The Future is Now: Archaeology and the Eradication of Anti-Blackness

Maria Franklin[1] · Justin P. Dunnavant[2] · Ayana Omilade Flewellen[3] ·
Alicia Odewale[4]

Abstract

Building a new anti-racist archaeology will require an unprecedented level of structural changes in the practices, demographics, and power relations of archaeology. This article considers why this iteration of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement is proving to be unique in terms of its potential to transform the field. We discuss how anti-racist archaeologists arrived at this juncture prepared to meet the challenges now before us, and how members of the Society of Black Archaeologists are collaborating with others to enact change. We acknowledge the significant social justice efforts of others and suggest how archaeologists can get involved to keep this critical momentum going.

Key words Race · anti-racist archaeology · Black Lives Matter · social justice

Introduction

We are writing from a moment in time that hints at a sea change in how the rest of the world perceives racism and its detrimental impacts on communities of color, especially Black communities. George Floyd's murder has galvanized protestors around the world calling for an end to racist policing and anti-Black racism on a scale and at a level of intensity that no one could have predicted even a year ago. As tragic as his death and the circumstances surrounding it are, Floyd is one individual among many who lost

✉ Maria Franklin
    mfranklin@austin.utexas.edu

1   Department of Anthropology, 2201 Speedway Avenue, University of Texas, Austin,
    TX 78712, USA

2   Department of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA

3   Department of Anthropology, University of California at Riverside, Riverside, CA, USA

4   Department of Anthropology, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK, USA

their lives under similar circumstances to the police and vigilantes who criminalize Black bodies (Bokat-Lindell 2020). Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi co-founded the Black Lives Matter (Black Lives Matter 2020) Movement which has undergone several iterations since it emerged after the killing of young Trayvon Martin in 2012. As Americans repeatedly witnessed the intentional murder of Black people, the reverberant call for the humanity and protection of Black Lives has continued to gain global momentum. Even though BLM organizers had their initial sights set on defunding the police (Elliott-Cooper 2020; Schnell 2020) and improving the quality of life among Black communities, its "unapologetically Black" social justice agenda has permeated nearly every aspect of society. It is now being amplified much more broadly. Is archaeology ready for the changes that BLM has instigated? The discipline's history suggests that it may be. If so, we ask: why is this moment of Black power unique, and what are its implications for archaeology?

Changes in archaeology's paradigms, practices, and politics have always been entangled with events happening in the wider world. In what follows, we briefly discuss archaeology's development in relation to earlier social movements. We then relate how archaeologists have responded to the BLM Movement prior to George Floyd's murder. This current moment, however, is proving to be vastly different and we explore the reasons why. We also assert that Black archaeologists are prepared to meet the challenges of transforming our discipline. Our numbers have risen, and we and our accomplices now have an established track record of anti-racist organizing and research. Based on the authors' experiences, the global tidal wave of social justice demands is already having an impact in archaeology. We share our insights on the labor we and others are involved in with the hope of expanding and strengthening these efforts to address equity and inclusivity in our profession.

Archaeology, of course, does not exist in a political and social vacuum. Across the globe, archaeology has been used to justify imperialism, the displacement of Native Americans and Indigenous peoples from their lands, scientific racism, ethnocentrism, and xenophobic nationalism (Diaz-Andreu 2007; Hamilakis and Duke 2007; Shackle 2001; Shepherd 2002; Trigger 2006). Its epistemology and research agendas have legitimized a racist teleology embedded in the notion that European whites exemplify progress and civilization. Yet, archaeologists have also worked in tandem with social and political movements to reimagine the discipline, and to realize its emancipatory potential (Franklin and Paynter 2010; Saitta 2007).

Inspired by the civil unrest of the 1960s, Charles Fairbanks instigated one of the first archaeological studies of African-descended people at Kingsley Plantation in Florida (Ascher and Fairbanks 1971; Orser 2001a:623). His main question of what remained of Africa among those enslaved resonated with the "roots work" of Black cultural nationalists and Afrocentrists at that time. Conkey and Spector (1984) published the first article on feminist archaeology in the 1980s. They clearly situated their critique of archaeology's androcentrism within feminist anthropology and the second wave women's movement. Social movements dedicated to the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, asexual, and intersex individuals (LGBTQAI) were birthed in the late 1960s. This activism, along with feminist archaeology and queer scholarship more broadly, encouraged the emergence of a queer archaeology that sought to complicate binary interpretations of gender and sexuality in the past (Blackmore 2011; Dowson 2000; Rutecki and Blackmore 2016; Schmidt and Voss 2000; Voss 2000, 2008). The Native American

Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, or NAGPRA, was signed into law in 1990. Native peoples had struggled in years prior for recognition and justice, including through the activism of the American Indian Movement (Atalay 2006:288–290). Their demand for control over their cultural patrimony is what led to NAGPRA. Sonya Atalay (2012), Joe Watkins (2000), and Dorothy Lippert (2008) are among those who pushed for disciplinary transformations through Indigenous archaeology (see also Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2009; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010).

