

Conservation or Tourism?: Open Air Museums and their Relevance to Archaeotourism.



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III. Abstract

Efforts of conservation create a conflict between the archaeological community and tourism industry. The following paper will discuss the tourism industry and the conflict between tourism goals and the conservation of archaeological material. The focus will be on open air museums and exploring the proposal that these open air museums are a valuable resource for archaeology to pursue alternative, if not better conservation methods and ethical standards while still generating and benefiting from the revenue of the tourism industry. By making use of two contrasting case studies, the open air museum Āraiši in Latvia and the tourist destination of Xunantunich in Belize, the following paper will discuss how these sites are entangled with concepts such as authenticity, conservation, and ethics and the related impacts that these concepts have on each site.

Keywords: Open Air Museums, Conservation, Authenticity, Archaeotourism, Tourism, Ethics.

1. Introduction

In a certain sense, archaeology has the power to enchant us, to *move* us and surprise us with untold histories. Archaeological tourism is a wellspring of new discoveries and stories waiting to be told, a prospect that reminds us what it is to feel alive (Perry 2019 p.354). The desire to experience this enchantment remains deeply rooted in people around the globe. Archaeological tourism, hereafter referred to as archaeotourism, is a product of the allure that the past has. Not including the year 2020, which saw a sharp decrease in travel and visitation of any kind due to the pandemic, world travel and tourism was steadily increasing year by year (UNWTO 2020). While the following includes all forms of tourism, not strictly archaeological site visitation, the year 2019 saw international tourist arrivals and overnight stays increase to 1.5 billion, based on reported data from destinations worldwide (UNWTO 2020). In 2015 43.4% of the population over the age of 16 in the European Union (EU) had visited a cultural heritage site at least once (Eurostat 2017). Currently, in both North America and Europe there are 453 cultural sites on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List, not including natural sites, mixed sites, or sites considered to be in danger (UNESCO 2020). Many of these sites on the UNESCO list are also open for tourism. In conjunction with tourism, museum visitation is continuously popular. In the United States of America (USA), museums see roughly 850 million visits each year. This figure includes all varieties of museums across America (AAM 2020). There is something to be said about the intrigue that the ancient past continues to have for modern societies across the world as it is evident that tourism and visitation numbers continue to increase annually. Any search engine inquiry on the internet about 'places to visit' or 'archaeological tourist sites' will immediately bring up multiple pages to search through, all titled variations of "10 Best Sites to Visit", or some similar phrase that lists various destinations that are a must see during a trip. It is clear that interest in visiting archaeological sites and museums will continue as long as there are materials of the past.

Open air museums are a blend of both archaeotourism and museum visitation that provides a unique stage for the presentation of archaeological material. Though not a new phenomenon, interest in open air museums and the availability of open air museums is rapidly increasing. In the last 25 years there has been a considerable increase in the number of open air museums. In Europe, there are roughly 300 open air museums available for tourists to visit (Paardekooper 2012, p.23). It is important to note that open air museums are not homogenous in their construction, nor do countries always share a common definition of an open air museum. In 2008, EXARC, an international cultural heritage network affiliated with the International

Council of Museums (ICOM), defined what an open air museum is, and since then their definition has become widely accepted (EXARC 2008). EXARC defines archaeological open air museums as,

...a non-profit permanent institution with outdoor true to scale architectural reconstructions primarily based on archaeological sources. It holds collections of intangible heritage resources and provides an interpretation of how people lived and acted in the past; this is accomplished according to sound scientific methods for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment of its visitors (EXARC 2008).

Archaeological open air museums are defined partly by educational value and partly by heritage, located in an undefined area between the archaeological process and the public. The main objective of archaeological open air museums is the presentation and interpretation of archaeological material remains for education (Paardekooper 2012, p.23). Archaeological sites that have been developed and made available for visitation do not fall under the same definition as open air museums. The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) defines an archaeological site as, "...any place where there are physical remains of past human activities." (SAA 2021). Archaeotourism has similar goals to that of open air museums. Such goals include presenting the public with the history of the site and the contributions that archaeology has made in the knowledge of past cultures, and the site's relevance to contemporary cultures, among others. However, there are concerns associated with conservation and preservation when it comes to having public access at these sites (Comer & Williams 2018, p.1). Where open air museums are designed to invite the public in and provide an immersive and educational experience, archaeotourism sites are ancient material remains that have been left exposed in their contexts and opened to visitation.

The challenges with archaeotourism are multifaceted. The appeal in visiting an archaeological site is the authentic experience. The public is attracted to the material because it has been left in its original context (Sinamai 2018, p.45). However, the result of leaving this material in its context and opening it to the public is the exposure to elements, foot traffic, looting, and other factors that threaten the conservation of the material. Despite the challenges, the economic factors of archaeotourism cannot be dismissed when considering how to improve conservation of sites. In 2016, tourism accounted for 1 in 10 jobs globally and generated 10% of the global GDP (Thomas & Langlitz 2018, p.70). Simply closing sites to the public is not a viable option. Other challenges when opening sites for the public include investments. Many sites, even those that generate significant revenue, do not receive funding for maintenance or basic services. These sites then lack proper conservation measures and local communities fail to see any sort of benefit or revenue (Thomas & Langlitz 2018, pp.70-71). Alongside economics, ethical

concerns also present as a result of archaeotourism. In many cases archaeotourism is forced to cater to public enjoyment. Public enjoyment impacts how sites are then developed, interpreted, presented (Sinamai 2018, p.45). The needs defined by the tourists are a strong consideration when interpreting the sites and developing them for presentation, often at the expense of local communities. Local communities are separated from their heritage sites, and their experience of the past is dictated by limited interpretations of the site due to the focus on attracting tourists (Sinamai 2018, pp.45-46). Both the intangible heritage and the tangible become commodities and are incompatible with local narratives. These issues as a result of archaeotourism are worth deeper consideration and investigation.

1.1 Research Questions

The problem is the current management and conservation of archaeotourism sites. Archaeotourism is damaging to the material remains and, in many cases, excludes local communities from their own heritage. Archaeotourism needs better, longer term solutions for conservation and management, engaging surrounding communities more in their own heritage all while maintaining revenue that tourism generates.

Archaeologists are gradually becoming more involved with solutions to the problems surrounding conservation and management at sites open to tourists, and there are measures slowly being put into place with regards to the ethics surrounding local communities (Thierstein 2018, p.6). However, I wish to consider if there is a better long term solution to these problems of tourism and archaeology. How can archaeology still present its findings for public education and maintain integrity and responsibility of and for the material? How can local communities be more involved in the interpretation of their own heritage but still benefit from the revenue of tourism? This work will investigate the idea that open air museums are a viable alternative, or aid to archaeotourism.

This work will discuss and explore the viability of open air museums as a long term solution to help archaeotourism sites with conservation and benefiting local communities while maintaining tourist interest. Through the use of case studies and research I will discuss the idea that open air museums could be a better focus for the archaeotourism industry rather than continually opening and developing new sites with tourism in mind.

The question presented by the problem that my thesis will work to answer is; **are open air museums a viable tool to help archaeologists navigate the conflict between conservation goals and tourism goals at archaeotourism sites, while engaging more with local communities, and if so, to what extent?**

In order to address the problems of archaeotourism and answer the research question, this body of work will also take into consideration the following statements that are relevant to the problem, which are:

1. To understand the current measures and guidelines in place for conservation at archaeotourism sites
2. To consider and analyze the meaning of the authentic experience and how it dictates tourist interest
3. To determine the viability of open air museums as long term options, or even alternatives to archaeotourism in the long run
4. To discuss the extent to which open air museums can help with conservation measures and aid in local community engagement
5. To determine if open air museums are capable of offering an authentic experience that will maintain tourist interest
6. To consider the implications of tourism and open air museums will have for archaeology into the future

The aim is to discuss, and answer the research question that open air museums can be an alternative to continuously developing archaeological sites for tourism while also exploring the topics relevant to the research question. The overall goal is to thoroughly investigate the research question and its implications within archaeology while also discussing how tourism and archaeology interact, impact material remains, and how current local communities are considered.

1.2 Research History

Archaeotourism, museums, and by association, open air museums are not strictly modern concepts. Interest in the past and its material remains is a deeply rooted practice that is traceable throughout history. There is evidence from the ancient world that shows the enjoyment of travel and tourism, similar to our modern tastes. One such example comes from the 5th century BCE where Herodotus describes the extent of his travels and his interest in ancient remains that he came across during those travels (Díaz-Andreu 2020, p.15). Later, during the Roman period, leisure travel and sightseeing was a common practice for the elite members of society. Roman Greece was a particularly popular destination that included visits to sites like Delphi, Athens, Corinth, Olympia, among other destinations. The popularity of this activity is seen in the production of the equivalent to tourist guides that were reproduced and sold in popular destinations, such as Athens. The author Pausanias wrote the first known travel

guidebook titled *Guidebook to Greece* (Díaz-Andreu 2020, p. 16). Pausanias' book included, by then, five ancient monuments and two modern monuments that he considered worth visiting during travel (Díaz-Andreu 2020, p. 17). Interest in antiquities and ancient sites as the key component of a trip was solidified during the late medieval period (Díaz-Andreu 2020, p.19). In 1763 the 'rediscovery of Pompeii' began. Leading up to 1763 interest in the site had waned, with focus on other nearby sites and discoveries like Herculaneum. It was the discovery of an inscription that proved that the hill of Citivia covered ancient Pompeii that reignited interest (Rowland 2014, p.86). By 1765 the *ciceroni*, the Neapolitan tour guides had added Pompeii to their list of routes. Pompeii made for a convenient day trip from Naples, with time for extra stops to other towns or the villas of the rich nobles nearby (Rowland, 2014, p.88). The crown began upgrades to the surrounding area of Pompeii as well, to attract more visitors. In the 1780's the king began upgrades on the Rapillo as well as construction on a new inn that would mimic the architecture of an ancient Pompeian house (Rowland, 2014, p.89). The purpose was to attract more visitors with the promise of comfortable lodging, but also to use the inn as a form of a teaching tool via its architecture (Rowland, 2014, p.89). However, it wasn't until the 18th and 19th century's that archaeotourism became more accessible. Alongside the development of faster modes of travel, there was an increased sense of nationalism that prompted better investments into archaeological infrastructure. The improvement of archaeological infrastructure was a result of the increasing number of sites being opened to the public. Some improvements included better conservation and management of sites and buildings as well as museum exhibits of archaeological collections being set up (Díaz-Andreu 2020 p.34). The industrialization of travel made 'out of reach' sites accessible for a wider variety of people from varying social classes (Díaz-Andreu 2020 p.33). In the late 1800's and early 1900's the tourist industry was beginning to expand its scope beyond Italy, Greece, and Egypt. Parts of South America and Africa were being published in guidebooks for tourists. Initial South American guidebooks mainly focused on Mexico and Guatemala. Current popular destinations, like Peru, were yet untouched by the tourism industry at this time (Díaz-Andreu 2020 p.70). Around the same time, the idea of local tourism, or museum visitation was also a rising trend. Lower social classes did not have funds to go on trips around the world, but still wanted to participate in the leisure activity of viewing antiquities. Local museums were increasingly housing historical displays containing archaeological material and objects (Díaz-Andreu 2020 pp.70-71). Later, after WWI and WWII, archaeotourism undertook renewed effort to consolidate the management of sites and associated tourism across both North America and Europe. State offices were becoming more responsible for the management and conservation of archaeotourism sites as

interest in visiting more parts of the world increased, and more people had access to travel and visitation of these sites (Díaz-Andreu 2020 p.90). Increased accessibility to sites via roads and cars made the management of sites an issue at the forefront. Topics such as vandalism and conservation were more important than ever as archaeotourism sites were encountering these issues for the first time (Díaz-Andreu 2020 p.93). As tourist activity became more popular, and sites more accessible, archaeologists were realizing that these sites needed better management in order for tourism to be sustainable.

