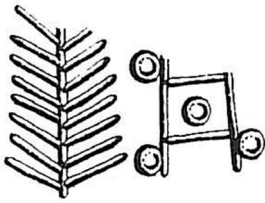CHAPTER ONE

Monuments and Monumentality

James F. Osborne

On December 5, 2007, the august Sotheby's auction house sold the Guennol Lioness, an ancient statue from Mesopotamia, for the then-unprecedented sum of $57.2 million. Many aspects of this remarkable sale warrant contemplation. The first and most obvious of these is the statue's astronomical price tag, at the time rendering it the most expensive sculpture ever sold; still today the lioness holds the record for the most expensive object from antiquity.[1] Another is the Guennol Lioness's murky provenance— the history of the object's ownership, knowledge of which confirms the legality of its sale—and the complete lack of provenience information—its original context and "find spot," the *sine qua non* of archaeological interpretation without which we can neither authenticate the antiquity of the piece, nor understand its original function (Witmore and Harmanşah 2007). With this crucial information lacking, we can only guess at the Guennol Lioness's place and time of origin, currently assumed, on the basis of stylistic parallels with other, more securely dated objects, to derive from the Proto-Elamite culture of southwestern Iran sometime around 3,000 B.C.E. (Porada 1950:223).

Though certainly intriguing and worthwhile, these economic and ethical issues distract us from the Guennol Lioness itself and its material qualities as a work of art. Given the statue's sale price one might be surprised by its physical properties: the Guennol Lioness is a mere 8.4 cm, or 3.25 inches, in length, fitting easily into the palm of one's hand (Figure 1.1).

Such a diminutive stature has not prevented scholars and laypeople alike from describing the lioness in the grandest of terms, however. Porada's (1950) original publication of the object, still the only dedicated analysis of it in art historical literature, wastes no time in praising the lioness, opening her article with the following statement: "Perhaps the most striking feature of this sculpture is the impression of monumental

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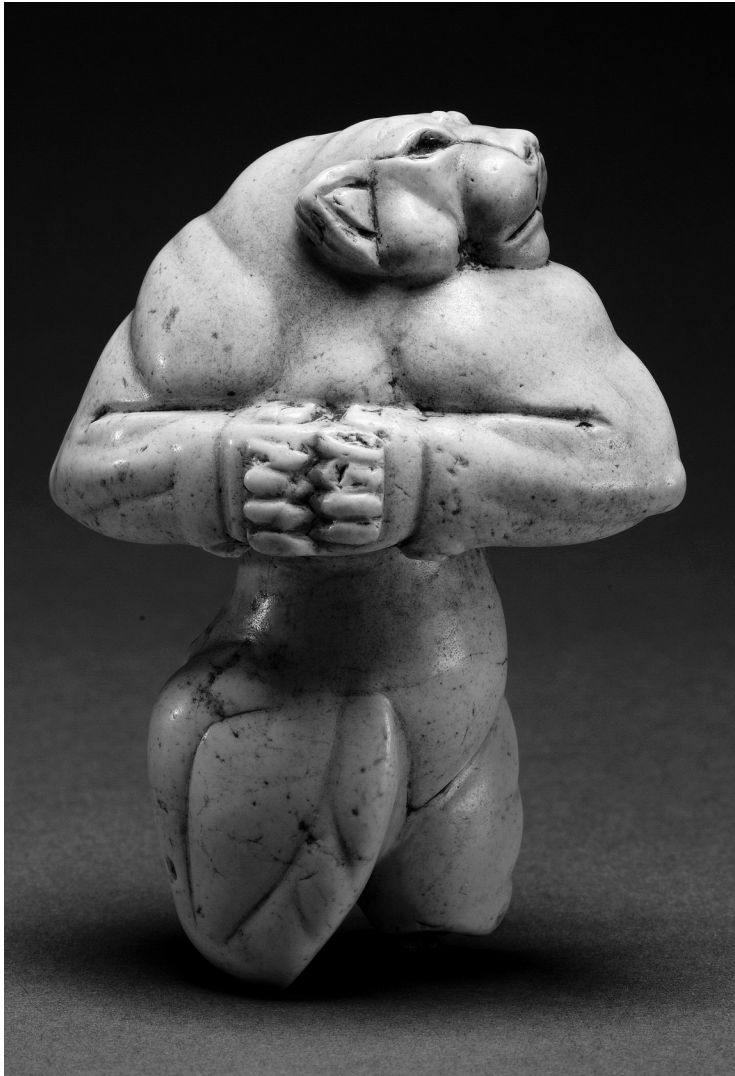
FIGURE 1.1 The Guennol Lioness, (likely) a proto-Elamite statue from 3,000 B.C.E. Height: 3.25 inches (source: Wikimedia).

