

Matthias Becher / Karoline Noack (eds.)

Past Worlds across Time and Space

Grasping the Transcendence of
Cultural Heritage and Communication

Bonn University Press



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With 15 figures

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Past Worlds across Time and Space: Grasping the Intersection of Cultural Heritage and Communication. Introductory thoughts

With this volume, TRA 'Past Worlds and Modern Questions – Cultures Across Time and Space (in short: Present Pasts)' offers the results of its work to date. It brings together case studies that aim to reify social processes in a global perspective in the *longue durée* – the general goal of the TRA Present Pasts' research. But let us start with a look back to when it all began. The TRA Present Pasts was created in 2019, the University of Bonn had been awarded the title of University of Excellence, which came with generous funding from German's Federal Government and Federal States. The Rectorate established six Transdisciplinary Research Areas as part of the Excellence Strategy, guided by the basic idea that an innovative research culture was necessary for success: rigid subject boundaries gave way to interdisciplinary approaches that did not stop at faculty boundaries. Thus, over the years, six areas have developed in which the university assembled outstanding quality – the Transdisciplinary Research Areas:

- Mathematics, Modelling and Simulation of Complex Systems
- Building Blocks of Matter and Fundamental Interactions
- Life and Health
- Individuals, Institutions and Societies
- Past Worlds and Modern Questions. Cultures Across Time and Space
- Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Futures

The core of each TRA is formed by areas of excellence that have already achieved international recognition, especially through the six clusters of excellence:

- Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS)
- ECONtribute: Markets & Public Policy
- Hausdorff Center for Mathematics
- ImmunoSensation2
- ML4Q – Matter and Light for Quantum Computing
- PhenoRob

These areas of excellence are thematically linked to research areas in which there is a high chance of scientific development (areas of potential). The potential areas should catch up with the areas of excellence in the short to medium term and further strengthen the research quality in the TRAs. The combination of areas of excellence and areas of potential in the six TRAs helps to integrate our six clusters of excellence and other collaborative research projects even better into the structure and future scientific development of the university. Here they have two main functions: First, they are to sharpen the University's profile by directing research towards central scientific, technological and societal issues of the future. Secondly, then they are to serve as creative and explorative platforms to bring together areas of excellence and areas of potential and to help the latter achieve an international top position in their respective fields in the near future.

The TRA 'Present Pasts' aims to analyze social processes in a global perspective with the goal of responding to contemporary questions, such as those surrounding the prerequisites and consequences of globalization. A particular focus is interrelations between current challenges and how comparable phenomena were negotiated in the past. Knowledge about human societies that is obtained through a comparative historical approach can contribute to a better understanding of present-day constellations in culture, economics, and politics. A framework that is geographically comprehensive and reaches far back into the past is essential for understanding current social processes.

Considering new perspectives that have been prompted by the cultural turn, TRA 'Present Pasts' moves beyond timelines that are discussed in Eurocentric historiography by bringing studies from Africa, Latin America, Europe and East Asia together and putting them into dialogue with one another. By doing so, we can understand the social functions and meanings of present and historical representations, practices, and objectifications of cultural memory, both in regionally specific context and as part of global entanglements. These phenomena have been and are still being shaped by the power relations entailed in cultural dominance or colonialism, as well as by cultures of hybridizing, anti-colonial or de-colonializing conflicts. The fields of *communication* and *heritage* were identified as two significant points of entry to these problems. Both terms are intentionally broad because the transdisciplinary research discourse with which it is associated involves a wide field for interpretation, as well as different perspectives and challenges for scientific practice. The terms can also be anchored locally, which emphasizes their importance for research at the University of Bonn and in the region.

One of the many overlaps between the concepts of *communication* and *heritage* as phenomena of globalization is the study of global processes during the colonial period and their consequences. This phase of globalization was characterized by the rise of the European maritime empires in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries. One result of this development was the far-reaching trade in plants, animals, food and people across the Atlantic. This fundamental expansion of communication was part of one of the most significant, transformative events in history, which is reflected in the modern processes of globalization. In their postcolonial negotiations, art, cultural history and ethnographic collections and museums represent places and objects of these encounters that transcend the boundaries of related research disciplines.

