Gardening time

Monuments and landscape from Sardinia, Scotland and Central Europe in the very long Iron Age

Edited by Simon Stoddart, Ethan D. Aines & Caroline Malone
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with contributions from
Ian Armit, John Barber, Lindsey Büster, Louisa Campbell, Giandaniele Castangia, Graeme Cavers, Anna Depalmas, Matthew Fitzjohn, Mary-Cate Garden, Andy Heald, Luca Lai, Robert Lenfert, Mary MacLeod Rivett, Hannah Malone, Phil Mason, Megan Meredith-Lobay, Mauro Perra, Ian Ralston, John Raven, David Redhouse, Tanja Romankiewicz, Niall Sharples, Alfonso Stiglitz, Dimitris Theodossopoulos, Carlo Tronchetti, Alessandro Usai, Alessandro Vanzetti, Peter Wells & Rebecca Younger
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Simon Stoddart
A tribute in honour of Giovanni Lilliu
(1914–2012)

Anna Depalmas

Remembering Giovanni Lilliu may seem an easy task. One might think that it is only necessary to list his rich scientific bibliography and to describe his great work over the course of nearly a century, as a university professor and archaeologist. However, a simple listing of his achievements would not transmit the true importance of his work. He not only illuminated the prehistoric archaeology of Sardinia, but also used it to establish the idea of a Sardinian epic which he connected to the modern world.

Prehistory was the choice of his field of study – rather than the predominant exaltation of the Roman era and classicism of the time –, and this had its origins in his study under Ugo Rellini at Rome. He graduated in 1938 and worked as Rellini’s assistant until 1942, when he returned to Sardinia to take up the position of Professor of Historical Archaeology and Geography at the University of Cagliari. From 1942 to 1958, he taught various subjects – Paleoethnology, Geography and the History of Religion - and in the latter year became a Full Professor and was appointed to the Chair of Sardinian Antiquity at the University of Cagliari. From 1944 to 1955 he also worked for the Superintendency of Sardinian Antiquity.

He held many posts in his long academic career. He was for a long time, and on various occasions, dean of the Faculty of Letters, Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Arts, Director of the School of Specialization in Sardinian Studies and Editor of the Journal carrying the same name (Studi Sardi), and, in 1990, he was elected a fellow of the Academy of Lincei of Rome. In his later years, he remained a very active Professor Emeritus at Cagliari University.

In 1936, while he was still a student, he published his first work on Su Nuraxi di Barumini. This was his birthplace, and throughout his life he maintained a close and almost embodied connection with the village. This also led him to carry out his most important archaeological work in the landscape of his birth. Indeed, between 1951 and 1956, he worked on excavating an artificial hill there, which was found to cover the nuragic complex of Su Nuraxi di Barumini. This was the first excavation conducted in Sardinia using a stratigraphic methodology to establish a time-line for the nuragic period, and it became a benchmark for later investigations and chronological research. His work at Barumini formed the basis for a series of fundamental papers on Sardinian proto-history, from I nuraghi. Torri preistoriche di Sardegna (The Nuraghi, prehistoric towers of Sardinia) in 1962 to Civiltà nuragica (Nuragic civilization) in 1982.

He was the first to study many of the themes that he investigated in depth during his long scientific career and many of these were only studied for the first time in the first half of the twentieth century. The chronology of proto-Sardinian civilization was one key field that he developed, modified and changed in the course of his long academic career. At the same time, Lilliu published a brief essay in which he attempted to identify certain constant factors in the history of Sardinian art, and this was developed in the catalogue for the exhibition of Sardinian bronzes in Venice in 1949. Following the theories of Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli on how to classify the art of the ancient world, Lilliu assessed the coexistence of the ‘anti-naturalistic’ art of the barbarian world and the ‘naturalistic’ art of the classical world within which he inserted Sardinia as a ‘land of pure expression’, and defined as anti-classical and barbaric. This line of thought became the nucleus of a theme which he studied from various angles and which helped him to define key concepts in his field of study.

At the beginning of the 1960s, he published his wide-ranging synthesis of Sardinia, La civiltà dei Sardi dal Neolitico all’età dei nuraghi (1963) (Sardinian Civilization from the Neolithic period to the nuragic
Sardinia and of progressive positions which were initiatives which promoted the independence of Christian Democrats and later as a supporter of also involved in politics, first as a member of the drafting the Special Statute of Autonomy. He was he worked for the Regional Council of Sardinia, and acute, despite his soft tone. As a cultured man, in a way which was never dull but rather vigilant taking on civic responsibilities, which he fulfilled on current events in Sardinia (and not only those subjects – with great versatility he also taught Geography and Christian archaeology). What I will personally remember is his ‘father of his country’. One of the many lessons that raised by him.

This work was later reprinted, expanded and revised in various editions until 1988. Apart from incorporating the results of later research, the later editions also allowed him to reassess some of his earlier observations with a critical eye, which was always one of his great strengths as a researcher and academic. The book proposed that a single unifying thread ran through Sardinian prehistory from the Neolithic period, even starting in the Palaeolithic period, until the Phoenician conquest. It established elements of the historiography of the island using data obtained from his work as an archaeologist. Many of the principal Sardinian monuments were described in an elegant style which alternated with detailed, creative and lyrical descriptions. The book was aimed at not only archaeologists and students, but also at a wider public, and indeed the book was dedicated to ‘the shepherds of Barbagia’. Generations of archaeologists have studied the manual and found themselves cited in later editions, in agreement with Lilliu’s global historiographical approach which aimed to unite past archaeological research with his experience of teaching Sardinian Antiquity in a university context. This book also gave birth to a national and popular history of prehistoric Sardinia, and expanded the work of archaeologists and their research from being only something studied in university lecture rooms and solely of interest to academics to its status as part of the common heritage of all Sardinians.

