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The Untold Heritage Value and Significance of Replicas

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the fraught questions surrounding replicas and their use in heritage contexts, drawing on an in-depth qualitative study of a historic replica, the 1970 concrete St John's Cross, Iona. We examine how replicas 'work' and unravel the part that social relations, place, and materiality play in the production and negotiation of their authenticity. The research shows that replicas are important objects in their own right, acquiring value, authenticity, and aura. The 'life' of a replica generates networks of relationships between people, places, and things, including the original historic object. While the underlying human stories of creativity, skill, and craftsmanship are rendered invisible when replicas are treated as mere surrogates, we argue that these 'life-stories' should be incorporated into future conservation, management and interpretation. The article spells out practical advice and guidance for heritage professionals who find themselves dealing with replicas.

KEYWORDS

Replication; ethnography; significance; value; authenticity; conservation

It's a real story and people really [sic] did look like this (a child at Iona Primary School) (Figure 1)

I'm engaging both from an aesthetic perspective and that awareness of wow [...] to let [...] the fact that it's a replica detract from my appreciation of it to me seems nitpicky (Molly, working at the Abbey)

While firemen yet dampened the ashes of the second disastrous fire to imperil Charles Rennie Mackintosh's world-famous Glasgow School of Art, public debate resurfaced about whether and how to replicate the architect's original designs. Across the world, replicas of historic monuments and objects are routinely employed and debated (Lowenthal 1985, 290–295), often propelled by digital opportunities and challenges (e.g. Mersman 2017, 245–56). But for all the talk, there has been little systematic study of how they actually 'work' in practice at places of historic interest, often tourist destinations, where replication is often thought to make 'best sense' (James 2016, 521) as some kind of substitute for an original.

We argue, based on our ethnographic findings, that replicas have untold heritage value, that their authenticity and significance derive from multiple values, and that it is important to consider the broader heritage policy and practice implications of such qualitative research for heritage management. Inviting new thinking about replicas has repercussions, changing understandings of value and authenticity in global contexts,

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Figure 1. Example of a child's artwork inspired by the biography of the St John's Cross replica. Reproduced with kind permission from Iona Primary School.

with a bearing on, for example, the 2000 Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relation to Cultural Heritage (Stovel 2001). A more advanced understanding of how replicas 'work' will also help to inform ethical and practical responses to post-conflict and post-disaster reconstructions (e.g. Kamash 2017, 611–14).

Traditionally, authenticity has been associated with original historic objects, with replicas attributed a distinct and secondary nature. As a result, historic replicas have had a chequered history and mixed fates (Foster and Curtis 2016; Lending 2017). In the context of new thinking about authenticity (e.g. Holtorf 2013; Jones 2010; Labadi 2010; Macdonald 2013), recent research explores the ways in which replicas accrue value and can be perceived as authentic. It argues that replicas are things in their own right, and that both analogue and digital replicas acquire their own cultural biographies, while simultaneously contributing to the social lives of their original counterparts (early examples include Cameron 2007, 67; Foster and Jones 2008, 266–9). Latour and Lowe (2011) posit 'migration' of aura from the original to the replica, and that replicas can even 'add originality'. Not surprisingly, the current literature reveals an emphasis on digital copies (Cormier 2018; Garstki 2017; Jeffrey 2015; Jones et al. 2017), but we argue that analogue copies also have a past, present, and future.

Focussing on a 1970 replica of the iconic early medieval St John's Cross (henceforth SJC) on Iona in Scotland (Figure 2), we seek to investigate how replicas mediate people's experience of the past by examining when and how they acquire authenticity and what kinds of relationships they set up with their historic counterparts. We conclude that replicas can 'work' for us if we let them. This means recognising them as things in their own right with their own creative, human histories – biographies that people can connect with in some way.



Figure 2. Crosses from left to right, St John's replica (with shadow on St Columba's Shrine), St Matthew's (empty base to right of well) and the *in-situ* and original St Martin's Crosses, in front of Iona Abbey; St Oran's, St John's and St Matthew's Crosses relocated for conservation purposes in the Iona Abbey Museum, upgraded in 2013.

Placing the SJC replica at the heart of our fieldwork, we examined the construction and negotiation of authenticity, with specific attention to the role of social relations, materiality, place, and the cultural biography of the replica. Applying techniques of rapid, focussed ethnographic research (Low 2002; Taplin, Scheld, and Low 2002; Knoblauch 2005), we used semi-structured interviews to explore people's experience of the replica in the context of Iona, the Abbey, and the other crosses. Short interviews were conducted with day tourists and longer interviews with local residents, heritage professionals, Iona Community staff and residents, longer-term visitors, and people involved in the story of the replica's creation. Insights into people's embodied engagement and practices were gained through the use of (participant) observation at the Abbey, and during tours and pilgrimages. At a small workshop, participants and the project team co-produced a 3D photogrammetric model of the replica. Before and after this digital practice (cf. Jones et al. 2017, 6–7), focused group interviews provided what Pink and Morgan (2013, 351) refer to as an 'intense route to knowing'. We also extended elements of this approach to a workshop with Iona Primary School (digital outputs: GSoASimVis [2017] 2018). All interviewees have been given a pseudonym.

