Fall 2021

Reflections on the State of Northwest Archaeology: Essays in Honor of Virginia Butler: Introduction

Shelby L. Anderson
Portland State University, ashelby@pdx.edu

Jeremy Spoon
Portland State University, jspoon@pdx.edu

Citation Details

Anderson, S & Spoon, J., 2021. Reflections on the State of Northwest Archaeology: Essays in Honor of Virginia Butler: Introduction. Journal of Northwest Anthropology. 55(2): 1-6.

Reflections on the State of Northwest Archaeology: Essays in Honor of Virginia Butler

Shelby L. Anderson, Jeremy Spoon, Michele Ruth Gamburd, Madonna L. Moss, Patrick (Pat) Lubinski, Dana Lepofsky, Gary Wessen, Douglas Deur, Perry Chocktoot Jr., Elizabeth (Betsy) J. Reitz, Dave Ellis, Julie K. Stein, Douglas Wilson, Virginia Parks, Lyssia Merrifield, Scott Thomas, Kelly Cannon-Miller, Chelsea Rose, Amanda Taylor, Bob Kopperl, Ross Smith, and Virginia L. Butler

Introduction

Shelby L. Anderson and Jeremy Spoon

Affiliation Portland State University

Correspondence ashelby@pdx.edu; jspoon@pdx.edu

Dr. Virginia Butler is an inspirational force. She guided and mentored us as junior scholars, helping us actualize our visions for an equitable, community-engaged anthropological practice. We organized this compilation to honor the depth and breadth of Virginia Butler's contributions to Pacific Northwest archaeology, past and present, and to encourage our colleagues to look to the future and consider where we are, or should be, headed in Pacific Northwest Archaeology. We solicited essays from friends and colleagues of Virginia who teach and practice archaeology and archaeology in environmental anthropology and cultural resource management; their responses are compelling, instructive, and inspiring. The contributors identified three overlapping areas in which Virginia has made significant contributions to our field both regionally and much further afield: zooarchaeology, interdisciplinary research on human ecodynamics or human-environment interactions, and public/collaborative archaeology (Table 1).

Virginia is well known for her substantive contributions to the methods and practice of zooarchaeology, specifically in the analysis of fish bones. She is an adept practitioner of scientific archaeology focused on zooarchaeology from an evolutionary perspective, and she is known for her excellent mentorship of zooarchaeology students (Gamburd; Taylor, below). Despite ample ethnographic information and descendent knowledge about fish and fishing, there was very little archaeological information on fish and fisheries prior to the 1970s. Virginia's early zooarchaeological work emerged during an era of increased specialization in archaeology. Archaeologists increasingly applied methods and concepts from other scientific fields to our work, and also developed methods and techniques specific to archaeology; of paramount importance was the development of a strong scientific argument that could be evaluated through carefully collected evidence (Ellis; Taylor, below). As part of this scientific archaeology, Virginia developed cutting-edge and innovative methods in zooarchaeology that brought increased rigor and knowledge to the study of fish remains (Lepofsky; Lubinski; Moss; Reitz below) (Butler 1987; Smith et al. 2011; Hofkamp and Butler 2017; Nims and Butler 2017; Nims et al. 2020).

Virginia has published more than 20 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on Pacific Northwest fish and fisheries alone.

