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Published in:
Archaeology and Photography

Publication date:
2019

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Citation for published version (APA):

Thomas, A. (2019). Duration and representation in archaeology and photography. In L. McFadyen, & D. Hicks (Eds.), *Archaeology and Photography: Time, Objectivity and Archive* Bloomsbury Academic.
<http://www.brownsbfs.co.uk/Product/McFadyen-Lesley-Birkbeck-University-of-London-UK/Archaeology-and-Photography--Time-Objectivity-and-Archive/9781350029682>

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7. Duration and representation in archaeology and photography

Late February 1925, Brodgar Farm, Stenness, Orkney.¹

It had already been a long, hard winter. Like all Orkney farmers James Wishart was keen to get on with the business of getting his land ploughed, harrowed and sown for the next season's silage crop. But his field contained rather a lot of sizeable and awkward stones, which would have to be removed before they damaged his plough. He had pulled out a good number when a large flagstone slab caught his eye: strikingly carved along one of its edges, with pattern of bands not unlike a Fair Isle sweater.

Wishart had to dig around the stone to remove it, and more objects began to emerge: two balls of stone, just bigger than his fist and smooth like beach pebbles. But the field needed ploughing, and it wouldn't clear itself of these rocks. He placed his finds by the dyke and carried on. He was little interested in old stones, carved or not, and there was work to be done. Even so Wishart thought he would mention the matter to his neighbour Peter Leith, who liked to look at such things. Leith had a keen knowledge of local history and archaeology. He also happened to be one of the few people in the West Mainland who owned a camera.

Leith came by straight away. As soon as he saw the stone, he knew he wanted to photograph it. He placed the slab on top of a roll of barbed wire in the farmyard, set up his tripod and plates, and looked through the viewfinder. When he had first examined the stone with Wishart, the deep grooves of the incised lines were obvious. If the light caught them just right then they were as clear as if they had been painted. But now through the camera lens the carvings were barely visible. Leith took a stick of chalk from his pocket and rubbed it along each incised mark, blowing away the excess to highlight the lines. When he developed his glass-plate negatives the next day, he was happy enough. The exposure of the sky wasn't quite right, but the stone was just as he wanted, and the chalk-filled lines were as clear as day (Figure 7.1).¹

Introduction

This chapter explores duration and representation in archaeology and photography. Its point of departure is the photographic print reproduced in Figure 7.1. The paper is aged and torn, the photograph slightly overexposed, and the print poorly aligned with the edge of the photographic paper. The image shows a large stone slab decorated with eight bands of incised markings, resting on an *ad hoc* plinth formed by the circular lid of a wooden barrel, on top of a roll of barbed wire. There is a roughly built drystone wall in the background. The various pieces of wood, metal and sacking on the ground, suggest a hastily constructed scene. The subject of the picture is a piece of flagstone which was quarried and decorated in the Neolithic, and unearthed by accident during early spring ploughing in February 1925 in Orkney, Scotland. Now known as the Brodgar Stone, it was captured on film by the camera of amateur local photographer Peter Leith on the day of its discovery.

As an artefact, and as an image, this can be interpreted from a range of different perspectives. My concern in this chapter, however, is not with the stone's original archaeological context (on which see Thomas 2016). Nor is it with an interpretation of the photographer's technical ability, or the aesthetics of the image itself. Instead, this chapter will explore how a study of this first photograph of the stone, and subsequent images produced of it, can be useful in understanding the relationship between archaeology, photography and time. In particular, I wish to examine the nature of *duration*, and the role it plays in the representation of the past. Crucial to the discussion is the way in which both archaeology and photography are frequently considered as ways of 'capturing' the past. This notion rests upon an understanding of temporality purely as *chronology*, and leaves little space for an understanding of the multi-durational character of the past.

¹ Thomas 2016, xv

This chapter presents an alternative view. It challenges the idea that photographs capture a fixed moment in time, and instead considers them as multi-durational artefacts. I will argue that this has implications for how we understand and represent the nature and reality of the past in archaeology. Thinking through photography can thus provide an analogy for how we encounter, and work with, the visual and material culture of archaeology in the present.