University collections – and in particular those of the University of Bonn – as a form of *heritage* are a pivotal subject of research of the TRA Present Pasts. They encompass current and past negotiations and communications surrounding objects, related practices, forms of knowledge, as well as temporal, spatial, social, cultural, and political contexts of origin and of collecting in its widest sense of the word. See for example the exhibition of the of the TRA Present Pasts' Open Museum Project "Searching of traces in the museums and collections of the University of Bonn. Object histories" from October 2024-April 2025 at the Knowledge Lab Uni Bonn (KLUB). In its broadest sense, *heritage* is a concept whose development and institutionalization originate from the modern era and the founding of nation states in the eighteenth century, and thus draw heavily on European value systems. It also involves exploring ways of understanding what we currently conceive of as heritage in the past, but also contemporary indigenous conceptions of heritage in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific. It consists of historicizing and regionalizing heritage conceptions and deconstructing western notions of heritage, to enable communities of origin (*Urhebergesellschaften*), political and activist movements, marginalized and other groups to actively shape these processes and thus to discover new ways of dealing with them. In order to understand the complexities of other-than-western notions and to bring these into meaningful dialogues, the development of alternative and decolonized concepts of heritage is crucial. Viewing university collections as heritage in this context holds innovative potential for these dialogues, which take place not only between museums and communities of origin, but also between another 'Western' institution, the university, and communities of origin (cf. Rattunde, Noack, Jaimes Betancourt 2024). Through research on provenance of collections, including university collections in cooperation with the so-called communities of origin, TRA Present Pasts undertakes to deconstruct this official heritage discourse. Such a new heritage discourse "from below" permits communities of origins and other groups to actively help shape these processes, to discover new ways of dealing with heritage and thus to construct new forms of thinking about heritage that looks back on around 50 years of history.

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was ratified in 2003, differed from the 1972 convention by centering

community participation in their activities for the first time. Furthermore, it expanded the definition of material world heritage, which had previously been static and represented primarily by Europe, to include cultural practices, forms of knowledge, and presentations from the so-called Global South. With the FARO Convention, the Council of Europe promotes the importance of heritage for society and views it as an instrument of democracy and respect for human rights. Working in this field of research requires transdisciplinary expertise from cultural anthropologists, (art) historians, archaeologists, cultural scientists, but also lawyers, whose work makes a decisive contribution to clarifying – and communicating – the function of the past for the present. With this in mind, this volume brings together specialists from various disciplines who negotiate very different understandings and discourses on heritage. The volume is meant as a contribution to multiple practices of indigenous communities, citizens, institutions and other actors, as well as to an innovative and productive rethinking of heritage that emerges from such negotiations of practice and science.

Communication across great distances represents a basic prerequisite for globalization, and *TRA Present Pasts* intends to contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon. Communication is often characterized as information exchange and defined as an expressive act. For Niklas Luhmann, however, “understanding” is the third and most important element of communication: the meaning of a message depends on its listeners, who interpret it in the context of past communications. This realization is by no means trivial for disciplines that work with texts and artifacts of every shape and form; in many cases, only a statement survives, not its outcome. Similarly, one must always bear in mind that communication is preconfigured by past communications. This “autopoiesis” of communication, i.e. the capability to produce and maintain itself by creating its own parts, is a component of Luhmann’s theory of social systems that is based above all on expectations. Because globalization results in a world system, very different phenomena must be re-interpreted in the context of communication: stronger or weaker dependencies; social inequalities and dislocations; phenomena in migration and mobility; legitimation of political power and participation; processes of social resilience, reform, and revolution; navigation of calamitous challenges; in short: power relations of every kind.

Whereas globalization is characterized by accelerated communication, communication in pre-modern times was comparatively slow, which today is equated with backwardness. This misassumption is based on the Eurocentric view that earlier times were less innovative and that, since the beginning of the so-called modern era, history has been defined by continuous progress in human civilization. On the other hand, Andre Gunder Frank has argued that a form of globalization existed since the rise of trade links between the Sumer and the Indus Valley Civilization in the third millennium BCE. Even as early as the

Prehistoric period, the roots of modern globalization could be found. Territorial expansion of the *homo sapiens* to all five continents was a critical component in establishing globalization. The development of agriculture furthered globalization by converting the vast majority of the world's population into a settled lifestyle. Critics of these ideas argue that they rest on a very broad definition of globalization.

