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Changing the Landscape of Archaeological Publishing

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Disseminating research is a key component of scholarly labor, but the costs and benefits of the current structure of academic publishing are underexamined within anthropology. This paper brings together a range of authors from across archaeology and cultural anthropology to summarize current issues in archaeological publishing and offer potential interventions at multiple scales. The paper is divided into five core topics. "Ideology" discusses the relationship between publishing and academic history, gatekeeping, and the ideology of collaboration and coauthorship. "Publishing Dynamics in North America" covers intersections between identity, authorship, and citation practices, as well as gendered patterns in publishing. "Publishing Dynamics in Latin America" presents a case study of academic publishing in Brazil and Peru, highlighting the unique challenges for archaeologists based in the Global South. "Publishing Pathways" interrogates open science and data, standards for peer review and coauthorship, and the impact of different publishing models on individual researchers. Finally, "Media Coverage" investigates bias in popular media covering archaeological research and the monetization of scientific information. We conclude with a list of multiscalar interventions for authors, peer reviewers, editors, journals, departments, institutions, and granting agencies that will improve conditions for authors and readers, emphasizing strategies that lead to collaborative, reciprocal forms of knowledge production.

Introduction

It is time to change academic publishing. This umbrella term describes the process by which scholars peer-review and disseminate their work in books and academic journals. "Academic," in this framing, refers to the venue, rather than the authorship. In archaeology, for example, scholarship is produced by a diverse range of practitioners, including archaeologists employed by cultural resource management firms, government offices, and other federal agencies; tenured or tenure-track faculty; graduate

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students in anthropology and related fields; and other knowledge producers outside academia. In this paper, we examine the landscape of archaeological publishing from the perspective of academic archaeologists, including students, individuals on the job market, contingent faculty, faculty, and independent scholars. We underscore, however, that changing the landscape of archaeological publishing will require similar interrogations and interventions among other groups of practitioners producing scholarship about the past, and broad-scale change will require working across professional boundaries. These interventions should be aimed at addressing three questions: (1) How can we guarantee that knowledge production is collaborative and reciprocal rather than top-down and extractive? (2) How do we ensure that people actually can and will read what we write? (3) How do we improve conditions for authors?

Although academic labor is conventionally divided into research, teaching, and service, there is a deep-seated understanding that research—particularly the production of peer-reviewed publications—is what really counts. Having a strong publication record is increasingly the central consideration for tenure-track positions, particularly given the saturation of the job market, in which, at most, only 29% of anthropology PhDs obtain faculty positions in anthropology departments (Mackie and Rockwell 2023). Research on the field of sociology shows that assistant professors hired by top programs from 2015 to 2017 entered the workforce with nearly twice as many publications as those hired from 1991 to 1993 (Warren 2019). Archaeology is not exempt from this "publication arms race" (Feldman Barrett 2019), so this focus on publishing becomes entrenched early in academic careers. A 2019 survey of archaeology faculty found that no faculty with doctorates awarded from 1971 to 1980 had more than four publications when first hired to tenure-track positions. In contrast, some recent graduates had as many as 13 (Cramb et al. 2022: fig. 7).

The academic labor that supports this publishing arms race is almost completely unremunerated. Most academic journals do not offer direct compensation for labor, including for reviewers or editors. In 2020, academics in the United States spent more than 100 million hours on peer review, a time investment equivalent to US$1.5 billion (Aczel, Szaszi, and Holcombe 2021). One recent article praises a researcher for reviewing one or two manuscripts per day, an uncompensated service more befitting a full-time contract (Dance 2022). Furthermore, research publications often fail to reach audiences beyond academia, despite the public's stake in the results. Even with an increasing call for engaged scholarship in archaeology, the discipline undervalues popular publication in annual assessments.

Publications are the lodestones of academic capital because of their relationship to scholarly reputation and career advancement. In practice, however, academics who do find university positions spend the bulk of their working hours on teaching and service. Time budget studies suggest that faculty invest 58%–62% of work time on teaching and only 18%–22% on research (Flaherty 2014). As a result, many academics spend long hours outside the nine-to-five work window striving to close the gap between expected and actual workloads, to the detriment of their work-life balance and well-being. These burdens disproportionately affect women and Black, Indigenous, and people of color scholars, who bear the brunt of higher service loads and the "invisible labor" of pastoral care for students (Rideau 2021; Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group 2017). These inequitable labor demands begin during undergraduate and graduate training—students of color, for example, are tasked with producing excellent work; educating colleagues about race; contributing to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives; building community; and grappling with opportunity gaps, tokenization, and microaggressions (Banks and Dohy 2019; Harwood et al. 2012; Ike, Miller, and Hartemann 2020). Unfortunately, these increased labor demands are characteristic for members of historically marginalized groups in all fields, not only academia. Both within and outside the academy, these pressures are especially acute for multiply marginalized individuals, who must navigate intersecting biases and identity-based discrimination simultaneously (Anzini 2020; Carneiro 2003; Flores Niemann, Gutiérrez y Muhs, and Gonzalez 2012). Given ever-increasing institutional labor demands, having time to write is often viewed as an indulgence, one differentially available to permanent faculty at institutions with the resources to support lower teaching loads and research leave—faculty that are disproportionately represented by cisgender white men (Kawa 2022). Such disparities contribute to systematic racial inequity in publishing. The scholarship of Black archaeologists, for example, is underrepresented, underpublished, and undercited within the discipline (Blakey 1983, 2020; Flewellen 2023; Franklin 1997; Ike, Miller, and Hartemann 2020), a disparity compounded by archaeology's lack of attention to racism as a contemporary social issue (Park, Wang, and Marwick 2022).

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Existing data highlight three major tensions that animate contemporary academic publishing. First, while in theory we publish to communicate research results to other scholars and a broader set of stakeholders, in practice we publish because hiring, promotion, and granting committees prioritize research dissemination through traditional journals. Because journal paywalls restrict scholarly conversations, media platforms often communicate our results to the public through syntheses that are strongly biased by editorial choice, sometimes at the expense of nuance, accuracy, and representativeness. Second, while academic writing is popularly understood as an expression of the "life of the mind," papers are also products that corporations leverage for profit. Indeed, the profit margins of major academic publishers are almost 40% higher than those of Coca-Cola, Google, or Microsoft (Hagve 2020). Finally, there is a discrepancy between the pedagogical labor that constitutes the bulk of academic workloads and the research labor valued for career advancement. These three tensions surrounding publication—communication versus currency, craft versus commodity, and labor versus luxury—have created an environment in which academics feel compelled to invest their labor in an exploitative system that extracts profit without compensation, restricts research results from the public, and biases the stories that are told about the human past. There is thus a pervasive mentality that the publishing industry is a "necessary evil" intractably woven into the fabric of academic research, a sense that we must consent to a recognizably damaging devil's bargain to disseminate and discuss our work.

Recognizing the systemic problems within academic publishing, we organized the session Publishing Dynamics in Anthropology and Archaeology at the 2022 Society for American Archaeology meetings. Presentations in this session sparked several ongoing research projects (Alex, Ji, and Flad 2025; Hutson et al. 2023; Kawa 2022) and stimulated conversations that grew into Changing the Landscape of Archaeological Publishing (CLAP), a collaborative working group that aims to publicize and confront existing problems with academic publishing while offering potential interventions. The paper is divided into five sections—"Ideology," "Publishing Dynamics in North America," "Publishing Dynamics in Latin America," "Publishing Pathways," and "Media Coverage" (table 1). Our paper is largely focused on dynamics and data from North America, but we include a case study on publishing dynamics in Brazil and Peru to highlight the distinct challenges that exist for academics in Latin America and underscore the need for more detailed explorations of publishing practices in the Global South and other national contexts. Each of our five sections identifies the costs and impacts of the current state of academic publishing. Throughout the paper, we explore solutions from anthropology and other disciplines and offer suggestions for interventions at multiple scales. We also point to strategies for equitably assigning authorship, navigating citational politics, and ensuring open access to data and knowledge.

Ideology

For academic archaeologists and anthropologists, peer-reviewed publication has become an end in itself. It shows that our ideas have survived the collegial critique and editorial processes of a respected disciplinary journal. The resulting paper can be added as a line on the CV—a little notch in our belt. Whether

Table 1. Description of Changing the Landscape of Archaeological Publishing working groups

Working group	Description
Ideology	Why do we publish? How do professional considerations intersect with the for-profit publishing industry? Who gets to be an author? How do we disentangle value and prestige? Core concerns include the relationship between archaeological publishing and broader understandings of history, gatekeeping dynamics within authorship and peer review, and the ideology of collaboration and coauthorship.
Publishing dynamics in North America	Who publishes archaeological research? What are the best ways to identify and document bias in publishing? How do we open archaeological publishing to a wider range of voices? The data and dynamics discussed in this section are focused on North America. Core concerns include intersections between identity, authorship, and citation practices; gendered patterns in publishing; and the use of survey and interview data to examine trends in knowledge production.
Publishing dynamics in Latin America	How are publishing dynamics in the Global South shaped by histories of colonialism and the hegemony of English as the current lingua franca? How does national policy affect research funding, publication practices, and authorial incentives? How and why are standards developed in the Global North inadequate to the needs of academic practice in the Global South? Who is the intended audience for academic publications? Core concerns include national policies and institutions, metrics and ranking systems, and institutional value versus broader public value.
Publishing pathways	How is academic publishing structured? How does this constrain the dissemination of archaeological results? What authorial behavior do current publishing models incentivize? At what stages of the publishing process can archaeologists modify current practices? Core concerns include open science and data, standards for peer review and coauthorship, and the obstacles faced by international researchers publishing in English-language journals.
Media coverage	How is archaeological research translated to the public? Which projects are "worthy" of popular media coverage? What are some of the pitfalls of relying on the existing "sci comm" apparatus to do the work of disseminating our results? Core concerns include bias in media coverage of archaeological research and the monetization of scientific information.

the paper is useful to anyone beyond that circle of insiders becomes almost an afterthought. We cannot pretend that broad dissemination of research findings is the primary goal when so many academic publications are hidden behind paywalls. In recent years, information technology has given academics many formats that are accessible to broader audiences—from blogs and podcasts to Bluesky threads and TikTok videos. If one goal of publishing is making knowledge accessible, why do we consider these formats less valuable to our careers?

A core problem is that we can make—or attempt to make—a living as academics only through unpaid publication in specialized journals. The few who already do make a living as academics determine what goes to press and thus who, of many aspirants, gets a job. Furthermore, all of these systems are shaped by intersecting structures of oppression and inequality, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, classism, and ableism. Put bluntly, academic publishing often operates as a form of gatekeeping. Even while many of us identify as teachers, it is peer-reviewed scholarship that is typically most valued and incentivized within university structures. While not all scholars face the same pressures of publication, particularly those who work at institutions or in positions that explicitly value teaching and outreach, the early training and socialization of doctoral students in Research 1 universities where audit culture reigns must be recognized as playing a fundamental role in the reproduction of this ideology. Look no further than how one of the rewards for scholarly accomplishment is a sabbatical or course reduction—time spent not teaching but researching and writing.

