

Trumping up the future with pastness of the present? Neo-relics and archaeological heritage

Abstract

Neo-relics, constructions borrowing their looks from ancient structures or sites ranging from the mighty Stonehenge to a humble Troy town, have been recently erected in different parts of Finland. While they are often seen in authorized heritage discourse as a potential threat, we demonstrate here with a variety of examples from various social contexts how ordinary people assign meanings and functions to archaeological heritage through them. We also approach the question regarding their authenticity by applying Cornelius Holtorf's materialistically infused constructivist definition of pastness – a property related to object's age-value rather than its actual age – to find out how personal involvement, localness and stories are important features in enhancing pastness. Finally, instead of seeing neo-relics as a threat for archaeological heritage and interpretation, we propose them to be embraced as a novel way for people to experience and interact with the past.

Keywords: neo-relic, pastness, authenticity, materiality, localness

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed a small boom in building of relic-like structures in Finland. These constructions have been set in areas where their archaeological counterparts have not been found traditionally, global archaeological heritage has influenced cemetery planning, and even the reconstruction of such heritage icons as Titanic and Egyptian pyramids has been proposed. These propositions in addition the actual construction of some structures defined in this article as neo-relics, has paved a way for a discussion on the authenticity and renewability of cultural heritage. The aim of this contribution is to examine these constructions and the 'threat' they potentially pose to the preservation and interpretation of the 'real' archaeological heritage through the concept of pastness and the related concepts of authenticity and materiality.

A neo-relic is here defined as a contemporary building or other structure that borrows its looks more or less strictly from an ancient structure or a site and has been constructed with modern means. They are not to be mistaken as reconstructions, which are usually based on academic research, while at the same time they can be classified as a special type of unofficial heritage (see Harrison 2013, 14–5). Another important conceptual prerequisite is that a neo-relic is often referred to with the same definition as its ancient archetype. Neo-relics result frequently from the initiative of a small group or society and they are often constructed as communal effort, a fact also reflected by types of neo-relics thus constructed. However, also personal interpretations of the archaeological heritage have been made, or at least suggested, both by a common man as well as nationally celebrated tycoons. The construction of a neo-relic for the business and/or tourism motivated purposes is nevertheless rare, although in such cases the outcome is usually more spectacular than in non-business driven operations.

From the academic point of view, this type of indirect involvement with the archaeological heritage has more often than not been seen as an act of falsification or trivialization resulting in a trumped up past that is to be objected if not eradicated for good. This abhorrence arises from the idea that while at present most neo-relics might be distinguishable as contemporary constructions, at least some of them have high potential of being turned into ‘inauthentic’ archaeological heritage of the future if they are mistakenly assimilated with the constructions of the more distant past. The crucial question to be asked in this context is how pastness observed in the future is constructed at the present and whether all contemporary neo-relics possess a similar amount of pastness at the outset, and if not, what are the material and conceptual aspects resulting in such variance? We argue here following the reasoning of Cornelius Holtorf (2013) presented in his seminal essay that while the presence of material clues is an essential feature for the experience of pastness, it is equally dependent on other experiences determined by specific social and cultural context, including but not confined to

correspondence with the expectations of the audience and meaningful narratives linking the past with the present.

After the theoretical framework has been summarized in the following chapter, the rest of the article is devoted to the examination of its applicability through a series of exemplary cases from Finland. They have been selected to represent a variety of social and cultural contexts to show the various modes and motives neo-relics are applied to communal, personal, and commercial purposes in order to create or enhance the experience of pastness. Although drawn particularly from the Finnish experience, the discussion regarding neo-relics has wider significance, as it does not only demonstrate how the people outside the academia assign meanings to archaeological heritage, but also reveals the multitude ways they wish to interact with it. Some neo-relic types underscore the point that authenticity or age is not always a precondition for the experience of pastness as communal and personal interaction with these objects can be far more important factors in the play than heritage status, while other cases indicate the age and in particular the ageing of the object as witnessed by patina and other properties of the material is essential for the reproduction of 'authentic' pastness.

On authenticity and pastness

In authorized or official heritage discourse, the idea of authenticity is customarily tied to the age of a site, structure or feature and for this reason anything that is old is seen as authentic while authentic is seen both as valuable and meaningful. Following this materialist line of reasoning, something recent is seen to be inauthentic and less valuable and has consecutively less potential to become heritage (Smith and Waterton 2012). While the materialist take on the subject thus emphasizes object's entities and essences, the constructivist perspective comprehends authenticity as a cultural construct where the authenticity lies rather in the observer than in the object. Siân Jones (2010, 189), for example, has stressed that authenticity is created in interaction between people, places and

things, as people experience object's 'network of relationships with past and present people and places'.