The desire to experience the ancient past through material remains has long been an interest of modern society, and the history of tourism is traceable through the historical record. The development of tourism and the subsequent practice of developing archaeological sites for the purpose of tourism is relevant to understanding how museums and open air museums are interconnected. Museums and curation are connected to a similar interest in the past as well as curiosity in other cultures and material remains. Though museum curation and its related history is problematic, the development of museum interest and related open air museums is also important when considering tourism activities and archaeological practice. Interest in the past and its materials led to the development of materials, but also staged authenticity, or the reconstruction of old styles to create the illusion of antiquity (Díaz-Andreu 2020 p.93). The concept of staged authenticity is relevant to both traditional museums and the development of open air museums.

Museums are also an ancient concept, though they have undergone several transformations to get to where they are now. The modern museum stems from a colonial narrative, the accumulation of cultural objects for the purpose of display (Ramírez 2020, p.74). But, this is not where they originated. The word museum is derived from the Greek word *mouseion*, used to describe a temple of the muses, particularly places of contemplation, learning, and teaching. The use of this word dates back to the 3rd century BCE (Simmons 2016, p.1). The word museum proper entered the English language in the early 1600s and was later defined in 1730 in the *Dictionarium Britannicum* as a, "study or library; also a college or publick[sic] place for the resort of learned men" (Simmons 2016 p.2). At the time, this was not the only idea of what defined a museum. The former definition puts emphasis on the structure while other considerations put more emphasis on the actual collection within a structure. However, what was present in all of the definitions was the association of objects and learning (Simmons 2016 p.2). Museums as places for public visitation is a more recent development. Civil rights movements emerged and were aimed at addressing systematic inequalities. These movements prompted the shift of museums from a colonial narrative to a more re-imagined

forum. While this shift was not perfect and still promoted authorities to create narratives of heritage and sites, it changed the way that the public could access and learn about heritage (Ramírez 2020, p.74). In 1807 the established British Museum dropped the ticket requirement and limitation on visitors per day to make the collection more accessible to the general public (Díaz-Andreu 2020, p. 35). In 1946 ICOM amended their definition of a museum to include the structure, collection, purpose and those who could make use of a museum (Simmons 2016 p.4). In 2007 the ICOM put forth a definition at its conference in Vienna that was the most widely accepted definition of a modern day museum. The ICOM definition states that,

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment (Simmons 2016 p.5).

More recently, in July 2019 at the 139th Executive Committee of the ICOM a new definition was presented,

Museums are democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artifacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality, and planetary wellbeing (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.51).

The practice of museology has undergone dynamic changes since its inception. The most recent definition from the ICOM is a significant step for museum work because of its recognition for the need for better, more ethical conservation for not only the communities involved with the heritage, but also for other aspects such as social justice and the environment. This most recent definition recognizes that the material remains of humanity are not permanent and that there is a responsibility that comes with the handling of these artifacts. The current idea of what a museum is, as defined by the ICOM, is relevant to both tourism and open air museums because of the interconnected and overlapping approaches that these institutions have to their material remains and subsequent communities connected to the heritage of those remains.

Open air museums or more specifically, archaeological open air museums (AOAM's) are in a unique category. The ICOM specifically mentions open air museums saying, "the title "open-air museum" cannot be denied to a museum of which the buildings, completely or partially, as copies or true to scale reconstructions are rebuilt after original patterns, are properly

furnished and open to the public" (Paardekooper 2012, p.28). The Association of European Open-Air Museums (AEOM) is an affiliated organization of the ICOM and has their own definition of what constitutes an open air museum. The AEOM states that open air museums are, "scientific collections in the open air of various types of structures, which as constructional and functional entities, illustrate settlement patterns, dwellings, economy, and technology", (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.51). Referring back to EXARC's definition (see Ch. 1), we can see many similarities between the two definitions, though the definition provided by EXARC is more detailed and gives a better picture of what an open air museum is and what it is not. What is clear in both of these definitions is the distinct differences between open air museums and other varieties of museums.

The inception of open air museum can arguably be linked to Karl Viktor Von Bonstetten (1745-1832) and his line of thought when constructing one of the open air parks that were increasingly popular in the 18th century (Pedram, Emami and Khakban 2018, p.106). Von Bonstetten's attention to the arrangement of houses with various utensils and instruments, as well as the comparisons that could be made between them laid the foundations for the modern open air museum (Pedram, Emami and Khakban 2018, pp.106-107). Later in the 19th and 20th centuries small 'ethnographic villages' constructed based on sources were erected for short periods of time for exhibition. However, it wasn't until Artur Hazelius opened the well known Skansen Museum in Sweden in 1891 that a more defined and solid example of an open air museum was available (Pedram, Emami and Khakban 2018, p.107). Archaeological open air museums do not focus on artifacts with a specific story. Instead, they focus on presenting a story in a physical setting using artifacts that are, in some cases, replicas. The idea is to create a narrative similar to how it would have occurred in the past, based on archaeological evidence (Paardekooper 2012, p.28). Open air museums are tasked with constructing, preserving and displaying surviving heritage within the natural environment by making use of archaeological and historical knowledge (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.51). Open air museums are constructed based on archaeological and historical sources and research, and in many cases make use of authentic material. Generally, open air museums depict pasts of their own region, rather than a distant and generic past. A more targeted and tangible past makes the material more engaging for visitors (Paardekooper 2012, p.29). Open air museums are often located in a specific geographical region and linked to the local landscape, its chronology, and the archaeology associated with it, not unlike an archaeotourism site. The significance of the location of an open air museum is that it fills a specific niche of both outdoor experience and educational experience (Paardekooper 2012, p.30). In addition to exhibiting artifacts and

traditions from past cultures, open air museums also seek to show the relationship between nature and human society (Pedram, Emami and Khakban 2018, p.103). Until recently, open air museums continued to operate within the definitions provided by both EXARC and the AEOM to fulfill the role of education and conservation with regards to their material remains. However, with a more in depth approach to heritage conservation and management, open air museums are receiving more attention from archaeologists as places for more ethical practice of public engagement with archaeology.

Until more recently, any research on open air museums and their functions within the field of archaeology was minimal and these museums existed solely within their capacity as defined by the ICOM and AEOM. In the past 10 years more attention has been given to the institution of open air museums and archaeology has made more use of the unique role that open air museums offer to the discipline (Paardekooper 2012, p.30). Discussions around heritage conservation have become more prominent both within the archaeological sphere and also for other humanities disciplines. But, what does heritage conservation actually entail? Heritage conservation can be defined as, “the purpose...is to safeguard the quality and values of storage, supporting its material nature and maintaining its cohesion for future generations” (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). However, heritage is not a concept that is simply assigned to a physical object or artifact, it is a process, an interconnection between people, cultures, traditions and materials (Ramírez 2020, p.76). Heritage measures are dependent on knowledge of the values of conservation. The ultimate goal of conservation work is the preservation of the authenticity of the object, tradition, or living customs (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). Many open air museums now deal with the transfer of buildings, accessories, culture and the respective heritage for the purpose of conservation and education where previously, more emphasis was put on recreating or replicating these aspects (Pedram, Emami and Khakban 2018, p.113). However, in the desire to preserve buildings and artifacts in this manner, it can be argued that open air museums are impacting the authenticity of the material in a way that archaeotourism does not.

Within the context of archaeotourism and open air museums, authenticity is an important subject because the concept of authenticity impacts the current work for conservation at both archaeotourism sites and open air museums. Authenticity is closely related to the origin of something, and its value is intrinsically connected with origin and the preservation of its original parts and providence (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). In short authenticity is, “...full compliance, trustworthy status, honest, credible, real, valid, unique, and so on” (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). The concept of authenticity is, arguably, the main attraction to

any archaeotourism site because of the value placed on something that is original and unchanged from its origin. Tourists are attracted to the authentic experience and authentic value that has been assigned to the material remains or monuments at the site. One of the current challenges for open air museums then, is the concept of authenticity. A more recent practice for some museums is the transport of artifacts and buildings and the subsequent practices and heritage associated with these. The purpose behind this transportation is twofold. One, to maintain relevance of the museum, and two to aid in conservation and protection of the material (Pedram, Emami and Khakban 2018, p.113). The practice of moving original material is continuously being developed in order to maintain updated practices of heritage conservation and the authenticity of the object. Recent research has proposed the idea that deconstructing and transporting these materials for the purpose of open air museums helps not only with the restoration and protection of the material, but also provides a hidden knowledge about the material as a result of the deconstruction process (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.55). However, the counter argument is that the removal of these buildings from their context ultimately is damaging to the authenticity. By removing the building from the context, the 'original environment', the overall authenticity has been affected and can negatively impact viewer interaction with the building or object (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, pp.55-56). Herein lies a major challenge for open air museums and the attraction of visitors.

Open air museums currently aim at creating a sense of place and conserving it while strengthening historical awareness and preserving cultural identities through archaeological research and practice (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020 p.59). Open air museums are also places of responsible resources for local communities. Current research is being put into how archaeological open air museums can become centers for better education regarding the culture, lifestyles, and heritage of the living communities that surround the archaeological open air museum (Olinsson & Fouseki 2019, p.489). However, because of the non-profit nature that is an intrinsic part of open air museums, many open air museums have a difficult time delegating economy to the improvement of certain areas of education or participation when it comes to local communities and related culture (Olinsson & Fouseki 2019, pp.489-490). As such, research is being conducted on how to better generate interest and income for archaeological open air museums so that they can offer more education about their landscape and the current people groups while also maintaining responsibility for local communities. The responsibility of archaeological open air museums is to work with their existing resources rather than creating new ones for the betterment of historical knowledge and education (Olinsson & Fouseki 2019, p.490). Alongside the awareness for better management of materials, open air museums and

their affiliates are becoming more aware of their surrounding communities and culture groups and what these groups need for better interaction with their heritage.

Current research on open air museums includes the development of conservation and management guidelines as well as the continued education and accessibility of heritage and material. Open air museums continue to adapt to current economic, political and cultural events in order to remain relevant to tourists and accurately display the results of archaeological investigation. Alongside the more physical aspects of the material, such as authentic reconstruction and transportation of remains, open air museums have to cultivate careful knowledge about traditions, spiritual knowledge, and cultural heritage in a comprehensible and engaging way (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.59). Open air museums cannot simply tell the stories that an authority in heritage would want to tell, instead they must strive to maintain their relevance by telling the stories of a particular region, its traditions, and the multitude of people groups therein (Williams-Davies 2009, p.121). Current considerations for open air museums focus on the specific aspects of conservation, authenticity, and relevance that are entangled with one another. These hidden values of open air museums are what are currently undergoing transformation in order to maintain open air museum relevance into the future. The current work of open air museums in trying to conserve material such as houses by dismantling and reassembling them intrinsically alters the authenticity of that material. Ultimately, this can have an effect on the viewer's mind because of the lack of contextual information from the original environment (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020 p.59). Alternatively, the task of moving the material for the sake of conservation also provides an opportunity to experience unwritten knowledge that may not have been available within the original context in addition to protecting the material from damage that may have occurred in the original context (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020 p.59). The practice of open air museums is changing continuously as is determined by the need for management and conservation in addition to the wants of tourists. Recently, open air museums are also taking more responsibility for their surrounding cultural groups and researching how to better incorporate living cultures into the narratives of the museums.

Looking at the intertwined history of tourism and the increasing popularity of museums and the subsequent open air museums, it is important to think back to the original problems of conservation and management at current archaeotourism sites that this work will address. Taking into account the history and development of archaeotourism and the current problems surrounding conservation, we are reminded of the research question; how can open air museums impact or even improve the current state of conservation at archaeotourism sites?