These moments of critical reflection regarding the contemporary relevance of our field emerged out of social movements. Coupled with the dissatisfaction with positivist archaeology, the field has witnessed a fluorescence of research on social difference and power in the past, the questioning of Western epistemic privilege, and an increase in collaboration with historically marginalized communities. Further, these initial sparks ignited changes in representation with a slow but rising tide of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) archaeologists. While it is critical that we situate this moment within the context of other major turning points in the field, we must also appreciate its uniqueness as the profession shifts from a small number of individuals to a much larger collective of archaeologists now working to dismantle racism in our field as part of the broader social justice aims of the Black Lives Matter Movement.

The Dual Rise of African Diaspora Archaeology and Black Representation in the Profession

The increasing number of Black archaeologists is partly related to the growth of the archaeological research on people of African descent (Agbe-Davies 2002). Although a focus on North American plantation slavery dominated the subfield in its early years (Franklin and McKee 2004), its scope has broadened to include studies outside of the US. The shift from using "African American" to "African diaspora" archaeology to define this genre underscores its global reach (e.g., Fennell 2010). Research programs have also expanded to address the diversity of Black experiences not only across space but time, as more of us explore life after emancipation and the "materiality of freedom" (Barnes 2011; see also Davidson 2008; Lee 2020; Leone et al. 2005; Warner 2015; Wilkie 2019). African diaspora archaeology also incorporates critical race and Black feminist theories (Agbe-Davies 2014; Battle-Baptiste 2011, 2017; Epperson 2004; Fennell and White 2017; Franklin 2001; González-Tennant 2018; Lee and Scott 2019; McDavid 2007; Morris 2017; Mullins 1999; Orser 2001b; Wilkie 2003), vindicationist scholarship (e.g., Bell 2008; Brandon 2008; LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Mullins 2008), and a commitment to partnering with Black communities within the context of research (Joseph 2016:14; McDavid 2010; Reeves 2004). Previous works by Black scholars from other disciplinary backgrounds have been foundational to these trends in African diaspora archaeology. Scholars such as Carter G. Woodson and Arturo Schomburg were actively building archives that documented Black life, while others like Angela Davis and C.L.R. James engaged in radical organizing that informed their scholarship. Critical reflections on the lives and works of these and other scholars demonstrate the necessity of blending theory and practice when engaging in Black Study. Discovering the potential to investigate African diasporic communities in the past with an eye toward social justice in the present helped to engender Black representation in archaeology.

Thus, over the years, each iteration of the Black Lives Matter Movement has coincided with a growing number of Black archaeologists and increasing structural development in anti-racist organizing. The very emergence of the Society of Black Archaeologists (SBA), while initially conceived in 2011, took place in the aftermath of Trayvon Martin's death in 2012. Members of the organization were actively involved in local movement efforts, while also conceiving of ways to develop SBA into an organization "of" Black archaeologists to speak to the needs of the communities we work in and are a part of. More broadly, there now exists a critical mass of archaeologists from different backgrounds who are explicitly engaged in anti-racist scholarship, activism, or both. These individuals, who Alexandra Jones has deemed "accomplices" (Dunnavant et al. 2020), are working with Black archaeologists to reimagine what the discipline of archaeology can and should be. As opposed to allies who attempt to retain their privilege while assisting marginalized communities (Desnoyers-Colas 2019; Indigenous Action 2014), accomplices risk their privilege and status, and share mutual accountability in causing radical systemic change (Clemens 2017; Indigenous Action 2014; Powell and Kelly 2017; Watson 2020). In a discipline that is ontologically racist, this abolitionist work will necessitate, at times, getting into "good trouble." Accomplices clearly understand the potential implications of the BLM Movement for archaeology.

In previous years, the traditional venue of annual conference meetings was used as the platform for collectively organizing around an anti-racist archaeology. In 2016, Kelley Deetz chaired a panel at the Society for Historical Archaeology's (SHA) conference entitled, "Historic Black Lives Matter: Archaeology as Activism in the 21st Century" which posed questions around blending activism and scholarship and the protection of African diaspora sites. Similarly, in 2019, the conversation reemerged with a panel organized by Jodi Barnes and Flewellen entitled "Black Lives Matter: The Fight Against Intersectional Operations of Oppression within Historical Archaeology." The presenters interrogated what an anti-racist field entails and discussed ways to combat structural oppression. A panel can help to raise awareness, and may even go so far as to provide concrete steps toward decolonizing our discipline. Yet, previous workshops, presentations, publications, and the anti-racist training implemented by the SHA Board in recent years - while agitating toward the cause - have not evolved into the wider transformation needed to eradicate anti-Black racism in the field. However, the latest panel, "Archaeology in the Time of Black Lives" held virtually in 2020, reached a much larger audience. Among the audience were those who not only listened, but responded. We suggest that this iteration of the Black Lives Matter Movement has created a particular moment in archaeology where real structural change may be on the verge of actualization. Next, we explain how COVID-19 and the current social movement have converged to shift how people, including archaeologists, now communicate and organize, and how this convergence has spurred collective action among those in our profession.

The Convergence of the Twin Pandemics: COVID-19 and Racism - and its Implications for Archaeology

The anti-Black racism that led to the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Atatiana Jerrson, Aura Rosser, Elijah McCalin, and

countless others by police-sanctioned violence is now coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 further illuminated US racial and economic disparities, especially with regard to health. Black and Brown individuals, due to structural racism, are more susceptible to the virus and are dying in disproportionate numbers. Many individuals from communities of color have unequal access to healthcare and testing, work in service jobs that increase their risk of COVID-19 exposure, and compared to other racial groups they suffer from more health problems that exacerbate the effects of this disease (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2020).