However, an important recent development is the introduction of materialistic notions into the constructivist interpretation of authenticity by which the significance of changes in the material substance, like wear and tear, has been acknowledged (Holtorf and Kristensen 2015, 315). The materiality of an object has been seen a requisite for it to bring past into present (cf. Olsen 2010). Cornelius Holtorf (2013, 427) states that materiality should be taken seriously when determining the authenticity of an object, as, in his words, this should not be defined 'in relation to the age of an object but to its age-value, i.e., the quality or condition of being (of the) past – its pastness. Pastness is the result of a particular perception or experience. It derives from, among others, material clues indicating wear and tear, decay, and disintegration. These material clues, and thus the presence of pastness, can be created entirely in the present.'

While Holtorf used examples derived from various social and cultural contexts to underline his view regarding the importance of material dimension in the experience of authenticity, we approach the question here by limiting our examples in culturally uniform context, Finland, and seek to take the argumentation further by applying his ideas systematically to internally coherent material, neo-relics, that simultaneously displays diversity in social context.

Globally speaking, regional cultural heritage seems to be slowly, but firmly losing its importance as a source of national cohesion when modern societies and nations are increasingly built of people with different origins. Holtorf (2011) has rightly questioned 'what contribution might cultural heritage make to contemporary society when the traditional links between heritage, collective identities and territory can no longer be taken for granted'? On one hand, this is reflected in the globalization of cultural heritage, which in authorized heritage discourse has long been exemplified by the list of the UNESCO world heritage sites. On the other hand, unauthorized interest in global heritage has resulted in local interpretations of it. For this reason 'Clonehenges', as one should

probably define various takes on Stonehenge, are found today from New Zealand through China to Nebraska (Delana 2009). While Clonehenges are not absolutely unknown to Finland either, it is a country that has not received considerable pulses of immigrants for a long time and thus remained a fertile ground for indigenous neo-relic experiments that spring forth both from global and local heritage as the following contextualized examples are intended to show.

Think global, build local?

In the global context, the construction of neo-relics is not necessarily a new phenomenon, as the material interpretations of the past at the ever progressing present have taken numerous forms and expressions throughout the human history. The 18th century Romanticism, for example, nourished the construction of follies (also known as sham ruins) to such magnitude that the definition of ‘ruin industry’ was later on coined to describe the phenomenon (see Thomas 2008, 50–3). The influence of classical antiquity in this respect has been particularly strong, and particularly the excavations in the Bay of Naples area with their spectacular finds during the 19th century inspired in grandiose construction projects such as the Pompeiianum, a full-scale reconstruction of a Roman villa commissioned by Kaiser Ludwig I of Bavaria in Aschaffenburg, Germany (Melotti 2011, 31–3).

Today, a neo-relic is seldom personally commissioned by a member of national or regional high society, but an interesting parallel phenomenon is the conceptual productization and business oriented use of values associated with the global heritage that we propose here to be defined as heritagewash (cf. greenwash, see also Ikäheimo 2010). Heritagewash was seriously attempted, for example, in the municipality of Ylämaa near the town of Lappeenranta in southeastern Finland (Figure 1), where in 2011 plans to build a 30 meter high stone pyramid to enhance the attractiveness of the region for international tourism were unveiled by a local businessman also occupying a significant position in local politics. In his vision, the interior of the pyramid would have been decorated with murals ‘conveying a message from the present to the future’. While the content of the message was never specified, it became evident that the pyramid would also have doubled as a

showroom for a stone yard owned by the advocate of the idea himself. Even more preposterous business ideas incorporating neo-relics with heritagewash include the building of a full scale copy of Titanic nearby a commercial center in planning in Kiiminki, and the construction of an ancient Karelian village incorporating projected 3D-visions of the past and the future by a cellulose factory in the city of Oulu.

The common denominator for all these visionary heritage ideas is that they were promoted by quite successful white middle-aged businessmen, received substantial media coverage, were to be implemented with the taxpayers' money and remain to be realized. Reviewing these rather embarrassing proposals together, one can only end up in a conclusion that in a way they are expected behavior from the tycoons, while the role reserved for the rest of the society is to discuss, to wonder and, ultimately, to oppose them. Nevertheless, if heritage is perceived in relation to the stories people tell about themselves in connection with social distinction and political or commercial purposes Holtorf (2014), the imaginary neo-relics were used as a way to promote individuals' social distinction and/or commercial aims. Instead of economic or political notabilities, neo-relics are today materialized in consequence of action taken by small organized groups, associations and societies as well as the result of various do-it-yourself-projects. The outcome is usually strongly dependent on the individual(s) participating in their design and execution and the context in which these constructions have been carried out.

