead, essentially leaving researchers and “descendants” at an impasse (see for example Colomer 2010, 2013a). The Montjuïc case reflects a particular challenge of heritage development in general and the heritage of violence in particular—on the one hand, appealing to a broader global heritage narrative positions the human remains as either national or international heritage in which all are invited to stake a claim; on the other hand, acknowledging that a group or community was more directly impacted by past violence renders the human remains the “protected” heritage of that select group, which distances or prohibits the participation of those not considered at present to be part of that group (Silberman 2010:5). The Montjuïc case remains contentious, and at present the site

of the Jewish burials is fenced off for protection and overgrown with weeds with no signs or public interpretation to attest to its historical significance (see Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2: Unmarked Jewish cemetery at Montjuïc**

*The cemetery is visible to visitors to Montjuïc's public parks or gardens but the area is fenced off and features no public interpretation. Barcelona can be seen in the distance.*



In contrast to both the NYABG and Montjuïc, the St. Helena case lacks a vocal, visible group in the present claiming the right to make decisions about the Liberated African heritage and the excavated human remains. This is not to say that descendants of the Liberated Africans do not exist—on St. Helena or elsewhere—but virtually no one publically identified themselves as a descendant, to me or otherwise. Furthermore, those



deciding the fate of the excavated human remains, such as the Working Group I discussed in chapter five, seem to be at a loss for how to identify potential descendants or affiliated communities in Africa, the Americas, or elsewhere. In fact, decision-makers in the St. Helena case seem stymied by a lack of any one individual or group who feels a sense of “ownership” of this history. During my fieldwork I was repeatedly struck by the impression that while all the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process seemed to have good intentions, their actions (or lack thereof) were the equivalent of a group of individuals who need to make a decision looking sideways at each other, assuming someone else will step forward and lead the process. In other words, decision-makers felt a sense of responsibility to see the dead “rest in peace” as I discussed in chapter five, but were uneasy claiming the right to decide what “rest in peace” means. In addition, this illustrates how the term “stakeholder,” as applied in the context of heritage development, may need to be limited to those with a personal stake in the heritage while “decision-makers” is a more accurate identification for those without such a personal connection yet still in a position to make decisions. Furthermore, this highlights the reality that “heritage” may sometimes be more a product of laws, development, or other modern realities that require action (i.e. a problem to be solved) rather than a shared source of community identity or pride.

Existing codes of ethics or heritage policies offer little in each of these three cases to guide decision-makers. In the cases of the NYABG and Montjuïc, some stakeholders pointed directly to the lack of resources and the impact this lack had on decisions and heritage development. Blakey (2010:62) states that controversy at the NYABG could have been minimized if this site of African burials, and the human remains and sacred

objects it contained, was protected by legislation similar to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The controversy at Montjuïc and several other unmarked Jewish cemeteries in Europe, combined with a lack of effective resources to resolve these controversies, prompted the Museu D’Història de Barcelona to host a seminar in 2009 entitled “Archaeological Intervention on Historical Necropolises: Jewish Cemeteries.” During the seminar international experts presented papers and engaged in discussion over religious, academic, and civil interests in these burial sites; papers were published by the Museu D’Història de Barcelona (Colomer 2013b). The seminar concluded with participants drafting the “Barcelona Declaration on Ancient Jewish Cemeteries” to fill what participants viewed as a critical lack of resources to guide decision-makers. However, even after this Declaration was drafted, the controversy at Montjuïc remains unresolved.

In the case of St. Helena no stakeholders referenced codes of ethics or heritage policy documents in their discussion of decision-making processes. In fact, on more than one occasion interview participants asked me what I knew about burial laws, in St. Helena or elsewhere, to seek information that could be useful in addressing decisions to be made. Two interview participants pointed to the lack of a heritage officer within the government or heritage policy for the island, reflecting what I came to identify as a desire for guidance or information on how to proceed with decisions regarding reburial, public interpretation, protection of remaining unmarked burials, and other aspects of St. Helena’s Liberated African heritage. In short, stakeholders did not know how to proceed, and they were looking to anyone or anything that would provide some direction. As I discussed in chapter five, in the absence of such resources, stakeholders forged their own

decision-making process, engaging in community consultation to consider opinions of those outside the Working Group.