Archaeology and Photography

Over the past two decades, the shared disciplinary histories of archaeology and photography have been the subject of much discussion (e.g. Bohrer 2005; Bohrer 2011a; Hamilakis and Infantidis 2015; Shanks 1997; Shanks and Svabo 2013). As techniques and technologies, they both represent, as Michael Shanks and Connie Svabo have noted, ‘constituting moments of modernity’ (Shanks and Svabo 2013: 90). Archaeology and photography emerged in parallel during the mid-nineteenth century, as reciprocal endeavours which shared a common desire to apprehend past events. The objectifying process of photography lifts things out of the past, to be viewed in the present, ‘like flies in amber’ (Wollen 1984: 118). Archaeology operates in an analogous manner, through what Yannis Hamilakis, Aris Anagnostopoulos, and Fotis Infantidis describe as ‘the selective recovery, reconstitution and restoration of the fragmented material traces of the past’ (Hamilakis *et al.* 2009: 285). Unsurprisingly, archaeological metaphors frequently appear in discussions of the photographic process (Bohrer 2011a: 8).

Archaeology and photography certainly share numerous interlinked concerns with the past and its representation. But to consider either archaeology or photography as ways of ‘capturing’ the past highlights a certain approach to time, and in particular duration, that requires further examination. It relies upon a notion of time purely as a uniform, linear and unidirectional *chronology* (Lucas 2005: 10). A chronological approach to time imagines it as made up of a series of instantaneous, fixed events akin to photographic *snapshots*. This bears little relation to the complexity of human experience, and effectively reduces the past to a series of ‘still frames’ (McFadyen 2013: 141). The past might be better understood as *durational*, comprising ‘things that were produced and shaped in the past, but continue to live and exist in the present’ (Hamilakis and Infantidis 2015: 139; Olivier 2001: 61). This understanding might at first seem to run counter to a photographic understanding of time. But this durational quality, and the ability to enact multiple times simultaneously, is also common to photography (Hamilakis and Infantidis 2015: 139). Thus, there is no such thing as an instantaneous photograph (Szarkowski 1980: 101), since even an apparent ‘snapshot’ contains a coalescence of times (cf. Plummer 2012: 36).

This is significant, as photography and archaeology also work together in a mutually constitutive role. Photography *mediates* the past, turning ‘ancient sites and collections into textual and graphical forms that can be shared and discussed’ (Shanks and Svabo 2013: 90). This brings with it a further entanglement. With its apparent ability to act as a ‘time machine’ (Badger 2007: 8), photography occupies a favoured role amongst modes of visual production and representation (Hunt and 2010). Its apparent objectivity has meant that it has endured as the dominant medium of recording across a range of academic disciplines (Edwards 2011: 161) and photography has been at the heart of archaeological practice and representation since the outset (Shanks and Svabo 2013: 89). Theorising photographs as multi-durational, however, disrupts any notion that photographs capture a fixed moment in time. It challenges assumptions that they might offer an immutable, objective representation of the past, and highlights the relationships between images and their representations, and between art and duration more generally (Baetens *et al.* 2010: xii). Exploring the multiple durations of photography can thus open up a parallel understanding of the temporal complexity which runs through archaeological material and practice. This allows us to examine the modes in which archaeologists have understood, represented and interpreted past visual culture – including artefacts such as the Brodgar Stone.