Other eras are therefore better suited to recognize the beginnings of globalization. Many scholars agree that an early form of globalized economics and culture existed during the Hellenistic Age. During this period, a culture mainly influenced by Ancient Greece stretched over a wide area from India to Southern Italy and Sicily. Others have perceived an early form of globalization in the trade connections between the Roman Empire, the Parthian Empire, and the Han Dynasty. The increasing articulation of commercial links between these powers inspired the development of the Silk Road, which started in Western China, reached the boundaries of the Parthian Empire, and continued onward towards Rome. The Islamic Golden Age was also an important early stage of globalization, when a sustained economy was established across Northern Africa and Western Asia resulting in a globalization of crops, trade, knowledge and technology. Further, the Mongolian Empire of the thirteenth century had some notable globalizing effects because of its expansion from the Chinese Sea to Eastern Europe. It witnessed the creation of the first 'international' postal service, as well as the rapid spread of epidemic diseases such as the bubonic plague – to return to our earlier remarks.

These pre-modern phases of global or hemispheric exchange are sometimes described as archaic globalization. Up to the sixteenth century, however, even the largest systems of international exchange were limited to Africa, Asia and Europe. The next phase of globalization was characterized by the rise of maritime European empires in the 16th and 17th centuries, first the Portuguese and Spanish, and later the Dutch and British Empires. One result was the enormous widespread exchange of plants, animals, foods, and human populations (including slaves) across the Atlantic Ocean. It was one of the most significant global events concerning culture, agriculture and ecology in history.

What followed was modern globalization. Nevertheless, the processes summarized under this keyword cannot be truly understood without analyzing past forms of interaction between individuals, societies and empires. These forms of interaction address pre-modern communication worldwide in a transcultural perspective. This volume is a first step to grasp not only past forms of *communication* but of *heritage* as well.

The initial contribution by *Patricia Ayala* opens up the concept of heritage based on the experiences of indigenous peoples in Chile. It describes the transition from a definition of cultural heritage and its control by nation state in-

stitutions to a redefinition of heritage by the indigenous peoples themselves as actors since the 1990s, when they were recognized by the state as part of Chilean history and national identity. Since then, the concept of heritage that, for example, overcomes the division into natural and cultural heritage has become increasingly important for self-determination and securing the cultural and territorial rights of indigenous peoples. The control of what constitutes heritage is correspondingly contested. Indigenous heritage is understood as a construction process that has no universal meaning, but whose meaning is always situational and culturally specific. In addition to the political significance of controlling heritage, these efforts by indigenous peoples contribute to the further development of academic knowledge from a historically and culturally situated and sensitive perspective.

By asking how heritage is made, *Sophie Elpers* also examines the processual concept of heritage on the basis of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), in this case with a strongly participatory approach of 'living heritage'. The proximity of this approach to the efforts to reconceptualize museums is striking. The question of the role of representations of the past and ideas about the future as well as entanglements, but also tensions that arise when museum people and intangible cultural heritage bearers collaborate, are shown in the article using three examples; heritage can thus be understood as a mode of communication. The actors involved in this dense network of collaboration have different approaches to the past and the future which means that heritage is always in the process of being created. Their practices unfold in a third space where different paradigms of cultural heritage and different perspectives on past, present and future worlds come together. These different approaches have led to a broader field of heritage, including the museum, which is characterized by translation, negotiation, innovation, engagement and mutual respect.

The article by *Quyen Mai and Girma Kelboro* questions the applicability of 'Western' (natural) heritage discourses in non-Western settings such as here in Vietnam, and in particular – as previously in *Ayala's* article – the nature-culture divide. Communities residing within protected areas perceive both people and nature as parts of a network of relationships. The 'discourse of difference' is introduced as a framework to understand that there are different ways to communicate culture in association with natural heritage. In other words, it is fundamentally about recognizing the heterogeneity and interconnectedness of different heritage discourses beyond a "Western" and "non-Western" dichotomy. Such an alternative communication of cultural heritage concerns both traditional and modern practices, global and local discourses, and the interrelationship between culture and nature.

