Telling a story

Using narrative interpretations at archaeological exhibitions

Eva Kristín Dal

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Author: Eva Kristín Dal
Course: Thesis and research
Course Code: ARCH 1044WY
Student number: s1065750

Supervisor: Dr. Monique van den Dries
Specialisation: Heritage Management
University of Leiden, Faculty of Archaeology
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1. Introduction

An archaeological research is a scientific process and as such should result in a scientifically qualified report. As interesting as these reports might be to people within the discipline, they can be equally as uninteresting to the general public. This fact has not escaped the notice of archaeologists. As early as 1956 Mortimer Wheeler, who is particularly well-known for his works at British hill forts (Renfrew and Bahn 2004, 34), wrote: “It is the duty of the archaeologist, as of the scientist, to reach and impress the public, and to mould his words in the common clay of its forthright understanding” (Wheeler 1956, 224).

The 1980s saw a change in the way people regarded archaeological interpretations and the interpretations of other kinds of heritage. It followed a realization that the public was not very interested either in archaeological findings or the growing industry of heritage tourism. This change was closely related to a shift in theoretical perspectives which took place not only in archaeology but also in other related disciplines (McCarthy 2008, 537; Pluciennik 1999, 653).

Despite this increased interest in public presentation, Prentice (1993, 171-172) commented in 1993 that “[s]tudies of the responses to the media used to present heritage attractions are few in number”. He blames this on the legacy of interpretation being an art and therefore “good practice has [...] tended to be assumed rather than proven by formal assessment”. Almost a decade later, Merriman (2000a, 3) reports the same. He writes that “[t]he *consumption* of the past, the way in which people think history, and visit museums and other presentations, has rarely been studied, except in the form of superficial and repetitive surveys of the characteristics of museum visitors.” Yet another decade later and Prentice’s and Merriman’s observations are still as relevant. A literature research yielded only scarce results on this subject.

This lack is especially true regarding the use of interpretations in the form of narratives. However, in the Heritage Reader, McCarthy (2008) addresses the issue of narratives as a form of interpretation. The incentive for this research, his work throws light on the potential narrative interpretations can have for the interpretation and presentation of archaeological data. In addition to McCarthy, Silberman (2008; 2004) has also written about the use of interpretative narratives for archaeological interpretations. Pluciennik (1999), Joyce (2002) and Little

(2004) have also shortly addressed the issue. In a discussion about the archaeological presentation at Ename, Belgium, Callebaut and Van der Donkt (2004) also describe the use of narratives.

The most prominent attempt to raise the issue of narrative interpretations, however, seems to have been the January 1997 meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology in Corpus Christi, Texas. There, over ten participants presented diverse interpretative narratives (Praetzellis 1998, 1-3; McCarthy 2008, 536). After this session, Deetz (1998, 94) wrote that "[t]he Storytellers session sent a clear message, that it is possible to convey our findings in an engaging fashion, and that there is ample room for us to change our style of writing. In a way, by having the courage to craft their presentations as they did, the participants demonstrated just that."

In the light of the little information available in this field, there is an opportunity to explore the public's opinion towards archaeological interpretations in the form of narratives. Hopefully, the current research seeks to resolve whether interpretative narratives are popular with visitors to archaeological parks and museums and whether there are any problems associated with using them.

1.1. What are interpretative narratives?

According to Silberman (2004, 119), an archaeological story or narrative is much more than an isolated anecdote or a list of facts about an ancient site or society. He defines it as "a carefully constructed, character-based narrative of crisis, conflict, adaptation, and change." An important quality of interpretative narratives is that the "stories must systematically uncover layers of meaning that lie beneath the surface of measurable, datable archaeological facts" (Silberman 2004, 119). To do so the narratives use a basic story pattern.

McCarthy has a similar understanding of interpretative narratives. He writes that

> [i]nterpretative narrative archaeology provides a way to try to explain the things that we, as archaeologists, *feel* are true about a site, the people who lived there, and the times in which they lived. The use of the techniques of fiction – plot, setting, character, and so forth – to tell a story in either the first or the third person suggest the potential to 'overcome' limits inherent in data (McCarthy 2008, 541).

Both definitions include the use of a story pattern. According to Pluciennik (1999, 655), there are three constituents to a narrative which can be used to analyse it, namely characters, events and plots. Characters are often individuals, usually humans, but can also be a collective. They may be the focus of the narrative but they are not necessarily the "object" of analysis. Events are generally comprised of a sequence of selected elements or occurrences. The plot ties together the events and gives them significance they do not possess as mere sequence.

Silberman (2004, 119) has identified two uses of the story pattern for archaeological interpretations: the telling of a great archaeological discovery, depicting the archaeologist as a hero, and the story of an ancient civilization's achievement or importance. However, if archaeological narratives are focused around individual characters, like Pluciennik suggests, they have the potential to offer a broader scope of use.

The term *narrative* can carry different meanings. Broadly speaking an archaeological narrative can be almost any interpretation, not necessarily intended for the public. However, what will henceforth be referred to as an interpretative narrative is an archaeological interpretation that makes use of a story pattern. It is character-based, includes a plot and is created around a specific setting or event. An interpretative narrative is firmly based on archaeological data, but can also include what the interpreter, to the best of his or her knowledge, *feels* is the truth.

Silberman (2004, 119) has, however, pointed out that archaeological interpretations should not be a work of popular translation or vulgarization. Instead he feels that "[g]ood interpretative stories transform stratigraphic assemblages, architectural reconstructions, and historical hypotheses into vivid, sometimes even moving celebrations of life".

It should be noted that in the literature review below the term "narrative" sometimes carries a broader definition of the word than outlined above, referring not necessarily to public presentations, which are the topic of this research. Where these "narratives" are relevant to the research topic, they will be included in the literature review.

1.2. Research goal

The literature suggests that the use of narratives for archaeological presentations can lead to several problems. Most of these regard the content of the narratives and ethical issues, rather than technical aspects. They are as follows:

- The compromise of authenticity;
- Inclusion of propaganda in the form of *communal autobiographies*;
- Oversimplification of facts;
- Inclusion or exclusion of multiple viewpoints;
- "Adventurous" portrayal of archaeologists;
- The use of narratives told in the present and referring to the past or narratives about the past referring to the present;
- Reaching the audience.

The aim of the research is to discover the public's attitude towards interpretative narratives and to find out to what extent these problems affect the visitor's experience. The main question central to this research is thus:

- To what extent do the above-mentioned problems affect the public?

In this context the public is defined as adult visitors to archaeological exhibitions. A sample from three specific locations, used as case studies, will be randomly chosen to represent the whole.

In addition two other questions will also be explored to cast further light on the public's attitude towards interpretative narratives. They regard the visitors' experience of narrative interpretations and their preference of presentation methods. These questions are as follows:

- Can narrative interpretations be used successfully for archaeological presentation?
- Do visitors prefer narrative interpretations to more conventional methods of interpretation?

The term *successful* is very subjective but for the purpose of this research a narrative interpretation is successful if the visitors enjoyed the interpretation, found it interesting, and learned something from it. A part of the research will therefore aim to evaluate these three factors.

One of the most characteristic features of a museum is, perhaps, the information panel, which provides information about different elements of the exhibition. As such panels are familiar to most visitors to archaeological exhibitions and will be used here as a comparison to the narrative presentations.

1.3. Methods

The research method is twofold and includes a literature study and a survey amongst visitors to archaeological exhibitions that use narratives in their presentation. To complement the latter, descriptions of the exhibitions, including observations about the presentation methods and the way the problems identified in chapter 1.2 are dealt with, will also be added.

The literature study focuses on identifying the problems and complications associated with using interpretative narratives. It also addresses the origin and theoretical background of narrative interpretations and the way they have been and are currently being used.

The survey aims to find out to what extent the problems associated with interpretative narratives affect the public. To get an overall picture of this presentation method, the survey also aims to evaluate if such presentations are *successful* according to the definition of the term provided in chapter 1.2. The questionnaire used in the survey is also designed to address visitors' preference of different presentation methods.

The descriptions are intended to provide a clearer picture to the reader of the museums and centre in the case studies and to identify the narratives used in the presentations. It seeks to evaluate the presentation methods and the use of technology. In addition, the way in which the different problems associated with narrative interpretations are dealt with, if at all, is discussed. This method has its limitations, the largest being its subjective nature. However, it will provide an opportunity for comparison and hopefully cast new light on the results or offer explanations for trends in the statistics the survey results provide.

The results from the survey were analysed statistically. The results from each location were then compared, distinct patterns identified and the results discussed. The findings of the survey were also compared with the descriptions and observations made at the exhibitions. The results were then discussed further in relation with the literature study. Finally the public's attitude towards the

problems associated with interpretative narratives will be identified. Suggestions will furthermore be made as to how narrative interpretations can be used successfully, how they can be improved and what should be avoided in relation to this presentation method.

The survey was conducted at three locations: The Provincial Archaeological Museum (PAM) Ename, Belgium; The Jorvik Viking Centre in York, the United Kingdom; Dublinia, in Dublin, Ireland. These locations were chosen because they all have interpretations that are based on narratives. A book chapter by Callebaut and van der Donckt (2004) constituted one of the stimuli of this research. It uses the Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename as a case study and thus it seemed ideal to include it in the case studies. The Jorvik Viking Centre was chosen because it has been one of the leading institutes in exploring alternative presentation methods since it was opened over two decades ago.

Originally, the intention was to include an archaeological park in the research. For that purpose, contact was made with Archeon, a park in Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands. The park has reconstructions of structures from three periods of history and prehistory, all based on data form excavations around the country. However, permission to do a survey among the visitors was not obtained.

Instead, Dublinia was chosen as the third location. It makes a good comparison to PAM Ename and the Jorvik Viking Centre as it makes use of reconstructions of Dublin in different time periods. It also has one exhibition where the relationship between the archaeologist and past societies is addressed. It should be noted that interpretative narratives are not as prominent in the exhibitions at Dublinia as they are at the other two locations, as most of the reconstructions in the former display a still “scene”. However, the choice of survey locations had to be made with only information available from web sites or publications. From those sources the most promising locations were chosen. Limited resources did not allow for a change in plans once the exhibitions had been visited and evaluated.

1.4. Chapter overview

The following chapters seek to provide the reader with an overview of interpretative narratives and their uses in archaeological presentation, benefits, problems and the public’s attitude towards these problems. To put interpretative

narratives in a larger context, the theoretical background is discussed in chapter 2, along with the role of the archaeologist as an educator and previous studies concerning presentation methods. Chapter 3 discusses the problems associated with using narrative interpretations. The aim here is to explore multiple aspects of the problems and discover the contending viewpoints present in the literature. Chapter 4 examines the discourse in the literature further, focusing on the use of interpretative narratives. This examination further casts light on the advantages of using narrative interpretations for public presentations and how they should best be used. The data collection phase is discussed in chapter 5. It provides information on the research design and its components, including the survey method and questionnaire design. In chapter 6 the case studies used for the research are described and examined in preparation for chapter 7. There, the results from the survey are presented and discussed. The final conclusions are presented in chapter 8.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter discusses the theoretical shift that interpretative narratives were born from in the 1980s. It also addresses the re-evaluation of the way archaeology was presented to the public and the educative role of the archaeologist this new school of thought encouraged.

2.1. A postmodern trend

Narratives in archaeological interpretations have their roots in American archaeology. A growing realization in the 1980s was that even though archaeology relied on public support and financing, the public did not understand or show much interest in the data that was being produced. This shift called for new methods of interpretations. It was supported by a growing influence of postmodern theoretical perspectives, promoting understanding instead of objective descriptions of archaeological material (McCarthy 2008, 537).

The concept of multivocality also emerged from postmodern and poststructuralist thought and gained momentum from social movements supporting the recognition of the right of marginalized groups. Multivocality is defined as multiple interpretations of the past that are meant to challenge dominant interpretative narratives (Fawcett et al. 2008, 3). According to Silberman (2008, 141) multivocality should: "create spaces and structures at heritage sites that will promote the co-existence of potentially conflicting approaches and perceptions of the site's significance". Joyce (2002, 120) agrees with this view. She writes that multivocal narratives "should not seek to resolve contending views. Instead, they have the potential to expose the ways people with different views differentially use material remains."

At a similar time, what has been termed the *linguistic turn* in philosophy and the humanities, led to a "crisis of representation" (Pluciennik 1999, 653). In regard to archaeology, the "crisis" was derived from the question "whether museums, developing from a background of white, western, imperialist, monolithic and modernist attitudes, can serve a valid function in a culturally diverse post-modern, post-colonial world" (Merriman 2000b, 301-302). This crisis encouraged the search for an objective and monolithic past that awaited to be revealed by the informed expert. Later this view was challenged and replaced

by the belief that there are many versions of the past, all reflecting the present and thus changeable. The solution was partly seen to be multiple narratives (Merriman 2000b, 302-303).

A similar attitude about multiple interpretations of the past can be reflected in social constructivism. As scientific knowledge is partly or entirely socially constructed (Johnson 1999, 45), Copeland argues that "[…] there is no such thing as an independent reality which we can know, describe and communicate in an absolutely true sense. […] the nature of the evidence dealt with is such that it may be interpreted in various ways by the viewer." One of the results from the above mentioned discourses has been a renewed interest in the ways archaeologists present their work, including the role of narratives (Pluciennik 1999, 653).

Narratives have also played a role in educational and social science theory where the use of narratives has even been taken step further and applied as a research method. Narrative research refers to any study that uses or analyses narrative materials (Lieblich et al. 1998, 2). It focuses both on the experiences of the research participants and on the meaning given to the experiences (Trahar 2009, 15).

However, not everyone agrees on what the postmodern shift in archaeology towards narrative interpretations should stand for in practice. Praetzellis (1998, 1), in the introduction to the *Archaeologists as Storytellers* session of the Society for Historical Archaeology in Christchurch, Texas, wrote that "by throwing positivism out of the window, we have allowed ourselves the freedom to take on an interpretive approach that does not require us to come up with answers to the big questions, those 'questions that count.'" In the discussion later in the same volume, Deetz (1998, 95) addresses this statement of his colleague. He writes: "Perhaps such an approach does not *require* that we answer the 'questions that count,' but I believe that there are times when this can indeed happen."

Both these statements imply that narrative approach does not have to deal with facts, but rather that is allowed for fictional interpretations, not based in archaeological data. This is at odds with the definition of interpretative narratives provided in Chapter 1.1, which needs to include verifiable archaeological data. If the standards are lowered in this matter, archaeological narratives run the risk of losing their credibility. This matter will be further discussed in chapter 3.1 on the issue of authenticity.

2.2. Archaeology for the public

As mentioned above, one of the factors that prompted the increased interest in the ways archaeological heritage is presented was the lack of public understanding and interest in archaeology. As early as the 1960s, Mortimer Wheeler had realized the importance of involving the public in archaeology. At the excavation at Maiden Castle in Dorset, UK, he invited the public to visit what was almost a life theatre with "the site as stage or dramatic backdrop; the excavation as a narrated performance for the public audience" (Moshenska and Schadla-Hall 2011, 53).

In the 1980s archaeologists in general started to look for ways in which to engage the public more. As a result archaeologists have increasingly taken on an educational role during the last two decades of the 20th century as a response to heightened interest by the public in heritage sites. An example of the efforts to get the public interested and involved in archaeological presentations can be seen at the Jorvik Viking Centre, one of the case studies for this research, and Flag Fen in the UK. Nowadays, heritage is considered a marketable commodity (Copeland 2004, 132-133).

There are different opinions about the newly found interest of archaeologists in their educational role. While some dismiss the notion of meeting the public's needs, others fear that the past has been idealized and packaged, offering nothing more than a non-challenging setting for leisure events (Copeland 2004, 133). Others are at complete odds with this view. McManamon (2007, 133-134) is of the opinion that public presentation and interpretation of archaeological and historic sites and monuments call for effective messages and messengers. Archaeologists and historical preservationists are not alone in communicating the message; educators, reporters, filmmakers and many more have already committed to the task. He believes that archaeologists should whole-heartedly take part in public presentation, even if only as supporters of those who are more active in that field.

Despite the efforts of the past two decades, surveys done at the end of the last millennium revealed that the public still has some misconceptions about archaeology and the past (Jones 1999, 259). This indicates that archaeologists and other conveyors of the past must increase their efforts. On the subject of public presentation, Callebaut (2007, 43) has written that it is "[…] possible to argue that

the work of scientific publication remains unfinished until the scientific information they contain is communicated to the public in large." This proclamation gives cause for reflection on what we want archaeology to become in the future and what part public presentation should play.

I feel sympathetic to Callebaut's ad McManamon's view that archaeologists should be involved in presenting their results to the public. Taking part in the process helps insure the presentation keeps its archaeological integrity and does not simply become "idealized and packaged". I hope to be able to demonstrate that narrative interpretations can be a useful tool for archaeologists and other "messengers" to create archaeological interpretations interesting to the public.

2.3. Previous studies

The few studies that have been made about visitors' response to heritage sites can give us a hint as to what the public likes in respect to archaeological interpretations. Studies from the 1980s and early 1990s in the United Kingdom indicated that what seems to capture the attention of the visitors best are exhibitions of crafts, costumes and armour, models and partial reconstructions of a ruined site, re-enacted events from the past, introductory films and videos and live animals. On the other hand one survey revealed the lack of attention to interpretative media, and concluded concurrently that such learning objectives should not be put at the fore (Prentice 1993, 182-197; Copeland 2004, 138-139). It must be noted, however, that none of these studies include the use of narratives in their research scheme. It is difficult to make any assertions as to why this is, but the most obvious explanation would be that narratives were not commonly used for interpretations at the time. It could perhaps also have to do with the nationality of the researchers, as the trend of using interpretative narratives might not yet have gained momentum in Europe.

The results of a more recent survey conducted by Merriman (2000a, 119-120) in the United Kingdom reveal that people find museums one of the least enjoyable means of finding out about local history. On the other hand, visits to a local area or site, either by themselves or with a guide, were found to be the most enjoyable. These results suggest that heritage sites and monuments stand a good chance of appealing to the public.

3. Problem orientation

Several problems have been pointed out in relation to using narratives for archaeological interpretations. They concern the content of the narratives and the issue of authenticity, rather than technical aspects of presentation.

3.1. Authenticity

Authenticity is a broad term with its roots in western cultural history. The modern meaning of it was largely defined by the Romantics and their contemporaries in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The term originally applied to art but was later extended to include folklore and traditions (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 231-232). Nowadays it can for instance refer to artefacts, data interpretations, or museum interpretations (Swain 2007, 213-214). In relation to ancient art and monuments, authenticity has usually been understood as the material integrity of the object itself (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 232). According to *The Nara Document on Authenticity* (ICOMOS 1994), knowledge and understanding of information sources about the values attributed to heritage, along with the characteristics and the meaning of the heritage, is a requisite base for assessing authenticity. These different definitions reflect that, in essence, authenticity is an abstract term that is always being re-negotiated, and thus authenticity has a different meaning at different times and in different places (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 230-232).

When entering a museum, visitors unconsciously expect that they are being presented with an objective evidence of the past and that the things they will see are authentic (Swain 2007, 214; Addyman 1990, 257). A survey from the early 1990s reveals that museum visitors consider authenticity to be extremely important and it is sometimes used as a legitimation for the visit (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, 230).

When it comes to narratives, the most obvious problem with authenticity lies within the narrative itself. When writing a story, there is a risk that it might become more the archaeologist's reflection rather than a narrative solely based on archaeological facts. Callebaut (2007, 42) has noted a few of the questions archaeologists are faced with in regard to authenticity and interpretation: "What are the acceptable limits of interpretation or reconstruction when the scientific

data is incomplete? Do we indicate to the public what is purely factual and what is an interpretation?" He rightly comments that a

> plausible scientific reconstruction may be based on well grounded and well researched hypothesis, but it remains a hypothesis nonetheless. At the very least we must determine what level of scientific documentation is necessary to validate heritage preservation programmes: whether they are physical reconstructions, 3D computer models or recreated historical characters (Callebaut 2007, 42).

McCarthy (2008, 541-542) is of the opinion that the best we can do as archaeologists is to write what we *feel* is true about a site, the people who lived there and the times in which they lived. In his opinion, using the elements of a story gives us an opportunity to overcome the limits of the archaeological data in our interpretations. He writes that:

> […] as archaeologists we stand on the firmest ground when we remain true to our data and the facts as we understand them in the creation of our narratives. It is our unique and privileged position to discover the material past and make it meaningful in the present, and we do a disservice to the archaeological record when, or if, we lose touch with that fact. Our professional ethics should require that our narratives remain firmly grounded in historical and archaeological data (McCarthy 2008, 542).

At the Alexander Keiller Museum in Avebury, Wiltshire, a special approach was taken to acknowledge the role of the curator as an interpreter. To do so, a life-size figure of a Neolithic man was created and dressed in two different sets of clothes – one set on either half of his body. One side showed the man wearing "primitive" clothes in earthy brown colours, while the other side showed a more imaginative costume, including tattoos and dyed cloth. Swain (2007, 214) comments that "[t]his is an imaginative idea for dealing with the ambiguities of the past and of archaeological interpretations, although the figure himself came across as a rather badly dressed 1980s shop dummy".

My impression of authenticity is that it all comes down to ethics. McCarthy (2008, 542) makes a valid point by saying that as long as we keep to the historical and archaeological data, as our profession's ethics mandate, the fear of false narratives is negligible. It is true, however, that not every detail of a setting of a narrative can be based on archaeological data, but using what archaeologists feel are true about a site does not have to detract from the authenticity of the

interpretation. In fact, this is also true for many other means of interpretation. More emphasis should perhaps be put on raising awareness amongst the public about the limitations of the archaeological data and encouraging critical reflection upon interpretations. The experiment at the Keiller Museum is an interesting example of how the public can be stimulated – and archaeologists and interpreters as well.

3.2. Communal autobiographies

In addition to a narrative monologue and dialogue, Silberman (2004, 124) has also defined what he calls *communal autobiography*. It is an interpretation "that is unavoidably connected with the contemporary political situation and aspiration of a living community". This interpretative direction, as Silberman fully admits, can be closely related to the nationalistic archaeologies the European empires of the 19th century. On the subject of nationalistic archaeologies, Merriman (2000b, 301) writes: "[l]ike it or not, museums continue to be used to construct new national and ethnic myths and to form new identities to mould together historically disparate interest groups." Examples showing communal autobiographies at its extremities are Saddam Hussein's extravagant restoration of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar (Silberman 2004, 124) and the Nazis distortion of the past to legitimise their expansionism (Merriman 2000a, 19).

More often, however, communal autobiographies deal with the past of minorities, for example, within nation-states and what the American anthropologists have called "people without history" (Silberman 2004, 124). On this subject, McCarthy (2008, 542) has written the following:

> If we have, for example, the goal of empowering the historically, socially, or economically disadvantaged communities, then we may deem it acceptable to sacrifice the aspects of the 'truth' suggested by the data, or overcome inadequacies in the data, in order to address a conceivably 'higher' goal through historical fiction. Any such efforts must be undertaken only with the utmost care and with explicit statements of the liberties taken.