It is worth noting that the professionalized prepublication peer-review process is a recent phenomenon, one whose structuring impacts we should avoid projecting too far into the past (Fyfe 2016). Elite groups of corresponding researchers developed the early modern journal system in western Europe in the eighteenth century (Morrell and Thackray 1981). The system's primary goal was to disseminate information to those who did not have direct access to the salons that hosted intellectual debates (Fyfe 2015). The aim was not to limit participation, as selection for eligibility and inclusion was determined by elite social networks before any publishing activity occurred. In Europe and North America, the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848 and the creation of the American land-grant institutions ushered in a new social contract (Marcus 2015). This process accelerated after two world wars in which universities were redefined as engines of progress and higher education was recast as a public good. In practice and at the time, though, most universities excluded people by race, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability and indeed had been built using the profits of slavery (Wilder 2013) and colonialism (Lee et al. 2020).

The formation of this social contract of "the university as public good" coincided with the professionalization of its practitioners. One of the early debates in that process was over who would be granted full-time professorial status in an academy that was caught between an extramural community of researchers and a specific place of employment in which many depended on their jobs for a living. The American Association of University Professors' (AAUP's) first constitution, drafted in 1915, specifies that members can be "any university or college teacher of *recognized scholarship or scientific productivity* who holds and for ten years has held a position of teaching or research in an American university or college, or in a professional school of similar grade" (emphasis added). In the ideology underpinning the first AAUP constitution, we can see the outline of the modern tenure track. Eventually, disciplinary societies and commercial publishers adapted to this new reality. They came to provide a ready-made metric for the recognition of scholarship that has been nearly universally embraced by the academic community and outside actors for ranking and performance evaluation. And through it, the current system of academic publication was born.

Because of this history, early-career scholars seeking a job must distinguish themselves by publishing frequently and in the most prestigious journals (Beck, Gjesfjeld, and Chrisomalis 2021). When a scholar manages to secure a tenure-track position, that individual will then work—sometimes sleeplessly—to keep up with the ever-higher demands of publication to secure tenure. Such pressures have led to a growing trend in maximizing the total number of published outputs from a single research project, producing what are referred to as "smallest publishable units" or "least publishable units" (see Gusterson 2017:441). Not only can this publishing strategy reproduce bad research (Smaldino and McElreath 2016) and contribute to the proliferation of underwhelming research reports, but it also encourages an unsustainable rhythm of work for academic laborers. The demand for scholars to always publish more can be attributed to the rise of what Marilyn Strathern (1996) called "audit culture," an integral part of neoliberal higher education (see also Gusterson 2017; Strathern 2000). Audit culture includes the expanded use of bibliometrics for evaluating the research productivity of individual scholars, departments, and institutions. Through this process, Shore and Wright (2000:62) describe how audit culture has cultivated a new image of the scholarly subject as "a depersonalized unit of economic resource whose productivity and performance must constantly be measured and enhanced."

Practicing archaeologists find themselves embedded in and reproducing such audit cultures when they play the publication game, and their participation exacerbates social inequities in the discipline by reinforcing the concentration of intellectual capital. Given all of these intersecting issues, we must sort out how the discipline might unlearn its commitment to coercing the overpublication of narrow and obscure research reports. To that end, we should also consider how alternative venues and forms of publication and knowledge dissemination may help to challenge existing inequities and help us think more expansively about whom publication serves.

Publishing Dynamics in North America

"Publishing dynamics" are the social systems that shape knowledge production, implicating the demographics of authors,

editors, reviewers, citation, and the canon. The sociopolitics underlying archaeological knowledge production have been investigated for decades (de Paula Passos 2023; Gero, Lacy, and Blakey 1983), and a substantial corpus demonstrates that authorial identity and institutional capital shape scholarship (Ribeiro et al. 2017). Women are underrepresented in peer-reviewed archaeology scholarship in many parts of the world (Caromano et al. 2017; Mateo Corredor and Pastor Quiles 2022; Tavera Medina and Santana Quispe 2021), and in the United States this pattern has been repeatedly linked to differences in submission rather than acceptance rates (Bardolph 2014; Heath-Stout 2020*b*; Tushingham, Fulkerson, and Hill 2017) and mirrored in grant submissions (Goldstein et al. 2018). These trends have a complex causality, ranging from the conflicting demands of academic labor and family life for women (Bitencourt and Andrade 2022) to the increased time cost of refereed publications and the reduced professional incentive for those pursuing careers outside research institutions, whether by choice or because of the chilly climate in academia (Tushingham, Fulkerson, and Hill 2017; Wylie 1993). The consistent undercitation of women in archaeology, even after controlling for differences in publication rates (Hutson 2002), exacerbates these inequalities. Likewise, archaeologists undercite their colleagues of color and exclude them from the disciplinary canon (Ike, Miller, and Hartemann 2020). The limited amount of intersectional work that has been done demonstrates that this issue is more pronounced for multiply marginalized individuals (Heath-Stout 2020*b*). The systemic and intersecting effects of identity on health, energy, and time have further come to a head with the COVID-19 pandemic. The long-term consequences of these exacerbated disparities for archaeology are currently unknown (Overholtzer and Jalbert 2021).

Although many of the studies of the demographics of publication in archaeology have been conducted by white women and have focused on gender to the exclusion of other or intersecting inequalities, in academia more broadly, Black feminist scholars in North America have recently led discussions on the sociopolitics of publishing and citation. We have been particularly inspired by the work of the Cite Black Women Collective, founded by anthropologist Christen Smith (https://www.citeblackwomencollective.org/our-collective.html; Smith and Garrett-Scott 2021; Smith et al. 2021). As they write,

> For centuries, people have been content with erasing us from mainstream bibliographies, genealogies of thought, and conversations about knowledge production because they view our ideas like they view our bodies: as eminently violable. This has been especially true in the university—a bastion of neoliberal heteropatriarchal white supremacy in the modern era. We are fed up with this state of affairs. Especially now, in this political moment, it is urgent that we reconfigure the politics of knowledge production by engaging in a radical praxis of citation that acknowledges and honors Black women's transnational intellectual production. (Smith et al. 2021:11)

As Smith et al. highlight, these are transnational issues. Non-English-speaking researchers or scholars for whom English is a second language face particular challenges, although language discrimination also affects "nonstandard" English speakers (Canagarajah 2022; Lippi-Green 1997; McKinley and Rose 2018; Young 2004, 2010). For example, while the citation rate of an article or journal appears to be an impartial metric of scientific impact, scores consistently give preference to English-language submissions in particular scientific fields (González-Alcaide, Valderrama-Zurián, and Aleixandre-Benavent 2012). To attract more citations, editors publish in English. In turn, English-language articles cite other English-language articles, resulting in lower rankings for non-English-language journals. This trend is not related to research quality: when non-English articles are translated into English, they receive a higher citation rate. The poor representation from non-English-speaking countries in international, high-impact journals and the lower ranking of non-English journals lead to an ever-growing body of "lost science" (Cabrera and Saraiva 2022; Stolerman and Stenius 2008). The global dominance of English as "the" language of science has costs beyond the extra time and effort demanded from scholars who are not native speakers (Amano et al. 2023; Lenharo 2023). The hegemony of Eurocentric perspectives in scholarly training and academic citations replicates and extends colonial power dynamics (Gomez 2020); as Baumgarten (2016:153) argues, "O Sul produz teoria a partir de sua própria perspectiva e especificidades, e a obrigatoriedade de vertê-la para o inglês para que seja reconhecida internacionalmente desrespeita e discrimina as culturas não anglo-saxônicas."[1]

These challenges are compounded for scholars working in developing countries (González-Alcaide, Valderrama-Zurián, and Aleixandre-Benavent 2012:304), who represent one-quarter of the world's scientists but only 2% of indexed publications (Gibbs 1995:97). These disparities continue to this day, with journals published in North America, Europe, and Oceania more likely to be captured by major citation indexes like Scopus and Web of Science (Asubiaro, Onaolapo, and Mills 2024), suggesting that national wealth is a strong driver of scientific production (Salager-Meyer 2008). Structural barriers such as access to funding, equipment, and basic infrastructure, including reliable internet, present disproportionate challenges to conducting research in developing countries; however, lack of well-stocked libraries with licenses for journal databases represents one of the most significant barriers to publication (Chan and Costa 2005). The exorbitant costs of high-impact journals directly and indirectly restrict both readers and authors from participating in global knowledge exchange.

These trends paint a dire portrait of publishing dynamics in archaeology. A homogeneous group—predominantly cisgender, white, straight, and globally rich men—dominates scholarly writing. The resultant winnowing of perspectives affects both

1. "The South produces theory from its own perspective and particularities, and the obligation to translate it into English for it to be internationally recognized disrespects and discriminates against non-Anglo-Saxon cultures." (Translation ours. The irony of having to translate this, however, we lay at the feet of the industry.)

the content of our work (leaving viewpoints unspoken or undervalued) and the equity of archaeological practice (Ballestrin 2013; Conkey and Spector 1984; Gomez 2020; Rivera Prince et al. 2022; Wylie 1997).

Archaeologists can challenge current norms at a variety of scales. As individuals, we can interrogate our bibliographies, deliberating and reflecting about whom we reference (Bolles 2013; Williams 2022). We can upload open-access, prepublication versions of articles to the internet. Archaeologists are confronting the deficiencies of the canon by providing open-access guidelines for the development of inclusive syllabi (Heath-Stout 2018; Quave et al. 2021) or bibliographies on underexamined topics within archaeology (Beisaw 2020; Odewale and Slocum 2020), foregrounding how archaeology has been used to legitimize patriarchal, settler-colonial, and nationalist narratives while obscuring other histories (Ballestrin 2013; Gnecco 2009; Hartemann and Pereira de Moraes 2018; Ribeiro 2017; Rodrigues de Lima, Cavalcanti de Castro, and da Silva 2012; Trouillot 1995; Wichers et al. 2021). Scholars are also grappling with the issue of removing scholars found guilty of sexual misconduct from their references (Beck and Souleles 2024; Souleles 2020) or compiling bibliographies of alternative citations (Quave 2020). Other potential tactics include the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research Lab's system used to clarify authorial contributions, which facilitates the recognition of different kinds of authorial labor (Liboiron et al. 2017).

Journal editorial policies can also address equity. *Latin American Antiquity* and *Current Anthropology*, for example, allow authors to submit manuscripts in several different languages, with abstracts for all articles in multiple languages. The *Journal of Archaeological Research* attributes greater authorial diversity to editorial practices, including gender-balanced solicitation of manuscripts from early- and midcareer researchers, technicians, and community partners, as well as editorial oversight of revisions (Heath-Stout 2020*b*:421). The *Journal of Field Archaeology* has observed shifts in reviewer behavior with its move to a double-anonymized review system (Heath-Stout 2020*a*).[2] Editors can likewise confidentially solicit demographic data from authors and reviewers, both to evaluate equity in recruitment and review practices and to provide transparency to readers (Rautman 2012). Tushingham, Fulkerson, and Hill (2017: 14–19) also point to the importance of nonrefereed publications for disseminating research and "bridging the peer-review gap" through reducing the time costs associated with conventional publishing, especially for archaeologists working in extra-academic settings.

At the departmental level, faculty can craft hiring rubrics and tenure and promotion guidelines that explicitly value multiple forms of scholarly production (Akanegbu 2021) or that revise expectations for those with caretaking responsibilities heightened by the pandemic, for example. While in some jurisdictions, more activist governing boards and legislatures are becoming involved in directly setting standards, academics are still principally responsible for hiring, promotion, funding, and publishing decisions. We draft the job postings and sit on the committees, and we decide what counts as a significant contribution and under what circumstances. We largely still share with our boards the objective of using public funds responsibly, and we have a role in explaining how our choices as academics are consistent with that responsibility.