Her efforts have changed what we know about the relative importance of different fisheries to past people, and provided unique insights into the health and distribution of past fish species. These findings have important implications for archaeology, but also for reconstructing past environments, and for modern policy, fisheries management, and conservation biology efforts (Butler; Lepofsky; Lubinski; Moss; Reitz, below) (Moss et al. 2011; Thornton et al. 2011; McKechnie et al. 2014). Deur and Chocktoot (below) detail how their collaboration with Virginia and others in a study of Klamath River fishes has provided information important for Tribal conservation efforts. Virginia's research on past human-animal interactions and conservation biology issues extends beyond fish to other animal populations and to larger anthropological questions. For example, she collaborated on research on past Oregon sea otter populations (Valentine et al. 2008), pre-contact dogs (Ames et al. 2015), and late Pleistocene megafauna (Gilmour et al. 2015). Most recently, Virginia led a large collaborative project at the Číx^{w}icən site, located near Port Angeles, Washington (Butler et al. 2019). Virginia and colleagues studied the ways people were affected by environmental change over the last 2,000 years through analysis of a variety of animal remains, more than 100 radiocarbon ages, and stratigraphic records. Driving this work is a larger interest in better understanding the resilience of the Číx^{w}icən people to various catastrophic events (e.g., earthquakes and climate change). The Číx^{w}icən research team synthesized a large and complex dataset, perhaps the largest archaeological collection ever generated by excavation in the Pacific Northwest (Butler et al. 2019). In addition to scientific goals, this project was, and continues to be, directed at addressing concerns and interests of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe (descendants of Číx^{w}icən village inhabitants) about archaeological research at the site.

The Číx^{w}icən Project demonstrates Virginia's ability to bring together diverse groups of people to work toward a common goal, and also her increased focus on public, community, and collaborative archaeology in more recent years (Stein, below). Virginia excels at building rapport and in bringing people together to address tough problems and to share knowledge and experiences. She has been personally and professionally community-oriented throughout her career, which is reflected in her teaching and mentoring (Kopperl and Smith; Taylor, below), extensive service record at Portland State University (PSU) (Gamburd, below), and the development and expansion of the PSU Archaeology Roadshow (Gamburd; Parks et al., below). Butler collaborated with Deur and an undergraduate student to identify municipal government policies and approaches that might improve policy and public attitudes towards archaeology in the Portland area (Deur and Butler 2016). From this study, Virginia identified the need to engage the public more deeply in local archaeology in order to bring about awareness and change in local and regional archaeology and heritage policy. To that end, Virginia initiated what is now an annual event, the Archaeology Roadshow (Gamburd; Parks et al., below). The Archaeology Roadshow is an all-day celebration of archaeology that brings together PSU faculty and students, Tribes, federal and state agencies, private companies, and avocational organizations to create exhibits and hands on-activities that showcase our local heritage (https://www.pdx.edu/anthropology/archaeology-roadshow). The Roadshow combines interactive exhibits and activities presented by partners and students; it includes artifact identification where the public brings personal treasures for expert review. The project has grown in many ways over the years, with the tenth event taking place virtually in spring of 2021. The Roadshow started in the basement of Cramer Hall, then moved to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) for two years, and now has a home at Hoffman Hall on the PSU campus. There are also two satellite events held annually in collaboration with the communities of Burns (2018–2021) and Bend (2019–2021), Oregon. The event has

grown from 150 visitors in 2012 to 1,000 visitors in 2018; by 2019 the event drew more than 1,000 people, and the exhibits expanded from approximately 10 activities to approximately 40 at the last in-person event in 2019. In 2020 and 2021, the Roadshow was held virtually due to COVID-19 safety requirements, which led to an innovative virtual interactive format. The ultimate goal is to promote stewardship of Oregon's heritage and educate about the value of archaeology and history to people's everyday lives; this mission aligns with Virginia's other work and collaborations (Wilson, below).