The Brodgar Stone: before and after

News of Wishart's 1925 discovery soon spread around local antiquarian circles. Later on that year a short note was published on the find by Dr Hugh Marwick in the *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, a local learned journal (Marwick 1925). This was illustrated by a further photograph of the stone. The image is tightly cropped around the artefact, but the slab seems to have been placed on a wooden plank. A drystone wall is visible in the background. Although the photographer of this image is not known, the lighting, orientation, and composition, suggests that it is the work of local professional Tom Kent. A native Orcadian, Kent had emigrated to America in his teens and become apprenticed to the studio of society photographer M. J. Steffens in Chicago. He returned to Orkney in 1898 and set up a shop and studio of his own, specialising in a wide range of subjects including artefacts and archaeological sites (Tinch 1988: 182). Two further, attributed, prints by Kent of the Brodgar Stone survive in the Orkney Archives. It is interesting to compare these images with Leith's earlier photograph (*Figures 7.1 and 7.2*). Kent's studio for the shot, like Peter Leith's, was *en plein air*, in the farmyard at Brodgar, but the professional photographer substituted the roll of barbed wire for a wooden barrel. Kent lay the stone horizontally, but turned it 180 degrees from Leith's orientation. In one of the images (*Figure 7.2*), Kent followed Leith in placing hammerstones from the discovery on top of the slab, but included a third stone found after the amateur had taken his photograph. But most significantly of all, in Kent's images the lines of the incised decoration are not chalked in. The early spring sunlight was at just the right angle to give the necessary contrast, raking across the edge of the slab and showing the carved lines perfectly (Thomas 2016: 3).

It was not until April 1925 that James G. Marwick, the local Provost, was able to visit Brodgar Farm to see Wishart's find. The place where the stone had been pulled from the field was no longer visible, but propped up against the wall in the barn, he found what he had come for: the large slab with the 'curious marks' that everyone had been talking about. Marwick immediately set about preparing his report on the discovery for the *Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*. Published in the Society's *Proceedings* (Marwick 1926), this article was to have a far wider readership, and influence, than the note on the discovery that had appeared the year before in the *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*. And crucially, it was Leith's image – rather than Kent's - which Marwick used to illustrate his report.

The year after the article's publication, and at James Marwick's suggestion, the Brodgar Stone was purchased for the National Museum in Edinburgh. It has been on display almost continuously since its accession. Although it was later placed vertically, the early museum display in the 1940s, and contemporary National Museum of Scotland photographs of the stone placed the stone horizontally on a plinth (*Figure 7.3*). This followed the mode of display seen in the first photographs of the stone by Leith and Kent. But despite having been on display in Edinburgh since the 1920s, in the wider archaeological literature, the Brodgar Stone has received only passing attention. Consider how the Stone has been represented through drawn illustrations in the archaeological literature over the past four decades (*Figure 7.4*). Elizabeth Shee Twohig omitted it from her otherwise comprehensive 1981 work on megalithic and related art – although she briefly referred to it, unillustrated, in a 1997 article (Twohig 1981, 1997). Colin Richards' doctoral thesis *An Archaeological Study of Neolithic Orkney* (1993) illustrated the decorated edge of the slab as a vertically-oriented line drawing, following the orientation of the later museum display. In a subsequent analysis of 'Incised and Pecked Motifs in Orkney Chambered Tombs' (Bradley *et al.* 2000), the line drawing of the stone is oriented horizontally, in the same way as Peter Leith's original photograph. Alexandra Shepherd (2000) followed this format, but the motifs were abstracted from the outline of the stone (Thomas 2016: 191). Paul Brown and Graeme Chappell's (2005) illustration returned to the orientation of Tom Kent's photograph.

The slight variations between these drawn representations of the Brodgar Stone are superficially unimportant, but they reveal a number of more fundamental issues. Each drawing has been transcribed from a photograph, whether Leith's, Kent's, or the National Museum of Scotland image (*Figures 7.1-7.3*). But the drawings also share something else in common: in each case the photographs have set the standard for not only what is depicted, but also what is actually *seen*. In particular, certain elements of the stone's style and motifs have been entirely overlooked. Ever since