This social dimension, this impact, can be clearly seen from Giovanni Lilliu’s popularity, which came from having shone a light on the national history of Sardinia and giving life to a Sardinian historiographical tradition, i.e. one with a strong sense of identity. His fame led to him being consulted, even in the later years of his life, on current events in Sardinia not necessarily related to culture or archaeology and being seen as a kind of prophet or even as the ‘father of his country’. One of the many lessons that he taught us, and in which he himself was an expert, was the importance of intellectuals being able to discuss, communicate and talk about complex historical themes in a way which was both comprehensible and of interest to laymen.

He showed a total but clear love for his land by taking on civic responsibilities, which he fulfilled in a way which was never dull but rather vigilant and acute, despite his soft tone. As a cultured man, he worked for the Regional Council of Sardinia, drafting the Special Statute of Autonomy. He was also involved in politics, first as a member of the Christian Democrats and later as a supporter of initiatives which promoted the independence of Sardinia and of progressive positions which were close to the Centre-Left. In practice, he was active in actions which were designed to give greater value to Sardinian identity and culture.

The ideological basis for these activities were elaborated by Giovanni Lilliu at the start of his intellectual life, and were made completely clear in the 1970s when he developed the concept of ‘constant Sardinian resistance’. At the beginning of the first prehistoric phase, the Sardinians were characterized by their resistance to foreign invaders and any attempts at acculturation. This characteristic did not disappear in ancient times, but has been a constant theme of Sardinian history and ethnicity, and is still present today. In this sense, Sardinian culture is not a fossil, but rather displays an extraordinary historical continuity with the past. This is an analysis which never became an idealization of aspects of Sardinian society and behaviour, but rather provided a clear and realistic picture through also identifying its negative aspects and its limitations. Nuragic civilization in particular became a symbol of a polycentric society, always in conflict with itself, the land and foreign invaders.

However, it is certainly limiting to supply a rigid definition of what Lilliu meant by nuragic civilization, given that he saw it as a dialectical relationship between its various dimensions, and worked on a reconstruction of it that was complex and multi-faceted. He proposed an interpretation of nuragic civilization that saw it not as local but Mediterranean. In this, he was greatly influenced by his direct experience of excavations in the village of Ses Paisses in Majorca, where he found ethnic roots which were common to all the large islands of the West Mediterranean, the Baleares and Corsica, although there were also differences connected to the independent developments drawing on their insularity.

The fact that he found writing easy as can be seen from his some 330 publications. The last of these was in 2010, and was a detailed description of the excavation of the Giant’s Tomb of Bidistili in Fonni. It is worth saying that many of the present arguments about certain elements and problems of prehistoric and proto-historic Sardinia were originally raised by him.

I would like to end this brief and partial memorial to Giovanni Lilliu by mentioning his work as a university professor of prehistoric and proto-historic Sardinia (and not only those subjects – with great versatility he also taught Geography and Christian archaeology). What I will personally remember is his little figure in jacket and pullover (he seldom, if ever, wore a tie), typewritten sheets in hand, and always punctual. He never postponed a lesson and was never
absent. As an examiner he was always courteous and understanding. But you had to be very well prepared for his exams. The end of the course every year was the moment that we all waited for. Then there were the one or two day excursions that he led us on to various parts of Sardinia. We students would present our explanations of the monuments and he would listen with great attention as if it were his first visit, and then sometimes add some of his own memories, making it ever more clear how he was the creator of our view of prehistoric Sardinia.

He really was the memory of Sardinian history.
Tributes to Dr David Trump, FSA, UOM (1931–2016),
and Dr Euan MacKie, FSA (1936–2020)

Caroline Malone & Simon Stoddart

David Trump was best known for his important work on the islands of Malta (Malone 2020), but his contribution to the prehistory of Sardinia is also worthy of record in the context of this volume.

David Hilary Trump took his first class BA in Arch and Anth at Pembroke College, Cambridge in 1955, and was a scholar of both the British School at Jerusalem, where he dug with Kathleen Kenyon, and the British School at Rome, where he excavated the key site of La Starza.

After Malta, Trump held the post of Staff Tutor in Archaeology at the University’s Board of Extra-Mural Studies until retirement in 1997, when he was succeeded by Caroline Malone. He not only contributed to the teaching of Mediterranean Prehistory in the Department of Archaeology, but also had a large following in the wider, continuing education community, engaging mature students in all aspects of Archaeology in the region and beyond. It was during this period that he made a major contribution to the archaeology of Sardinia, uncovering once again unsuspected phases of prehistory at Grotta Filiestru (Trump 1983) and completing the survey of Bonu Ighinu. At Grotta Filiestru, he characteristically invested all the resources he could muster into constructing an effective chronology (Switsur & Trump 1983) and some of the first faunal studies undertaken in Sardinia (Levine 1983). This work was, in its way, as equally pioneering as his work on the island of Malta. The Grotta Filiestru produced a new scientifically dated sequence of Sardinian prehistory, identifying the fifth-millennium BC Filiestru Neolithic phase for the first time. In earlier fieldwork he also excavated the cave site of Sa ‘ucca de su Tintirriolu (Loria & Trump 1978). His work around Bonu Ighinu (Trump 1990) is, however, closest to the theme of this volume since, in typical energetic style, Trump also provided one of the earliest studies of a nuragic landscape, once again demonstrating a pioneering role, now followed by many others.