Helpfully, the Society for American Archaeology has produced a set of guidelines for promotion and tenure that can provide a framework for discussing standards appropriate for a diverse discipline (Driver et al. 2018). Departments can regularly evaluate service burdens to ensure equity and make certain that service makes up a larger part of the distribution of effort for the purposes of merit reviews. Departments can also experiment with course or service buyouts to facilitate writing time for faculty from underrepresented groups and support research dissemination to academic, public, and descendant community audiences. The rationale for such buyouts is to allow for the focus that writing requires in the face of ever-proliferating demands on faculty time, rather than to enable faculty to "get out" of teaching. Although investing in teaching and service is crucial—and may be more important and fulfilling—without publications, junior faculty are unlikely to get tenure at most institutions. For similar reasons, departments can develop or expand fellowships and funding for graduate students from underrepresented groups to reduce the financial need to pursue academic or nonacademic work and provide mentorship in the form of professionalization workshops or courses to support graduate students in preparing their first publications. We recognize, however, that institutions show marked variability in their access to resources, which has down-the-line consequences for faculty publications (Zhang et al. 2022).

University administrators can require job search committees to consider diversity and inclusivity for every hire. Administrators should also reconfigure institutional publishing funds so that researchers do not have to front article processing charges (APCs) and take on the risk of paying out of pocket. Administrators can recognize faculty with larger service burdens through awards for service and create guidelines that enable some forms of service to be counted as scholarship. In jurisdictions in which the language of DEI has been removed from university hiring and promotion regulations and policies, the fairness imperative still exists, and serving it inherently involves many DEI-related concerns. Although archaeological publishing has remained persistently univocal for most of the discipline's history, measured interventions at multiple scales have the potential to challenge and disrupt these dynamics.

Publishing Dynamics in Latin America

As the standards of scientific practice are defined by the Global North, "peripheral" knowledge producers are increasingly

2. Single-anonymized review occurs when the author does not know the identity of the reviewer(s). Double-anonymized review occurs when neither author(s) nor reviewer(s) is aware of the other's identity.

alienated and erased from view (Céspedes 2021). This section examines the publishing dynamics of two Latin American countries, Brazil and Peru, as examples of so-called peripheral archaeological science producers. Publication dynamics in Peru and Brazil are driven by multiple factors, including (1) funding, (2) state-established standards that tie productivity to accreditation and rank, and (3) the intended public for scientific publications. These interacting, and at times conflicting, dynamics are highly complex and cannot be addressed completely in this section; however, we argue that they signal some of the many ways being an academic archaeologist in Peru and Brazil does not necessarily conform to standards established by the Global North.

The most prestigious institutions that invest in scientific research in Brazil are public, including the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico, the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES), the Fundações Estaduais de Amparo à Pesquisa, and the Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social. Funding can be used for research materials, publications, and scholarships, for both researchers and students at all levels and in all fields of science, resulting in a highly competitive environment. These institutions seek to promote Brazil's scientific, technological, and intellectual independence. As a result, the Brazilian state takes a central role in knowledge production, and publication quantity and journal rank are among the most important metrics for evaluating funding applications (Dellagostin 2021; Dudziak 2018).

High levels of productivity (measured by the number of publications in high-impact, preferably international and English-language journals) and citation scores are used to determine program and university rank, generating the same patterns of knowledge production as the Global North. Adapting to these standards can discourage originality and uniquely Brazilian forms of knowledge production (Baumgarten 2016; Ribeiro 2017). For example, formats such as chapters or books have declined in favor of articles, demonstrating how bibliographic ratings in the human sciences are homogenizing the scientific landscape (Codevilla and Wesolowski 2023; de Souza Lima et al. 2023). Meanwhile, the publication rate is increasing: Brazilian archaeology currently has 17 national journals registered in CAPES, some of them specialized only in archaeology.

In comparison, in Peru, archaeological publications result from three research orientations: (1) academia, (2) public and private entities investing in site preservation for local development and tourism, and (3) rescue archaeology (*proyectos de rescate*), which is carried out by companies in compliance with the laws of the Ministry of Culture. This last type represents most of the archaeological interventions in the country, publishing both gray literature (*informes*) and open-access books.

Scientific standards for academic research in Peru were recently defined by the 2014 "university reform law," which established the National Superintendency of Higher University Education and the current rules around scientific productivity, including new accreditation requirements that include scientific publications (Congreso de la República del Perú 2014; SUNEDU 2015). Funding comes from two sources: university competitive funds and Consejo Nacional de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación Tecnológica (CONCYTEC; the government agency for scientific funding). CONCYTEC, the only state entity that provides grants to promote scientific research, does not have a dedicated program for archaeological investigations. Instead, the few archaeologists who have been awarded CONCYTEC funds have successfully argued that their work contributes to pressing innovation or scientific needs for the nation. To qualify for a CONCYTEC award, researchers must have publications in a Q1 or Q2 journal,[3] and the product of their proposed project must be Q1 or Q2 journal articles. Following a government initiative (CONCYTEC 2016), universities began rewarding faculty with bonuses for publications. The same regulations that have improved university research standards, productivity, and world rankings (Gonzáles and Diestra 2021; González-Parias, Londoño-Arias, and Giraldo-Mejía 2022; Mendoza-Chuctaya et al. 2021; SCImago Lab 2021) have also created unethical incentives and actors, including a market for purchasing coauthorships in international or predatory journals (Mayta-Tristán and Borja García 2022; Mayta-Tristán, Borja García, and Angulo-Bazán 2023).

Publications also result from the important work that occurs through the Ministry of Culture and, to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism and smaller private foundations whose work centers on the preservation of emblematic archaeological sites. Among the Ministry of Culture's research objectives is the creation of "social value," specifically, a local sense of cultural patrimony and economic development and tourism. The resulting data are published in a variety of open-access formats for a range of audiences: full-color-image books for the public, materials for school-age children, reports, audiovisual products, websites, and other publications largely aimed at public consumption. These investments have significantly expanded the panorama of archaeological professions and, by extension, the value of alternative forms of publication.

While journal rankings and impact factor can provide a measure of research quality, the production of these articles does not always align with the other goals of archaeologists in Brazil and Peru. Peruvian and Brazilian archaeologists are scientists and knowledge producers but also nation builders. A Q1 or Q2 designation rarely affects dissemination, education, or economic development; in other words, the real-world impact is low in the context of these nations. In fact, the standards normalized by the Global North often work to devalue those forms of publication that can move forward both the scientific and nation-building goals—for example, open-access and public science communications. While space constraints inhibit us from discussing the roles that language, gender, and diversity

3. Such quartiles divide journals within a field into four categories based on metrics such as impact factor. Q1 journals include the top 25% of journals in a field, while Q2 includes those journals that are lower than the top 25% but higher than the median.

play in Latin American publishing dynamics, this brief outline is meant to signal that the positionality of researchers in other nations can be fundamentally different from and in conflict with the pathways defined (and frequently imposed) by other parts of the world.

Publishing Pathways

Archaeologists have long faced a complicated publishing landscape, related in part to issues of academic belonging. In the Americas, archaeology is rarely a department in its own right; instead, it is usually embedded within anthropology, classics, or area studies. In Europe and elsewhere, it is more likely to be an independent discipline or embedded within history or art history departments (Shott 2005). These broader disciplines maintain long-established and, at times, mutually exclusive publishing value systems that can hinder the mobility of archaeologists across national boundaries and limit the success of those who attempt to traverse these disparate pathways. Archaeological publishing is further complicated by the fact that different subfields often operate under distinct publication models. Such models range from monographs and books to peer-reviewed scientific journal articles and increasingly include newer publication forms such as software, data, tutorials, and online courses.[4] However, familiarity with these differing publishing models and the value systems they inculcate varies among archaeologists, often according to their subfield.

In a field that encompasses the study of anything at any time in the human past, interdisciplinarity is an enormous strength and a source of innovation, but it can also function as a liability for early-career researchers. Poor cross-subfield and cross-disciplinary communication surrounding different publishing norms can lead to misunderstandings and biases during evaluation and promotion. Archaeologists who pursue interdisciplinary or unconventional publishing opportunities face unpredictable reception by gatekeepers who may view such outputs as unimportant if published in specialty journals of another field, unserious if using novel formats, or unoriginal if conforming to a multiauthored science model. At the heart of these problems is the question of what forms of archaeological scholarship are valuable and how we should apportion credit in an increasingly diverse field.

The democratization of publishing has taken the form of online platforms and the rise of open-access scholarship. While this transition provides many more options for publication, it has also unearthed new challenges for archaeology. Online publishing and Creative Commons licensing have made research more affordable, portable, and accessible for readers, but open-access fees are unregulated. The costs of publishing have largely shifted to authors. These circumstances disadvantage many researchers, particularly those based in the Global South, who rely heavily on reading open-access articles but who may not be able to afford to publish open access themselves because of prohibitively high fees (Sengupta 2021). Consequently, their research is often published behind paywalls or in publications that are less well known, visible, or cited (Nielsen and Andersen 2021). There are, however, high-quality nonprofit options available to us, if we choose to support them. Open-access options without fees include institutional or nonprofit open-access repositories where work (e.g., preprint drafts and accepted versions of papers)[5] can be archived (e.g., SocArXiv, BioRxiv, and Zenodo) and even peer-reviewed (e.g., Peer Community in Archaeology), in parallel with submission to a traditional paywalled journal. These repositories comply with journal copyright policies and are indexed by major search engines. Alternatively, for-profit repositories (e.g., ResearchGate and Academia.edu) both host and index papers; however, the degree to which articles are genuinely free to access is variable, the legality of their service is contested (Chawla 2017), and long-term curation outcomes are uncertain. Overall, when choosing to publish open-access work, academics must balance the high cost of open-access publishing in more prestigious and higher-visibility venues with the lower-cost but lower-visibility option of depositing publications in open-access repositories.

As open-access pathways have been expanding for traditional archaeology publications, some researchers have also been making their workflows and research products openly accessible. The complexity of many kinds of archaeology—for example, computationally intensive work—is poorly captured by the traditional format of a journal article. Moreover, the traditional practices of "data availability upon request" are ineffective (Marwick and Pilaar Birch 2018). Research demonstrates that expanding the accessibility of data and computer code improves the reusability and reproducibility of research (Marwick 2017). Many archaeologists use supplementary information files for including the data and computer code files (e.g., R, Python, NetLogo, OxCal) associated with a journal article. However, many publishers' article production processes introduce errors, such as file format conversions or renaming, that make these files unusable. Some authors work around these limitations by depositing data and code files in nonprofit open-access repositories and then citing these deposits in their journal articles.[6] Additional issues are that supplementary information files are often invisible to search engines, robbing contributors of credit, and they are typically not closely evaluated by peer reviewers (Pop and Salzberg 2015). To fill this gap, journals such as the *Journal of Open Archaeology Data* and *Scientific Data* provide peer review tailored to data sets. Similarly, the *Journal of Open Source Software* enables citation credit

4. For examples, see the Open-Archaeo list at https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8299651.

5. The term "preprints" encompasses a variety of approaches, including sharing work both before and after peer review; as archaeologists, we observe that postreview preprints are more common, although it is clear that scholars more generally must interrogate the meaning and management of peer review during an era of increasingly open science (Martinón-Torres et al. 2023).