COVID-19 also radically shifted our social life. When George Floyd's murder was streamed online, millions of people were already locked to their screens as they practiced social distancing in their homes. What the convergence of these twin pandemics amounted to was an unprecedented collision of biological and systemic state-sanctioned Black death that was hyper-visible to the world. And the world took notice.

Large masses of people around the United States took to the streets in the midst of this pandemic to hold the nation accountable for its conscripted role in the deaths of Black people through police violence and the lack of care for Black communities to combat the spread of COVID-19. Many viewed protesting amid a global pandemic as endemic of the indistinguishability between dying at the hands of the police or the virus - both being approbated by the state (Kiley 2020).

Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) argue that it only takes 3.5% of the population to participate in consistent non-violent demonstrations to create social change. We sincerely hope that this is the case today. Since May 25th, people around the country continue to protest. Everyday people, varying in age and from different racial, cultural, class and religious backgrounds led protests in urban and rural areas decrying that "Black Lives Matter" while demanding an end to police brutality and racial injustice. The latest wave of civil unrest that started in Minnesota rippled across the world, with demonstrations taking place throughout Europe, South and Central America, Asia, and Africa. As a result, statements began to pour into the public domain from for-profit and non-profit companies and organizations stating, in neatly packaged rhetoric, that they too believed that "Black Lives Matter."

In short order, the major archaeology organizations began releasing their own solidarity statements. The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), and the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) all crafted statements released to their memberships that are publicly available online. These outlined how they, too, believed that Black lives mattered and that they were committed to seeing an end to racial injustice, including the insidious ways that anti-Black racism permeated the field. At no other time in history have we witnessed such an orchestrated series of agitation from archaeologists and responses from our professional organizations. While timely, these statements belied the struggles of people of African descent who often experienced covert and overt forms of anti-Black racism at every level of their professional engagement in archaeology (Battle-Baptiste 2012; Brunache 2014; Jones 2014; White and Draycott 2020).

With these statements from professional organizations widely circulated, a new door seemed to be breached for engagement with a much broader field of archaeologists about the institution's ingrained practices of anti-Black racism. That the authors, other Black archaeologists, and our like-minded colleagues were there to mobilize around

this engagement hinged on the fact that we had been building the foundation for action for some time now.

Building Capacity, Channeling Our Rage, and Pushing for Transformation

We have not been silent or passive. This moment of crystallization, when Black archaeologists and our accomplices have come together and been vocal in response to BLM in 2020 builds upon years of labor. Black scholars have addressed our underrepresentation in the profession (Agbe-Davies 2002; Franklin 1997; Odewale et al. 2018; White and Draycott 2020), partnered with Black communities in our research (Franklin and Lee 2019; Jones 2011; Skipper 2014), and produced Black feminist and anti-racist scholarship (Flewellen 2017, 2020; Lee and Scott 2019). For example, each of the authors is currently working with Black communities in the US and abroad. Odewale, being a native Tulsan, spearheads research alongside present-day community members in Tulsa aimed at locating the archaeological remnants of the predominantly Black Historic Greenwood District. Greenwood burned down during the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre (Odewale and Slocum 2020). Dunnavant, Flewellen, and Odewale lead the St. Croix Estate Little Princess Archaeological Field School program (Dunnavant et al. 2018) that works alongside non-profit entities including Archaeology in the Community (under the direction of Alexandra Jones), the Caribbean School for Boys and Girls, and the Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism (CHANT). The program provides free archaeology training to Afro-Caribbean students in St. Croix as well as to predominantly Black students from HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Franklin continues to participate in multiple heritage and archaeological projects in Texas to address the concerns and goals of Black descendants, including raising awareness of Black history through public education.

Thus, given the efforts like those discussed above, we are now better positioned to collectively use this current momentum to push for institutional change. We have had the time to develop strategies for networking and building capacity. Our on-the-ground work with Black communities has emboldened us; we are not alone, and as they struggle for equity and justice, so too must we. The stakes are high: our failure to engage in anti-racist organizing not only implicates all of us in archaeology's white supremacy, but without change BIPOC archaeologists will continue to bear its burden. Archaeology is not only racially exclusive, the vast majority of us continue to practice at its margins. Since we lack institutional power in archaeology, our voices are muted in every realm of the discipline. Further, we recognize that increasing our representation alone is not the solution to equity in the profession. For example, white women constitute at least half of the archaeologists in the US and they are still subject to patriarchal gatekeeping practices when it comes to publishing (Heath-Stout 2020). Thus, we are attempting to challenge the status quo by channeling this moment of turbulence, and of rage, to constructively dismantle racism in our field.

For the authors, the SBA is ground zero for our activism. Comprised of BIPOC and white archaeologists who joined the organization seeking to institute transformative practices in the profession, the SBA has provided us with a safe, alternative space within which to collectively strategize, publish, and instigate change. As the protests raged, therefore, SBA members were well-prepared to respond. Our first major intervention was a virtual panel co-organized with two other entities.