Figure 0.1. David Trump.
Euan MacKie was a central figure in the study of brochs, as is shown by the very high level of citation in this volume (Mackie 1965 ... 2008). In several ways the contribution of David Trump and Euan MacKie run in parallel, one journeying south, the other journeying north also from Cambridge beginnings, both Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of London, engaged in seminal fieldwork, on a shoe string generally with volunteers, providing the first chronological foundations for monuments in the landscape and addressing synthesis of the results. Both were pioneers of their generation who retained their own intellectual independence in museums (both) and in continuing education (Trump), rather than a department of archaeology or a heritage organization.

MacKie graduated in Archaeology and Anthropology from St. John’s Cambridge in 1959 and took his PhD from the University of Glasgow in 1973, becoming, after a brief period at the British Museum, Keeper and Deputy Director (1986) of the University Hunterian Museum. As a graduate he took part in an expedition to British Honduras, directing the excavation of the Maya site of Xunantunich, leading to an interest in Mesoamerican archaeology throughout his life.

His excavation of brochs such as Dun Mor Vaul on Tiree, published in 1975, Dun Ardtreck on Skye published in 2000 and Leckie in Stirlingshire published in 2008, were fundamental in uncovering the sequence, material culture and chronology of these monuments. He gathered information for his important three-volume compendium on brochs from his own excavations and the investigations of others, undertaking research well into retirement (1998), publishing the final volume in 2007. These volumes are landmarks of data on the subject, a resource which provides a platform for all broch studies. His achievements were also celebrated in his Festschrift, In the Shadow of the Brochs (2002), showing the respect shown to him by younger generations.

He ventured far and wide in his more interpretative work. Some of his interpretations of broch builders and their monuments are no longer widely held and the chronologies are currently being reconsidered, but his stimulating approach to ideas endures. He was passionate about many other subjects including his seminal work in prehistoric metrology and archaeoastronomy. The volume Science and Society in Prehistoric Britain (1977) was a central work for Glyn Daniel’s teaching in Cambridge, and he made the valid point that the sophistication of prehistory is not to be underestimated. His interest in ethnography, no doubt drawing on his Arch and Anth undergraduate career at Cambridge, gave him a great respect for other ways of thinking and for the architectural and political achievements of prehistoric Britain, most notably for the builders of the brochs themselves in the Iron Age.
Chapter 23

Endnote: gardening time in broader perspective

Ethan D. Aines & Simon Stoddart

One of the predominant themes of this volume is time, and more specifically what is to be done with it. Sean Carroll, the theoretical cosmologist’s recent (2010), popular work made the case that from a physical perspective time is ostensibly change. When we observe the passage of time, Carroll argues, we are observing a natural consequence of the second law of thermodynamics, that there are more ways for a system to become disordered, or entropic, over time than there are ways for it to remain the same. Therefore, we are experiencing change when we speak of experiencing the passage of time. As many authors maintain, we can very precisely measure this change through chronometric means – at the atomic level, measuring the decay of an isotope, or at the cosmological level, marking the passage of seasons – but we cannot measure the experience of this change, as it is by no means objective (Gosden 1994; Lucas 2005).

In this volume, time has been discussed as being cultivated – gardened – though in other conceptions time can be discussed as being spent, wasted, as being finite or limited, or even as being consumed, as for the Chronophage, the orthopteran demon that rides atop the Corpus Clock, devouring time itself in King’s Parade, Cambridge. The cultivation of memory is one of the defences that many cultures around the world employ in the face of this unstoppable consumption; this unending change. We are constantly aware of the past, and of time as a finite resource, and as people, we have to deal with or confront this. Laurent Olivier writes that as a natural consequence of facing the vestiges of the past that surround us, people strive continuously to ‘transcribe’ themselves onto the environment and into history beyond the limit of what we know will be finite lives (Olivier 2011, 15–16). This urge, he contends, explains the ‘unshakable power conveyed by monument building’. Monument building ‘was not done simply to create permanent structures capable of withstanding the forces of deterioration; it was just as much an attempt to link them, through the very sight on which they were built, to the most remote origins of which they were supposedly the continuation’ (Olivier 2011).

But we struggle with these same issues today as much as the monument builders of the past did. The proliferation of memory studies within archaeology, and particularly heritage, mirrors other disciplines. We tentatively suggest that this reflects the preoccupation of the age in which we live, as much as its importance in the Ancient Past. Europeans who experienced the traumas of the Second World War are now disappearing as direct receptacles of memory, and are now memorialized by their immediate descendants, as key centenaries come into focus. The crucial forty-year time-gap (of which see more below) was crossed in the 1980s, setting off this trend of the recall of memory. Furthermore, globalization has profoundly affected senses of identity, so that many seek more localized and memorialized roots.

This preoccupation with the memories of other ages has had a long history. Towards the second half of the nineteenth century, amid concerns of a rapidly transforming society, many older Americans found stability by turning back in time to trace ancestral heritage (Ellis 1975). Along with burgeoning familial research, new traditions such as family reunions were born as Americans reached not only into the past but also contacted dispersed kin as a means of reinforcing the foundations of their identity in a time of societal transformation (Taylor 1982). Many American genealogies therefore exhibit a similar phenomenon to the gaps observed in African societies (of which more below), whereby the selective and uneven tracing of particular lines (whether patrilineal, matrilineal, and more often an ad-hoc bi-lineal mixture), bring American families closer to ‘famous’ ancestors from whom
they can draw certain defining moral characteristics. It is possible to observe a more localized form of political imagination – a genealogical imaginary (Kramer 2011) – arising within the boundaries of the family. Today, with the advent of specialized memory tools like genealogical software and crowd-sourced family trees as on Ancestry.com, these ‘gaps’ may be filled. Yet the proliferation of genealogy as a pastime in more recent years and the rise of at-home DNA testing suggests nineteenth-century Americans were not the only ones experiencing a great disjuncture from idealized pasts.