Peter Leith chalked in the edge of the slab for his 1925 image, it has only been the stone's *incised* marks that have received attention. But there are also accompanying - and apparently overlying - *pecked* and *ground* marks along the stone's edge (*Figure 7.5*). A deep cup has been ground into the cross-and-lozenge band, and several distinct depressions can be seen by the banded lozenge design. These comprise three discrete peck-marks, arranged in a triangular manner, with a smaller peck-mark in the middle of one side. Any possibility that these marks could be accidental, or due to damage, can be dismissed by comparison with other stones found at the Ness of Brodgar. The same 'triple-cup' motif, comprising three pecked, ground or drilled cups arranged in a triangular manner, occurs frequently throughout the assemblage. In the case of Small Finds SF17506, SF11546 and SF11566 (*Figure 7.5b, c and d*), there is a smaller peck-mark between two of the larger ones, as seen on the Brodgar Stone. In the case of SF11566 (*Figure 7.5d*), the pecked motif also overlies an incised banded design. Despite appearing to be part of a wider pattern of focussed, deliberate marking, the pecked and ground working on the Brodgar Stone had, until recently, been entirely ignored (Thomas 2016: 193).

This simple recognition has profound implications. Through a range of incised, pecked and ground marks, the Brodgar Stone displays a sequence of decoration and alteration involving multiple engagements at different times. It is unclear that its decoration was ever 'finished', or that the Stone was ever intended to be a final form. Since its design would be added to, defaced, altered or augmented, any 'meaning' which we might seek to discern in the decoration cannot be fixed or static. These different acts of marking do not represent discrete 'events', but ongoing processes of differing durations, perhaps interrupted by long hiatuses or periods of intense activity (cf. Bailey and McFadyen 2010: 378). This challenges the Stone's status as art, and the purely visual consumption that this term implies. It leads us to consider the Brodgar Stone instead as a multi-durational artefact. It indicates that the *process* of working may be as significant as its *form* (Thomas 2016: 225). This has repercussions for how we understand the creation and appreciation of carvings in the Neolithic, and their relationship to different phases of architecture and activity.

This also tells us a great deal about the representation of the past in archaeology. The line drawings shown in *Figure 7.5* depict only a virtual Brodgar Stone, as it appears to exist in various early photographs. But, and as Frederick Bohrer has argued, 'photography has ... a double impact that does as much to create anew as to record what is pre-existent' (Bohrer 2011b: 32). The early photographs of the Brodgar Stone have effectively displaced the original artefact to become the *prima facie* evidence; what started as a representation has become the reality. This process is then continued as the line drawings themselves become represented as an objective point of fact, which is then interpreted in accompanying texts. As Stephanie Moser and Sam Smiles have observed,

'images of the past survive longer than the theories they were designed originally to support; they linger on in museum displays, as illustrations in archaeologically oriented books, and as part of popular culture.' (Moser and Smiles 2005: 6).

But the illustrations of the Brodgar Stone show only part of the picture. In each of the illustrations, the artefact has been presented as the result of a single event. Only one stage of decoration (the incising), and thus one imagined single point in time, has been represented (Thomas 2016: 192). The material past has been misread as if it is a fixed, *photographic* instant. And in this instance, the work of the camera, refracted through the drawn illustrations, is implicated in the representation of this moment in time. This demonstrates a wider problem of archaeological interpretation and recording which favours 'the moment of creation over the *duration of appreciation*' (Barrett 1999: 22; my emphasis).

I have argued that this problem relates to archaeology's loyalty to the linear time of *chronology*, which sees the past as a series of photographic *snapshots*. We might struggle to function without it (Lucas 2005: 27), but as an *unquestioned* and exclusive framework for understanding the past, chronology is clearly problematic (Thomas 2016: 184). We need to consider other ways of thinking about time.

Philosophy and time

How can philosophical approaches to time and duration contribute to these observations? As the ‘single most pervasive component of our experience’ (Sklar 1998: 413), time has often been conceptualized by philosophers as a tension between *stasis* and *change*. That idea is often illustrated by Zeno’s famous paradox. This uses the example of an arrow in flight, which at any given moment, both moves and occupies a single point in time, thus demonstrating the fundamental *aporia* or paradox of time. It assumes that time is an infinite succession of instants, within which things cannot simultaneously occupy a point and change (Lucas 2005: 19-20). Aristotle refuted Zeno’s paradox by arguing that time was not a series of instants, but rather an infinitely divisible continuum from past to future. This continuum was connected by the present as both a point and a line; for Aristotle, time was movement, *spatialized* to become an abstract and objective container for human action (Lucas 2012: 21).