power which it conveys. When seen in the original, the figure seems to fill the entire field of mental vision" (1950:223).[2] Likewise, Hugh Hildesley, executive vice president of Sotheby's, described the Guennol Lioness in a pre-auction publicity pitch using similar terms: "It is one of those objects which catches your imagination immediately because although it is tiny, it is monumental."[3]

The counterintuitive application of this adjective—*monumental*—to so diminutive an object raises several intriguing questions: Can something that is tiny really be considered monumental? More to the point, just what do we mean by the terms *monument,*

monumental, and *monumentality*? The use of these words is commonly found across several academic disciplines, archaeology, architecture, and art history in particular; is there common ground in the ways these fields deploy this terminology, or have diverging disciplinary traditions created a scenario in which the same terms are used with different meaning and intent? To what extent can it be argued that monumentality is a cross-cultural characteristic of the human species? Perhaps most important, what is the social and political significance of monumentality as it is manifested in particular ways around the world?

I posed these questions to the participants in the conference *Approaching Monumentality in the Archaeological Record,* which was hosted by the Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology at SUNY Buffalo in May 2012. The answers they provided through a series of case studies are contained in this volume. But before readers turn to the regions or time periods in the following chapters that concern them directly, it is worthwhile to consider the topic of monumentality more generally, and how it is has been treated over the past century or so by the humanities and social sciences. Though the literature is vast and often disparate, there do exist themes that recur in often surprising places.

In what follows, I would like to propose that approaching monumentality requires a two-step process. First, one must distinguish between monument and monumentality as two closely related, but nevertheless distinct, phenomena. A helpful way to conceptualize this problem is by likening their relationship to the art historian's familiar distinction of form and meaning. Second, and with this analogy in mind, it is most productive to see in monumentality an ongoing, constantly renegotiated *relationship* between thing and person, between the monument(s) and the person(s) experiencing the monument. Such a relational approach to monumentality offers the possibility of forging a unifying discourse to the topic, and one that might act as a guide for future research.

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The precise meaning of the word *monument* is frustratingly difficult to isolate, and seems only to recede further from grasp as one approaches it. The *Oxford English Dictionary,* in theory the arbiter of terminological disputes (in reality, of course, a participant in them) provides two major subdivisions of "monument," the first being what is today recognized as the standard usage: an object that is generally large in size, that commemorates or memorializes, that is historically significant, and that has longevity. It is important to note monument's etymological origin, however: the word derives from the Latin verb *monēre,* "to remind." Monument's Latin source contains a crucial element of meaning that tends to be overlooked in everyday speech: that monuments are not simply things, they are things-that-do, motionless objects that nevertheless possess an active force, accomplishing real work among those surrounding them. This same active force is the sense of monument's second major definitional subdivision in the *OED*, now wholly obsolete: a transitive verb meaning to cause to be memorialized, to commemorate with a monument.[4]

Art historian Wu Hung argues that what might be considered the normative definition of monument—large, permanent, public objects; in short, the main definition

provided by the *OED*—is, though universal in ambition, little more than a construct of our own time, place, and cultural history (Wu 1995:1). Since any meaning associated with a monument can and will change over time as the culture that surrounds an object evolves, it is futile to ascribe an absolute meaning to any given monument. Hence, Wu's (1995:4) analogy to art history's form and meaning: though a monument may physically stay the same over long durations of time, monumentality, or the meanings we associate with a monument, continuously change (cf. Meyers 2012:13, Thomas 2007:4). Riegl (1903) even noted the tendency for sculptures and buildings to become monumental unintentionally, insofar as they are ascribed monumental associations long after—potentially many generations after—their creation.

A monument, then, should be considered an object, or suite of objects, that possesses an agreed-upon special meaning to a community of people.[5] But since this meaning can never be immutable, we can only consider an object's monumentality in the context of its relationship to the community of which it forms a part. Appreciating relationality is thus essential to understanding the monumentality of any object, for just as we assign to material things their meaning, so they exert their own agency on us, influencing our thoughts, beliefs, even physical actions (Hoskins 2006). Perhaps it is time to resuscitate the *OED*'s transitive sense of the word: the active meaning of monument that has become obsolete should once again gain currency.

This is not to downplay or disregard the genuine contributions that formal analyses of monuments can provide. This is particularly apparent in pre- or nonhistoric contexts, where identifying and understanding meaning with any degree of confidence is notoriously difficult. In extreme situations, formal analysis may be the only option available. But more to the point, an archaeological interpretation operating under a relational framework has to consider equally the formal properties of the monument(s) under investigation as well as the monumentality that exists in the relationship between objects and subjects. The two are inextricably intertwined, and considering one without the other does justice to neither.

The following pages present a handful of examples of the ways in which various scholars from several disciplines, archaeology especially, have considered either side of this form/meaning dialectic.