Theoretical approaches to memory

The issue of collective memory in prehistoric archaeological contexts can be approached from a variety of theoretical sources, some more and some less appropriate to the task. Philosophical, historic, sociological, and ethnographic sources each have their advantages and disadvantages, though the first two approaches (the first based, at least in part on the second) place Western and somewhat anachronistic ideas at the fore. While other methods such as cognitive psychology and artistic expression present themselves, the focus here shall primarily be on the first four mentioned.

Maurice Halbwachs, the French philosopher, sociologist, and colleague of Émile Durkheim, presented some of the earliest and most complete writings on collective memory, later assembled in the 1952 volume On Collective Memory (Halbwachs 1992 [1952]). One of Halbwachs’s most important contributions is the concept that memory is not possible outside of a social framework. Even individual memory and imagination are forms of social memory because they occur within the milieu of social influence (Halbwachs 1992, 49). Importantly, family, whether consanguine or fictive, forms one of the major loci of collective memory. Halbwachs writes, ‘No matter how we enter a family… we find ourselves to be part of a group where our position is determined not by personal feelings but by rules and customs independent of us that existed before us’ (Halbwachs 1992, 55). Drawing on the work of Fustel de Coulanges (1864), Halbwachs illustrates how even religious expression, often seen to operate on a higher ideological level, finds its primary dissemination within the family (Halbwachs 1992, 63). Some sociological and historic models of memory, drawn from nineteenth- and twentieth-century examples, tend towards a top-down model, but Halbwachs clarifies the processes of memory at a variety of different levels.

Two of the most important historical studies of collective memory may be found in the work of Jan Assmann (1991, 1995) and Paul Connerton (1989, 2009). Assmann focuses on what he terms ‘cultural memory’, or the need for collective identity to reside in, and be passed on through, ceremony. Assmann also highlights the importance of memory landscapes, writing that ‘Memory needs places and tends towards spatialization’ (Assmann 1991, 25; cf. Bachelard 1964; de Certeau 1984; Casey 1987; Nora 1989). As Yates (1966) also emphasizes in her monograph on mnemotechnics and the creation of ‘memory palaces’, from a cognitive perspective, place is the basis of all memory. Another important aspect of Yates’ work on the ars memoriae, is the concept of spatial memory functioning well in sequences. Individual landmarks in the memory are significant, but even more significant is the progression through a series of semioticized landmarks within a landscape, whether internal as in the sense of the memory palaces or external as in the sense of a familiar journey or choreography. Consequently, as we shall explore further, entire landscapes may serve as a medium for cultural memory. These are not so much accentuated by signs (monuments) as raised to the status of signs, that is, they are semioticized” (Assmann 1991, 44; cf. Strehlow 1970). Political imagination, or the extent to which a group visualizes itself in regards to a shared, somewhat fictive past (Assmann 1991, 111), also takes on a prominent role in Assmann’s work (cf. Anderson 1983, 6).

Connerton (1989) focuses on bodily practices (habitus) and, like Assmann, commemorative ceremonies. The latter are (more or less) ritual performances through which social memory is sustained. The use of commemoration in late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century France (Connerton 1989, 10) and Germany between the First and Second world wars (Connerton 1989, 43) are two major foci. As Hobsbawm (1983) and Lowenthal (1985) note, these periods were times of rapid transformation in which the social patterns and traditions of the past became dislocated. The past, to use Lowenthal’s phrasing, became a foreign country. Therefore, Connerton’s examples are highly applicable to heritage studies, but may be more difficult to apply fully to prehistoric societies except through more general analogies. Assmann also bases many of his observations upon literate, although ancient, cultures in the Middle East and North Africa. This raises the question that the application of theoretical models derived from historical studies may not provide the best basis for understanding prehistoric societies. We suggest that we can become overly general when discussing collective memory, and thus lose the unique contexts in which commemorative practices may take place. On the other hand, the use of overly specific examples risks directly comparing prehistoric societies with the disjuncture from the past that occurred over the course of nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban life.
The impact of literacy?

The primary responsibility of archaeologists when applying Halbwachs, Assmann, and Connerton’s theoretical approaches in prehistoric studies is to understand that these have historical, literate biases. As they caution, the transmission of memory in literate societies relies on highly specialized practices (e.g., writing and historiography), and thus in pre-literate societies we may expect the transmission of memory, in lieu of such specialized practices, to be subject to greater and greater distortion as time goes by.

The concern with memory in the Western Tradition has deeper origins that are connected with the advent of literacy. The Etruscans (Pfiffig 1975; Stoddart 2007–9) had a profound sense of historical time whose format was finalized as they sought absorption in the Roman world. A central facet of this construction of time was the saeculum, a period ranging from 123 to 100 years in length (Table 23.1), a term adopted by the Romans (Varro De Lingua Latina 6.11; Forsythe 2012) who admired their temporal religiosity. Romans’ use of the ‘saeculum’ or the end-point when the last surviving member of a generation and the last carrier of its particular memories had died amounted to some 80 years. ‘Half the generational limit of 80 years – that is 40 years – seems to represent a critical threshold.’ for memory. So basically, after 40 years a person who witnessed a significant event in their adulthood will now be retired and will focus more on the memory of the past.

On the other hand, Lillios (2003, 129) cautions against viewing prehistory in stark contrast to the historic period as it could lead to the assumption that prehistoric societies were ‘memory-challenged’, when in fact they may have had hitherto unrecognized specialized mnemonic materials.

A hard-wired time depth to memory?