The "Archaeology in the Time of Black Lives Matter" Virtual Panel

Zoë Crossland at Columbia's Center for Archaeology contacted SBA co-founders Dunnavant and Flewellen to see if it was possible to create a public-facing event that addressed anti-Black racism in the field. Together they envisioned a three-part series consisting of a read-in, webinar panel, and workshops. The "Archaeology in the Time of Black Lives Matter" panel, co-sponsored by the SBA, Columbia's Center for Archaeology, and the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG), was the centerpiece of the series.

Roughly 2,000 people attended the event as six Black scholars, including the authors, conversed about practices of anti-Black racism in the field and what practitioners can do to combat it. The success of the panel was largely due to shifts in how people now communicate and gather due to COVID-19. The pandemic led to the canceling of in-person annual conferences as well as department talks and symposiums. These venues are traditionally the spaces where archaeologists meet to talk about and to strategize on how to transform the discipline. With social distancing, only virtual gatherings are now possible.

Virtual events have the ability to connect thousands of people from across the world, pulling scholars out of their thematic and disciplinary silos. A gathering of this kind would not have been possible a few years ago. Thus, like the demonstrations of social unrest that rose up in response to the murder of George Floyd, this panel was emergent and transgressed traditional bounds of academic engagement. Unlike in previous times, the panelists' conversations regarding anti-Blackness in archaeology were not relegated to a time slot at a conference bracketed by financial gatekeeping and geographical distance. The general public and other archaeologists witnessed the conversation unfold, were able to ask and answer questions via the chat options, and engaged through Twitter as the event was live-tweeted by Laura Heath-Stout. Those unable to attend the live-streaming were able to view the recording on the co-sponsors' webpages.

Where Are We Now?

Our interrelated objectives include growing the number of Black archaeologists, decolonizing the field's canon and our curriculum and pedagogy, advocating for collaborative research with descendant communities of color, and addressing equity across the profession. More broadly, we want to ensure that institutions claiming "Black Lives Matter" are also held accountable for addressing sexual harassment, repatriation, and the concerns of LGBTQIA archaeologists.

We know that it will take an army of co-conspirators to dismantle racial injustice in our profession from the bottom up and the top down. To that end, the virtual panel generated enough interest to further build our capacity, and to diversify our efforts. Following the panel discussion, a group of scholars reconvened in the form of two-hour break-out sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities around activism and organizing, recruitment and retention, community engagement, field schools, museums and heritage, and anti-racist curriculum and pedagogy. The insights and recommendations from those discussions have been compiled in a resource list that is readily available to the public via the SBA website (https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/

resources). Moreover, archaeologists and educators are now using the virtual panel discussion in classrooms and workspaces to have critical conversations around systemic issues in the field. A case in point are the happenings at New South Associates. In response to the panel's call for better engagement between Cultural Resource Management (CRM) firms and HBCUs and Black educators, the firm reached out from its Georgia and North Carolina Offices. New South Associate's co-founder Joe Joseph reported:

> The Greensboro office contacted faculty at North Carolina A&T State University's Environmental Studies and History Departments who expressed interest in company personnel providing presentations on CRM archaeology and African American burial grounds in particular, as well as the potential for paid student internships. The Greensboro office also reached out to the predominantly Black Swann Middle School located immediately behind New South's office. Their principal was highly receptive to collaboration, particularly to the use of ground penetrating radar (GPR) and archaeological excavations, as the school has a STEM program. Plans are currently underway to provide classroom instruction on archaeology as well as field demonstration and orientation on GPR, with discussions initiated about the potential for a school grounds archaeological education project. In Georgia, staff spoke with Dr. Karcheik Sims-Alvarado who is starting a Public History Program at Morehouse College in January and with whom New South has previously worked. The firm offered to provide classroom lectures on CRM archaeology and the history of African diaspora sites as well as to establish an internship program, offers that were well received. Finally, New South has spoken with the principal of Stone Mountain Elementary School about both classroom visits and office tours, as this predominantly Black school is within walking distance of New South's office.

Thus, change is happening and we are currently working on a number of additional initiatives to keep the momentum up. The SBA has developed a member survey to determine what attracted our members to archaeology, the challenges we encountered during our educational and career pathways, and what graduate programs, CRM firms, and professional organizations can do to increase and retain Black representation in archaeology. We intend to use the survey results to partner with various entities in archaeology to promote equity in our field. One such collaboration involves a proposal to evaluate the efforts of SHPOs (State Historic Preservation Officer) with respect to raising the visibility of African diaspora archaeology and doing so in concert with local descendant communities. Our goal is to work with the SHA, SAA, and ACRA (American Cultural Resources Association), which have all endorsed this proposal, to assess how often African diaspora sites are considered eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and the SHPOs' commitment to outreach and education within Black communities. We plan to identify the best practices to address these concerns and to encourage SHPOs to adopt them if they are not in place. We hope that the results of this endeavor will provide more opportunities for African Americans, especially children and teens, to learn about the relevance of archaeology to Black heritage and history. This might help to generate interest among some of these youth to consider a career in archaeology.

Contributing to the Cause

BIPOC archaeologists alone cannot do the work that is needed to radically change archaeology. A number of the efforts currently underway involve SBA members working in concert with other organizations and individual archaeologists. For those who refuse to remain silent there are multiple ways to get involved. The following suggestions are by no means exhaustive.