2. Theory, Methodology, and Material

2.1 Theoretical Background

The problem and the related questions that I wish to address focus on open air museums and archaeotourism sites and their entanglement with conservation and tourism goals. The current problem is the deterioration of archaeological material as a result of prolonged tourism and an overall lack of conservation and management at many archaeotourism sites along with the side effect of alienating local communities from their heritage. The question then, is how can archaeotourism still be conducted for benefits such as education and economic value but also be more responsible to the material as well as the local communities. The theory that I will expand upon is the proposal that open air museums, as defined by EXARC and discussed in Ch. 1.2, are the key to mitigating the conflict of interests between conservation efforts and tourism. In addition, I propose that open air museums are a good way to involve local communities in their heritage in a more sustainable way that better incorporates ethical concerns. If more focus is put into the development of open air museums for the purpose of lessening the burden at archaeotourism sites, I theorize that conservation efforts will improve at archaeotourism sites alongside the relationships with local communities and their involvement with their heritage. Considering current research and the idea that heritage is not limited to material remains, I will discuss the theory that open air museums have the potential to better bridge the gap between conservation efforts and tourism while involving local communities in their heritage material all while taking steps towards more ethical conservation methods. I argue that open air museums have the potential to mitigate the clash between conservation and tourism because they can create an authentic tourist experience, maintain tourism benefits such as revenue, and do not rely solely on original archaeological material that is subject to damage and deterioration. Open air museums can also engage local communities and cultural groups with their own traditions and materials and provide education on ethics, archaeology and the past for tourists.

Archaeotourism, conservation and local involvement have conflicting interests when it comes to the archaeological material at the sites that are open for tourists. As seen in chapter 1.2, it is only within the last 20 years or so that archaeology and site management stakeholders have become more aware of the issues between the material and conservation alongside local community involvement. These conflicting interests need to be better managed and mitigated for the sake of the material but also those who are stakeholders in the site and its material. As discussed about current research and methods at open air museums in my research history, open air museums offer an opportunity for education and interaction with archaeological

research in ways that archaeotourism sites cannot always provide. Furthermore, open air museums offer surrounding communities more opportunities to engage with their own heritage and tourists in a unique way that combines living and ancient culture. Open air museums often work to engage all stakeholders, including local communities in the experience and teaching involved with the archaeological material (Williams-Davies 2009, p.121). The basic theory that I am exploring is that open air museums, as defined by EXARC, are an important tool for managing and mitigating the clash between conservation and tourism interests while having a better impact on local communities and their culture sites. Using discussions of theories such as conservation, ethics and ethical codes, and authenticity and associated authentic experiences, I will build my research framework to expand upon and support my theory.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The concepts of authenticity, conservation, and ethics are central to my theory that open air museums are an important tool for archaeological experience and material conservation. Museums, generally, offer a different experience for visitors to that of archaeotourism sites. Museums, as discussed in Ch. 1.2, have a different approach to materials than tourism sites and engage visitors with the material differently. Open air museums land in a grey area when considering museums and tourism, as they engage visitors in a way more similar to that of an archaeotourism site while maintaining their own set of standards when it comes to material management and display. For the purpose of the following theoretical framework, as well as the rest of this body of work, open air museums will be considered their own category as defined by EXARC in Ch. 1. Considering the topics of conservation, authenticity and ethics, I propose that open air museums can attract tourists in the same way that archaeotourism sites can, while having a better impact on local stakeholders as well as conservation methods. I want to explore the viability of a better relationship between conservation and material remains that can still involve local communities while providing the economic benefits that archaeotourism offers. The key concepts to my theory include conservation, ethics, and authenticity. These topics are important because they encompass the key points that I have outlined in Ch. 1.2 as crucial to the operation of archaeotourism sites and open air museums. Authenticity is an important factor for tourism and attracting tourists in order to gain revenue. Conservation and ethics are entangled topics because they deal with the material remains as well as the heritage stakeholders.

Conservation and archaeotourism have conflicting approaches and goals for archaeological material remains. Archaeotourism goals conflict with conservation goals because

tourism requires sites to be open for constant use while conservation methods would, generally, restrict public visitation to the site. But, what is conservation and where does it actually conflict with tourism goals? The ICOM defined conservation as “all measures and actions aimed at safeguarding tangible cultural heritage while ensuring its accessibility to present and future generations” (Sloggett 2021, p.1). The definition of conservation has remained relatively unchanged within archaeology and heritage management. Any activity associated with conservation includes technical examination, preventative conservation, restoration, remedial conservation. Conservation is enacted under the philosophy that all actions therein are conducted with respect for the material’s physical properties and its overall significance from past to present heritage (Sloggett 2021, p.1). Conservation practice seeks to manage the change of a valuable or important place within the urban context in such a way that its heritage values remain in the best conditions for future use (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). Conservation depends on careful knowledge of heritage values and storage for best practice. In short, conservation, and any action therein is conducted with the intended survival of the subject of conservation, be it object or monument, for the appreciation, use, or education for current and future generations (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). Overall, conservation seeks to prevent any further damage or use of current material, where archaeotourism relies on the continued use and visitation of materials. The exposure of archaeological material within its context, as is the case for many archaeotourism sites, goes directly against conservation practice. How, when, and where conservation should be applied is a continual debate within archaeology and tourism sectors. It is this debate where the goals of tourism and the goals of conservation tend to disagree and clash. Where tourism relies on the continued and prolonged use and access to current archaeological material, conservation methods would see that the material is made less available for tourists.

Approaches to Conservation

More classical aspects of conservation have focused heavily on the material or object. Authenticity and the inherent desire to preserve that authentic aura of an object has traditionally led to a focus on the physical aspects of heritage for conservative measures (Morcillo et al. 2017, p.40). Recognition that there is value in the place and the use of various materials, rather than only in their authentic quality has, more recently, opened up new approaches for conservation methods (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). Approaches within conservation practice can be materials-based, values-based, or have a living heritage focus (Poulios 2014, p.17). The practice of conservation is not strictly limited to fit into these categories, however.

Materials-based conservation is the 'conventional' approach to conservation that most would associate with conservation practice. Materials-based conservation focuses on the protection of material, monuments, and associated authenticity within the archaeological record. The focus on material-based conservation was a result of political and armed conflicts in the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Notably, material-based conservation is expert driven. It reifies the need for an expert in material remains (Poulios 2014, pp.17-18). Historically, conservation methods that have an extreme focus on the preservation of material remains have created the most problems with regards to local heritage groups. In some cases, heritage groups were forcibly removed from their associated heritage places because of the desire to protect the material from further usage and subsequent deterioration (Poulios 2014, p.18). Furthermore, this approach to conservation is problematic for tourism and any economic factors associated with tourism for local communities or political stakeholders. Materials-based conservation approaches seek to preserve objects or monuments in their contexts with their absolute and original meanings, or the complete authenticity (Morcillo et al. 2017, p.40). In this way, conservation and the notion of authenticity are intertwined. While material conservation is important, objects of the past are not the only pieces of heritage that carry importance for future usage and conservation cannot seek to maintain one part of the heritage at the cost of other aspects such as tourism or local cultural use.

Alternative approaches to conservation are a values-based or a living heritage approach to conservation. These forms of conservation incorporate a more socio-cultural vision for a more inclusive approach to conservation methods overall (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). A values-based approach confronts the historical focus on material-based conservation methods. Values-based approaches in conservation consider a wider variety of stakeholder groups, that is, groups that have a legitimate interest or investment in heritage, including tourism (Poulios 2014, p.19). Living heritage conservation methods focus specifically on heritage that is still being lived at present and is closely associated with continuity of traditional values (Poulios 2014, p.21). The values-based approach to conservation seeks to include more spiritual and cultural aspects of local communities and heritage groups. A more inclusive approach that considers the groups' traditional management practices are taken on board and included in the conservation process (Poulios 2014, p.19). This approach to conservation was prompted by the change in criterion for conservation by the Nara Document (1994), the Burra Charter (1999), and the ICOMOS charters (2004 and 2008). These documents outlined new guidelines for conservation with emphasis on the importance of cultural-historical sites as places for sustainable economic and social development alongside respecting the site authenticity and

integrity already in place. In this way, current use of sites such as tourism is weighed when discussing conservation (Khakban, Pedram & Emami 2020, p.52). Values-based conservation approaches do not disregard the material aspect of heritage, but overall strives for a more inclusive approach to the material and associated stakeholders.

The approach to conservation that I will take for my theoretical framework is that of an inclusive approach or a more values-based approach, as discussed by Poulios (2014). Conservation efforts have to consider multiple ownership groups and stakeholders, especially if the site is already open for tourism, or planned to be an archaeotourism site. Conservation and management efforts rely on the cooperation of all involved stakeholders (Lochrie 2016, p.105). Conservation efforts and tourism are intertwined because of their differing goals for the material and associated heritage. Conservation methods cannot ignore the material approach, however the focus of conservation cannot solely be on material remains either. In order for conservation to be successful, it has to consider living culture groups, local communities and their traditions in addition to the ancient past in addition to economic and political factors associated with tourism. Tourism focuses on the material with the purpose of current and continued use. Conservation methods need to find balance in preserving the material for future use but also maintaining the material for current use and access. When all of these aspects of tourism and other stakeholders are considered and managed as a part of a conservation approach then conservation is truly safeguarding tangible cultural heritage for future generations while ensuring the stability of current use at archaeotourism sites.

Ethics and Ethical Codes

Ethics are an important consideration when dealing with ancient remains and local heritage communities as well as conservation. Ethics are especially relevant when discussing tourism and museum work. Ethics are, "...future oriented rules of behaviour based on ideas about what are morally correct - those that are right, just, and good, and create just actors in return" (Giovine & Majewski 2021, p.1). Ethics outlines a philosophical ideal that guides social actions. The overall challenge of ethical codes within conservation and heritage is to identify an overarching ethical stance that can accommodate conflicting practical applications (Giovine & Majewski 2021, p.1). Codes of ethics are sets of rules agreed upon by all stakeholders and consider the contexts of said groups alongside their beliefs (Giovine & Majewski 2021, p.1). Ethical practices are closely tied to conservation. The nature of conservation is both inclusive and exclusive in that it can prioritize, emphasize and remember certain aspects of heritage while marginalizing other aspects. In other cases, conservation can be physically destructive. Certain physical properties can be enhanced and preserved at the cost of other elements that the expert

deems not essential to the authenticity of the object (Giovine & Majewski 2021, p.1). As such, conservation requires guidelines and ethical codes. Conservation practices operate under a variety of frameworks that attempt to ensure the best practice when it comes to the physical object, but also local heritage groups and related stakeholders (Rotroff 2001, p.138). Within archaeological contexts ethics usually address philosophical, practical and political issues. In addition to these areas of ethical discussion an important ethical mandate in archaeology is the idea that the practice should 'be useful to society' (González-Ruibal 2018, p.348). Such a mandate is open ended and overly general. The argument can be made that the production of knowledge is useful to society. However, in the context of archaeotourism, this mandate becomes relevant. The development of tourist destinations for the production of knowledge can become problematic for reasons of overexploitation, alienation of local communities and development. Commodification of the past is also an area of discussion when it comes to conservation and archaeotourism (González-Ruibal 2018, p.348). On one hand, the development of archaeotourism destinations is a benefit for the production, sharing and access to heritage, but on the other hand it can alienate local communities and forcibly remove them from their traditional practices (González-Ruibal 2018, p.353). Ethical codes ultimately seek to bridge the gap between these two dichotomies and even out relationships between archaeologists, local communities and related politics, the public, and other stakeholders.

Ethics and conservation are entangled with each other and their goals for archaeological material. Archaeotourism reinforces the need for practices such as conservation and conservation efforts reinforce the need for ethical codes. Conservation focuses more on the material and the object, but can take an inclusive approach to include the value of the object to current heritage groups and related stakeholders. Ethics and ethical codes ensure that all stakeholders are considered in relation to the material. Ethics are especially important for archaeotourism because of the variety of stakeholders as well as the conservation approaches for the material.

Authenticity and the Authentic Experience

Authenticity and conservation are entangled concepts. Arguably, conservation exists because the concept of authenticity has been assigned to material remains. The authenticity and authentic experience of objects and monuments is not only deeply ingrained into conservation approaches and disciplines such as archaeology, but also into tourist mindsets. Authenticity has traditionally motivated conservation approaches because of the desire to preserve the authentic aura an object or monument has been assigned. Furthermore, the tourist mindset is often influenced by the concept of the 'authentic experience' or the 'authentic object'.

