Heroes, Mummies, and Treasure: Near Eastern Archaeology in the Movies

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The general public has associated Near Eastern archaeology with adventure from the very beginnings of this discipline.[1] In the ill-fated expeditions to the Bible lands sent by Frederick V of Denmark, the adventure tales of Austen Henry Layard, and the romantic illustrations of the Napoleonic expedition, Near Eastern archaeologists' own narratives have invoked images of danger and excitement for public consumption. These narratives were deliberately provided to the public and have remained very much a part of the public conception of archaeology, promoted by nation-states, corporations, and archaeologists themselves. Yet, after World War II and concomitant with the rise of scientific archaeology, these kinds of narratives were abandoned by archaeologists. Rather, archaeologists began cultivating narratives of scientific distance and positivist objectivity. For the public at large, however, archaeology remained a romantic, adventurous occupation, remote from its own daily experience, yet easily accessible through popular media such as magazines, documentaries, and museum exhibits—media in which the early romantic narratives could still be found. As popular and academic communication styles diverged, so to did the public's perception of archaeology—especially Near Eastern archaeology—diverge from the realities of the academic discipline.

Movie poster for *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989).

Cinema is one place where this pre-processualist vision of archaeology continues to thrive in the public imagination and where there is a significant difference between the public face and the professional realities of archaeology. Archaeologists react either very positively or very negatively to these imagined renderings of their discipline. For example, Shelly Lowenkopf takes a typically hostile stance towards Indiana Jones, arguably the most influential cinematic archaeologist. Lowenkopf refers to Indiana Jones as "an unfortunate paradigm" since his training and methodology were not emphasized in the films.[2] Some archaeologists, however, respond very positively and even make the claim to be "the real Indiana Jones," leaving other archaeologists feeling at best uncomfortable and at worst angry since for many within archaeology, this adventurous image is seen as a negative.[3] With archaeologists so quick to discount or accept the portrayal of the discipline in the movies, they have missed an opportunity to come to a greater understanding of the social messages communicated about archaeology to the public at large. While popular audiences may not take away messages from films about scientific techniques and excavation strategies, they are likely to take away important messages about who archaeologists are, why they do what they do, and how relationships to the past are constituted. By studying the representations of archaeology in film, it should be possible for archaeologists better to understand the public's perception of their work and to communicate archaeological knowledge more effectively to popular audiences.

The Traditional Complaint— Archaeology is Serious Work

Archaeologists tend to analyze films about archaeology much in the same way one would criticize another archaeologist—on the basis of excavation techniques and methodology. John Pohl writes about the first Indiana Jones movie, "Although *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) enlightened audiences on how an archaeologist might integrate ethnohistorical research with a field investigation, the expeditions amounted to little more than thievery, and the paramilitary-style adventures were caused in large part by dismal project planning" (1996: 574). These comments seem to miss the point. Even if one could detect any evidence of ethnohistorical research in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (which would require a significant stretch of the imagination), these were not the messages Spielberg and Lucas wanted to convey. By no means was *Raiders* intended as a documentary or treatise on archaeological methods.

The depiction of poor excavation techniques in archaeological films is a plot feature; it serves to make the fictional account entertaining. A cinematic feature is not, like Lewis

Binford's *New Perspectives in Archaeology* (1968), going to push an agenda calling for a new, more scientific, approach to archaeology. Dramatic interest is what is at issue, and it is unlikely that film will change in order to promote and foster better archaeological techniques. However, film does convey many other types of information, and so powerfully that much of this information is unquestioned by the viewing audience. It is these unquestioned (or unquestionable) messages that lie at the heart of the popular audience's conceptions of archaeology and archaeologists, and it is the investigation of these messages that will help the archaeologist better understand his or her public role.[4]

Money, Museums, and Making a Living

Within popular film, there appears to be significant confusion about how archaeology is structured as a profession. Audiences are given a variety of messages about the actual organization of archaeological work, and the relationship between archaeologists and public institutions (museums, universities, and government agencies). There is further confusion about where funding comes from and how archaeologists are financially compensated for their work. Films confuse the general public about what archaeologists do, who they do it for, and how archaeologists are able to make a living.

It is very rare, for example, for film archaeologists to be affiliated with a university or institution of higher learning. Most often the archaeologist is a freelance individual, like Lara Croft, or is hired directly by a museum, like Steven Banning in *The Mummy's Hand* (1940). Indiana Jones is an exception to this; in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), scenes of Indy teaching (and trying to avoid teaching) at the fictional Marshall College[5] are used as settings for the exposition of the coming adventure. Nonetheless, in spite of this academic affiliation, Indy's archaeological adventures are funded directly by the museum; antiquities are bought directly from Indy, and his teaching responsibilities can be dropped at a moment's notice.

Archaeological excavations in films are not initiated with particular research objectives in mind. They can occur at the request of a government agency (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*), at the request of a private individual hoping to save the world (*Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* [2001]), or as a capitalist venture (*The Mummy's Hand*). In most cases, the archaeologist uses funds given by private donors or institutions to fund the excavation. After the artifacts have been retrieved, the archaeologist either splits the loot with the private donors, or is paid a cash settlement by the museum or government agency that retained his services. In other words, the organization of archaeological work is imagined as analogous