In all three cases it is clear that existing resources were insufficient to effectively guide heritage decision-making processes. I discuss potential future directions to address this gap in the concluding section of this chapter. Yet effectively posing future directions requires critical attention to the current state, so I turn now to my third research objective, evaluating the efficacy of existing codes of ethics and heritage policy documents.

### **Efficacy of Existing Resources**

To examine the efficacy of existing resources I build on the content analysis I presented in chapter two, focused on the Vermillion Accord on Human Remains; the Codes of Ethics for the International Council of Museums; ICOMOS's Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Sites; and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. In this analysis I considered three questions: (1) How do these codes of ethics or heritage policy documents assign decision-making power? (2) What guidance is provided to resolve potential conflicts? (3) How do these codes of ethics or heritage policy documents account for varying cultural contexts? I wish to stress here that my analysis does not mean I see no value in these codes of ethics or heritage policy documents. On the contrary—I think these resources represent significant efforts to improve research, public interpretation and outreach, heritage development, and tourism practices. However, I aim for my critical attention to these documents to provide a framework for more thoughtful application of these resources as well as a foundation for

theorizing further efforts to build equitable decision-making processes and improved resources relevant to the heritage of violence and dark tourism.

### **Identity and Ethics**

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the question of how to define the relevant stakeholders and their role(s) in decision making is a common factor in each of the case studies. To analyze the efficacy of existing resources I return to my discussion of how each document identifies decision-makers. The Vermillion Accord positions archaeologists and other researchers as the presumed actor behind the text's passive voice. In other words, researchers are the ones implicitly addressed in this document and asked to show "respect for the wishes of the local community and of relatives or guardians of the dead" (Vermillion Accord Principle 3). If, as I discuss in chapter five, researchers opt-out of the decision-making process or deflect decisions back to the local community, how useful is this document to other decision-makers? Furthermore, Principle 4 of the Vermillion Accord calls for "respect for the scientific value of skeletal, mummified, and other human remains," which effectively positions affiliated communities/relatives/guardians separate from scientists and disaffirms other values associated with human remains. We see in the case of Montjuïc how religious affiliation results in modern communities identifying themselves as "guardians" yet as Silberman (2010:4) points out, compromise is not possible when science and religion are fixed into opposing positions.

The default decision-makers behind the Code of Ethics for the International Council of Museums are museum personnel; other potential stakeholders are discussed

almost exclusively in non-active contexts. For example, the Code references “communities” as something to which decision-makers (i.e. museum personnel) respond, as in Principle 4.4: “Requests for removal from public displays of human remains or materials of sacred significance from the originating communities must be addressed expeditiously with respect and sensitivity.” “Communities” may be active by making the request for items to be removed, but the Code does not specify any active role communities take beyond that point or what constitutes a community. Furthermore, “communities” is presented as plural but without discussion of why there may be multiple communities connected to an object or set of remains or how museums should handle conflicting requests from communities.

This question of community identity is particularly salient given the three case studies I present in this dissertation, which are all complicated by questions over the role of diasporic communities. In chapter two I questioned whether diasporic communities would be considered part of the local community or if they would be considered tourists; I realize diasporic communities may be either or both or something else altogether, but in the context of these resources a more effective working definition for diasporic communities seems important. The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism cites the benefits and responsibilities of local communities and calls for specific actions from local communities; who holds these rights and responsibilities therefore matters. Deeper analysis of the discourse in the Code of Ethics for Tourism suggests that “community” or “communities” are limited to those geographically local to the site(s) of tourism, which would exclude diasporic community members. For example, the Preamble points to “host

communities;” hosting requires a physical (i.e. local) space that emotional, cultural, or biological identities, such as those held by diasporic communities, cannot replace.

This concept of a local “host” community welcoming tourists and other outsiders, including diasporic community members, aligns with strategies by tourism professionals to use heritage tourism for sustainable economic development. In the case of Montjuïc, for example, opening the cemetery site to the public could potentially draw tourists with an interest in their Jewish heritage, a small but growing niche market in Spain’s tourist economy (see for example Chanin 1999). The diasporic community, then, is not a stakeholder but rather the target tourism audience. For St. Helena, revenue generated through tourism related to the island’s Liberated African heritage would primarily stay with the local community or benefit off-island tourism development agencies or investors; members of the African diaspora are unlikely to see any financial benefit, although of course they may experience other benefits.