At the start of the twentieth century, J.E. McTaggart’s *The Unreality of Time* (1908) revisited the *aporia* and distinguished between two types of time: A-series and B-series. In this model, A-series represents *time as continuum* (past-present-future), whilst the B-series emphasises *time as a series of successive instants* (time as a sequence of historical dates). In the B-series, things always occupy the same relative position: they are earlier than/before, later than/after something else, and this quality is *permanent*. But in the A-series, time is problematic, as what was once future becomes present, and then past: it *changes* (McTaggart 1908: 458). Since something cannot be simultaneously past, present and future, the A-series has to be explained in terms of the B-series (Lucas 2005: 21). We do not experience time as the succession of points defining the B-series, so this experienced time defies simple measurement (Gosden 1994: 2). This tension between ‘measured’ and ‘human’ time lies at the heart of archaeological discussions of time, as we attempt to understand the human creation of time within a chronological framework created by measured time (Gosden 1994: 2; Thomas 2016: 184).

For McTaggart, the co-dependence of the A-series and B-series was contradictory, and so for him time must be *unreal* (McTaggart 1908: 458; Lucas 2005: 21). Following McTaggart, Henri Bergson also acknowledged the paradoxical nature of time, but without considering it any less ‘real’ (Bergson 1911). A major part of Bergson’s thinking rests upon the suggestion that we do not experience time as a series of instants, but as *duration*, or *durée*. But what is significant to the current discussion, is the way in which Bergson’s approach relates not only to the past, but also to the future; the way in which a consideration of duration

‘involves the fracturing and opening up of the past and the present to what is virtual in them, to what in them differs from the actual, to what in them can bring forth the new’ (Grosz 2005: 4-5).

Many archaeologists have observed how Bergson’s approach is particularly apposite when dealing with the multiple durations of past material remains. A Bergsonian approach to archaeology might recognize the material past not as a static sequence, but

‘as intermingling remains that persist through time by virtue of qualities of durability. Every site, every place contains vestiges of its history, because the past, in its materiality, hangs on’ (Shanks and Svabo 2013: 100).

As Yannis Hamilakis and Jo Labanyi have noted, Bergson’s ideas regarding duration are particularly pertinent when dealing with archaeological objects which ‘were created at a certain point in time but have subsequently been reworked, reengaged with and reactivated through human social practice’, since such objects ‘speak of time as coexistence rather than succession. And they embody, materially and physically, memory as duration’ (Hamilakis and Labanyi 2009: 6). This understanding of the past as a *coexistence*, or *coalescence* of times (cf. Plummer 2012: 36) is pertinent to both archaeology and photography. It runs counter to thinking which sees the past as made up of static and discrete ‘events’, and instead suggests that the past is much less certain, and is rather ‘like the future ...[existing] along a ‘spectrum of possibilities’’ (Witmore 2012: 29).

Edmund Husserl subsequently developed Bergson’s theories through his phenomenology of internal time-consciousness (1966). Husserl argued that when we hear a musical tone, it flows; but when we represent it, we can only *represent* a series of notes. Similarly, he suggested, our consciousness perceives time as flowing, but we can represent this temporal flux only as a series of instants. Husserl thus presented a tension between the *representation* of time and the ‘essential’

character of time, with the former relegated to a secondary role (Lucas 2005: 22). Using Husserl's phenomenological theory of internal time consciousness as a starting point, Alfred Gell argued that

'our access to time is confined to the A-series flux, through which we interact with 'real' time, via the mediation of temporal maps which provide us with a surrogate for real time. These *reconstructions* of B-series time are not the real thing . . . but we are obliged to rely on them' (Gell 1992: 239-240; my emphasis).

These observations have implications for how we understand the relationship between archaeology and the representation of the past.