This article introduces the SJC and its ethnographic context, followed by a synthesis of fieldwork results (for more detail see Foster and Jones 2019). We review the practical heritage implications with reference to stages in the heritage cycle, which in a post-Burra Charter world (1979–) offers a recognisable framework for considering different aspects of heritage management and their interrelationships, as well as their policy context. In this highly influential model, the starting point is to understand a subject and determine its cultural significance, embracing aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual values for past, present, or future generations, where significance is the sum

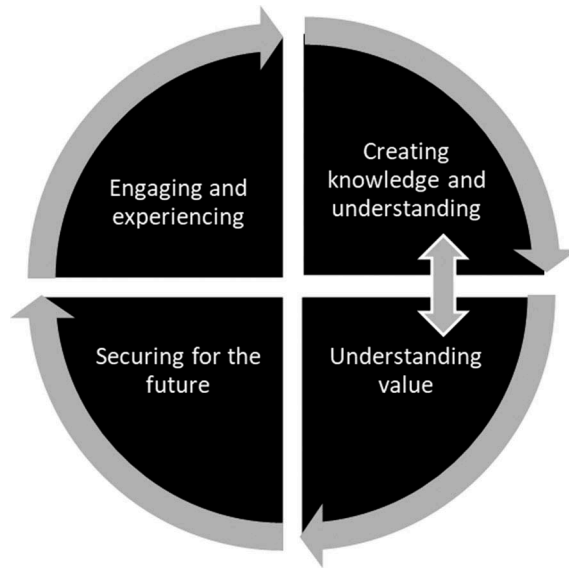


Figure 3. Summary of the heritage cycle (after Thurley 2005). Graphic by Sally Foster.

of these values (Australia ICOMOS 2013). The heritage cycle (Figure 3) describes a process born out of such a values-based conservation approach: an understanding of value (iteratively fed and shaped by creating knowledge and understanding of something) is used to inform decisions about what is worth securing for the future, and how such resources can be engaged with and experienced for wider public benefit, generating a desire to know more about our heritage (Thurley 2005). Our focus is on the social, spiritual, and other values which ethnography is suited to illuminating, while simultaneously attentive to how these intangible dimensions intersect with tangible aspects of the SJC replica and its original, fragmented counterpart. Importantly, it suggests that replicas can be a medium for the active negotiation and generation of values, practices, and forms of social memory, and that these intangible dimensions need to be foregrounded, alongside the tangible, in the conservation process.

Iona and the St John's Cross Replica

The tiny island of Iona studs the end of the Ross of Mull (Figure 4). It has a resident population of about 130, a tiny number multiplied a thousand-fold by the estimated annual total of visitors from home and abroad, chiefly day and cruise ship trippers (<http://www.welcometoiona.com/as> of 28 July 2018). As generations of tourists before them, they are attracted by its many special qualities, not least as the place where the famed early Christian missionary, St Columba, founded his monastery in 563 CE. For such a small place it bears a 'burden of history and legend, of beliefs and expectation' (MacArthur 2007, 199). What emerges from our ethnography is the complexity of the island's multiple communities, the nature of their and others' gazes, and that these gazes can be mapped in different ways onto different places on the island. A critical distinction has to be made between the local community of Iona and the staff,

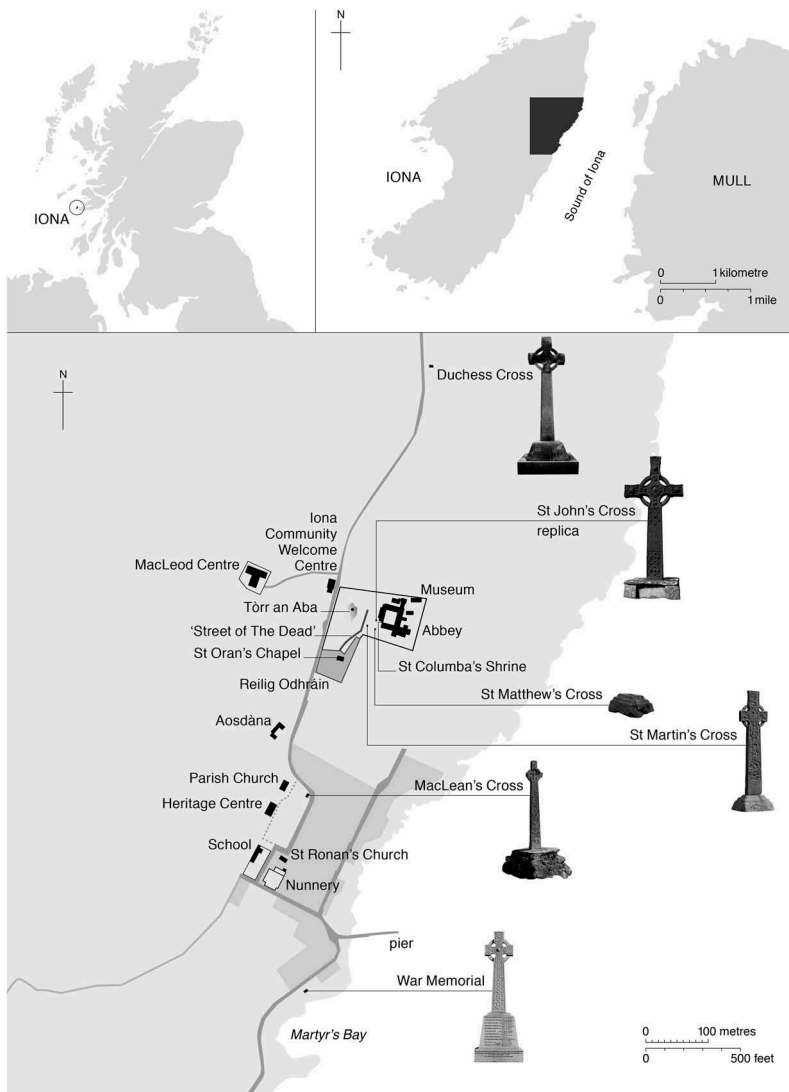


Figure 4. Map showing the location of Iona, and key features mentioned in the text. Graphic Christina Unwin.

volunteers, and weekly visitors of the Iona Community (IC), an ecumenical Christian religious community (see below). People also come to stay at other religious retreats on the island, as well as commute to (and from) Iona for work. Tourists are often long-stay, repeat, and transgenerational, and have included notable artists.

