

ASSEMBLAGE PARADATA

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Brief Bio

Andrew Reinhard is an archaeology PhD student at the University of York interested in video game archaeology, specifically how games are artifacts and sites.

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Paradata

Much like soldiers in World War II who played poker with cards designed to help them identify the enemy, I wanted to design a card game that would encourage people to think about things archaeologically. Archaeologists are storytellers, so I wanted to test each player's creativity to look at a series of (surprising) objects and an event, and to create a story linking everything together. Artifacts alone convey information, but taken together in a single context—an assemblage—they tell a story. Artifacts are the bones of our past, but when assembled produce a skeleton.

To make the game, I first developed and wrote the rules, thinking about how to use unrelated images to create some kind of connection. Once the mechanics and rules were done, I found a bunch of oddball artifact images online (which for this prototype should be classed as "fair use"), and dropped them into InDesign CS5 to create the initial deck of 84 cards, plus 18 hazard cards and 24 events cards, the artifacts and events provided without explanation or interpretation, and the hazards drawn from real-world archaeological perils. For the prototype, the actual identification of the artifacts has been removed, although I might add them back as a kind of answer key.

A PDF file of the cards along with the rules will remain accessible by being hosted on my blog, archaeogaming.com. Because the game is CC0, I would encourage everyone to play the game and improve upon it, adding cards, making expansion decks, and remixing the rules.