Archaeology, the Bible, and Film

Next to Egyptology, biblical archaeology is perhaps the most common type of archaeology to appear in Hollywood cinema. The most famous film to feature biblical themes is Raiders of the Lost Ark, but many other films feature characters striving to gain or prevent the unearthing of artifacts mentioned in the Old Testament or relating to the life of Jesus, or perhaps even Jesus himself, as in 2000's The Body. Generally, these films feature skeptical protagonists or Catholic protagonists who are struggling with their faith. Through the course of the adventure, these troubled characters learn important lessons and have their faith confirmed by some miraculous event. Certainly these films perform similar functions for religious audiences as biblical archaeology once did. Both ease the concerns of faith communities that arise in reaction to biblical skepticism. While the films may start out questioning the Bible, by the end, the "truth" of the Bible or religious doctrine is confirmed and skeptical tensions are eased.
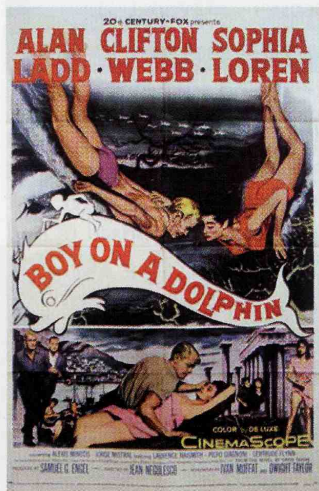
with other professional disciplines, like law or accounting; or along the lines of other more sensationalized cinematic occupations, like the "private eye." It is no wonder that in outreach settings, public audiences are surprised to find out that archaeologists are not allowed to keep what they find. It is equally difficult to explain the role of the private donor, who in feature films treats an archaeological dig like a capitalist investment, with an expectation that the finds will be a financial return on the previous investment. As stated by Croft's love interest in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, "it's all just a business."

Although film portrays the profession of archaeology with a skewed perspective, it is understandable why this perspective is invoked by filmmakers. Exotic locales, hidden treasure, and unsolved mysteries are all romantic and exciting topics for film. As early Near Eastern scholars realized, archaeological work lends itself well to adaptation into the adventure genre, and even given the best efforts of the processualists, hints of this are still apparent. Joyce and Preucel ably demonstrate that professional archaeological writing involves specific approaches to communicating the process of discovery that are similar to narrative devices

used in communicating adventure stories (2002: 35). It is no wonder that archaeological topics translate well into film, even though site reports are worlds away from adventure novels. With this in mind, it is telling to investigate the role of the archaeologist as the hero of an adventure story.

The Archaeologist as Hero

A literary or film hero reflects certain sets of values and beliefs; both the hero's own and the beliefs of the author as refracted through the character that has been created.[6] If the hero is embraced in popular culture, he likely reflects exaggerated forms of the values held by society more generally. Given this, the popularity of the Indiana Jones movies makes them ideal candidates for this kind of study. It is interesting, however, that early films did not feature Indiana Jones-like heroic archaeologists, and in fact did not portray archaeologists in the same heroic light in which archaeologists described themselves in their own works. Early films about archaeology depict the archaeologist as a victim who required rescue by another, more masculine heroic figure. In *The Mummy* (1932), for example, none of the archaeologists are able to prevent the attacks of Imhotep, and it is only intervention by the goddess Isis that is able to save the day. There are some exceptions to the non-heroic depiction of archaeologists in early film, most

Movie poster for *Boy on a Dolphin* (1957).

notably Steven Banning in *The Mummy's Hand* (1940), but it is not until Indiana Jones that the archaeologist took his place as a cinematic heroic figure.

In *Death Rides the Range* (1939), the good archaeologist Professor Wahl is rescued by non-archaeologists. Subsequently, the professor is murdered by evil archaeologists attempting to gain control of a helium mine in an ancient Native American cave. The archaeologist in *Gun Smoke* (1945) is equally unlucky—murdered by a villainous gang for the gold relics he had discovered at a North American site. The non-heroic nature of the archaeologist is underscored in *Hidden Valley* (1932), where Professor Woolridge hires a cowboy to help him find North American native gold. The adventure turns to tragedy, when the professor is murdered and the innocent cowboy is blamed. In all of these Westerns, the heroic figure is the figure of the

cowboy, the moral force central to the American imagining of the taming of the West.[7] In these films, the archaeologist is a secondary character used to facilitate the excitement. The same is true of other genres. It is a detective, not a cowboy who investigates the murder of the archaeologist, in *Phantom of Chinatown* (1940). Likewise, John Wayne is enlisted to protect archaeologists in *Legend of the Lost* (1957). In 1977's *March or Die*, the Foreign Legion must protect a team of helpless archaeologists from a murderous Arab tribe. Heroes from military backgrounds play this role in *Stargate* (1994), led by Kurt Russel, a tortured army man, who must protect the archaeologist, played by James Spader.

In various film genres, the archaeologist can be found as a character in peril, and himself the object of an heroic quest. Often the hero is the adult child of the archaeologist, or someone who has been retained by the child to rescue the helpless archaeologist who has gotten in over his head, as

Movie poster for *King Solomon's Mines* (1985).

in *Ace Drummond* (1936), *Daughter of the Sun God* (1962), and *Riders of the Whistling Skull* (1937). Recent film pays homage to this Oedipal/Freudian tradition. In *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Indiana Jones goes off in search of his missing mentor, Abner Ravenwood, and, Indy seeks his missing father in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989). In the disappointing 1985 version of *King Solomon's Mines*, Sharon Stone, playing an archaeology student, enlists Richard Chamberlain (playing Alan Quatermain) to help her find her archaeologist father who is missing in Africa. Similarly, Jean Claude van Damme attempts to rescue his father, gone missing in Israel, in the forgettable 2001, *The Order*.

Many of the older heroic figures are combined in Indiana Jones. Allusions to the American West and the myth of the cowboy are manifest in his clothing (brown leather jacket and brown fedora) and equipment (holstered revolver and bullwhip). Most explicitly, Indy's fighting skills and ability to engage in physical feats of daring signify his connection to heroes of past genres. Unlike these past heroes, however, Indy's intellectual abilities are also emphasized. His skill with languages is apparent in his ability not only to sight-read ancient inscriptions, but also to speak numerous languages fluently. Other characters refer to him as Dr. Jones

or Professor Jones, and acknowledge his various intellectual achievements, rather than focussing on his physical prowess. Indy is an heroic, intellectual figure.