Archaeology and Representation

In archaeology, Husserl's tension emerges especially in relation to how time is *visualized* or *represented*; that is, how we 'reconstruct' B-series time. Artefacts, buildings, sites, and entire past activities and processes become preserved by record, supplanted by the 'secondary, mimetic topographies of fact and imagination: notebook, drawing, photograph, museum, archive' (Hicks 2016: 33). Three-dimensional artefacts are reconstructed and translated into photographs and two-dimensional decontextualised line drawings, which are easily printed and reproduced in book form (Bradley 1997). These allow the comparison of the form of objects, artefacts and buildings across a very wide geographical and temporal range, facilitating arbitrary judgments relating to aesthetic values or perceived evolutionary developments (Scott 2006: 637; Thomas 2016: 183). These practices of visual comparison relate to the overwhelming 'ocularcentrism' of Western science – the privileging of the visual over the other senses (Thomas 2008). More specifically, they form part of a wider anthropological tradition of representation, whereby the ability to visualize a society becomes synonymous with understanding it (Fabian 1983: 106).

The problem lies with the way in which archaeology's visual conventions still produce, and perpetuate, a particular conception of time. This is the time of chronology: linear, unidirectional and evolutionary. When represented as parts of a chronological sequence, the constituent features of an archaeological site are rendered atemporal (Chadwick 1998; Lucas 2005: 40). Archaeological discussions of carved stones such as the Brodgar Stone are frequently categorised and understood through groupings based on their visual characteristics. The stones are abstracted from their archaeological contexts, and reduced to formal qualities in order to be viewed and compared simultaneously (Thomas 2008: 8). Form is privileged over process. The past is objectified, seen, ordered, and *othered* through the lens of the archaeologist in the present (cf. Fabian 1983: 106; Thomas 2016: 183). Reduced to forms through photography and illustration, artefacts are removed from the processes by which they were made, placed and appreciated (Thomas 2016). They are presented as visual instants: defined by apparent similarities which reinforce their appearance as fixed, static entities, and reified to the point where they are uncritically accepted as a 'real' version of the past (Bailey and McFadyen 2010: 576). This was demonstrated by the early photographs of the Brodgar Stone: at first representations of the past, these became reality; folded together with the object of the study itself and actively influencing what is *seen* (cf. Bradley 1997: 68). Archaeology thus not only depicts time: it also creates it (González-Ruibal 2013: 14).

In reducing objects to instantaneous forms or *snapshots*, archaeology's reliance with time as chronology is thus inescapably bound up with how it makes time through representation. But thinking through photography can reveal something it shares with archaeology: the potential for approaching time and representation outside of this particular chronological framework - in particular to think about duration.

Photography and Duration

Photography has always had a 'deeply ambivalent relationship to time' (Hunt and Schwarz 2010: 259). From the outset, with Daguerre and Muybridge's early images of objects and bodies in flight, photographs have seemed to isolate things and people from the flow of time, in a 'kind of visual aporia' (Lowry 2010: 54). With the birth of cinema, the moving image brought 'a fundamental change

in our understanding of time, so much so that photographic and cinematographic metaphors came to illustrate Bergson's own philosophy of perception' (Sutton 2009: 69). The different durational qualities of the moving image have been a common theme in discussions of the temporality of photography (Plummer 2012: 1). Gilles Deleuze, for example, used Bergson's account of duration in his account of the 'movement-image' and 'time-image' in cinema (Deleuze 1989a, 1989b). Deleuze's distinction between the idea of film as a series of successive images, or 'a coexistence of distinct durations' (Deleuze 1989b: xii) – echoes the distinction explored above between time as a series of successive instants and time as a simultaneous continuum. But just as in the study of cinema, so in the study of still photographs we can explore the durational, as well as purely the instantaneous, dimensions of the image. A photographic exposure may be made 'in the blink of an eye', but the photograph is made to outlast that instant, with future experiences of looking at the photographic image belonging to 'the subjective register of *durée*' (Burgin 2010: 131). Thus, through the Bergsonian account of time and Deleuze's analysis of cinema, we might understand photographs as a multi-durational artefacts (Plummer 2012: 36). As Victor Burgin has observed

'we expect to be told the running time of a film or video; we do not normally ask: 'How long is the photograph?' – but the question is not entirely irrelevant' (Burgin 2010: 131).