The ICOMOS Charter offers perhaps the best option for identifying various stakeholders in the diverse cultural contexts of the case studies. Principle 6 on Inclusiveness calls for “collaboration between heritage professionals, host and associated communities, and other stakeholders” (p. 12), directly acknowledging that there may be associated communities beyond the “host” community. In addition, this broad language leaves room for multiple interpretations within the diverse contexts of all three case studies, even those that may shift over time. The ICOMOS Charter, then, would seem to hold the most potential in guiding heritage development or resolving conflicts discussed in the case studies, yet as I discuss in chapter two, calls within the ICOMOS Charter for collaboration or consultation may be hollow. Stakeholders have the “right and

responsibility...to make their opinions and perspectives known” (ICOMOS Charter Principle 6.3 p. 12) but how can individuals or groups act on this right/responsibility if they have little or no knowledge of the heritage in question? More importantly, drawing on Bourdieu (1986), this responsibility to make opinions or perspectives known depends on individuals and communities having the cultural capital to participate in the heritage development process. What if they lack experience with heritage products/processes or have no social or political power to leverage? Recent scholarship on control of heritage by Indigenous peoples, such as Lonetree (2012), illustrates the distinction between heritage created by the dominant group about a marginalized other and heritage created by an empowered group that reflects their own sense of identity. Relying on marginalized communities to assert rights and responsibilities regarding heritage or forever hold their peace is a form of structural violence that must be actively combatted. Furthermore, Principle 6.3 quoted above is in reference to “[p]lans for expansion or revision of interpretation and presentation programmes.” My discussion of it here in the context of heritage *development* is therefore an application of this text beyond its stated purpose.

Using these documents to identify what constitutes respectful treatment of the dead in heritage and tourism contexts requires a similar creative application. As discussed in chapter two, the Vermillion Accord and Code of Ethics for Museums explicitly mention respectful treatment of human remains, while the ICOMOS Charter and Global Code of Ethics for Tourism offer guidance on developing, promoting, and utilizing public interpretation and tourism sites. Yet there is no single resource to guide heritage development involving human remains. The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism promotes human rights within tourism and critiques exploitation in tourism contexts, yet

offers no definition of what constitutes exploitation. Furthermore, there is nothing within this document (or the other resources discussed, for that matter) to prompt developers, communities, or other stakeholders to even question whether the heritage of violence or dark tourism are exploiting past violence to fulfill aims in the present. These resources cannot begin to address the ethical dilemmas inherent in the commodification of violence through tourism, including practices such as tour guides at the “killing fields” in Cambodia offering skeletal fragments to visitors as souvenirs (Bickford 2009). They offer no grounds on which to question the practice of displaying the remains of some victims of violence at tourist sites while the remains of other victims are buried or otherwise honored in a culturally-appropriate manner. For example, there are concomitant actions in Rwanda to identify and repatriate some human remains while leaving other bodies as they died within sites that are now memorial museums (see for example Doughty 2011; Robb 2009).

### **Privileging Interests**

As discussed in the previous section, the Vermillion Accord and Code of Ethics for Museums are written for constituencies, i.e. experts who are believed to hold certain knowledge others do not. In other words, these experts are part of what Smith (2006) identifies as the “authorized heritage discourse.” As a result, the views and values of these “experts” are privileged over those of non-experts. Recently, scholars have critiqued these top-down models of heritage development, which marginalize the interests and knowledge of communities or even tourists (see for example Light 2015; Long and Smith 2010; Star 2010). Subsequent calls for heritage developed in



collaboration with, or driven by, affiliated communities reinforces the need to critically examine who is considered part of the community in discourse, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, as Waterton et al. (2006) advocate, these calls for collaborative action necessitate close attention to the interests of those producing this discourse.

