

The issue of ownership is an important one that should be addressed regularly in order to ensure that all involved parties are happy. This is especially true of archaeology, by its nature, because it involves attempting to answer specific questions and removing significant amounts of potential evidence that are unrelated. It is impossible to preserve and document everything in a way that any possible question can be answered except by not digging in the first place and answering no question at all (and even that is infeasible in the face of development and increasing urbanization). Therefore, prioritization of research agenda is inherent in the process of digging. One thing these articles revealed is that prioritization of the political agenda should too play an important role in the process of archaeology.

Particularly telling was the quote from a FEMA employee, who stated that they, "didn't really need an academic history in order to do historic preservation." It is attempts such as these which show just how much can be learned from failed politics. In some cases, such as that of the widespread site looting at the turn of the century described in McManamon's paper, the political agenda necessary to placate various parties are clear, but in others, the details remain vague. Hodder rightly considers that even the concepts of politics and culture are Western principles that do not necessarily hold for other areas of the world, thus making the duty of conservation both more difficult but also more interesting as the international stage is considered. Overall, the politics of archaeology seems to be underformalized and generally pretty sticky, an area which should be ideally avoided "for the sake of science" but is necessarily part of the excavationary process.

How this applies in particular to the John Brown House is by no means simple. For starters, we are working on the land of the Rhode Island Historical Society. This organization has a vested interest in our understanding the significance of the site, but also, owing to the proximity of the dig to their headquarters, to the preservation of the land itself. The dig is being conducted by Brown students under the purview of the Joukowsky Institute, so both the agenda of the department and the educational goals

of the individuals performing fieldwork are important in the process. Finally, the significance of the results certainly extends to the city of Providence and surrounding areas, and could potentially be of interest at the state or even national level (supposing, for instance, the highly questionable slave tunnels were uncovered). It is the mixed opinions and agendas involved that make the politics so difficult.

The question then becomes how we can learn from this material. I think that without a doubt we should attempt to cater to as many of these audiences as possible in our final report. While a chapter-by-chapter breakdown is essential to producing a manageable end product, providing material in each chapter that is of interest to many groups will make it have lasting weight, both as an academic reference tome for future archaeologists and as a popular description of some long lost past. While balancing these agendas, however, it is important to remember that the facts don't speak for themselves, and we need to give the necessary background to have the groups perhaps understand each other a little bit more by the end.