The archaeologist is always associated with intelligence. This is the common trait that these movies communicate—that the archaeologist has specialized knowledge and training that allows him or her unique access to an ancient culture. The specialized knowledge of an archaeologist is greatly simplified in film. This is most evident in the reading of inscriptions. For example, the Aramaic in *Stigmata* (1999) is read without difficulty, while Indiana Jones easily reads the Sanskrit on a piece of parchment brought to him in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984). As soon as the inscription is revealed in *Alien vs Predator* (2004), the team archaeologist is able to reconstruct a history where aliens once used Earth as an arena for battle with other types of aliens. In these situations, archaeological knowledge is used as a means of providing the back story or reveal important plot information to the audience. Such plot devices work time after time because the public is conditioned to imagine that this is the scale of knowledge that archaeologists hold about the past. Archaeologists, to the general public, do not make arguments, but learn facts. Their knowledge is less akin to the knowledge of historians or anthropologists, and more akin to the knowledge of the dealers in the *Antiques Road Show*. Archaeologists, in the public imagination, are experts on all past times and cultures, all types of artifacts, and all types of language.

Gaining expertise about the past, according to cinema, brings with it a responsibility to protect the past. In many films, artifacts of the past are in danger and the archaeologist's real role is as intercessor for the relics of ancient times. On the other side of this, the worst peril comes from evil archaeologists who have twisted their role of protector for their own gain. This is a metaphor that is accepted by popular audiences, and is one of the key messages that film provides about archaeology to nonarchaeologists. A sense of urgency about the past is presented, and even if no one really believes that the artifacts are in immediate danger, there is a sense that archaeologists are the guardians of humanity's cultural heritage.

The archaeologist's role as guardian/protector centers on the preservation of artifacts. Much like the "MacGuffin" in an Alfred Hitchcock film (Day 1997: 23), artifacts help to move the plot by providing motivation for the protagonists and forming the basic framework for the adventure or horror story. This disembodied use of artifacts in film highlights an important disconnect between archaeologists and the general public. While archaeologists obviously care about antiquities, it is difficult to convey to the public the importance of preserving and recording

The "MacGuffin"

Alfred Hitchcock used a plot device in his adventure movies that he called a "MacGuffin." This was the object of pursuit, protection, and rescue, by both the heroes and the villains. It could be a briefcase, some kind of scientific device, or an artifact. Hitchcock believed that it was better not to reveal why it was so important to retrieve the object, since it was never possible to have stakes that were realistically high enough to justify the events of the film. Or, if the stakes were presented, they might seem so high that the film becomes implausible and violates the audience's willing suspension of disbelief. For a list of the various "MacGuffins" used in archaeological films, see Day (1997: 23–24).

John Wayne, Rossano Brazzi, and Sophia Loren in *Legend of the Lost* (1957).

their archaeological context. Nonarchaeologists encounter artifacts in a fetishized context in museums, or see films that depict archaeologists desperately trying to recapture stolen artifacts, which further encodes ancient relics with distorted value, challenging real-world archaeologists to explain how and why archaeological sites need to be preserved. An interested lay person, educated through experiences at a museum and informed through the messages of popular cinema, may feel that it is better to retrieve an arrowhead from a site and bring it to an archaeologist rather than simply to leave the artifact in the archaeological context.

It is equally difficult to explain to the public the many roles that archaeologists play beyond mere artifact acquisition and preservation.

Archaeologists in film are never interested in preserving an archaeological site. On the contrary, the site presents a significant barrier to the archaeologist's attempt to gain the object of his quest. Often remote and difficult to get to, the site is filled with a variety of dangers. In mummy films, the tomb is demarcated from the profane world by a curse. In adventure films, booby traps anthropomorphize the site, giving it agency to protect itself from archaeologists and looters. Climactic scenes often involve the destruction of the site, which is never lamented by the archaeologist (e.g. *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*). The site can provide information to the archaeologists, but usually this information is in the form of riddles that must be solved in order to avoid booby traps or to inform about the location of hidden artifacts. Sites are exciting, dangerous, and remote in film, but not themselves the subject of scholarly enquiry.

The Archaeologist as Villain

Archaeologists are not always protagonists in films. Just as frequently, they are depicted as immoral, ruthless, insane, and even evil. These portrayals are particularly telling about the messages popular cinema convey to the general

Planet of the Apes

Archaeology plays an interesting recurring role in the first three Planet of the Apes films. In 1968's Planet of the Apes, three astronauts return to an Earth of the future where humans have become mindless animals and primates dominate the world. Of the primates, Cornelius is an archaeologist and scientist, who has been conducting excavations to prove that humans once were intelligent beings and once ruled the planet. The theocracy, however, does not want this information to be revealed and attempts to ban his work. Within the heavy-handed social commentary, archaeology plays a revolutionary role; it is a type of scientific investigation that can show the truth about the past and subsequently undermine established authority. None of the other Planet of the Apes films or television programs are nearly as memorable, but this archaeological theme does surface frequently, especially in the first two sequels.

public. It is unlikely that anyone truly believes that there are archaeologists attempting to enslave the world by gaining ancient time travel devices (as with Lara Croft's nemesis). Audiences, however, have to believe that the villains truly are bad, and so films convey their villany through various types of unsavory archaeological practices, character traits, and declarations. Moviegoers are told what makes the archaeologist "bad," and, for the film to work, the audience must find these characterizations plausible.

Beyond familiar villainous characteristics (like killing without reason or having a mad desire to rule the world), there are two types of archaeological villains. The villain may be utterly indiscriminating about who he works for, as with Belloq, the lead antagonist in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, who has no loyalty to the Nazis but is simply willing to work with them to achieve his own ends. In an important encounter, Belloq claims that he and Indy are one and the same. Indy denies this, stating that the difference is in the company they choose to keep. The other type of archeological villain is the private collector. In *Boy on a Dolphin* (1957), a film most famous for marking Sophia Loren's American film debut, the antagonists are the collectors who tempt the discoverers of a beautiful statue to sell it rather than take it to a museum. In opposition to either type of villain, the hero is a hero because he wants to share the archaeological treasures with the world, usually through an institution like a museum. The villain greedily wants to possess and control the object for himself. From a cinematic perspective the morality of this issue is clear-cut: private collecting is wrong.

