Timothy GREGORY Field Archaeology, Live in the Classroom

This presentation explores practical ways in which archaeological evidence can be contextualized to help students understand its use in the study of ancient culture. It is, of course, fairly standard to illustrate lectures on ancient history and civilization with slides and Power Point presentations of sculptures, vases, coins, and architecture. This paper, however, argues that in order to make use of such evidence, the scholar must understand the processes used in the discovery and analysis of archaeological evidence from excavations and archaeological field surveys. It then shows a number of examples of how this contextualization can be accomplished in the classroom. For example, we can explain the basic theory and processes used in excavation and archaeological field survey, the kinds of objects discovered in such projects, and the types of conclusions drawn from them. This would presumably be followed by discussion with students about the limits of such conclusions and the way they should and should not be included in historical analysis. As another example, the presentation shows how students can be remotely "involved" in archaeological projects (excavations and surveys) and can virtually "take part" in the discovery and analysis of ancient objects, landscapes, and structures. It concludes with examples of classroom procedures for the incorporation of this information into historical re-creations of life in the past.

More specifically, this paper will present specific examples of the inclusion of archaeological material in my Introduction to Classical Archaeology and my classes in Byzantine History. The former presents students with copies of documents used in actual field projects in order to give them an idea of the theory and practice of individual archaeological projects, and it also gives students "at home" an opportunity to interact with other students who are currently working in an active field project. This latter has been quite successful in providing the students in America with details about the reality of archaeological fieldwork and helps dispel the common perception of how archaeological work is conducted. In the Byzantine classes I make significant use of short video clips to show different views of the landscape of the eastern Mediterranean area. In addition, I use other clips of churches, monasteries, and palaces from the Byzantine period, and these are designed to help them imagine the architectural spaces in which much of Byzantine history took place. All of these courses are currently offered online, and the paper will discuss how this video material is incorporated into the classes and how they are used to encourage meaningful discussion among the students. Examples of these video clips will be shown in the course of the paper.

Scholarly institutions such as the Archaeological Institute of America, the Society for American Archaeology, and the National Park Service have long advocated for the use of archaeology in the K-12 classroom. This presentation will argue that a sophisticated understanding of archaeological methods and problems are important in the teaching of ancient history and civilization and that they contribute to students' abilities to construct sound arguments about the past, based on a broad array of evidence, including that from the material record.