An example on the actual use of global heritage for the construction of neo-relics in a formalized context can be pointed out from the Kirkkonummi urn cemetery near Helsinki in southern Finland. This site dedicated to St. Michael and designed by architect Bey Heng was inaugurated in 2001 and it seeks to encapsulate pastness through a multitude of constructions (see also Ikäheimo 2011a). The centerpiece of the cemetery is an installation named 'Iäisyyden portit – The Gates of Eternity' (Figure 2[a]) that has clearly been inspired by Stonehenge or, less likely, by a relatively large olive oil production site incorporating several olive presses in Late Roman North Africa (see e.g.

Mattingly 1996). Other relic-inspired structures include 'Kiitoskivet – The Stones of Praise' (Figure 2[b]) – a stylized reference to a ship setting; a burial type used especially in southern Sweden and the main western islands of the Baltic Sea (Gotland, Öland and Åland) during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (e.g. Wehlin 2013), 'Toivonkallio – The Cliff of Hope' (Figure 2[c]) – an area for the scattering of ashes reproducing the form of an Iron Age cremation cemetery under flat ground (e.g. Wickholm 2005) and 'Pohjoismuuri – The Northern Wall' (Figure 2[d]) – a dry-masoned columbarium that would easily find its home at the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae in Orkney Islands.

The resulting ensemble of references to the past might horrify a visitor entangled with authorized heritage discourse, but for many the pastness emanating from this mixed bag of influences may be equally soothing in a context that inevitably evokes extreme emotions. References to the distant past created in not-so-distant past are used here to promulgate the conception about the chain of generations. Therefore, the past resides in the Kirkkonummi urn cemetery clearly in audience's imagination rather than in a chronological system (Holtorf 2013, 432; Lowenthal 2002), while an urn cemetery as a venue is rather suitable for such display of pastness. On the other hand, as the inspiration is today growingly derived from local heritage rather than from the iconic structures and sites of global heritage, the Kirkkonummi urn cemetery represents an anomaly among the neo-relic sites. The importance of localness in the creation of pastness will be explored next.

Localness brings pastness

The experience of pastness is further augmented when the appearance of a neo-relic coincides with the preconceived understandings of the audience (Holtorf 2013, 433). The neo-Medieval wooden church (Figure 3) built to enhance the attractiveness of the Pohjanranta hotel-restaurant-camping complex in the municipality of Keminmaa southwestern Lapland in 2010 is a fine example of the ways pastness can be created at present regionally through local heritage (see also Ikäheimo 2011b). About three kilometers downstream from Pohjanranta lies the archaeological site of Valmarinniemi,

where excavations in 1981 confirmed the information given by historical sources about the existence of, at least one if not two, wooden churches of the Catholic Kemi parish at the site during the 14th and 15th century (e.g. Jylkkä 2006). Nothing, but pits resulting from the removal of foundation stones, burned reddish sand and charred timber, had been preserved from these ecclesiastic structures (Koivunen 1981).

The inspiration for the construction of a neo-Medieval wooden church of Pohjanranta was therefore sought from two photographs depicting the church of Södra Roda located in Värmland, Sweden. As this Medieval wooden church had been burned down by an arsonist already in 2001, the result seen at Pohjanranta today is a modern structure built with vague references to a long gone archetype, but which nevertheless possesses enough pastness to convince the visitor by the way it is built and the materials that have been employed in its building. The structure resembles enough a small Middle Age wooden church of our imagination (see also Holtorf 2013, 431) without actually being one, as without it, most of us would have no point of reference how to imagine it. In addition, the structure gains additional credibility both from the local history and its relative proximity to an archaeological site with national significance (see, e.g., Purhonen 2001, 295–6), while it may equally impress an uninformed visitor.

The argument stressing the relevance of localness applies also to Troy towns (fi. *jatulintarha*, Figure 4[a]) – a stone lined labyrinth or maze pertaining in the Baltic Sea area mainly to the late Medieval and historical periods and found in significant quantities throughout coastal Fennoscandia (Westerdahl 2014) – that are arguably among the most popular neo-relics constructed in Finland today. The reason for their popularity might be the relative easiness of construction as well as their appealing outlook. Enhanced functionality should neither be forgotten, because, unlike most other types of neo-relics, Troy towns can actually be used for something, for example for play or meditation. As constructions composed of delicate lines of spiraling stones, they are fragile small-scale monuments that are easier to turn into decorative motives (Figure 4[b]) than to eye-catchers