Educators can start by decolonizing the discipline through their curriculum and pedagogy. If we actively transform who, what, and how we teach, we can begin to normalize an anti-racist archaeology (e.g., Hanna 2019; Kandaswamy 2007). Further, those of us who are in the position to recruit BIPOC students should actively work to do so, and be prepared to ensure their retention and success. Graduate programs can be isolating for BIPOC students at best, and at worse, can be demeaning and hostile spaces (Blackwell 2010). Based on the authors' graduate school experiences, strong mentoring, advisors supporting Black advisees' decisions to write non-traditional dissertations, and agitating for anti-racist disciplinary spaces (including within their departments) are among the reasons why each of us succeeded. As a case in point, Black students now poised to enter graduate school are more likely to pursue projects that are not the norm in archaeology. These include dissertations with robust social justice agendas or that are framed within Black feminist praxis. The potential to work on explicitly political projects is what attracts many BIPOC students to archaeology. To learn more about these issues one can consult the resource list available on the SBA website.

Archaeologists who work in the private sector can take a page out of New South Associate's book and do local outreach with predominantly Black schools or colleges, or Black organizations (e.g., historical or genealogical societies). For CRM firms seeking to address racial inclusivity among their rank, White and Draycott (2020) recently wrote about the "whiteness of archaeology" and why it matters. White's take on racism in CRM provides a rare glimpse into what it is like to be Black and working within this context. This is essential reading for all archaeologists: White and Draycott discuss data and experiences related to racial exclusion in our field that are sobering, and they provide advice on how to transform archaeology.

Along with these increased efforts to diversify the private and public sectors of archaeology, the number of archaeological projects that centralize the voices of predominantly Black communities is steadily growing (Odewale et al. 2018). These projects use traditional research methods alongside present-day community perspectives to consider how descendants' collective memory and investment in Black heritage (Franklin and Lee 2020; LaRoche 2013; Odewale 2020; Reeves 2018) heightens the historical significance of Black homesteads (Franklin and Lee 2019; LaRoche 2012; Paynter and Battle-Baptiste 2019) and burial spaces (LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Odewale 2020). LaRoche and Blakey (1997) learned by experience with their involvement in the New York African Burial Ground project the importance of engagement with Black descendants, as local knowledge producers and ethical clients, prior to excavation. African descendant communities from New York to Ghana posited divergent opinions on how excavations should be conducted, but all cared deeply about the protection of their ancestral heritage and sought "power and control, not the afterthought of inclusion" (LaRoche and Blakey 1997:100). To that end, staff at James Madison's Montpelier recently organized the first National Summit on Teaching Slavery and created a rubric with descendants and with researchers at other historic sites and

museums that would "bring an organization through a staged analysis of its ability to engage with the descendant community" (National Summit on Teaching Slavery 2019a:17). Among the best practices cited in the rubric are structural parity, transparency and accountability, collaboration, and inclusive and equitable narratives (National Summit on Teaching Slavery 2019b). This rubric currently guides the working relationship between researchers and staff at Montpelier and the Black descendants of this plantation (Reeves et al. forthcoming) and should be applied more widely.

This is also a good time to get involved with our professional organizations, such as the SAA, to work toward racial justice. Erin Cagney and Sarah Janesko led a petition drive in response to the SAA's lack of actionable items in its initial BLM solidarity statement. Their goal was to pressure the SAA "to make internal, structural changes to support and welcome Black, Indigenous, and people of color archaeologists as well as promote anti-racism in the archaeology community." The SAA is now organizing a task force to address the demands in the petition which had 273 signatures. Importantly, members must also hold the leadership of our organizations accountable for the promises they make to enact change.

More broadly, the proliferation of virtual spaces throughout academia and radical communities has dramatically reconfigured how scholars not only engage with one another but with a wider public as well. Organizations like the SBA have taken advantage of the affordances of virtual spaces to host reading and writing groups that center on Black studies as well as to co-host additional panels and discussions for larger and more diverse audiences. One can organize along similar fronts. Further, these virtual spaces during a global pandemic have heightened the visibility of the work that various collectives and individuals are doing to change archaeology. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Zoom - now more than ever - have increasingly become sites of intellectual discourse and radical organizing. One can lend their support to these efforts. For example, the Black Trowel Collective's (2020) Community Manifesto reads in part, "An anarchist archaeology embraces considerations of social inequity as a critique of authoritarian forms of power and as a rubric for enabling egalitarian and equitable relationships." In solidarity with students who are working-class, immigrants, and/or from ethnic and racial minority groups, the Collective provides microgrants with no questions asked. Archaeology in the Community (Archaeology in the Community 2020) is a non-profit organization that provides free programs for primary and secondary students, and professional development for college students. Since 2006, its founder, Alex Jones (2011), has introduced archaeology to thousands of children, many of them from predominantly Black communities in Washington DC and Baltimore. AITC depends on donations to support its community-based educational programs.