Ideally, archaeology should not take sides in political matters, but in reality it cannot always be avoided. However, it is not clear whether McCarthy has considered what makes him, or any other archaeologist, capable of determining when the truth can be sacrificed, and when it cannot. There are always more sides

to the story and, for instance, a multivocal approach could be more ethically correct in situations like these.

3.3. "Archaeology for dummies"

Heritage tourism is a leading economic sector all over the world and archaeological sites have great potential as tourist destinations. Concerned voices have pointed out that along with tourism comes the risk of creating what McCarthy (2008, 540) terms "*Archaeology for dummies*", i.e. over-simplified explanations about archaeology and archaeological findings. Silberman (2008, 138) has also expressed his concerns that interpretations produced in the form of narratives run a risk of becoming works of popular culture, thus not meeting the standards of the discipline. This viewpoint might originate in what Deetz (1998, 94) calls an "unfortunate tendency in our profession to belittle popular writing". He criticises the accepted "technical" style of writing, and promotes the use of more simple and declarative sentences. On similar notes Grima (2002, 85) has pointed out that the term "interpretation" usually has twofold meaning for English-speaking archaeologists:

> On the one hand, there is the interpretation of past material remains, conducted by archaeologists as the appropriate specialists. On the other, there is the interpretation of this past to the public, which is usually understood as simplifying and selecting the specialists' knowledge, to make it suitable for consumption by the uninitiated.

McCarthy dismisses concerns about "*Archaeology for dummies*", stating that there is no need for any over-simplification. The public, he writes, "is smarter and more willing to listen to complex stories than academics generally imagine" (McCarthy 2008, 540). Praetzellis (1998, 2) agrees with McCarthy and points out that none of the storytellers at the *Archaeologists as Storytellers* session of the Society for Historical Archaeology in 1997 would propose that narratives should be oversimplified. Narratives, he writes, are not an easy solution for those who are not bothered to do their work properly. On the contrary, they are valid interpretations, meant to complement more "traditional" methods.

These speculations lead to the consideration of what Merriman (2000a, 8) describes as institutions "whose prime aim is to make money and whose secondary aim, if it exists at all, is to provide educational experience", rather than

institutions "which aim primarily to enable the public to understand the past and secondarily to make money or at least not loose it". These definitions draw a line that has perhaps become more blurred in the past few years with the growth of heritage tourism and the increased emphasis in the visitors' experience. Where this lines falls in the future is an ethical question, which leads to still more questions: What is the responsibility towards the visitors? How can the visitors distinguish between the former and the latter? Are they meant to make this distinction?

Although these questions are well worth notice they reach far beyond the scope of this discussion. Thus I will not seek answers to them further than my own conviction. I believe that the archaeologist's duty is to the public. They should always provide interpretations, in narrative form or other, that represent the past as best to their knowledge.

3.4. Multiple viewpoints

Two decades ago Hodder (1991, 15) wrote that interpretation is translation:

> It involves the archaeologist acting as an interpreter between past and present, between different perspectives on the past, and between the specific and the general. Interpretation therefore involves listening, understanding, and accommodating among different voices rather than solely the application of universal instruments of measurements.

McManamon (2007, 123-125) has also discussed the nature of multiple interpretations or perspectives on important events and historical processes. He is of the opinion that usually more than one perspective can be found to a story:

> Telling the whole story, with the necessary cultural, historic and scientific details that prevent homogenisation, frequently involves including different points of view in the interpretation. This approach requires attention to multiple sources, and possibly also multiple perspectives on the evidence (McManamon 2007, 125).

Thus, the key to a good interpretation is to recognize the differences in them and make available interpretations that can take all these differences into account, even if they are not all the focus of an interpretative programme. However, McManamon also points out that there are challenges involved. The most prominent is to distinguish from the many possible themes describing events and

explanations and those that are firmly grounded by scientific evidence and careful analysis.

Interpretations presenting more than one viewpoint can be considered a form of multivocality. Further to his concerns that interpretative narratives run a risk of becoming works of popular culture, Silberman (2008, 138) has criticised what he terms the

> […] *appearance* of many voices and multiple stories, while subtly undermining the presumed power of multivocality to contest dominant narratives. It does this […] by incorporating a mosaic of conflicting or contrasting voices into a single, embodied experience of 'heritage tourism' whose primary motivation is the marketing of leisure entertainment and the stimulation of subsidiary economic activities such as service employment in hotels and restaurants, and the sale of souvenirs and subsidiary merchandise.

Silberman's view, in short, is that multivocality cannot and should not go together with interpretations aimed to be easy to follow, coherent and capable of holding the widest possible audience (Silberman 2008, 141).

3.5. "Archaeological tale of adventure"

Silberman (2004, 121) has pointed out that there are some disadvantages to the narrative approach of archaeological interpretation. He suggests that the emergence of the archaeologist as a leading character on-camera in introductory films and audio-visuals is a negative development. The focus shifts from the history of the site itself to the process of excavation, or the "*archaeological tale of adventure*", as he puts it.

This does not, however, have to be a negative development. The excavation process is highly relevant to the results it gives. It can therefore give the visitor a better insight into how the results that are being presented to him were found. The public tends to be very interested in the excavation process (see for instance in Batchelor 2004), but at the same time the archaeological findings must not be left out.

3.6. The present in the past or the past in the present?

Archaeologists have long been aware of the fact that their interpretations and narratives are influenced by the present. Copeland and Pluciennick have discussed this issue. The former notes that it is very easy to present interpretations without giving careful consideration to the social agendas embedded within the interpretations (Copeland 2004, 133). Pluciennick sees this limitation in a more positive light. He writes that as archaeologists we should

> […] accept that *no* language can adequately and fully represent the world or the past, archaeologists (who are emotionally and experientially as well as intellectually involved with the world's materiality) should at least be more open to exploring alternative forms of (re)presentation (Pluciennik 1999, 667).

Anders Högberg (2007, 29) has, however, pointed out that archaeologists have not paid much attention to how the narratives of the past affect the present and how narratives created outside the discipline affect the present or indeed peoples' discussions about the future.

Högberg's work with school children has led him to believe that the past is not about the present, but rather that the past is in the present. This he feels concurs with the two-decade-old theory of Shanks and Tilley that "archaeology cannot be separated from its audience" (Shanks and Tilley, quoted in (Högberg 2007, 42). This he feels "demands a shift in focus for public archaeology within cultural environment education projects: from stories about the past told in the present to stories about the present referring to the past" (Högberg 2007, 28).

3.7. Stories for whom?

The use of interpretative narratives and the role of the archaeologist as a narrator are debated. In a discussion about the session of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Deetz (1998, 94) writes:

> Simply put, archaeologists *are* storytellers. It is our responsibility to communicate to as wide an audience as possible the results and significance of our findings. Now any account of the past, whether based on excavated materials or documents, is a construction.

However, Joyce (2002, 121-122) is not convinced of the benefits of narrative interpretations. Joyce feels that the attempts of archaeologists to use narratives to reach a large audience have not been successful:

> For many archaeologists who embark on this route the imagined super-addressee is someone who is not a professional, someone perhaps that they might once have been. Yet many of these works actually find an audience primarily within the profession. This suggests that it is not only the desire to widen the audience that motivates archaeologists who write stories.

She also points out that even though writing is constitutive to archaeology, archaeologists can never fully anticipate the full diversity of the audience (Joyce 2002, 2). Thus it would be an impossible task to write a narrative intent to reach all visitors.

G. Tully (2007, 196), on the other hand, believes that because stories and oral histories are an important form of communication in many cultures, they are an educational feature worth promoting and are likely to appeal to both local communities and tourists.

4. Using interpretative narratives

Chapter four examines the discourse in the literature about interpretative narratives. Different aspects of character-based interpretations are discussed along with general comments on public presentations.

4.1. Heritage presentation in general

There are general guidelines available that pertain to heritage presentation, including narrative interpretations. Having a variety of experiences, giving the visitors some control over their own experience, making connections to personal experiences and challenging the visitors can all contribute to 'mindfulness' on heritage sites that will result in more learning, higher satisfaction and greater understanding (Copeland 2004, 140).

Merriman (2000a, 122) notes that the imagination is what has been missing in many approaches to the past. On this subject he writes:

> In one way, the acknowledgement of individual creativity in gaining a sense of the past can offer an attractive route […] because if everybody constructs their own vision of the past then curators can hardly be accused of being conspirators in a massive plot to inculcate a dominant ideology. However, this argument can also lead to a dangerous relativism whereby anyone's view of the past is as good as anyone else's, and academic anarchy reigns (Merriman 2000a, 131).

Narratives could for instance be a powerful tool in activating the public's imagination, but at the same time steer it in the right direction by creating the appropriate frame, in which the visitors themselves can fill in the rest.

4.2. Text

When writing about archaeology, the style of the narrative matters. Two decades ago Ian Hodder (1989, 273) addressed the writing style of archaeological narratives. He feels that in the last few centuries the personality and narrative sequence of reports have been replaced by "impersonal, abstract, timeless and objective style […] At best the reports are dull, excessively long, detailed and expensive and read by no one except the delirious specialist." He observes that site reports would benefit from reintroducing the "I" along with a narrative sequence, as doing so would help to situate the text and disclose the provisional

and the contingent of the past that is created in the present:

> The site report could be written as a complex interweaving of sequences of events in the past (what happened on the site) and sequences of events in the present (what happened on the excavation). Most excavations have their dramas, their problems unsolved. The text would permit uncertainty and unresolved doubts and would narrate a truer picture of what had passed (Hodder 1989, 273).

More recently Cooper (2008) has written about the way language can affect people's view of archaeology. He has observed what he calls a *rhetorical destruction*, which aims at discrediting the valuing of heritage assets, cultural resource management as a philosophy, cultural resource management as a process and the nature of heritage bodies themselves. However, the *rhetorical destruction* can be turned around for instance by change in vocabulary use. This issue has not been given much attention. It is, however, highly relevant to archaeological interpretations, particularly interpretative narratives.

Joyce (2002, 1) has criticised the experiments with new forms of writing. She writes that "this vibrant experimentation *with* writing has yet to include a sustained critical examination *of* writing." This observation by Joyce is valid, although in the last decade some attention has shifted towards this aspect (see for instance Silberman 2004; Pluciennik 1999; Cooper 2008).

Silberman (2004, 121-123) has also suggested that the narrative form must move from a monologue, where the visitor's role is entirely passive, towards a dialogue. By dialogue he means that a two-way communication should take place between interpreter and visitor. This allows the visitor to obtain precisely the information he or she is interested in.

4.3. Story pattern

On the art of writing archaeological narratives, Joyce (2002, 122-123) observes that there are significant challenges to speaking for a subject from another time and place. To succeed in making compelling stories, as in the case of fiction, attention to small details must be paid.

John Terrell (Terrell 1990) has made some interesting observations in regard to storytelling and prehistory. He is of the opinion that the story form structures what the archaeologist has to tell and it is a suitable form to

communicate both with the public and colleagues. Terrell, however, has revealed some concerns that much of history is still unwritten because nothing "happens" that can be used to structure a narrative around. Therefore, a plot may be necessary to turn the archaeological data into narrative form.

According to Barbara Little (2004, 282), good environmental reconstructions and detailed architectural and artefactual information is needed. This is necessary to create richly described scenes and realistic characters. And without characters, it is exceedingly difficult to weave a plot. Hence, a narrative interpretation can in this way prompt more detailed analysis of the archaeological data.

4.4. Technology

New technology emerges quickly in the modern day world and the possibilities of presenting multiply accordingly. On the future of archaeological interpretation, Silberman (2004, 125) writes that stories will be conveyed with fewer words and more vivid film images. This cannot be done carelessly though:

> [t]he challenge, it seems to me, will be to go beyond the merely pleasing and entertaining interpretations – to present the visitors with some sense of the powerful process of historical change and creative transformation that are the very lifeblood of the story form itself.

According to Callebaut and van der Donckt (2004, 95-96), technology should serve one main purpose: "to tell and help visualize a long forgotten story that was literally dug up in the course of a scientific investigation". It should be an invisible, inaudible background partner. Most importantly, the story should be so compelling that the visitor is unaware of the technical medium behind it. "[T]echnology must not be the end in itself", they conclude.

At the archaeological park at Ename in Belgium, a state of the art technology has been used to present archaeological interpretations. This has been a great success, but as an added impact, the visitors seem to pay more attention to traditional information panels after watching the virtual presentations. That is why Callebaut and van der Donckt (2004, 96) feel that high technology should be supplemented by more classical forms of interpretation.

Joyce (2002, 129) also sees electronic media as complementary to a narrative approach. She writes that "[…] electronic media provide a unique

environment for efforts to construct multiple narratives, one we must exploit to the fullest. But they are not a requirement for such narratives.”

5. Data collection

The data for the research was collected through a survey amongst visitors to three archaeological exhibitions. In this chapter the data collection phase is discussed and the different issues related with the survey examined. Finally, the checklist used for the description and observations at the exhibitions is briefly discussed.

5.1. Research design

The research data was collected with a survey amongst visitors to archaeological museums and an archaeological centre. The data from the survey was also supplemented by descriptions of the exhibitions and observations at the same museums and centre. This means that the primary research design involves a quantitative approach. This is then accompanied by qualitative remarks.

In essence the difference between quantitative research and qualitative is that the first seeks to verify a theory, while the latter seeks to establish it. At first glance these two methods do not seem compatible with each other, but there are a number of ways that they can be combined to form a successful research design. It is, for instance, possible to use qualitative research to compliment or deepen the results from a quantitative research (Gray 2009, 202-206). The survey will form the quantitative base of the research, which will be supplemented by observations, i.e. a qualitative approach.

The survey is analytical or explanatory rather than descriptive in its nature as it seeks the answer to "why" people like archaeological narratives, rather than just recording the number of people who like them. Analytical surveys specifically explore the relationship between certain variables (Oppenheim 1992, 21; Saris and Gallhofer 2007, 4), in this case, between possible problems, enjoyment, interest, educational value and different methods of presenting interpretations. These qualities will give more in-depth results than those given by the use of a descriptive survey method.

5.2. Survey

5.2.1. Requirements and constraints

The formulation of the survey was aimed to evaluate the visitors' attitude towards the problems that have been associated with using narrative interpretations,

identified in chapter 1.2. It also included a comparison between two presentation methods and evaluation of the elements that make an interpretation "successful". For this to be possible, the survey had to take place at exhibitions that include narrative interpretations. The content of the exhibitions also had to be compatible, for instance all locations were required to include displays focusing on the process of archaeological research.

To help visitors recognize the type of interpretations that was being asked about, an example was given. As different museums and centres all have different interpretations, the examples had to be adjusted for each location the survey took place at.

The biggest constraints to the survey were limited time and resources. These resulted in small sample sizes, as large samples require a lot of time and exceeding travel costs. The scarcity of institutions that make use of narrative interpretations was also a limiting factor. The travel budget for the research only allowed a short stay abroad, offering no opportunity to pilot the survey at a suitable location.

The data collection was done through a survey among visitors at three locations: The Provincial Archaeological Museum (PAM) Ename, Belgium; The Jorvik Viking Centre in York, the United Kingdom; Dublinia, in Dublin, Ireland. They were chosen because they include narrative interpretations in their displays (see chapter 1.3). However, as these exhibitions did not offer the possibility to address the above mentioned problems directly, as they were not all present in the exhibitions. Instead, the respondents were in some questions asked about their opinion of a hypothetical situation or their general opinion.

5.2.2. Survey method

There are many ways of administering surveys. They can be administered by an interviewer, directly or through a telephone, or self-administered, where the respondents are given a questionnaire which they fill out themselves (Oppenheim 1992, 102-103). This survey was self-administered. This method has its disadvantages, especially for people with reading or writing disabilities. However, this method was chosen because it is less time-consuming to administer, as many people can take part simultaneously, and free of any bias from the interviewer.

The survey took place at the following times at each place:

- PAM Ename: September 24th-25th 2011. During this time only 29 people visited the museum, of which 23 agreed to participate in the survey. In order to get more responses, some copies were left at the front desk as the staff of the museum offered to administer the rest of the questionnaires. This resulted in 17 more responses, amounting to a total of 40 questionnaires;
- Jorvik Viking Centre: October 15th 2011;
- Dublinia: November 12th-13th 2011.

The questionnaires used for the survey can be viewed in appendices 1 to 3.

5.2.3. Sampling method and sample size

Deciding on a sampling method and sample size is very important to a survey and can affect the outcome. A sample is taken from a parent population, in this case visitors to these locations. To be able to compare the results from all three locations, a sampling frame was needed. As total visitors per year were the smallest quantifiable number available at all locations, they made up the sampling frame.

One method to establish an appropriate sample size is by using statistical calculations. Bartlett et al. (2001, 48) have, for instance provided a table from which a sample size can be determined in relevance to the parent population. They also point out that the use of the data is also important when choosing the sample size. If the data will only be used continuously, i.e. categorical variables will not play an important role, a smaller sample size is required. However, if the data is to be analysed with regard to categories, for instance age or sex, the sample needs to be larger.

Oppenheim (1992, 39-44), on the other hand, is of the opinion that a representative sample refers not to the numerical size of the sample, but rather that a sample is representative if every member of the parent population has an equal chance of being selected. He states that the accuracy of a sample is more important than the sample size itself. By accuracy of the sample he means the degree of precision that is theoretically obtainable. This can be calculated for each sample size. Usually it constitutes a 5% marginal error.

Oppenheim further suggests that the size of the sample also depends on the number of sub-groups within the sample that are to be compared. For two or three

groups (for instance two sexes, or three age groups), he suggests that some 200-300 respondents would be enough to obtain statistical significance. Oppenheim concludes, however, that the sample size is ultimately determined by constraints of time and costs.

Another useful variable is the sampling fraction. It is calculated by dividing the number of people in the sample with the number of people in the parent population. The number represents one out of how many take part in the survey. (Oppenheim 1992, 40)

The sample used for this research can be defined as quasi-experimental, as the selection of the sample is not entirely random, but is refined to people belonging to a certain age group (adults), at a certain time (the days the survey took place) and at a certain place (the three above mentioned museums and centre) (Gray 2009, 140-141). The sample was chosen by the interviewer, which also gives a certain level of bias, as complete objectivity is difficult to obtain.

Table 5-1: Size of parent populations, sample sizes and representative sample sizes.

	PAM Ename	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Total visitors per year (parent population)	15,000[1]	350,000[2]	130,000[3]
Sample size achieved	40	50	50
Representative sample size for continuous analysis	117	118	118
Representative sample size for categorical analysis	374	384	383

Table 5-1 shows the sample size acquired at each museum or centre, the size of the parent population and the size of a representative sample. The representative sample was calculated using a formula provided by Bartlett et al. (2001). Even

[1] Marie-Claire van der Donckt, personal communication September 26th 2011.
[2] Natalie Turner, personal communication November 3rd 2011.
[3] Sheila Dooley, personal communication November 24th 2011.

though the difference in the size of the parent populations is dramatic, the sample sizes are very similar. The sample size converges to a maximum value, as the likelihood of statistical difference within the sample is minimal for a larger sample.

However, due to lack of resources and time constraints, it was not possible to get a representative sample for the survey. Instead, 50 respondents at each location were chosen. Even so, that number of respondents was not acquired at PAM Ename, as explained in chapter 5.2.2 above.

5.2.4. Open vs. closed questions

There are two main types of questions used for questionnaires: closed questions and open questions. Closed questions offer the respondent some choice of answer they are supposed to indicate, for instance by ticking a box. Open questions, however, are not followed by any kind of choice. Both types of questions have benefits and faults. The most obvious are that open questions give the respondents freedom but are costly and time consuming to process. They also have the benefit of giving the respondent the chance of answering outside the frame of reference made by the researcher. Closed questions on the other hand are easier and quicker to answer. However, the answer categories can be crude and introduce bias to the results, and spontaneous answers are lost (Oppenheim 1992, 112-114; Saris and Gallhofer 2007, 103-105). No one rule seems to apply as to whether open or closed questions are preferable. However, Saris and Gallhofer (2007, 105) conclude, after stressing that the subject needs more research, that closed questions are more efficient because they are easier to process.

Even so, most surveys will use a mixture of open and closed questions (Oppenheim 1992, 115). The questionnaires for this research, available in appendices 1 to 3, make use of both open and closed questions. Many of the questions

Question 2

a. At the *Jorvik Viking Centre* reconstructions are used to tell the story of Viking Age Jorvik.

Example: The "ride" takes visitors through a reconstruction of Viking Age Jorvik.

Did you enjoy this way of presenting information? Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me what you liked or disliked about the reconstruction?

____
____
____
____

Figure 5-1: Question 2 in the questionnaire, used at Jorvik Viking Centre, includes both a closed (a) and an open (b) request for answer.

start with a closed question that asks about, for instance, the opinion about a certain type of presentation method. Three options are offered for answer: “yes”, “no”, and “I don’t know”. An open one, asking the respondent to explain why he or she is of this opinion, follows this question, to encourage the respondents to give more in-depth answers. The questionnaire also makes use of two attitude scaling questions, asking the respondents to give their opinion on a 5-point scale.

5.2.5. Classifying questions

Many questionnaires include questions about age, sex, education or other classifying questions. Questions of this nature can be very informative for the research and are used to stratify the sample. However, they usually consider subjects that can be sensitive to people.

To avoid making people uncomfortable and encourage participation, the questionnaires contained no classification questions. Instead, the sex and age of the respondents were noted down, without asking the respondents directly. For this intention, three predefined age groups were used: individuals younger than 40 years old, individuals between 40 – 60 years old, and individuals older than 60 years old. For the purpose of this research, this classification is accurate enough and easy to distinguish between. This method leaves the risk of a bias as it comes down to the person administering the questionnaire to recognise to which age group respondents belong. However, the benefits of this method outnumber the shortcomings of the inaccuracy.

Questions regarding education and other similar classifying qualities are not very important to this research and will therefore be left out. It has, for instance, already been established that people with higher education are more likely to visit museums and a certain group of people, usually with a low level of education or less well-off, never visit them (Swain 2007, 200). It can be assumed that the same applies to archaeological museums. Therefore a certain group would anyway be absent from the sample.

5.2.6. Phrasing

The phrasing of a questionnaire is very important to the survey’s success. About this topic Oppenheim (1992, 121) writes: “This means, first of all, that the focus and contents of the questions must be right; second, that the wording must be

suitable; and third, that the context, sequence and response categories (if any) must help the respondent without unintentionally biasing the answers."

Oppenheim (1992, 121) also writes that to get the respondent to continue to cooperate, each question should be motivating. Saris and Gallhofer (2007, 100) agree with Oppenheim that stimulation, for instance in the form of a pre-request with some kind of graduation or politeness, can increase answering rates. They write: "If a stimulation is formulated very politely, it might be that the respondent is more inclined to answer, even if this person has no specific opinion and might just give a random opinion because of the encouragement to give an answer." It is not certain in this case, whether Salis and Gallhofer mean this as a good or a bad thing; either it is good to get a higher response rate, or the results are less reliable as some respondents just chose a random answer.