For the islanders and people working on the island, there is a palpable pride that it is a resilient, vibrant, and growing place. It may take an effort to get there, but Iona is not remote, having been internationally networked for centuries. Critically, their past stretches back into prehistory and is about more than what happened at the Abbey, as reflected in their Heritage Centre, which deliberately makes little mention of St

Columba, the Abbey or IC, focusing instead on recent social history and daily life. As a community, they have to work hard to make their histories heard among the more prominent narratives surrounding St Columba and his followers, the Benedictine Abbey established in about 1200, and the IC.

The IC describes itself on its website (<https://iona.org.uk/as> of 25 June 2018) as a 'dispersed ecumenical community working for peace and social justice, rebuilding of community and renewal of worship'. Founded by George MacLeod, between 1938 and 1965 they rebuilt and moved into the Abbey's later medieval monastic buildings. The Abbey Church itself had been restored and brought back into use between 1903 and 1910 under the aegis of the Iona Cathedral Trust (ICT). As islander Donald noted, reflecting a widely held sentiment, 'there's really two communities in a way, although they're much more one community now than they were'. Although now generally acknowledged to be good neighbours, they do lead rather parallel lives, and the journey has been bumpy. The historical reasons for this are well documented elsewhere (Ferguson 2001; Muir 2011; MacArthur 2007, 148–62, 195–6). What matters here is that some of the islanders distanced themselves from the IC, and hence the Abbey as a place to visit and worship, and the legacy of this was apparent in our interviews with older inhabitants.

As Gordon, an IC member and former resident reminded us, 'no one gets to Iona by accident', and Iona is regarded as special in many ways. Religious visitors and holiday-makers alike frequently allude to what can be characterised as the liminal qualities of the landscape they experience, leavened for some by its associations as the home of Celtic Christianity. Our interviews revealed how visitors negotiate authentic relationships with the place and its inhabitants, through their own individual and family biographies. Indeed, the very creation of the replica is to be seen in such a context (Foster *In prep*).

The SJC replica stands at the Abbey, near the west end/main entrance of the imposing (restored) Benedictine-period church. Ownership of the Abbey passed to the ICT in 1899 and they transferred stewardship of it and the Nunnery to Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in 1999. Visitors pay to explore the Abbey and its museum as a heritage site, although they cannot enter the buildings occupied by the IC. Access to the Abbey Church is free to worshippers and islanders. Everyone needs to pass through gates that are monitored or locked at different times of day, which affects how different communities chose to access and thus experience the replica and the rest of the Abbey.

The SJC is an artistic and technical masterpiece. Thought to be the progenitor of the ringed, so-called Celtic cross, it was erected in the eighth century outside the entrance to a stone shrine-chapel focused on St Columba's grave. The Shrine was the target for the international medieval pilgrims who journeyed to Iona, approaching the monastery along the paved 'Street of the Dead' and ending their journey at the SJC. En route, travellers passed many crosses (Figure 4). SJC has had many lives. Already broken up by the seventeenth century, it was not until 1927 that its dispersed surviving fragments were reunited with the *in-situ* shaft. This attempted reconstruction fell in 1951 and again in 1957. Neither possible nor desirable to reconstruct it *in situ* for a third time, a suggestion was made to the ICT that they replace it with a replica. The driving force was successful Fife-based businessman Major David F. O. Russell whose dogged determination and skills in diplomacy eventually brought the project to fruition. The unique

production of a cross in this particular way tested the limits of craftsmanship in concrete, involved considerable ingenuity and creativity, and required significant levels of personal and institutional investment that spanned a wide network of important and influential people across Scotland. It effectively ‘caps’ the twentieth-century recreation and reinvention of Iona Abbey, and the role of the influential Russell family in that enterprise, while giving a voice to the important role of the ICT that, today, has a somewhat overlooked presence on the island.

Social Networks with ‘Loaded Objects’

‘I am up to my neck in replicas [...] It’s how I make my living here’, islander, Isla, explains, and replicas are indeed core to Iona’s identity and being. For over a century, visitors have gone home with Iona Celtic Art, jewellery, and other art forms designed by Alexander and Euphemia Ritchie, copying designs found on the island’s rich heritage of carved stones (MacArthur 2003). The Ritchies are perceived as belonging firmly to the islanders’ heritage, while the crosses they spawned generate authentic connections with Iona, seamlessly linking the object, gift-giver, place, recipient and any new home to which they are given. If visitors to Iona’s Aosdàna shop buy a modern casting from an original early twentieth-century Ritchie mould, they go away feeling they have purchased a bit of Iona because of the stories embodied in this act. Thus, as Macdonald (2013, 109–136) argues, authenticity is actively negotiated in the performance of selling and buying, contrary to the prevailing assumption that heritage commodification in tourist settings renders objects and relationships inauthentic. As Isla puts it: ‘the objects acquire a significance that is related to their cultural provenance, but also to the personal experience that the objects had when they were on Iona [...] they’re loaded objects’.

The loaded nature of the replica revealed itself in many ways. At the Abbey, it is explicitly treated as a proxy for the secure original, a didactic tool recognised as such by both visitors and its stewards. As Gordon observed, ‘it’s mainly saying, we’re using this as a tool to explain to you the significance of the original. Now go and see the original’. For islander Malcolm, ‘the value is that we’re seeing what was there long ago’, and interviewees often commented on how it made them think of the craftsmanship of the monks who made the original. Few people know anything about the replica. When they thought they did know something, they confused its life with the return of the original SJC in 1990. Part of the same ‘composite biography’ (Foster and Curtis 2016) in the sense that their lives and fortunes are inextricably entwined, the stories of both original and replica are grounded in the meaningful return of something ‘lost’ to the island. The replica was credited with agency, particularly by the HES stewards who shared the refrain of it not trying too hard or pretending to be something it is not. As in other recent studies, the replica contributes to the life of the original (Foster, Blackwell, and Goldberg 2014; Jones et al. 2017; Lending 2017, 132–40). It is effectively seen as offering homage to the original and adding to its value, what Cameron (2007, 57) terms ‘selective canonisation’, when copying enhances the status of the original. In the case of the SJC, this is most obvious in the way that it generates the shadow that casts itself on the Shrine. Without the replica, and indeed without the rebuilt Shrine, the historical

significance of this relationship would not have been recognised and its emotional impact would be missed (see below).