Form and Monument

In 1950, eminent archaeologist V. Gordon Childe published what would become his most famous work, "The Urban Revolution" (1950). According to one informal study, Childe's piece on the origins of urbanism has since become the single most-cited archaeological article on ancient complex society (Smith 2009:3). Using Lewis Henry Morgan's (1877) social evolutionary rubric of savagery-barbarism-civilization as a baseline for human culture over time, Childe equated these stages to the hunting-gathering, agricultural, and urban stages of demography, respectively.

Childe's arguments for the social changes that occurred with the advent of urbanism—essentially, a shift from mechanical to organic social solidarity, in Durkheim's (1893) terms—and his lifelong predilection for Marxian social theory (Trigger 1989:259–263)

are well-trodden ground. Less commonly noted is his assertion that one of the primary distinguishing characteristics of cities, and thus of urban civilization (as distinct from villages and agricultural civilization), is the presence of monumental architecture. In his words, "Truly monumental public buildings not only distinguish each known city from any village but also symbolize the concentration of the social surplus" (1950:12). In ancient Sumer, for example, whose cities were in part characterized by enormous temples with attached magazines and granaries, Childe proposes that "the social surplus was first effectively concentrated in the hands of a god and stored in his granary. . . . But of course the imaginary deities were served by quite real priests who . . . administered their divine masters' earthly estates" (1950:12).

Seeing architectural scale as directly correlated with power and with the social and political control of commoners by elites is among the most common interpretations of monumental buildings offered by archaeologists (see Potts this volume). Occasionally, the influence of Marxian thought is explicitly noted, as in the case of Mesopotamian archaeologist Susan Pollock, who uses an appeal to Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony to argue that monumental buildings are physical embodiments of relations of domination/subordination, and are thus inherently ideological statements (1999:175). In other studies, the same or similar principles are present, though with reference to more contemporary anthropologists such as Godelier (1986) instead of Marx (e.g., Kolb 1994).

The primary difference between Childe's programmatic article and the more recent case studies is the latter's implementation of a thermodynamic approach to monumental architecture, according to which monumentality can be measured quantitatively in terms of energy expenditure. The foundational text in this branch of the archaeology of architecture is Trigger's study, which defines monumental architecture as buildings whose "scale and elaboration exceed the requirements of any practical functions that a building is intended to perform" (1990:119). Though thermodynamics reduces monumentality to scale and little else, archaeologists are at least offered the ability to proceed measuring monumentality in a formal fashion. This is done by assessing the amount of energy that is involved in building a structure: since, according to principles of least effort, humans seek to conserve energy wherever possible, it follows that situations in which much energy has been expended in construction activities must speak to the ability of a ruler to marshal resources and human loyalties (1990:122–124). Although some scholars argue that this principle results in simplistic conclusions that can be summarized as "the bigger the building, the more powerful the builder" (see Marcus 2003), and understanding the duration of monumental building events is rarely taken into consideration (cf. Bayliss et al. 2007), the idea remains prominent in archaeology (e.g., Rosenswig and Burger 2012:4–5). Adherents to this approach typically quantify energy investiture in a building by estimating the number of labor-hours or days that was necessary to build it (Abrams 1989; Abrams and Bolland 1999). The procedure first estimates the original volume of a building,[6] then multiplies that volume by construction rates determined either from ethnographic or ethnoarchaeological examples (Pollock 1999:179), experimental archaeology (Kolb 1994:525), or, ideally, from ancient texts (Ristvet 2007:199).[7]

Though less transparently reductive, other approaches are only slightly less instrumentalist in their assumption that the scale of large public structures functions to perpetuate and consolidate political power on the part of elites, and that monuments and monumental architecture are thus useful indices for social complexity. Moore, for example, notes that architecture is more than merely a passive byproduct of labor investment; rather, the form of buildings actually helps shape social interaction (1996:3). At the same time, however, his assessment of the visibility of large structures in the Andes comes to similar conclusions, such as that high visual angles of incidence and large viewsheds from buildings suggest those structures' use in communicating control (1996:116–118). Likewise, Inomata (2006:811–813) and Gilibert (2011:101–106) calculate the size of open spaces (plazas, courtyards, and so on) that stood before public buildings in order to estimate the number of individuals that could fit in the space. That number is then taken as a proxy for the degree to which rulers were able to use these open spaces as venues for political performances, performances that are argued to have been crucial to the efficacy and legitimacy of the state.