Oppenheim (1992, 128-130) and Saris and Gallhofer (2007, 87-88 & 134) offer basic guidelines to successful phrasing of questions. The guidelines include the following points:

- Keep questions short - they should preferably not exceed twenty words.
- Use simple words.
- Give definitions before a question is asked, not after it.
- Avoid asking hypothetical questions.
- Don't forget "don't know" or "not applicable" when writing answer categories.
- Avoid proverbs, sayings and double negatives.
- Avoid ambiguous words and presuming questions.
- Avoid double-barrelled questions, for instance when the opinion on two matters is asked for, but only one choice of answer is offered.
- Avoid leading questions.
- Avoid implicit questions, where the first (hidden) component of the question is assumed, but needs to be true in order for the respondent to answer the second component.

5.2.7. Layout and order of questions

Research has not revealed any specific rules about the layout of a questionnaire. A successful questionnaire should, however, be self-evident and consistent. This especially applies for self-administered questionnaires. Another aspect to consider is that the layout should also enable them to be easy to process (Oppenheim 1992, 59 & 105; Saris and Gallhofer 2007, 167).

More is known about the order of the questions. Saris and Gallhofer (2007, 165-167) offer four principles regarding the ordering of questions in a questionnaire:

- Prior questions can have an effect on later questions.
- One should not mix all questions randomly with each other as is often done in omnibus surveys.
- Start the questionnaire with the topic that has been mentioned to the respondents to get their cooperation. The first question should be simple, apply to all respondents and be interesting to increase further cooperation of the respondents.
- Answers to the first questions are probably not as good as later responses because the respondents have to learn how to answer and to gain confidence with the interviewer and the interviewing process.

The fourth principle is somewhat contrary to the third one. The third principle suggests that the questionnaire should get right to the point and start with questions relating to the main topic to increase the likeliness of cooperation, while the fourth principle states that answers at the beginning of the questionnaire are not as reliable as later ones. The authors are not unaware of this dilemma and recommend as a solution that the main topic should not be addressed in the first question; it should, however, be introduced very soon.

Saris and Gallhofer also further discuss the second principle. They feel that the ordering of questions should be done by topic, as it is easier for the respondent. They acknowledge however the risk of the so-called ordering effect this may cause, giving similar responses to multiple questions.

Some disagreement, however, seems to be about where classifying questions (if used) should be located in a questionnaire. Saris and Gallhofer (2007, 167) suggest that such questions should be at the beginning of a

questionnaire and that the respondents even anticipate them there. Oppenheim (1992, 108-109) and Grey (2009, 253) are of the opposite opinion. They fear that such questions, which may sometimes include personal and sensitive subjects, can be off-putting to the respondents and discouraged them to continue with the questionnaire.

The questionnaires for the survey have a two-column layout. At the top left hand side is the heading, Archaeological stories, intending to give an impression of what the survey is about. Under the heading is a short introductory text and thanks for participation. Thereafter follow the questions, each clearly numbered. Some of the questions have more than one request for answers. They are outlined with letters (a, b, c, etc.). At the right hand bottom, the end of the questionnaire is indicated and again thanks for participation. The questionnaires can be viewed in appendices 1 to 3.

When it came to ordering the questions, some problems occurred. Three questions ask directly about the opinion of a certain feature of the museum, park or centre. The other questions are more general or apply to the experience as a whole and require the respondent to reflect upon their visit. It was therefore evident to start with these three questions. However, they happen to be core questions to the questionnaire. To compromise, the question dealing directly with narratives was moved to second place, so it would not be the first question the respondents answered.

5.2.8. Pre-testing and piloting

It is highly recommended to pre-test a questionnaire and do a pilot survey (Gray 2009, 361; Oppenheim 1992, 45; Saris and Gallhofer 2007, 173). This is to improve all aspects of the questionnaires, for instance to evaluate if the layout is attractive to everyone or if the testers understand the questions in the same way.

For this purpose, five people were asked to evaluate a preliminary questionnaire. This revealed some issues, for instance ambiguity of the word *like*, which can apply to many features of the same object. This word was therefore left out of some of the questions.

Sadly, there was neither time nor resources available to do a pilot-survey. However, after the first survey at the Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename, it became apparent that questions 10b and 11b did not yield much information that

was useful to the research. In succeeding surveys these were left out, in order to make the questionnaire quicker and easier to fill out. Question 1b from the survey at Ename was also removed. It was meant to get around the problem of the visitors' answers only referring to the interpretations used in the example. However, after the first survey, the results indicated that this question complicated the questionnaire unnecessarily.

5.2.9. Bias

All surveys have to deal with bias in their results. It is important to recognize the factors that can increase the bias and try to minimize it. Brance (2008, 3), for instance, writes that as researchers we cannot expect to be given perfectly accurate information by our respondents. We must therefore construct the questionnaires so they help respondents give the researchers the best information that they can.

There will, however, always be some bias, as respondents will sometimes interpret questions so the questions fit their own circumstances (Brance 2008, 19). It is therefore wise not to rely only on a single question, especially when dealing with non-factual topics. To avoid this it is advisable to develop multiple questions to minimize biases (Oppenheim 1992, 143).

Social desirability means that respondents want to make a good impression, so they sometimes answer differently to what is true, for instance pretending to be interested in something they are not (Saris and Gallhofer 2007, 86). Social desirability is something that might very well influence a survey such as the one undertaken for this research and is therefore something that needs to be kept in mind when interpreting the data.

To minimize the effects of biases to a research, it is recommended to use data triangulation, viz. to use three different methods of gathering data (Gray 2009, 193). For such a small-scale research, this is not really a possibility, other than using three case studies. However, the observations at the exhibitions are intended to provide some means of comparison and hopefully cast new light on and enrich the final results.

The questionnaire is in English even though the countries in which the research will be conducted do not all have English as a native language. This will inevitably form a bias in the results and discourage some visitors to participate.

Some groups of people will therefore be underrepresented, for instance people of lower education, or overrepresented, for instance tourists. Keeping the questionnaire in English is more beneficial, however, as most of the participants are English speaking.

As mentioned in chapter 5.2.5, no classifying questions were included in the questionnaires. Instead, the respondents were divided roughly into three age groups. This method offers a certain risk of bias, as age can be difficult to discern from looks alone. However, as the main results of this research do not rely on age division, this method gives enough accuracy.

5.2.10. Processing and analysis

It is good to keep a few things in mind when planning and executing the processing of raw data from a survey. Inevitably, some information will be lost during this process and it is therefore important to identify at what point it can best be afforded to lose information. The level of loss can be different between the field and the office. That is why it is important to plan ahead where the processing will be done (Oppenheim 1992, 116-117).

The questionnaires were processed after the fieldwork at each location was finished. This increased the risk of losing data relating to facial expressions and reaction of people. However, doing this in the office rather than when travelling minimized the risk of mistakes. The questionnaire also included open questions that can be time consuming to process.

Processing closed questions is relatively easy using computer software. *Microsoft Excel* workbooks were used to create a database using codes. This involves giving every answer option a number, or a code. Each option is represented by a row. The classifying factors were: age and sex also got codes, in this case 1-5 (1=male, 2=female, 3= <40 years old, 4= 40-60 years old, 5= >60 years old). Each column corresponds to a respondent, and the answers are marked in the appropriate rows.

Analysing open questions is more difficult. A method suggested by Oppenheim (1992, 262-265) was used, which is similar to coding, for those questions. It involves identifying themes or concepts in the answers. They are then identified in the answers and analysed as the closed questions.

The analysis of both the closed and open questions yielded a database which allowed for statistical analysis of the data. The answers were calculated in percentages to make the three case studies easier to compare, as they did not all have the same number of participants. The answers to each question were also analysed with regard to age and sex of the respondents, making patterns easy to spot. To make the results more visual and accessible, graphs were plotted for the results.

5.3. Case studies: descriptions and observations

Before a survey was conducted at the chosen locations, the locations were visited for orientation and descriptions and observations were made regarding the interpretation and presentation methods. The observations focused on evaluating the same factors that are addressed in the questionnaire. To make the observations coordinated and more to the point, a checklist was used. It comprised the following items:

- What methods of interpretation are used?
- What narratives are used?
- How is technology used?
- How authentic is the site? How is authenticity treated?
- Do I feel the archaeology has been "dumbed down"?
- Are there multiple viewpoints of the same event/setting?
- Are the narratives meant to establish the identity of a group?
- Is nationalism or the promotion of a cultural group obvious?
- Is the archaeologist portrayed in a heroic manner?
- How are the interpretations? Are they *stories about the past told in the present* or *stories about the present referring to the past*?

Although this evaluation is very subjective, they will hopefully be useful in making comparisons with the results from the survey. Furthermore, the descriptions of the exhibitions will hopefully help the reader to gain a better picture of the exhibitions used as case studies and cast better light on the results.

6. Interpretative narratives in practice: case studies

The following chapter gives a brief historical overview of the museums and centre used for the survey. The exhibitions are also discussed in relation to the checklist presented in chapter 5.3.

6.1. Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename

The village of Ename is located about 30 km south of Ghent in Belgium, on the southern bank of the river Scheldt. Archaeological excavation, starting in 1982, has revealed that the now modest village played an important role in European history. In the period between 974 AD and 1050 AD, Ename stood on the border between the French kingdom and the Holy Roman Empire. In the late 10th century, the Ottonian emperor, Otto II, had a fortress erected in Ename to defend the western border of his empire. The establishment of a pre-urban settlement around the fortress followed.

In 1050 AD the count of Flanders took possession of Ename. A Benedictine abbey was established in Ename as part of the demilitarization of the site. Much of the settlement was destroyed, but the fortress chapel and the two churches were left standing. One of them, Saint Laurentius church, is still standing today and is one of the best-preserved early-Romanesque churches in Belgium. In 1794 the authorities of revolutionary France closed the monastery. The surrounding settlement continued as the village of Ename (Ename 974 2011d; Callebaut and Van der Donckt 2004, 86-87).

In 1987 the eight-hectare archaeological site was declared a legally protected historic monument. The Saint Laurentius church is also a protected monument and was recognized by the European Commission as an important architectural monument in 1995. The archaeological site and Saint Laurentius church, along with the forest preserve *Bos t'Ename* and the Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename (PAM Ename), form Ename's heritage resources. These attractions are managed by the Ename 974 Project, supported by the Government of the Province of East-Flanders, the Institute for the Archaeological Heritage, the Department of Monuments and Landscapes and the town of Oudenaarde (Ename 974 2011c).

The Ename 974 Project has from the start used innovative presentation technologies. They include virtual reconstruction at the archaeological site and

experimental presentations at the museum. These are not meant to replace traditional methods of presentation but to supplement them. The public has enthusiastically met these efforts, and in 1998 the project received two awards, the *Golden Scarab* as the best archaeological presentation in the Benelux countries and the Flemish Monument Prize (Ename 974 2011a). The positive response to the public interpretation efforts of the Ename 974 Project led, in 1998, to the establishment of the Ename Centre for Public archaeology and Heritage Presentation, which aims to open up heritage to the public by developing presentation techniques and programmes based on high scholarly standards of archaeological and historical research (Ename Centre for Public archaeology and Heritage Presentation 2011; Ename 974 2011b).

The Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename was opened in 1998. It is located in a 19th century mansion, known as Beernaert House, located on the village square next to the Saint Laurentius church. The theme of the museum is memory and discovery. Its goal is to present the daily life of the Ename community over a period of a thousand years from the early medieval times to the present time. It also seeks to emphasize the universal value of the past as well as Ename's own heritage. The designer of the overall concept and main exhibition is John Sunderland (Ename 974 2011e; Callebaut and Van der Donckt 2004, 93-94).

The museum seeks to link the story of Ename by presenting artefacts from the archaeological excavation and linking them with a larger context (Callebaut and Van der Donckt 2004, 94). The features of the museum include the timeline zone, in which artefacts from a period of a thousand years are displayed, a special exhibit on food and dining customs and an "archaeolab" where the different aspects of archaeology are presented to the visitors. The feature, which is of highest interest to this research, however, is the *Feast of a thousand years*, a multimedia, character-based presentation. Around the feast table sit 24 life-size mannequins, representing a cross section of the population of Ename for the past thousand years. A spherical showcase holds 24 artefacts, each artefact relating to a character. An artefact can be selected by pressing a button around the edge of the showcase. By pressing a button the corresponding character is lighted up and on a large screen above the festivities a video starts playing. There the artefact is introduced, and the character, portrayed by an actor, appears on the screen. He or she acts out a monologue, addressing the visitors, about some aspects of the

character's life. Each presentation lasts several minutes, amounting in total to almost two hours.

Presentation methods

The exhibition makes use of many different presentation methods. There are many reconstructions, both virtual and material. The area where the archaeological park is located has been virtually reconstructed in 3D, from the year 974 until the 19th century. The reconstruction is accessible to visitors through a touch screen, the display of which is also shown on a larger screen. Although using the touch screen is slightly awkward, it none the less gives a good impression of what Ename looked like in earlier times and the changes that occurred. The locations, in which the artefacts on display were found, are indicated in the virtual model, placing them in context for the visitors. A similar presentation is also available in the "archaeolab" through the use of a computer screen and a mouse, although this version offers more options.

Material reconstructions have been made of a medieval kitchen, the section of a trench at the archaeological excavation and an archaeologist's laboratory. These make the past and the practice of archaeology more tangible for the visitors but accompanying explanations are missing. In the "arcaheolab" visitors can get some hands-on experience. Pottery pieces and animal bones have for instance

Figure 6-1: The artefacts display at PAM Ename. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

been fastened to a board so visitors can have a close-up look at them. This room is great for educational purposes, but otherwise offers little to the visitors.

Artefacts are displayed in glass showcases with information panels in between every few cases, which separate the time periods. The overall impression of this display is very modern and accessible. The information panels in this section of the exhibition contain a moderate amount of text. The same cannot be said of the panels in the section dedicated to archaeological research. They are much larger and contain too much text and are not very attractive.

Usually there is an introductory film available in the auditorium, but at the time of the survey a video artwork was playing in there. This was one of many art installations that the museum was currently hosting, all of them referring in some way to collecting practices.

The *Feast of a Thousand Years* makes use of combined presentation methods. The setting of the feast itself is in a way a reconstruction, though not of an event that took place in the past. However, the mannequins represent people from earlier times. The artefacts are displayed in a showcase and it also makes use of video to communicate each narrative. Finally, there is a panel on the wall, which introduces the characters and orders them into a time sequence.

Figure 6-2: The *Feast of a Thousand Years*. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

Narratives

The *Feast of a Thousand Years* is a very clear use of narrative interpretation. It is character-based and has a setting, in this case Ename through the past thousand years. The plot is more difficult to discern, but the change that the area went through during that time and the interaction of the characters make up what can be considered a plot. It also passes the scientific criteria, as the narratives and the characters are based on historical sources (see Tack et al. 1999) and the setting on archaeological data.

Two secondary narratives can also be identified within the exhibition. The first is closely related to the individual stories of the characters of the *Feast*, i.e. the story of the past people of Ename. The other is the tale of archaeological discovery. They both have collective characters, the former the people of Ename, the latter a modern day team of archaeologists.

The use of technology

Technology is well incorporated in the exhibition. The virtual 3D reconstruction of the site puts the artefacts better into context and helps the visitor to create a sharper image of Ename in the past centuries. The reconstruction is already over ten years old but it has aged well. The only problem is that it is slightly difficult to control the model through the touch screen.

The balance between technological presentation and more traditional methods is good. The technology is used to compliment other forms of presentation rather than being the main focus of the presentation. In the *Feast of a Thousand Years*, it plays quite a big part as the videos dominate the space when playing, but as there are many other means of presentation used in the same room, this does not become overwhelming, rather it feels like one of many components in the recreation of the characters sitting at the feat table.

Figure 6-3: Inhabitants of Ename in the past are portrayed by actors and projected onto a screen in the feast hall. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

Authenticity

As mentioned above, authenticity can refer to many different things, for instance, artefacts, data interpretation and museum interpretations. It is a complicated and abstract term that can have different meanings on different levels. The characters and the stories they tell are based on information from a manuscript that describes the duty of the people serving the monastery, called *De Monnik-Manager. Abt De Loose in zijn abdij t' Ename* (Tack et al. 1999). The exception to this is the character representing a man from the Neolithic period. The authenticity of the "data" behind the narratives can therefore been seen as high.

The nature of reconstructions and the mannequins can be considered less authentic than of the stories, because when the verifiable data is exhausted the impression of the interpreter takes over. The personal appearance of the characters is a good example of this. Though their clothes might be based on historical sources, their facial identities will always be an artistic impression.

Nowhere in the exhibition is the issue of authenticity addressed directly. The visitors are not informed about the choices the interpreter had to make or where interpretation overtakes verifiable fact.

Oversimplification of facts

At PAM Ename a complicated story is being presented. It has been successfully done: the presentation is easy to follow but still gives a wealth of detail. Only the section about archaeological research has perhaps been simplified somewhat. However, many aspects of the discipline are being addressed in the exhibition, so visitors realize how complex and varied the practice of archaeology can be.

Multiple viewpoints

The exhibition is oriented around a timeline where each event is only represented from one point of view. However, the *Feast of a Thousand Years* offers a chance for multiple viewpoints of daily life in Ename, as some characters are contemporaries. An example of this can for instance be seen in the narratives of a husband and wife, each telling their view of life.

Identity

One of the collective characters of the secondary narratives identified in the exhibition is the collective that comprises the inhabitants of Ename through the ages. It could therefore promote some sort of group identity with common roots and common ancestors, who for instance played an important role in European history.

Archaeological heroes

One of the secondary narratives explicit in the exhibition is the story of the archaeological discovery. The main character and hero of the story is the archaeologist. Much emphasis is put on the process of excavation and how the archaeological data is collected. The most obvious portrayal of the archaeologist as a hero is probably at the *Feast of a Thousand Years*. There, visitors are introduced to a female archaeologist who tells them about the work of the archaeologist. The reconstruction of the archaeologists' laboratories also places the archaeologist in the role of the hero, the one who makes new discoveries from very small and what appears to be insignificant material. This does not detract from the exhibition, but rather enhances the experience of the visitors. Indirectly the "presence" of the archaeologist narrativizes the role of the visitor, by bringing in a contemporary figure that the visitors identify as a part of their world. The archaeologist thus provided a link to the present, which is apparent throughout the exhibition.

Figure 6-4: The archaeologist is portrayed as a character in the *Feast of a Thousand Years.* Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

The past vs. the present

In the entrance hall at the beginning of the exhibition is a collection of artefacts from daily life in the late 19th century and snap shots of people from the same time. The purpose of this is, presumably, to get the visitors to reflect on how abstract the term "past" is and that archaeology also considers the recent past. It is compiled of snapshots from the 19th century and objects from that time period.

Where the timeline is prevailing in the exhibition, the presentation is firmly set in the past. Opposed to this, the past is presented through the discoveries of the modern day, in the "arcaheolab". In fact, a story about the present is presented, where the past is the interest of the main character, the archaeologists. The layout of the museum reflects this transformation in a way. The "timeline zone" is at the beginning of the permanent exhibition and the "arcaheolab" at the end. In between

those two parts of the museum is the feasting hall. As the characters there come alive through the actors and the stories are addressed to the visitor, this part can in fact be seen as a sort of an intermediate of the other two, where the past and the present meet.

6.2. Jorvik Viking Centre

Historians have long been aware that York was an important place in the Viking Period from the 9th century until the Norman Conquest of 1066. In 1972 small trenches made by the York Archaeological Trust, an independent education charity, revealed a very thick layer of archaeological material, mostly from the Viking Age. These archaeological layers were exceedingly well preserved. In relation with redevelopment, a large-scale excavation took place at 16-22 Coppergate in the years of 1976-1981. The site is located in the heart of York, close to where the centre of Viking Age Jorvik was thought to be. The site was opened to visitors during the excavation and attracted a total of 300,000 visitors (Jorvik Viking Centre 2011a; Jones 1999, 258-259).

Following the excavation, plans were made to set up a permanent display of the remains of the Viking Age village. A survey carried out amongst the visitors to the excavation revealed that conventional archaeological museum displays were of little interest to the public. Therefore a new presentation technique was developed using modern technology (Jones 1999, 259).

In 1984 the Jorvik Viking Centre was opened. The centre is located on the Coppergate site, in the basement of an outdoor shopping centre. Every part of the exhibition was based on the evidence of the Coppergate excavation or in cases where information was missing, on historical or other archaeological sources. A large team of experts contributed to realizing the project. The main designer of this first exhibition was John Sunderland, who also was involved in the design of the exhibition in the Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename (see chapter 6.1). The layout of the exhibition is largely determined by the restrictions of its underground location and safety regulations in such spaces. In order to manage crowd density, so-called "timecars" are used to move people through a part of the exhibition, which contains a reconstruction of Viking Age Jorvik (Addyman and Gaynor 1984, 11-14; Jones 1999, 259-260). The Viking Centre has gone through some changes since it opened its doors to the public. Academic research still

continues and the results have been used to update and improve the exhibition. In 2001 it reopened to visitors after refurbishment and yet again in 2010 (Jorvik Viking Centre 2011d, 2011c, 2011b).

The exhibition now comprises four halls. The first of these is called *Discover Coppergate,* in which a part of the excavation has been reproduced under glass flooring. This hall offers information about the excavation, the preservation of the archaeological material and the Vikings themselves. The next part of the exhibition is the ride in the "timecars", which takes visitors through a reconstruction of Viking Age Jorvik. The hall after the ride, called *Investigate Coppergate*, is dedicated to scientific analysis of archaeological material, with special focus on skeletal material. Following this is the *Artefacts Alive* hall where artefacts connected with the different trades are displayed. The last hall is dedicated to the end of Viking rule in Jorvik.

Since the exhibition opened, it has been very popular with the public, attracting up to 900.000 visitors yearly (Merriman 2000a, 9). Today, however, approximately 350.000 visit the centre each year[4]. In 1996 Meethan (1996, 330) wrote that the Jorvik Viking Centre represented a new kind of exploration. What he felt was significant about the Jorvik Viking Centre is: "the explicit linking, or exploitation, of archaeology as a form of entertainment and commercial enterprise, representing the emergence of a new form of consumption, heritage as entertainment" (Meethan 1996, 330). Three years later Jones (1999, 260) wrote that the available evidence (without specifying what evidence exactly, however) showed that the Jorvik Viking Centre had been successful, both as an archaeological display and in changing visitors' misconceptions about the Vikings.

The Viking Centre has had its critiques, especially from the academic world. What has mainly been criticized is the fact that the "timecars" do not offer the visitors any control over the time they spent in this part of the exhibition (Addyman and Gaynor 1984, 18). The second issue of criticism is the authenticity of the exhibition. On this subject Halewood and Hannam (2001, 574-575) write that the authenticity of the Jorvik Viking Centre is a very managed property of the exhibition, referring to the fact that the reconstructions were viewed before the

[4] Natalie Turner, personal communication November 3rd 2011

evidence of the excavation: The visitor is presented with "conclusion before evidence" (Halewood and Hannam 2001, 574-575).