Virginia's career is an example of how the practice of archaeology has changed over time, which mirrors broader trends in our discipline (Butler; Lepofsky; Stein; Taylor, below). There has been a movement over the last 40 years from an archaeology operating separately from Tribes and other descendant communities (and from anthropology more broadly) toward a more collaborative archaeology where archaeologists/anthropologists work in partnership with Tribes toward shared goals and community priorities. As Butler points out, these changes were brought about in large part by Tribal efforts to assert sovereignty over cultural resources work in the Pacific Northwest, as well as the development and expansion of national and local legislation that enforced a new way of working together. In this sense, Tribes are co-producing knowledge with archaeologists and often are educating archaeologists to improve our practice. As collaboration and applied archaeology (in academia, not just in cultural resource management) becomes normalized in Pacific Northwest archaeology and in archaeology more broadly, where will Pacific Northwest archaeology go in the future? Many of the trends identified by contributors—and exemplified by Virginia's work—are the necessary building blocks for the archaeology and anthropology we (Anderson and Spoon) are working for in the future. Cross-training students across the sub-fields of anthropology, and in other fields such as Indigenous Studies, in addition to the classic archaeological specializations in biology, geology, and chemistry, will do much to move our discipline towards the goal of a better, more ethical anthropological practice. The pressures of cultural resource management, where work is driven by development rather than pursuit of knowledge, will also have to be addressed (Kopperl and Smith, below).

That future is a more diverse, inclusive, and collaborative (or co-produced) anthropology; an anti-racist archaeology and anthropology that recognizes and disrupts white supremacy and is fully engaged in the present-day issues and priorities of descendent communities and broader society. Influencing this future are the current discussions on social justice related to the MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and other social movements (Franklin et al. 2020; Hodgetts et al. 2020; Flewellen et al. 2021; Voss 2021). Creating a more just and equitable future includes elevating different ways of knowing in order to address complex multifaceted problems, such as anthropogenic climate change (Fatorić and Seekamp 2019). Further, representation has also been central to discussions of equity. As a female archaeologist in a white male-dominated professional landscape (Fulkerson and Tushingham 2019; Heath-Stout 2020), Virginia led the way for future female representation in the field. She has also increased Indigenous authority in her research projects, challenging the colonial roots of anthropology where host communities were seen merely as informants from whom to extract knowledge. There are many challenges to achieving a more just and equitable anthropological future, including the forces in both academia and the public/private sector that reproduce existing, problematic structures and practices. Virginia's career journey helps to guide us on how archaeological practice evolves over time depending on the state of the world. She has now inspired the next generation to push for more progressive changes to archaeology and anthropology more generally, making it practical and useful to the world as we learn about and honor our past for a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient future.

Table 1. Contents of "Reflections on the State of Northwest Archaeology: Essays in Honor of Virginia Butler."

REFERENCES CITED

Ames, Ken A., C. Speller, D. Yang, M. Richards, R.L. Lyman, and Virginia L. Butler
2015 Stable Isotope and aDNA Analysis of Dog Remains from Cathlapotle (45CL1), a Contact-Era Site on the Lower Columbia River. *Journal of Archaeological Science,* 57:268–282.

Butler, Virginia L.
1987 Distinguishing Natural from Cultural Salmonid Remains in the Pacific Northwest of North America. In *Natural Formation Processes and the Archaeological Record*, edited by David T. Nash and M. D. Petraglia, pp. 131–147. *BAR International Series*, No. 352. Oxford.

Butler, Virginia L., Kristine M. Bovy, Sarah K. Campbell, Michael A. Etnier, and Sarah L. Sterling
2019 The Číxʷicən Project of Northwest Washington State, U.S.A.: Opportunity Lost, Opportunity Found. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, 23:1095–1102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2018.03.010>.

Deur, Douglas, and Virginia L. Butler
2016 Incorporating Archaeology into Local Government Historic Preservation and Planning: a Review of Current Practice. *Journal of the American Planning Association, Special Issue on Historic Preservation and Planning,* 82(2):189–203.

Fatorić, Sandra, and Erin Seekamp
2019 Knowledge Co-Production in Climate Adaptation Planning of Archaeological Sites. *Journal of Coastal Conservation*, 23(3):689–698.

Flewellen, Ayana Omilade, Justin P. Dunnavant, Alicia Odewale, Alexandra Jones, Tsione Wolde-Michael, Zoë Crossland, and Maria Franklin
2021 "The Future of Archaeology Is Antiracist": Archaeology in the Time of Black Lives Matter. *American Antiquity*, 86(2), 224–243. <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.18>.