The Dangerous Past

Since the first showing of *The Mummy* (1932), starring the quintessential horror star, Boris Karloff, Near Eastern archaeology has had a close relationship to the horror genre. The "horrors" of horror films are frequently monsters or spirits who have come from the past to cause harm in the present. The various Mummy films are all predicated on the idea that the archaeologist has disturbed something (or someone) that should not have been disturbed. Likewise, films as diverse as *The Exorcist* (1973), *Ghostbusters* (1984), and *Lair of the White Worm* (1988) involve monsters or deities who have been brought back to the earthly realm after long sabbaticals. The archaeologist who has awakened these terrors may be depicted as naively proceeding with his or her work and the dramatic tension lies in the audience's knowledge that the archaeologist is really doing something he should not be. In these films, the past is best left undisturbed.

Similarly, when the dangers of the past take the form of technology rather than monsters (for example, both Lara Croft films and *Stargate*), archaeologists are just as guilty of unearthing something that should be left buried. The villains in such films are typically archaeologists or collectors who

want to use the ancient technology for their own nefarious gain. The heroes, meanwhile, are good archaeologists who want to prevent their evil counterparts from gaining control of that technology. The message is the same as in the monster movies—some things are best left forgotten. When one meddles with the past, one risks grave danger.

These horror films involving technology use another public perception (a perception that is evident at least as early as Herodotus) that in the past there were great technological wonders that have since been forgotten, a theme readily apparent in pseudo-archaeological works as well. Popular film perpetuates this idea as modern unease with technological advancement is projected back on the past. Film audiences are shown that terribly destructive technologies were known, but wisely hidden away by thoughtful ancients. Or, audiences learn that the ancients booby-trapped their tombs to protect their goods from grave robbers or archaeologists. The elaborateness of these traps demonstrates the supposed technological sophistication of the ancients. While it is unlikely that any audience member will believe that the artifacts in a Lara Croft film actually
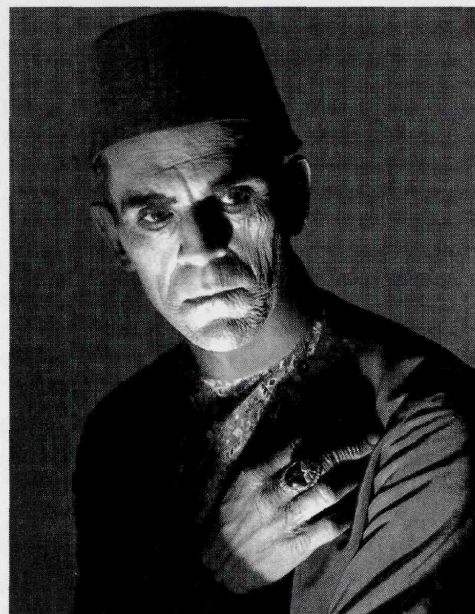

Boris Karloff as *The Mummy* (1932)

The Mummy Movies

The success of Universal's Monster Movies (especially Dracula and Frankenstein) mixed with the media-driven frenzy of the curse of King Tut's tomb led to the creation of a horror film staple–the Mummy. In 1932's The Mummy, Boris Karloff became the first actor to bring Imhotep to life. Wrapped in bandages for only a few moments of film, these brief images left an indelible impression on film audiences. Karloff plays an individual who had been buried alive during the 18th Dynasty as punishment for stealing the sacred scroll of Thoth in order to try to bring his beloved princess back to life. The film follows the mummy's attempts to resurrect his lost love in the 1930s; and this plot provides the framework for many of the later mummy films. It may have been based on an earlier silent film, The Dust of Egypt (1915), which, according to Day (1997: 80), features a mummy who comes back from the dead and is particularly amorous. However, it is Universal's The Mummy's Hand (1940), a follow-up to the 1932 hit, that establishes the more typical conventions of the genre. In this film, archaeologists excavating Princess Ananka's tomb are terrorized by a mummy who has been brought back to life by a modern "priest of Karnak". Excavation members, including Dr. Petrie (!) are killed off one by one, culminating in the kidnapping of the heroine. The direct sequel to this film, The Mummy's Tomb (1942), takes place years after the events of the The Mummy's Hand. In this film, the protagonists of the original are living quiet lives in New England, when the mummy is brought there to kill off all who had disturbed Ananka's tomb in the previous film. In 1959, this movie was remade by Hammer Studios. Titled The Mummy, and starring the horror greats Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, this film is vastly superior to the original and a forgotten gem of the mummy subgenre. More recently, Universal has resurrected its Mummy franchise, starting with 1999's The Mummy, followed by The Mummy Returns (2001) and a prequel of sorts, The Scorpion King (2002). In these mummy movies, professional archaeologists are mostly non-existent, replaced instead by adventure seekers and treasure hunters. The basic premise of Universal's first mummy movie, that Imhotep has come back to life intent on resurrecting his forbidden love lies at the basis of both of the more recent mummy films. However, these new films are clearly situated within the genre of action-adventure as opposed to horror.

exist, or that there really were "stargates," after seeing these films they may be more willing to believe a documentary that describes the technological wonders of Atlantis and the hubris that led to its destruction, for example.

The anxiety about lost knowledge also extends to mystical artifacts. Each of the Indiana Jones movies involves the quest for an artifact that has mystical powers or properties. From a more comic perspective, Jim Carrey, in *The Mask* (1994), obtains a mystical mask that transforms him and gives him remarkable powers. The message that the popular audience takes from films like these is that archaeology can provide access to the dangerous, but compelling, knowledge of the ancients.