Authenticity is a contested theory long discussed by scholars in the realm of museum practice, archaeotourism destinations, and other archaeological fields. S. Jones (2010) defines authenticity as, "...a quality of being authentic, that is, real, original, truthful, or genuine, really proceeding from its stated source" (p.181). Authenticity is the concept of 'original aura' that an object or building has, in that it is truthful and unchanged in its origin (Morcillo et al. 2017, pp.35-36). Therefore, there is an implication that no reproduction could ever be authentic, in that reproductions cannot recreate the genuine element of an original (Rickly & Vidon 2018, p.3). Within archaeology the value of a physical object is defined by its authenticity and obtains its meaning through its authentic aura or the experience it can offer.

Objective and Symbolic Authenticity

Traditionally, this idea of authenticity, that an object only has value insofar that it is original, has been closely linked with museum usage, objective authenticity (Rickly & Vidon 2018, p.3). Within the museum context, the concept of objective authenticity substantiates the power of experts and their knowledge. Objective authenticity propagates the idea that something can be inauthentic and therefore there is a need to certify and evaluate an object's authenticity (Rickly & Vidon 2018, p.3). It is an object related approach to authenticity that raises the questions of 'who?'. Who has the authority to authenticate, and for whom is authenticity made? (Rickly & Vidon 2018, p.3). Overall, this form of authenticity creates a very binary approach to the experience of authenticity. That something is either authentic or not. Furthermore, this approach to authenticity implies that there is an inherent value of authenticity within the object. Objective authenticity takes the choice away from the viewer or the tourist in that they cannot create an authentic experience of their own, but rather can only experience the authenticity that has been predetermined.

Rickly & Vidon (2018) propose the idea of constructive authenticity that exists within the realm of tourism. They propose that tourists are not so much in search of an object's authenticity, but rather symbolic authenticity. Constructive authenticity rejects the otherwise binary nature of objective authenticity, that something is either authentic or not. Instead, constructive authenticity operates under the idea that authenticity is contextual, interpretive, and emergent (p.3-4). In this context authentication is, "the social process by which the authenticity of an attraction is confirmed" (Rickly & Vidon 2018, p.8). However, there is still a focus on the object, or material that creates the experience of authenticity.

More recently in the discussion of authenticity and authentic experience is the proposal of existential authenticity. Existential authenticity is the rejection of object-focused authenticity. Where objective and constructive authenticity focus on the experience of something genuine,

existential authenticity focuses on an activity based authentic experience (Rickly & Vidon 2018 p.6). Existential authenticity incorporates intrapersonal and interpersonal authentic experiences. Intrapersonal is created through bodily feelings and self making, and interpersonal is created through family ties and *communitas* (Rickly & Vidon 2018 p.6). However, this form of authenticity is problematic for the discussion of archaeotourism and open air museums because it is something self made and fleeting (Rickly & Vidon 2018 pp.6-7). It does not focus on objects and therefore the existence of objects is not at the forefront of the experience, making it inapplicable to my discussion of open air museums.

For the purpose of my analysis and discussion I will adhere to the definition of authenticity as defined by Jones (2010). Furthermore, I propose a similar idea to that of Jones' (2010) and Rickly & Vidon (2018), that authenticity is constructed in a socio-cultural setting and then assigned to material remains, rather than an inherent aspect of objects or monuments. What I mean is that the concept of authenticity and related meaning-making processes related to objects are adopted in a social setting where an individual, or a group interacts with objects and constructs authentic value within their own perceptions. Over time, broader cultural perceptions of what is authentic can emerge and be adopted. Authenticity in this form is subjective from person to person. In this way, I argue that it can be the case that even replicas can acquire authentic qualities and tourists can have an authentic experience with 'inauthentic' material.

Authenticity, conservation and ethics are entangled with each other. An example of this entanglement, for understanding, is the conservation of renaissance paintings. Though this example does not deal directly with open air museums or archaeotourism, it is an example of how authenticity and conservation intersect. Conservation practice, as previously discussed, would seek to preserve the true nature or authenticity of the painting for future generations to benefit from. However, the very act of conserving the painting, or restoring the painting alters the originality, or true nature of the painting (Scott 2016, p.6). Once conservation is undertaken, it cannot be reversed and the authentic nature has been altered because the original state of the painting no longer exists as a result of conservation efforts (Scott, 2016, p.6). Another example of how conservation and ethics intersect are the Zuni War God statues. The Zuni people carve these statues with the intention that they will be abandoned, exposed to the elements, and eventually decay so as to return power back to the earth. The nature and the value of these statues is that they are destroyed by time. The Zuni War God statues were never meant to be put on display or appreciated for their construction (Young 2006, p.22). However, unless these statues are preserved they will have value to no one else. Should these statues be

taken from their contexts, conserved, and displayed so that different stakeholders may appreciate and learn? Or, should they be left where they are with their knowledge lost to the elements and their meaning to the Zuni People preserved? Herein lies an example of an ethical dilemma when considering conservation of archaeological remains.

For the best results, conservation work would see less tourism to protect the authenticity of the material. Ethics are in place to ensure best practice in conservation, but also to protect current use of sites in some cases. Archaeotourism is marketed to tourists using the appeal of authenticity and the authentic experience. The concept of authenticity is deeply rooted within the tourist mindset and is a major motivator for continued visitation at archaeotourism sites. Current management and conservation practices seek to protect said authenticity from further decay as a result of tourism and use and often clash with archaeotourism goals and development. Ethics and subsequent ethical codes have developed in response to heritage conservation and the inherent issues that developed, like heritage alienation and forced removal from traditional sites alongside continued deterioration of archaeological material. These are the key concepts that will serve as the foundation of my analytical framework and subsequent research because of their intrinsic value to the discussion of archaeotourism and open air museums.

2.3 Methodology

Archaeotourism is an ever popular aspect of archaeological knowledge production and public presentation. However, archaeotourism can be problematic for local communities in many cases and is often damaging to the material remains. Archaeotourism and its continued popularity reinforces a need for improved site management, conservation and local engagement. As previously discussed, archaeological knowledge should be available to everyone, but at the same time it is the responsibility of archaeologists to make informed decisions about conservation and ethical practices involving cultural groups and local heritages. In response, I have posed the question: are open air museums a viable alternative to help with site management and conservation while also involving local heritage groups and their traditions in ways that archaeotourism sites are unable to? The key topics that this question involves are the concepts of conservation, ethical codes and authenticity. I will be using these topics as the core of my analysis to discuss the idea that open air museums are an important archaeological tool to help navigate the clash between archaeotourism and conservation. In order to discuss the goals and work towards an answer to my research question I will apply my theory and theoretical framework to two contrasting case studies that will compare and contrast an open air museum and an archaeotourism destination in order to determine the viability of conservation

and tourism benefits at an open air museum. The open air museum destination will be the Āraiši open air museum located in Latvia, and the archaeotourism site will be Xunantunich in Belize. The case study will take into consideration the concepts of conservation, ethics, and authenticity as discussed in my theoretical framework and apply them to the analysis with the goal of determining the validity of my theory and the answer to my research question.

The analysis presented in this work will rely on the three core concepts of conservation, ethics, and authenticity and their entanglement in order to attract tourist visitation. How the topics of conservation, ethics, and authenticity and their relationship to each other is critical for the hypothesized success of open air museums that I discussed in my theoretical framework. The methodological framework can be broken down into a series of three points and their relevance to my original research question and how I will work towards an answer.

Concept 1 - Conservation: Open air museums and conservation are entangled. Conservation is better suited for open air museum work and open air museums are better suited to handle conservation practice. If conservation goals are being met can tourism still happen?

Concept 2 - Ethics: Can open air museums be a space to demonstrate how ethics are important in archaeology and the tourism industry while also undertaking ethical practice?

Concept 3 - Authenticity: Authenticity is ingrained in the tourist mindset, that an object needs to be original, but open air museums can also present authenticity. How does the presence of authenticity affect tourist interest? (Refer to Image 1.)

The first point I will discuss is that of authenticity. In Ch. 2.2 I discussed how authenticity and the authentic experience are created, measured and perceived by local groups, stakeholders, and tourists. My aim is to determine whether or not open air museums can be a viable tool to help with conservation of archaeological material while maintaining the benefits of archaeotourism. Authenticity is important in determining the answer to my question because of its value in the tourist mindset. The attraction of an archaeotourism site is the perceived value of viewing the material in its authentic and original contexts, thus the continued interest in these types of sites, such as Xunantunich. There is an appeal in the experience of being able to walk through the original construction of Mayan pyramids and experience the architecture in its authentic context. Experiencing the original construction in this way evokes a sense of enchantment and excitement that continues to draw tourists to these types of sites. I will analyze the validity of the attraction of an authentic experience when it comes to archaeotourism and open air museums. If authenticity is confirmed to be present does that equal increased interest in tourism and thus decreased interest in an open air museum? I will

combine analysis of how authenticity is measured and presented in archaeotourism sites and open air museums alongside tourist interest.

The second concept is the idea of conservation and how it is influenced by tourist visitation. As discussed in Ch. 2.2, conservation and tourism goals clash. If conservation goals are to be met then archaeotourism sites would need to cease visitation altogether. In order to get closer to an answer for my research question, whether or not open air museums can help with the overall conservation of archaeological materials related to tourism sites, conservation is an important consideration. How conservation is measured and practiced is vital to the analysis of the relationship between open air museums and archaeological material. In order to determine the validity of the theory that I proposed in Ch. 2.2, that open air museums can be a viable solution to better deal with conservation while still offering the benefits of tourism, conservation is an important concept to apply. Conservation, its practice, and related implications are therefore vital to the analysis of open air museums because of the clash between tourism and conservation. If conservation is to be properly undertaken and fully put into place, tourism and the related benefits or otherwise are threatened. Therefore, I will analyze the approaches to conservation at Xunantunich and Āraiši and how they contrast alongside their respective approaches to material management. How do these sites approach conservation and material management? If conservation practice is present at these sites, does it affect their overall operations? Positively or negatively? The practice and implementation of conservation and related goals with regards to archaeological material is also related to the analysis of authenticity. If authenticity is present, does that equal tourism? But if authenticity is present, does that also mean that conservation must be undertaken due to the desire to preserve the perceived authentic value? So, authenticity equals tourist interest, but conservation goals equal no tourism.

Lastly, ethics and ethical codes are the final point of analysis. Ch. 2.2 discussed the entanglement of conservation and ethics and authenticity and the role of ethics within archaeology and related tourism goals. Ethics ultimately seek to ensure best practice when it comes to the material and related people groups. How ethics are undertaken and practiced at archaeotourism sites such as Xunantunich and then open air museums such as Āraiši in terms of the material remains, the local people and heritage group as well as public interaction are important areas of analysis when it comes to determining the viability of open air museums and conservation. The effect that the site, being a tourist site or open air museum site, has on current surrounding communities alongside the material remains is an important area of analysis because of the relevance of the material to current culture groups as well. In

determining the extent to which open air museums can help with conservation methods and improve relations with local heritage groups, the presence of ethical codes and the practice of ethics is an important aspect to apply as an analytical frame. In tangible terms, ethics can be analyzed using an examination of interaction and involvement of local communities and related heritage groups. Community engagement can include, but not be limited to, employment, teaching/learning opportunities, and involvement in development and maintenance. In addition to local and related stakeholders, how the material is managed will also be an important area of investigation. Material management also ties in with conservation practice as these two aspects are closely related, as discussed in Ch. 2.2.