Presentation methods

The Jorvik Viking Centre makes use of a variety of presentation techniques. The most prominent is the reconstruction of Viking Age Jorvik and part of the excavation. The "timecars" give the ride through the Viking Age village the feel of a ride in an amusement park. The ride is narrated, which supplies the visitors with information about life in the Viking Age. The narrator also points out different features of the reconstructions and interacts with the characters presented there in Old Norse. This ride is what sets the centre apart from other archaeological exhibitions and is the main attraction.

Figure 6-5: Part of the Coppergate excavation has been reconstructed under a glass floor. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.[5]

In the first hall, information panels are used in combination with videos and artefact displays. The display cases, panels and screens are built into the wall and connected together with a broad black stripe that follows the wall and leads the visitor through the display. The design has a very modern look.

[5] Photography was not allowed in all parts of the exhibition.

Figure 6-6: The information panels are built into the wall and connected with display cases and videos with a black stripe. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

In the hall called *Investigate Coppergate*, skeletons are displayed in glass showcases and information is offered on information panels. The display changes in the next hall. There, interactive touchscreens have been placed next to each showcase. Each showcase is quite large and carries several artefacts related to a certain trade. Randomly, a video starts in those showcases featuring a character connected in some way to that trade, portrayed by an actor. The character tells the visitors about the trade and their life in the Viking Age. Information panels are placed in the showcases. However, the showcases are very dark, which makes the panels difficult to read in some cases. Presumably, the showcases are kept so dark to accommodate the videos. In this hall a visitor was heard comment: "The displays are too dark to actually see something, aren't they".

Throughout the exhibition staff dressed in Viking Age clothes engage in conversations with the visitors and offer them information or further explanations of the interpretations. A blacksmith offers visitors handmade coins for purchase.

The exhibition aims to stimulate the senses of the visitors. The exhibition is not only visual, but sounds and smells are used as well to make the experience more vivid and authentic. The entire centre has quite a pungent smell to it, which is meant to simulate the smell of the Viking Age village. During the ride the visitors experience various other smells that are connected with different trades and daily life in the Viking Age.

Narratives

At Jorvik Viking Centre the main character is a collective, the inhabitants of Viking Age York. The narrative is presented during the ride in the "timecars" when visitors are taken through a reconstruction of Jorvik. The narrative is presented through the use of multiple senses; visitors see, hear about and smell the Viking Age village. The narrative casts light on everyday life in earlier times. To make the experience more relevant to the modern day visitors, the similarities of themes in life then and now are emphasised.

A secondary narrative to the exhibition is the process of excavation and the analysis of archaeological material. This forms the basis of the reconstruction and validates the main narrative. The characters of this narrative are the archaeologists, but they stay in the background and are never presented as such.

The use of technology

Videos are prominent in the first part of the exhibition. In the first hall there are four videos that give information on the Vikings and the excavation that took place at Coppergate. The videos run on a continuous loop, but as it is difficult to hit the beginning of the videos they can be difficult to follow. However, as this is an open area with many presentations and as a high number of visitors go through it, it is not really possible to enable every visitor to start the video.

In the hall after the "timecar" ride, a replica of a standing skeleton is displayed in a tall showcase. On top of it, explanations are projected about the different evidence that can be derived from the skeleton, focusing alternatively on different parts of the skeleton.

Figure 6-7: Information is projected on top and above the skeleton. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

In the hall named *Artefacts Alive*, several interactive stations with touch screens are placed next to the showcases. They offer information on the crafts that would have taken place in Viking Age Jorvik, many of which are displayed in the reconstruction. However, the touchscreens were awkward to use and the content not structured enough. One visitor gave up using the interactive screen after disclaiming: “It’s not working properly”. This is very discouraging for visitors. The text that the interactive stations offered was not presented well enough. An example of this is that sentences were frequently divided between two or even three screens, necessitating the viewer to turn to the next “page” to finish the sentence. The number of interactive touch screens was also too high, and would perhaps have benefitted from being complemented by other more traditional presentation methods.

The showcases in this same hall are quite dark. As mentioned above, a video of a character portrayed by an actor appears intermediately in them. They represent a person that would have been involved with the craft that is being represented. The outcome in individual showcases is very good, but the characters only appear randomly in the showcases so visitors may miss this.

Authenticity

Since the exhibition is largely based on reconstructions, the issue of authenticity is especially relevant. The exhibition is claimed to be based solely on archaeological or historical evidence and much ambition put into keeping the exhibition authentic. Visitors are made aware that the Viking Age village, which the ride on the “timecar” takes them through, is a reconstruction. At the same time the authenticity of it is stressed by referring to the archaeological data behind it. The visitors are, however, never made aware of the ambiguity of the data and that what they are seeing is what the academics imagine Jorvik to have looked in the past – supported by archaeological data.

Thus, the issue of authenticity itself is never directly discussed. It is therefore difficult for the visitors to distinguish between real archaeological artefacts on display and reconstructions. This especially applies in the first hall where visitors are presented with a reconstruction of the excavation and real archaeological artefacts on display. However, a member of staff was heard

explaining to a visitor that the artefacts were real archaeological objects that had been restored.

As mentioned above, Halewood and Hannam (2001, 574-575) have criticised that authenticity is a very managed property at the Jorvik Viking Centre. They feel that the conclusion of the archaeological research is exhibited before the visitors are presented with the evidence of it. It must, however, be taken into account that the exhibition has changed since Halewood and Hannam wrote this in 2001. Their argument is still valid up to a point. The reconstruction of the excavation and the display of the artefacts in the first hall, before the ride in through the reconstructed village, only opened recently. This offers some indication of the origin of the evidence to the visitors, even though most of it is still located after the ride. This new addition is good, as it promotes visitors to contemplate the evidence behind the exhibition and hopefully the authenticity of it as well.

Oversimplification of facts

The Jorvik Viking Centre does a good job of explaining the elements of excavation and the history of Jorvik. Complicated issues, for instance the preservation of wood, are very well explained and made accessible to the public. An appropriate balance between detailed explanations and technical aspects has been reached to keep the visitors interested and give them new insights into the issues discussed.

Multiple viewpoints

The Jorvik Viking Centre does not offer multiple interpretations of the archaeological material, keeping to a single story of Viking Age Jorvik.

Identity

The exhibition does a good job of establishing the identity of the Vikings living at Jorvik. However, the inhabitants of Viking Age Jorvik seem quite separated from the modern population of York. They are presented as a group of people who used to live in York and are not linked to the present day population. It seems that the

modern population does not identify themselves as descendants of the Vikings or that they are likened in any way to them.

Archaeological heroes

The archaeologist as a main character is not present in the exhibition. Archaeologists are referred to as the experts who analysed the information the exhibition is based on, but they are not active participants in the narrative.

The past vs. the present

There is a strong link between the past and the present at the Jorvik Viking Centre. This is emphasized by frequent referral to the excavation at this site that provided the information on which the exhibition is made. This is especially evident in the reconstruction of the excavation area and introduction of analytical methods used by scientists. The narratives presented to the visitors are however more about the past rather than the present. The referrals to the excavation are meant to authenticate the presentation rather than bring it into the present.

6.3. Dublinia

The Dublinia museum is located in the city centre of Dublin. It is housed in the former Synod Hall of the Church of Ireland. It is connected with the Christ Church Cathedral, on the adjacent side of the road, by a medieval footbridge. The Synod Hall, completed in 1875, stands on the site of the medieval church of St. Michael.

The Dublinia is owned and operated by the Medieval Trust, a private charitable trust. Its aim is to increase knowledge of history and understanding of the medieval period. The trust procured the Synod Hall in 1991. Following the building underwent restoration. Originally the exhibitions of Dublinia focused on the medieval period, but in 2005 what was originally intended to be a temporary exhibition about the Viking Age was made permanent (Liffey Press 2006, 52-54).

The museum now houses three exhibitions, one on each floor of the building. The aim of the museum is to illustrate life in the old city through a series of life-size reconstructions, models and displays. The exhibitions are designed to

be engaging and accessible and to inspire the visitors to find out more about earlier times.

On the lowest level is the exhibition called Viking Dublin. It focuses on the life of the Vikings and the challenging journeys they made across the seas. On the first floor is the Medieval Dublin exhibition. The changes of the city through time are revealed to the visitors on a scale model of the city. The Medieval period is presented through a reconstruction of a merchant's house, the quayside and a fair and the diseases people had to fight then. On the top floor is the History Hunters exhibition. Visitors are introduced to the process of excavation and analysis used for archaeological research. At the end, the issue of rescue excavation is brought up in relation to protests to a development project that took place in the years of 1976-1981 down the street from the Christ Church Cathedral. This last exhibition is the only one which displays real artefacts form archaeological excavations.

Presentation methods

Many different presentation methods are used in Dublinia. The most prominent are the information panels and reconstructions. The panels are designed to help make the visitors choose how much information they want to obtain during their visit. At the top there is a short summary of the contents of the panels in large font. Below is further information printed in two different font sizes, the information growing more detailed as the font gets smaller. These are further complemented by video presentations, most often featuring virtual reconstructions. In the Viking Dublin exhibition, "shields" are fastened on the wall throughout the exhibition. On each of them is a question. A handle on the "shield" can be used to turn it and

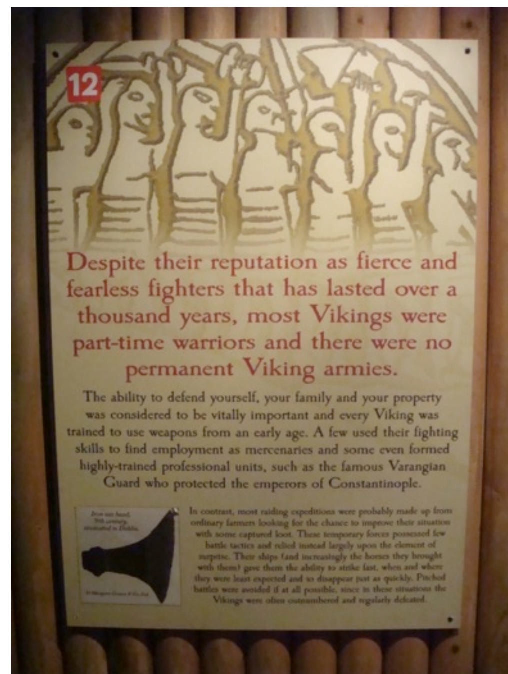

Figure 6-8: The information panels are printed in three different font sizes. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

Figure 6-9: "Interpretative" shield. The answer to the question can be revealed by turning the handle. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

reveal the answer. This method encourages visitors to explore the exhibition better and keeps them interested.

Some of the reconstructions flow in with the display, allowing free access. Visitors are free to touch and handle the displays and even sit down on them. Other reconstructions are more defined, portraying a “scene”, for instance the worship of pagan gods. A faint smell can be detected in and around the reconstructions, offering the visitors a whiff of earlier times.

Narratives

The Viking Dublin exhibition does not contain a single continuous story. However, many singular “scenes” are drawn up by the reconstructions. Amongst them are the burial of a pagan Viking, the inside of a boat and the interior of a Viking Age house. The same is to be said about the Medieval Dublin Exhibition. A house of a medieval merchant has been reconstructed, giving a “still image” of life in that house. The same applies to a 13th century fair and the quayside.

At the History Hunters exhibition the different stages of archaeological research is displayed. The main character in this exhibition is the archaeologist, who, for instance, appears on the computer screen of the workstations. However, the exhibition is built so the visitor steps into the shoes of the archaeologist, and thus becomes a part of the process.

Together, these three exhibitions make up the story of the development of Dublin since it was settled until archaeologists excavated the remains of the old settlements in modern times. The collective character of the Dublinians throughout the ages comprises the main character of the narrative. However, the visitors also get a glimpse of individual characters, both inhabitants of Dublin as well as the archaeologists, throughout the exhibitions.

The use of technology

There are several video presentations available throughout the exhibitions. Monitors are set into the exhibition walls, showing virtual reconstructions of an earlier Dublin. These displays are narrated. The videos are relatively short and run on a continuous loop. Therefore, there is little inconvenience in missing the beginning of a presentation. Audio stations are also distributed throughout the exhibitions, providing narrated information in several different languages.

Figure 6-10: Video monitors are set into the walls of the displays. Photo: Eva Kristín Dal.

Some of the reconstructions also have sound affects, for instance showing a Viking Age outhouse and the reconstruction of the boat interior. In the hall where diseases in the medieval Dublin are discussed, the visitor encounters very convincing cough sounds, making one look for the coughing person. However, in some places the mix of many sound presentations is a bit uncomfortable and confusing.

Authenticity

As the exhibitions are largely based on reconstructions, the issue of authenticity is highly relevant. The reconstructions both flow in with the other displays or are more "framed". They are sometimes mixed with other types of presentations, for instance a monitor is set into the wall of the reconstructed Viking Age house. Many of the reconstructions can also be touched or handled by the visitors.

At the entrance the visitors are given a map of the exhibition, and the receptionist points out that there are real artefacts on display in the exhibition on the top floor. Except for that comment, the issue of authenticity is never addressed. Similar to the Jorvik Viking Centre, the visitors are presented with the method used to obtain the data the exhibitions are based on at the end of their visit. However, it is nowhere discussed where the information used for these exhibitions is derived from.

Oversimplification of facts

There are many ways in which to seek information in the exhibitions, which allows the visitors to decide for themselves how detailed information they would like, and on which parts to focus. A good example of this is the information panels that have fonts in three different font sizes.

Multiple viewpoints

The museum does not offer multiple viewpoints on their narratives. However, in the Viking Dublin exhibition, it is mentioned that the Vikings were not only raiders and troublemakers, but also farmers who had families, and both aspects of their life is presented.

Identity

The exhibitions do not seek to establish the identity of any group and they do not relate much to the modern day population. However, in a review of Dublinia the relation of the characters of the History Hunters exhibition to the modern day population is discussed. "Using contemporary reconstructive technologies, scientists have allowed *us* to see *our* medieval ancestor exactly as she would have looked" [emphasis added] (Liffey Press 2006, 54). This indicates that the exhibition sees itself as presenting the ancestors of the inhabitants of Dublin or even the Irish.

Archaeological heroes

The archaeologist as a collective is presented as the "hero" of the History Hunters. He becomes especially visible on the computer monitors on the "archaeologists" desks, which the exhibition is partly made up of. Videos are displayed on the monitors, depicting professional archaeologists, who tell the visitors about their line of work. The visitors (children especially) are also encouraged to step into the shoes of the archaeologist.

The past vs. the present

The interpretations are presented in the past. However, the nature of the History Hunters exhibitions is such that it takes place in the present.

7. Analysis and discussion

In this chapter the analysis of the data is briefly discussed and then the results from the statistical analysis presented. Finally the results are discussed and compared.

7.1. Analysing the data

Although most of the respondents faultlessly filled out the questionnaire, some issues came up during the processing of the questionnaires that needed to be dealt with. The first was that some respondents did not answer all the questions in the questionnaire. Those were marked as "Not answered" in the database. This was to avoid any inconsistencies in the statistics, i.e. that all statistics were based on the same number of replies. The second challenge that appeared during the analysis of the data was that some people ticked two boxes for the same question, even though they were asked to check only one box. This especially applied for question 3a on the survey, asking about the preference of the visitors. Originally the question was designed to make people choose either information panels or stories. However, some people ticked both boxes and wrote in the following question (3b) that they liked both presentation methods or that they complemented each other. Instead of trying to force the respondents to choose only one option, it would have been wiser to offer the option of both presentation methods. To avoid inconsistencies in the statistical analysis, these answers were included in the "I don't know" option, but in the analysis the number of these instances will be accounted for. This problem was most prominent at PAM Ename, although many respondents at Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia also commented that this option was missing.

Question 3

a. Do you prefer one of these two types of presentation, the information panels (mentioned in question 1) or the stories (mentioned in question 2)? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Information panels
- ☐ Stories
- ☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me why?

____

____

Figure 7-1: Question 3 on the questionnaire used at PAM Ename.

The open questions proved more difficult to analyse than the closed questions. The nature of a free response is that each answer can fall under more than one category. This is reflected in the statistics, as the total percentage of answers can exceed a 100. Therefore, a higher total can be expected in the statistics derived from the "open" questions. No effort was made to counterbalance this, as doing so would have distorted the results and made the different case studies difficult to compare.

As mentioned in chapter 5.2.3, limited time and resources made it impossible to collect a representative sample, both for a continuous and a categorical analysis. Even so, where noticeable difference appeared between age groups or the sexes, these will be presented and discussed, as these will add value to the results. It should be kept in mind though, that the sample size is far too small for representative results, and the results should accordingly be interpreted with caution.

In the following chapters the results from the survey will be presented. In chapter 7.5 they will then be discussed. The order in which the results are both presented and discussed follows the order of the questions on the questionnaires.

7.2. Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename

All together 40 people participated in the survey at the Provincial Archaeological Museum (PAM) Ename. The sample consisted of an equal number of men and women, 20 of each sex. Half of the respondents belonged to the age group of 40-60 years old, 35% were younger than 40 years old and 15% were older than 60 years old (see Figure 7-2).

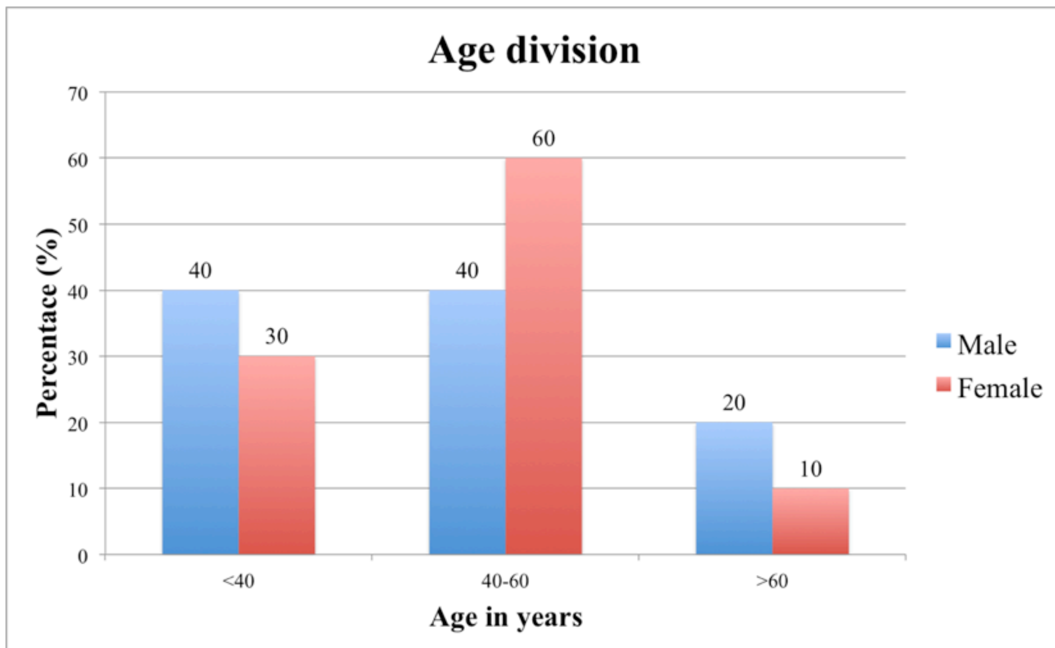

Figure 7-2: Age and sex division of the respondents at PAM Ename.

A great majority of the respondents claimed to like the information panels, in total 95% of the respondents. Only two people were undecided. One of them gave the reason that he had not paid much attention to the panels. There were various features that the respondents liked about the information panels. Most people felt that they offered appropriate amount of information and gave clear information that was easy to follow. The design of the panels also seems to be popular with the respondents. Many, however, gave very general answers to the question, for instance: "I liked everything" (see Figure 7-3).

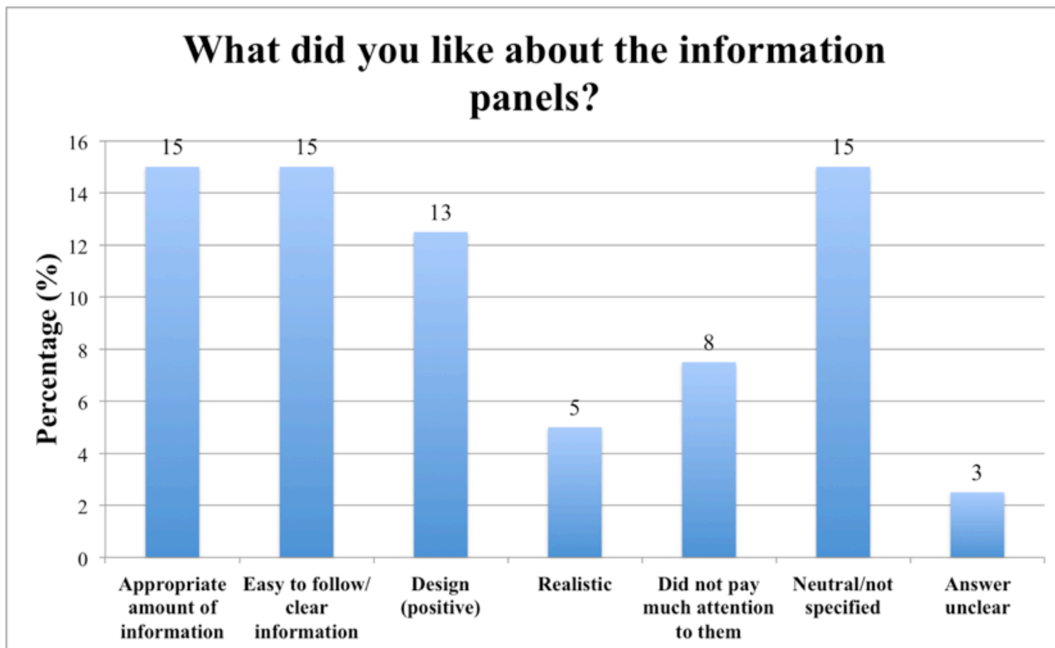

Figure 7-3: Features of the information panels that the respondents liked at PAM Ename.

Slightly fewer people claimed to like the stories presented at the *Feast of a Thousand Years*, or 83% in total. Three people did not like the stories. Two people ticked the "I don't know" option and two did not answer the question.

The most popular feature of the story-based presentation was the presentation method itself or individual stories in the presentation. A few people (10%) mentioned that they thought the stories were very realistic and others that they were fun (8%). Some respondents also liked them because they made use of a new presentation method, different from what they had seen before (8%) (see Figure 7-4).

The respondents also remarked on some features that they did not like about the stories. Three people felt it was a disadvantage that the stories were either too long or that it was impossible to listen to all of them. One person felt that the stories were "childish", using the term in a negative way.