without compromising their character and altering their pastness. This point became painfully evident, when the municipality of Vihanti in northern Finland created a new ‘landmark’ and ‘tourist attraction’ by building a Troy town with highly stylized design, nearly a meter high dry stonewalls and built-in lighting (Figure 4[c]) into a region characterized by Neolithic dwelling-sites rather than Medieval stone settings. The neo-relic was planned to be a piece of environmental art that would be Vihanti’s ‘symbol and landmark telling in its own peculiar way about the history and the nature of the region’, as it was boldly outlined in a placard attached next to the monument (Ikäheimo 2011b). Another illustrative, yet different kind of example on pastness reproduced through neo-relics can be pointed out from southwestern Finland (see also Ikäheimo 2013), where the city of Turku celebrated its temporary status as the European capital of culture in 2011 by supporting a wide spectrum of community projects aimed to involve the local inhabitants. One of these projects was called ‘Jump into the game, run to the Troy town’ and it encouraged local people to build their collective interpretation of a Troy town. The idea was strongly opposed by some opinion writers in regional newspaper *Turun Sanomat* with a multitude of arguments (Ikäheimo 2013, 83–9), which are of strong interest in this context.

The Troy towns to be built were defined by commentators as inauthentic and false, while their construction would at least distort if not ridicule the local history. Moreover, if they were to be constructed as authentic as possible, in the long run they would be mistaken for genuine Troy towns and skew the picture regarding both them and the past. Therefore, some writers underlined the importance of building new stone mazes – if they had to be built in the first place – into ‘inauthentic places’ with a design bearing as little resemblance to original Troy towns as possible. In this way, they were hoped to form a distinguishable entity even after the information about their construction had been forgotten. On the other hand, both these prerequisites will possibly increase the heterogeneousness of Troy town related monuments surviving to the future.

Strangely, this very community project was also exploited to obstruct the Turku city development as a monument named Aurinkotarha ('Sungarden', see Figure 4[d]) was constructed into the old soil extraction pit at the Kuuvuori neighborhood using large irregular stone blocks derived from a nearby road works site. The monument consists of several radial stone line rays scattered around a large central block, and the outcome does not resemble a traditional Troy town at all. It was actively promoted by the local Kuuvuori association as a place for open air concerts and picnics, as the area was about to be developed into a football stadium or given over to housing projects. However, the haphazard creation of the Aurinkotarha-monument and the hint of pastness it gained through the European cultural capital year project convinced the Turku city council to treat it like proper cultural heritage – the area was left undeveloped because of Aurinkotarha. To our knowledge, this is one of a kind occasion where an instant neo-relic has been successfully used to obstruct urban development through assimilation with proper cultural heritage.

Still, many neo-relics of this type are built as small-scale projects initiated by local operators. For example, a Troy town built by regional farmers association at Liikasenmäki, in Jaala (Figure 4[a]) is an excellent example of a construction that captures the spirit of its surroundings and enhances the experience of a person visiting the site. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the Troy town located by the observatory of the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia in Espoo (Figure 4[b]) that is promoted as 'a place where knowledge is transformed into an experience and the visitor is surrounded by Finnish myths and stories' (Haltia 2016) – fits into the concept. Nevertheless, the examples given here are sufficient to point out that neo-relics connected with the local history offer people a way to reflect and sustain their regional and local identities. While their regional proximity can sometimes be rather obscure, as the example of the neo-Medieval wooden church located in Keminmaa shows, the resulting pastness is of credible and endurable sort as long as it corresponds with the expectations of the audience.

A story behind a stone

Neo-relics can also be used for local identity building on a more personal level; they may enhance experiences of sanctity and spirituality by gaining strength from the positive associations with cultural heritage and history. Sanctity is a quality that might be also aspired with private monuments. *Sieiddit* (singular *sieidi*, North Sámi) are Sámi offering sites that have traditionally been used for communicating with the otherworld in order to gain luck in livelihoods. Usually, they are natural stones like boulders or erratics showing no sign of human intervention, but examples of *sieiddit* formed of piled or raised stones and curved wooden poles are also known. The animal bones found in these sites date their historical use from the 6th to the 17th century AD (Salmi, Äikäs et al. 2015; Äikäs 2015), but other material evidence (e.g. coins, candles, fishing flies and alcohol bottles) reveals their contemporary significance (Äikäs and Spangen 2016). People return to these old offering sites today for various reasons.