This chapter started with a photograph (*Figure 7.1*). But what durations are manifested in Peter Leith's image of the Brodgar Stone? There is, of course, the distant Neolithic when the stone was originally carved and used. Running through the image is also the 1920s when the stone re-emerged to be found and photographed. The low winter light of the afternoon February sun which illuminates the photograph. The moment that Leith released the camera's shutter and the exposure time of the plate itself. Each make their own contribution to its biography, but as we have seen, there are also further durations at play. Multiple processes and timescales contribute to the biography of the stone up until the point when it was found, but there is also the continuing story and 'afterlife' of both the image and the artefact. These endure long after the shutter was released. Time operates here not as linear chronology, but as the effect of coexisting and overlapping durations (Deleuze 1989b: xii).

As a time-image, Leith's photograph transcends chronological time and produces instead a co-existence of past, present and future, as the past of the recorded event is fused with the present tense of its viewing and the afterlife of the image itself. Photography disrupts 'our common-sense understanding of the relationship between past and present' (Lowry 2006: 65). It not only depicts the past, but also points to the future: 'it not only tells us *what has been* but *what will be*' (Plummer 2012: 2, original emphasis). This encapsulates the multiple durations of photography, and the ability of photographs to 'condense different times as co-existence rather than succession; for example, the having-being-there of the time when the photo was taken, and the here-and-now of us viewing it, and often several other times in between' (Carabott *et al.* 2015: 10). As with the Deleuzian notion of the time-image, so with the biography of the Brodgar Stone: 'the sheets of past coexist in a non-chronological order' (Deleuze 1989b: xii).

This understanding serves to challenge photography's position of assumed objectivity (cf. Hunt and Schwarz 2010). If the past is not fixed, then it is not possible to capture a fixed moment from the past. It reminds us that

'the only place the past can exist is in the present...[It] does not exist in actuality, but is the *virtual* form of the past, accessible through various practices of remembering' (Hodges 2008: 411).

This allows us to see photography as 'a complex and embodied cultural process of which the photographs themselves are only the final outcome' (Edwards 2014: 179). By recognising their multi-durational character in this way, photographs become more than just visual. They cease to be fixed, neutral or objective records, or the after-effects of cultural history. They become fluid and mutable, transcending temporal boundaries as if they were memories (Shevchenko 2014: 4). They are *social* objects made meaningful through different forms of apprehension (Edwards 2005: 27). And as we have seen in Peter Leith's image of the Brodgar Stone, they are also temporal interventions that create multiple durations spanning pasts, presents and futures.

Thursday 14th November 2013. Langbigging, Stenness, Orkney.

Peter Leith's son, also called Peter, had raised an Orkney flag on the pole in his garden to help me find his house. The building was unexpectedly modern, but the land had been occupied by the Leith family for generations. He opened the door and showed me to the sitting room. On a round table in front of the sofa, he had laid out an A4 folder containing various photographs, hand-written notes and newspaper cuttings. Later that afternoon, two cigar boxes appeared, each containing assemblages of steatite spindle whorls, stone tools, flint arrowheads and polished stone axes. These items from the Norse period, the Iron Age and the Neolithic told stories from the 1920s, the 1940s, and after – stories of collecting, and of curation. Now in his late eighties, some were collected by Peter as a boy; others had been given to him by his father.

