

BRAZIL > BERMUDA #WORLDINTERVIEW #14

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INTERVIEWEE: DEBORAH ANNE ATWOOD



In what ways is Bermudian archaeology global?

Whether as a navigational marker for early colonial European explorers or as a garrisoned island for the British, American, and Canadian forces Bermuda has played an important role in the history and development of the Atlantic World. Consequently Bermudians share cultural and historical links with North America, the Caribbean, England, Africa, and Europe and archaeological material found in Bermuda provides information on local and international history.

What is the biggest problem facing archaeology in Bermuda?

Currently there is little legislation on the island protecting land sites and although there is very strict legislation protecting underwater sites it can be very difficult to monitor and protect these sites. There are only a handful of local archaeologists working in Bermuda, so much of the research projects are carried out by archaeologists from overseas through partnerships with local institutions.

What role do archaeologists play in holding those in power accountable?

Very little. We can advise those in power about best practices, archaeological ethics and the best way to protect and record sites and promote scientific investigation.

In what way do you see archaeology changing as the 21st century progresses?

Technological advances have changed the way in which we record sites, especially underwater sites. With over 300 shipwrecks in Bermuda's waters and only a handful of archaeologists on the island it would take years to accurately record every wreck. However, the development of affordable recording equipment like GoPro cameras and 3D model technology means that we can enlist the local dive community to assist us with mapping and surveying of sites. The possibility to perhaps use 3D printing technology to take models of wrecks and replica artifacts into local classrooms is also very exciting and could enable us to better teach the importance of preserving and protecting our cultural heritage.

About Deborah:

Assistant Curator, National Museum of Bermuda.

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Questions from James Dixon in the UK.

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