While the respect for the ancestral traditions and a wish for cultural continuity may be important for the locals, others may find their way to these sites in connection with neo-pagan practices, shamanistic tourist performances, or hunting and fishing trips. Fishing related offerings can also take place at a *sieidi* of one's own making. On the message board of Finnish hunting magazine *Erä* (*Erä* magazine 2008), a forum member describes his pursuit of fisherman's luck as follows: 'Tomorrow, I will make a *sieidi* and find the cognac bottles that my wife has hidden from me. Not to drink, but to douse the *sieidi*.' An erected stone observed by the second author of this paper at Taatsijärvi (Figure 5[a]), a well-known fishing lake, might be this kind of self-made *sieidi* especially due to its proximity to a well-known ancient *sieidi*.

A slightly different example can be pointed out from Kuusamo northeastern Finland, where the principal of local adult education college has carved a wooden *sieidi* and put up on his yard. From the late 1990s, archaeologists doing fieldwork under his auspices in the Kuusamo area have been asked to offer a bottle of spirits to this *sieidi*. Often this request has been made indirectly by referring to bad luck that they might suffer during the excavations if it was not obeyed, and the

bottle has been thereafter secretly laid by the *sieidi*. The offer is therefore a part of reciprocal hospitality, where the host is rewarded via *sieidi* for his help in arranging the excavations while the neo-*sieidi* itself is a way to build and perform local identity connected to the forest Sámi people. (Okkonen 2016)

In the Sámi ethnic religion people also had their personal *sieiddit*. A certain stone could be visited by only one person that the stone had chosen. (Paulaharju 1932; Rydving 1993) The tradition that *sieidi* is not chosen rather it chooses you is also alive in contemporary shamanism. (Äikäs, Fonneland et al. in press). This conceptual proximity to ancient relics raises the question if a site with indicators of contemporary ritual activity should be considered a neo-relic even if it represents a modern update of an old tradition. The question is further problematized by the existence of sites that are increasingly interpreted as ‘proper’ *sieiddit* while no archaeological or historical evidence exists on their use as such (Äikäs and Spangen 2016; Spangen 2016).

Here pastness is created through cultural proximity; some of the visitors at *sieiddit* feel that they continue the traditions of their ancestors (Äikäs, Fonneland et al. in press). If visitors have a regional and cultural remoteness to the tradition, they might need help in experiencing the narrative related to these sites. Tourist entrepreneurs tell or sometimes invent the story behind the *sieidi* in order to give the place pastness (Holtorf 2013, 434). The Sámi culture is marketed by the tourism industry as a part of the mythology of the north, thus *sieiddit* have also become tourist attractions. Tourists can participate in ‘Lappish baptism’ performed as a shamanistic ritual and make offerings to both new and old *sieiddit*. The productization of *sieiddit* (Figure 5[d]) can be interpreted as a shift of the original place away from the context of sacredness, as the sacred experience is replaced by a commercial and entertaining experience. Nevertheless, Lynn Meskell (2004, 177–219) has suggested that in productization the object is not always disconnected from the context of the sacred. Productization may decrease spirituality, but also democratizes it and make its objects easier

to reach. The object may also acquire new meanings that may or may not be related to the previous spiritual meanings.

To give an example, the precise location of the old *sieidi* at Kalliorova in Muonio that is referred to in written records (Äyräpää 1931; Paulaharju 1932) is no longer known. However, a local tourism entrepreneur informed one of the authors during a field visit to the site that a presentable stone has been chosen for tourists. As the tourists are taken to see the stone (Figure 5[b]), a ‘shaman’ emerges from behind the stone to meet them and performs a ‘Lappish baptism’ – a mock ritual bearing no resemblance to the religious beliefs of the Sámi culture. The tourist experience at Kalliorova is not depended on seeing a genuine *sieidi* stone as meanings are constructed there on actions and stories, and not necessarily on the history of the place. Still, for tourists the meaning of the *sieidi* may have been transmitted to the stone to which they are brought and the faithful recreation of the original object is not necessary to create the feel of authenticity. Instead, authenticity is constructed by recreating the atmosphere of the original place and by conveying emotions and experiences that can be credibly related to it (Prentice 2001, 15–22). At Kalliorova the selection of the stone for a neo-*sieidi* has been based on its location on the hill where the actual *sieidi* might have once stood and on the physical appearance of the stone itself. It resembles some of the well-known *sieddit* (Figure 5[c]). Hence, for the visitors who are familiar with the *sieidi* tradition, the physical appearance of the stone makes it easier to associate pastness to it (Holtorf 2013, 433; even though Äikäs (2015) has criticized the conception that all *sieddit* look alike).

