

# INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE RESEARCH— AN INTRODUCTION

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Archaeology has been transformed in recent decades. One change is the increasing international collaboration between professionals from different institutions and countries that share archaeological interests. However, the nature of collaborations has changed dramatically—and for the better—from the types of relationships between researchers, institutions, and fieldwork relationships with many non-Western countries as conducted in the first half of the twentieth century. First, the regulations and laws related to the protection of archaeological heritage in many countries have changed drastically in the last few decades. New regulations frequently prohibit the export of artifacts and other materials, as home countries exert greater control over all aspects of cultural patrimony. More importantly, they often stipulate that foreign researchers have local or governmental archaeologists as codirectors, defining a new era in collaborative research. The nature of these mandated relationships, of course, varies with the individuals involved, but these are increasingly truly cooperative.

Additionally, the last decades of the twentieth century saw an increase in Ph.D.s from universities in countries like England, the United States, France, and Italy awarded to foreign students who have since returned to work for museums, universities, and governmental agencies in their home countries. Several have also competed for and earned academic positions abroad, returning for fieldwork. This has favored the interchange of knowledge and the formation of several types of networks, both academic and social. Finally, and perhaps more important, change has to do with the idea that many archaeological subjects can be investigated in different situations or circumstances, and that is vital for a researcher to examine these par-

allel situations elsewhere firsthand. This is an important conceptual change that is not incompatible with the idea that a single archaeologist can be a specialist in a subject of a particular time and place. Fortunately, the number of archaeologists that think in this way is growing.

In soliciting contributions on this topic, some of which will appear in a later issue, we have tried to have authors illustrate the variability of instances of international cooperation as they occur in different contexts. The types of collaboration and associated structural relationships are varied, and we have undoubtedly failed to capture all of the possibilities and situations, but the sample is worth the effort. We have attempted to encompass collaborative relationships that span countries and continents, and that also include examples of a variety of different forms of interaction. As one would expect, goals and objectives vary with the projects and the researchers involved—projects range from short-term interactions to long-term partnerships, and topics are sometimes very specific, while other projects have more general goals. Most authors emphasize the positive aspects of collaborative relationships, though hardships or areas of concern are also noted. Many common themes emerge from these experiences, several of which echo points raised by contributions that appeared in the special issue on the “Practice of Archaeology in Mexico” in the November 2007 *The SAA Archaeological Record*. We believe these examples highlight several practices that will continue to serve archaeology well in the coming decades. We leave you to draw your own conclusions for each case and we hope you can understand, as we do, the importance of equitable, parallel, and two-way (or more) relationships involved in international cooperative investigations.