6. For examples, see the list at https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7306327.

for computer code via a peer-review process that focuses on best practices in scientific software (e.g., documentation, tests, continuous integration, and licensing; Smith et al. 2018).

The peer-review system itself is typically an opaque and irregular process, characterized by variable workflows according to publication venue, with high potential for implicit biases to affect outcomes—as Ribeiro and Giamakis (2023:11) underscore, "No matter the quality of the submitted paper, the name, status, affiliation, language, and writing style of its author(s) unavoidably influence the reviewer's decision." An author submitting an article may receive anonymous reviews through single-anonymized or double-anonymized review. The peer reviews themselves are rarely published alongside manuscripts (<3% of journals, mostly in STEM fields), despite the belief that greater transparency would improve the review process (Polka et al. 2018). In the absence of strong editorial leadership and moderation and orientations or training for reviewers, anonymous reviews can be cutting and counterproductive (Docot 2022). Mirroring broader inequalities in the field, the process favors established scholars and members of majority groups. In the arms race of publication, where tenure-track positions are awarded to PhDs who have published ever greater quantities of articles (Cramb et al. 2022), escalating demands on academics as authors and reviewers risk reifying and aggravating problematic social hierarchies.

Media Coverage

Archaeological research should reach and benefit the public, an objective that raises varied and sometimes conflicting concerns. Beyond "edutainment" (Holtorf 2005), archaeological research generates knowledge about pressing issues, including environmental sustainability, violence, inequality, health, and identity (Clack and Brittain 2007), and can positively influence personal choices and public policy (Burke et al. 2021; d'Alpoim Guedes et al. 2016). Meanwhile, the mischaracterization and misuse of archaeological data can advance harmful ideologies (Hakenbeck 2019), erase Indigenous histories, erode Indigenous sovereignty, justify cultural genocide (Atalay 2006; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010; Deloria 2018; Halmhofer 2021; Montgomery and Supernant 2022; Trigger 1984, 2006), and promote particular religious or political views (Brophy 2018).

We recognize that scholars have different levels of engagement with mass media professionals (Rauchfleisch, Schäfer, and Siegen 2021) that are driven by both internal and external factors, including status and organizational authority (Dudo 2012). Varying levels of engagement with mass media are associated with certain costs, risks, benefits, and rewards (table 2). Scholars should consider these potential outcomes as they decide how to engage with the media.

Beyond the collective good, archaeologists must share their research in ways that take into account the interests of stakeholders, whom we define as the living people that a project involves or affects, including local communities and the descendants of past humans we study. Ideally, archaeologists should collaborate with such stakeholders—especially local and descendant communities—in the production of knowledge (Atalay 2010; Douglass 2020; Douglass et al. 2019; Flewellen et al. 2021; Fong et al. 2022; Lima Tórrez 2003; Martínez-Villarreal and Oconitrillo 2012; Sebastian Dring et al. 2019) and disseminate research so that stakeholders can access the findings and the broader public can learn about stakeholder concerns. University administrators, politicians, and funding agencies charged with assessing the worth of archaeological work (Stojanowski and Duncan 2015) may sometimes attack or eliminate research programs that fail to communicate their value (e.g., BBC News 2021). Yet most of our findings published in peer-reviewed journals remain largely inaccessible to the public, and the peer-review process can be opaque.

The popular press can bridge this divide. Mass media includes news outlets, podcasts, and television, among others, which are produced by editorial staff for diverse publics. Some archaeological studies garnering substantial traction are featured on hundreds of media platforms, where they are viewed and shared by millions of people worldwide (Douglass, forthcoming). The scale of mass media coverage of archaeological research remains poorly understood and is likely far broader than many archaeologists think.

This coverage, however, is hardly comprehensive or equally distributed. One analysis found that, except for health and medicine, fewer than 0.005% of scientific papers receive media attention (Suleski and Ibaraki 2010). "Media logic" determines the topics and framing chosen for stories, prioritizing news values of novelty, human interest, timeliness, and conflict (Schäfer 2011). These explicit biases compound journalists' implicit biases to filter the archaeological topics and cultures presented to the public (Blakey 1983). For example, press coverage of bioarchaeological research is dominated by stories about mummies, Vikings, natural curiosities, superlative discoveries, and famous individuals—topics that do not reflect the subdiscipline's current foci (Stojanowski and Duncan 2015). Furthermore, the aspects of archaeological research that do reach the public often fit into preconceptions and stereotypes. For example, museum dioramas and illustrations have projected contemporary gender norms and racial tropes onto past peoples (Solometo and Moss 2013) despite research that complicates identities in the past (Owen 2005), a bias that the world of curation has begun to discuss and address.

Recognizing that some archaeological research receives a flurry of coverage, while other work is overlooked, we offer guidance for archaeologists on media relations. The advice is organized as a framework that summarizes potential outcomes of three levels of engagement. We orient this framework from the perspective of an archaeological researcher and consider consequences for that researcher, stakeholders, and society (table 2). The first level, nonengagement, considers a researcher who avoids the press. The individual may decline journalists' requests for interviews or other media contributions. The next level involves passive engagement with the media. The archaeologist accommodates reasonable requests from the press,

Table 2. Potential consequences of three levels of engagement between a researcher and the mass media

	Nonengagement	Passive engagement	Intentional engagement
Researcher:			
Costs and risks	No input on narrative; missed visibility and professional development; lost opportunity to reach future partners, collaborators, students, funding sources; reinforcing the ivory tower; hostility from public and politicians	Incomplete control of narrative; misrepresentation under guise of your approval; distraction from outputs more valued in hiring and promotion (peer-reviewed articles, grants, teaching, etc.); lost time and emotional/intellectual energy	Decrease in outputs often more valued in hiring and promotion; more lost time and emotional/intellectual energy, including for training and practice; visible to public scrutiny and harassment
Benefits and rewards	No lost time or emotional/intellectual energy; insulation from public scrutiny and harassment; maintenance of professional persona	Balance of outreach and academic work; exposure to future partners, collaborators, students, funding sources; relationships built with media workers	Control of narrative; prestige as expert and public intellectual; visibility that invites diverse input and partnerships, opening new lines of research and support
Stakeholders:			
Costs and risks	Portrayal that harms community; findings inaccessible; cannot be applied to contemporary issues	Omission from the narrative	Colonization of knowledge and narrative
Benefits and rewards	Knowledge taken or appropriated by academics is less public	Findings accessible, can be applied to contemporary issues; names and interests of people studying issues that affect community made available; some public awareness of community's issues, knowledge, experiences	Findings accessible, can be applied to contemporary issues; open door for dialogue; researchers convey their perspectives and approachability
Society:			
Costs and risks	Do not see results of publicly funded research, less likely to support future research; misunderstanding and stereotyping of peoples; reinforcing the ivory tower; distrust of academics; reliance on pseudoscience and echo chambers; findings inaccessible, cannot guide personal decisions and policy; archaeology career less visible to potential students	Narrative filtered by media may perpetuate misunderstandings and stereotypes; distorted and partial view of field determined by what media deems newsworthy; reach limited to audience of media outlet providing coverage	May be less engaging or accessible than materials produced by media professionals
Benefits and rewards	No cognitive dissonance from challenges to beliefs; echo chamber gives sense of community; better entertainment with fewer constraints	See results of publicly funded research, more likely to support future research; findings accessible; can guide personal decisions and policy; research easy to find in mass media outlets; researchers more visible for potential students	See results of publicly funded research, more likely to support future research; findings accessible, can guide personal decisions and policy; dismantling the ivory tower; academics can convey their humanity, personalities, identities; researchers more visible and approachable for potential students
Recommendations	Engage with public directly through outreach events (public lectures, K–12 school visits, etc.); assign public-facing projects (pedagogy of engaged scholarship, service learning) in university classes; participate in social media (blogs, Bluesky, Mastodon, etc.)	Prepare for media encounters by distilling key points that address research motivation, significance, ethics, narratively rich aspects of methods; require journalists to provide the article framing, aims, and a preview of passages that contain your words or contributions; seek support from institutional press offices	Write for popular outlets that feature scholars as authors, such as *Sapiens*, the *Conversation*, and *Scientific American*; develop communications plan with collaborators and stakeholders early in projects; collect multimedia throughout research process for press packets; identify reliable journalists who cover archaeology; send forthcoming publications for consideration as news stories; participate in science communication training (*Sapiens* workshops, American Association for the Advancement of Science Mass Media Science and Engineering Fellowship)

Note. For a researcher who chooses to avoid the media (nonengagement), interact minimally (passive engagement), or prioritize media work (intentional engagement), this framework lists costs/risks and benefits/rewards that may arise for the researcher, stakeholders, and society. The final row provides recommendations that minimize risks for each level of engagement.

such as interviews and consultations. Finally, a researcher who chooses intentional engagement might develop a media strategy or create original content in mainstream media. Outreach to journalists, stakeholders, descendant communities, students, and more broadens the range of people who are aware of and informed about the substantive results of research done in both academic and cultural resources management settings.

The appendix (supplemental materials 1.8, available at https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18247691) provides further elaboration of the benefits and risks of different levels of engagement with the media, along with potential strategies. Other improvements will require collective reforms from departments, institutions, and the archaeology profession. Graduate programs should teach public communication through coursework or internships; instead of another summer in the field, graduate students could work in mass media. Hiring and promotion committees should consider media engagement and develop assessments for it, which can be adapted from other fields (e.g., Archaeological Centers Coalition 2023; Perkmann et al. 2021; Rauchfleisch, Schäfer, and Siegen 2021). Media engagement can be addressed in interviews and applications, perhaps as part of diversity statements when the engagement reflects concrete efforts to diversify the practice and exposure of the field, in teaching statements when it reflects examples of public education, or in research statements to highlight the significant effort that may go into media engagement as a component of overall research agendas. We encourage archaeologists to consciously consider their preferred level of engagement and strategize how to ensure that the consequences of different strategies align with their intellectual and ethical priorities.

Discussion

Academic publishing is a growing industry, exhibiting annual growth rates of 5%–6.5% for articles and 2%–3% for journals from 2015 to 2022 (STM 2022). These latest increases are in line with longer-term trends. Over the past 60 years, the number of academic papers, scholarly journals, and published scholars has increased exponentially (Fire and Guestrin 2019), and in recent years, science megajournals such as *PLoS One* have churned out more than 10,000 publications annually (Brainard 2019). The ballooning corpus of scholarly publications is matched by accelerating expectations for academic productivity, especially among early-career scholars, for whom bibliometric measures like the *h*-index or journal impact factor contribute to a hypercompetitive professional environment. This juggernaut of production has led to pushback in the form of the "slow science" movement, whose proponents argue that research should be measured, methodical, and curiosity driven, rather than focused on achieving performance targets (Caraher 2016; Mountz et al. 2015; Stengers 2018).

Accelerating productivity unquestionably benefits the bottom line of for-profit publishers, but it does not benefit academics, the public, or the research itself (Costopoulos 2018). Instead, demands for ever-increasing academic productivity have become entwined with decreasing research quality and professional satisfaction (Smaldino and McElreath 2016). The growing numbers of qualified applicants competing for fewer permanent positions—and the resulting pressure on candidates to publish as much as possible—have been exacerbated by the 2008 recession and the global coronavirus pandemic (Squazzoni et al. 2021). A crucial first step to improving knowledge dissemination practices lies in recognizing that the structure and ideology of academic publishing are recent historical phenomena. For example, the aggregation of for-profit publishing houses into monopolies (Larivière, Haustein, and Mongeon 2015) and the related serials crisis as journal subscriptions became bundled and exorbitantly expensive had their genesis in the 1990s and early 2000s (McGuigan 2004).