Discussion

We have sought to demonstrate above how people interact with the past by bringing past to the present. The neo-relics as a phenomenon offer people an indirect way to bodily engage with relics of pastness. Although some neo-relics have been geared for commercialized purposes, they are more often characterized by do-it-yourself mentality and localness. The process of building a neo-relic can be seen a way to interact with past, but the building process itself may be essential for the

authenticity of an object. In Japan, for example, historic religious buildings are from time to time dismantled and rebuilt so that most of the original wood is replaced in the process, but the authentic building tradition is strictly followed (Jones 2010, 185). Authenticity lies in the construction process rather than in the age of building material.

Whereas archaeological sites and museum objects are often controlled, made inaccessible with fences or showcases and offer only a limited interaction, one is allowed to touch neo-relics, smell, climb on and play with them. Some examples of Troy towns, like the one in Vihanti encourage visitors to playful behavior whereas in others like Aurinkotarha the intended playfulness seems rather artificial and the neo-relic is actually more dangerous than inviting playground. None the less, neo-relics seem to offer a better way to interact and experience with heritage than 'genuine' sites which are of restricted access and use. They can also be highly personal and local to the point where they stand on your backyard, as was the case of one neo-*sieddi*. Some people may even have a personal *sieddit* inside their house (Äikäs, Fonneland et al. in press).

Localness and personal connection are features that define the engagements with neo-relics. In a recent article on treasure hunting and private collecting of World War II artefacts in Finnish Lapland Vesa-Pekka Herva et al. (2016) come to the conclusion that localness and personal connections are important for this kind of alternative archaeology. According to them, local heritage and personal objects or personal stories behind the objects are often being emphasized and therefore 'what the public finds important and interesting about the past and its remains can be quite different from the view of heritage professionals'. With alternative engagement and doing yourself – whether collecting wartime artefacts or constructing neo-relics – people gain more intimate relationship with the past.

In the case of neo-relics, pastness comes local and close to you and vice versa, localness enhances pastness. The examples discussed above have shown that, generally speaking, localness enhances pastness and increases the feel of authenticity. In authorized heritage discourse these properties are

often viewed as a threat as they seem to complicate later interpretations, while for the local people they may stand for increased meaningfulness. Bella Dicks (2000, 220–9) has shown in her study on the visitors at the Rhondda Heritage Park that personal investment and cultural proximity help the visitor not only to connect with but also to situate themselves within the narratives regarding the site. Similarly, Siân Jones (2010) has shown how archaeological objects may gain authenticity and value through their factual connection to the local history as they share a life history with the local residents.

In recent cultural heritage discourse, heritage has been emphasized as a process where objects are in constant change (Holtorf 2015; DeSilvey 2006). It has been asked, for example, whether ‘monuments and artefacts should be allowed to grow, change, rejuvenate, collapse and decay if these processes are integral to the ongoing meanings and values surrounding them’ (Jones 2006, 120–1). Similarly, we should ask if the modern neo-relics should be allowed to undergo such process. Holtorf (2013) has stated that pastness requires material clues like patina, cracks and missing bits; in spite of other aspects of pastness that are evident in neo-relics they customarily lack these material clues. As they are used actively for varying periods of time and consecutively let to decay, their pastness is enhanced. From the traditional point of view this has been a threat, as with age their appearance gets closer to ‘genuine’ archaeological relics. On the other hand, the possibility to use and wear – to bodily engage – can be seen as an important characteristic of a neo-relic.

Neo-relics seem also to pose a threat to modernity and its desperate, if not delusional, need to conveniently categorize things; they are creations of the present represented as belonging to the past and therefore distorting the easy categorization of things (Harrison 2013, 26–37). They do not fit into conventional archaeological classifications and are incompatible with the idea of ‘academically correct’ archaeological distribution maps. Their flexible nature, on the other hand, offers people a way to express their communality and identity. Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton (2012, 153) have claimed that contrary to the ‘authorized heritage discourse’ heritage should be thought as ‘a set

of processes that relate to issues of identity formation and “community”. Therefore, instead of seeing neo-relics as a threat for archaeological interpretation and heritage we perhaps should embrace them as a novel way for people to experience and interact with the past.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion has pointed out that rather than representing the result of mischievous pursuits to trump up the future past with the ‘inauthentic’ creations of the present, the construction of neo-relics is a multi-faceted phenomenon where pastness is adapted for a multitude of purposes in different social and cultural contexts. The particular importance of both localness and narratives for enhancing the experience of pastness was noted, while the influence of the global heritage is not to be ignored either. If, or more likely when, these modern constructions are left to decay, an additional layer of pastness will be imposed on them. While some archaeologists might seem this as a threat to archaeological heritage, it is to be remembered that in the long run, all our efforts to preserve any archaeological heritage in Finland, Scandinavia or in North America, are waste of both money and resources, because from a geological point of view the next Ice Age is more or less around the corner. Thereafter, all relics in the area affected by the future glacier(s), no matter whether carrying prefix neo or not, will be reduced to sand and dust or plowed to the southern steppes. However, as the various branches of heritage industry – protection, conservation and tourism – employ thousands of people today, we might just want to calm ourselves and carry on as usual.