Archaeologists will occasionally go so far as to argue that monumental works can be directly correlated with particular complex social formations, as Renfrew (1973; 1976) did when he used Service's (1962) and Sahlins's (1968) neo-evolutionary framework to propose that the presence and distribution of long barrows in Neolithic Wessex corresponded to the territorial divisions of local chiefdoms. The association of monumentality with particular neo-evolutionary stages of complexity has recently been challenged (Howey 2012; cf. Notroff et al. this volume), and more sophisticated modeling of the relationship of landscape monuments and territory is now prevalent, such as Glatz and Plourde's (2011) use of costly signaling theory to understand Late Bronze Age monuments in Anatolia (cf. Neiman 1997; see also Glatz this volume). Very common is the general interpretive stance that sees social complexity and monuments as inextricably related (e.g., Dillehay 1990; Kolb this volume; Sherratt 1990). DeMarrais et al.'s well-known study proposed that monumental buildings "associate a group with a place and represent the power and authority of its leaders . . . often expressing relatively unambiguous messages of power" (1996:18); thus, the presence of a southern Moche monumental ceremonial complex in a non-Moche area is taken as an indicator of the expansionist nature of the Moche state (1996:26). Such works are characterized by a similar underlying assumption—that size can be equated with political power and social complexity, and thus that the construction of monumental works is undertaken in order to facilitate political subjectivity (cf. Caraher this volume; Notroff et al. this volume).

Another aspect of the archaeological record that archaeologists have examined with an eye toward the formal properties of monuments is in the layout of ancient cities. The presence of coordinated monuments across urban centers has often been taken to suggest the presence of urban planning. For example, following Trigger's definition of monumental architecture discussed above, Smith argues that a series of spatially coordinated buildings and sculptures can be taken to suggest that urban construction took place in a top-down fashion in which political rulers decreed the layout of a city and deliberately and conspicuously staged the city to emphasize their own ability and strength (Smith

2007:8–12). The temple compound of Angkor Wat in Cambodia is a good example of such a planned monumental urban center.

Whereas archaeologists will typically look at an ancient city plan and assess its monumental layout to determine cases of top-down city planning, studies of contemporary monumentality in urban planning conventionally take the equation of political power and monumental architecture as a given and proceed from there (Therborn this volume). Ford, for example, notes the paradox that although grand monumental places and structures are among our most treasured urban attractions (think Olmstead's Central Park in Manhattan, or the Palais Garnier in Paris), it takes governmental regimes that are nearly totalitarian in strength to see them actually built (2008:237–238).[8] Nowhere is this more clearly attested than in China, where strong governmental authority has permitted the construction of 2,800 high-rise buildings in the city of Shanghai (and an additional 2,000 planned) as well as iconic "megaprojects" being undertaken in every city across the country (C. J. Smith 2008:266–267).

However, the wealth of information for modern cities renders them all the more visible and interpretable, and thus studies of places more modern than the ancient past can offer insights and caveats regarding political authority that might not otherwise occur to the archaeologist. Political geographer John Agnew looks to twentieth-century Rome, and especially its infamous Beaux-Arts memorial to Victor Emmanuel II, which has been relentlessly mocked since even before the completion of its construction (Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998:28–29), to point out that "[s]*imply because they were built* does not mean that they [monumental structures] inevitably served to solidify the regimes among the national populace and necessarily sacralize their claims" (Agnew 1998:236, original emphasis). The difference between conceived intent and perceived outcome is something archaeologists would do well to keep in mind, since the discrepancy challenges the correlation of scale and power that so many assume is inherent to ancient building projects.

Finally, this brief turn to contemporary urban planning reminds us of the discipline of architecture and the contributions it has made to the study of the formal properties of monuments. Architecture has long had a difficult relationship with monumental buildings; during the early days of the Modern Movement especially, architects were reluctant to discuss monumentality openly or to pursue monumental goals given their own complicity in furthering the causes of the totalitarian regimes of the 1920s and 1930s by designing and constructing their monumental state apparatuses (Collins and Collins 1984:17). Furthermore, those same regimes were stylistically obsessed with excessive Beaux-Arts constructions (see, e.g., Speer 1970), the very architectural fashion that the modernists were so desperate to avoid. Lewis Mumford went so far as to write, "If it is a monument, it is not modern, and if it is modern, it cannot be a monument" (1938:438).

Nevertheless, prominent architects from the Modern Movement eventually became closely associated with monumentality, including Louis Kahn, Sigfried Giedion, and Josep Lluís Sert, particularly when the need for monumental memorials became apparent in the aftermath of World War II (Goldhagen 2001:25). A programmatic statement penned

during the height of the conflict scorned monumental efforts of the preceding century and offered many pieces of advice, including the use of new materials and techniques. It also demanded the close collaboration of architects, landscapists, painters, sculptors, and urban planners in creating works that symbolize a culture's ideals and that offer people more than mere functional fulfillment (Sert et al. 1984), recalling Trigger's definition of monumental architecture discussed above. At the same time, however, the lofty cultural ambition of the modernists reminds us as archaeologists that monumental buildings and sculptures can be much more than works possessing certain criteria of form. They also influence us in multifarious ways, participating in our ongoing and unceasing social negotiations long after their creators have departed (Sert et al. 1984).