All four resources discussed here, as with most codes of ethics and heritage policy documents, were produced in Western contexts. Indeed, “codes” and “policies” in and of themselves represent Western ways of organizing and presenting information. Labadi (2007, 2010, 2013), Meskell (2013), Strasser (2002), and Willems (2014), among others, examine the impact of such Western-focused practices on heritage preservation and development. In the heritage of violence, this Western/European-based hegemonic discourse is particularly problematic for two reasons. First, violence and heritage alike develop within particular cultural contexts; memorials, public interpretation, and other forms of heritage must account for these varying cultural contexts, Western and non-Western alike. Yet as I discussed in chapter two, these four documents provide little guidance on developing heritage within diverse cultural contexts; what guidance they do provide promotes Western values and is likely most useful to those operating from that perspective. Furthermore, these documents do not question the structural inequalities or power imbalances that may have catalyzed or legitimized the violence now being memorialized. As such, these forms of cultural or structural violence go unchecked.

Second, I have also discussed varying cultural ideas regarding what constitutes respectful treatment of human remains. Promoting Western ethical standards may therefore violate or, at the least disregard, non-Western views on the dead. In the case of St. Helena, the island’s residents are currently and have historically been primarily

Christian; the Liberated Africans were almost certainly not Christian when they died on the ships or on the island (although a number of survivors were later baptized before being sent to other British colonies). There are no resources to help stakeholders decide whether the Liberated African remains should be reburied under conditions more closely aligned with the spiritual beliefs of modern St. Helenians, those of the Liberated Africans, or something else altogether. Likewise, in the case of Montjuïc, whose spiritual beliefs will guide future actions? Modern Christian residents of Barcelona may not feel a taboo against disturbing the dead, a view in direct contrast with that of the Jewish faith. In addition, these resources fail to consider that in some cultural contexts human remains may not be the most meaningful material culture associated with past violence. In some cultures the remains of the dead do not hold nearly as much cultural or spiritual significance as an object or place; what constitutes “ethical” treatment of the dead in these cases requires broad thinking and deep cultural understanding.

Collectively, these critiques illustrate how existing codes of ethics and heritage policy documents provide little guidance for decision-makers struggling with ethical issues inherent in the heritage of violence or dark tourism. Furthermore, they offer little to nudge decision-makers beyond their own experiences, perspectives, or cultural ideologies, a critical short-coming when decision-makers in the present are focused on events of the past—social actors in the present must be prompted to consider how those in the past, on whose behalf they are making decision, may have held different values or experienced different cultural contexts.

## **Contributions**

This dissertation offers a case study exposing the complexities of both the heritage development process and ethical dimensions of using human remains in heritage projects. The anthropological perspective presented here offers new thinking on the impacts of present needs and demands on the heritage development process, drawing out what had previously been relatively invisible forces of power and capital. Heritage practitioners and others can use the discussion presented in this dissertation to interrogate their own efforts in the heritage development process: Who is invited to become part of the decision-making process, who is excluded, and why? Who is doing the “inviting” and by what authority? Are there imbalances in power dynamics among decision-makers, and how could such imbalances be combated? Who is the target audience for heritage development? If the target audience is tourists, is there a need for checks against potential exploitation of heritage for economic gain?

This dissertation also positions human remains as a distinct form of material culture that requires particular attention in a heritage of violence. Decision-makers may need to look past their own cultural contexts to consider what constitutes ethical treatment of human remains and be open to the possibility that human remains are not the most meaningful aspect of material culture regarding past violence. In other words, the knowledge, beliefs, and opinions of decision-makers should not be an unquestioned stand-in for the once-living individuals who are the object of heritage projects. What do decision-makers know, and what could they learn, about respectful treatment of the dead in the cultural contexts of the deceased?

Finally, this dissertation adds a new critical perspective on existing codes of ethics and heritage policies. These resources provide valuable guidance and insight on various aspects of heritage and tourism development yet reflect problematic power dynamics or cultural assumptions, including privileging Western perspectives and actions. The content analysis presented here can lead to more thoughtful and cautious applications of these resources by scholars and decision-makers alike.