All of the dangers that archaeologists are portrayed as encountering when investigating the past reflect a general fear of the unknown. At the surface level, the script writer is simply falling back on a well-established plot device by situating the dangerous monster or object in ancient times. This is an explanatory framework that an audience will accept within the fictional parameters established for the genre.
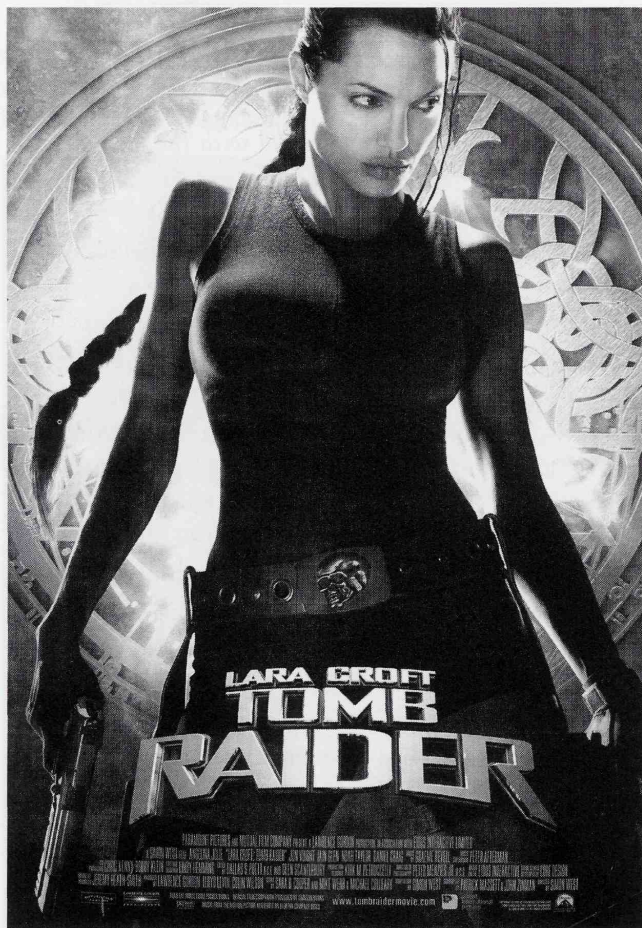
Movie poster for *Lara Croft Tomb Raider* (2001).

Once again though, such plot devices work because of the preconceived notions that the public holds about archaeology and the past. Antiquity represents the unknown—something that has been lost and must be sought and rediscovered.

Oversexed Archaeologists and Undersexed Spouses

There has been a gradual transformation of the popular cinematic conception of the archaeologist from the older, weak victim to the younger, strong heroic figure. With this transformation has come a sexualization of cinematic archaeologists. In the early films (like *The Mummy*), the archaeologists are sexless figures, being either elderly or impassive. This is not simply a symptom of changing cinematic sensibilities that previously did not allow the depiction of sexuality; in *The Mummy* (1932), Zita Johann plays the damsel in distress, and her sexuality is the very evident object of desire for Boris Karloff's mummy. The archaeologist, in contrast, is not sexualized, but is a character without agency who is at the mercy of the mummy. Even as late as *The Exorcist* (1973), the archaeologist who unleashes the ancient menace is in fact a Catholic Priest, and not a sexualized character.

With the Indiana Jones films, the sexuality of archaeological characters is more fully transformed. While teaching his class in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Indy stumbles during his lecture after seeing that one of his students has written "LOVE YOU" on her eyelids. At the beginning of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, reference is made to the non-sexualized image of archaeologists in earlier films when the female protagonist, Willie Scott (played by Kate Capshaw), expresses surprise that Indy is an archaeologist, stating, "Well, I thought archaeologists were always funny little men searching for their mommies." The recent mummy series starring Brendan Fraser, and the Lara Croft movies starring Angelina Jolie, feature archaeological characters that, while not overly sexualized characters themselves, are unquestionably gorgeous. Lara Croft, based on a video game, plays on male lust and female fantasy. The initial action sequence in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* leads directly into an extended shower scene, featuring Angelina Jolie, which does not advance the plot, but certainly sets the tone of the film.

In the few archaeology-romance films, messages about archaeology and sexuality are conveyed. The most fundamental of these is that the field provides an insecure lifestyle. Although most of the archaeologists in these romance films appear to be independently wealthy, their work takes place in geographically unstable locations. The uncomfortable lifestyle or the tension caused by living in remote locations acts as a plot device for the romantic elements. In *I Live My Life* (1935), a bored New York society girl travels to Greece

where she meets an archaeologist and falls in love. The tension in the film is this couple's struggle to come to terms with one another's lifestyle choices. In *La Maison du Maltais* (1938), Safia has an illicit affair with an unseemly figure named Matteo. Although pregnant with Matteo's child, she marries an archaeologist who is wealthy, respectable, and since he travels, provides a plot device to separate Matteo and Safia. In *Otklonenie* (1967), an archaeologist and an engineer reunite seventeen years after their love affair ended, each having chosen their careers over romance. In *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985), Jeff Daniels plays a fictional archaeologist who brings romance into Mia Farrow's life when he literally walks out of the cinema screen.

If the archaeologist is not providing romantic encounters to bored travelers, then he or she is likely involved in a relationship with a graduate student. Neither of these romantic scenarios may seem surprising to archaeologists or academics in general, but nonetheless, it is interesting to note that they are also part of the public consciousness. In *El Tesoro* (1988), the lead character is an archaeologist who brings with him four graduate students, one of whom he is romantically involved with. The supposedly oversexed appetites of archaeologists are apparent in 1980's *On a volé la cuisse de Jupiter*, where two couples (including a Greek professor and an archaeologist) meet each other. The tension starts when the archaeologist discovers the buttocks of a classical statue and wants to donate it to the museum, but his attractive partner wants to sell it. The film turns into a murder mystery, but throughout, the hypersexuality of the archaeologists is always present. The uninhibited nature of modern Greek culture is also emphasized in *Summer Lovers* (1982) where a beautiful female archaeologist complicates the relationship of an American couple (featuring Daryl Hannah in a pre-*Splash* role) visiting the islands. *La Vénus d'Ille* (1962) is a very odd film showing the sexual dangers that an archaeologist can face. Here, an archaeologist slips his wedding ring on a statue's finger with the result that a goddess visits him in the night and his bride-to-be loses her mind.