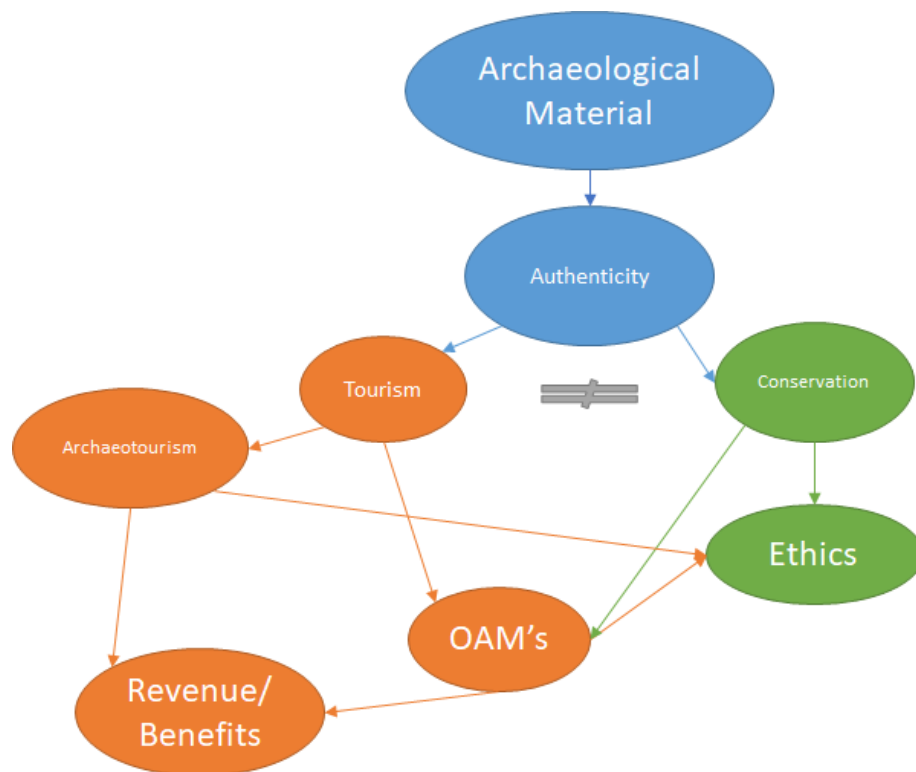


Image 1. Overview of Methodological Approach.

The purpose of the case studies will be to compare and analyze the similarities and differences in the approaches to material remains and living heritage between open air museums and archaeotourism sites. The goal is to explore how open air museums can be a viable tool for conservation methods at archaeotourism sites while maintaining the local benefits that tourism can offer, such as economic revenue for local communities. The analysis will take into consideration how conservation, ethical codes, and authentic experiences are considered and implemented in the open air museum and then at the archaeotourism site. I will also incorporate my previous research history of archaeotourism sites and open air museums. By

taking these aspects into consideration it is a way to understand the types of locations that tourists are interested in and how archaeologists involved in the tourism industry can respond.

2.4 Material Introduction

The material that I will explore and the data that I will use will be compiled research on the case study locations Xunantunich in Belize and Āraiši in Latvia. These two case studies are contrasting examples. Xunantunich is an example of a long term archaeotourism site and Āraiši is an example of a long term open air museum that has been built, and further developed on top of an archaeological excavation site. Both case studies are significant because they are excellent examples of an archaeotourism site in the case of Xunantunich and an open air museum in the case of Āraiši. Each site has a significant amount of research to use in gathering data that will aid in the overall analysis. By choosing two contrasting sites I hope to provide an overview of the contrast between these two types of sites alongside a comparison of how they each approach and deal with subjects such as authenticity, ethics and related heritage, and conservation while balancing tourist engagement. In terms of data collection I will gather a sample of statistics such as annual visits, overall tourist satisfaction, and significance of the site. These values are significant because they are tangible ways to help determine tourist engagement and foot traffic at the site. I will include similar types of data for each site in order to give a more balanced overview of both locations. I chose two contrasting sites because I want to better demonstrate how each type of site, meaning archaeotourism site versus open air museum, approaches the topics of ethics and conservation in accordance with the material they work with.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Āraiši Archaeological Park, Latvia, Introduction

To collect, research, preserve, and popularize material and spiritual culture in the interests of Latvian people from ancient times until today is the overarching goal for the Latvia National History Museum (Paardekooper 2012, p.170). The Latvia National History Museum is the current parent organization of the Āraiši archaeological museum park in Latvia. Āraiši is titled as an archaeological museum park and falls under the definition of an open air museum as defined by EXARC (see Ch.1) (Paardekooper 2012, p.170). Āraiši has also been a member of EXARC since 2001 (Zirne 2020). The open air museum was founded in 1994 and started out as a private organization. Today, it is governmental. The full name of the park is “The Āraiši Lake Fortress” and it is located on an islet in the Āraiši Lake in Latvia (Paardekooper 2012, p.170).

The museum is based on a phase of the site that is dated to the 9th century AD and continues into the 10th century AD. The 9th century phase is the earliest known phase of the site and also the most well preserved (Meadows and Zunde 2014, p.224). The site was first excavated by Jānis Apals, who also later initiated the reconstruction of the site as an open air museum (Zirne 2020). In total, Āraiši displays 17 reconstructed buildings based on excavations, research and



Image 2. Map of visitor area of Āraiši. In Paardekooper 2012, p.173.

experimental archaeology conducted at the site (see images 3 & 4). One building is a bronze age house, three buildings are stone age dwellings, and the other thirteen buildings are medieval age houses (Paardekooper 2012, p.170). The reconstructed buildings are maintained regularly and repaired every 5 to 10 years (Zirne 2020). The museum presents an example of how dwellings were arranged and developed from the Stone Age up to the Middle Ages, with an emphasis on the Viking Age fortified settlement. All of the buildings are reconstructed to a life-sized scale and based on experimental archaeology methods. The local landscape is a crucial part of the museum and is incorporated into the presentation. Occasionally, the museum will have seasonal actors present as a part of the overall display alongside craft opportunities for visitors to participate in (Paardekooper 2012, pp.171-172). Overall, the museum seeks to present an authentic snapshot of the site for its visitors to experience (Paardekooper 2012, p.175). The Āraiši open air museum is significant as a case study because it is a member of EXARC as well as being based on an excavated and researched archaeological site. It follows

the definition of what an open air museum is (see Ch.1) and incorporates reconstruction, conservation and the authentic experience.

3.1.1 Visits and Statistics

The site covers 12 hectares of land. The museum has roughly 55 visitors a day, with more during 'high season'. High season is the period of the year from June to September when vacation and tourism is more prevalent due to the time of year (Paardekooper 2012, p.172). Annually, Āraiši's open air museum park receives anywhere between 5,000-25,000 visitors. Āraiši's opening hours are from 9:00-19:00 every day of the week. Tickets are 4,00 EUR for adults, 3,00 EUR for students and pensioners and 11,00 EUR for families (AMATA 2021). Visits are not restricted and visitors are allowed to explore the whole of the open space (Paardekooper 2012, p.172). Guided group tours have a maximum of 30 people at a time. Larger groups are divided and the tour is planned accordingly for the comfort of the tour guide (AMATA 2021). The open air museum also has a permanent exhibit in the National History Museum, in Latvia, with which they also share an education officer. The research around the site is constantly updated to ensure that exhibits and related education are using the latest insights (Paardekooper 2012, pp.171-172). Education programs are created and offered for everyone from elementary school levels to adulthood. During annual events the Āraiši Park



Image 3. *The Reconstructed Lake Village at Āraiši.* In Paardekooper 2012, p.171.

gathers living history groups, scientists, and folklore groups to help educate, inform, and create an authentic experience for the visitors (EXARC 2001).

Āraiši is unique in terms of being an open air museum because it combines reconstruction with authentic artifacts and materials. The site itself is original and at least one of the houses is minimally reconstructed, remaining mostly historical. However, this house is unfurnished and inaccessible because of the issues with maintenance and size. The site is guarded during the day and during the night because of previous issues with vandalism (Paardekooper 2012, p.175). Visitor infrastructure at Āraiši is simple and basic. There is a small cafe that offers minimal refreshments, WC access, and a small shop where postcards are available. Other than the annual events there are few interaction opportunities for visitors year round. However, this is not to say that the information at the site is not being presented in interesting or educational ways outside of the annual events (Paardekooper 2012, p.175). Visitors to the archaeological park are almost equally present between national and international tourists who travel between 0-100km, depending on where they are staying, to visit the site (Paardekooper 2012, p.176). Āraiši promotes a more self-guided tour style. While there is an opportunity for guided tours the tour guides are very seasonal and do not always have the best training (Paardekooper 2012, p.176). There are definitely opportunities for improving the visitor experience and drawing in more tourists, but Āraiši is decently known locally and internationally for its material and educational content.



Image 4. *The Āraiši Lake Dwelling Site.* By Edgars Šulcs, 2016. Original Work.

Paardekooper (2012) conducted a survey for tourists visiting open air museums and the reasoning why they chose to visit an open air museum. The full survey and associated reasoning behind the questions chosen can be read in Paardekooper's text *The Value of an Archaeological Open-Air Museum is in Its Use*, however I want to touch upon a few of the results as they are relevant to my case study. The most common answer from those surveyed was 'interested in the past' at 32%. The second most common answer was 'educational value' at 21.3% (Paardekooper 2012, p.256). Other answers included 'interested in the region', 'environmentally friendly', 'offered event', and 'entrance fees'. These are statistics for first time visits. However, it is important to note that there was a survey conducted for second time visits as well, and these two answers were also the top two percentages among survey takers at 29.7% and 15.4% respectively (Paardekooper 2012, p.256). These statistics are important to my case study because they demonstrate an interest in open air museums for their educational quality alongside an interest in the past despite the source material being slightly different than that of an archaeotourism site in terms of authenticity.

3.1.2 Summary of Āraiši

Āraiši, though a small and rather unknown open air museum, is in a good position to demonstrate how archaeology can still offer authentic experiences for tourists while engaging with conservation practice and ethics. Āraiši, because of its location and interaction with the landscape as well as being situated on top of an archaeological site, has the potential to interact with tourists and the community in beneficial and educational ways, while generating continued interest for local tourists and international tourists. There are areas for improvement as an open air museum, especially in areas such as engagement with visitors and better educational programs that could offer more opportunities for locals to be involved. Other areas for improvement are areas that involve advertisement of the site, in order to bring increased interest. However, Āraiši is in a unique situation to be able to expand and engage with archaeological material and ethics while also being a tourist destination. Further, in depth analysis of Āraiši as a case study and how it deals with the concepts outlined in Ch.'s 2.2 and 2.3 will be conducted in Ch. 4.2.1.

3.2 Xunantunich, Belize, Introduction

Xunantunich means 'stone woman' in the Yucatec Mayan language. The site was first excavated more than a century ago, in the 1890's. From then the site was investigated and excavated off and on up until the 1980's and 90's (Leventhal et al. 2010, p.1). Xunantunich is

located near the border of Guatemala and near the town of San Ignacio (Ramsey & Everitt 2008, p.912). In the 1980's and into the 1990's tourism was becoming a focus for economic development in Central America. During this time the Belizean government also sought to



Image 5. Xunantunich Pyramid Facade. Rachael teLinde, 2018.

develop more archaeological sites for tourism as a part of the push to draw tourists to Mayan cultural and heritage sites (Leventhal et al. 2010, p.2). With help from the United States Agency for International Development the Belizean government developed Xunantunich for tourism. Xunantunich was developed because it was easily accessible along the modern road to Tikal and because of its locality to the San Ignacio town (Leventhal et al. 2010, p.2). There was a recognition that developing tourism at the site would have an adverse effect on the site's conservation so efforts were made to combine tourism and conservation at the site. As an example, the facades on the structures at the site are reconstructions because the originals were deteriorating so quickly that they became a danger of falling onto tourists (see Image 3). The insides of the structures are also being heavily reinforced for visitor safety as the materials are suffering from deterioration from constant foot traffic. The Xunantunich Archaeological Project (XAP) was created in order to combine tourism efforts with conservation efforts (Leventhal et al. 2010, p.2). XAP began proper work in 1991 cataloging and documenting the architecture, structural features and surrounding landscape for a more comprehensive map of the site that was finished in 1992. This updated map better depicted the 'monumental heart' of the site with a significant amount of the research being focused on the Castillo, the main acropolis that stands at 39m (Leventhal et al. 2010, p.5). Since the 1990's research at the site has been continuous. Various efforts towards improving tourism visits alongside archaeological

projects have continuously been in the works. Currently, archaeological work is still happening at the site with continued efforts towards incorporating research and sustainability with conservation. Xunantunich is a good choice for a case study analysis because it demonstrates how archaeotourism has both positive and negative impacts on local communities as well as the environment and the archaeological material. Xunantunich is significant because of the economic importance it has for local Belizean communities as well as the significance the site holds for archaeological research and cultural value.