Manuel May Castillo's contribution discusses the 'coloniality of heritage' with a particular focus on the cultural and legal spheres of the Maya. It highlights how

heritage institutions often restrict access to sacred sites, creating an asymmetrical dependency that marginalizes indigenous practices. The application of outdated laws, such as Article 27 of the Monuments Law, contradicts constitutional reforms aimed at protecting indigenous rights. Historical narratives portray Maya rituals as barbaric, reinforcing negative stereotypes that persist today. The text also examines 19th century land disputes, illustrating how colonial ideologies influenced legal claims to indigenous lands. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the socio-political context in which these heritage narratives were constructed. The author argues that Indigenous peoples are actively redefining heritage, using it as a tool for empowerment and anti-colonial resistance. By reclaiming their cultural practices and challenging colonial legacies, they seek to assert their identity and rights. Ultimately, the text argues for a more inclusive understanding of heritage that recognizes the contributions and perspectives of indigenous communities.

Stefan Feddern analyzes two complementary documents on Doña Isabel, the daughter of Moctezuma. In 1526, Hernán Cortés granted the *encomienda* of Tacuba to her, when he married her to Alonso de Grado. In this context, Cortés claimed that Moctezuma had handed over power to him peacefully to justify the claims of Doña Isabel. Shortly after her death in 1550 or 1551, the ruler of Tlacopan wrote a letter in Latin to Charles V referring to a lawsuit about the *encomienda* of Tacuba and bitterly complaining about Doña Isabel and her behaviour. It becomes clear, that both sources shed light not only on the political, legal and social inequality in Mexico after the Spanish conquest but also on the importance of Doña Isabel for the legitimation of the position of Cortés and his followers. In consequence, it was much more difficult for the representatives of the indigenous people to hold on to their interests.

Robert Plum is asking what to do with the growing number of churches, which will become obsolete due to secularization. There is an ongoing debate about the reuse of these buildings among heritage professionals, art historians, architects, and scholars of religion. The main problem is to what extent the specifically Christian character of these buildings should be preserved. Based on a critical-theoretical and postcolonial reading of these buildings Plum proposes to use their critical potential as an important contribution to social change.

When examining multi-religious spaces, *Kim de Wildt* takes a dual approach. On the one hand, she wants to examine them as part of the future legacy that is currently taking shape. On the other hand, she views multi-religious spaces as sites of interreligious dialogue and emphasizes the aspect of silence that primarily characterizes these spaces. Finally, she examines the question of whether multi-religious spaces are merely material representations of dialogues or actual dialogue spaces.

Hester Dibbits explores the concept of emotion networks as a method of engaging with cultural heritage. She defines emotion networks as groups of individuals with conflicting interests and emotions who interact and may change their positions during the discussion. The method involves visualizing these interactions through drawing or physical movement and allows participants to express their feelings about heritage issues. Dibbits emphasizes the importance of framing the discussions around specific heritage topics as this can significantly influence the emotional engagement of participants. The article emphasizes the dynamic nature of heritage conversations and shows how the introduction of new information can lead to changes in participants' perspectives. Finally, the article introduces the concept of emotional connectivity as a medium for a deeper understanding of cultural heritage. This approach aims to empower individuals to tackle the complexity of heritage and citizenship in today's society.

This volume goes back to a virtual conference that took place from June 2nd to 3rd, 2020 at the University of Bonn. The authors met again on April 22nd and 23rd 2021 for a workshop to discuss their contributions and develop common approaches to grasp the transcendence of *heritage* and *communication*. Additionally, Hester Dibbits' contribution was included through workshops in the summer of 2021 as part of a TRA Present Pasts-funded cooperation between the University of Bonn and the Bonn City Museum. If this volume is successful, it is primarily thanks to the commitment of the authors, for which we are deeply indebted to them.

Finally, in addition to all the contributors, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to a number of people who played a key role in the editorial support of the volume, namely Simon Hirzel, Sarah Moll, Jonathan Hamburg, and Lisa Opp. The TRA manager, Kim Alings, was also very committed to this volume. For his commitment to the cooperation with the Bonn City Museum we would like to thank Ove Sutter. Both the mentioned conference and the workshops were prepared and supervised by Christine Beyer, Frauke Scheffler, Elizabeth Stauß, and especially Simon Hirzel, for which we would also like to express our great thanks to them. Last but not least, we would like to thank Christoph Antweiler, who supported us with his professional knowledge and excellent advice.