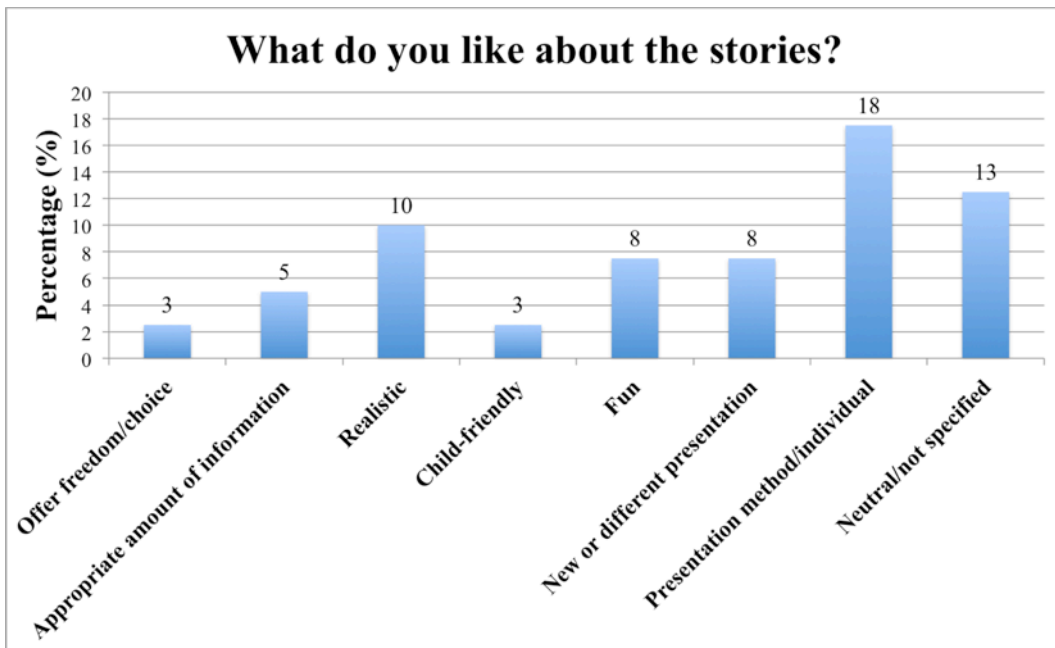

Figure 7-4: Features of the stories that the respondents liked at PAM Ename.

When asked about which presentation method the respondents preferred, half of them preferred the stories to the information panels. A total of 35% chose the information panels over the stories and one out of ten was unsure. Two people, the equivalent of 5%, did not answer the question (see Figure 7-5).

In total eight people, the equivalent of one fifth of the respondents, commented that they thought both presentation methods - the use of information panels and stories - were good or that they complemented each other. Three of them ticked both options on the questionnaire. As mentioned above, they were sorted with the “I don’t know” category.

The most common reason people gave in favour of the stories was that they were more alive and stimulated the imagination. The majority of those who preferred the information panels, however, gave the reason that they are more objective than the stories.

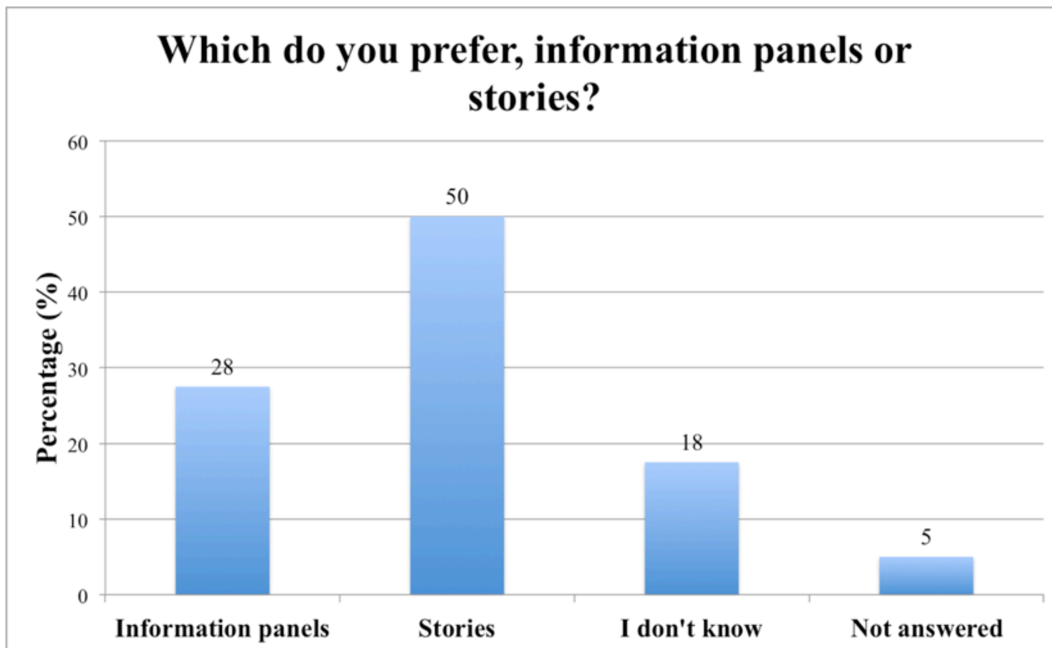

Figure 7-5: The respondents' preference of presentation methods at PAM Ename.[6]

When these results were analysed with regard to age groups, a clear pattern emerged. Most of the people who preferred information panels to the stories belonged to the age group of 60 years or older. On the other hand, the youngest audience seems to be most keen on the stories (see Figure 7-6). When the same data was analysed with regard to sex, no significant difference appeared (see Figure 7-7).

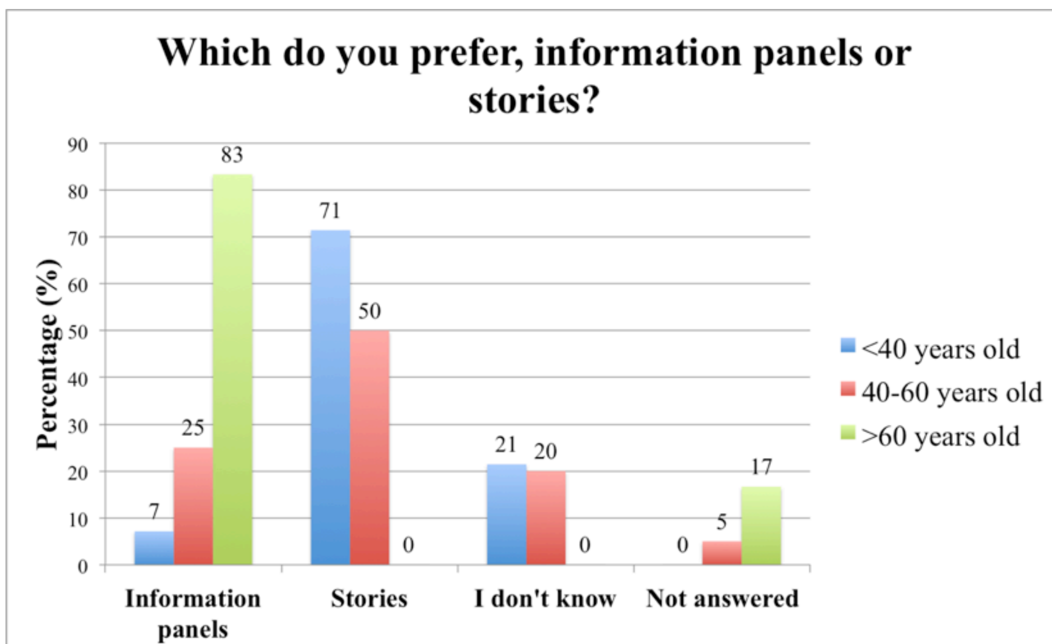

Figure 7-6: The respondents' preference of presentation methods at PAM Ename with regard to age groups.

[6] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.

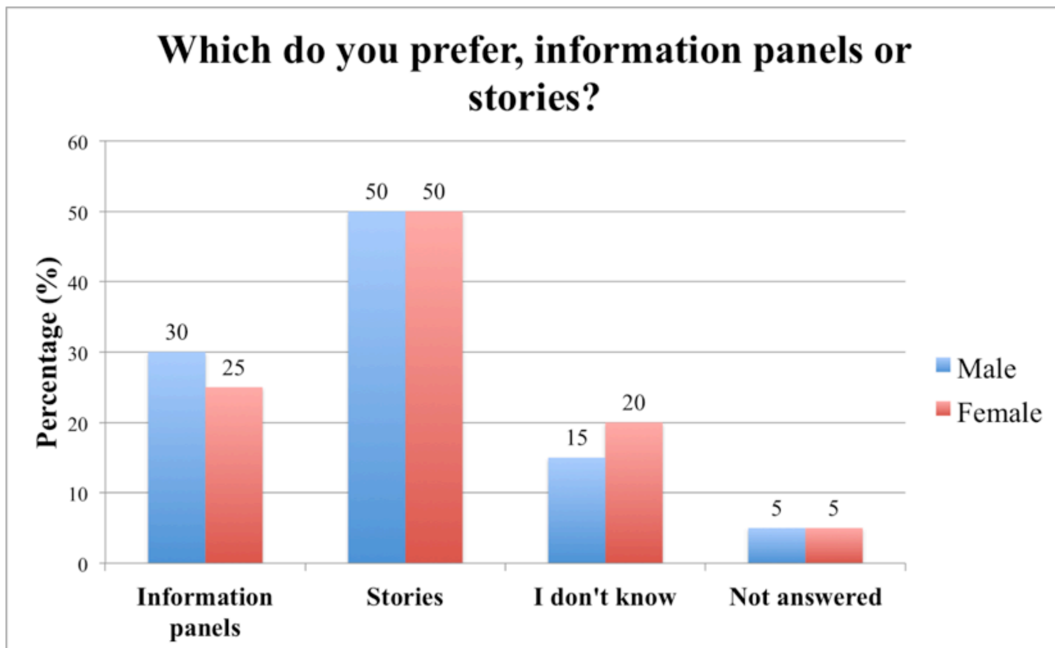

Figure 7-7: The respondents' preference of presentation methods at PAM Ename with regard to sex.

The participants were asked what the value of stories at archaeological parks and museums is. Over half of them felt it is high and almost 40 out of a hundred that it is very high. No one considered the value of stories to be low (see Figure 7-8).

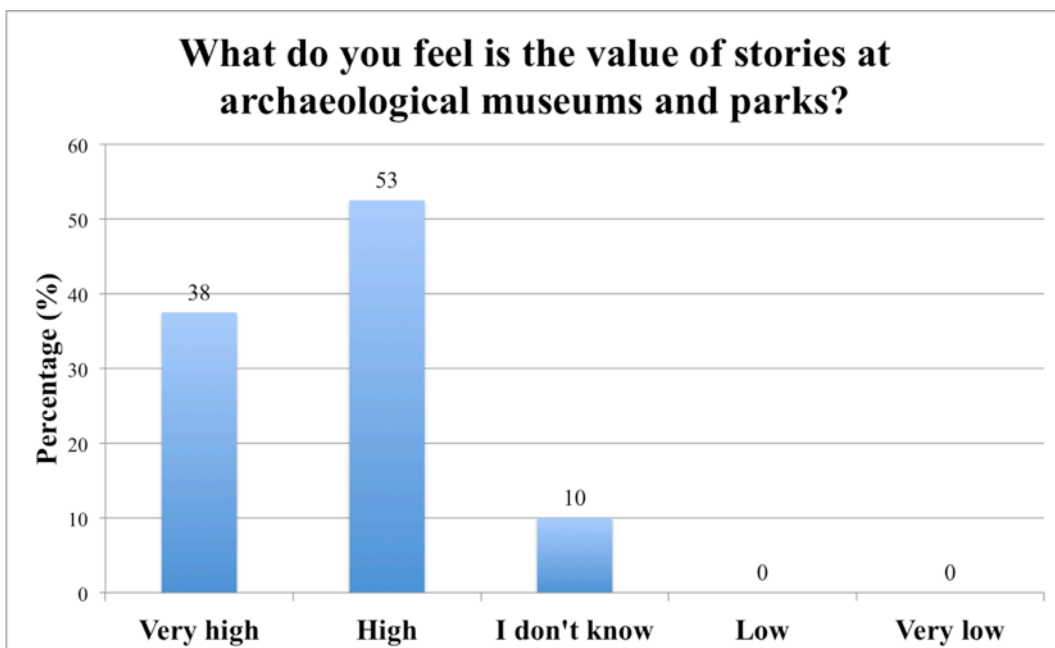

Figure 7-8: The value of stories at archaeological museums and parks, according to the respondents at PAM Ename.[7]

[7] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.

When these same results were analysed with regard to age groups, it became apparent that the youngest participants valued the stories most. People 60 years or older felt that they had high value, and people from 40 to 60 years old followed closely (see Figure 7-9).

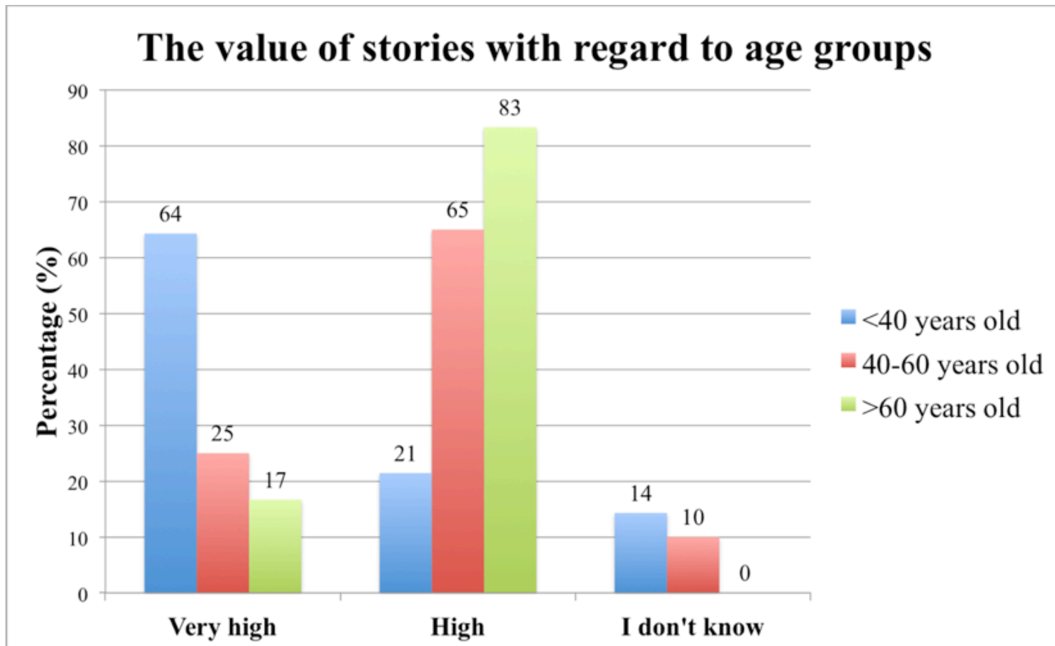

Figure 7-9: The value of stories at archaeological museums and parks, according to the respondents at PAM Ename, with regard to age groups.

Most respondents felt that the stories in the *Feast of a Thousand Years* represented life in earlier times accurately (53%) or very accurately (25%). Only one person felt that they represented it inaccurately. Women seem to be slightly more wary of this form of presentation, rating it "accurately" rather than "very accurately" (see Figure 7-10).

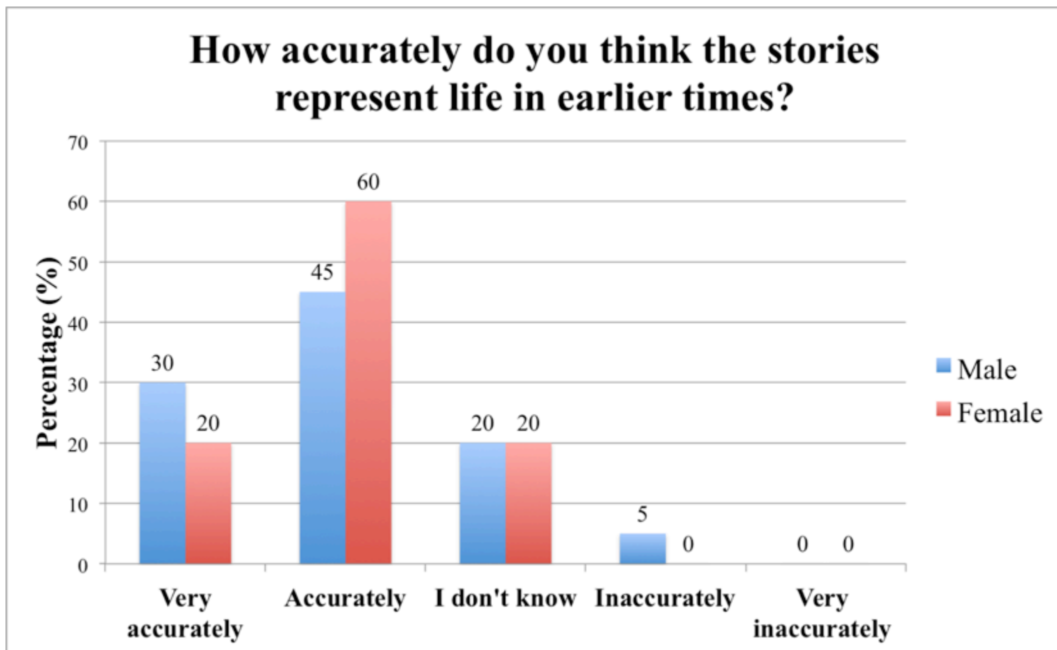

Figure 7-10: The accuracy of the stories, according to the respondents at PAM Ename, with regard to age groups.

The majority of the respondents believed that the stories they were presented with at the *Feast of a Thousand Years* represented one of many possible stories. A quarter, however, felt that they told the absolute truth (see Figure 7-11).

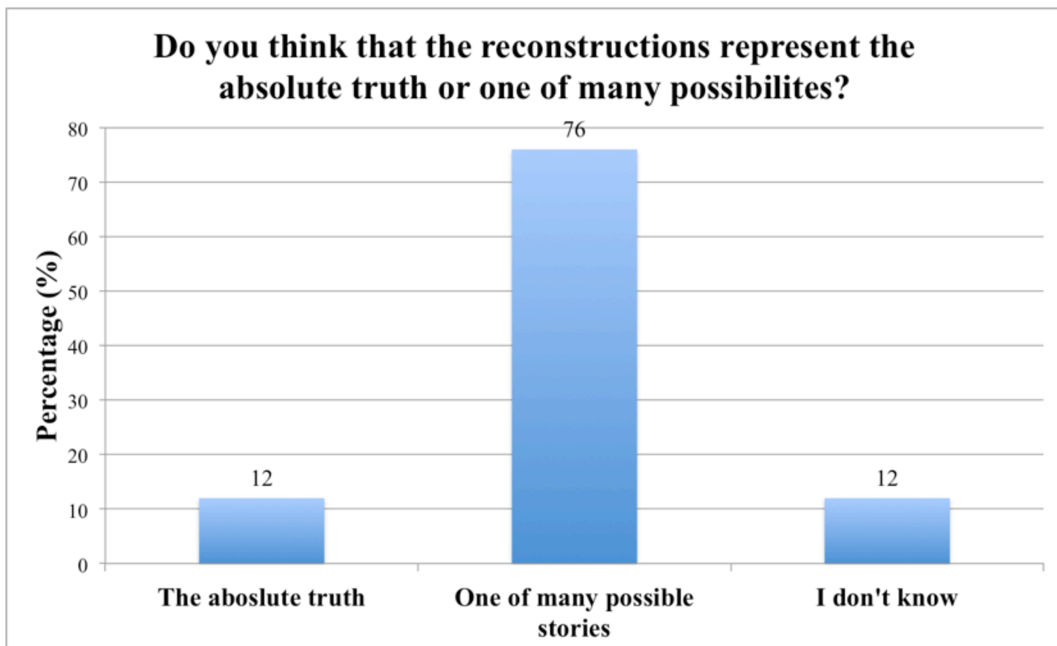

Figure 7-11: The respondents believe in one of many stories or the absolute truth at PAM Ename.

Just over half of the respondents would be interested in seeing presentations, which offer multiple viewpoints of a single event. However, there were quite a number of respondents that were not interested in this (see Figure 7-12).

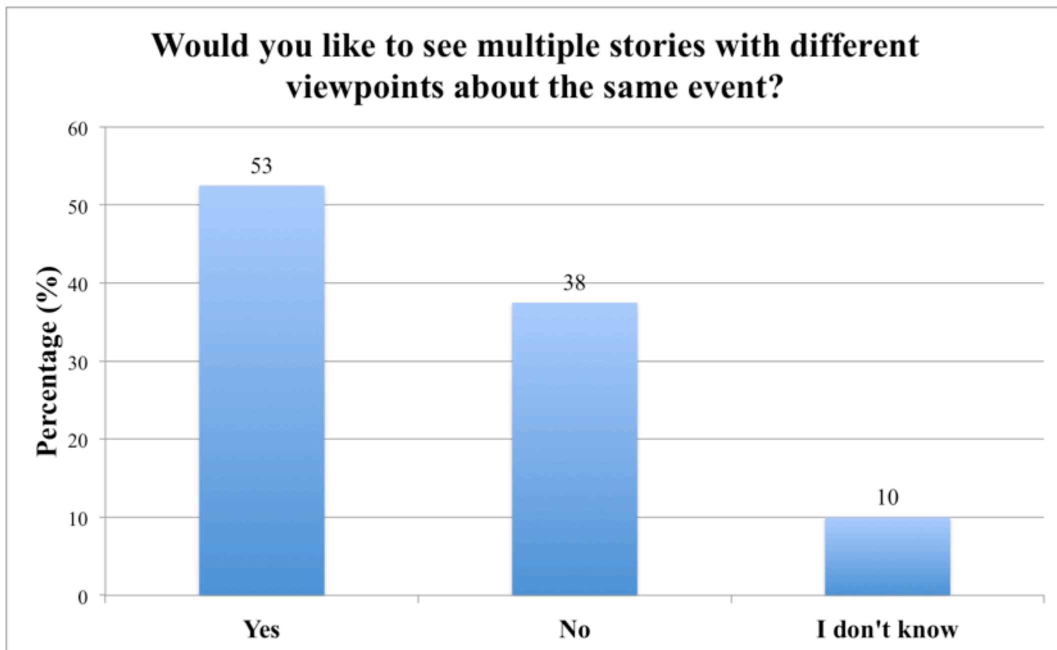

Figure 7-12: The interest of the respondents at PAM Ename in multiple stories.[8]

The answers to the question of whether the characters of the stories at the PAM Ename relate in any way to the modern day population of Ename were varied. It is interesting to note that over half of the respondents under 40 years old answered positively. Much fewer people belonging to the other age groups answered positively. People aged 40-60 years old most frequently replied negatively, but the difference was not significant. Most undecided people belonged to the age group of 60 years or older (see Figure 7-13).

[8] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.