Meaning and Monumentality

If the studies cited above are lacking in any respect, it is in their general tendency to overemphasize form at the expense of meaning, to concentrate too closely on the nature of the monument itself and not enough on the monumentality created in its interaction with people and things around it (Thomas 2007:10–12; this volume). In the past two decades or so there have been several attempts in archaeology and other disciplines to move the discussion of ancient monuments along new avenues of research, often exploring new theoretical areas as they arise in neighboring disciplines. Only occasionally is a study dedicated to monuments or monumentality specifically; more frequently, we will see their relevance to the present work applied indirectly.

One of the most commonly discussed topics in theoretical archaeological literature in recent years has been the theme of agency—that of common individuals as active participants in the creation of social structure as opposed to the "great men" purview of traditional history, typically using the work of Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984) as a foundation, as well as the agency of material objects themselves influencing the negotiation of social engagements (Olsen 2003; 2010). This burgeoning literature has inevitably spilled over into monumentality, perhaps most famously in Pauketat's (2000) analysis of the gradual construction of the enormous Monks Mound at the Mississippian site of Cahokia (cf. Blitz and Livingood 2004). Drawing upon his excavations at the site, which show clear evidence for annual construction cycles, Pauketat uses Giddens's concept of unintended consequences to construct a narrative that sees the commoners who were, of course, the actual builders of the mound, as the unwitting agents of their own subjection, assembling the apparatus of their own domination over too long a time span to anticipate the consequences of their actions (2000). A highly similar approach has been adopted in Formative Period Mesoamerica by Joyce (2004), who proposes that the iconic pyramids of the later classic Maya and Aztecs were simply the end point of a long trajectory of monument building that began with relatively modest structures newly built out of clay. These clay buildings lasted much longer than previous materials, and thus changed the spatial arena in which political interaction occurred, eventually—and unintentionally—becoming the sites of new political practices that over time became standardized and thus necessitated ever larger physical settings. Likewise, Johansen (2004)

documents how Neolithic ashmounds in southern India, though originally created by a process of repetitive and mundane activities such as cattle penning and dung storage, later became sites of megalith construction and the expression of political power (see also Fisher this volume).

The contrast with the approach advocated by Trigger, and adopted indirectly by scholars such as Kolb and Pollock, is clear. Agency-based reconstructions of the origins of monuments turn the traditional explanation on its head by removing powerful political actors altogether and replacing them with common people as the monumental agents. Far from being indexes for how much labor a political ruler was able to mobilize, Joyce and Pauketat reverse Trigger's understanding of cause and consequence in monumental constructions by rendering political power an outcome of monumental architecture instead of its creator.

Not unrelated to concepts of agency in the creation of monuments is the notion of how individuals experience monuments once construction is completed (Pauketat this volume). The so-called phenomenological approach to the built environment has encouraged much speculation—some productive, some less so—on how ancient buildings and sculptures were actually understood and perceived by individuals. In the case of architecture, one might point not to a particular architect, but to the writing of prominent social theorist Henri Lefebvre, godfather of the "spatial turn" in the humanities and social sciences, who argues that the power of a cathedral, for example, lies in how its visitors become aware of their own footsteps, listen to the singing, smell the incense—in short, they "experience a total being in a total space" (1990:221).[9]

In archaeology, the phenomenological approach to monuments is most closely tied to landscape archaeology (Johnson 2012) where scholars, especially those working in Great Britain and continental Europe, have attempted to interpret the meaning of megaliths, cairns, henges, and other built landscape features without the aid of native historical documents as a guide (e.g., Cummings et al. 2002; Müller this volume). One researcher frequently concerned with monuments in the landscape is Bradley (1993, 1998, 2000), who turns to built features of ancient circular henges such as distinctions in sight lines between interior and exterior to postulate about ancient principles of inclusivity and exclusivity, among other things. Equally important is the work of Tilley (1994, 1996) who, following a lengthy theoretical explication and justification of the phenomenological approach, speculates about whether cairns in the coastal area of Wales were placed deliberately to draw one's attention to distant landscape features like mountains, or to nearby natural features such as rivers within earshot of a given monument (1994:93–109). One does not have to be a dyed-in-the-wool positivist to challenge the credibility of such reconstructions, and several strong negative reactions have been penned (e.g., Fleming 2005). Regardless of how one feels about the phenomenological approach to landscape, however, it is critical to keep in mind the landscape setting of ancient monuments, and to consider the possibility—or even likelihood—that a given ancient culture may not have had the same conceptual dichotomy between culture and physical landscape that we do today (Scarre 2002a, 2002b:6–8, 2007). Related theoretical positions and interpretations are often held by archaeologists interested in monumentality and the sacred

(Barrett 1990; Howey 2012; Johansen 2004; Scarre 2011; Thomas 1990; Thompson and Pluckhahn 2012) and in urban symbolism and settlement planning according to principles of cosmology, where lie longstanding debates concerning the verifiability of results (Ashmore 1991; Ashmore and Sabloff 2002, 2003; Carl et al. 2000; Smith 2003, 2007; Wheatley 1971).