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Patricia Ayala

Taking Their Heritage in Their Hands: Indigenous Claims to Museums and Archaeology in Chile

Abstract

The construction of the Chilean National State led to the extermination, denial and assimilation of Indigenous Peoples. Since the beginning of the 20th century, state agencies and their experts have defined, declared and controlled their cultural heritage. With the advent of multiculturalism in the 1990s, Indigenous Peoples were recognized as part of the Chilean history and national identity. Since then, they want to take their heritage in their hands. Indigenous Peoples look to define and control their heritage in their own terms and from their own world views. Their leaders raised demands to the State, archaeologists and museums. Until now they claim for inclusion and community permit, as well as for ownership and management of their cultural heritage and museums. They also request a respectful treatment of their ancestors, claiming in some cases the repatriation, restitution and/or re-burial of their ancestral remains.

Introduction

In the present days in Chile, heritage acquires more and more relevance for Indigenous Peoples in their struggles for self-determination and cultural and territorial rights. It is a concept that has been installed in their communities in recent decades and, in some cases, they do not have a word to translate it into their native languages. However, their definitions of heritage go beyond the original western conceptions, linked to the formation of European nation-states, which assigned a symbolic value to certain monuments or archaeological sites, as emblems of national identity. Historically, the definition and legitimation of heritage has been a practice of modern states with the support of disciplines such as archaeology and anthropology, from whose power and authority it was sought to legitimize a form of social control through manifestations of the past (Smith 2006). Patrimonialization is the process by which is defined what is heritage and therefore subject to conservation, protection and study by the experts of the past. In ethnic territory, patrimonialization entails the appropriation, musealization

and nationalization of indigenous memory, material culture and bodies of their ancestors (Ayala 2014).

During the first decades of the 19th century, the creation of the Chilean state led to the extermination, denial and assimilation of Indigenous Peoples. Since the beginning of the 20th century, according the first National Monuments Law (1925), the Chilean government demands legal ownership of archaeological heritage and indigenous human remains. With the advent of multiculturalism in the 1990s and the enactment of the Indigenous Law 19.253 in 1993, Indigenous Peoples were recognized as part of the Chilean history and national identity. This process was framed within a global context of emergence and visibility of indigenous movements since the 1960s. This scenario implied a new ideological, legal and institutional context in which the relations of the Chilean State with the Indigenous Peoples changed, since the state moved from an assimilationist and integration policy to one of recognition and promotion of cultural differences. From a position of power different from that of previous years, Indigenous Peoples emerged as agents who want to take their heritage in their hands. They want to define and control their heritage in their own terms and from their own worldviews. In this context, the authorized heritage discourse (Smith 2006) has been challenged, appropriated and resignified by these populations. Through demands for repatriation, restitution and re-burial, their leaders question the patrimonialization of their culture and the bodies of their ancestors.

In this chapter, heritage is understood not as a fact, but as a construction with a meaning given in a certain context, therefore its meaning is not immanent or universal but historically situated and culturally specific. Unlike other times, the concept of heritage encompasses historical evidence previously disregarded and the criteria for its definition have been broadened and made more flexible (Gnecco 2004). Although the indigenization of heritage is a process under construction and possible definitions are discussed among these peoples, it could be said that their conceptions of heritage are not crossed by dichotomies such as nature/culture and past/present. In any case, there is no doubt that there is not only one way to define heritage among Indigenous Peoples. It is also clear that the heritage discourse has been strategically appropriated in their own struggles, in addition to being a tool in their integration to the tourism industry and ethno development projects in the multicultural era.

The currently recognized Indigenous People in Chile are: Aymara, Quechua, Atacameño, Kolla, Diaguita, Chango, Mapuche, Kawésqar and Yagán, as well as the Rapa Nui that inhabit Easter Island in Polynesia. In this chapter I will focus specifically in the Atacameño, Mapuche and Rapa Nui People as an example of the indigenization of the patrimonialization process.

1. Indigenous Heritage in the Multicultural Era

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the reconfiguration of the Chilean state in the democratic period goes hand in hand with the installation of neoliberal multiculturalism. With the participation and recognition of cultural difference as a new art of government, culture began to occupy a central place in public debate and in the identity construction of indigenous populations and the new Chilean nation. Since the State had previously disseminated a nationalist discourse of rupture between the indigenous past and present, the multicultural political discourse changed the relation of these populations with their past, when the Indigenous Law 19.253 affirmed that the ethnic groups are descendants of pre-Hispanic societies. This law also integrated Indigenous People to the national history, and this led Chileans to re-imagine themselves as a multi-ethnic nation and to re-invent themselves through a long-standing linear temporality, which places the pre-Hispanic past at the origins of the multicultural Chilean nation.