The absence of voice extends into the way the crosses are regarded as silent witnesses: 'they're not protected, they're liked guardians or something like that' (Andrea, working for HES at the Abbey). A studied or cultivated indifference was marked in some older members of the island community and appears to be bound up with their attitude toward the Abbey and its tenants (see above). Yet this belies more subtle attitudes to the Abbey and their sense of ownership of the crosses, for, as Peter one of the islanders put it, 'it would cause absolute civil war, if the crosses [...] were going to be taken off the island'. So, while it might appear that the crosses, including the replica, are taken for granted – 'they're wallpaper in terms of your day-to-day life' (Isla) – this is not the case.

The replica was frequently attributed spiritual value by many of our interviewees and was no less significant than the original. 'Every cross is a replica, isn't it' said Dora, visiting the IC for a week. Marthinus, an Afrikaans member of the Eastern Orthodox Church, happily worships icons he knows to be copies. But being a Christian cross, replica or not, also constrains the way some people engage with it. This applies to non-believers, but also believers for whom the crosses represent pain and are 'not particularly about Celtic curlicues', in other words, their aesthetics and art-historical significance (Doris, a past Iona resident and regular visitor). The replica and other crosses were described as aids to meditation and contemplation, sources of energy, the subject of veneration, reminders of faith and markers of holy ground. They could be 'brought alive by [...] pilgrim/community experience' (Gertrude, a resident) when used as props in active religious observance.

Our interviewees had little opportunity to negotiate authenticity by engaging with the historical network of people and places implicated in the replica's cultural biography. This only began to change when we showed them some photographs of its makers at work (e.g. [Figure 5](#)). The craft and skills which went into making the replica, into devising and creating its form, and the technically challenging mould from which the concrete was cast, started to become manifest and be valued. As Isla put it, the production of the replica:

tells a contemporary human story of commitment and endeavour, connected to the cross, and connected to the wider importance of the cross, and the wider religion on Iona. So I think it's a, it's a continuity of care, it's a continuity of belief, whether that's a religious belief, or a belief in the job you're doing as a craftsperson, or a belief in the job you're doing as an engineer. I think, for me, it's the human story.

The replica project was largely undertaken by Iona lovers rather than permanent residents or the IC ([Foster In prep](#)). It was what islander Tom and Molly, respectively, recognised as a 'passion thing' and 'passion project'. The pictures generated thoughts and emotions (hooks) which released the potential significance of the replica, segueing into notions about past and present craft and spirituality, and of the evolving character of island living (the replica arrived atop the boat bringing the year's coal supply). A sense emerged that the replica, already generally acknowledged to be beautiful in some way, was handmade, by skilled and connected craftsmen, who took great pride in their work, and interviewees commented that if it mattered to the craftsmen it should



Figure 5. Engineer John Scott who led the SJC project for Exposagg Ltd, conservator Tam Day, foreman plasterer Jackie Drysdale, and artist John Lawrie stand in front of the freshly cast concrete in Borthwick's Yard, Edinburgh, before it journeys to Iona. Photograph by Arthur MacGregor, reproduced with permission from HES.

matter to the wider community. It was recognised to be a significant exercise, not cheap, and an investment worth protecting. The photographs about its production also became a source of 'glorious revelation' in a spiritual sense, as described by Gertrude. Interviewees talked of the dedication and skills of honest craftsmen, whose craft was an act of worship in some way, like the early medieval monks.

Concrete and Other Material Qualities

Gertrude's enthusiasm on discovering the replica to be concrete was not widely shared by others. Interviewees regarded concrete as a new, industrial-age material, something that is 'imported' or even 'dead energy', and not readily perceived to require skills and craftsmanship. Working in conservation, Ruben had it drilled into him 'over decades of my work life, that there's something not quite right and kosher about concrete'. Cultural attitudes to technology affect its reception, not least concrete with the 'slipperiness' of its multiple, seemingly contradictory, characteristics (Forty 2016, 10–11). Although many of our interviewees had not recognised that the replica is made of concrete, the knowledge was not generally viewed positively. Prior to being shown photographs, its creation was not recognised as involving creativity, skill, and craftsmanship. But materiality as experienced is also a consideration (Figure 6), the issue being what Holtorf (2013) has called 'pastness', how a thing is attributed age-value primarily on the basis of its appearance. As was to be expected from existing research (e.g. Douglas-Jones et al. 2016), touch and patina are deemed to contribute to authenticity. This patina comes from weathering, decay and lack of surface uniformity, and the



Figure 6. Detail of west face of St John's Cross replica, with lichen. Photograph by Sally Foster.

growth of lichen and related plants. Interviewees needed the replica to be ageing gracefully, showing visible signs of a life span: 'with the growth on it, the lichen and so on, I think it looks authentic, very original almost', mused Roderick, a long-term visitor who has actively tracked the replica since it was first made. Yet for others, the replica remains 'too crisp' (cf. Kamash 2017, 609) and lacking in pastness, despite the efforts of its makers who maintained the worn profile of the original and matched the colour and geological origin of the aggregate. For the same reason, our interviewees sometimes assumed the well-preserved St Martin's Cross was a replica. We therefore encountered contrasting and ambivalent responses, but interviewees exhibited a certain pride if they could recognise that the replica was just that.