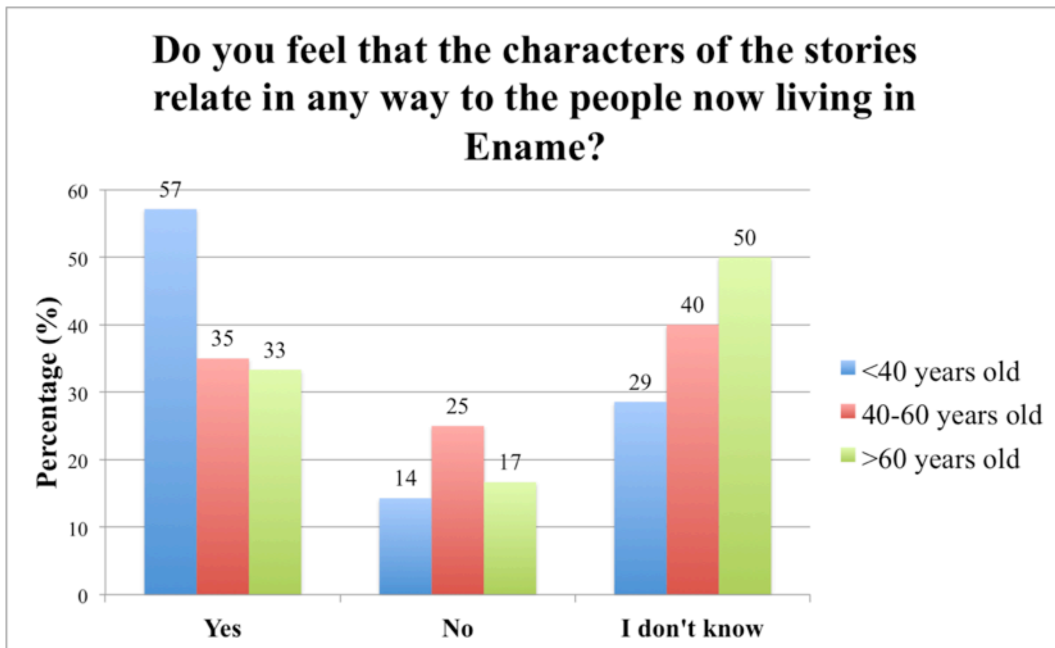

Figure 7-13: Relation of the characters of the stories to the modern day population with regard to age groups at PAM Ename.

The most common answer when the respondents were prompted to explain their answer further was that people still have to deal with similar problems or themes in life. Only one person gave the reason for a negative answer, which was migration.

Almost 60% of the respondents would have liked to find out more about the process of excavation after their visit to the PAM Ename. Almost one third, on the other hand, would not be interested in finding out more (see Figure 7-14).

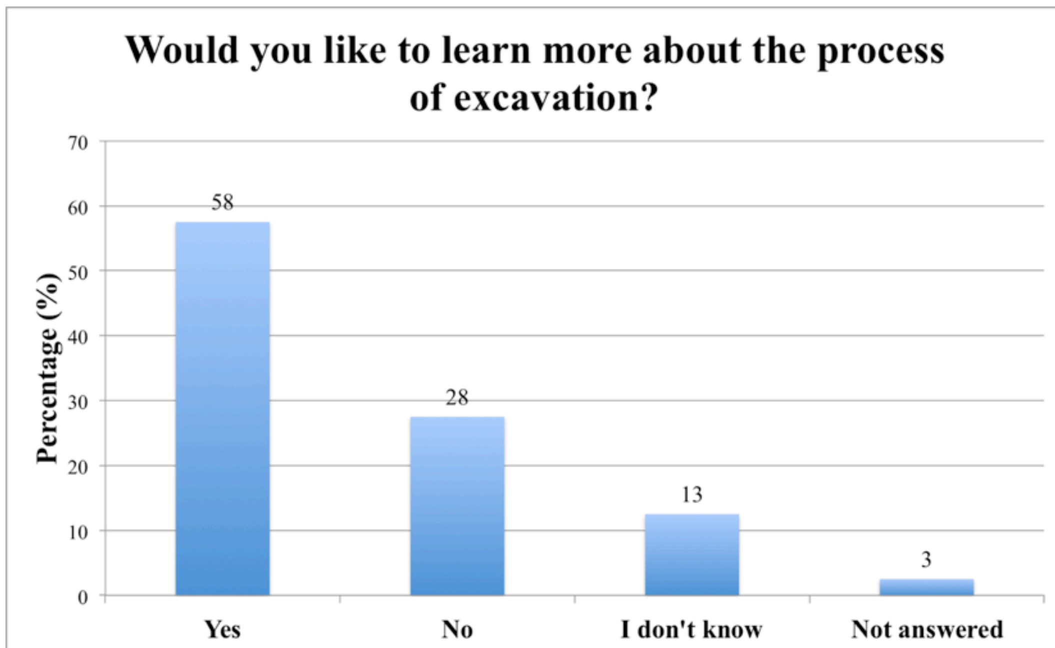

Figure 7-14: The respondents' interest in the process of excavation at PAM Ename.[9]

When the responses were analysed with regard to age groups, it became apparent that the oldest participants were the least interested in finding out more about the process of excavation. The people that were most keen to learn more, however, were between 40 and 60 years old (see Figure 7-15).

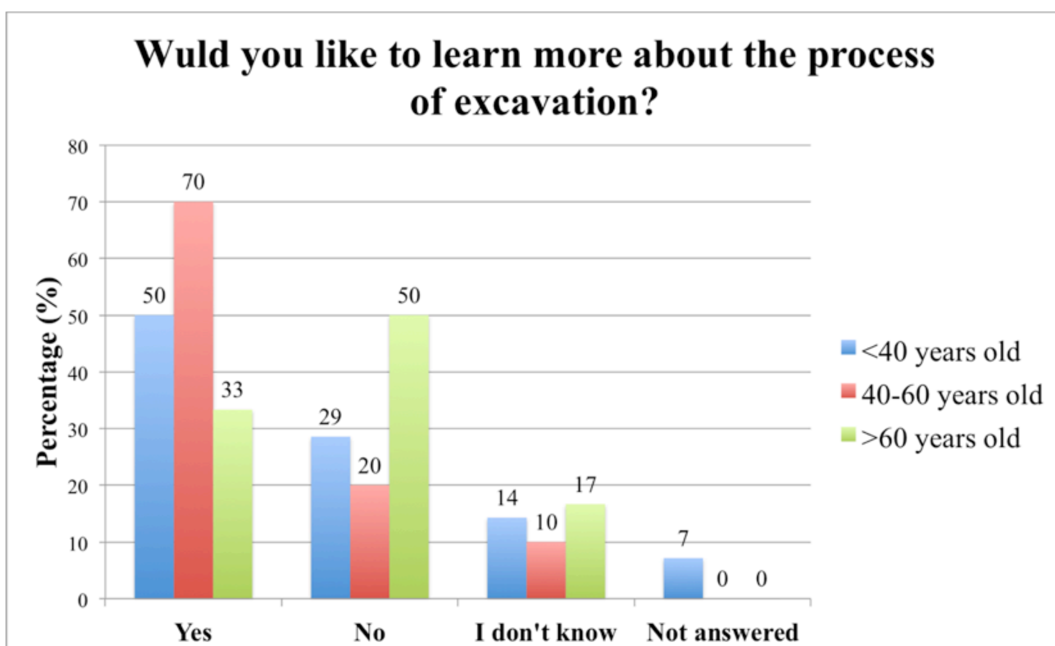

Figure 7-15: The respondents' interest in the process of excavation with regard to age groups at PAM Ename

[9] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.

A similar number gained new insight into the archaeology and history of Ename during their visit to the museum (see Figure 7-16).

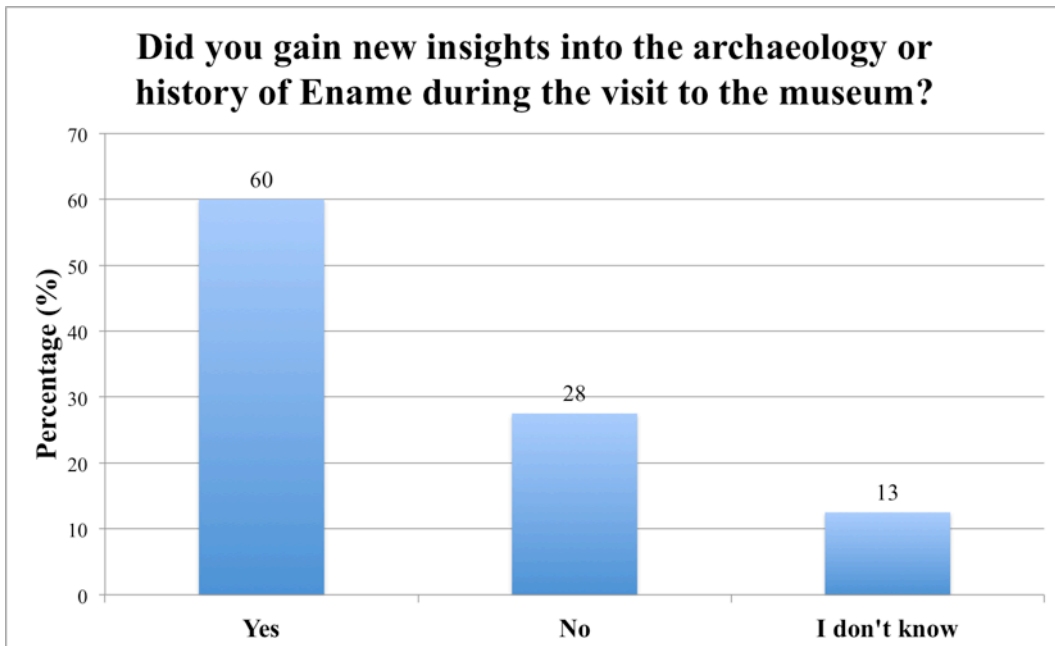

Figure 7-16: The gain of new insights into the archaeology and history of Ename by the respondents.[10]

Much fewer would be interested in learning more about the past of Ename, however. Almost one third would not be interested in finding out more and only slightly fewer were undecided (see Figure 7-17).

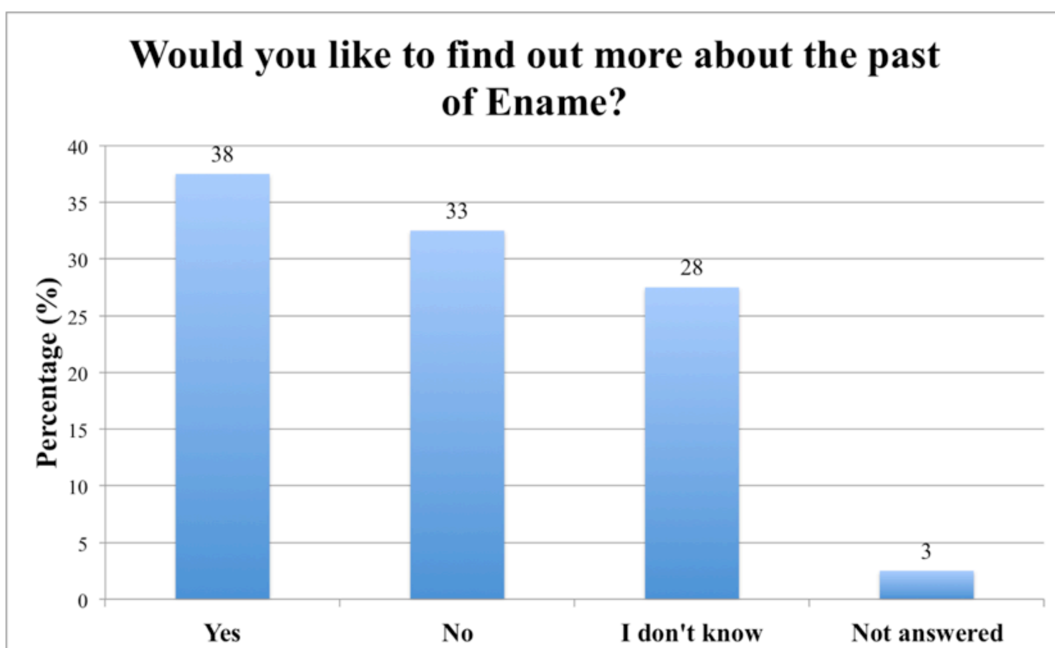

Figure 7-17: The respondents' interest in finding out more about the past of Ename.[11]

[10] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.
[11] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.

Ninety per cent of the respondent at the PAM Ename felt that the museum met their expectations. Two people did not have their expectations met. One of them came for an exhibition of contemporary art, not an archaeological exhibition, and the other felt the exhibition was too warm. That complaint is not surprising as on Saturday 24th, the first day the survey was conducted, the heating broke down and the exhibition halls were stiflingly warm.

7.3. Jorvik Viking Centre

In total, 50 people participated in the survey at the Jorvik Viking Centre. The participants were selected randomly. The sample consisted of 29 women and 21 men. That means that 58% of the participants were women and 42% male. Almost half (48%) of the participants belonged to the age group of 40-60 years old, 34% were younger than 40 years old and 18% were older than 60 years old (see Figure 7-18).

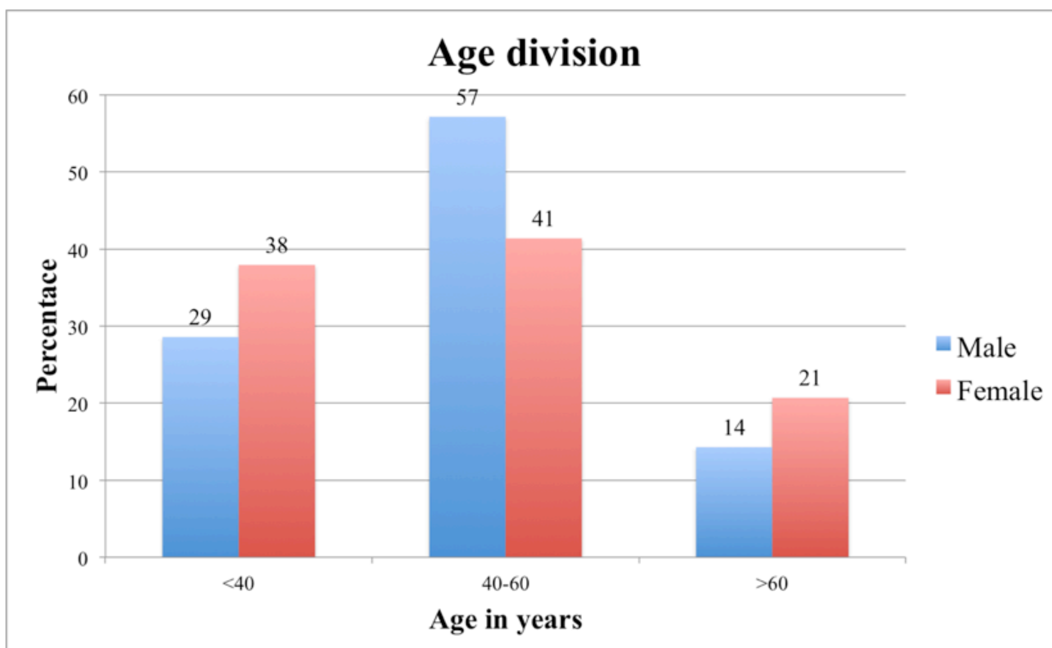

Figure 7-18: Age and sex division of the participants at the Jorvik Viking Centre.

Almost all participants claimed to have enjoyed the information panels at Jorvik Viking Centre. Over half of the respondents gave the reason that the panels were easy to follow and they provided clear information. The second most common answer, at 14%, was that they liked the design of the information panels (see Figure 7-19).

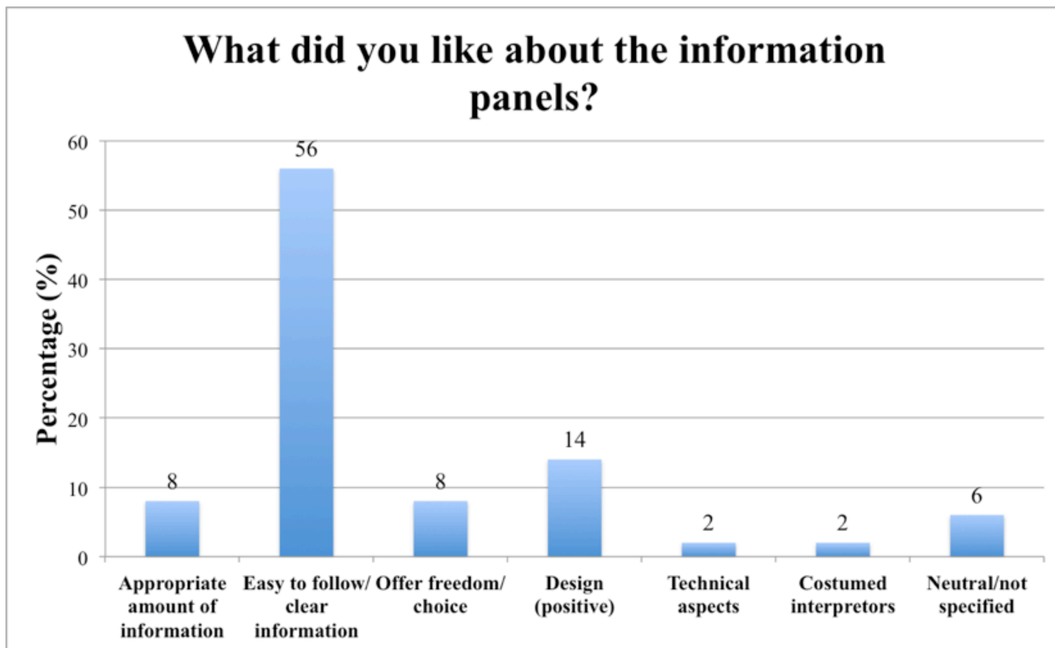

Figure 7-19: Features of the information panels that respondents liked at the Jorvik Viking Centre.

Only two people claimed not to enjoy the information panels. The reason was that the panels were not accessible enough and that there was too much of a gap between them. One can imagine that the former complaint originates in the fact that the Viking Centre was very busy on that particular day.

However, every participant enjoyed the reconstructions of Viking Age Jorvik. When asked what they liked about the reconstructions, most participants mentioned how realistic they were or a specific element of the reconstructions. The third most popular feature was the ease with which this presentation method offered information. A few people mentioned, in particular, the smell as the feature they liked the most about the presentation (see Figure 7-20).

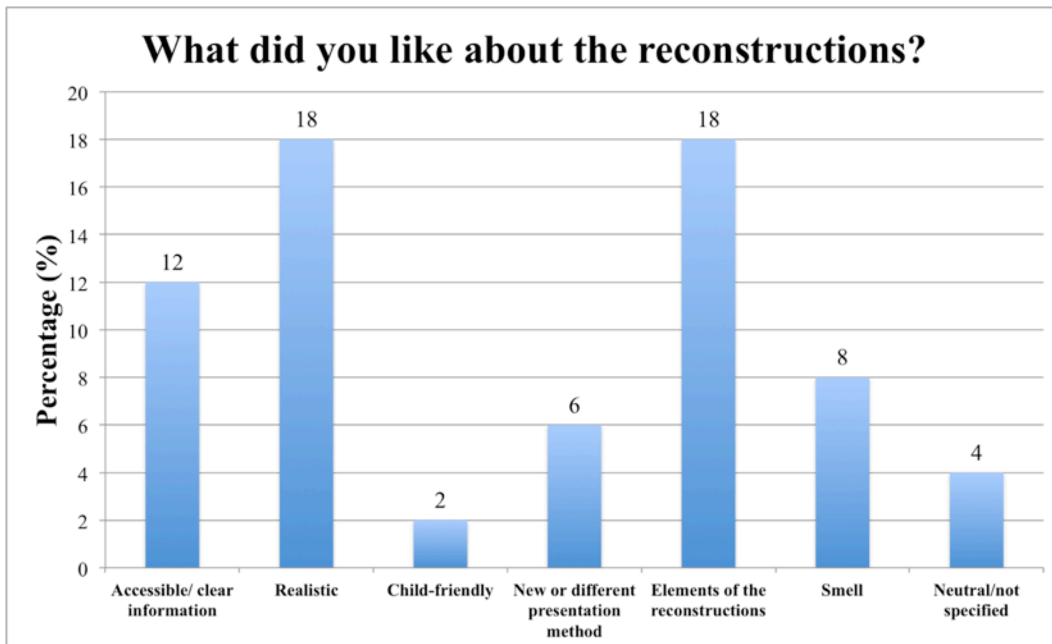

Figure 7-20: Features of the reconstruction the respondents liked at the Jorvik Viking Centre.

Most participants at the Jorvik Viking Centre preferred the reconstructions to the information panels (see Figure 7-21). A quarter of the respondents felt that the reconstructions presented information in an accessible and easily understandable manner. Slightly fewer gave the reason that it was more fun. Six people, the equal of 12%, liked both or felt that the two presentation methods complemented each other.

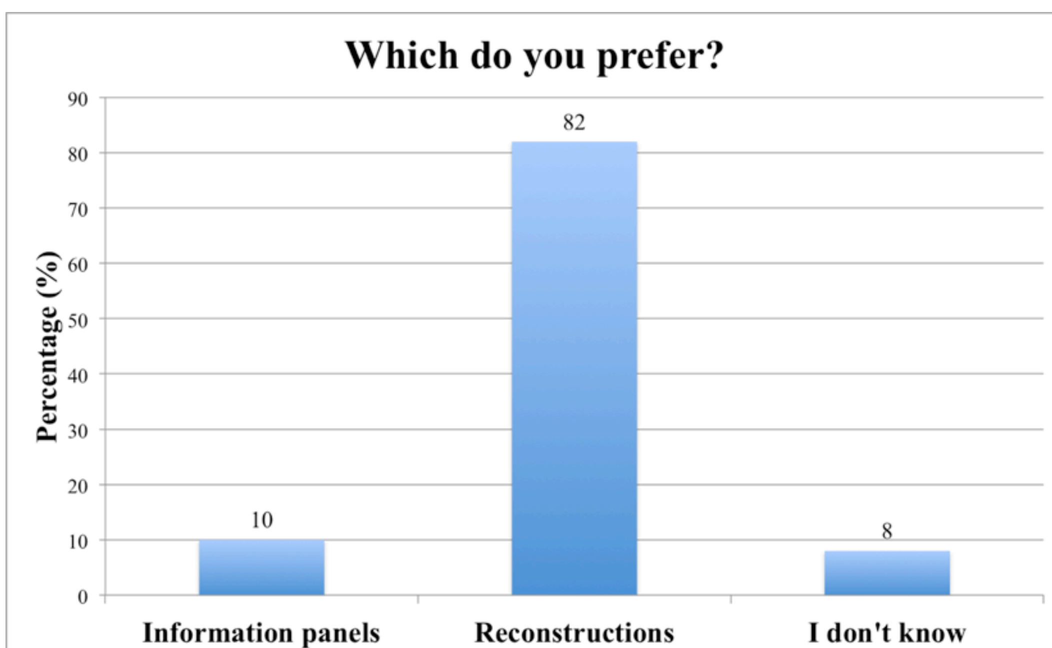

Figure 7-21: The respondents' preference of presentation methods at the Jorvik Viking Centre.

When the answers were analysed with regard to age and sex of the respondents, it was revealed that the oldest age group was the least fond of the reconstructions and had the highest number of undecided people (see Figure 7-22). The difference between the two younger groups was not significant, but the oldest group deviated by almost one fifth from the other two groups. The results also disclosed that slightly more men than women preferred the reconstructions (see Figure 7-23).