On the other hand, the re-elaboration of the past of the ethnic groups in Chile has been a process of readjustment, tensions and contradictions between the preexisting notions of identity, ancestry and temporality and those imposed by the multicultural state (Ayala 2008 and 2014). Along with this, the indigenous connections with the past and their archaeological heritage differ from each other, since these are heterogeneous communities with their own political specificities and internal struggles. However, despite their cultural diversity, at different times and from different perspectives, indigenous leaders expressed their demands and claims to the state and archaeology at public events, meetings, congresses, institutional documents and publications. In the north, Atacameño People claimed the ownership and management of their archaeological heritage, as well as information on investigations, community permit and indigenous participation. They also request not exhibiting human bodies or excavating archaeological cemeteries beside the return and re-burial of their ancestral remains. Moreover, the Atacameños sought to manage the Archaeological Museum of San Pedro de Atacama (Cárdenas 2001; Ayala 2008). In the south, Juana Paillalef (1998) posed the problems observed in the conservation and protection of indigenous heritage and criticized the excavation of burial sites in Mapuche territory, highlighting archaeology's lack of consideration towards the interests of local communities. In Easter Island, Rapa Nui leaders criticized archaeological excavations, the study of cemeteries, the lack of information on research and the absence of community-based permits (Seelenfreund 2008). They also request a respectful treatment of their ancestors, claiming the repatriation and/or re-burial of their ancestral remains (Arthur 2015).

The initial response of the State to the indigenous demands was the creation of preservation, conservation, valorization and management projects of archaeo-

logical sites. This process involved the National Monuments Council, the National Indigenous Development Corporation and the National Forestry Corporation, as well as regional museums and archaeologists. In the north, the Atacameño case was pioneer involving the archaeological sites of Aldea de Tulo, Pukara de Quito and Lasana and the rock art of Peine (Ayala 2014). Specifically, in San Pedro de Atacama, the community management projects were characterized by conflicts over the power of representation of the past and for the control and ownership of archaeological heritage (Ayala 2008).

Meanwhile, in the south of the country, during the construction of the Bypass Temuco, two pre-Hispanic burial sites were found and the human remains and archaeological objects were sent to Santiago. Members of the Mapuche community opposed the removal of this collection and demanded their return. The restitution from the National Museum of Natural History occurred three months later, now the archaeological remains are hosted by the Regional Museum of Araucanía (Paredes 2015).

In Easter Island, there were conflicts between archaeologists and Indigenous Peoples, although in this case the demand was to include the local community in research projects carried out by a team of foreign archaeologists, who said they had done everything to establish a fluid relationship with the community. For Andrea Seelenfreund (2008), these conflicts were directly related to the incorporation of tourists who pay to participate in scientific expeditions, and a subsequent failure to call on local labor who depend on working in this kind of projects.

Since the beginning of 21st century, there was a significant change in national indigenous politics, consistent with a participatory multicultural discourse (Bolados 2010) and coinciding with a transformation in heritage management, which was assumed as state policy. This process involved the creation of new institutions, the discussion of renewed laws, greater and diverse access to economic resources, as well as the promotion of a discourse of 'citizen participation' in the National Monuments Council. In addition, the Area of Indigenous Heritage in this institution has been created, in charge of promoting ethno development projects and ethnic professionalization. In this context, Chilean archaeology showed a more dialogic approach and search for common understanding, coinciding with the participatory multicultural discourse of democratic governments. This has materialized in new types of relationships, in the integration of the indigenous voice, the assessment of local histories and perspectives and the diversification of the spaces of diffusion of archaeological discourse (Ayala 2014).

However, despite community participation and the deepening of multicultural politics, conflicts continue between some museums, archaeologists, Indigenous Peoples, the state and/or private companies. This is the case, for

example, of the UNESCO-JAPON Project for the conservation of archaeological sites in Rapa Nui (2005), which involved an important participation of local people. However, the fact that this did not become a permanent program with the support of the State revived the distrust of the Rapa Nui population regarding Chile's lack of commitment to the island and the rejection of archaeologists who do not integrate members of their communities in their research (Seelenfreund 2008). In Atacameño territory, the accidental discovery of an infant and its offerings in the framework of an environmental impact project generated a series of disputes over the power of decision on indigenous archaeological heritage, despite the participation of community visitors in the work done in the field site (Rodríguez and Villaseca 2015).