### **Future Directions**

My critique of existing codes of ethics and heritage policy documents demonstrates how these resources often fail to consider heritage as a dynamic, fluid, global process. As discussed in chapter two, a notable exception to this is UNESCO's Nara Document on Authenticity, which advocates "greater respect for cultural and heritage diversity" and acknowledges a distinction between "the cultural community that has generated [heritage]" and the community that "cares for [heritage]." The recently drafted Nara +20 document—designed to update the Nara Document 20 years after it was developed—takes this further, recognizing the significance of cultural context and "community participation, social inclusion, sustainable practices, and intergenerational responsibility." Nara +20 also acknowledges that individuals can be part of more than one community and that there is often an imbalance of power among heritage stakeholders

In a sense, this dissertation is an effort to apply the principles of Nara +20 in the specific context of the heritage of violence. In doing so, it is apparent that current resources are insufficient to guide decision-makers through the potentially high-stakes

ethical terrain involved when human remains become the object of heritage projects. What I advocate for, then, is further critical attention to the ethical dimensions of human remains in heritage contexts. In this dissertation I have responded to Silberman's (2010) call for new perspectives on who should care for the dead in heritage, particularly in the absence of distinct descendant populations. Yet as my analysis of key policy documents and ethical codes illustrates, our understanding of the rights and responsibilities of communities in heritage contexts—diasporic communities in particular—is insufficient. More work remains to be done on defining who should make decisions about the dead in heritage contexts; such a definition should take into account what Chilton and Silberman (2010) identify as increasingly blurred globalized social identities of the modern world. In the context of heritage, how are communities defined? How do cultural contexts impact understandings of “descendant” or “stakeholder” in heritage development? How do decision-makers navigate heritage development processes that cut across national boundaries or legal structures, including unmarked burial laws? This work must also continue to interrogate the problem of unbalanced power dynamics and other inequalities.

In addition, there is room for further work on the commodification of violence for heritage and tourism. We still have an incomplete understanding of the ethical, social, political, or legal consequences that arise from a heritage of violence or dark tourism. Additional research on the needs and demands driving a heritage of violence is critical to understanding whether such practices exploit past violence or suffering for potential gain in the present. In what context(s) is such exploitation appropriate or inappropriate? Is the commodification of violence for tourism a form of violence in and of itself? Do sites of dark tourism actually fulfill stakeholders' goals of education and memorialization for

visitors? How do visitors respond to their experiences with dark tourism or the heritage of violence?

Furthermore, there is significant room for new resources to guide decision-making processes regarding human remains in heritage contexts. Rapidly expanding heritage development combined with greater tourist mobility has resulted in recent growth in dark tourism. This situation, combined with increased attention to the question of what constitutes respectful treatment of the dead, provides an ideal moment to forge new ground. The content analysis of existing codes of ethics and heritage policy documents in this dissertation demonstrates the shortcoming of these resources while simultaneously pointing to components of these resources that could provide useful guidance to decision makers. I propose drawing the results of this analysis together with resources in other areas to theorize best practices regarding human remains in heritage contexts.

For example, the Sites of Conscience network advocates for deliberate efforts to connect past and present to promote dialogue on past violence, suffering, or death (Gabriel 2011; Sevčenko 2004). This network has a collection of resources aimed at developing ethical public interpretation around past violence; while these resources do not address human remains specifically, the ethical perspective and community collaboration models they promote seem ideal to draw upon in this context. In addition, researchers increasingly consider cultural protocols to ensure that research methods, products, and forms of curation or dissemination are acceptable to the various cultural groups who participate in the research process (see for example Anderson 2013; Pink 2009; Ruby 2000). Here again there is rich potential to draw on these models to develop

best practices for collaborative, ethical development of a heritage of violence.

Furthermore, scholarship on NAGPRA provided new information about power dynamics and political economic impacts that led to greater efforts to decolonize archaeology in particular and academia more broadly (see for example Bernstein 2010; Lippert 2006; Silliman 2008; Zimmerman 2006). Collectively, these perspectives and resources could inform new thinking about practices that consider broad definitions of community, expansive views on what constitutes human remains, and varying cultural contexts.