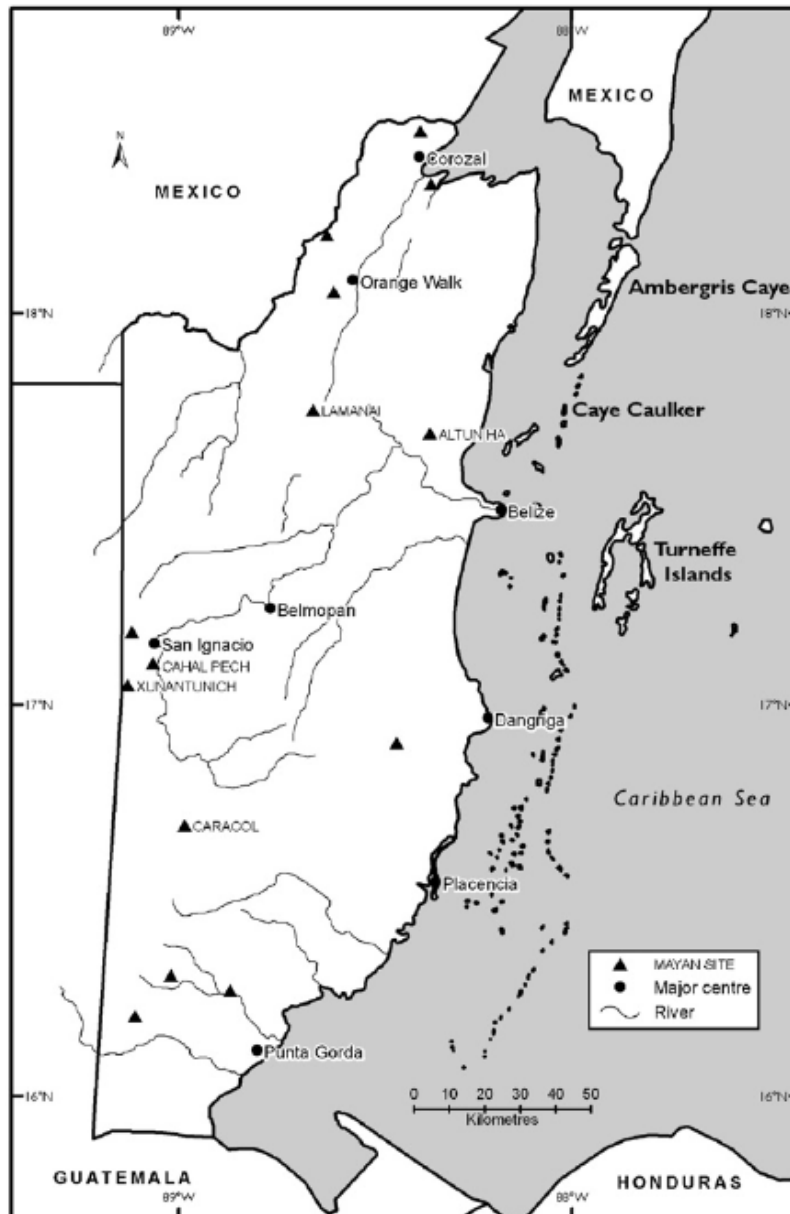


Image 6. *Archaeology Heritage Sites in Belize, Central America.* In Ramsey & Everitt 2008, p.910.

3.2.1 Visits and Statistics

Xunantunich is one of the larger and more visited archaeological sites in Belize especially for tourists visiting the Cayo District. Tourism in Belize accounts for roughly 21% of the country's GDP and employs 28% of all the work force (Tilden et al. 2017, p.316). Xunantunich was also one of the first Mayan sites to be developed for tourism during the time when the Belizean government turned to tourism as a form of economic growth. Belize's tourism development happened fairly recently compared to other countries in Central and South America, but the development has been rapid and continuous since the 1990's (Ramsey & Everitt 2008, p.910). The XAP involved locals early on in the work at Xunantunich and continues to involve locals in the work happening. Local workers were, and are still vital for seasonal excavations. Local involvement also helped XAP researchers with a deeper understanding of Mayan culture and history alongside furthering the tourist experience at the site. Local workers became full time artisans or tour guides at Xunantunich and combined their knowledge of Mayan civilization with their work. The inclusion of locals was so successful for the tourist experience at the site that the XAP hosted for the Cayo Tour Guide Association. It is not possible to experience the site without a tour guide for safety and conservation concerns (Leventhal et al. 2010, p.12). The chance that the XAP and continued projects at Xunantunich offered locals has been vital in the success of the site both as an archaeological site and a tourist destination.

Ramsey and Everitt (2008) conducted a survey of tourists visiting Mayan archaeological sites in Belize. Among the sites included in the survey was Xunantunich alongside Caracol and Cahal Pech (p.911). These sites are the largest and most visited archaeological sites in Belize with Xunantunich drawing an average of 46,000 visitors per year. The survey was conducted on tourists eating at a local restaurant in San Ignacio. They were contacted by the research team that was in charge of the survey and asked about the site(s) they had visited as well as what kind of holiday they were engaged in (Ramsey & Everitt 2008, pp.910-911). Other questions in the survey asked about the opinion the tourist had on tourism at archaeological sites, things like drawbacks to developing archaeological sites for tourism, or positives. The survey also asked why the tourist was visiting an archaeological site (Ramsey and Everitt 2008, p.912). The answers for the survey were varied, and a full explanation of the study and the results can be read in Ramsey and Everitt's paper, but I will touch upon the results concerning Xunantunich because they are relevant to this case study.

When asked about the drawbacks of developing Xunantunich as a tourist site alongside the ongoing archaeological investigations, many participants had recommendations, despite the

fact that they were tourists themselves. Among their recommendations were things like, “control crowds, improve protection of the site, and do not over-commercialize” (Ramsey and Everitt 2008, p.913). Other answers included pro’s and con’s. Many tourists that participated in the survey mostly recognized economic and cultural benefits to the development of Xunantunich as a tourist destination. The most common answers were “revenue from tourism, more employment, and improvement of infrastructure, and retaining culture for future generations” (Ramsey & Everitt 2008, p.912). As for the cons, many tourists recognized the cultural and environmental issues. A few of the most common answers included “damages to sites, stolen/broken artifacts, litter, and over-restoration” (Ramsey & Everitt 2008, p.912). The answers generated in this study by Ramsey and Everitt (2008) are significant because it shows that there is recognition at the tourist level for the need to change how tourist sites are managed, but at the same time there is a recognition of the value of tourism.



Image 7. View of Main Courtyard at Xunantunich. Rachael teLinde 2018.

3.2.2 Summary of Xunantunich

Overall, Xunantunich is a well known, but entangled site when it comes to tourism, conservation and ethics. The site is an economic driver for the local region and has a positive impact on the local community of San Ignacio. Furthermore, locals have been trained to be involved in the site archaeology and its related tourism work. However, it is evident that the site material continues to deteriorate despite best efforts by archaeologists and locals. The obvious attraction of the site is the authentic experience of the Mayan structures that remain in situ and the ability to be able to traverse through these structures. As a result, conservation efforts have suffered. Furthermore, local nature is being impacted by foot traffic and vehicle transportation to get to the site. Lastly, there are continued ethical topics that, while being addressed, have no

clear solutions due to the nature of Xunantunich as an archaeotourism site and its benefit to local communities and the country as a whole. In conclusion, Xunantunich, as a case study, demonstrates the entangled issues that arise when archaeological sites are opened for tourist activity. An in depth analysis of the material presented on Xunantunich is conducted in Ch. 4.2.2.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

My approach to data collection was heavily reliant on data produced by previous researchers and compiling relevant studies. My research was conducted using a variety of methods. I made use of Lund University's library and online search portal. I supplemented these methods by using Google Scholar to get a sense of the kind of material available. I also combed through other databases such as JSTOR, Elsevier and Academia. My goal was to read and compile as much research as I was able to with the time constraints and then make use of the most relevant data.

The sources I included in my thesis had to fall under the peer-reviewed and academic source criteria. A few exceptions to these criteria are the websites I chose to include for statistical and informative types of data. The reasoning for these criteria was to ensure that the data I used in my thesis was as reliable as it could be. I wanted my material and data to be solid, reliable and supportive for my analysis and discussion.

I ended up compiling a wide variety of text and research reports based on my chosen case studies. As a result, I spent a large portion of time reading and determining which data I wanted to include and which texts did not offer the relevant type of material that I was looking for. Therefore, I was selective with the source material in order to adhere to the time constraints and the allotted length of my thesis while still providing a solid set of data and analysis.

I wanted to provide a similar set of data for both case studies in order to strengthen the analysis. I was able to find similar types of research and resulting data for the two sites that served as my case studies. These data sets came in the form of tourist surveys regarding the site in question, alongside background information and overall site analysis from previous archaeological investigations. I chose to stick to these types of data sets and materials because they provide a solid overview of the site and give a snapshot into how tourism at the site is perceived while adhering to time constraints and overall length limit of my thesis.

3.3.1 Source Criticism

The source material I worked with for the Āraiši case study was a small sample size. In terms of the Āraiši case study I used information from EXARC's homepage on Āraiši as well as Āraiši's homepage for information on opening hours and pricing on their tickets. Alongside these two sources I also relied heavily on Roeland Paardekooper's text *The Value of an Archaeological Open Air Museum is in its Use* (2012) for information on the visitors and related analyses. I also elected to use a few scientific papers on the archaeology of the site, mainly relying on Zirne (2020) *The Practice of Preserving and Presenting Archaeological Sites in Latvia* and Meadows, J and Zunde M. (2014) *A Lake Fortress, a Floating Chronology, and an Atmospheric Anomaly*. I chose these texts because the information that the authors presented was relevant for my research interest. Furthermore, the authors are well published and the texts I read were peer-reviewed and reliable.

Paardekooper's text (2012) was well written and relevant for my research topic. The chapter on Āraiši was well curated and used a variety of examples and information to give a good overview of the open air museum and its context. The limitation of Paardekooper's text was the date of the material. While the statistical and other research on Āraiši was relevant and well documented in the text, the date of the text itself is a limitation for my case study. The date of the information and the lack of updated information on the types of topics presented in Paardekooper's text is a problematic point for my case study because it is not current. There was a lack of recent source material that I had access to for the same type of material that Paardekooper's text offered, which overall affected my analysis. .

Meadows, J and Zunde M. (2014) *A Lake Fortress, a Floating Chronology, and an Atmospheric Anomaly* was a well written and informative article. However, the main goal of the article was to examine the site from an archaeological perspective to better understand the site as an underwater site but also to help date the stages of the site. For these reasons, this text was not as valuable to my overall research goals. The information I pulled from this source was more relevant for introducing Āraiši in its current context. However, the paper was informative and useful for knowledge of the site, its archaeological investigations, and some history of the site.

Zirne's (2020) *The Practice of Preserving and Presenting Archaeological Sites in Latvia* article was informative and recent. The article was well written and drew upon several examples and texts. The subject of the text is a focus on how archaeological site conservation is approached in Latvia. Zirne covers a variety of sites that are both endangered and not. Āraiši is covered in the text because it is relevant to the conservation approach in Latvia. Āraiši is

covered in Zirne's text as an example of an archaeological site that employs reconstruction as an option to tourism. However, the part of the text that covers Āraiši is relatively short and does not go into too much depth on the site.

In conclusion, the limitations of using the sources for my materials fall mainly under issues of being up to date, which can impact the overall analysis and discussion. It is important to be aware of the limitations of study in order to better understand areas for improvement. Given more time and ample access, I would have liked to delve deeper into source material and search for more recent articles that are relevant to my case study.