Assmann places the maximum fidelity of ‘living’ memory at around 80 years, and some anthropological studies bear this out (1991, 37). Bradley (2003, 221) estimates the maximum extent of stability stands at somewhere between 100 and 200 years, while Vansina recounts that the shortest living memory he encountered was that of an anthropologist was of the Aka of Lobaye, reaching back only one generation (1985, 24). Working in an archaeological context at Deir al-Medina in Upper Egypt, Meskell (2003, 37) claims the same of the workers whose family commemorative practices reached back scarcely two generations. Interestingly, they could, however, ‘remember’ Amenhotep I and his mother, regarded as founders of the village, stretching back many generations. This points to memory practices operating at different scales within the same society relating to different types of foci for that memory.

Against these broadly general agreements, there is strong ethnographic evidence that hunter gatherer and by implication other prehistoric memories can be very deep in certain circumstances. Australian ethnography recalls that myths can carry cataclysmic events back from deep time (Hirsch 2006). At a more general level, Minc (1986, 103) has shown how ‘oral tradition clearly provided one enduring means for the preservation of hard-won survival experience between occurrences of resource crises’. Hegmon and Fisher also emphasize that long-term information on resources were similarly embedded in ritual codes (Hegmon & Fisher 1991, 141).

The importance of context for memory

Recent developments in neuroscience show that memory at an individual level requires context. The human brain constructs memory out of the experience of repeated and multiple contexts, which may be sensory, and may be related to repeated visits to places or may be socially constructed.

Paul and Laura Bohannan noted cases of socially embedded ‘structural amnesia’, to use Barnes’s (1947) phrase (see also Forty & Küchler 1999, Connerton 2008), when living with the Tiv of central Nigeria in the late 1940s and 1950s (Bohannan & Bohannan 1953, Bohannan 1952). The recitation of genealogies was of central importance in disputes among the Tiv, as they established claims about the past. Noting this, the British colonial administrators carefully recorded these genealogies only to find that they shifted and changed over time (Bohannan 1952). Jack Goody has written, based on the work of Malinowski (1926), that this type of genealogy acts as a ‘social charter’ that is more reflective of current and ongoing institutions than they are faithful historical records (Goody 1968, 33). More recently, Jan Vansina (1985) has discussed the ‘floating gap’ that occurs between these fictive genealogies and more distant, ‘mythical’ founding ancestors (as in the example from Meskell above). These gaps may be obvious to ethnographers, yet are reported to go unnoticed by those recounting them (Assmann 1991).

Consequently, as the previous two cases would suggest, an important, third source of theorizing collective or cultural memory presents itself in ethnographic work and the observation of memory systems at play in living societies. One of the most important studies of the interchange between memory and place is William Basso’s (1996) ethnography of the Western Apache, Wisdom Sits in Places. Through exploration of
toponyms and the stories behind them, Basso examines spatial conceptions of history and myth and the ways in which knowledge of place is closely linked with one’s knowledge of self (Basso 1996, 34). Some of Basso’s informants report being figuratively ‘stalked’ by the landscape, as they reflect on the moral lessons of its features as they pass through it or remember it from afar. They may, through memory and introspection, be led to more moral or traditional ways. As Basso writes, ‘insofar as places and place names provide Apache people with symbolic reference points for the moral imagination and its practical bearing on the actualities of their lives – the landscape in which the people dwell can be said to dwell in them’ (Basso 1996, 102).

Of great importance to archaeologists is the idea that people do not need man made monuments to act as mnemonics in a landscape. In the case of the Western Apache, ‘…geographical features have served for centuries as indispensable mnemonic pegs upon which to hang the moral teachings of their history’ (Basso 1996, 62). Furthermore, this suggests that landscape may be as much an internal concept as it is an external reality. Recovering memory-relationships in a landscape is therefore attended by great difficulty when we cannot speak with the subjects of our studies. Prehistoric landscapes, although we share them with our forebears and walk in their vestiges today, may be truly lost to us. A phenomenological approach, as promoted by Tilley (1994, 2010), can only go so far. Although our bodies are homologous to prehistoric men and women’s bodies, our internal world-views are not. Richard Bradley (2000) calls attention to the fact that ‘natural’ places, equally present in the minds of people, are no less the object of archaeological study than monuments that were intentionally constructed. Indeed, some natural places can be simply touched delicately by culture to mark that presence (Stoddart 2012). Basso and Bradley both emphasize the need to be imaginative when exploring the linkages between landscape, place-making, and memory, and their research cautions that, as with many things in archaeology, we cannot see the whole picture.

Bloch (1971) also presents a clear case study of the ties between land, kinship groups, and memory in his study of the Merina of the northern part of the central plateau of Madagascar between 1964 and 1966. At the time of Bloch’s study, the Merina saw themselves as a society beset by rapid social change, instigated in part by missionaries, colonialists, and foreigners in general. The introduction by these outsiders of new ways of doing had resulted in a disjuncture between ‘Malagasy times’ and the present. One of the major ways in which life was different in the 1960s than in the past was the dispersed nature of the Merina people, with most families living away from their ancestral lands. Even if a family had been in a given location for four or five generations, they still thought of themselves as ‘guests’ or ‘strangers’. A family felt they only ‘belonged’ to the place where their particular kinship group kept their family tombs. Because it was impossible to act fully within both the traditional ways of life, those of the ancestors, and modern ways, with their economic and political advantages, many Merina people existed with a tension between the two. However, through death, this tension dissipated. The act placing the dead in the ancestral tomb was ‘the final act of atonement by at last transforming the social being into an actor in the imaginary society of ancestors’ (Bloch 1971, 216). Consequently, through death there was a spatial, social transformation.