Conclusion

What will come of this moment remains to be seen but it is clear that the momentum is building. There is a deeper and broader understanding that systemic racism will not passively go away and requires ardent change. Looking toward the future, the bridge between twenty-first-century archaeology and the Black Lives Matter Movement will be built by BIPOC archaeologists and our accomplices based on the lessons learned from decades of individual and collective action (Ike et al. 2020). The power behind this latest iteration of BLM lies in its ability to shine a light in dark corners thus removing the illusion of neutrality: white silence equates to racism. Thus, as calls for justice are heard around the

world, we also "hear" the silence of those complicit in anti-Blackness. Still, with BLM in 2020 as the backdrop, more individuals and institutions than ever before are coming forward and speaking out against racism in highly visible, globally connected virtual battle grounds for social justice. In archaeology, statements are starting to move beyond passive declarations of solidarity into the realm of structural change, bringing us closer to the anti-racist future so many of us envisioned when the SBA was formed. We must remain confident that this iteration of archaeology and Black Lives Matter will serve as a radical opportunity to not only re-center archaeology toward the intellectual project of recognizing the capacious value of Black life, but to reconfigure the discipline as a whole.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

Agbe-Davies, A. S. (2002). Black scholars, Black pasts. *SAA Archaeological Record* **2**(4): 24–28.

Agbe-Davies, A. S. (2014). *Tobacco, Pipes, and Race in Colonial Virginia: Little Tubes of Mighty Power*. Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA.

Archaeology in the Community (2020). http://www.archaeologyincommunity.com/; accessed August, 2020.

Ascher, R. and Fairbanks, C. (1971). Excavation of a slave cabin: Georgia, U.S.A. *Historical Archaeology* **5**(1): 3–17.

Atalay, S. (2006). Indigenous archaeology as decolonizing practice. *American Indian Quarterly* **30**: 280–310.

Atalay, S. (2012). *Community-based Archaeology: Research with, by, and for Indigenous and Local Communities*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Barnes, J. A., (ed.) (2011). *The Materiality of Freedom: Archaeologies of Post-emancipation Life*. University of South Carolina Press, Columbia.

Battle-Baptiste, W. (2011). *Black Feminist Archaeology*. Routledge, Walnut Creek, CA.

Battle-Baptiste, W. (2012). Interview by Dunnavant, J. P., on March 14 (digital audio recording). Society of Black Archaeologists Oral History Project, https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/services; accessed August, 2020.

Battle-Baptiste, W. (2017). Cruise ships, community, and collective memory at Millars Plantation, Eleuthera, Bahamas. *Historical Archaeology* **51**(1): 60–70.

Bell, A. (2008). On the politics and possibilities for operationalizing vindicationist historical archaeologies. *Historical Archaeology* **42**(2): 138–146.

Black Lives Matter (2020). Herstory, https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/; accessed August, 2020.

Black Trowel Collective (2020). Black Trowel Collective Microgrants, https://blacktrowelcollective.wordpress.com/; accessed August, 2020.

Blackmore, C. (2011). How to queer the past without sex: queer theory, feminisms and the archaeology of identity. *Archaeologies* **7**(1): 75–96.

Blackwell, D. M. (2010). Sidelines and separate spaces: making education anti-racist for students of color. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education* **13**(4): 473–494.

Bokat-Lindell, S. (2020). Why is police brutality still happening? *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/28/opinion/minneapolis-police-brutality.html; accessed August, 2020.

Brandon, J. C. (2008). Disparate diasporas and vindicationist archaeologies: some comments on excavating America's metaphor. *Historical Archaeology* **42**(2): 147–151.

Brunache, P. (2014). Interview by Flewellen, A. O. on January 11 (digital audio recording). Society of Black Archaeologists Oral History Project, https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/services; accessed August, 2020.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). Health equity considerations and racial and ethnic minority groups, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fracial-ethnic-minorities.html; accessed August, 2020.

Chenoweth, E. S. and Stephan, M. J. (2011). *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Non-violent Conflict*. Columbia University Press, New York.

Clemens, C. (2017). Ally or accomplice? The language of activism. Teaching Tolerance, https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/ally-or-accomplice-the-language-of-activism; accessed July, 2020.

Colwell-Chanthaphonh, C. (2009). *Inheriting the Past: The Making of Arthur C. Parker and Indigenous Archaeology*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Colwell-Chanthaphonh, C., Ferguson, T. J., Lippert, D., McGuire, R. H., Nicholas, G. P., Watkins, J. E., and Zimmerman, L. J. (2010). The premise and promise of Indigenous archaeology. *American Antiquity* **75**(2): 228–238.

Conkey, M. W. and Spector, J. D. (1984). Archaeology and the study of gender. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* **7**: 1–38.

Davidson, J. M. (2008). Identity and violent death: contextualizing lethal gun violence within the African American community of Dallas, TX (1900–1907). *Journal of Social Archaeology* **8**(3): 320–354.

Desnoyers-Colas, E. (2019) Talking loud and saying nothing. *Departure in Critical Qualitative Research* **8**(4): 100–105.

Diaz-Andreu, M. (2007). *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology: Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Past*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Dowson, T. A. (ed.) (2000). Thematic issue: Queer Archaeologies. *World Archaeology* **32**(2).

Dunnavant, J. P., Flewellen, A. O., Jones, A., Odewale, A., and White, W. A. (2018). Assessing heritage resources in St. Croix post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria. *Transforming Anthropology* **26**(2): 157–172.

Dunnavant, J. P., Flewellen, A. O., Franklin, M., Jones, A., Odewale, A., Wolde-Michael, T., and Panelists (2020). Archaeology in the time of Black Lives Matter, June 25. Columbia's Center for Archaeology, the Society of Black Archaeologists, and the Theoretical Archaeology Group, North America. https://archaeology.columbia.edu/2020/06/27/video-of-panel-on-archaeology-in-the-time-of-black-lives-matter/.