Captions for figures

Figure 1. Map showing locations mentioned in the text. Base map: D-maps (http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=2266&lang=en).



Figure 2. Neo-relics at the Kirkkonummi urn cemetery: a) “Iäisyyden portit” (The Gates of Eternity); b) ”Kiitoskivet” (The Stones of Praise); c) “Toivonkallio” (The Cliff of Hope) and d) “Pohjoismuuri” (The Northern Wall). Photos: Author 1.



Figure 3. The neo-Medieval wooden church at Pohjanranta, Keminmaa.



Figure 4. A selection of contemporary Troy towns from Finland: a) a Troy town built by regional farmers association at Liikasenmäki, in Jaala; b) a stylized Troy town underneath the staircase leading to the observatory of the Haltia visitor center at the Nuuksio National Park, and d) a Troy town on steroids at Vihanti, and d) Aurinkotarha (Sungarden) in Turku. Photos: a, c and d Author 1; b Author 2.



Figure 5. New sieiddit – and an old one – for personal and commercial use: a) raised stone by Lake Taatsijärvi, b) neo-sieidi for tourists at Kalliorova, Muonio, c) an ancient sieidi in Näkkälä, Enontekiö, d) neo-sieidi in a shop in Hetta, Enontekiö. Photos: Author 2.



References

- Äikäs, T. 2015. *From Boulders to Fells: Sacred Places in the Sámi Ritual Landscape*. Helsinki: The Archaeological Society of Finland.
- Äikäs, T., T. Fonneland, S. Thomas, W. Perttola, and S.E. Kraft. In press. "Traces of our ancient religion": Meaning-making and shamanism at Sámi offering places and at the Isogaisa festival, northern Norway. In *Archaeological Sites as Space for Modern Spiritual Practice*, ed. J. LESKOVAR. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars.
- Äikäs, T. and M. Spangen. 2016. New users and changing traditions: (Re)defining Sámi offering sites. *European Journal of Archaeology* 19(1): 95–121.
- Äyräpää, A. 1931. Muinaismuistot [Ancient relics]. In *Suomenmaa. Maantieteellis-taloudellinen ja historiallinen tietokirja. IX.2. Oulun lääni*, eds. J.E. Rosberg, K. Hildén, and E. Mikkola. Porvoo: Werner Söderström osakeyhtiö.
- Delana. 2009. *Clonehenges: 20 Creative Recreations of Stonehenge*. Available: <http://weburbanist.com/2009/09/03/clonehenges-20-creative-recreations-of-stonehenge/> [November 12, 2016].
- Desilvey, C. 2006. Observed decay: Telling stories with mutable things. *Journal of Material Culture* 11(3): 318–38.
- Dicks, B. 2000. *Heritage, Place and Community*. Wales: University of Wales Press.
- Erä magazine, 2008-last update, Discussion forum of the Erä magazine, Fishing diary, week 22 at Teno. Available: <http://www.eralehti.fi/keskustelu/t4986> [7/31, 2008].
- Haltia, 2016-last update, Arkkitehtuuri [Architecture]. Available: <http://www.haltia.com/fi/haltia-suomen-luontokeskus/arkkitehtuuri/> [11/14, 2016].
- Harrison, R. 2013. *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. London – New York: Routledge.

- Herva, V-P, E. Koskinen-Koivisto, O. Seitsonen, S. Thomas 2016. "I have better stuff at home": treasure hunting and private collecting of World War II artefacts in Finnish Lapland. *World Archaeology* 48(2): 267–81.
- Holtorf, C. 2011. The changing contribution of cultural heritage to society. *Museum International* 63(1–2): 8–16.
- Holtorf, C. 2013. On pastness: a reconsideration of materiality in archaeological object authenticity. *Anthropological Quarterly* 86(2): 427–44.
- Holtorf, C. 2014. Heritage: Public perceptions. In *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, ed. S. Claire, 3361–6. New York: Springer.
- Holtorf, C. 2015. Averting loss aversion in cultural heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21(4): 405–21.
- Holtorf, C. and T.M. Kristensen. 2015. Heritage erasure: rethinking ‘protection’ and ‘preservation’. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21(4): 313–7.
- Ikäheimo, J. 2011a. Kirkkonummen uurnahautausmaan uusmuinaisjäänöksistä [The neo-relics of the Kirkkonummi urn cemetery]. *Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja* 101: 125–36.
- Ikäheimo, J. 2011b. Uusmuinaisjäänökset turistiryysinä Perämeren itärannalla: kivikuvio, kirkko vai valtamerilaiva? [Neo-relics as tourism magnets on the eastern shore of Bothnian Bay: a stone maze, a church or an Atlantic cruiser?] *Faravid: Pohjois-Suomen historiallisen yhdistyksen vuosikirja* 35: 221–9.
- Ikäheimo, J. 2013. Uusjätulintarha arkeologisena ongelmana ja ratkaisuna Turun seudulla [Neo-Troy town as an archaeological problem and solution in Turku region]. *Turun museokeskuksen vuosikirja ABOA*, 82–91.
- Jones, S. 2006. ‘They made it a living thing didn’t they’: The growth of things and the fossilisation of heritage. In *A Future for Archaeology: The Past in the Present*, eds. R. Layton, S. Shennan, and P. Stone, 107–26. London: UCL Press.