Franklin, Maria, Justin P. Dunnavant, Ayana Omilade Flewellen, and Alicia Odewale
2020 The Future is Now: Archaeology and the Eradication of Anti-Blackness. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 24:753–766. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-020-00577-1>.

Fulkerson, Tiffany J., and Shannon Tushingham
2019 Who Dominates the Discourses of the Past? Gender, Occupational Affiliation, and Multivocality in North American Archaeology Publishing. *American Antiquity*, 84(3):379–399.

Gilmour, Daniel M., Virginia L. Butler, Jim E. O'Connor, Edward Byrd Davis, Brendan J. Culleton, Douglas J. Kennett, and Gregory Hodgins
2015 Chronology and Ecology of Late Pleistocene Megafauna of the Northern Willamette Valley. *Quaternary Research,* 83:127–136.

Heath-Stout, Laura E.
2020 Who Writes About Archaeology? An Intersectional Study of Authorship in Archaeological Journals. *American Antiquity,* 85(3):407–426.

Hodgetts, Lisa, Kisha Supernant, Natasha Lyons, and John R. Welch
2020 Broadening #MeToo: Tracking Dynamics in Canadian Archaeology Through a Survey on Experiences Within the Discipline. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, 44(1):20–47.

Hofkamp, Anthony R., and Virginia L. Butler
2017 On the Validity of the Radiographic Method for Determining Age of Ancient Salmon. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports,* 12:449–456.

McKechnie, Iain, Dana Lepofsky, Madonna L. Moss, Virginia L. Butler, Trevor J. Orchard, Gary Coupland, Fredrick Foster, Megan Caldwell, and Ken Lertzman
2014 Archaeological Data Provide Alternative Hypotheses on Pacific Herring (*Clupea pallasii*) Distribution, Abundance, and Variability. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* 111(9):E807–E816. <www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1316072111>.

Moss, Madonna L., Virginia L. Butler, and J. Tait Elder
2011 Herring Bones in Southeast Alaskan Archaeological Sites: The Record of Tlingit Use of Yaaw (Pacific Herring, *Clupea pallasii*). In *Archaeology of North Pacific Fisheries*, edited by Madonna Moss and Aubrey Cannon, pp. 281–291. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.

Nims, Reno, and Virginia L. Butler
2017 Assessing Reproducibility in Faunal Analysis Using Blind Tests: A Case Study from Northwestern North America. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports,* 11:750–761.

Nims, Reno, Darby Filimoehala, Melinda S. Allen, and Virginia L. Butler
2020 When Less is More: Element Selection as Sampling Strategy in Zooarchaeology. *Journal of Archaeological Science,* 121(September): 105205. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2020.105205>.

Smith, Ross E., Virginia L. Butler, Shelia Orwoll, and Catherine Wilson-Skogen
2011 Pacific Cod and Salmon Structural Bone Density: Implications for Interpreting Butchering Patterns in North Pacific Archaeofaunas. In *Archaeology of North Pacific Fisheries,* edited by Madonna Moss and Aubrey Cannon, pp. 45–56. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.

Thornton, Thomas F., Madonna L. Moss, Virginia L. Butler, Fritz Funk, and Jamie Hebert
2011 Local and Traditional Knowledge and the Historical Ecology of Pacific Herring. *Journal of Ecological Anthropology,* 14(1):81–88.

Valentine, Kim, Deborah A. Duffield, Lorelei E. Patrick, David R. Hatch, Virginia L. Butler, Roberta L. Hall, and Niles Lehman
2008 Ancient DNA reveals Genotypic Relationships Among Oregon Populations of the Sea Otter (*Enhydra lutris). Conservation Genetics,* 9(4):933–938.

Voss, Barbara L.
2021 Documenting Cultures of Harassment in Archaeology: A Review and Analysis of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Studies. *American Antiquity*, 86(2):244–260. <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.118>.