In Bloch’s case study it is possible to find similarities with prehistoric societies, and particularly with Alasdair Whittle’s concept of tethered mobility in the Neolithic (1996, 1997). According to Whittle, one of the primary functions of ditched enclosures may have depended much upon the ‘symbolic representation of community cohesion’ (1996, 190). Consequently, ‘through reinforced attachment to specific places, chosen times for communal gathering and ritual, pre-determined ways of seeing and experiencing ordered space, people were encouraged to maintain the rhythms and obligations of tethered mobility’ (1996, 192). Through both ethnography and archaeology, it is possible to see the connection between people and the places to which they retain a deep connection through memory and ritual practices, although they may live elsewhere.

Significantly for the archaeological study of memory, as these multiple examples suggest, there is no universal way to remember, and cultural memory practices take on a great array of forms. Certainly there are some generalities we can trace across cultures, but memory and how groups of people choose to remember and to forget are often highly contextual. Some of the ways in which people recollect, re-remember, and often imagine their own pasts, and the ways in which they choose which members of society are part of the in-group and which are not, present a predominant recurring theme. Building on the ideas of Halbwachs, it makes sense that memory – being entirely socially mediated – would take on as many different forms as there are different social groupings around the world, despite similar cognitive processes involved. These various studies also highlight the importance of scale when discussing memory and point to the fact that these scales are by no means uniform. From the formations of familial histories to the foundational stories of nations and religions, a great variety may be
observed, and importantly, larger scale configurations of memory are often experienced differently from one smaller-scale setting to the next.

Memory in archaeological studies

Many archaeological studies of the inventive ways in which past societies were aware of and used their own pasts in the active maintenance of their identities have sprung from this font of theoretical work over the past two decades. This closely mirrors trends within the social sciences in general (Assmann 1990, xi). Several articles, edited volumes, and monographs stand out among this work (Bradley 1987, Ingold 2002, Van Dyke & Alcock 2003, Yoffee 2007, Hamilakis 2014, Chadwick & Gibson 2013) and each has contributed to an understanding of the ways in which the archaeological palimpsests observed at many sites are ‘rarely… accidental and innocent’ (Van Dyke & Alcock 2003b, 1). Indeed, the juxtaposition of later monuments with earlier ones on the same sites are frequently so obvious and impactful that they cannot be ignored. Some examples include the construction of churches on Roman buildings (Morris & Roxan 1980), the relationship between Iron Age and early Medieval landscapes (Meredith-Lobay 2009), the placement of Anglo-Saxon boundaries along earlier ritual routes (Malim et al. 1997), and the alignment of prominent Late La Tène route-ways through earlier Hallstatt burial mounds (Stegmaier 2017). Longterm continuity of population and practice presents one possible explanation for the observed collocation, yet as many of the ethnographic and historic examples illustrate, ‘continuity’ is rarely simple and often created. Convincing evidence for a break in continuity followed by using past monuments as part of the political imaginary has been provided in many of these cases.

Another commonly observed phenomenon is the use of former monuments and buildings for innovative practices and novel interpretations. One example is the siting of the Anglo-Saxon moots and later hundred courts at prominent prehistoric monuments in England including hillforts, causewayed enclosures, and burial mounds. Three examples in East Anglia are the moothill at Grime’s Graves (a bronze age tumulus), the hundred court at Wandlebury (an Iron Age hillfort), and the meeting site at the Bronze Age tumulus at Mutlow Hill along the route of Fleam Dyke. As Semple explains, these sites were viewed with awe and caution as a species of space associated with past supernatural activity (2008, 2013). Settlements were consequently often placed a comfortable distance away. Prehistoric tumuli were also often used for early Anglo-Saxon burials, and toponymic analysis has illustrated that people had different vocabulary for contemporary burial mounds and ancient, reused ones (Semple 2008; 2013; Chester-Kadwell 2007).

Votive deposition, as a long-term practice emerging from earlier prehistory, takes place through a large repertoire of forms and mediums, some of which directly reference the past while others resemble past depositional practices yet provide an array of innovative forms. As Bradley (1990) writes, hoarding and votive deposition have never satisfactorily been shown to be unitary practices throughout prehistory and may have taken place for a variety of different reasons. The deposition of Iron Age prestige metalwork, including tripod-cauldrons, at Bronze Age palaces by ‘ruin cults’ on Crete provides an interesting example. The deliberate placement of these depositions only in the public areas of the former-palaces leads Prent (2003) to believe that local cultic practice reflects a 300-year memory from the times when the palaces were still in use. Although the placement of votive depositions can often be shown not to be random, deliberate placement does not necessarily mean deliberate continuity, as in the case of the small Late Iron Age coin hoards placed in and near Bronze Age burial mounds at Mutlow Hill in Cambridgeshire, and near Narborough in Norfolk, among other examples (Aines 2020). The occurrence of coin hoards, as a new medium in Late Iron Age Britain at older sites, potentially represents a hybrid practice that makes creative use of the past. The Iron Age Salisbury hoard, which includes Bronze Age artefacts and numerous miniature weapons, makes multiple references to the past (Stead 1998). At Nettleton Top, in similar depositions, some of the miniatures found take on the idealized forms of what Iron Age people imagined certain Bronze Age weapons, including shields, looked like, yet they do not resemble any known Bronze Age typologies (Farley 2013, 109). The deposition of heirlooms provides yet a different example of memory practices at the family level (Lillios 1999). The recurrence of hoards at certain sites again and again in multiple periods, such as Ken Hill, Snettisham, illustrate another potential form of commemorative practice. Yet in a warning against such interpretations, Martin Rundkvist (2015) writes about similar depositional practices around Lake Malaren in Sweden, where memory notwithstanding, people have been throwing things into rapids from the Neolithic period until the modern era because of cross-cultural allure. Meskell (2003) refers to these types of places as ‘numinous’ locales.