Of course it is no surprise that there are also cinematic examples of archaeologists who are romantically neglectful (see also Day 1997: 110). Nancy dallies with various men while her husband is away on an excavation in *Borrowed Husbands* (1924). In 1926's *Made For Love*, the wife of the archaeologist has various affairs while her husband is at work. In the Swedish film *Loving Couples* (1966), Angela describes how her archaeologist husband walked out on her and their child, but explains that she has come to terms with her role as a single mother. The consequences are not always simply emotional. In *The Awakening* (1980), Charlton Heston is such a neglectful husband that he does not notice when his wife gives birth to an incarnation of an ancient Egyptian queen.

A Warning to Archaeologists about Funding Agencies and Private Donors

If there is one organization that archaeologists should be cautious about, based on the lessons learned from modern cinema, it is the people who fund archaeological work. At best, funding agencies or private donors in film are cold corporations, uninterested in human concerns and the well-being of the people that they fund, as in Timeline *(2003). At worst, they are immoral villains actively manipulating or working against the archaeologist, in a nefarious plot to control the world (e.g.,* Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*). These people or organizations lack the specialized skills and knowledge that the archaeological heroes possess, and must parasitically attach themselves to the unsuspecting or financially strapped scholar.*

British Thinkers, American Fighters, and Repressed Librarians

The public perception of gender roles in archaeology is also influenced by fictional films, issues that have been well addressed by feminist and gender theory. Messages about gender have real ramifications for archaeologists and the way they negotiate their public roles. Gender roles that are presented or reified by film can be particularly burdensome if not limiting. For male characters, issues of gender are tied up with ethnicity, not unlike detective or spy stories. British archaeologists, if heroic, are heroic because of their intellect and sophistication. American male archaeologists tend to be serious, adventurous, rogueish individuals with a penchant for drinking. British archaeologists tend to think through problems, whereas the Americans fight their way through problems (*Stargate* is an exception to this; both types of heroes appear, but both are Americans). In this particular case, the heroic archaeologist is the thinker, whereas the heroic adventurer is a military man. It is clear that masculinity in archaeology films is marked either by urbanity and intelligence or else by fighting skills.

Female archaeologists seem to fall into one of two categories. They can be privileged women with a love of adventure, who happen to be extraordinarily beautiful, yet are unaware of or unwilling to acknowledge the male gaze. Or, they can be junior level scholars (perhaps graduate students

or librarians), who, when they take off their glasses and let down their hair, become remarkably beautiful (the make-up and costume design for Rachel Weisz in *The Mummy* [1999] is intentionally designed to play on this motif). Women from the first category are either heroes or villains. Of the second category, the female is either one of the heroes or a damsel in distress. Both types of female character exhibit elements of male sexual fantasy, whether they are sexually aggressive or sweet and demure. Yet one should not deny the elements of female fantasy that both of these types of characters provide to women. The shy librarian waiting to be swept off of her feet provides obvious chances for the female viewer to identify and fantasize alongside. Likewise, the more recent Lara Croft character can be equally appealing to women as a model of sexual power.

Certainly not unique to archaeological characters, a moral judgment is implicit in the sexual activities of these women. Lara Croft, while without a doubt a beautiful and powerful woman, chooses to ignore the male gaze and not to utilize her sexual power. In *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, she rebuffs her butler for telling her to act like a lady and be modest about covering her body. This both acknowledges the male desire for her and demonstrates that Lara has no concern for patently male issues. It is interesting to note, however, that there is very little sexual activity in the "Tomb Raider" movies. In the first, Lara participates in a very chaste relationship with a fellow archaeologist and in the second, she has a brief romantic interlude with a past lover, only to gain the upper hand in a quest. By contrast, in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), the audience finds out that Dr. Ilsa Schneider (played by the beautiful Allison Doody) is actually a villain when it is revealed that she had sexual relations with both Indy and his father. Indy, and the audience, are not convinced of her villainy until this information is revealed. Judging by these examples, sexual promiscuity is not a heroic trait for female archaeologists in the cinema.

None of these observations on gender should be particularly surprising for critical film viewers. It is apparent that archaeology in cinema communicates particularly conservative messages to the wider public. It reinforces certain notions that are equally apparent in the fiction of more established genres, such as the western or the detective story. Yet, the general public only rarely encounters an actual private eye or cowboy. When an archaeologist is communicating with the general public, it is very probable that the public is taking these messages about gender into the encounter.

Camels, Deserts, and Assassins:
The Middle East

So much can be said about the depiction of "the Other" in cinematic archaeology that another article would

be required. Certainly archaeological films are guilty of perpetuating "Orientalist" notions of the Near East. The Near East is without a doubt the most frequent backdrop in archaeological cinema. It is an exotic land where European and American characters play out their adventures with the help or hindrance of secondary characters fitting numerous Middle Eastern stereotypes. The environment itself is extreme; there is no representation of the lush gardens in Jerusalem or along the Nile but rather miles of endless desert, dotted by oases or "Bedouin" tent camps.

Archaeology on Television

Television has proven to be another popular medium for archaeology as entertainment, although Near Eastern archaeology per se cannot be said to be as prominent in this medium as it is in film. Often though, archaeology programs are created in response to the success of certain feature films. The central character in Relic Hunter, played by Tia Carrere, is an amalgamation of Indiana Jones and Lara Croft. Stargate SG-1 and Stargate Atlantis are both spin-offs of the feature film, but both manage to go well beyond the original in terms of creativity and well researched archaeological content. Some may remember the brief run of Tales of the Gold Monkey (or Tales of the Brass Monkey as the original promotional material referred to it), which attempted to recreate the adventure of Indiana Jones, with occasional archaeological content. Many television programs feature archaeology, even when this is not the central concern of the program. Both The X-Files and Millennium featured episodes where archaeological excavations revealed dangers from the past. In the various recent incarnations of Star Trek, archaeological excavations also lead to danger. Captain Picard is an amateur archaeologist, and in one episode, prepares to give an academic paper at an archaeological conference. Very frequently, archaeology plays the "MacGuffin" role in television programs. Recent programs such as Alias and Smallville include desperate quests for archaeological "MacGuffins."