For the Xunantunich case study I compiled information from two main sources with some supplemental information from a third source. The first source I used is a chapter in the edited book *Classical Maya Provincial Politics: Xunantunich and its Hinterlands* edited by Lisa LeCount and Jason Yaeger. The chapter I consulted is written by Richard Leventhal, Wendy Ashmore, Lisa LeCount and Jason Yaeger and is titled *The Xunantunich Archaeological Project, 1991-1997*. The other main source I pulled from is titled *If you dig it, they will come! Archaeology heritage sites and tourism development in Belize, Central America* by Doug Ramsey and John Everitt. The third source I pulled from was used to understand the archaeology at Xunantunich and is titled *The 2016 Investigation of Structure A9 at Xunantunich, Belize*. It is a more recently published field report from the site by Douglas Tilden, Diane Slocum, Jaime Awe, and Kelsey Sullivan. These three sources make up the main body of my research on Xunantunich.

Leventhal et al.'s chapter in the edited book on Xunantunich and the surrounding area was an excellent read on the inception of the projects at the site and the subsequent development of the site as an active archaeological site as well as a tourist destination. The chapter gives a good, if broad overview of how Xunantunich was developed in terms of both tourism and archaeological investigation. However, the focus of the chapter is definitely on the archaeological aspects of the site and less so on the tourism aspect. My focus is the intersection of archaeology and tourism, so my analysis would benefit more from information that took tourism into more consideration as a part of the research. Additionally, the main limitation of using this chapter is its date as it was not recently written. My analysis may benefit more from more current material and information.

Ramsey and Everitt's article focused solely on tourism at archaeological sites in Belize. The article was short, but informative and consolidated the tourist experience in Belize well. The survey conducted was well explained, though the sample size was limited because of location and time constraints. However, the authors explained these limitations as well and how they

affected the data gathered. Overall, the article presented a concise overview of the tourism industry in Belize as well how tourists think and are aware of site impact. The limits of using this article is once again the date of the article. The data presented within the article is quite dated and has definitely changed over the course of time. Furthermore, while the authors were transparent about their sample size and limitations, it does not change the fact that their sample size and location of sampling could have been improved, which definitely impacts my subsequent analysis based on their data.

Overall, while the sources I chose are valid, well written, and are reliable, the data contained within these sources is dated, and in the case of Ramsey and Everitt's article, limited as well. Despite these factors, the data presented in these articles is still valid and can be used to provide an analysis for my case study.

4. Discussion and Analysis

The goal of my thesis was to investigate the value of open air museums as a tool to help mitigate the clash between tourism and conservation goals. The current problem that I wanted to shed light on through my work was the fact that archaeotourism sites suffer from deterioration of the material within as well as oftentimes clashing with local communities. These clashes end up having negative impacts on the communities in terms of economy and heritage management that then lead to ethical concerns that the site and its management either cannot or will not address. My research question was, to what extent can open air museums help to manage the conflicting interests of tourism and conservation in ways that archaeotourism are not able to? In order to answer my research question and related research goals I decided to make use of case studies. The following chapter will first analyze the case studies presented in Ch. 3 and then discuss the results and other aspects of my thesis. Through careful analysis and discussion, I hope to present sufficient results and conclusions for my research question and related research goals.

4.1 Case Study Analysis

In order to draw informed conclusions based on the case studies and preliminary analyses presented in Ch. 3, I will use the points outlined in the methodology chapter to further assess each case study. Both case studies presented will undergo similar consideration using the concepts of conservation, ethics, and authenticity. Each case study will be discussed using the same format in order to conduct an even and equal assessment. The analysis will take into

consideration both the methodology and the context of the material to make an informed conclusion regarding the material and the question.

4.1.1 Āraiši Analysis

The goal behind choosing Āraiši as a case study was to demonstrate how open air museums can undertake conservation efforts and create ethics in ways that archaeotourism sites are not always able to, while still maintaining tourist interest. The information I gathered on Āraiši shows that the site is an archaeological excavation site, but is undertaking conservation efforts with their material alongside the implementation of ethics when it comes to its community. As discussed in Ch. 3.1 and 3.1.1, Āraiši is an open air museum based on the archaeological excavation on the site it is located at and seeks to present an accurate snapshot of the stages that happened at the site. Alongside its goal to present an accurate picture of the past, Āraiši seeks to maintain the local landscape and involve local customs and handiwork in events and education. Though the material that Āraiši works with is not always authentic in that it is original, Āraiši seeks to present an authentic experience of the site through archaeological research and reconstruction.

Āraiši, as an open air museum, touches upon the three topics of ethics, conservation, and authentic experience. Taking into consideration the idea that I proposed in my theoretical framework, that authenticity and the authentic experience does not necessarily need to come from material that is original but can be created via other means, Āraiši is still capable of offering tourists an authentic experience. Āraiši can create this authenticity through the reconstruction of its buildings based on archaeological research and also through the material that has an authentic value that Āraiši has access to. In terms of authentic experience, especially as seen through the survey presented in Paardekooper's text, there was no mention of the material not being interesting or engaging because of the lack of authentic material in the way that one would find at an archaeotourism site such as Xunantunich. Visitors to the museum are there to engage with the educational value of the site and because they are interested in the history of the region as well as the archaeology of the site, all of which Āraiši brings to bear in their displays and interactions.

Āraiši's approach to conservation is evident in their efforts to conserve the local landscape, the local traditions, and the excavation material. Ch. 3.1 mentioned that Āraiši has a permanent exhibition in the National History Museum of Latvia. The National History Museum is the medium by which most of the conservation of the material found at the site occurs, because of the close relationship between Āraiši and the museum. Furthermore, much of the site at

Āraiši is a reconstruction rather than original constructions that have been restored. It is for this reason that conservation at Āraiši is a more simplified approach as it deals more with reconstructed elements that require maintenance. The essence of Āraiši does not perpetuate the need to conserve authenticity. Āraiši also takes into consideration the surrounding landscape. The very definition of an open air museum is that it engages the local landscape as a part of the experience, as discussed in Ch. 1. Āraiši meaningfully incorporates the local landscape as well as it is an essential part of the open air museum experience, so the landscape must be maintained and negative impacts mitigated in order present the best experience for visitors. The last point of conservation at Āraiši is its incorporation of local traditions and handiwork in educational programs and events. Āraiši engages these traditions as a part of display and as a result is presenting the knowledge to visitors and ensuring that future generations have access to the knowledge.

Ethics are present in the operation of Āraiši as an open air museum. Through the inclusion of local groups for events and presentations, as well the educational programs that Āraiši offers there is a creation of ethics through the practice of heritage in these programs. Furthermore, the nature of Āraiši is an open opportunity to further explore how ethics can be created and practiced within archaeology as well as tourist destinations. Āraiši, being an open air museum and place of education can set a stage of sorts for archaeologists to practice and demonstrate how ethics can be practiced within archaeology and explore other alternatives for ethical codes and implementation at archaeotourism sites. The way that Āraiši engages the local communities and subsequent heritage practice as well as how they engage with conservation practice and landscape maintenance shows that there is a strong consideration for ethical standards. These standards are on open display for Āraiši's visitors and demonstrate how archaeology and ethical practices can be present as a part of the tourism industry.

4.1.2 Xunantunich Analysis

Xunantunich is a long standing archaeological site that has been adapted to accommodate tourism. Local communities participate in the tourism industry by working as tour guides year round and helping the archaeological teams with research and excavations. However, as a result of long term tourism at the site, Xunantunich is seeing deterioration of its structures and surrounding nature. Ramsey and Everitt's article mentions that tourists were seeing litter and soil deterioration at sites like Xunantunich as a result of prolonged tourism and constant foot traffic. In Leventhal et al.'s text there was also a mention of how the archaeologists were aware that developing the site and allowing tourism to take place afterwards would have

an adverse effect on the archaeological material at the site. However, they took steps to try and mitigate the damage to the site, train locals, and implement conservation practices at Xunantunich and developed the site for tourism as per the Belizean government's direction. Based on the sources and the research, Xunantunich was only developed to be a tourist site because the Belizean government wanted to focus on tourism as an economic driver for the country. However, this focus on tourism and economy does not change the fact that Xunantunich, as a Mayan site, has value for local communities and heritages.

In terms of authenticity, Xunantunich remains authentic in its material because it is an archaeological site with original monuments and structures that have been unearthed. However, tourism at the site has eroded a significant amount of these structures because tourists are permitted to walk along the facades and up the pyramids. As a result, much of these structures have been restored and further worked on. There is even a facade on the main structure that has been removed in an attempt to conserve what was left of it and it has been replaced with a replica. Tourists are experiencing authentic material, but much of the material is being damaged in the process and other parts of the material have been replicated in order to conserve the parts of the original.

Concerns regarding best conservation practice have been present at Xunantunich since its development. While steps have been made, as per Leventhal et al.'s chapter, it is evident that damage at the site is still a concern. Ramsey and Everitt's article and included survey shows that tourists that visited Xunantunich were aware that there was deterioration at the site despite the efforts towards conservation. Based on the survey by Ramsey and Everitt, it is also evident that tourists recognize deterioration and over development at other tourism sites within Belize, not solely at Xunantunich. This type of data is important because it highlights where conservation efforts have been either neglected or have not held up. At present it seems that archaeologists are just trying to maintain the structures and conserve the material to the best of their ability while continuing with tourist activity.

Ethical concerns are entrenched in site tourism in Belize. The local communities are heavily impacted by tourism, both positively and negatively alongside heritage groups that identify with Mayan ancestry and culture. Xunantunich has historically trained locals to better engage with their heritage and to be able to work at the site and benefit from the revenue generated, as described in Leventhal et al.'s chapter. However, the practice at Xunantunich in involving locals in the development and profit from the site will not be the case for every archaeotourism site. Furthermore, Xunantunich still relies heavily on archaeological directors to determine best practice for the site and its material, rather than allowing local communities and

heritage groups to have a greater voice when it comes to the material. Lastly, tourism in countries such as Belize are huge economic drivers, so there is no simple solution of 'close the site to tourists' to help maintain the material and put control of the material back in the hands of local heritage groups. Xunantunich still is a large part of employment for local groups as well, which further entangles ethics and best practice when it comes to the material at the site.

4.2 Research Approach

For my research I wanted to start broad and then narrow the field of focus. My research question and related topics come from a very large field of archaeological investigation, and deal not so directly with physical archaeological material, but with more theoretical and intangible topics. To start, I wanted to investigate the topic as a whole to determine how the overall scope of the field related to my question and then I narrowed the focus to information relevant to my question and aims. The reason for approaching the research in this way was to provide readers with relevant background information and context in order to understand the reason why I posed the question that I did and undertook the topic that I did. I chose the research topic that I did because I felt that it would offer a decent area of investigation from a new angle while enabling me to adhere to time constraints, current Covid-19 restrictions and safety guidelines, and provide a solid piece of work.

I approached the research with an open mind. I had very little previous experience on this topic going into my thesis work. Therefore, I had to approach the research with a willingness to learn on top of the desire to delve into my subject and research question. The goal was to present a comprehensive overview of my chosen topic, ask questions that promoted critical thinking, and provide strong analysis of the data I was able to collect.

In order to get closer to an answer for my research question, I decided to make use of two contrasting case studies. I chose contrasting case studies because I felt that these case studies would provide readers with a clearer picture of the subtle differences between archaeological open air museums and archaeotourism sites and how each type of site handles material, conservation and ethics, and how they appeal to tourists.

In terms of previous research, I found that there was a very limited portion of work on the topic that I was specifically investigating. There is a large body of research that discusses best practice, conservation, preservation and related management concerns when it comes to archaeotourism sites. Likewise, there is also a sizable body of research and work on open air museums and archaeology. However, there was very little research to pull from that bridged the gap between these two topics, as was the overall goal of my work. Therefore, it was

challenging, but rewarding, to synthesize the research on each of these separate topics in order to present a comprehensive body of work.