Even if some phenomenological interpretations of ancient monumentality flounder on account of our inability to confirm or reject them, rendering reconstructions of ancient perception a challenge in the best of times, it is nevertheless worth recalling phenomenology's basic tenet that humans in all times and in all places are trapped within their own particular worldview and can only ever view the world through the perspective of their own cultural environment. This is important to any study of ancient monumentality (and, indeed, to any study of the past), for how are we to evaluate rival interpretive claims of a given body of evidence, particularly in the case of nonliterate societies? Consider the experiment posed by the Environmental Protection Agency, who requested that a deterring symbol be placed permanently above New Mexico's underground Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The symbol chosen has to last in the desert at least 10,000 years, and thus in addition to being durable must also be an effective communicator well beyond the demise of our civilization that produces it (Bryan-Wilson 2003). The sheer futility of the proposals made by a committee of anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists, and engineers—ranging from huge skulls and crossbones to a vast desert landscape of black thorn-shaped monoliths—would be comical were it not for the disquieting fact that the failed suggestions effectively shatter any confidence we might otherwise have possessed regarding our ability to understand accurately the intent behind ancient monuments.

Part of the problem in the WIPP case is humans' inability to perpetuate genuinely long-term social memory beyond the cyclical rise and fall of civilizations; phenomenology teaches us that attempts to do so are doomed to fail. Nevertheless, the maintenance of social memory at a smaller time scale is one of monuments' most visible, and most frequently discussed, functions. One case of monuments being used as tools to activate social memory is the so-called unintentional monument, which refers to buildings and sculptures that, though not intended to have a special relationship with people at the time of their construction, later are mobilized to serve the social needs of the present (think Baltimore's Poe House, or the Paul Revere House in Boston) (Riegl 1903). Perhaps more obvious manifestations of the materialization of memory are those monuments, especially memorial sculptures, that are created with the explicit goal of reminding people about significant places, events, or people. This phenomenon began in earnest following the Renaissance (Choay 2001), and accelerated exponentially in the second half of the twentieth century (Huyssen 2000).

It is important to recall, however, that deliberately created memorials are by no means exclusively positive in their associations (Savage 1997). Perhaps the most famous memorial to have been built in North America in the past decade is Michael Arad's 9/11 Memorial, commemorating the September 11 attacks of 2001 (Arad 2009). Far less famous, though equally revealing of the delicate nature of monumentality as a social memory device, is The Eye that Cries (*El Ojo que Llora*), a rock art installation placed

in a public park in Lima comprising several thousand pebbles, each inscribed with the name of a victim from Peru's violent civil conflict during the 1980s and 1990s. When it was discovered that several dozen names of Shining Path terrorists who had been killed in a prison uprising were inadvertently included in the monument, The Eye that Cries was vandalized, revealing that a sculpture explicitly intended to symbolize a nation in healing can in fact do quite the opposite, reopening painful wounds by activating disturbing memories (Drinot 2009).[10] Similarly, artists have been struggling to find effective ways to commemorate traumatic or shameful national events without glorifying them inadvertently by constructing large, permanent sculptures; what is the appropriate way to commemorate the Holocaust in Germany, for example? One innovative solution has been the rise of the "counter-monument," monuments that self-consciously challenge expected norms of scale and endurance, such as the Harburg Monument against Fascism, a twelve-meter high square pillar that invited pedestrians to scrawl personal messages on its soft aluminum siding before being slowly sunk into the ground to rest (cf. Huyssen 1996; Moshenska 2010; Young 1992, 1999).

Time will tell how monuments such as the 9/11 Memorial or The Eye that Cries are received in future centuries—if, indeed, they are even still standing. As we have seen, monuments, even deliberately constructed memorials, have an uncomfortable habit of changing meanings with the passage of the years (Harmanşah 2011). For archaeologists, one of the greatest challenges is articulating how these meanings changed in the past, for of course ancient societies had social memories too—and how are we to tell to what stage in the evolution of memory an excavated feature belongs? Can a building we bring to light have its memory-history accurately reconstructed, from its creation to its use, reuse, and eventual abandonment? Building on the work of scholars such as Halbwachs (1950) and Connerton (1989), Alcock (2002) asks similar questions in her study of memory in the landscape and monuments of ancient Greece. She argues convincingly that, far from representing merely a shift in political status from independent democracy to subjugated province, the architectural infilling of the Athenian Agora during the occupation of the Roman Empire was a deliberate attempt to highlight Greece's former Hellenistic glories, showcasing earlier Hellenistic art and architecture as both a reassurance to themselves and a reminder of their accomplished legacy to their conquerors (Alcock 2002:51–67). The relative wealth of information pertaining to the Classical world makes it an ideal venue for studies of monumentality and memory (Alexandridis this volume; Boschung this volume).