Elliott-Cooper, A. (2020). "Defund the police" is not non-sense. Here's what it really means. *Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/02/britain-defund-the-police-black-lives-matter; accessed August, 2020.

Epperson, T. W. (2004). Critical race theory and the archaeology of the African diaspora. *Historical Archaeology* **38**(1): 101–108.

Fennell, C. C. (2010). Early African America: archaeological studies of significance and diversity. *Journal of Archaeological Research* **19**(1): 1–49.

Fennell, C. C. and White, W. A. (eds.) (2017). Special issue: Challenging Theories of Racism, Diaspora, and Agency in African America. *Historical Archaeology* **51**(1).

Flewellen, A. O. (2017). Locating marginalized historical narratives at Kingsley Plantation. *Historical Archaeology* **51**(1): 71–87.

Flewellen, A. O. (2020). African diasporic choices: locating the lived experiences of Afro-Crucians in the archival and archaeological record. *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Informationsvidenskab Og Kulturformidling* **8**(2): 54–74.

Franklin, M. (1997). Why are there so few Black American archaeologists? *Antiquity* **71**(274): 799–801.

Franklin, M. (2001). A Black feminist-inspired archaeology? *Journal of Social Archaeology* **1**(1): 108–125.

Franklin M. and Lee, N. (2019). Revitalizing tradition and instigating change: foodways at the Ransom and Williams farmstead, c. 1871-1905. *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* **8**(3): 202–225.

Franklin, M. and Lee, N. (2020). African American descendants, community outreach, and the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead. *Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage* **7**(2): 135–148.

Franklin, M. and McKee, L. (2004). Introduction: African diaspora archaeologies: present insights and expanding discourses. *Historical Archaeology* **38**(1): 1–9.

Franklin, M. and Paynter, R. (2010). Inequality and archaeology. In Ashmore, W., Lippert, D., and Mills, B. (eds.), *Voices in American Archaeology: the 75th Anniversary Volume of the Society for American Archaeology*. Society for American Archaeology Press, Washington DC, pp. 94–130.

González-Tennant, E. (2018). *The Rosewood Massacre: An Archaeology and History of Intersectional Violence*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Hamilakis, Y. and Duke, P. (eds.) (2007). *Archaeology and Capitalism: From Ethics to Politics*. Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA.

Hanna, K. B. (2019). Pedagogies in the flesh: building an anti-racist decolonized classroom. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* **40**(1): 229–244.

Heath-Stout, L. E. (2020). Who writes about archaeology? An intersectional study of authorship in archaeological journals. *American Antiquity* **85**(3): 407–426.

Ike, N., Miller, G., and Hartemann, G. O. (2020). Anti-racist archaeology: your time is now. *SAA Archaeological Record* **20**(4): 12–16.

Indigenous Action (2014). Accomplices not allies: abolishing the ally industrial complex. http://www.indigenousaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/;. Accessed Sep 2020.

Jones, A. (2011). Archaeology and my mission to empower the youth of my community. *SAA Archaeological Record* **11**(2): 30–31.

Jones, A. (2014). Interview by Flewellen, A. O., on Jan. 11 (digital audio recording). Society of Black Archaeologists Oral History Project, https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/services; accessed August, 2020.

Joseph, J. W. (2016). Marks from the past, signs of the future—the "dikenga" of historical archaeology. *Historical Archaeology* **50**(3): 5–23.

Kandaswamy, P. (2007). Beyond colorblindness and multiculturalism: rethinking anti-racist pedagogy in the university classroom. *Radical Teacher* **80**: 6–11.

Kiley, B. (2020). Racism is the biggest public health crisis of our time: health care workers of color fight twin pandemics. *Seattle Times*, https://www.seattletimes.com/life/double-duty-healthcare-workers-of-color-fight-the-twin-pandemics-of-coronavirus-and-racism/; accessed August, 2020.

LaRoche, C. J. (2012). Benefits of public intervention at African-American archaeological sites. In Skeates, R., McDavid, C. and Carmen, J. (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Public Archaeology*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 629–658.

LaRoche, C. J. (2013). *Free Black Communities and the Underground Railroad: The Geography of Resistance*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana.

LaRoche, C. J. and Blakey, M. L. (1997). Seizing intellectual power: the dialogue at the New York African Burial Ground. *Historical Archaeology* **31**(3): 84–106.

Lee, N. K. (2020). Race, socioeconomic status, and land ownership among freed African American farmers: the view from ceramic use at the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead, Manchaca, Texas. *Historical Archaeology* **54**(2): 404–423.

Lee, N. and Scott, J. N. (eds.) (2019). Special issue: The Marathon Continues: New Directions in African Diaspora Archaeology. *Transforming Anthropology* **27**(2).

Leone, M. P., LaRoche, C. J., and Babiarz, J. J. (2005). The archaeology of black Americans in recent times. *Annual Review of Anthropology* **34**: 575–598.