2. Working towards Collaboration and Decolonization

An example of a new type of relationship between Indigenous People, museums and archaeologist is the decision of the Archaeological Museum of San Pedro de Atacama to withdraw human remains from their permanent exhibition in 2006. After nearly a year of meetings between representatives of Atacameño communities and museum professionals, the removal of human remains from the exhibition took place in 2007. Although this process was concluded with the understanding that the removal of human remains was an important 'first step' in favor of respecting the Atacameño ownership claims and beliefs, some leaders of this community reiterated their request for the return and re-burial of human remains hosted in this museum (Sepúlveda and Ayala 2008; Ayala 2020). Before, during and after this process, Atacameño professionals from this museum contributed to the creation and legitimation of cultural protocols to redignify and preserve the bodies of the abuelos or ancestors (Cruz et. al. 2020). Both the changes in the exhibition and in the conservation area show a trend towards collaboration and decolonization of museological practices in this institution.

In 2021, a collaborative project was created between non-indigenous researchers and Atacameño researchers entitled "collecting and patrimonialization of indigenous bodies in Atacameño territory". The research questions are: where are our abuelos or ancestors?, when and why did they leave the land and the territory?, who took them out?, how are they now?. This project seeks to answer these questions in order to provide information to the Atacameño People about the location of their collections and to promote a discussion regarding their return, repatriation and/or reburial. Until now, Atacameño collections have been identified throughout the national territory and in the United States, Europe, and Argentina (Ayala et al. 2022).

Another example of collaboration is the reopening in 2010 of the Mapuche Museum in Cañete. Since then, this institution is called Ruka Kimvn Taiñ Volil Museum – Juan Cayupi Huechicura, and considers an important Mapuche participation as well as a decolonized perspective (Paillalef 2017). The application of cultural protocols in the change of the permanent exhibition, as well as in the reburial of a funerary context, show a process of museological indigenization not only in their practices and discourses, but also in the sentiment of the Mapuche Lavkenche community, which currently conceives this museum as its own (Obreque and Muñoz 2020).

Since 2013 the Rapa Nui have an independent and autonomous program of repatriation, care and re-burial of human remains or *Ivi-Tupuna* (ancestors). It is an experience created and managed by members of the Rapa Nui community, working in collaboration with the Anthropological Museum Padre Sebastián Englert and researchers (Arthur 2015 and 2018). From the Rapa Nui perspective, the search for ancestors is a matter of community health and reencounter with oneself and cultural protocols are a path towards decolonization and redignification of the *Ivi-Tupuna* (Tuki and Arthur 2020).

3. Repatriation and Re-burial of the Ancestors

The scientific treatment of human remains and its definition as national heritage has been repeatedly contested by indigenous communities in Chile, even more so with the installation of state multiculturalism since the 1990s. Demands for the return, repatriation and re-burial of their ancestors are part of the indigenous movements to take their heritage in their hands. Although this country does not have a law in this regard, from 2009, the Council of National Monuments has an Instructive guide for the re-burial of human remains coming from archeological contexts, at the request of communities and organizations (González 2008; Arthur 2015).

The first repatriation process occurred in the 1980s long before the enactment of the Indigenous Law in 1993 and the impact of the NAGPRA Act of the United States, enacted in 1990. In October 1975 the Smithsonian Institution returned three flagstones from the ceremonial village of Orongo to the Chilean State. The *moai*, brought to the Kon Tiki Museum in Oslo by the Norwegian expedition, was restituted in the 1980s and is currently at the Sebastian Englert Museum in Rapa Nui. Also during the 80s, members of the Atacameño communities requested the return of an archaeological collection sent to the National Museum of Natural History in Santiago (Ayala 2008). Something similar happened in 2001 when Mapuche communities demanded the return of human remains found in the archaeological excavations of Bypass Temuco that were transferred to the same

city (Paredes 2015). These experiences served as antecedents to the later repatriation and re-burial of human remains culturally linked with Aymara and Atacameño populations. Its execution was subject to an agreement signed between the Council of National Monuments and the National Museum of the American Indian of the Smithsonian Institute, as well as an agreement between the Council and the communities involved (González 2008).