Significance of Location: Place and Space

Location and setting are also important considerations when considering the value and authenticity of a replica, which can get lost in the face of an overriding emphasis of 'pastness' and social relationships. The significance of place emerged in the ACCORD

project's work with communities to co-design and co-produce digital copies of things. Place both shapes and is shaped by peoples' sense of identity and belonging, so it informed what the participants thought to be significant and selected to copy (Jones et al. 2017). The act of getting involved in their heritage in this way was a means of making a connection with the locality and building a relationship with it (Jones et al. 2017, 8), while the copies they created acquired symbolic associations relating to the place they came from and the associated identities. This act of 'objectification of significance' through creation of a digital copy, in parallel with the intensity of the engagement, expanded the cultural biography (and hence value) of the original (Jones et al., 12). A digital copy may not enable the sensory engagement with the landscape and physical setting that an original does (Jones et al., 13), but an analogue copy does have that potential, so what difference does this therefore make to the appreciation of the replica?

Place and space emerge as particularly important to understanding the networks that the replica is bound up in (cf. Lowenthal 1985, 240–41 on locale and atmosphere). There is a wide acceptance that the original SJC cannot stand outside, and the replica is seen to confer an understanding of the original because it 'returns' something lost and retains a sense of its intended space. On tours, guides tell visitors that St Martin's is 'the oldest cross still *in situ*', and visitors told us it was important that the replica, standing in the *in-situ* original base, is also where people intended the original to be (cf. Jones 2010, 184). There is the sense of the crosses outside being rooted in the ground (the simile of the crosses being like trees within a forest also recurred). While the historical rationale for what commuter-to-Iona Dorothy described as the replica's 'seemly' location at the entrance to St Columba's Shrine might not be widely appreciated, visitors recognise that getting to the Abbey represents the end of a journey. This is an embodied experience common to everyone who alights from a boat and walks to the Abbey, 'a sense of returning to the persona of an earlier pilgrim' (Dorothy). If authenticity is a process of building up experiences, then we also see how this intensifies on the journey to the Abbey and its replica. It is not just bound up with the immediate spatial environment that the replica finds itself in, but also travellers' desires, expectations, and experiences of Iona and its Abbey.

For a number of our interviewees, being outside there is a palpable pleasure that comes from what feels like an individual experience of the SJC replica, an unmediated encounter which means 'emotion springs up unbidden' (Dora). This is the special privilege of islanders who walk around the Abbey out of season, or those who can come to the Abbey after HES staff have gone away, at this point leaving the Abbey gates open, and the last ferry is also away for the day. Tracey, an American holidaying on Iona sums this up in her description of the replica as 'beloved of the shadow – it moves the people who come here'. Nature's nightly light show of the evening shadow of the replica cast on St Columba's Shrine is now thought to be a deliberate design feature of the eighth-century craftsmen, a feat unintentionally recreated when the replica was erected in 1970 against the backdrop of the Shrine that, until its recreation in 1954/5, survived as no more than low wall footings. The fabric that conjures the shadow is twentieth-century but the experience still feels special, and provides a link to the past, 'responding to the Columban legacy in a very intimate way', as Isla described it. Equally,

though, the fabricated environment of the museum with its dramatic revolving light and sound effects also had a profound and moving impact on some people.

Outside the replica and other crosses evoke 'something higher' (Andrew, a heritage professional), and allow people to 'surrender' to living with nature's rhythms. This includes a physical surrender to nature's power in ageing, with the idea that the monuments, including the replica, have lives (despite views on concrete and its ageing, see above). People marvel at the scale of the SJC and the replica's silhouette against the sky and buildings (its contribution to the landscape setting) are appreciated. The recreated Benedictine buildings have the potential to dwarf the SJC replica and depress its scale, but they, and the recreated Shrine, form a theatrical backdrop. The place hardly resembles an eighth-century monastery, but this is a real experience nonetheless.

Heritage Implications

On the basis of this case study, replicas at heritage sites need therefore to be considered as things in their own right, with their own biographies, which stand in complex relationships to other things, their historic counterparts (and in this sense simultaneously share 'composite biographies'). The replica *is* the SJC: 'you know, if you said to the Monument Manager, I'll meet you at St John's in ten minutes, you wouldn't find her in the Museum, you'd find her outside the Shrine [next to the SJC replica]' we were told by Stella, one of the HES staff. Yet, with so little widely known about our replica's biography it is not surprising that the replica is nevertheless still readily dismissed given the influential heritage mindset that 'all replicas are ultimately fakes', and by implication not worth bothering to think about, as exemplified by heritage professional, Mark. Given the iterative relationship between creating knowledge of something and understanding its values (Figure 3), this means that the values and hence significance of the replica have not been considered. This has had a knock-on effect in terms of the process of deciding what to formally protect through the legal process of designation, and what stories to present to the public at the site. Our ethnographic study has revealed that the intangible heritage associated with the SJC replica is rich and highly nuanced. Authenticity qualifies values. Specific qualities of place and setting have been shown to be critical to the way in which authenticity of the replica can be experienced. Visible ageing remains a quality highly sought out by people, and the use of modern material – concrete – has proved a culturally constructed barrier to appreciation of authenticity for some, while a revelation to others. New or alternative senses of authenticity emerged when people were introduced to some of the human stories behind the creation of the replica questioning their own assumptions about the absence of creativity, skills, and craftsmanship. Values and significance expanded from the primarily tangible to the intangible. In different ways, the replica started to acquire an authenticity as people acquired the ability through looking at photographs to connect aspects of the replica's biography to their own lives, not least their special relationship to Iona and personal spiritual beliefs.

The problem is that if a replica works well as the proxy it is often intended to be in heritage contexts, then its own life story is rendered invisible. The bottom line then is a simple message: factor replicas into assessments of cultural significance, and act on this knowledge. There is scope to accommodate this approach within some existing

international policy or charters (e.g. The Burra Charter, Australian ICOMOS 2013, §15.4), although the Riga Charter, 2000, takes a more conservative line on replication. Putting this into practice at any one place will always present further challenges, but including replicas in the mix will ensure that the full gamut of tangible and intangible interests are explored and realised. To elaborate on specific practical implications we will now turn to the aforementioned heritage cycle.