- Jones, S., 2010. Negotiating authentic objects and authentic selves: Beyond the deconstruction of authenticity. *Journal of Material Culture* 15(2): 181–203.
- Jylkkä, K. 2006. A medieval coin find from Valmarinniemi, Keminmaa, northern Finland. In *People, Material Culture and Environment in the North: Proceedings of the 22nd Nordic Archaeological Conference, University of Oulu, 18–23 August 2004*, ed. V.-P. Herva, 391–97. Oulu: University of Oulu, Faculty of Humanities.
- Koivunen, P. 1981. Keminmaan kirkonpaikan tutkimukset Valmarinniemiellä kesällä 1981 [Investigations of the Keminmaa churchplace in Valmarinniemi in summer 1981]. *Faravid: Pohjois-Suomen historiallisen yhdistyksen vuosikirja* 5: 37–53.
- Lowenthal, D. 2002. The past as a theme park. In *Theme Park Landscapes: Antecedents and Variations*, eds. T. Young and R. Riley, 11–23. Washington D.C.: Dumberton Oaks.
- Mattingly, D. 1996. First fruit? The olive in the Roman world. In *Human Landscapes in Classical Antiquity*, eds. G. Shipley and J. Salmon, 213–53. London: Routledge.
- Melotti, M. 2011. *The Plastic Venuses: Archaeological Tourism in Post-Modern Society*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Meskel, L. 2004. *Object Worlds in Ancient Egypt: Material Biographies Past and Present*. Oxford: Berg.
- Okkonen, J. 2016. *Personal Communication*.
- Olsen, B. 2010. *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*. Lanham: Altamira Press.
- Paulaharju, S. 1932. *Seitoja ja seidan palvontaa* [Sieddit and sieidi worship]. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Prentice, R. 2001. Experiential cultural tourism: Museums & the marketing of the new romanticism of evoked authenticity. *Museum Management and Curatorship* 19(1): 5–26.

- Purhonen, P. 2001. *Maiseman muisti: valtakunnallisesti merkittävät muinaisjännökset* [Memoryscape: nationally important archaeological sites]. Helsinki: Museovirasto.
- Rydving, H. 1993. *The End of Drum-Time: Religious Change Among the Lule Saami, 1670s–1740s*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Salmi, A., T. Äikäs, M. Fjellström, and M. Spangen. 2015. Animal offerings at the Sámi offering site of Unna Saiva – Changing religious practices and human–animal relationships. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 40: 10–22.
- Smith, L. and E. Waterton. 2012. Constrained by commonsense: The authorized heritage discourse in contemporary debates. In *The Oxford handbook of public archaeology*, eds. R. Skeates, C. McDavid, and J. Carman, 153–71. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spangen, M. 2016. *Circling Concepts: A Critical Archaeological Analysis of the Notion of Stone Circles as Sami Offering Sites*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.
- Thomas, S. 2008. *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge.
- Wehlin, J. 2013. *Östersjöns skeppssättningar. Monument och mötesplatser under yngre bronsålder / Baltic Stone Ships. Monuments and Meeting places during the Late Bronze Age*. GOTARC Serie B. Gothenburg Archaeological Theses 59. Bohus: Göteborgs universitet.
- Westerdahl, C. 2014. Spiritscapes of the north: Traces of the fear of the drowned in maritime landscapes? In *Med hjärta och hjärna: En vänbok till professor Elisabeth Arwill-Nordbladh*, eds. H. ALlexandersson, A. Aandreeff, and A. Bünz, 483–503. Göteborg: University of Gothenburg.
- Wickholm, A. 2005. The cremation cemeteries under flat ground: a representative of what? *Interpretierte Eisenzeiten* 18:31–40.