While current trends in academic publishing are troubling, they also point to ways forward. The rapid shifts in the political economy of academic publishing demonstrate that large-scale changes are possible and can be effected quickly. The University of California's (UC's) termination of its contract with Elsevier in spring 2019 provides one compelling example of punctuated changes to the balance of power between academic institutions and for-profit publishers. The UC's willingness to employ a high-risk tactic and walk away from negotiations was successful in the short term, leading to the renegotiation of open-access terms for UC authors some two years later (McKenzie 2021).

Unlike practitioners in other fields, academics are still largely allowed to self-regulate how they organize, manage, and measure their labor. This autonomy includes institutional and departmental decisions about what is valued in training, hiring, and promotion, decisions that affect the performance and reproduction of disciplinary cultures. So far, norms in archaeology have accommodated the expectations and standards of the academic publishing industry, but these norms are not fixed or permanent. A system founded on uncompensated labor—which renders research inaccessible to the public while providing staggering profits for private corporations—is not inevitable, sustainable, or effective. Instead, our publishing practices can be adjusted so that they align with our disciplinary and community values. Any realignment of disciplinary publishing must minimize the demands of for-profit corporations in favor of addressing the needs of three intertwined and overlapping groups: local communities affected by our research, our readers, and authors themselves. Such a realignment, however, requires deliberate and thoughtful action and a refusal to simply satisfy "the relentless demands to which we now have to conform in order to survive" (Stengers 2018:140).

In this article, we have offered a variety of multiscalar interventions that can be used to help solve some of these problems. Our perspectives range from those who believe that a radical overhaul is the only way to improve conditions (Costopoulos 2017; Fogelin 2020) to those focused on incremental and targeted changes in domains such as open data, journal policies, and citational politics (Heath-Stout 2020*a*, 2020*b*; Hutson 2002, 2006; Marwick and Pilaar Birch 2018). Regardless of where we fall on this spectrum, we all agree that change is necessary. To facilitate more deliberate and reflexive publishing practices in archaeology

Table 3. Low-, moderate-, and high-effort interventions to change the landscape of archaeological publishing

Position	Low	Moderate	High
Author	(1) When appropriate, host data on permanently accessible platforms. General repositories that are free to access include Zenodo (https://zenodo.org/), Open Science Framework (osf.io), and figshare (figshare.com), while archaeology-specific repositories that charge a fee include Archaeology Data Service (archaeologydataservice.ac.uk) and the Digital Archaeological Record (core.tdar.org) or a data-publishing and archiving service like Open Context (opencontext.org). (2) Cite data as well as publications (Marwick and Pilaar Birch 2018). (3) For paywalled publications, make prepublication versions freely available on university repositories or online networks and repositories such as Knowledge Commons (http://hcommons.org/) or SocArXiv (https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv).	(1) Adhere to best practices in open science, being cognizant of when data should not be open (Marwick et al. 2017; Tsosie et al. 2021). (2) Experiment with preprints (e.g., http://socarxiv.org/). (3) Write accessibly (*Nature Biomedical Engineering* 2021). (4) Target broad audiences in research dissemination strategy (e.g., a plain-English summary for https://www.sapiens.org/).	(1) Employ deliberate and flexible processes for authorship (e.g., Liboiron et al. 2017). (2) Avoid citing bad actors (Souleles 2020). (3) Expand authorship to include various stakeholders. (4) Be reflective and deliberate about engagement with media. (5) Adhere to Black feminist citational practices (Guzmán and Amrute 2019; Smith and Garrett-Scott 2021). (6) Reach out to and collaborate with others with appropriate and complementary expertise in preprints, data publication, and so on. (7) Foreground your positionality when appropriate and write reflexively.
Peer reviewer	(1) Ensure that journal policies concerning descendant community consent and open data are followed. (2) Do not review for predatory journals.	(1) Push for open data rather than "data available on request." (2) Participate in peer-review training and follow structure and content guidance provided by editors. (3) Experiment with open peer review (https://archaeo.peercommunityin.org/).	(1) Read citations carefully, drawing attention to erasures and absences. (2) Prioritize accepting requests to review articles, particularly of articles by early-career scholars. (3) Balance the number of peer reviews done with the number of articles submitted and prioritize reviewing for early-career scholars. (4) Provide thorough and constructive feedback on all reviews.
Editor/journal	(1) Establish clear peer-review guidelines (tone, function, scope). (2) Incorporate deliberate, inclusive, and flexible policies concerning authorship. (3) Require an abstract written in the language of the research region. (4) Encourage broadening the citational universe (e.g., citation of tweets in Flewellen et al. 2021).	(1) Consider double-anonymized review (Heath-Stout 2020*a*). (2) Actively solicit manuscripts from early-career scholars. (3) Enforce journal data policies concerning descendant community consent and open data. (4) Provide thorough editorial oversight of the revisions process. (5) Award open research badges (Kidwell et al. 2016) to articles that have open data and materials to recognize the authors' efforts and signal to readers that the journal values transparency.	(1) Allow multilingual submission, especially for regional journals. (2) Subsidize open-access/deliberate policies about preprints or open access. (3) Develop policies for flagging or removing citations from bad actors (Souleles 2020). (4) Solicit demographic data from authors to track representation and change over time. (5) Consider proactive strategies for disseminating and publicizing research (see, e.g., the curated collections in *Cultural Anthropology*). (6) Foreground transparency and accountability in the peer-review process.
Department	(1) Distribute short summaries of research. (2) Engage with institutional press office or public relations office. (3) Include media engagement in information solicited in applicant diversity statements and promotion files.	(1) Reduce use of bibliometrics from evaluation in faculty bylaws through identifiable stages. (2) Encourage inclusivity and citational diversity of syllabi. (3) Treat mass media internships as a legitimate form of field experience for graduate students. (4) Train graduate students and faculty in public communication of research (e.g., National Science Foundation Portal to the Public). (5) Value writing for the public in promotion and evaluation processes. (6) Value the publication of research products such as data sets and code as equivalent to traditional publications.	(1) Be creative about sabbaticals and support for writing in terms of rotating distributions of service and so on. (2) Provide scaffolding—in the form of mentorship or program requirements—to support and incentivize graduate student writing. (3) Convene with other departments within home institution to collectively agree on strategies for reducing administrative reliance on bibliometrics.

Table 3 (*Continued*)

Position	Low	Moderate	High
Institution	Count alternative scholarship toward career advancement.	Recognize media engagement in hiring and promotion.	(1) Reduce emphasis on bibliometrics in tenure and promotion. (2) Periodically reduce service burdens for faculty (on a rotating basis) to facilitate writing. (3) Adequately resource article subvention funds, reduce journal type restrictions, and reduce precarity in subvention disbursement. (4) Ensure that institutional repositories for hosting data and open-access content are modern, efficient, and user-friendly.
Granting agency	Clear policies on descendant community agreements.	Clear policies on open data and support for data repositories when appropriate.	(1) Enable flexible requirements so that early-career researchers are not hampered by agency strictures surrounding open-access publications (i.e., counting the use of preprint servers, data repositories, posting final versions, etc., as acceptable open-access venues). (2) Require accountability from researchers on commitments to data availability.

and anthropology, we have consolidated a list of suggested interventions for the actors, agents, and institutions most intrinsically involved in archaeological publishing (table 3).

In addition to offering these interventions, this paper attempts to model what we view as best practices for collaboration and authorship in archaeology. Our strategies for coauthoring a collaborative, international paper with a large number of authors are outlined in the appendix (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18247691). These materials detail our organizational practices, our use of working groups to craft a modular paper, our process for finalizing author order, and our reflections concerning authorial contributions and positionality.

Conclusion

From an individual perspective, landscapes can seem stable and immutable, a backdrop too ancient and unyielding to be affected by any one person's actions. As archaeologists, however, we appreciate that landscapes are produced by deep histories of both incremental and catastrophic change, and as anthropologists, we acknowledge how they shape and are shaped by human action. The landscape of academic publishing is no different. Just as humans have altered natural landscapes to suit their needs through controlled burns, species reintroduction, and rewilding, academics can construct new niches in the current publishing landscape to erode its seemingly intransigent topography. The forces of human agency, historical contingency, and economic intervention that have shaped the current landscape of knowledge production can also be used to radically alter it. In an incisive and accurate paper, Wenzler (2017) stresses that at its core, the dilemma of academic publishing is a collective-action problem. It is past time for us, as a scholarly community, to begin developing collective solutions. We recognize that there are structural limitations to implementing many of our recommendations that will vary by institution and by individual and realize that many of our suggestions are "easier said than done." There is a fine line between realism and nihilism, however, and the alternative to instigating change is to simply absolve ourselves of responsibility for transforming institutional culture. Echoing Canagarajah (2022:125), we hope that "small small changes make big big differences." Through publicizing these issues and offering a range of suggested interventions, this paper serves as a call to action for archaeologists and anthropologists who recognize that now is the time for change.

Comments

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The authors are to be congratulated for outlining an aspirational future for archaeological publishing. Identifying five primary impediments to a more inclusive and open framework for this, they offer detailed recommendations on how to achieve it. I am in sympathy and agreement with much of their analysis, but in the spirit of helpful critique, I want to highlight aspects of the current publishing landscape that they have chosen not to emphasize or discuss in depth but that will impede a realization of many of their goals for the foreseeable future. I write these comments from an informed and personal perspective; I have been an author of manuscripts published in

all manner of venues, the coeditor of *Latin American Antiquity*, the editor in chief of *Current Anthropology*, and a deputy editor of *Science Advances*. As an academic dean and department head, I have evaluated the accomplishments of candidates for hiring, tenure, and promotion on criteria based in great part on their publication records and likelihood of continuing to do so. I discuss the following: it is not always about power dynamics and implicit bias between editors and authors, the hegemony of academic publishing by the large for-profit houses, and how deans and other administrators see academic publishing. I expand on these topics in Aldenderfer (2025).

The authors did not overindulge in the trope of characterizing editors and reviewers with the pejorative stereotype of the gatekeeper. They correctly emphasize the power dynamic between authors and editors, and they describe forms of implicit bias that can influence it. But the onus of their argument, it seems, is always on the editor—the gatekeeper—and never about the potential implicit biases that the author brings to a journal. Authors submit manuscripts with trepidation but, in many cases, with a good deal of assurance that their work is above reproach. The role of a good editor—and I emphasize good—is to negotiate differences of perspective and opinion with the author through the assistance of the reviewers within the scholarly norms of the discipline. Instead of portraying the editor as a ready-to-reject gatekeeper, let us follow the advice of Dawson, Field, and Hortal (2014), who ask that we see editors (and reviewers) as guides, not gatekeepers (see also Aldenderfer 2018). There are bad editors and reviewers, but as Habibie and Hultgren (2022:15) note, most editors, like authors, are "struggling with similar personal, social, and professional challenges and responsibilities that other scholars are encountering and dealing with including family problems, employment, promotion, and of course *scholarly publication*." Most editors try to do their best, and authors should keep this in mind as they negotiate their research with them. Labeling them a priori as gatekeepers does not help.