The Athenians' attempt to use architecture as a means of conveying messages to their Roman occupiers raises another way individuals have approached monuments and monumental buildings, and that is as a text whose social meanings can, with judicious and careful treatment of physical and historical evidence, be "read" by scholars seeking insight into social relations. Victor Hugo is perhaps the writer who most explicitly makes the analogy. At one point (Book V, chapter 2), Hugo leaves the narrative of *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* for a lengthy discourse likening architecture to books that compile and represent cultures' memories, traditions, and values, writing that for 6,000 years—in biblical terms the entire span of earth's history—"architecture was the great handwriting

of the human race. And this is so true, that not only every religious symbol, but every human thought, has its page and its monument in that immense book." Hugo opines a strong pessimism for the survival of architecture as the poetry of humankind in the face of competition from the printing press; the antagonist Claude Frollo ominously declares, "This will kill that," when looking up from a printed volume to the towering cathedral.

Hugo need not have worried, since reading monumental architecture as social text has continued well into the present day. Ethnohistorian Gary Urton, for example, wrote a social history of the Andean village of Pacariqtambo based on the construction sequence of the courtyard wall, what in antiquity would be referred to as a temenos wall, that surrounds the village's public church (1988). Since the village's ten clans, or *ayllu*s, were each responsible for a section of the wall, the patchy evolution of the wall's morphology over time reflects the oscillating hierarchies that exist between the *ayllu*s, and serves as a testament of the public interaction and dialogue between them. Monumental sculpture can be similarly "read" (Ibarra this volume; Langin-Hooper this volume), as in the case of the Patna Massacre Memorial, a statue erected to commemorate the deaths of several dozen British soldiers during the eighteenth-century occupation of India. Over time, subtle changes were made to the monument's form as well as to its accompanying inscription, which Brown (2006) argues were both a result of, and a contributing factor to, the changing dynamics between the English and their colonial subjects.

There is one final theme pertaining to meaning and monumentality that has appeared in scholarly literature, though much more subtly, and that is several scholars' challenge to the typically assumed association of monuments and permanence. Monuments do not necessarily remain in place where they were erected, but can be uprooted and transplanted with accompanying changes of meaning (Parker 2003; this volume). Because it is the case that many, if not most, monuments are built to last, it is worth ruminating on those monuments that seem to be characterized, at least in part, by their proclivity for change (Savage 2009:21). For example, in the previous section I described how open courtyards and plazas in ancient cities have been interpreted as proxies for state control via political performances. Though certainly true in many instances, Smith looks to modern examples of open spaces and notes that unlike buildings, whose form and meaning are comparatively rigid, open spaces contain the capacity for almost instantaneous changes in meaning (2008:220). Tiananmen Square is one example, a carefully constructed venue of state authority that became, almost overnight, the locus of revolution in 1989.[11]

For a very brief period—just five days, from May 30 to June 4—Tiananmen contained what must surely be one of the shortest-lived monuments in history: the Goddess of Democracy, a statue erected by the demonstrating students as a deliberate provocation to the regime, who was then obliged either to allow the statue to remain standing, or to destroy it in an embarrassing public spectacle (Wu 2005). The regime chose the latter, and replicas of the Goddess of Democracy have gone on to become symbols of political freedom around the world, a powerful example of how a monument's efficacy can lie in its temporariness, not its permanence, as standard definitions would have us believe. More contrived, perhaps, but no less fascinating is the case of Gerz and Shalev-Gerz's Holocaust Memorial in Hamburg, consisting of an 8-m-tall column that was slowly

lowered into the ground beneath as people inscribed their thoughts and feelings onto its surface. Here we again see the monument's meaning and its relationship with its viewers being negotiated in its disappearance, not its immutability.

Conclusion

The numerous studies described above, in addition to providing a general overview of the themes that are found across the vast and disparate literature that exists on monuments and monumentality, illustrate the point with which I opened this chapter: that no definition of "monument" can ever aspire to be absolute unless it locates a monument's monumentality in the relationship that exists between it and the people experiencing it. Such an approach is both flexible and encompassing, incorporating many disciplines and methodologies without expecting researchers to adhere to strict definitional properties. A relational viewpoint is absent from formal treatments of monuments, and generally only hinted at in the more interpretive works just described. Both aspects of the topic are necessary to any study, though not sufficient individually; form and meaning must be considered together. Monumentality is something more than the shape, or size, or visibility, or permanence of the monument—though these variables absolutely carry their own significance. Monumentality lies in the meaning created by the relationship that is negotiated between object and person, and between object and the surrounding constellation of values and symbols in a culture. This introductory chapter—and the case studies that are presented in the chapters that follow—has demonstrated this in numerous studies of monuments of all kinds, and from all times and places.