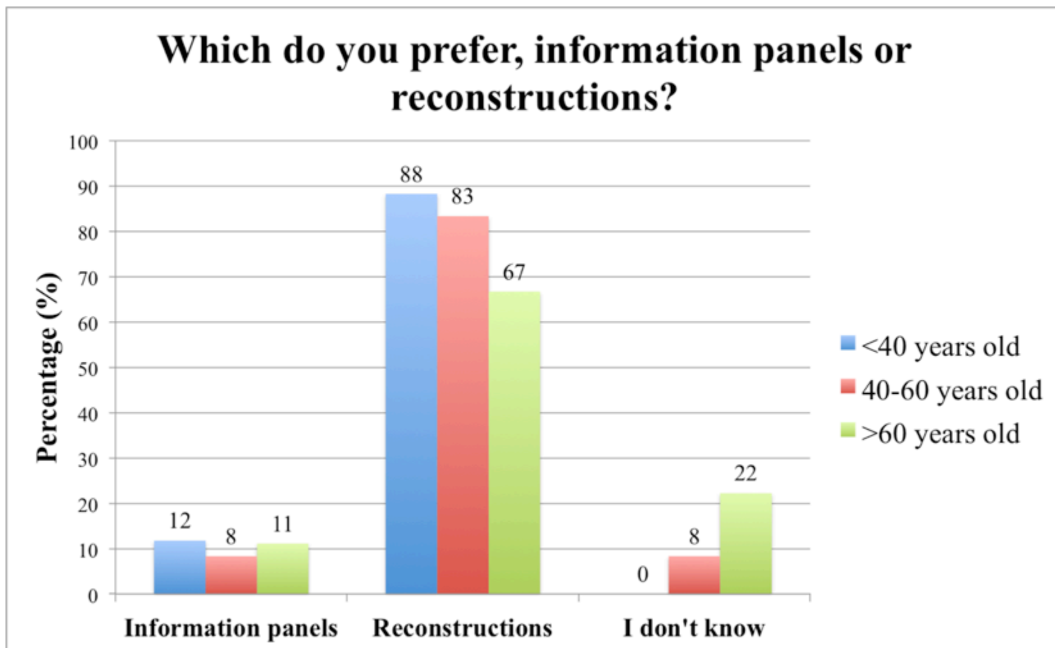

Figure 7-22. The respondents' preference of presentation methods at Jorvik Viking Centre with regard to age groups.

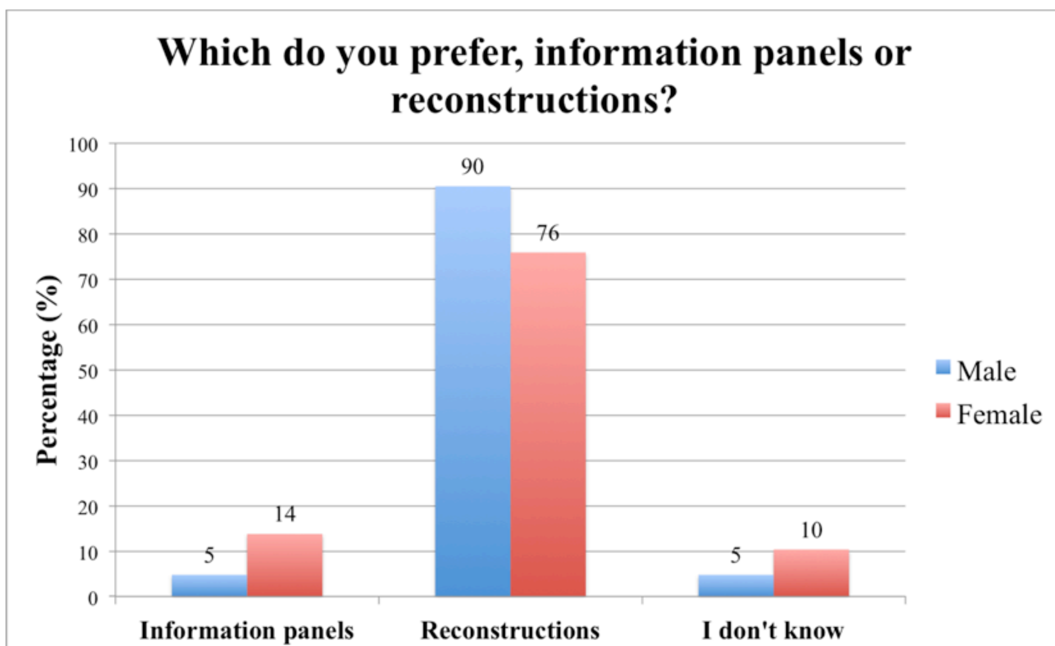

Figure 7-23: The respondents' preference of presentation methods at Jorvik Viking Centre with regard to sex.

When it came to the value of reconstructions, all the respondents felt it was either high or very high (see Figure 7-24).

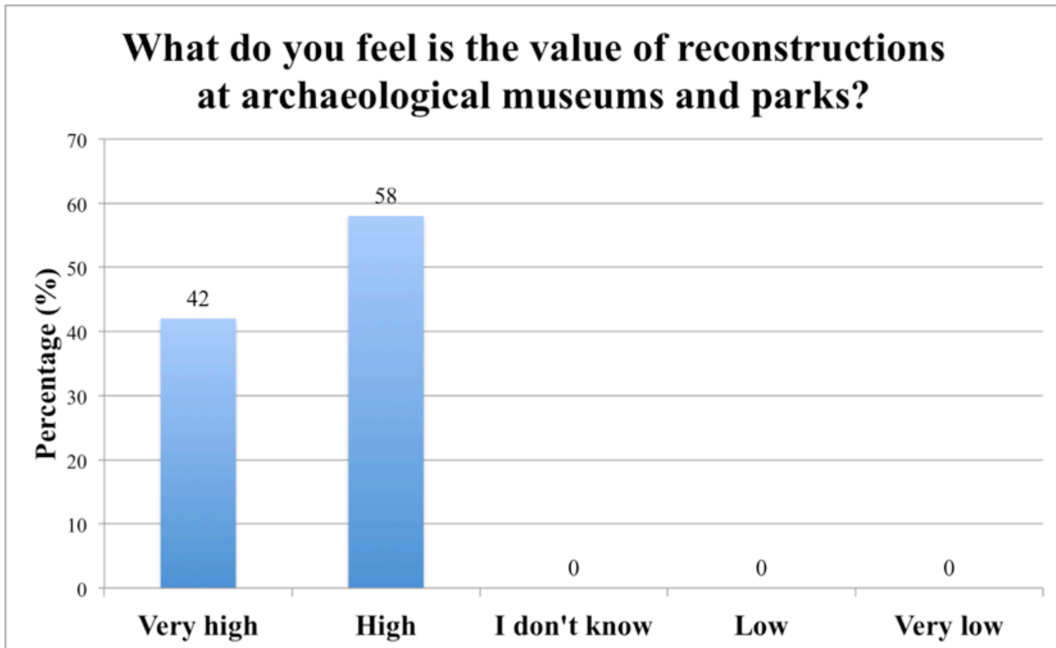

Figure 7-24: The value of reconstructions, according to the respondents at Jorvik Viking Centre.

When the responses were analysed with regard to age groups, an interesting pattern appeared. The group that consisted of people older than 60 years old seems to regard reconstruction at archaeological museums and parks with the highest value. Other age groups were more reserved in their evaluation (see Figure 7-25).

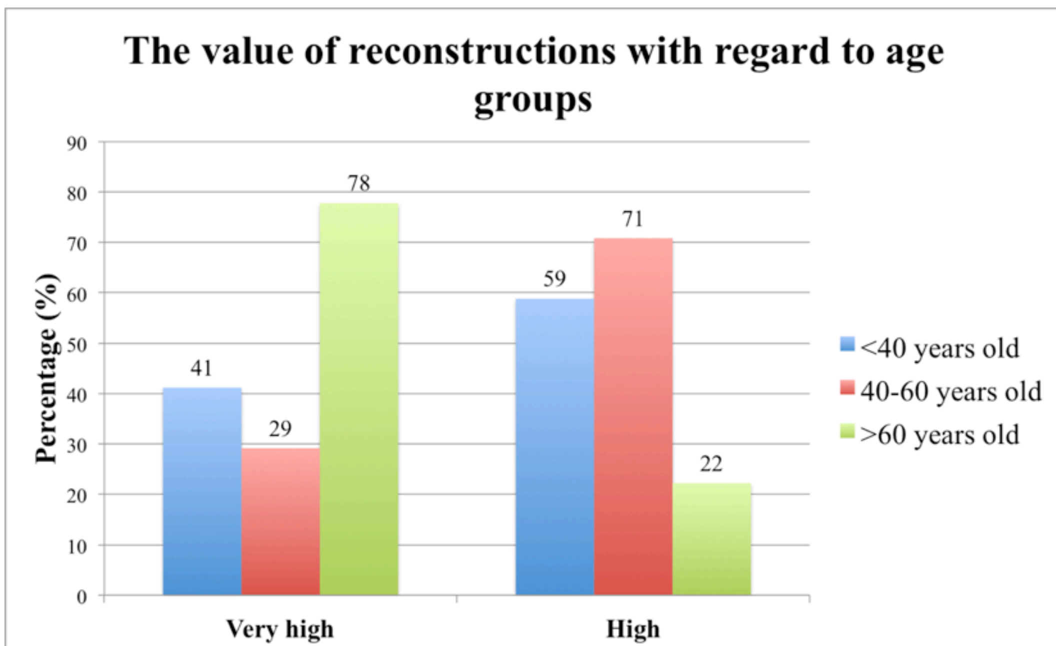

Figure 7-25: The value of reconstructions, according to the respondents at the Jorvik Viking Centre, with regard to age groups.

When asked about how accurately the reconstructions represented life in earlier times, most respondents felt that they were accurate. Only two out of ten felt that they represented life in earlier times very accurately and a similar number was unsure (see Figure 7-26). It is noticeable that there was quite a difference between the answers of men and women for this question. Women seem to have some reservations about the accuracy of the reconstructions. On the other hand more men were undecided than women (see Figure 7-26).

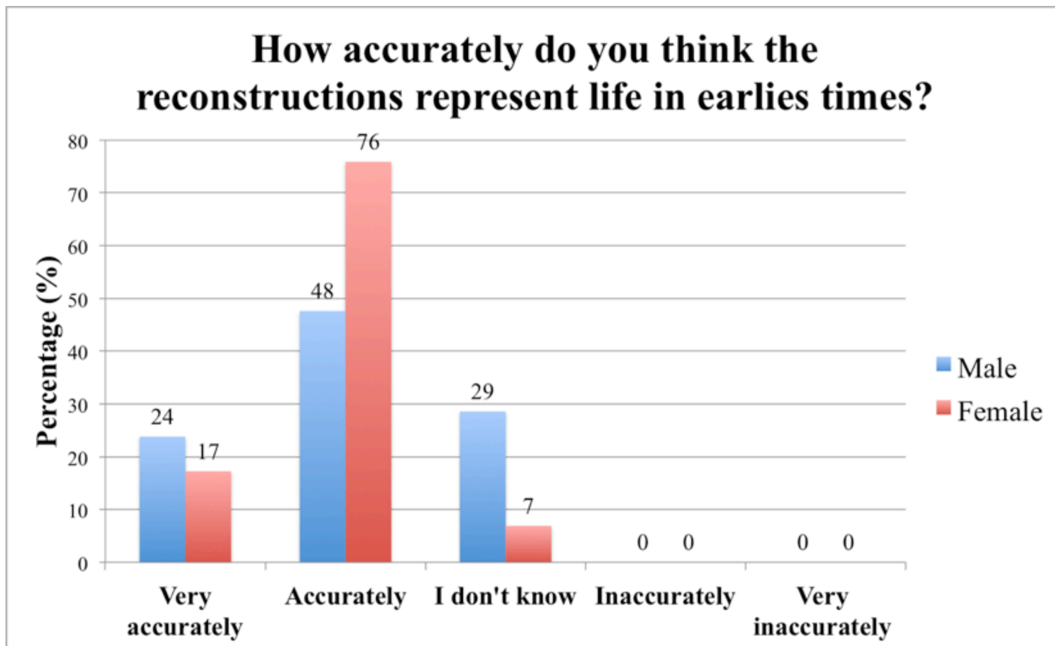

Figure 7-26: The accuracy of the reconstructions, according to the respondents at the Jorvik Viking Centre, with regard to sex.

Most people seem to be aware that the reconstructions represent one of many possible stories rather than the absolute truth (see Figure 7-27).

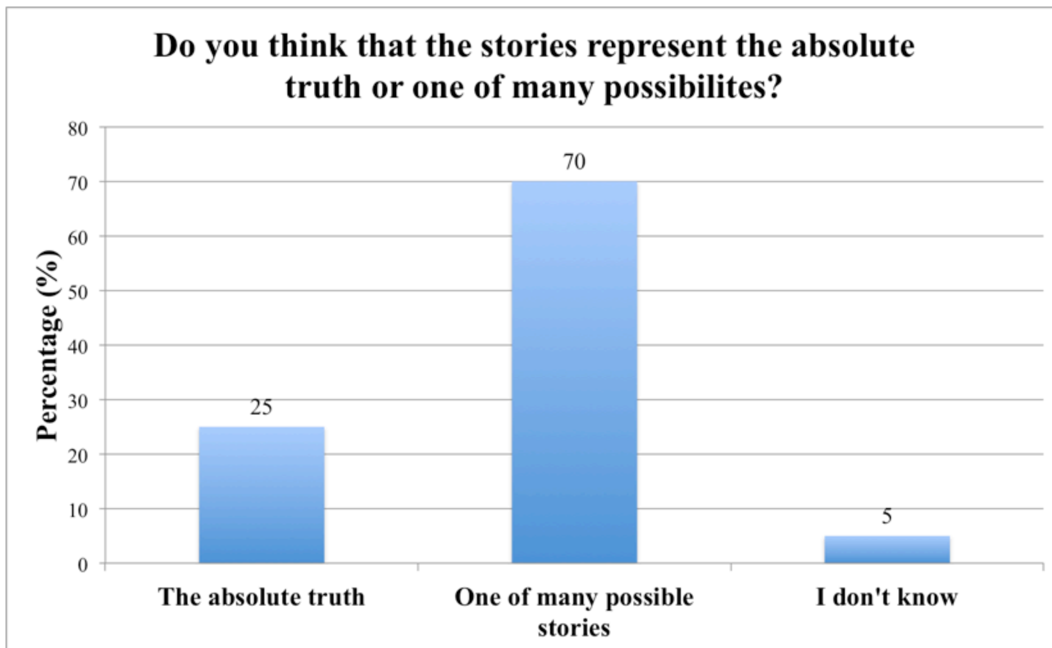

Figure 7-27: The respondents' believe in the absolute truth or one of many possibilities at the Jorvik Viking Centre.

Accordingly, most of the participants would like to be presented with multiple viewpoints of an event. Only 12 out of a hundred would prefer to see only one point of view (see Figure 7-28).

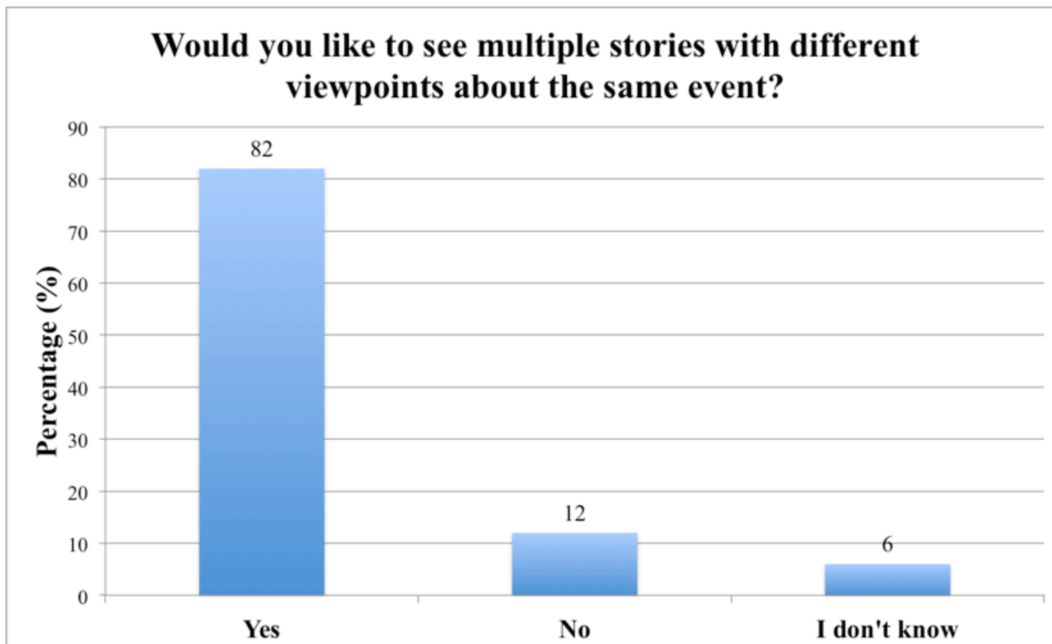

Figure 7-28: The respondents' interest in multiple viewpoints at the Jorvik Viking Centre.

When asked about whether the characters of Viking Age Jorvik related in any way to the people now living in York, very varied answers appeared. Among the youngest age group, the answers were quite evenly distributed. The majority of

the older two groups, however, did not feel that the characters related to the modern day population of York (see Figure 7-29).

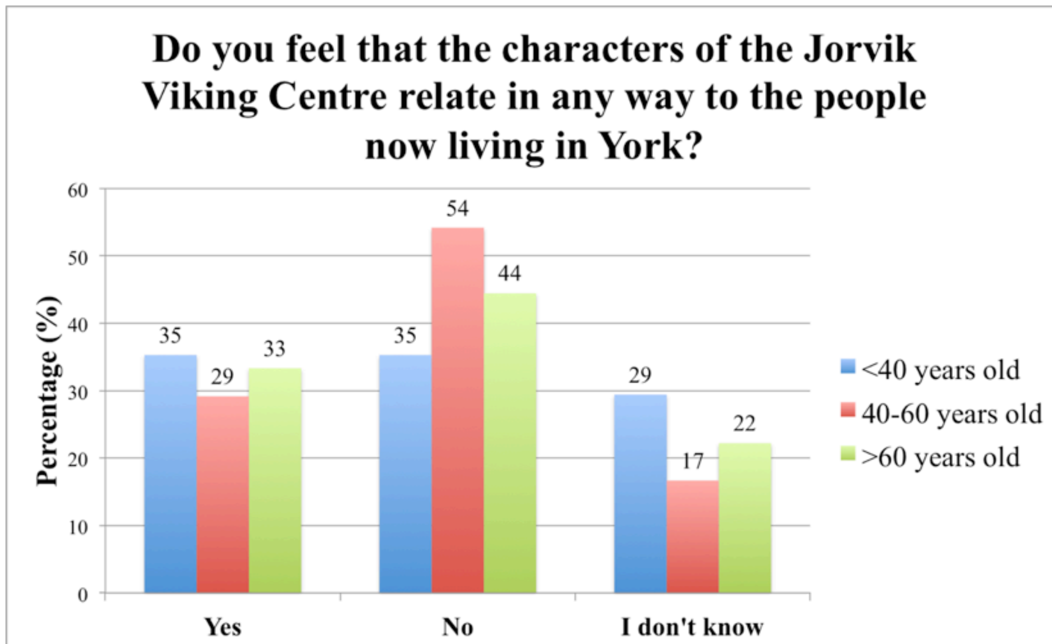

Figure 7-29: The relation between the Vikings and the modern day population of York, according to the respondents at the Jorvik Viking Centre.

The most common relation the respondents mentioned was, like at PAM Ename, that people still have to deal with similar themes and problems in life. A few people also mentioned ancestry and heritage as the connection. The majority of those few who gave a reason for their negative answer were of the opinion that people have progressed since the Viking Age.

Over half of the respondents at Jorvik Viking Centre would be interested in finding out more about the process of excavation (see Figure 7-30). A possible explanation of such a low rate is that the respondents felt that they have already learned enough about this, as the Coppergate excavation and the analysis of archaeological material were covered quite extensively in the exhibition. When the answers for this question were analysed with regard to age groups, an interesting pattern emerged. The group keenest to find out more about the process of excavation included the oldest people. Participants between 40 and 60 years old, however, were least likely to want to learn more about this topic (see Figure 7-31).

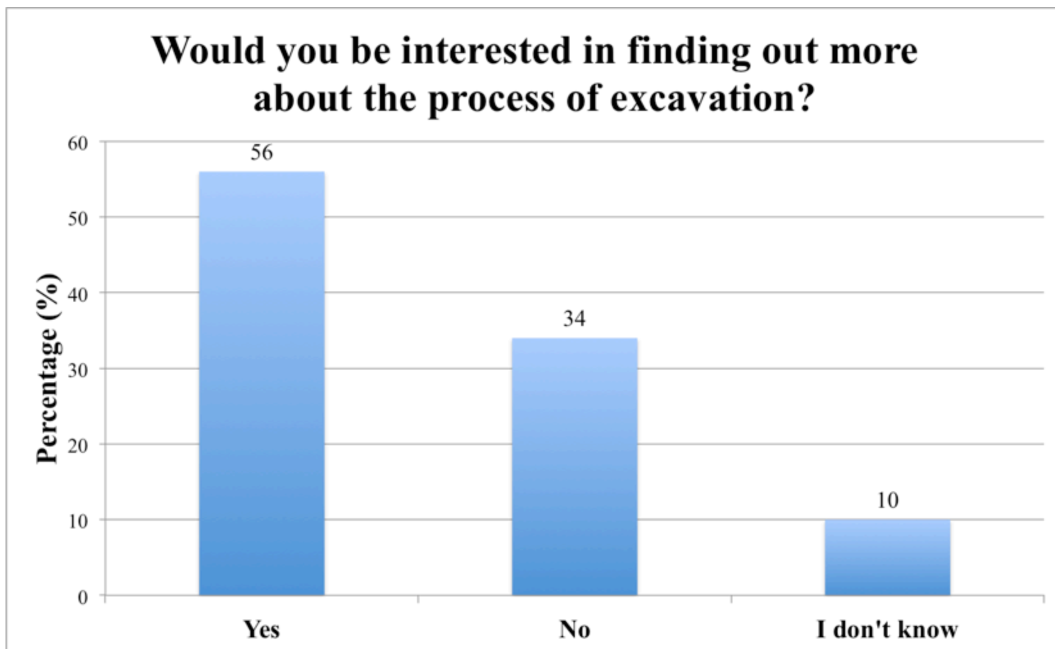

Figure 7-30: The respondents' interest in finding out more about the process of excavation at the Jorvik Viking Centre.