The authors emphasize the importance of the open-access (OA) movement and show how it can transform archaeological publishing. There is no question that it has gained traction over the past two decades. However, the hegemony of the large for-profit publishers will continue to be an obstacle to broader acceptance of "genuine" OA publishing. These publishers own some of the most prestigious titles, with high impact factors (Aldenderfer 2025:154), and authors concerned with career advancement will continue to publish with them. Ironically, by using the article processing charge, these publishers have managed to subvert the original intent of the OA movement, an outcome that was not foreseen by its early advocates. We will live in this environment for the foreseeable future.

Academic administrators grapple with deciding what "counts" and then apportioning credit for it. While the authors are right to call for more reflection on what should count, it is important to be aware of the constraints that chairs, deans, and review committees face in attempting to implement change. Departments may argue for what they think counts, but review beyond the department always involves scholars from different disciplines who may have a very limited understanding of the changing face of our field. My personal experience as a dean made clear the power of tradition. Advocacy for change is necessary, but tradition is a powerful reactionary force, and change in what counts and how to count it will be slow.

The authors have given us much to think about and have outlined well-considered actions each of us may take to improve publishing in archaeology. To navigate this landscape of stasis and change, each of us must develop a personal strategy "that conforms to one's ethical positions, disciplinary expectations, and institutional norms" (Aldenderfer 2025:158).

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We congratulate the authors for opening discussion of many aspects of archaeological publishing. We focus on questions posed in their introduction: (1) How can we guarantee that knowledge production is collaborative and reciprocal rather than top-down and extractive? (2) How do we ensure that people actually can and will read what we write? (3) How do we improve conditions for authors? Drawing on six years' (2014–2020) experience as the coeditors of *Latin American Antiquity* (*LAQ*), we explore these questions from the perspective of Latin American contributors to that journal.

For its first quarter century, *LAQ* was an excellent but small North American journal. Most first authors were men, and relatively few papers were published in Spanish. In 2013 the journal had 53 submissions and a page count of 480 pages (all data cited here are from Gutiérrez and Braswell 2020). By 2019 the page count had grown to 880 pages, and there were 115 submissions. In 2017 *LAQ* achieved gender equity for the first and only time, and contributions whose first authors were women remained comparatively high, at 46%, into 2020. Other positive developments include a partnership with Cambridge University Press, indexing by Social Sciences Citation Index, and a special issue highlighting research by the Museu Nacional do Brasil.

Sustained growth occurred because the journal became truly international. In 2019 75% of submissions came from outside the United States and 57% from Latin America. Throughout our tenure, about one-third of all submissions were in Spanish. Nonetheless, as we noted in our farewell Editors' Corner in 2020, several issues continued to trouble us. These relate to the authors' three questions.

No major international publication house sponsors research, pays the salary of investigators or contributes to their

universities, formulates research plans, conducts the work, interprets data, or writes up the results. Moreover, none are based in Latin America. Yet with few exceptions, it is these corporations—rather than authors, financial sponsors, nations, or Indigenous peoples—that own and profit directly from published work. Moreover, they do so in several ways, including exorbitant publication charges, prohibitive subscription fees, and—most recently—selling artificial intelligence (AI) rights. As to the first question, this process is therefore inherently extractive and colonialist. In no degree is it "collaborative," and reciprocity is limited only to the distribution of the works.

Most problematic of all, the work of Latin American scholars is not widely available to the scholars and institutions that produce it or to students, the Latin American public, or Native peoples. In 2020 there were fewer than 10 university subscriptions to *LAQ* in Latin America and the Caribbean. Making matters worse, large publishers no longer wish to sell individual journals. Instead, universities are forced to buy huge and expensive bundles, much like cable television. To be cited, a journal must be read. The near total lack of access by legal means to the largest group of potential readers not only is colonialist but also drives down impact factors.

How can this situation be improved? Some publishing houses now seek "transformative" read-write agreements with universities and governments. These allow an institution to pay just once both to publish and to have access. But the number of Latin American nations that can afford this can be counted on one hand by a three-toed sloth. As journals move to open access, responsible companies are offering waivers for countries that will never be able to afford such agreements. Nonetheless, authors must request these waivers, which can be demeaning. Producers of scientific research must not be made to beg to have access to it—it should be automatic.

Today, we are extremely concerned about how contributions to journals are sold for AI, a new, lucrative revenue stream for academic publishing. This year, one of us had a paper digested and spit out on Google within a week of submission and before any reviews had been received! Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. We are deeply worried that the intellectual products of Latin American scholars will be sold and used for AI without proper citation. We urge all scholars to carefully read publishing contracts and to sign only those that guarantee proper and full attribution for AI uses. And please boycott those journals and publishers that do not.

The current paper discusses aspects of archaeological publishing that demand change. Scholars are ultimately responsible for the way we generate and communicate knowledge. The authors of the paper model best practices for collaboration and authorship in archaeology, as recently described by Rivera Prince et al. (2025). Both works highlight collaborative international research fostering an intentionally designed and supportive writing environment. In this way, we visualize a pathway for making one important change that all archaeological journals need. We celebrate this publication and encourage archaeologists to act.

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In this comment, I speak from the vantage point of being one of three editors, with Christina Rieth and Sjoerd van der Linde, working with the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) journal *Advances in Archaeological Practice* from 2015 to 2025. This born-digital journal was conceived as a publishing venue to serve the nonacademic membership of the SAA (Dore 2013, 2022). It is distinct from the SAA's flagship journal, *American Antiquity*, and from *Latin American Antiquity* in that the content is not focused on the results of research but on methods and practice, and it is not limited by geography. During our tenure, we tracked participation in the journal by gender, international geography, and topical content. Our experience provides some ability to comment on Beck and her coauthors' topics of ideology and publishing dynamics in North American publishing. What is below is based on our semiannual reports to the SAA board of directors.

The position taken at *Advances* is that humanistic and scientific archaeological work requires critical consideration of methods and practices. *Advances* tries to expand its reach by publishing the aspects of professional and ethical archaeology that are overshadowed by articles whose primary focus is theoretical interpretation and research findings. The topics we publish transcend the workplace and include physical and digital collections and curation, site and land management and preservation, new technologies and work flows for site documentation, safety and wellness, engagement and collaboration, and teaching. In recent years, half of our issues have been themed, and half comprise independently submitted papers. This experience provides insights that may be worth evaluating by editors and mentors trying to open participation in academic publishing.

Archaeology is conducted for research and educational purposes but also for government management, preservation, and serving communities that want to learn about or control their past. Regardless of project origination, a common purpose of the work is to gain insight into human experience. The challenge of academic publishing is how to share work that does not originate with a theoretically oriented question. For *Advances*, bettering practice shapes the journal's mission and acquisition of articles.

The editors of the three SAA journals examined diversity trends in articles published from 2018 to 2020. *Advances* noted that statistics such as an average of 52% lead authorship by women in those years masked structural inequities in practice. Women were more likely primary authors of articles about curation, collections, and teaching, and men were more likely authors of remote sensing–related field methods and heritage management work, including collaborative work (Gamble et al. 2021). This echoes broader cross-disciplinary trends that accord prestige to the work of discovery rather than to the work of care (D'Ignazio and Klein 2020:199). Journals that

prioritize the discovery phases of archaeological work might consider the impact of that approach on authorship diversity. However, people working in the other essential phases of archaeological practice may have less experience as lead or corresponding authors in academic publishing and need editorial support. I have not examined how the priority of discovery flows into press releases, media coverage, and thus public perceptions of practice.

Some goals for equity might contradict one another. We tracked participation by geography and gender and noted participation by Indigenous authors. Who can participate in archaeology varies by educational and economic opportunities and social expectations. Gaining cultural diversity may diminish gender equity in a journal. For example, when we published articles about collaboration that shared authorship, the number of male authors increased.

Finally, theme issues can be a tool to expand diversity in a journal. Because of the ways that diversity covaries with practice, the development of theme issues can introduce new topics into a journal and publish different authors, showing future authors what a journal is willing to promote. *Advances* issues of independently submitted papers tend to have a higher proportion of male authors. As such, theme issues can influence authorship. *Advances*, like other journals, requires a proposal to support planning a theme issue. That process allowed the editors and editorial board to engage with guest editors in ways that guided author participation. A commitment to keeping a theme issue whole by supporting authors challenged during peer review allows increased publication by nontraditional authors.

Generating topics for articles, assembling them for publication, and responding to peer and editorial review pragmatically are essential job skills for academic archaeologists. Archaeologists in other areas of practice write for different purposes and different gatekeepers. If a journal's editorial goal is to broaden participation, it is not necessarily skills in writing that nonacademics lack; it is training in the strategy of navigating academic writing and publishing. Guidance and mentorship are worthwhile investments.

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Scope and Limits of a Necessary Critique

Beck et al.'s study honestly addresses publishing dynamics in archaeology, highlighting how academic systems replicate geopolitical inequities. Their progressive approach—which I share—challenges hegemonic evaluation criteria and advocates for more inclusive science. However, by structuring their analysis into five sections ("Ideology," "Publishing Dynamics in North America," "Publishing Dynamics in Latin America," "Publishing Pathways," and "Media Coverage"), the text unintentionally reproduces the very asymmetry it critiques: it allocates more space and depth to the dynamics of the Global North, while reducing Latin America to a section framed as "challenges."

This imbalance is not incidental. It reflects a recurring pattern in academic literature: the Global South is problematized through theoretical frameworks designed in the Global North, rendering invisible the creative responses that already exist in regions like Latin America or the Global South as a whole. The article rightly identifies structural barriers—lack of access to indexed journals, dependence on international publications—but overlooks how these constraints have spurred alternative models that merit study in their own right.

The Pitfall of the North-South Divide in Academic Discourse

The analysis of publishing dynamics in the Global North is thorough: it scrutinizes institutional policies, funding mechanisms, and open-access trends—always with proposed reforms. In contrast, the section on Latin America merely lists obstacles—scarce indexed journals, pressure to publish in English—without exploring how these conditions have spurred innovations.

This imbalance is not neutral. By framing the North as a space of solutions and the South as a space of problems, the text reinforces a colonial narrative that continues to dictate which knowledge counts and how it should circulate. A clear example is the treatment of open access: while international models (like article processing charges [APCs]) are discussed, there is no mention of countries like Argentina and Chile, where high-quality journals—free for authors and readers, sustained by public universities—have existed for decades.

Innovations from the South: Beyond Survival

Latin America is not merely a landscape of deficits within an exclusionary academic system—it is also a laboratory of alternatives. The article overlooks several critical developments.

Noncommercial Publishing Models

Diamond open-access journals. Unlike neoliberal open access—which shifts costs onto researchers—the region is dominated by freely accessible journals funded by public institutions. Examples from Latin America demonstrate that nonprofit circulation is viable (see, e.g., the global rankings of Latin American journals in Scimago; https://www.scimagojr.com/index.php).

Regional repositories. Platforms like LA Referencia, SciELO, and Redalyc consolidate regional scientific output, reducing reliance on private databases.

Critiques of Global Metrics

In Latin American countries, a growing debate challenges how evaluation systems prioritize English-language publications at

the expense of locally relevant research. In response, many Latin American journals have sought inclusion in international databases (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science) to meet research assessment requirements—without abandoning local languages (primarily Spanish and Portuguese). Argentina exemplifies this trend, with at least five archaeology journals now indexed in global databases while maintaining local-language publication.