To return, then, to the question with which I opened this chapter—can the tiny Guennol Lioness truly be considered monumental?—we are faced with the stark reality that without provenience information the miniature statue's relationship with the people that used it and its relational status within its larger cultural system are all but irretrievable. And yet, there is a tantalizing clue in the ancient art historical record. The one other place in which the image of the muscular lioness appears is in seal impressions from the site of Susa. Here one sees the same lioness standing beside stylized mountains, and in two cases even holding the mountains above her head (Porada 1950:fig. 6). Porada writes,

> [T]he enormous size of the leonine figures in comparison with the small mountains could . . . be interpreted as indicating that the lion-demons had great power over the mountainous country through which they stride (fig. 6: a) or which they support on their raised paws (fig. 6: f, g). (1950:225)

Whether or not the lioness had "great power" over the mountains, it seems undeniable that the animal was somehow related to this massive feature of the natural landscape—perhaps the only culturally held relationship of any kind to which we can point. Though the evidence is exiguous at best, it does appear that the instinctive inclination to refer to the lioness statue as "monumental" despite its tiny stature might have some ancient relational justification after all. Furthermore, we cannot disregard the relationship

that our own culture has chosen to associate with it. For better or for worse, and for reasons many of us may not agree with, in our multimillion dollar purchase of the object we have chosen to ascribe to the Guennol Lioness a meaning that is only marginally related to its size. As one archaeologist has written, "Monuments, it turns out, are in the eye of the beholder" (Hole 2012:457).

Though we can interpret such ascriptions of meaning in the present with relative ease, the challenge for the archaeologist is to make such determinations using only inconsistent and fragmentary evidence from the past. The chapters contained in this volume, which is divided into five major parts—(I) Monumental Architecture and Social Transformation (Potts, Caraher, Thomas, and Notroff et al.); (II) Monumentality and Landscape (Glatz, Ibarra, Kolb, and Müller); (III) Monuments and Memory Work (Bogucki, Alexandridis, Boschung, and Parker); (IV) Monuments, Settlements, and Cities (Bachhuber, Novák, and Therborn); and (V) The Experience of Monuments (Fisher, Langin-Hooper, Wendrich, and Pauketat)—take up this challenge with rigor and resolve, and it is my pleasure to present their findings here.

NOTES

1. The previous record holders for most expensive sculpture, modern or ancient, were the ancient Roman piece *Artemis and the Stag,* which sold for $28.6 million in June 2007, and then Picasso's *Tête de Femme (Dora Maar)*, which fetched $29.1 million in November of that year. This record lasted less than a month, when the Guennol Lioness was sold for nearly double that price. Though the lioness still stands at the top of the pile for most highly priced antiquity, the record for the most expensive sculpture was surpassed yet again in early 2010, when Alberto Giacometti's *L'Homme qui marche I* sold for $104.3 million, a record that remains intact today.

2. A contemporary art historian whom I invited to participate in the monumentality conference whose proceedings are contained in the present volume (and who politely declined the invitation) mentioned in passing, "You should get someone to present on the Guennol Lioness. Talk about *monumental!*"

3. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-K7PNw1_dw for Hildesley's presentation of the statue, as interesting for its artful persuasion of the viewer as it is for the lioness itself.

4. "monument, v.." *OED* Online. September 2012. Oxford University Press, accessed 14 November 2012, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/121853?rskey=Oz7z5V&result=2.

5. In the same analogical spirit as Wu, Lefebvre declares that "[b]uildings are to monuments as everyday life is to festival" (1990:223).

6. The degree to which this part of the process is speculative is directly correlated with the amount of the building that is preserved in the archaeological record. Though a crucial stage of the quantification process, the degree of confidence in archaeologists' volumetric reconstructions is rarely specified and never statistically evaluated.

7. Of course, the same procedure can be used to argue *against* a particular building's monumentality, with the reasoning that buildings with low energy investiture must be fairly conventional, nonmonumental structures. Such is the case with Banning's (2011) recent reassessment of the massive 11,000-year-old buildings excavated at Göbekli Tepe, whose size and uniqueness leads most scholars (including their excavator, Klaus Schmidt†) to assume that the buildings must be monumental.

8.   The interminable struggles surrounding the construction of One World Trade Center (formerly known as the Freedom Tower) in downtown Manhattan are emblematic of the difficulties nontotalitarian regimes face when trying to launch major monumental building projects.

9.   A lengthier passage perhaps better summarizes Lefbvre's intent: "Inasmuch as the poet through a poem gives voices to a way of living (living, feeling, thinking, taking pleasure, or suffering), the experience of monumental space may be said to have some similarity to entering and sojourning in the poetic world" (1990:224).

10. As an interesting aside, it is worth noting that the sculptor, Lika Mutal, was not aware of the presence of Shining Path activists in the list of victims' names she was handed, and claims she would not have included them if given the choice (Drinot 2009:23). Here again we see the agency of the object itself exerting itself, this time not only without the sculptor's intent, but in direct contradiction to it.

11. The iconic photograph of the still-anonymous "Tank Man" who defied a line of tanks by standing before them with nothing more than a grocery bag is emblematic of monumental open spaces' remarkable ability to undergo 180º turns of meaning at dizzying speeds.

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