Creating Knowledge and Understanding

As Macdonald (2013, 133) points out in relation to the Nara Document on Authenticity (ICOMOS 1994, §9), each case needs locally specific knowledge and understanding (something that was further reinforced in NARA+20 [Japan ICOMOS 2014], alongside the need for new methodologies). Since little is known of replicas, research is obviously needed to establish the stories around them. An interdisciplinary, composite biographical approach that looks at the web of relationships between originals, replicas, people, and places offers a rounded perspective on what happened, and a temporal understanding of changing values and meaning. The sources will vary, and may lend themselves to historical ethnography (Macdonald 2013, 52–78), while rapid ethnographic assessment as practised here can illuminate contemporary attitudes to authenticity and value (see also Jones et al. 2017). More commonly practised in America and Australia, rapid ethnographic assessment offers the means of understanding values that are not bound up in the fabric of the place and are not immediately obvious to the observer, and enables a more democratic and unselfconscious ‘voice’ to emerge from relevant communities of interest (Jones and Leech 2015, §3.5, 5). When it comes to objects, the experience of authenticity over time is informed by the relationships – of object, people, and place – embodied in the cultural biography of the object (Jones 2010, 198). The benefit of ethnographic study to elicit contemporary values and meanings is that place, in all its senses, is an integral part of the biographically informed analysis, while there is also scope for aura to be viewed as more than a social construct, drawing simultaneously on the intrinsic, material qualities of ‘old’ things (Jones 2010, 183; Graves-Brown 2013, 222)

Keeping detailed records of the people, places, and things associated with replica creation can ensure their ‘human stories’ are accessible in the future, something that is not mentioned in the 2017 V&A and Peri ReACH guidelines on digital reproduction (Aguerre and Cormier 2018, 26), although its importance is self-evident in the accompanying publication (Cormier 2018). There is important knowledge about evolving (his)stories of heritage practices to be gained and shared, as well as how communities get involved and engage with replicas. Professional curators should not be shy to recognise and communicate the contribution of their own community (Wolfhechel Jensen 2012).

While professionals can ensure the availability of good records for the future, the availability of sources about existing replicas, particularly older ones, will inevitably be more of a lottery, and require much ferreting to identify, retrieve, and set in a wider historical context. The SJC replica was not a government enterprise, but fortunately, many of those involved with its production were exceptionally proud of their role (Figure 7) and curated records, some of which are still held privately, while others have been transferred to public records. These archives are essential for those who



Figure 7. Joe Findlay, Alastair MacKenzie, Jock Logan, and Remo Tonetti of MacKenzie Ltd stand in front of the replica of the St John's Cross that, working with John Scott, they have just erected on Iona in June 1970. Photograph by Murdo MacKenzie, reproduced with permission from HES.

need to learn how the highly engineered and technically complex replica was put together, but it also provides important information about the relationship between people and places. Now available on YouTube (MacKenzie and Foster 2018), a cine film made by the son of the engineer who erected the replica on Iona, shows the enterprise in the 1970s island context, including the coal delivery, a wedding, and a funeral. The people involved emerge as personalities, and we share their toils and tribulations. The oral testimonies we collected of those involved, and people who witnessed events, means that we can develop a full, rich, and nuanced cultural biography of a replica (Foster *In prep*). The wider point is that we looked, we asked, and we found.

Understanding Social Value and Authenticity

If replicas constitute a problem for people who do not like to be 'fooled' by them (Lowenthal 1985, 295), then we can do something different with them, starting by looking at, and sharing, ways in which they can be valued. We showed earlier how a given replica may have considerable significance and how the experience of

authenticity emerges out of people's ability to connect to the networks of people, places, and things which comprise its cultural biography. We also saw the particular role that place plays in this. Such understanding can offer a new and unexpected strand to the cultural significance of a place, if it is sought out. If there is a discomfort in the different values that people may have, this emotion can be harnessed to positive effect in terms of visitor interest and engagement.

As Brumann (2017, 285) notes, 'it is almost impossible not to have very authentic feelings' for the rebuilt Mostar Bridge in Herzegovina. This is something the Riga Charter does not really allow for, with its emphasis on authenticity as a measure of the degree by which cultural attributes, primarily material ones, 'credibly and accurately bear witness to their significance'. In *this* sense, replicated cultural heritage 'is in general a misrepresentation of evidence of the past' in all but exceptional circumstances. Yet, as at the rebuilt Mostar Bridge, on Iona, the SJC replica informs the experience of authenticity for many people. For instance, its shadow setting on St Columba's Shrine can do something ineffable for someone whose knowledge that the SJC is a replica and/or is concrete impedes their ability to enjoy it for what it is, although its spiritual value is not affected. The important point here is that, while interviewees want honesty when something is a replica, and affirm that a good replica should be faithful to the original subject (form, detailing, texture, colour, matching materials/qualities of materials, etc.), our research shows that authenticity is about experience and about narrative. As Dora put it, 'authentic doesn't mean from the seventh century. Authentic means that it still carries its significance in the community [...] authenticity is like legitimacy. It's in the eyes of the grantor', and happens 'when the heart is moved'. Overall, our findings therefore challenge the ready assumption that a replica is 'inauthentic', with knock-on implications for Charters that prescribe and proscribe their future creation.

The key challenge for heritage managers is how to elicit and navigate the complex values and expressions of authenticity arising from multiple gazes, hardly a problem unique to replicas, but one that has been particularly neglected in their case (see above). Our research shows that even at the island level, gazes were highly nuanced and deeply socially embedded. We saw earlier how seemingly dismissive or indifferent local attitudes to the crosses, Iona Abbey and current use of its spaces, were bound up with a long history of relations between the island's multiple communities. We also noted the 'wallpaper' effect. In the absence of any threat to something a lot may also go unsaid, but our research also revealed subtle forms of attachment and value among the islanders. Cultural attitudes to concrete as a modern material contributed to the invisibility of the people behind the enterprise and their creativity, skill, and craftsmanship. A dislike of religious symbolism, or of the suffering that the cross represents, was also a factor in how some people approached the crosses. Our results would also have been very different had we only interviewed the locals, or not contextualised their responses through ethnographic work. Visitors brought their own manifold perspectives. To whom does such heritage 'belong', whose views about values count, what might we have missed? Multiple values need to be weighed up, both traditional heritage values (scientific, historical, artistic/aesthetic) and social and spiritual ones, with an awareness of their context.