I had written to Peter about the Brodgar Stone the week before. It was his father's photograph which had illustrated James Marwick's paper 'Discovery of Stone Cists at Stenness, Orkney' in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1926, and I was keen to understand more about it. Peter told me about James Wishart, and about his father: how he had chalked in the lines on the stone to make them stand out. Holding the photograph and talking to Peter, I learned more about the image and how it had come to be taken, but I also learned more about the Neolithic artefact. I have long been fascinated with both this stone and its reproduction, the image and the artefact, and I felt honoured when Peter gave the print to me. For Peter, this was also a very personal possession: a family photograph, which told his father's story of an image taken two years before he was born. More than just an image, this had become an artefact itself; a multi-durational object which linked the past, present, and future.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the idea that both archaeology and photography engage with and create multiple durations. I have argued that a consideration of photography as multi-durational has repercussions for how we think about time, and the ontological status of the past, in archaeology. Through the photograph of the Brodgar Stone taken by Peter Leith in 1925, this chapter has considered the lasting traces of Neolithic incised and pecked decoration redrawn in 1920s chalk, and the enduring effects of a shutter released in Orkney, on a bright February afternoon over 90 years ago.

We know today that the Brodgar Stone had a complex biography in the Neolithic, comprising several stages of marking and alteration. However, only one of these stages – the bands of incised decoration – has received attention since its discovery. Leith's chalked-in photograph played a central role in this narrative. Through these chalked lines, the conventions of chronological, successive time favoured, and perpetuated, by normal archaeological recording practices presented the object as the product of a single Neolithic carving event. Other durations were erased, and new durations introduced. As an archaeological interpretation, the photograph represented a further temporal intervention, enacting the singular and static interpretations offered for Neolithic art and architecture in Orkney. 'Frozen in time' at a particular point in its life, the nuances of the stone's biography have been erased and ignored. Its early photographic representations become artefacts themselves – the *prima facie* evidence from which archaeologists created their line drawings and narratives (Thomas 2016: 227). But in the case of Leith's photograph of the Brodgar Stone, we have seen that the image is not simply a medium for objective representation, and nor is it just a 'final outcome'.

My meeting with Peter Leith junior brought another intervention in endurance and memory (Figure 7.6). Holding the print of his father's photograph in his hand, the effects of duration were tangible in the faded and torn photographic paper, stained and yellowed on the back where someone had once written *Stone found at Broadgar* [sic] (Figure 7.7). As a physical object, the photograph had been only occasionally viewed in the 90 years since it was developed. It will, like the Stone itself, eventually decay. But the material past endures through its representation; it is made durable through 'iterative association and continued regeneration' (Witmore 2012: 29). Running in parallel with the photograph's entropic duration are other temporalities. These include the subjective duration of the viewer (cf. Burgin 2010: 131); its living on through secondary re-drawings and re-publications (including those in this chapter); and the reflection of these durations back from the photograph to

alter the biography of the stone itself. Time here is non-linear. The photograph encompasses not just 1920s fieldwork and Neolithic stone-carving, but also contemporary knowledge.

As image, as object, and as idea, the Brodgar Stone cannot represent a snapshot of a fixed moment in time. It is a multi-durational artefact. Both Leith's photographic print and the Brodgar Stone as a museum object traffic between the multiple durations of the Neolithic, the 1920s, and my 2013 meeting with Peter Leith junior, whilst the image's *future* has affected the *past* of the artefact. In this way, photography provides a paradigm for archaeological intervention (Shanks and Svabo 2013). As durational image and durational artefact, and as knowledge in visual and material form, through time the photograph and the Stone decompose one another.

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¹ The research for this paper was initiated during AHRC-funded PhD undertaken at the Archaeology Institute of the University of the Highlands and Islands between 2011 and 2015, reproducing some of the material contained therein and subsequently published as Thomas 2016. Earlier versions of this paper were presented in the *Archaeology and Photography* session at the Royal Anthropological Institute 'Anthropology and Photography' conference in London 2014 and in the *Photography and Archaeology* session at the European Association of Archaeologists annual meeting in Glasgow in 2015. Many thanks to the organisers of those sessions, Dan Hicks and Lesley McFadyen, my fellow speakers, and audience

members for constructive comments. Peter Leith's 1925 image of the Brodgar Stone provided the springboard for many of the ideas in this paper and sincerest thanks go to his son, Peter Leith junior, for donating the print and discussing it and his father's work. Thanks also to Alison Sheridan at the National Museum of Scotland for allowing me to access and photograph the Brodgar Stone, and to Daniel Lee for his continuing support.