The Argentine Case: Unresolved Tensions

Argentina exemplifies contradictions that Beck et al.'s analysis could have explored. First is evaluation policies versus local realities. Agencies like Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas mandate publications in Scopus or Web of Science for career advancement. This forces researchers to choose between academic promotion and regional relevance. Second, Latin American archaeology has developed critical frameworks of colonialism and heritage that are rarely cited in Anglophone literature. Works on human remains restitution or community archaeology, for instance, often circulate first in activist circles before reaching specialized journals. Third is the myth of global open access. While the Global North promotes APCs as a solution, Argentina's open-access landscape is predominantly diamond (no fees). Yet many of the regional journals face exclusion from international repositories—revealing that the barrier is not just economic but geopolitical.

Conclusion: Toward a Plural Ecology of Knowledge

Beck et al.'s article marks an important step in reimagining how academic archaeology can democratize publishing and reading practices. However, this dialogue must shift from theoretical discussion to concrete action. To truly democratize scholarly publishing, we must recognize Global South alternatives not as "adaptations" but as valid models, decentralize quality criteria by valuing social impact and community collaboration in evaluations, foster horizontal dialogues where international coauthorships avoid northern theoretical dominance, and recognize that the Global South contributes more than just "data." We hope that this commentary—and Beck et al.'s work—sparks a paradigm shift: one where the Global North acknowledges that the South has long proposed viable alternatives for knowledge dissemination.

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The University as Public Good

I am a United States–based assistant professor writing a response to Beck et al. less than six months into Donald Trump's second term as president. This morning, I read about yet another effort to revoke the visas of foreign students. Billions of dollars have been cut from national research funding, and an effort is underway to dismantle the Department of Education. There are active attacks on environmental protections and preservation regulations at the federal level. But if we pause to reflect, many aspects of North American higher education and archaeology have long been unsustainable, our publication practices being just one among many.

As the authors explain, the North American publishing landscape emerged in tandem with the recasting of higher education as a public good. Now it seems that the notion of the public good may be the downfall of our university system, but we must admit that academics are not blameless. The failure to engage with the public, to make them more than an "afterthought," and the exclusionary politics of various institutions, whether actual or perceived, are catching up to us. Interestingly, the backlash against higher education is being cheered on by many of the very demographics of society academic archaeologists claim to care about.

In his newest book, *Something between Us*, cultural anthropologist Anand Pandian (2025) argues that the United States is at a crossroads. Those of us who envision a more just future, who advocate for building relationships of care and mutual aid, must more closely examine events like presidential elections to "clarify what it will take for genuine social change" (Pandian 2025:xii). Institutions of higher education contradict themselves by making inclusionary promises while operating in very exclusionary ways. Vice President J. D. Vance has gone as far as labeling professors as enemies. Pandian (2025:xiii) explains that "our learning is often expressed in inaccessible ways and confined to restricted publication venues." It is on those of us within these spaces to rebuild public trust and welcome more people in rather than constructing walls to keep them out.

I was particularly struck by the authors' emphasis on language barriers and the many burdens placed on academics who write in languages other than English. Furthermore, paywalls limit access for people not affiliated with well-funded institutions. In addition to these issues, what came to mind for me was President Trump's executive order declaring English the official language of the United States, a country that consistently struggles with low literacy rates. This has been attributed to funding cuts and low spending on education. If national wealth is a strong driver of scientific production, as the authors emphasize, what does that mean for those of us who are educators in the United States amid the gutting of educational and research funding? We must rethink how we share our knowledge not only in multiple languages but also at levels that are comprehensible to the many residents of the country who are not fully literate. We need to be part of our communities, not isolated at our universities.

In my opinion, one of the greatest strengths of archaeological research is the ability to demonstrate other ways of being and emphasize that many aspects of society that are taken as fact, such as the gender binary, are truly constructs. I have been

thinking a lot on what it means to be human and how we define ourselves as a species. As primates, we are meant to be social and should engage in mutual aid. Clearly communicating how past peoples and our ancestors lived and flourished outside the constraints of modern capitalism can spark imagination. Nothing about how we live was inevitable.

Public-facing scholarship can take many forms, including but not limited to engaging with the press, public presentations, museum exhibitions, collaborations with community groups, and trips to K–12 schools. I would go as far as to argue that the work we do outside our institutions should be valued even more highly than how we present our research within academic venues. The scholars who are most at risk, the precariously employed, the early career, and those of us who live at multiple intersections, have also suffered severely from publish or perish mentality. Folks who are willing to push the boundaries of what it means to be an academic and those who prioritize community engagement and activism must be rewarded for their service. It would serve everyone better to acknowledge the very real flaws in our institutions and ways of doing archaeology to survive this administration and strive for a more equitable future.

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Jess Beck et al.'s article gives a relatively systematic observation of current issues in archaeological publishing and offers potential multiscalar interventions that are seen to be applicable and promising to improve the conditions for the subjects involved in current academic publishing. Some of the issues raised in the article are persistent and deep-rooted problems in academic publishing that have inspired us to reflect and think deeply.

In the first part, "Ideology," the paper does emphasize transnational issues and universal challenges in academic publishing, such as the "publication arms race," which are objectively prevalent across countries and regions, including North and Latin America, chosen as two cases for this paper. From a relatively macroscopic perspective, the article does provide insights into many of the sticking points deeply entwined with the industry of scholarly publishing, the structure of academia, and the system of governance, which do exist to varying degrees in most countries, including both the Global North and the Global South.

But is archaeological scholarly publishing special while being characterized by the universality of global scholarly publishing? Are there significant differences in scholarly archaeological publishing between countries of the Global South and the Global North? Should the corresponding interventions differ? Because of the lack of time and big data, we cannot provide definitive and exhaustive answers to these questions for the moment, but we would like to offer three reflections based on the information we already have on China.

Publishing formats. Excavation reports (发掘报告) and preliminary reports (发掘简报) occupy an extremely important position in scholarly archaeological publishing in China and are intimately related to the history of Chinese archaeology in the last century. These reports represented a middle course that Chinese archaeologists tried to steer in the special context of many large-scale excavations, resulting in enormous archaeological materials and a strong research-oriented journal-publishing tradition (Wei et al. 2023*b*). This contrasts starkly with the Global North's norms, which prioritize peer-reviewed articles.

Popular media coverage. In addition to mass media coverage pertaining to "media logic," there are many public-facing archaeological journals like *Public Archaeology* (《大众考古》), *China Cultural Relics News* (《中国文物报》), and *Fossils* (《化石》) aiming for public dissemination of archaeological knowledge. Moreover, other public or social media platforms, such as official websites operated by state-affiliated archaeological institutes and universities, WeChat public accounts, TikTok, and Little Red Book (a social networking website), can further supplement traditional media logic.

Self-established system in Chinese-language publishing. Most archaeologists in China rely on domestic journals for career progression, as the local evaluation system prioritizes Chinese publications. Only interdisciplinary researchers (e.g., in geoarchaeology, environmental archaeology, ancient DNA, etc.) actively publish in international journals, with strict adherence to impact factors and journal rankings for performance assessments. This means that the language bias brought about by English-language journals seems to have limited influence on most Chinese archaeologists, especially those who work in local institutes. Of course, this has also had a negative impact on the understanding and dissemination of Chinese academic achievements.

We are encouraged by the strategies the authors suggest in terms of changing the current archaeological publishing landscape, although developing alternative solutions to the current quantitative assessment system remains a critical challenge. In fact, since 2020, China has also launched policy to change the "paper-only" orientation, combined with overreliance on Science Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Arts & Humanities Citation Index papers in academic assessment, aiming to dismantle metrics-driven evaluation (Wei et al. 2023*a*; Zhang et al. 2020). While there have been some successes in some areas, it remains to be seen how effective this reform will be in depth for all academic publishing because of the objective existence of disciplinary and institutional diversity and the difficulty of establishing new alternative strategies.

Overall, Beck et al.'s article has raised very critical problems in the academic publishing landscape that are deep-rooted in the current publishing industry–motivated system and in Global North–centric bias. These problems pertaining to archaeological

publishing are very complex, as diversity is prevalent at regional, intradisciplinary, and institutional scales. Of course, the strategies proposed by the authors for changing the scholarly publishing landscape are very inspiring, and it is hoped that such reflections and strategies will play a substantial role in promoting reform and contributing to the optimization of archaeological and many other disciplines' academic publishing.

Reply

In academia we often labor under the pretense that academic publishing as it exists is simply a fact of life: for-profit publishers, hard work hidden behind paywalls, harsh peer reviews, and questionable hopes of career advancement. Like doomscrolling, death, and taxes, we treat "publish or perish" as an immutable feature of our reality.

Our intention with this paper was to open a conversation about how and why we should enact changes to the dominant model of publishing, which we have largely accepted as fixed and unchanging for too long. Specifically, how can we reduce the dissonance between our disciplinary aims and the consequences of the current publishing landscape for community engagement, research dissemination, and scholarship? At the same time, we wanted to model what writing and publishing can look like if we take different values on board—namely, those of collaboration, mutual support, and aid.

In writing our concluding response, we did our best to enact those values. The lead authors, Jess Beck and Rowan Flad, solicited feedback from the five working groups and consolidated those responses. The lead authors then drafted a reply for each commentary, balancing contributions from different working groups, often lifting text verbatim to communicate the general sentiment of our authors. Finally, the lead authors (and Nicholas C. Kawa and Daniel Scott Souleles) added an introduction and conclusion. Every step of this process was up for comment, critique, and emendation from the working groups and contributing authors.

As the commentaries on our paper demonstrate, the publishing dynamics we identify affect scholars from across professional trajectories, career stages, and national boundaries. Respondents from three countries and continents offered perspectives from cultural resource management and a broad range of academic career stages, including postdocs, assistant professors, full professors, and emeritus faculty. Commenters also included current or past editors of major journals targeted at different archaeological audiences. The professional diversity of the respondents is both useful, in that it incorporates new perspectives not represented among our authors, and instructive, in that it testifies to the far-reaching effects of the current publishing landscape.

What is noteworthy from our perspective is that a common tension was threaded through both the three reviews of our initial manuscript and the six commentaries on our revised paper. There is a fine line within archaeology—and, indeed, academia—between ambitions for change that are too expansive and those that are not nearly expansive enough. In this reply, we respond to each commentary individually, before concluding with some final thoughts on strategies for moving forward.

Aldenderfer: Be Aware of Publishing Biases and the Power of Tradition

Aldenderfer is correct that change will be slow, difficult, and unsteady. Many of us have been editors or have been otherwise involved in the back end of academic publishing, and we are not presenting a straw man argument that demonizes editorial oversight. Instead, we emphasize that all actors involved in the publishing process—authors, editors, and peer reviewers—have agency, even when those dynamics are complex. Editors who acknowledge their gatekeeping power can use it for good. Administrators who acknowledge their agency and limitations can choose which traditions to follow and which to break. Indeed, throughout our paper, we discuss how editors can have a positive impact by monitoring the positionality of reviewers, establishing double-anonymous peer review, copublishing reviews alongside articles when appropriate, and soliciting manuscripts from underrepresented scholars.