Archaeology and Japanese Cinema

For the most part, archaeology fulfills the same plot functions in Japanese cinema as in Hollywood films. In Yokai Hanta—Hiruko (1990), the main hero is an archaeologist who uses his knowledge of the past to defeat a goblin. The genre of Japanese cartoon known as anime frequently features archaeologists. In these extremely violent and stylized cartoons, archaeologists typically play heroic roles. In the animated Project A-Ko 4: Final (1989), archaeological ruins provide the key to understanding the invasion of an alien fleet. Similarly science-fiction oriented is Majingâ Zetto (1972), which features archaeologists investigating the ruins of an ancient civilization that used to build giant robots. The examples of archaeology in anime are nearly endless. This brief sampling, however, is representative of the way the genre approaches archaeology in general.

Even though many of the films are set in the Near East, the protagonists in archaeological films are almost exclusively of European descent.[8] British archaeologists are by far the most common, and are usually situated within the British upper classes. In some films, such as the early Universal mummy films, lower class British characters provide the comic relief; they are the bumbling hapless characters who may have good intentions but lack the abilities and mental acuity to keep out of trouble. Class is not so obviously marked in films featuring American protagonists. However, occasionally characters with markedly Brooklyn or Bronx accents fulfill the same comic function as their lower class British counterparts. In these instances, the comedy comes not necessarily from the New Yorker's lack of intelligence, but more from their greed and general cowardice in the face of danger. Both British and American archaeologists are the characters with whom the audience is supposed to identify. Viewers approach the exotic peoples and cultures through the eyes of these characters.

Non-British Europeans are not portrayed as positively in the cinema. The German archaeologist is the quintessential bad guy. In World War II-era films (taking place in and out of the Near East), German archaeologists are spies, saboteurs, or thieves (for example, 1939's Death Rides the Range).

Certainly these roles reflect general Allied sentiments during World War II and Hollywood's role in propagandizing and rallying support for the war. After relations with Germany normalized, however, the German archaeologist retained his villainous status. However, instead of emphasizing their German ethnicity, film-makers emphasized their affiliations with the Nazi party, which have clear villainous overtones (the Indiana Jones films are the best example of this). Frequently the French are depicted as bad as well. Though not normally evil, the French archaeologist, in Hollywood cinema, is unscrupulous and immoral, and will stop at nothing to make an archaeological find or to steal credit from another. The best example of this is the character of Belloq in Raiders of the Lost Ark.

Most archaeological films that take place in Near Eastern locales also feature local characters, typically of three types, all rooted in Western stereotypes of the Middle East. There are those "noble savages" who are extremely well educated and are, for some reason or another, protecting the archaeological finds from falling into the wrong hands. Almost always, these locals are inscrutable members of secret societies that trace their lineage back to ancient times (see Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, and the character of Ardeth Bey in the two most recent Universal "Mummy" movies starring Brendan Fraser). Generally these characters are descendents of tribes that were not assimilated into Islam, but rather retained earlier faiths. As in the Brendan Fraser films, these locals are expert horsemen and camel riders, expert swordsmen, and entirely devoted to the ancient cause. However powerful these people are, though, they still require an American or British archaeologist to save the day.

In the same vein, there are versions of these local archaeologists who collude with evil forces. In these situations, the individual may have religious devotion to an evil ancient force or may simply be too weak to stand up to a foe or evil demon. Middle Eastern characters of lesser significance may simply be the goons of other bad guys. Frequently, Arab goons are assassins, using their skills with poisons or swords to thwart the heroes.

Finally, there are those local archaeologists who simply lack the skills of their visiting counterparts. The poor, uninformed local archaeologist must rely on the heroic intelligence and physical skills of the American or British archaeologist to find the treasure or save the world. While archaeologists of Middle Eastern nationality may be well intentioned, they tend to lack the physical prowess and mental agility to solve the problems without British or American assistance. There are no Yadin-like heroes from the cinematic Middle East. Whether good, bad, or neutral, the Middle Easterner in archaeological cinema never truly holds full agency in archaeological cinema.

An Archaeology Filmography

Abbott and Costello Meet the Mummy (1955)
Ace Drummond (1936)
Alan Quatermain and the Lost City of Gold (1987)
Alien from L.A. (1988)
Alien vs. Predator (2004)
Ancient Evil: Scream of the Mummy (2000)
Artificial Intelligence: A.I. (2001)
Awakening, The (1980)
Baby Krishna (1998) (Japan)
Beneath the Planet of the Apes (1970)
Bleak Future (1997)
Body, The (2001)
Borrowed Husbands (1924)
Boy on a Dolphin (1957)
Cabeza viviente, La (1961) (Mexico)
Caltiki - il mostro immortale (1960) (Italy)
Carry On Behind (1975)
Charlie Chan in Egypt (1935)
Crystal Triangle (1987) (Japan)
Curse of the Faceless Man (1958)
Curse of the Mummy's Tomb, The (1965)
Dangerous Venture (1947)
Death Curse of Tartu (1966)
Death Rides the Range (1940)
Demons at the Door (2003)
Dig, The (1995)
Dominion: Prequel to the Exorcist (2005)
Dust of Egypt, The (1915)
Dve luny, tri solntsa (1998) (Russia/Ukraine)
Escape From the Planet of the Apes (1973)
Exorcist, The (1973)
Exorcist: The Beginning (2004)
Flying Serpent, The (1946)
Friends (1993) (South Africa/France)
Ghostbusters (1984)
Glass Sphynx, The (1968)
Guide (1965) (India)
Gun Smoke (1945)
Hidden Valley (1932)
Horror of Snape Island (1972)
I Live My Life (1935)
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989)
Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984)
Isis (1975)
Jiang shi xian sheng xu ji (1986) (Hong Kong)
Kid Millions (1934)
King Solomon's Mines (1985)
Lair of the White Worm (1988)
Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life (2003)
Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001)
Legend of the Lost (1957)
Lilovyj shar (1987) (Russia)
Live Wire, The (1935)
Long Shadow, The (1992) (Israel/Hungary)
Loving Couples (1966) (Sweden)
Maison du Maltais, La (1938)
Majingâ Zetto (1972) (Japan)