In 2010, the University of Zurich in Switzerland restituted the remains of five Kawésqar individuals to their home community in Tierra del Fuego, in Chile's extreme south. In 2011, the Museum of Ethnography in Geneva, also in Switzerland, returned four mummies to the Miguel de Azapa Museum in Arica. A recent case of re-burial is within the Aymara community of Quillagua, which worked together with archaeologists, curators and state agents to value, protect and preserve a funerary archaeological collection that later remained under the protection of their community. As a final step of this project, parts of the rescued human remains were re-buried in the cemetery at a ceremony organized and presided over by the local indigenous community (García et al. 2012). Another re-burial that had state approval is that of the Atacameño community of Taira, which was carried out as part of an environmental impact study financed by the mining company CODELCO (Rodríguez and Villaseca 2015). Negotiations and the search for consensus between this company, government agencies and the Atacameño community of Taira lasted for several months, as indigenous leaders established a series of demands regarding the treatment of the human remains and their funeral context, trying to achieve the maximum of return and the minimum possible intervention, in view of the final act of re-burial.

In contrast to these experiences regulated and controlled by the Council of National Monuments, in the late 1980s a re-burial of human remains and cultural objects led by members of the Atacameño community of Chiu Chiu, without the authorization of this institution was carried out in an archaeological cemetery (Ayala 2008). Something similar began to happen in the south of Chile, where due to the perception of some Mapuche community leaders that the heritage legislation does not protect them like the rest of the Chileans, actions have been carried out for self-protection of property without the Council's permission (Paredes 2015). On the one hand, this has resulted in the refusal to report the discovery of human remains and archaeological artifacts to the authorities, opting for their conservation 'in situ'. On the other hand, if the removal has been carried out, some Mapuche could opt for the conservation of the pieces in the localities where they were found and they would be administered by the communities, a situation that is only applicable to material remains and not to human remains, as they prefer not to disturb them.

In January 2018, the repatriation of two *tupuna* (ancestors) took place, in what was the first international repatriation of human bodies in the history of Rapa

Nui People and the first directly managed by their own Repatriation Program. The returned *tupuna* were kept at the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and the Otago Museum, both in New Zealand (Arthur 2018). This process showed a series of difficulties with the Council of National Monuments, which sought to regulate the procedures and reaffirm the national ownership of human remains and validate the scientific vision. For the Rapa Nui people these human remains must be returned directly to the community without conditions or imposed regulations, since they are not the property of the Nation-State but are the ancestors of Rapa Nui people (Arthur 2018). The Rapa Nui also have a repatriation in process from Norway. Added to this is a request for the repatriation of a *moai* from La Serena and the request for the restitution of another *moai* to the British Museum (Ayala and Arthur 2020).

These experiences show how indigenous movements that seek the return of their ancestors to their territories, challenge the coloniality of collecting, archaeology and the processes of patrimonialization. They also evidence the impact that the indigenous repatriation and re-burial movements have had on the generation of new paradigms for the ethical treatment of indigenous bodies in Chile. At the same time, Atacameños, Mapuches and Rapa Nui develop cultural protocols for the work of conservation, exhibition, repatriation and re-burial of the bodies of their ancestors.

4. Final Words

In this chapter I wanted to show the difficulties and complexities experienced by Indigenous People who want to take their heritage in their hands. While they have obtained answers to some of their demands, there is still a long way to go due to persistent disputes with the State, museums and archaeologists. Like other indigenous demands, cases of repatriation and reburial have brought to light problems about the ownership and rights over heritage. The Chilean government demands legal ownership of human remains and archaeological objects and archaeologists have the right to access, study, interpret, preserve, and protect this heritage. At the same time, beside other experts, archaeologists are called to determine which Indigenous Groups have the right to repatriate and/or re-bury their ancestors, and how this process needs to be done. On the other hand, indigenous leaders claim their rights to define and control their cultural heritage before the state and the scientific establishment.

Despite these struggles for the control, definition and ownership of indigenous heritage, in recent years important experiences of collaboration and decolonization have been developed. These initiatives show that the construction of relationships of trust and collaboration between archaeologists, museum pro-