Securing for the Future

This element of the heritage cycle embraces the heritage sector-led activities of the designation of assets for their legal protection, resultant reactive casework, proactive site conservation, and management of collections at such monuments, as well as community custodianship and practices. In professional contexts, heritage is formally valorised – so it makes a difference whether replicas are considered as a part of this process. As of 24 August 2018, according to information on the HES online Portal, the SJC replica is not designated (given legal protection) as part of either the scheduling or listing of Iona Abbey (Scheduled Monument 12968; Listed Building 12310). It is singled out for exclusion, not ignored. From the available information, the rationale is not clear, but we can infer that it was not deemed to meet the thresholds for designation by Listing (local, regional, or national, architectural or historic interest and importance), or Scheduling (national significance derived from intrinsic, contextual, or associative characteristics). In practice, the replica is part of a property in the care of Scottish Ministers and HES aims to manage such monuments in a joined-up way, regardless of whether all elements of it are designated. But what if such a replica was in the hands of a non-heritage body or not part of a larger complex being managed as a whole? What then if it was not designated and there were, therefore, no checks in place on its future conservation and management? We picked up mixed views about whether the replica should be regarded as a monument (and technically could be designated) or was an artefact, despite its monumental status and very earth-fast (indeed concrete-bound) nature. This is the classic carved stone conundrum. Often monuments that can, in theory, be moved, and often have been, switch between being artefacts and monuments, in the care of site or collection managers, and with different curatorial discourses (Foster 2010). But the bottom line is that not being designated sends a clear message about the lack of value associated with this replica by heritage managers. Our research did not exist when the Abbey's re-designation recently took place, but our interviews suggest that it was all too easy to dismiss the replica and for this to go unquestioned.¹

How the casework and conservation of a replica are handled should be informed by its values, current perceptions of authenticity, and how these are manifest in the materiality, location, and locale of the replica. A replica is no different from other heritage in that in the act of conservation, altering materiality can affect the way that the authenticity is perceived. Removing patina (e.g. lichen growth on the replica) should therefore only be done if essential on conservation grounds (Douglas-Jones et al. 2016; Eklund and Hammelt 2013). Our research shows the importance of the location of the replica in relation to the original (cf. Hilton of Cadboll, Jones 2004) and the other surviving elements of the Columban monastery. It also reveals the important contribution that the sensory qualities of the surrounding built and natural environment make to people's experience of it. Although in the absence of such a precise relationship, other connections to place might be equally important, such as in a community heritage centre or local historic building.

Engaging and Experiencing

Just as understanding significance releases potential (Russell and Winkworth 2009; Shar Jones 2007), the interpretation and presentation of a site founded on biographical understandings have the power to provide a unifying narrative, transcending the hurdles of institutional silos and disciplinary discourses. Ethnography has its part to play in revealing contemporary understandings, as we have seen. Replicas can be a meaningful and significant part of the story told at and about a heritage place.

There are good historical and practical reasons, but so far Iona Abbey's otherwise excellent site interpretation underplays the social interest and storytelling potential of the replica (Figure 8), precluding the wider community and visitors from fully engaging with it. To help elicit 'pastness', Holtorf (2013, 432–5) argues we need meaningful and believable narratives which link the past and present. Our emphasis is slightly different: finding value and experiencing authenticity in past things are bound up with networks of relationships between people, places, and things (Jones 2009, 2010). We saw how clues to the makers' creativity and craft are important elements; new forms of authenticity and value emerged from the sight of a few 1970s photographs at the end of our interviews. The production of replicas, the location, methods, materials, and so forth, is often an important element in their cultural significance (see Jones 2010, 190–97). In the case of the SJC replica, we were struck by the recurring theme of stone craftsmanship on Iona (concrete can be considered a form of liquid stone) that people see as a source of connection and connectivity. This one (replica) monument, therefore, has the potential to embrace in some way the lives and biographies of many overlapping communities of interest.

We also saw how touch is such a significant part of the authentic experience, for many providing what seems like a tangible connection with networks of people associated with the object's social life (Jones 2010, 193–94). Some people feel they are allowed to touch the replica rather than the original, while for others the immediacy of the chapel-scale museum and its dramatic interior and auratic experience is more moving and secluded, inviting (forbidden) touch. Heritage managers presenting sites to the public generally do not encourage touch, in museums at least, yet without that



Figure 8. On-site panel at the foot of the SJC replica. Photograph by Sally Foster.

act and sensation visitors can lose out on an affective experience and the creation of a special relationship.

During our research, we observed other behavioural factors that acted as barriers to appreciating the authenticity and/or value of our subject, what with a nod to Holtorf (2013) we refer to as 'anti-pastness'. This revealed itself in ways that impacted on how the replica (indeed the wider Abbey) was received. Combining both a place of worship and a much-visited heritage site created confusion for some religious interviewees about how they could behave, while others staying with the IC found the intensive programme of activities it organised for them inhibited their ability to appreciate the aura of the place. Being a busy place could also diminish the place's auratic potential (cf. James 2016, 523). Doris observed that how receptive you are (or can be) to looking affects the visibility of things; she visited for 20 years, mostly in a 'work' capacity, before she stopped, looked, and really noticed the crosses.

Interviewees appreciate the ability to relate to what people did in the past. Being outside, the replica evokes the tradition of outdoor worship. From the heritage perspective, it can contribute to the ability of visitors to reimagine the topography of the Columban monastery, through the location of its crosses, Shrine, vallum, and the rocky prominence of Tòrr an Aba, where St Columba had his writing cell. The largely overlooked empty socket of St Matthew's Cross is particularly evocative to some, because it gives the imagination free rein, although some said they would like to see a replica here too.