Lippert, D. (2008). Not the end, not the middle, but the beginning: repatriation as a transformative mechanism for archaeologists and Indigenous peoples. In Colwell-Chanthaphonh, C. and Ferguson, T. J. (eds.), *Collaboration in Archaeological Practice: Engaging Descendant Communities*. AltaMira, Lanham, MD, pp. 119–130.

McDavid, C. (2007). Beyond strategy and good intention: archaeology, race, and white privilege. In Little, B. J. and Shackel, P. A. (eds.), *Archaeology as a Tool for Civic Engagement*. AltaMira Press, Lanham, MD, pp. 67–88.

McDavid, C. (2010). Public archaeology, activism, and racism: rethinking the heritage "product." In Stottman, M. J. (ed.), *Archaeologists as Activists: Can Archaeologists Change the World?* University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, pp. 36–47.

Morris, A. (2017) Materialities of homeplace. *Historical Archaeology* **51**(1): 28–42.

Mullins, P. R. (1999). *Race and Affluence: An Archaeology of African America and Consumer Culture*. Kluwer Academic/Plenum, New York.

Mullins, P. R. (2008). Excavating America's metaphor: race, diaspora, and vindicationist archaeologies. *Historical Archaeology* **42**(2): 104–122.

National Summit on Teaching Slavery (2019a). Engaging descendant communities in the interpretation of slavery at museums and historic sites. *History News* **74**(1): 14–21.

National Summit on Teaching Slavery (2019b). Engaging descendant communities in the interpretation of slavery: a rubric of best practices. *History News* **74**(1): 22–29

Odewale, A. (2020). Archaeology as a path to reconciliation in Tulsa's Historic Black Wall Street. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Boston, MA, January 8–11.

Odewale, A. and Slocum, K. (2020). The rise, destruction, and rebuilding of Tulsa's Greenwood District: a source list, https://tulsasyllabus.web.unc.edu/; accessed August, 2020.

Odewale, A., Dunnavant, J. P., Flewellen, A. O., and Jones, A. (2018). Archaeology for the next generation. *Anthropology News* **59**(1). https://doi.org/10.1111/AN.729.

Orser, Jr., C. E. (2001a). The anthropology in American historical archaeology. *American Anthropologist* **103**(3): 621–632.

Orser, Jr., C. E. (ed.) (2001b). *Race and the Archaeology of Identity*. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.

Paynter, R. and Battle-Baptiste, W. (2019). Contexts of resistance in African American western Massachusetts: a view from the W. E. B. Du Bois homesite in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. *Historical Archaeology* **53**(1): 323–340

Powell, J. and Kelly, A. (2017). Accomplices in the academy in the age of Black Lives Matter. *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis* **6**(2): 42–65.

Reeves, M. B. (2004). Asking the "right" questions: archaeologists and descendant communities. In Shackel, P. A. and Chambers, Erve J. (eds.), *Places in Mind: Public Archaeology as Applied Anthropology*. Routledge, New York, pp. 71–81.

Reeves, M. B. (2018). Reversing the narrative: using the archaeology of African American spaces to interpret history at a United States presidential home site. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Jose, CA, November 14–28.

Reeves, M. B., Minkoff, M. F., and Brock, T. (forthcoming). Aiming for anti-racism: policies and practices of a publicly engaged Archaeology Department. In Westmacott, C. V. (ed.), *Critical Public Archaeology: Confronting Social Challenges in the 21st Century*. Berghahn, New York.

Rutecki D. M. and Blackmore, C. (2016). Towards an inclusive queer archaeology: an overview and introduction. *SAA Archaeological Record* **16**(1): 9–11.

Saitta, D. J. (2007). *The Archaeology of Collective Action*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Schmidt, R. and Voss, B. L. (eds.) (2000). *Archaeologies of Sexuality*. Routledge, London.

Schnell, L. (2020) Defund police? Some cities have already started by investing in mental health instead, *USA Today*, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/06/22/defund-police-what-means-black-lives-matter/3218862001/; accessed July, 2020.

Shackle, P. (2001). Public memory and the search for power in American archaeology. *American Anthropologist* **103**(3): 655–670.

Shepherd, N. (2002). The politics of archaeology in Africa. *Annual Review of Anthropology* **31**: 189–209.

Skipper, J. (2014). Sustaining visibility? The quandary of St. Paul and archaeology in the long run. *Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage* **1**(3): 210–227.

Trigger, B. (2006). *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Voss B. L. (2000) Feminisms, queer theories, and the archaeological study of past sexualities. *World Archaeology* **32**(2): 180–192.

Voss, B. L. (2008). Sexuality studies in archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* **37**: 317–333.

Warner, M. S. (2015). *Eating in the Side Room: Food, Archaeology, and African American Identity*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Watkins, J. (2000). *Indigenous Archaeology: American Indian Values and Scientific Practice*. Alta Mira Press, Walnut Creek, CA.

Watson, L. (2020). Allyship and accomplice: two sides of the same coin. *Equity Dispatch* **4**(3): 2–8.

White, W. A. and Draycott, C. (2020). Why the Whiteness of archaeology is a problem. *Sapiens* https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/archaeology-diversity/; accessed July, 2020.

Wilkie, L. A. (2003). *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African-American Midwife's Tale.* Routledge, New York.

Wilkie, L. A. (2019). At freedom's borderland: the Black regulars and masculinity at Fort Davis, Texas. *Historical Archaeology* **53**(1): 126–137.