Finally, in this dissertation I offer an initial step in addressing Stone's (2011) call for considering the rights of victims when developing or promoting violence for dark tourism. This call is an isolated and rather vague plea within the literature on dark tourism, however. It is unclear if Stone's mention of the "rights of victims" refers to the living or the dead. If we are to consider the dead as having rights, what does this invoke? And who would enforce these rights? This raises the possibility that perhaps ethical treatment of the dead should be viewed more as a universal standard and less variable based on cultural contexts. Is it in fact more appropriate to draft a statement on universal rights of the dead, similar to the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights? The increasingly globalized nature of heritage certainly suggests that this would be a valuable position to consider. In the St. Helena case, for example, the local population may decide that development projects to benefit the modern population are more critical than protecting the remaining unmarked Liberated African burials. While this action may be perfectly sound in the eyes of the local population, the global community may not view desecration of graves holding the remains of those who died during the transatlantic slave trade in the same way. A more universal global standard would both protect decision-

makers from backlash resulting from differing views on what constitutes ethical treatment of human remains and provide much-needed specific guidance on the unique issues associated with this decision-making process.

However, a universal declaration runs the risk of promoting the same Western biases in existing global heritage policies, such as UNESCO's vision of "universal value" that historically has privileged Western sites and building styles. Equally problematic would be an unquestioning deference to the sacred value of human remains. For example, Sturdy Colls (2015) outlines recent archaeological investigations of Holocaust sites that have revealed new information about the scope and structure of concentration camps as well as experiences of prisoners. In spite of what this information can add to our historical understanding of the Holocaust, this work has sometimes been met with resistance from Jewish groups and others concerned with the possibility that excavating at concentration camps may inadvertently disturb human remains (Sturdy Colls 2015). Is it even possible to establish a universal vision for respectful treatment of the dead that could account for a vast array of contingencies, challenges, and constant change?

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The issues presented in this dissertation reflect global conversations regarding heritage, as evidenced by UNESCO's initiatives to understand the role of heritage in sustainable economic development, establish the value of cultural diversity, and recognize the global scale of the transatlantic slave trade. Heritage practitioners therefore seem poised to engage in new conversations and establish new resources regarding dark tourism and ethical treatment of the dead in heritage contexts. However, there must be



room to consider non-Western decision-making models as well as the possibility that human remains are not the most meaningful form of material culture in the heritage of violence. While new resources regarding ethical treatment of the dead in heritage contexts are desperately needed, the road moving forward must be navigated thoughtfully.

As the research presented in this dissertation demonstrates, a heritage of violence is a valuable practice for drawing attention to and learning from past violence. Furthermore, human remains and indexical signs of human remains play a powerful part in telling stories about past violence, as they can humanize past violence and serve as a point of connection between past and present populations. Yet the dead—those who are at the center of the heritage of violence and dark tourism—are voiceless in the heritage development process. It is up to us in the present to keep ethics at the forefront of our actions. Heritage is about feelings, actions, objects, places, experiences and so much more, but it is also about choices—above all, this dissertation emphasizes the value of thinking critically about the choices we make in heritage contexts and how the impact of our choices extends from the past into the present and on to the future.

**APPENDIX A**  
**RELEVANT ACRONYMS**

DfID	Department for International Development
EIC	East India Company
ESH	Enterprise St. Helena
EuroTAST	European network researching the Transatlantic Slave Trade
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
ISM	International Slavery Museum
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NYABG	New York African Burial Ground
SHG	St. Helena Government
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WAC	World Archaeological Congress