Manteau, Le (1996) (France)
March or Die (1977)
Mask, The (1961)
Mask, The (1994)
Mask of Fu Manchu (1932)
Master Keaton (1998)
Minion, The (1998)
Mole People, The (1956)
Mr. Moto Takes a Vacation (1939)
Mummy, The (1932)
Mummy, The (1959)
Mummy, The (1999)
Mummy and the Curse of the Jackal, The (1969)
Mummy's Boys (1936)
Mummy's Curse, The (1944)
Mummy's Ghost, The (1944)
Mummy's Hand, The (1940)
Mummy's Shroud, The (1967)
National Treasure (2004)
On a volé la cuisse de Jupiter (1980) (France)
Order, The (2001)
Orion's Key (1996)
Otklonenie (1967) (Bulgaria)
Out for a Kill (2003)
Pascali's Island (1988)
Phantom of Chinatown (1940)
Pharaoh's Curse, The (1956)
Planet of the Apes (1968)
Plunder of the Sun (1953)
Project A-Ko 4: Final (1989) (V)
Purple Rose of Cairo, The (1985)
Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)
Rebel Storm (1990)
Riders of the Whistling Skull (1937)
Robot Wars (1993)
Rock 'N' Roll Wrestling Women vs. the Aztec Mummy (1964) (Mexico)
Rundown, The (2003)
Runestone, The (1990)
Sabirni centar (1989) (Serbo-Croatian)
South of Algiers (1953)
Sphinx (1981)
Spring, The (1989)
Stargate (1994)
Summer Lovers (1982)
Susana y yo (1957) (Spain)
Tale of the Mummy (1998)
Tarzan and the Amazons (1945)
Tesoro, El (1988) (Spain)
Timeline (2003)
Tomb, The (1986)
Une femme ou deux (1985) (France)
Unearthed (2004)
Valley of the Kings (1954)
Vénus d'Ille, La (1962) (Belgium)
Werewolf (1996)
Witch Hunter (1997)
Yokai Hanta - Hiruko (1990) (Japan)

Outreach and Cinema

Film conveys many messages to the general public about archaeology and archaeologists. While film is supposed to be entertaining, and most audiences understand that it is fiction, non-archaeologists still "learn" much about archaeology at the movie theatre. Archaeologists who seek to reach out to the wider public must take these messages into account, whether they accept or reject the cinematic images. For archaeologists, successfully communicating archaeological information to the general public requires negotiating the preconceived beliefs with which the public approaches the profession. Joyce and Preucel argue that archaeology carries with it universal narrative meaning, which derives from the public images of Indiana Jones and the adventure narratives in which archaeology is situated (2002: 27–28). This means that the authority of the archaeologist (in the public eye) is tied up in the archaeologist's heroic persona. Given the formative role of heroic narrative in Near Eastern archaeology, modern Near Eastern archaeologists are under even more pressure than archaeologists who work in other regions, as they must successfully negotiate between the fantasy (the archaeologist of film) and the reality (the archaeologist of the academy) in order to communicate successfully with a public whose perceptions of the field, for better or worse, are sculpted through popular film.

Notes

1. Thanks are due to Elizabeth Galway, Benjamin Porter, and Matthew Rutz for reading drafts of this article, and to Sandra Scham and Benjamin Porter for initially suggesting that an article on film would be valuable. This article is dedicated, with many thanks, to another archaeologist and movie buff, Walter E. Aufrecht, whose considerable knowledge of film still left him confused about *Donnie Darko*.

2. Lowenkopf (1996: 575). Lowenkopf also mistakenly states that the Indiana Jones films were based on the Rob MacGregor novels. The opposite is in fact the case. Numerous authors have written novels involving Indiana Jones, based on the characters from the films. Indiana Jones is the creation of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg.

3. To set the record straight, there is no "real Indiana Jones." He is a fictitious character that Steven Spielberg and George Lucas created in an attempt to mix James Bond with the heroes of 1930s serials. Since the Indy films are purposeful throwbacks to a pre-processualist archaeology, it is very fitting that Indy is more akin to early heroic archaeologists like Layard than to Scientificist, science-oriented archaeologists.

4. One of these messages worth acknowledging is basic yet still important. The validity of archaeology as a discipline is never questioned. Most evident in films like *Planet of the Apes* (1968) and *Artificial Intelligence: A.I.* (2001), it is suggested that, centuries from now and for different species, archaeology will remain a legitimate means of understanding the past.

5. Marshall College in New York seems to be an amalgam of Princeton, Yale and the University of Chicago, although in other press material about *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Indy is said to teach at Barnett College. In the television program, *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, audiences are informed that Indy's Dad was a professor of medieval studies at Princeton and that Indy received his doctorate from the University of Chicago.

6. The study of heroes has also been skewed in the public consciousness by the writings of Joseph Campbell, who argues along simplified Jungian lines that heroes are the same in myths around the world. I approach the topic from almost the opposite perspective (following Bakhtin 1982: 335), taking heroic attributes as distinct to the culture that produced the character.

7. It is noteworthy that scholars have established that cowboy language is also used in professional conceptualizations of archaeology (see Joyce and Preucel 2002: 27 and their comments on Gero 1983 and 1985).

8. The exceptions here are the few films from Japan that feature Japanese archaeologists. Most of these films have failed to gain exposure on a global level.

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