4.3 Limitations of Study

Taking into consideration the entirety of my thesis, there were aspects that were restricted and limited. A few such things that limited my study and overall work were as follows. Firstly, the time and length constraints on the scope of the work were important considerations. Given more time and space with which to work, I would have liked to make use of a wider variety of information, data, and investigations. As it was, I had to be aware of these limitations and adjust my work accordingly. Secondly, current world Covid-19 restrictions put a limitation on the type of data collection methods I could use. Access to certain material was also limited. I had to work around certain and specific opening hours for the university libraries, and travel was not possible during the scope of study. The last major limitation to my study that I wish to discuss, as I feel that it ultimately impacted my overall work, was the date of the material I worked with. Ultimately, the material I had access to and the statistics I used were dated. Ideally, I would have liked to conduct my own survey and gather more recent statistics and reports, but the pandemic restrictions as well as the time constraints limited these possibilities for this specific body of work.

4.4 Areas for Further Research

The information presented in my thesis is just a small portion of a very large and comprehensive topic within the archaeological field. As such, there are many areas for further exploration and analysis when it comes to this kind of topic. EXARC was a very valuable resource for the core of this thesis, and they are continuing to do a lot of interesting work in this field of archaeology.

A further area of investigation that would be interesting would be how the recent Covid-19 pandemic has affected tourism and archaeological sites open for tourism at local and global scales. The pandemic has heavily restricted travel which has impacted tourism activities. It would be interesting to investigate how communities that surround archaeotourism sites have been affected as well as how the site itself has been affected. Has less foot traffic at these archaeotourism sites helped with conservation efforts, or merely paused the deterioration for the time being? It would be interesting to investigate how open air museums and archaeotourism sites, their material, and their local communities are currently dealing with the impacts of restricted travel, and what these impacts will mean for the future of their sites.

If given the opportunity, I would like to delve deeper into open air museums and their role within archaeology. I would like to explore how open air museums are perceived and curated in different parts of the world from the tourist perspective to the archaeologist perspective. I would also like to expand on the subject presented in this body of work, potentially collecting my own data and running comparative analysis. Furthermore, there is potential for investigation into how open air museums and tourism sites can work together to reach better conservation methods and better relationships with local heritage groups. There is much potential in these topics within archaeology, and I am interested how archaeology and tourism will develop in the future.

5. Conclusions

The goal of my thesis was to discuss the question: can open air museums help archaeologists navigate the clash between conservation goals and tourism at archaeotourism sites, and if so, to what extent? The aim was to explore how archaeological material can still be accessible to the public and still receive the benefits that the tourism industry offers while exploring better options for conservation and ethical practices. I made use of two case studies as my material. One case study was the open air museum Āraiši in Latvia and the second one is a well known archaeotourism site in Belize, known as Xunantunich. By compiling data in the form of tourist surveys and previous archaeological research I presented an overview of each site and how it handled tourist engagement as well as issues of conservation, ethics, and the authentic experience.

Based on my research and my subsequent analysis, I can say that there is value in open air museums as potential alternatives to continuously developing archaeotourism sites. Tourism is a vast industry that has major impacts, both positive and negative, on its surrounding communities and countries as a whole, especially in the case of Belize. There is no simple solution of just ceasing tourism activities in order to protect the material and related heritages. However, there is a need for change in how some of these archaeotourism sites are managed, how the material is conserved, and how the site interacts with local communities. To that end, I wanted to explore the possibility that open air museums are a better medium by which archaeology can still engage in tourism and its benefits but at a more ethical and practical level than that of a site like Xunantunich.

The case studies and related data showed that there was clear concern, at the tourist level, for the conservation of archaeological sites and their surrounding nature. However, tourists at the open air museum did not seem to express the same concerns. Furthermore, the tourists that participated in the survey regarding the open air museum were interested in the

continued development of the museum and related material. Research on the development of Xunantunich revealed that archaeologists were aware that opening the site for tourism would have an adverse effect on the conservation of the site, which has proven to be the case with the current levels of reconstruction that has taken place at the site. Conversely, Āraiši has little concern with the conservation of their on-site material because many of their structures are reconstructions. Research on the site revealed that much of the original archaeological material is stored in a permanent museum exhibit that is open year round, while the site deals with reconstructions and recreations. It is evident that open air museums, based on my research and surveys, are better equipped to deal with archaeological material in a way that is more beneficial to the material while still engaging for tourists.

The analysis of ethics and how ethics are approached and created at these sites is an important topic of discussion. Āraiši engages in education and nature preservation on top of engaging in tourism. Based on my research, Āraiši takes steps in order to ensure that the local landscape is preserved as a part of their display. Furthermore, as a part of its nature, Āraiši offers a stage for the display of ethical practice when it comes to archaeological material and better engagement of local communities and heritage groups. Āraiši offers programs led by community participants as a part of event periods where visitors can learn about traditional techniques and crafts. Xunantunich, because its scale and the amount of visitors it receives every year is just not capable of conducting the same types of programs that Āraiši is able to offer. However, Xunantunich does also endeavour to involve its local communities by offering training programs for locals to work as tour guides as well as with the material at the site. Both case studies attempt to engage local communities and heritages with their related materials in ethical ways, however it seems that Āraiši has more ample opportunities to work with ethics and teach tourists about how ethics and archaeology are entangled within the tourism industry.

Authenticity and the authentic experience are present at both sites. Xunantunich offers the authentic experience in that all of the structures at the site are mostly original and left within their contexts. Āraiši enables its visitors to create their own authentic experience through reconstruction based on archaeological excavation and research. Both sites create an authentic experience for tourists through means that benefit the site. In both surveys, with the sets of tourists surveyed, neither saw an answer regarding the authentic value of the material. Tourists surveyed at the Xunantunich were concerned over the impact of tourist activity on the material. Tourists at Āraiši did not have the same concerns and even appreciated the attention to detail at the site as well as the opportunity for education.

Based on investigation and analysis I was able to present an overview of the interaction between archaeology, open air museums, and tourism. Despite the limitations of the study I was able to reach a preliminary result for my research question. Furthermore, I was able to touch upon the research aims first discussed in Ch. 1. In order to reach a more well defined conclusion regarding my research questions, a more thorough investigation and analysis will need to be conducted using more up to date research and statistics. However, based on the research, analysis and initial conclusions from this body of work, there is value in open air museums as a tool for archaeologists to explore alternative options to authentic experiences, conservation practice and ethical codes while maintaining tourist activity. Lastly, there is potential for open air museums and archaeology to develop more intricate relationships together with tourist sites in an effort to pursue better management options when it comes to material conservation and better interaction with local heritages.

6. Summary

My thesis topic is a small part of a much larger area of study. Archaeology and tourism have long been entangled with one another and have had to navigate the implications of this entanglement. Open air museums are also not a strictly modern development, but many countries are still working to solidly identify what constitutes an open air museum. Organizations such as EXARC have made strides in helping to define what an open air museum is and what it does. Open air museums are becoming a unique medium through which archaeologists can engage the public in archaeological methods and education. Through research and investigation I examined the idea that open air museums can also offer archaeology alternative methods for the creation of ethics and better conservation of materials within the tourism industry. Based on initial investigations and analysis, it is apparent that open air museums are a subject for further consideration for archaeologists and the tourism industry alike. Open air museums can create a unique setting for tourism benefits while also enabling archaeology to engage in ethics and conservation in ways that open tourism sites are not always able to.

This study sought to further explore the relationship between archaeology and tourism and how this relationship could be further transformed into the future. As discussed in this body of work, archaeotourism is not a sustainable venture in terms of conservation, but also local relations, as demonstrated by looking back at the history and development of archaeotourism. Looking back at Ch. 1.2, the research history, it is evident that archaeologists are becoming more aware of the need for improved conservation as well as improved ethics at these archaeotourism sites, but it is also evident that these sites are deeply ingrained into local

economies. By demonstrating the entanglement of conservation, ethics, authenticity and subsequent revenue at these sites throughout this body of work, I sought to explore how these relationships could be transformed into a more sustainable framework for the material, but also local communities.

In summary, my thesis touches on a very small part of a wider topic but the implications of my research question are far reaching. I hope that the overall scope of my research question, analysis, and results have proven to be enlightening and thought provoking. Though the results of my investigation are preliminary, I was able to explore my research question and reach my research aims. I hope to have set the stage for further discussion and investigation on this type of topic within archaeology in the future.

7. Appendix

7.1 Survey Format from Paardekooper (2012)

The standardised Visitor Survey Form

This is the amended visitor survey form for future use in archaeological open-air museums. It is based on the one used in this research, updated with new insights after using in eight such museums for a full season.

What date is it today?

.....

What factors made you choose to visit us today?

- Interested in the past Interested in the local region Enjoy the weather
 Children friendly Educational value
 Other

How often have you visited us before?

- This is my / our first visit
 I / we have visited you times before, the last visit was in (year).

How did you hear about us?

- I / we have been here before (see earlier question)
 Recommended by the Tourist Office
 Recommended by the hotel / camping / B&B
 Recommended by friends
 A Brochure
 A Website
 I / We know the museum already for a long time
 I was / we were just passing by
 Other

How easy was it to reach the museum?

☹ ☺ ☺

How did you enjoy the following:

The buildings (reconstructions)	☹	☺	☺
The offered programme of activities	☹	☺	☺
The tour guides / the staff	☹	☺	☺
The guided tour	☹	☺	☺
The entrance fees	☹	☺	☺
The café/restaurant	☹	☺	☺
The gift shop	☹	☺	☺
The signs & leaflets	☹	☺	☺
Overall experience	☹	☺	☺

How long have you stayed with us?

- Less than 1 hour 1-2 hours 2-3 hours 3+ hours

Did your visit today

- Exceed* your expectations *Meet* your expectations
 Fall below your expectations I *didn't know* what to expect

Will you visit other places today?

- No, I / we only came for you
 I / we don't know yet

Yes, namely:

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Open questions

What did you like about us?

What could we improve?

Where do you come from?

City, Region, & Country

Where did you travel from to see us?

- I / we travelled from home I / we travelled from a Holliday address
 Different:

With whom were you visiting us?

- Single with my partner Family Different:

How old are you?

- 1-14 years
- 15-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31-50 years
- 51-65 years
- Over 65 years

7.2 Survey Format from Ramsey & Everitt (2008)

1. Which countries are you travelling to as part of this trip?

Belize
 Belize and _____
How did you get there? Land Sea Air

2. How long will you be staying in each country?

a. Belize
b. _____ d. _____
c. _____ e. _____

3. How many times have you visited these places in the past AND for how long?

a. Belize
b. _____ d. _____
c. _____ e. _____

4. What is the purpose of your trip?

Pleasure
 Business
 Combination
 Other
What % is Pleasure? _____
What % is Business? _____

5. What type of holiday are you intending?

nature-based (adventure wilderness ecotourism)
(land water)
 cultural (Mayan Other _____)
 resort
 event
 other, please describe _____

6. How would you define nature-based tourism?

7. How would you define cultural tourism?

8. What were your reasons for traveling to the Caracol site?

9. Were your expectations met? Yes No Please explain:

10. What are the benefits of developing an archacological site into a tourist site?

11. What are the drawbacks of developing an archacological site into a tourist site?

12. What new knowledge have you gained based on your visit to Caracol?

13. What recommendations do you have for the personnel at Caracol to improve the experience?

14. What impacts (positive or negative) do you think the Cruise ship industry will have on Belize?

Now I just need some background information:

Where are you from?

Country _____ State/Province _____ Community _____

Is this where you were born and raised (Y/N)?

Country _____ State/Province _____ Community _____

Have you traveled to other countries in the past? Yes No. If so where in the past 5 years:

What is your educational background?

some highschool highschool diploma some college/university
 college diploma/university degree post-graduate degree

What is your position of employment or profession? _____

What is your age range:

under 20 21-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+

Do you have any other comments you would like to share about tourism generally, or the Caracol site specifically?

That's it. Thanks a lot for your time. Enjoy the rest of your trip.

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