As some of these examples show, as much as continuity, we may also find dislocation from the past and the invention of traditions. Meskell (2003), for example. traces the importance in Graeco-Roman
culture of paying obeisance in sites that were awe-inspiring. On one such site, at Deir al-Medina near Luxor, rather than the worshipping in the foundations of a grand temple, devotees found themselves in the ruins of a worker’s village, failing to recognize they were not in a former holy place. ‘In this sense,’ Meskell writes, ‘they were not performing an act of cultural memory but were constituting new, hybrid forms of commemorative practice’ (Meskell 2003, 50). Bradley illustrates similar phenomena in both the Boyne Valley and in North Umbria where after a long intervening period between prehistory and the middle ages, older sites were reactivated in new ways for political benefit (Bradley 1987).

The materiality of monuments

Taphonomic biases strongly influence our interpretations of memory in the past. The foremost among these is the physical materiality of the monuments. Many, though not all, of these examples revolve around long-lived monuments built from stone and earth. Because of their durability, both brochs and Nuraghi were the focal points of memory for the people who inhabited them and have remained focal points for the archaeological study of memory because of this defining characteristic. The properties of stone differ from those of wood, for example, and the endurance of stone itself becomes a symbol of longevity and the endurance of memory, both ‘living’ and ‘dead’. They may have formed ‘memory monuments’, a more prominent sub-class of what Ian Hodder has classified as ‘memory houses’ (Hodder 2012), with the important distinction the dead are buried elsewhere, so it is the monument (and its refuse) that provide the source of memory rather than the direct presence of the individuals who once lived there.

Mike Parker Pearson and Ramilisonina’s ethnographic landscape exploration of the semiotics of Stonehenge, as compared with nearby Durrington Walls and Woodhenge, brings these issues to the fore. By relating these monuments to the homes, tombs, memorial stones, and building traditions in highland Madagascar, they build a careful ethnographic analogy that provides one basis for understanding how construction choices and materiality may be deployed to emphasize certain symbolic concepts. As they write, ‘Whilst the meanings of things can be arbitrary and open to continuous reinterpretation, the physical properties of materials such as stone, wood, water and fire are such that they resist certain interpretations and understandings and invite others. In such cases, their materiality may be a significant element of their metaphorical associations’ (1998, 310).

Consequently, they illustrate how wood is often used for the structures of the living, whereas stone is often for the structures of the dead (1998, 308). They argue that Stonehenge was therefore not a monument to an ancestor cult, but the focal point of a mirror realm in which ancestors feasted and enacted other rituals in the stone reflection of the nearby wooden sites where the living did the same. Consequently, the transition of certain wooden hengiforms to stone over time may have reflected some of the same life cycles, from life to death, from transience to permanence, experienced by humans and human communities (1998, 324).

However, ideas like permanence and impermanence are mediated by embedded social practices and may differ from one culture to the next. Both Ise Grand Shrine, in Mie, and Izumo Grand Shrine, in Shimane, Japan are notable for their scheduled ‘restoration’ every 20 and 60 years, respectively (Bock 1974). In 2013, restoration works were carried out at both shrines in the same year, when they were completely rebuilt to the exact specifications of the originals on an adjacent plot of land as they have been for centuries. At Ise, this was the sixty-second iteration of the main shrine over the past 1,240 years. Much like the metaphorical ship of Theseus – or even the literal Vasa, kept alive by incredible sleight of hand – this raises interesting questions about survival and identity. Metaphysical questions aside however, the rebuilding of the shrines has helped to pass on ancient woodworking techniques and architectural styles that would have otherwise been lost (Smith 2013a). Symbolically, the rebuilding of the shrines reflects the Shinto belief in the transitory nature of life and the renewal that follows death.

Similarly, the monumental totem poles of the Pacific Northwest, which symbolize kinship groups, myths, and living individuals relevant to the local, different tribes, are traditionally made from cedar and gradually decay as part of their natural ‘life-cycles.’ Gloria Cranmer Webster, a Kwakwaka’wakw, notes that while Western conservators have sought to protect totem poles from the ravages of time, the idea of preservation is diametrically opposed to the traditional indigenous view that totem poles, like all other objects, should be allowed to decay and move on once they have served their purpose. Repairing or re-painting totem poles happened rarely in the past because in order to do so, a potlatch had to be held at the same expense as erecting a new totem pole, but without any additional prestige passing to its owner (Rhyne 2000). Rhyne emphasizes, therefore, that this approach is not a sentiment, but a deeply embedded social practice.

In these examples, the symbolic nature of wood is not necessarily different from Parker Pearson and Ramilisonina’s interpretation, but both emphasize the
impermanence of wood as it mirrors the impermanence of life and the inevitability of death and regeneration. Therefore, it could be argued they are semiotically more complex than a simple life/death dichotomy. Yet at the fore are issues of materiality and ideas of decay, degeneration, and ruination (cf. Olivier 2011, 56–7; Olsen & Pétursdóttir 2014).

Both brochs and Nuraghi, however, are not monuments of death, but the dwellings and gathering places of the living. The durability of dry-stone buildings, when properly cared for, is immense. Yet in certain cases, memory was not necessarily carried by the buildings themselves, but in the daily, habitual practices of the living that occurred in and around them. Parker Pearson and Sharples (1999) have explored the ways in which refuse and middens may have communicated the longevity and status of certain brochs – ideas explored elsewhere in this volume – including Dun Vulan in South Uist, Scotland. Here, while midden material ought to have been valuable for enriching the nutrient-poor soils of the machair near Dun Vulan, instead it was allowed to accumulate over centuries until the midden beside the broch reached up to the height of the door. One can imagine the luxuriant, green of ruderal species that covered the midden, and the ways in which this, quite apart from the materiality of the broch itself, would have been a sign of the antiquity of the house and of a certain type of wealth that would allow for the conspicuous consumption of fertile soil in this manner. Almost like a coat of arms, the midden would have illustrated the long prestige of those who lived there (Parker Pearson pers. comm. 2019).