Aldenderfer's point that "review beyond the department always involves [those] . . . who may have a very limited understanding of the changing face of our field" resonates in light of the current political climate in North America. In the years since we first drafted this paper, deans and departments, particularly those located in more Republican-leaning states in the United States, have faced additional scrutiny from other actors: boards of trustees, state legislators, and governors. Despite these new obstacles, a wide range of scholars still has a say in what counts for promotion and tenure. Editors, department heads, deans, and others in senior positions can and should play a leading role in evaluating standards. Every committee meeting, every memo on policy, every assessment of faculty performance is an opportunity to introduce and demystify new ideas about what can and should count as evidence that academics are doing their job, contributing to their communities and the discipline.

That other actors are involved in implementing such standards is another powerful argument for making the contributions of our own field transparent to the broader public. Archaeologists need to further consider how to illuminate the intertwined relationship between understandings of the past and the politics of the present and make a case for why community outreach is crucial. In many ways, the core arguments of our paper adhere to a central tenet of dialectical behavioral therapy—that we are all doing the best we can, AND also, we need to do better and try harder. As work by McGuire (1994:181) and Nicholas and

Andrews (1997:9) reminds us, the real challenge in doing the right thing is knowing what the right thing is and that we must learn this together.

Gutiérrez and Braswell: Resist Colonial Publishing Practices and Ensure Global Access

Just as the political climate has changed in the years since we submitted the manuscript, so, too, have the technological capacities of artificial intelligence (AI). Gutiérrez and Braswell are correct to identify the likelihood that research will be sold and used for AI without attribution as one component of the larger phenomenon of "data colonialism" (Arora et al. 2023). Generative AI is not neutral. AI hardwires the intersecting human biases present in the material it uses to train models (D'Ignazio and Klein 2020), and these biases will be replicated in the outputs generated by programs such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and other platforms. At the same time, excluding scholarly content from AI models would likely result in a prioritization of nonscholarly sources and information in search summaries and other outputs, an undesirable outcome that further undermines scholarly relevance. Additionally, scholars are increasingly adopting AI to develop bibliographies; although academic attention has focused on AI hallucinations, the kinds of citation biases we highlight in our paper (e.g., who is considered an expert, what research questions are legitimate, what forms of knowledge are considered valuable) are also likely to be perpetuated by AI. Important correctives include awareness of and education about the biases inherent in such models, starting in graduate programs or earlier, in tandem with the development of strategies to mitigate such biases.

Beyond calling attention to the looming specter of AI, Gutiérrez and Braswell concisely encapsulate the fundamentally nonreciprocal nature of for-profit publishing and provide both ethical and pragmatic arguments for increasing the international accessibility of research. Primarily, they take the ethical stance that access to research should be "automatic" for those who produce that research. From a perspective more oriented toward the mores of the prestige economy of academic publishing, however, they also convincingly argue that opening up access to "the largest group of potential readers" is not only an ethical necessity but also a move that will increase journal impact factors. These distinct rationales work in service of the same end goal, and we appreciate their rhetorical flexibility in marshaling arguments that target different kinds of stakeholders in academic publishing.

Herr: Support Diverse, Nontraditional Authors by Focusing on Practice

Herr demonstrates that writing for different audiences requires real forethought. The core emphasis in *Advances in Archaeological Practice* on methods, along with the decision to balance general and thematic issues, has led to the recruitment of a distinct community of readers and authors. Reaching new communities does not just happen accidentally but is the result of deliberation, long-term planning, and careful tracking of outcomes. Herr's comments on "masked" inequities and the potential for equity goals to work against one another were also nuanced observations, along with her suggestion that themed issues can help expand diversity by introducing new topics and authors to journals.

Recent work by some of our authors likewise highlights the entangled relationship between the norms of disciplinary prestige and representation. A study of the scientific and popular publishing of archaeological research (Alex, Ji, and Flad 2025) found that work on "superlative" finds such as fossil discoveries, "firsts," and breakthroughs receives the greatest media attention, also citing D'Ignazio and Klein's (2020) arguments about according prestige to works of discovery rather than to works of care such as curation, collections work, or pedagogical advances. Following this thread, it stands to reason that men are more likely to be the corresponding or lead authors on research papers that receive media attention, although further research is needed to corroborate this prediction. To diversify archaeological voices in the popular press, collaborative papers should be thoughtful about which collaborators are listed as contacts for media inquiries on press releases and how they disseminate the work in a public-facing way.

Finally, Herr's argument that "guidance and mentorship are worthwhile investments" points to the kinds of commitments that will improve academic culture more broadly. Here, we might add that collaboration and transparency about authorial labor are similarly worthwhile commitments (Rivera Prince et al. 2025). One path forward is replacing the one-size-fits-all "publish or perish" focus on deliverables and metrics with more flexible—but arguably more meaningful—outcomes. Perhaps we should think of the strongest departments as those whose faculty reflect a diversity of strengths and skills—a scholarly community with varied strengths in disciplinary expertise, project leadership, mentoring, public communication, teaching, and training.

Izeta: Recognize Value in Publishing Innovations from the Global South

Izeta aptly highlights how well-intentioned attempts to apply a decolonial approach can easily reproduce colonial logics and hierarchies. Izeta's critique of the organizational imbalance of the paper, which frames Latin America as a place of "challenges" and North America as presumptively the place where innovations will emerge, is instructive, and we agree that this logic can just as easily be inverted—and should be.

We likewise agree that the dynamics of scientific production in Latin America deserve a dedicated research project and analysis. The section titled "Publishing Dynamics in Latin America" was never designed to be the kind of comprehensive

review that such a complex topic merits; rather, we explicitly set out to provide general insights from just two case studies from the region, Peru and Brazil, both of which differ from the Argentinian case study in important ways. A major goal of this paper was also to spark conversation among archaeologists more broadly, and Izeta's call to attend to the distinct trajectories that characterize archaeological publishing in other parts of the world is welcome. He highlights various innovations in Argentina that can serve as guides, including noncommercial publishing models funded by public institutions and the development of regional repositories that can sidestep the need for private databases.

While some initiatives have emerged to reduce scientific inequity in Latin America, they do not diminish the importance of recognizing the complexity of this region. Latin America is a pioneer in the open-access model for scientific publications, but it is equally true that there is still a visibility problem for these journals and for international repositories such as SciELO or Redalyc (Moutinho 2024). Despite being open access, included in international indexes such as Scielo or Scopus, and published in local languages, many Latin American journals have significant visibility and impact issues, which Izeta also acknowledges. We concur that a future, more expansive review of Latin American archaeological scientific production could identify even more examples of innovation and perhaps reveal new structural challenges that may be limiting the dissemination of Latin American scholarship.

As described in our paper, the ways of being an academic archaeologist in Peru and Brazil extend beyond the standards established by the Global North, pathways that are fundamentally distinct and valuable, albeit often in conflict with standards imposed by other parts of the world. Izeta's commentary highlights that to truly understand and transform archaeological publishing requires a global network, with scholars from different contexts bringing their situated understandings to bear on these problems. As Li and Wei also remind us, these issues are transnational. As such, solutions should be, too.

Lans: Engage the Public and Reward Community-Driven Archaeology

Lans underscores that the issues we raise around the dissemination of scholarship are not merely minutiae or pedantic quibbles. Our refusal to acknowledge—let alone confront—the damaging realities of the academic publishing system has significant consequences for public perception of our field's relevance and accessibility. Engaging with diverse audiences is essential for popular support of archaeology, as archaeologists offer perspectives relevant to everyone, everywhere. Especially important is the abundant evidence from past human communities demonstrating that the way we live today is only one of a wide range of possibilities. A commitment to public engagement is not meant to replace scholarly publication, as we still need to communicate technical information to other researchers, but to recognize that other forms of communication are also vital and valid—a "yes, and" rather than an "either, or" situation.

Indeed, the work that Lans highlights, such as public presentations and trips to K–12 schools, is not dissimilar to one of the chief goals in our paper: reaching broader audiences at a time when the ideology of academic publishing is antithetical to accessibility. In this light, we encourage archaeologists to publish in scholarly outlets and then write about their work directly for the public, including in media outlets like *Scientific American* and the *Conversation*. Regrettably, a primary avenue for anthropologists to write for the public, *Sapiens* magazine, concluded new publishing and podcast production at the end of 2025, as its funding will be reallocated to meet demands for research grants in a time when federal funding for the sciences and research programs highlighting the diversity of human experience has been slashed nationwide.

The solution to public and political attacks on scholarship, however, is not simply pouring more funding into research. We must also rebuild public trust in archaeology, and that requires investment in and attention to public-facing scholarship. Framed constructively, it is an opportunity to broaden our communicative scope. Lans rightly notes that there are not only language barriers to communicating archaeological research but also literacy and genre barriers. While the media section in our paper suggests routes of engagement that expand beyond academic publishing, venues such as news media do not always offer archaeologists much control. As Li and Wei highlight, however, there are many other strategies for disseminating research, from podcasts to blog posts, Substack columns, YouTube channels, social media posts, and TikTok videos. It is time for us to begin experimenting with—and valuing—different ways to communicate the results of our research to the broader public.

Li and Wei: Different Countries Have Different Publishing Models and Priorities

Like Izeta's, the commentary from Li and Wei correctly identifies that we both critique global inequalities and reproduce them through our focus on the Global North. One of the benefits of the commentary format in *Current Anthropology* is that it allows for the representation of a broader range of perspectives and forms of expertise, beyond those of the authors of the initial piece.

Li and Wei hammer home the critical point that diversity in archaeological scholarship, which occurs at regional, intradisciplinary, and institutional scales, is not sufficiently reflected in our discussion of publishing strategies. Like Izeta for Argentina, they highlight a number of national priorities and solutions that are specific to China, including the legitimacy of excavation reports as a form of knowledge production, the primacy of public-facing archaeological journals and social media platforms that are actively used to communicate archaeological research to a broader audience, and the prioritization of Chinese-language publications in promotion and tenure. They also draw attention

to the costs and benefits of the "lingua franca" model of science communication, emphasizing how a focus on Chinese-language venues limits the language bias and burden attendant to publishing in English-language journals but also limits the dissemination of archaeological scholarship beyond the Chinese-reading world.

* * *

Our argument in this paper is that open conversation about the realities of existing publishing pathways—and the realities of whom they serve and whom they exclude—is an essential first step for "genuine social change" to occur. We hope that our paper, along with these six commentaries, provides a road map for thinking through the current landscape of publishing and finding ways to alter it. Finally, while Lans reminds us that "nothing about how we live was inevitable," our historical contextualization of the recent publishing landscape in North America, combined with Izeta's and Li and Wei's enumeration of unique Argentinian and Chinese solutions, reminds us that nothing about the current publishing landscape is inevitable, either. In that light, it is time to reflect on why we write, whom we write for, and what we want for the future of archaeological publishing.

—Jess Beck, Rowan Flad, Bridget Alex, Ari Caramanica, Andre Costopoulos, Nicholas C. Kawa, Ben Marwick, Christina Warinner, Dana Bardolph, Lewis Borck, Kristina Douglass, Alan Farahani, Mackinley FitzPatrick, Lars Fogelin, Laura E. Heath-Stout, Scott R. Hutson, Matthew Magnani, Natalia Magnani, Ana Cecilia Mauricio, Lisa Overholtzer, Matthäus Rest, Daniel Scott Souleles, and Renata Verdun da Silva Carmo

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