## APPENDIX B

### TABLE OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS, ST. HELENA AND UK

Interview ID	Demographic Information
SH 1_01	St. Helenian, government
SH 1_02	Non-St. Helenian, tourism professional
SH 1_03	St. Helenian, professional interest in tourism
SH 1_04	St. Helenian, resident
SH 1_05	Non-St. Helenian, government
SH 1_06	St. Helenian, government
SH 1_07	St. Helenian, heritage professional
SH 1_08	Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional
SH 1_09	St. Helena permanent resident, government
SH 1_10	Non-St. Helenian, government
SH 1_11	St. Helenian, professional interest in tourism
SH 1_12	St. Helenian, tourism professional
SH 1_13	St. Helenian, resident
SH 1_14	Non-St. Helenian, tourist
UK_01	Non-St. Helenian, researcher
UK_02	Non-St. Helenian, researcher
UK_03	Non-St. Helenian, researcher
UK_04	Non-St. Helenian, researcher
UK_05	Non-St. Helenian, Director of International Slavery Museum
UK_06	St. Helena diaspora, government
UK_07	Non-St. Helenian, personal interest in St. Helena history
UK_08	Non-St. Helenian, professional interest in St. Helena history
UK_09	Non-St. Helenian, professional interest in St. Helena history
UK_10	Non-St. Helenian, tourism professional
UK_11	Non-St. Helenian, tourism professional (former)
UK_12	St. Helena diaspora
UK_13	Non-St. Helenian, government
UK_14	Non-St. Helenian, professional interest in St. Helena history
UK_15	St. Helena diaspora
UK_16	Non-St. Helenian, researcher
UK_17	Non-St. Helenian, researcher
UK_18	Non-St. Helenian, government (former)
UK_19	Non-St. Helenian, government (former)
UK_20	St. Helena diaspora
UK_21	Non-St. Helenian, professional interest in tourism
UK_22	Non-St. Helenian, staff of International Slavery Museum
UK_23	Non-St. Helenian, professional interest in St. Helena history
UK_24	Non-St. Helenian, government
SH 2_01	Non-St. Helenian, government
SH 2_02	Non-St. Helenian, government
SH 2_03	Non-St. Helenian, government
SH 2_04	Non-St. Helenian, tourism professional
SH 2_05	St. Helenian, education/media
SH 2_06	St. Helenian, tourism professional
SH 2_07	Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional
SH 2_08	St. Helenian, education/media
SH 2_09	St. Helena permanent resident, government

SH 2_10	St. Helenian, tourism professional
SH 2_11	St. Helenian, resident
SH 2_12	St. Helenian, resident
SH 2_13	St. Helenian, professional interest in heritage
SH 2_14	St. Helenian, resident
SH 2_15	St. Helenian, professional interest in tourism
SH 2_16	St. Helenian, government
SH 2_17	St. Helena permanent resident, government
SH 2_18	Non-St. Helenian, heritage professional
SH 2_19	St. Helenian, resident
SH 2_20	St. Helena permanent resident, professional interest in heritage
SH 2_21	St. Helenian, education/media
SH 2_22	St. Helenian, resident
SH 2_23	St. Helenian, education/media
SH 2_24	St. Helenian, resident
SH 2_25	St. Helenian, government
SH 2_26	St. Helenian, resident
SH 2_27	St. Helenian, government

## APPENDIX C

### DEMOGRAPHICS: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS AT ISM

<u>No.</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation*</u>	<u>Highest Education Completed*</u>	<u>Home Country*</u>	<u>Ethnic Affiliation*</u>
LB_01	M	55-64	Retired	A-Levels	UK	White British
LB_02	M	N/A	Retired	Diploma	UK	No response
LB_03	M	Over 65	Retired	Professional Qualifications	UK	White
LB_04	F	N/A	Librarian	Degree + Library Qualifications	England	White British
LB_05	M	55-64	Trainer	Degree	England	White
LB_06	M	Over 65	Retired	HNC Engineering	England	White
LB_07	M	25-34	Civil Engineer	University	England	White British
LB_08	M	35-44	IT	College	UK	White British
LB_09	F	55-64	Company Director	No response	UK	White
LB_10	F	N/A	Retired	Diploma	England	English/Irish/Russian
LB_11	M	N/A	Retired	No response	England	Gordee
LB_12	F	N/A	Retired	No response	England	No response
LB_13	F	35-44	Teacher	Bd honors	UK	British
LB_14	M	35-44	No response	No response	St Helena	Saint
LB_15	F	Over 65	Retired Education	Grad	US	African American
LB_16	F	Over 65	Retired Teacher	College	England	UK White
LB_17	M	Over 65	Retired	BA honors	UK	White British
LB_18	M	Over 65	Retired	Institute of Environmental Health	Britain	White British
LB_19	F	Over 65	Music Teacher	Degree	UK	White European
LB_20	F	45-54	Psychiatric Nurse	MSc.	UK	Irish/Estonian
LB_21	M	45-54	Local Government Manager	MSc.	UK	English/Ukrainian

\* = open-ended categories, self-reported by interview participants

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