The afterlife of monuments

In archaeological work over the past two decades, the ‘turn to things’ and the cultural biographies of things (Kopytyoff 1986, Gosden & Marshall 1999, Olsen 2010, Hodder 2012b) have been enormously productive, and very little needs to be said of these approaches here. In short, objects have social lives of their own, and may go on to lead new lives, as it were, that may not have originally been conceptualized by their makers (Olsen & Pétursdóttir 2014). In this way, monuments as things and landscapes as things, may be said to have agency, although the origins of this agency (does it lie with the things themselves or the people who perceive them?) has been debated to some extent. Monuments are large scale implementations of these ideas.

Within this frame, monuments, such as brochs and Nuraghi, as symbols of national or regional identity have the immediate advantage of presenting a literal facade of continuity with the past. Intangible heritage may come and go, move around, and be ‘appropriated,’ but stone presents a more stable image upon which to base these ‘imagined communities.’ Brochs and Nuraghi may therefore no longer be ‘used’ in the sense they once were, yet their use (even if primarily by archaeologists and the promulgators of heritage) as symbols of cultures past and remembered continues in their afterlives. They provide material, enduring reminders of the unique circumstances of the nation’s pasts.

In this way, monuments provide the settings in which real and fictive histories are set, and thus enable us to give a spatial dimension to the past. The Scottish antiquary and polymath James Anderson, for example, identified the broch of Mousa on Shetland as the location where, as recounted in Ossian’s Fingal, the bloodthirsty chieftain Grumal was imprisoned for his misconduct (Smith 2013). While Grumal may have been created as part of Macpherson’s mythomoteur (cf. Assmann 1991, 64–5), it makes no difference. When we stand in the foundations of these ruins, we can imagine what may have happened here, as Anderson did. Shanks (2012, 100) highlights the frequency of this type of antiquarian engagement and terms it ‘place/event’, building on the definition of Bernard Tschumi (1994). As Shanks (2012, 103) explains, this type of engagement focuses ‘upon the question: this happened here; or did it, could it have?’ This relates closely to what Assmann (1991, 111) terms the political imagination, or the extent to which ‘a group – whether it be a tribe, race, or nation – can only be itself to the degree in which it understands, visualizes, and represents itself as such’. In consequence, monuments fulfill other roles outside the scope of their original builders’ intentions and act as the spatial tethers between this modern world with its national intricacies and the past accessible only through imagination.

Conclusion: monuments for memory

James Whitley (2002) has objected to using ‘ancestors’ as a means of blanket interpretation in archaeology, yet his emphasis on folklore and ancient written sources overlooks the multitude of ethnographic studies that illustrate the foundational importance of ancestry to the identity of many cultural groups around the world.

Instead, he favours the hypothesis that veneration and fear of otherworldly beings motivated certain practices in prehistoric societies. These fears abound in literature, folklore, and even toponymy (see for example Semple 1998, Chester-Kadwell 2008), but in relevance to individual archaeological contexts, these ideas need to be examined on a case by case basis.
However, ancestor veneration alone does not account for all forms of commemoration. Ancestry provides an important sphere of a community’s identity, but collective memory may ossify around other events including victory (Scleifman 2001), defeat (Nelson 2003), and times of both plenty (Adamcyk 2002) and poverty (Masalha 2012). Studies of heritage abound with cases, and these examples are by no means comprehensive. The American artist Heather Ossandon, whose art explores both mundane and ceremonial ritual, asks ‘What deserves to be remembered, venerated, and why?’ in the introduction to her exhibition playfully entitled *Commemorative Plates of Shitty Things*, which recalls, among other events, her brother’s second open-heart surgery (Ossandon 2014). Lowenthal (1985) also discusses the commemoration of, and even nostalgia for, terrible times in the past.

While these forms of commemoration involve remembering people – potentially ancestors, but unknown persons as well (Hobsbawm 1983, Inglis 1999) – motives may be multifaceted and ulterior. We conclude with a cautionary question. Did ancient societies need monuments at the heart of cultural and collective memory and in commemorative practices or is it archaeologists who need monuments to identify memory in the past? As Basso’s work, and several other examples herein, illustrate, memory can be held within in ways that leave few physical traces.

Yet going back to the idea of resisting the change that is inevitable with the passage of time, the cultivation of memory in monumental architecture undeniably alters the perception of time and of the environment for those who engage with them. As settings and through their material durability, the architectural elements within built environments, whether urban or monumental, add gravitas to power. We are reminded through the maintenance required, through the patina that these environments acquire over many years, that before us someone has walked here: an ancestor, a forebear, a predecessor to part of the identity we assume in such a location. There are locations that can, for a moment, seem to resist this change and in which, rather than being consumed, time can grow. As the late gardening correspondent for the *New York Times* Allen Lacey once wrote, ‘Gardeners, like everyone else, live second by second and minute by minute. What we see at one particular moment is then and there before us. But there is a second way of seeing. Seeing with the eye of memory, not the eye of our anatomy, calls up days and seasons past and years gone by’ (Lacey 1992, 16).
Gardening time

Gardening may seem worlds away from Nuraghi and brochs, but tending a garden is a long process involving patience, accretion and memory. Scholars argue that memories are also cultured, developed and regained. The monuments in Scotland and Sardinia are testament to the importance of memory and its role in maintaining social relations.

This collection of twenty-one papers addresses the theme of memory anchored to the enduring presence of monuments, mainly from Scotland and Sardinia, but also from Central Europe and the Balkans.

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