The workshop we conducted with the island's school children illustrates the importance and potential of biographical details for affective experience and education (Jones 2016, 145). This introduced the children to the composite biography of the SJC using archival materials, including historic postcards that were used to develop a timeline based on the evolving state of the cross and Cathedral ruins/rebuild. Although we only showed them excerpts from the cine film, most of them, to judge from the artwork produced, were captivated by the SJC story (encompassing replica and original), particularly where they could situate it in a network of people and places familiar and meaningful to them (Figures 1 and 9). We also further enfranchised the children as stakeholders. The ruined Nunnery, with its grounds directly in front of their school, is 'their' space, and we let them into the 'secret' that the basal stones from the below-ground foundations of the original SJC lie there, unceremoniously in a corner, unremarked upon. This experience and enjoyment prompted their desire to understand more about the SJC cross, and no doubt influenced how they value the replica, thus shaping new 'heritage futures'. Moreover, through such processes replicas can play an important part in the broader shift advocated by Harrison (2015, 27), where heritage is seen as:

collaborative, dialogical and interactive, a material-discursive process in which past and future arise out of dialogue and encounter between multiple embodied subjects in (and with) the present.



Figure 9. Example of a child's artwork inspired by the biography of the St John's Cross replica. Reproduced with kind permission from Iona Primary School.

Concluding Discussion

Approaching its 50th birthday in 2020, it is timely to consider the significance of Iona's St John's Cross replica, but our findings have wide-reaching implications. We have exposed both its concrete and non-concrete values. Our ethnographic insights illustrate the ways in which a replica can acquire authenticity and aura, how its life impacts positively on the life of the original and other copies, and how a replica can generate and extend networks, mediating experiences of authenticity in the process. Factoring in other biographical research (Foster *In prep*), there is a case for considering this replica as both a celebration in concrete (of the original SJC, of itself, and of the people who made it) and a celebration of concrete (receiving recognition by the Concrete Society in 1971 and 2000).

George MacLeod famously described Iona as 'a thin place where only tissue paper separates the material from the spiritual' (Ferguson 2001, 156), but from an ethnographic perspective, it is a richly textured 'thick' place. Our research is obviously specific to Iona and its special qualities, but it also illustrates broader, internationally relevant issues. Our in-depth ethnographic study reveals the nuances and complexities that

characterise relationships between (replicated) things, people and places. It also highlights the importance in heritage practice of building appreciation of embedded and embodied relationships with place into understandings of authenticity and value (Jones 2009).

The '*in-situ*' nature of replicas used on heritage sites distinguishes them from most originals or replicas in museum contexts; on heritage sites, they are intended to *replace* and stand for something that is missing rather than develop an independent biography bound up with the story of a new place. Based on our research, we argue that wherever they are, replicas are independent beings, which acquire histories and provenance, but is there the will to speak of their rich lives and thus release their potential? The replica's conundrum is that if it is 'working' as a proxy for something else, its own character and biography are probably rendered invisible, often deliberately hidden through curatorial and managerial practices (Cameron 2007, 60, 70). Values emerge from stories which viewers generate for themselves by making connections with things that elicit emotions, and these connections can be prompted by what people sense, and what they know or can hook onto intellectually about something. These stories have interpretative capacity, but the experience of authenticity often requires individual engagement, a personal moment of magic when the ineffable qualities of something can well up (cf. Jones 2010, 190). Picking up and musing on an old photograph – or the power of touch – may be sufficient triggers, as we saw with the SJC replica.

In most senses, replicas are therefore no different from other aspects of our material heritage in terms of how they 'can work' – visible age-value is an important consideration, but they still require a conscious effort to give them voice. They should prod our heritage consciences, but while they are disruptive and challenging (Stockhammer and Forberg 2017, 12 suggest 'wild'), we argue that they do not need taming, just understanding. Once freed from their secondary existence, today's replicas become originals in their own right (cf. Digan 2015, 62), part of the archaeology of the future (*pace* James 2016, 519), and the heritage cycle can gain a new gear that has the potential to propel it in new and unexpected directions. The next recreation of the Glasgow School of Art can speak for the passion behind the project, the endeavour and creativity of the twenty-first-century people who (re)crafted it, the importance of the place, as well as the genius of Mackintosh. Reborn, it will begin to visibly age and acquire further stories.

The risk is that persistent authorised heritage discourses occlude consideration of replicas. As illustrated by the Riga Charter with its focus on historical reconstructions, international guidance continues to be informed by traditional approaches to the nature of authenticity, and hence value and significance. (A)bashed cultural heritage managers may apologise for replicas rather than find ways of celebrating the richness of these stories that, even where created by heritage bodies, are about individual drive and creative endeavour, past, present, or future. Case studies such as this help to query 'quasi-monolithic understandings of authenticity', and enable us to understand how to give the public the authentic heritage experiences they seek, in the spirit of NARA+20, whether at World Heritage Sites or elsewhere (Labadi 2010, 81; Holtorf 2005, 129).

Replicas can be as old and as authentic as we feel them to be. There is no magic age at which something becomes old enough to be perceived as authentic or of value; things come to life when someone invests an interest in them. Aoi, from a Buddhist background, who was showing Iona to a visiting Japanese shaman friend, captured this

sentiment: 'When people feel it they will start loving it. I would come back and admire this replica. It will gain respect from people and will acquire its own history and therefore not be a replica anymore'. In the Far East, *fuzhipin* (複製品, Chinese for exact copies) are originals, with replication valued as part of the endless cycle of life (Han 2018). In today's world, given current ideas about authenticity and value now permeating the West, we should not have to travel so far before replicas at heritage sites can be appreciated in the round. The 1970 concrete replica of St John's Cross on Iona illustrates that potential.

Note

1. SMF, as a former head of designation at Historic Scotland, suspects she might then well have done the same.

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