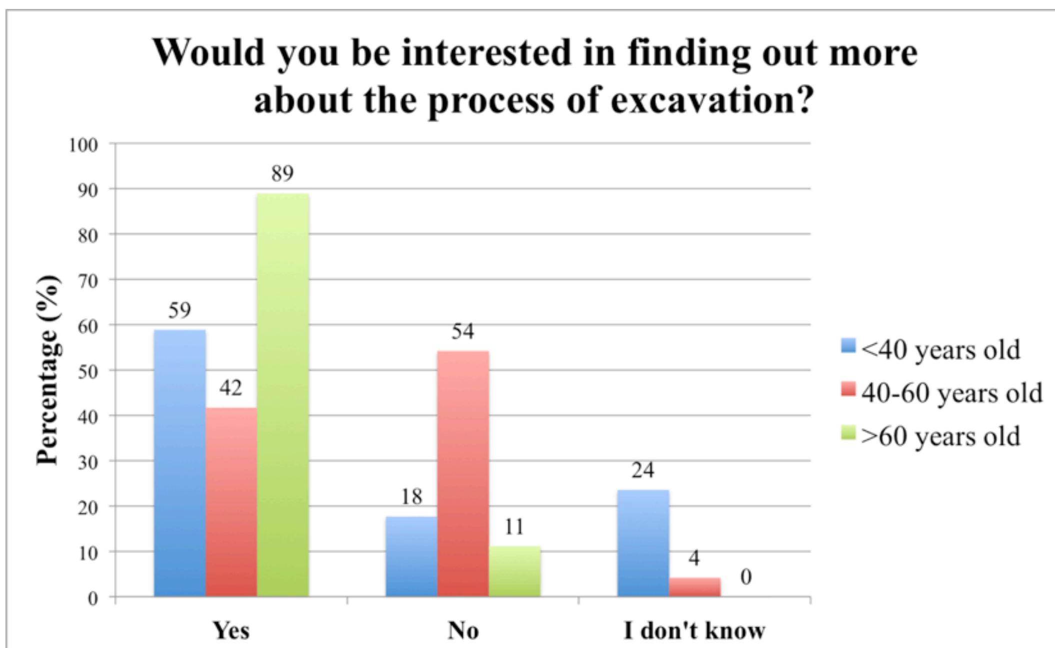

Figure 7-31: The respondents' interest in finding out more about the process of excavation with regard to sex at Jorvik Viking Centre.

Almost every participant (96%) gained new insights into the archaeology and history of York. When asked whether or not they would be interested in finding out more about the past of York most people answered positively (see Figure 7-32).

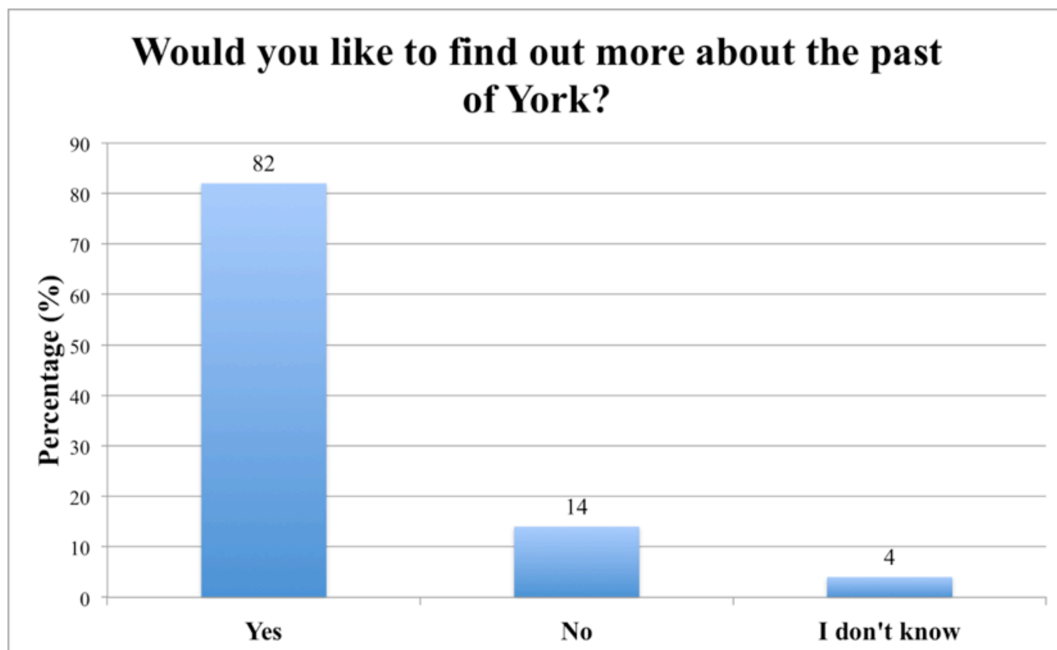

Figure 7-32: The respondents' interest in finding out more about the past of York

The final question asked if the Jorvik Viking Centre met the participants' expectations. Only one person answered negatively.

7.4. Dublinia

At Dublinia, a total of 50 visitors participated in the survey. As before, the participants were selected randomly. The sample included more female participants than male, with 33 women and 17 men participating. The average age of the sample was also lower than at the other locations, as 72% of the participants were younger than 40 years old, 22% between 40 and 60 years old and only 6% were older than 60 years old (see Figure 7-33). These numbers are consistent with the overall impression of the visitor populous, which seems to a large extent to consist of small groups of people in their 20s and 30s, more often than not female.

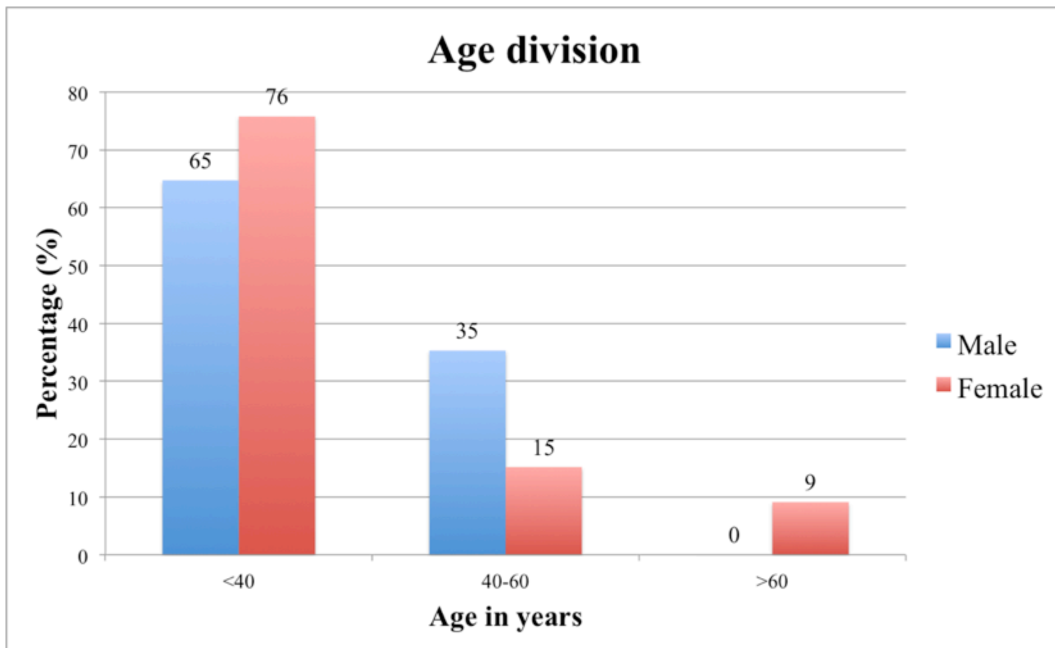

Figure 7-33: Age and sex division of the participants at Dublinia.

Only two participants did not enjoy the information panels as a presentation method. Only one gave a reason. This person felt that the panels were sometimes too "wordy" and the print was too small. What the participants seem to like the most about the information panels was that they offered clear information that was easy to follow. One fifth of the participants also felt that the information panels offered the appropriate amount of information and a similar number liked the design of the panels (see Figure 7-34). Some participants listed the features of the panels that they did not like. Among them were negative comments on the design and that they contained too much text (see Figure 7-35).

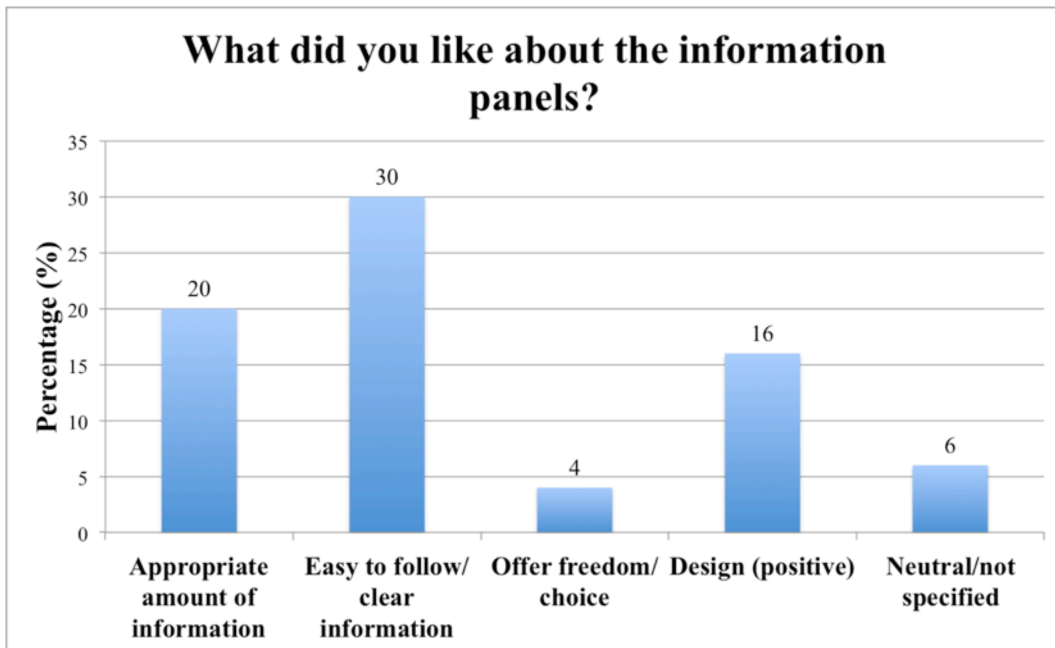

Figure 7-34: Features of the information panels that the participants liked at Dublinia.

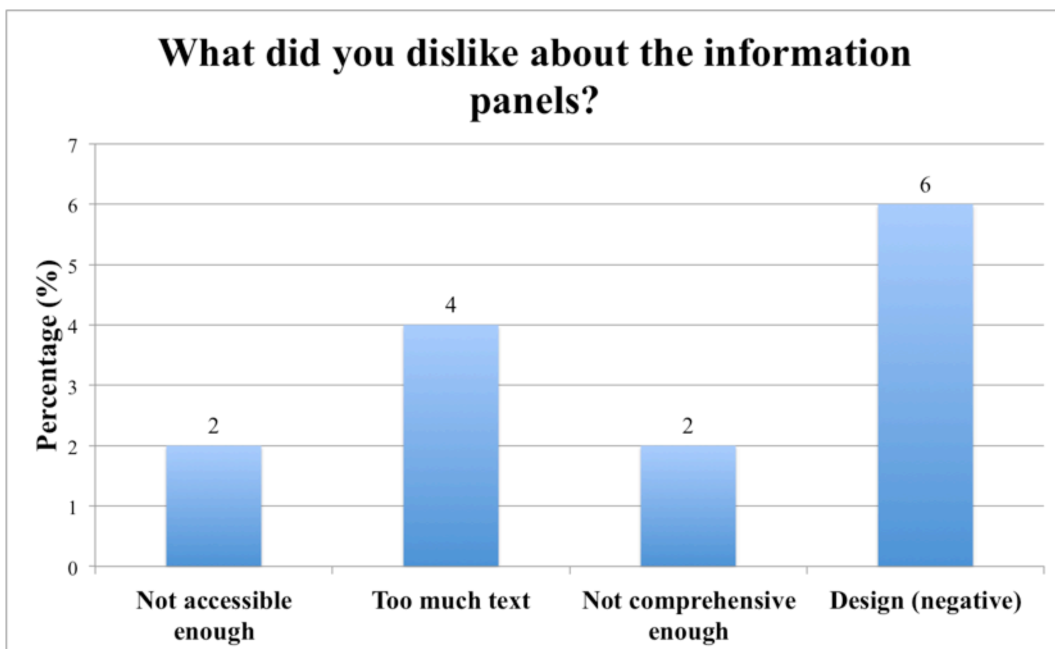

Figure 7-35: Features of the information panels that the participants disliked at Dublinia.

All the participants liked the reconstructions as a presentation method. What they seemed to have liked the most is that they offered clear and accessible information and how realistic they were. One tenth of the respondents liked that many of the displays were touchable or interactive (see Figure 7-36).

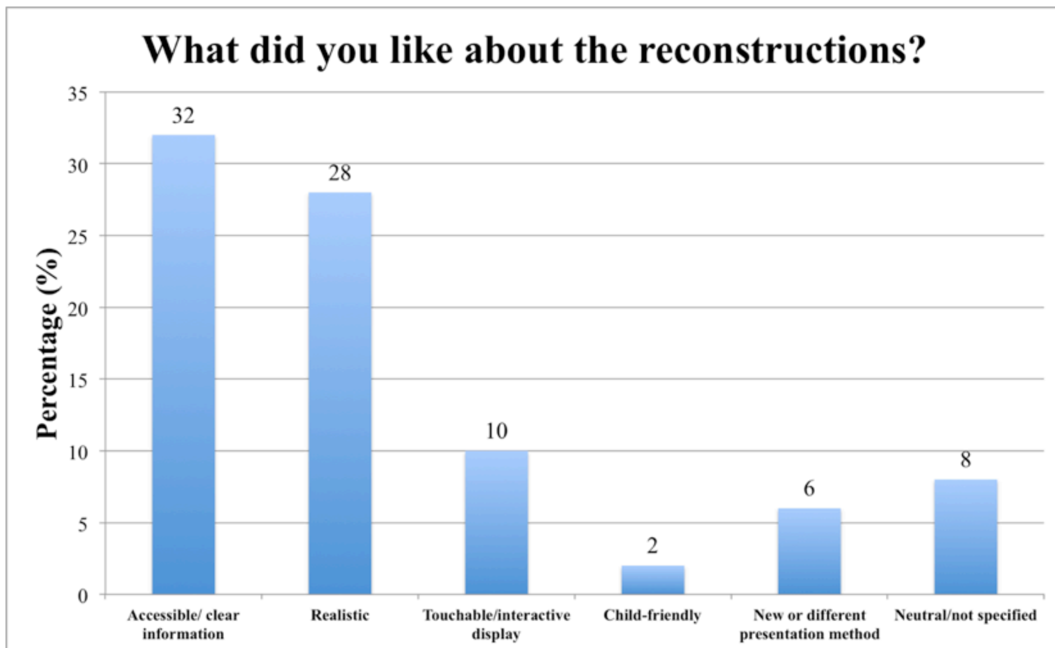

Figure 7-36: Features of the reconstructions that the participants liked at Dublinia.

At Dublinia 60% of the respondents preferred the reconstructions to the information panels. Only 10% preferred the information panels. Almost one third of the participants did not decide for or against the presentation methods (see Figure 7-37). Included are the 24%, who felt that a combination of both methods was preferable. 20% of the respondents preferred the reconstructions because they were more alive and stimulated their imagination. 16% felt that they offered information in a more accessible and clearer way than the panels. Other features the respondents liked are that they were realistic or interactive (10%), fun (4%), contained the appropriate amount of information (2%) and were child-friendly (2%).

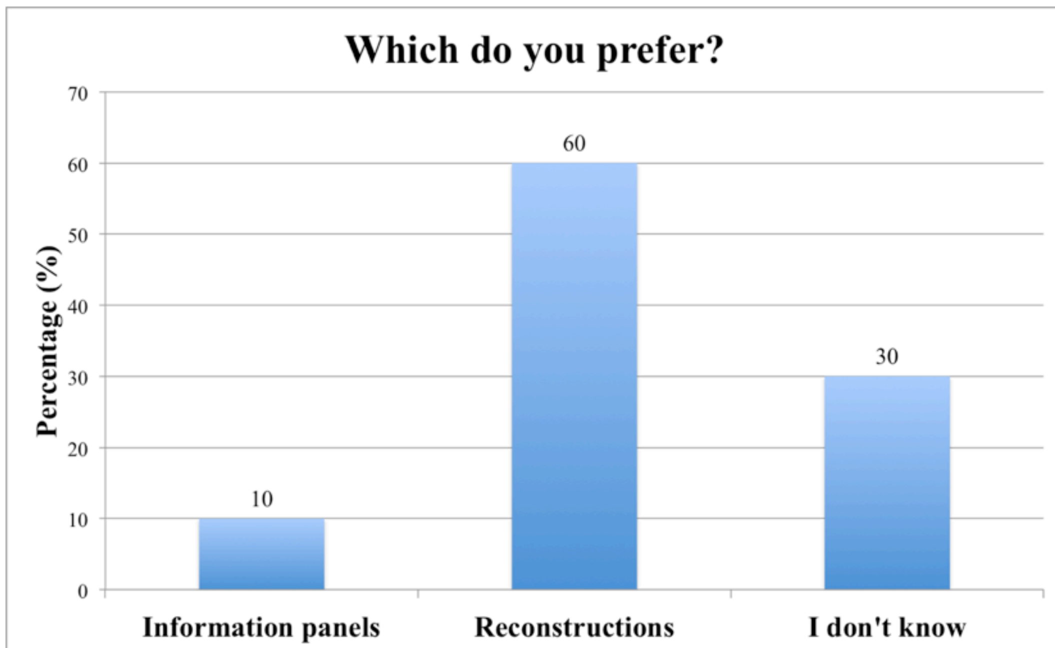

Figure 7-37: The respondents' preference of presentation methods at Dublinia.

When the results were analysed with regard to age groups some difference is evident. Almost an equal number of the youngest and oldest respondents preferred the reconstructions, but noticeably fewer between 40 and 60 years old preferred them. This group, however, was more likely to prefer the information panels than the other groups (see Figure 7-38). There was no significant difference according to sex in the attitude towards the two presentation methods (see Figure 7-39).

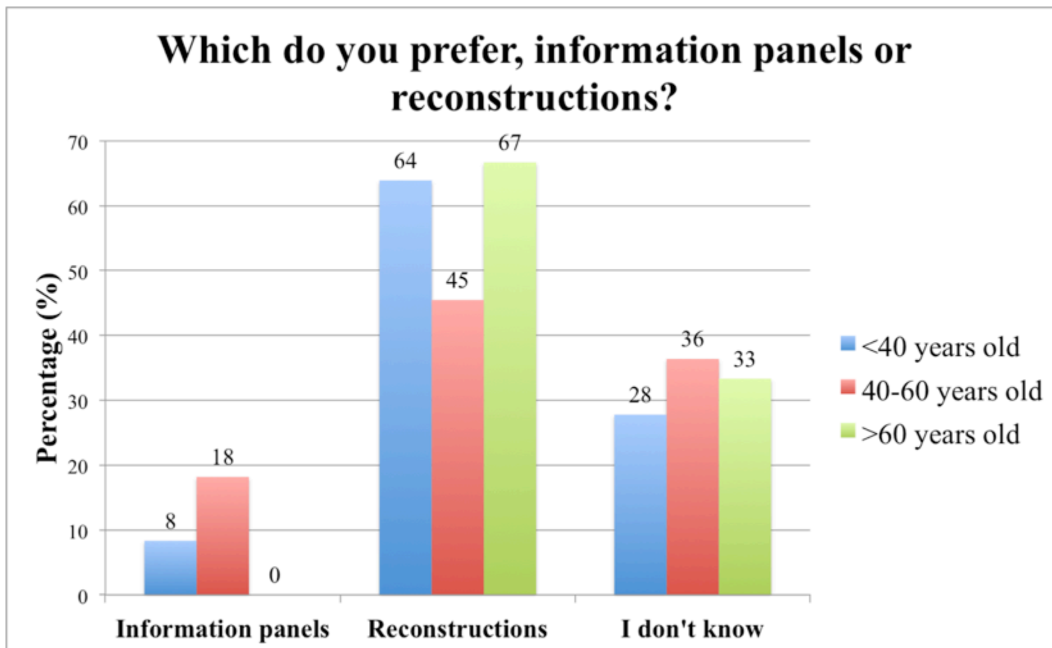

Figure 7-38: The respondents' preference of presentation methods at Dublinia with regard to age groups.

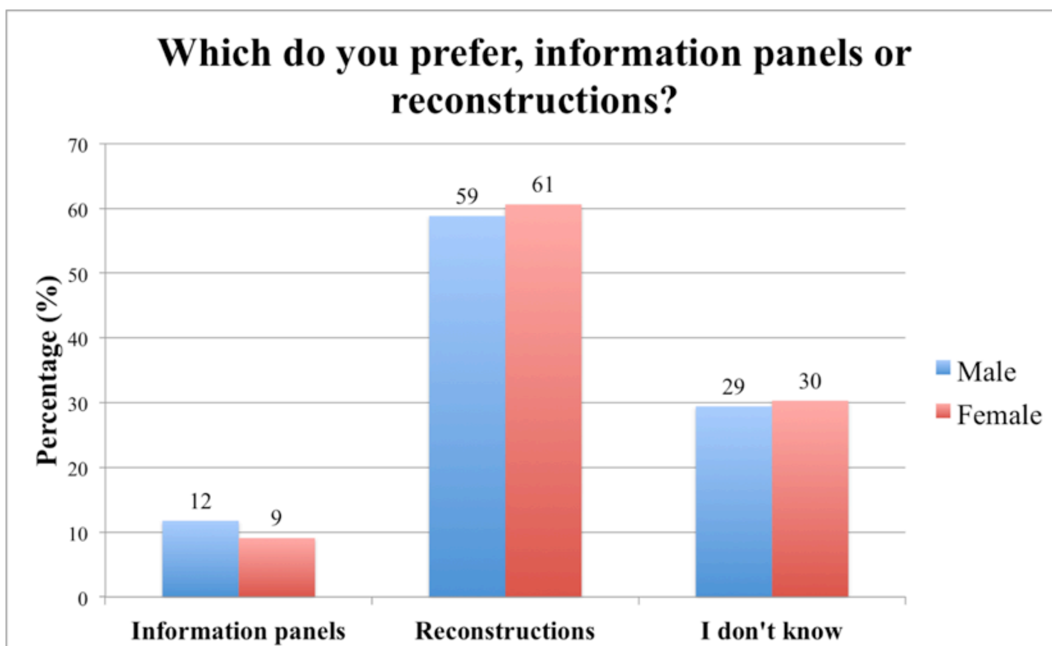

Figure 7-39: The respondents' preference of presentation methods at Dublinia with regard to sex.

All the respondents felt that the value of reconstructions at archaeological museums and parks was very high (24%), high (70%) or were undecided (6%) (see Figure 7-40). When the results were analysed with regard to age groups, it became apparent that the respondents older than 60 years felt they have the highest value. The responses of the two other groups were very similar: the majority felt they have high value (Figure 7-41).

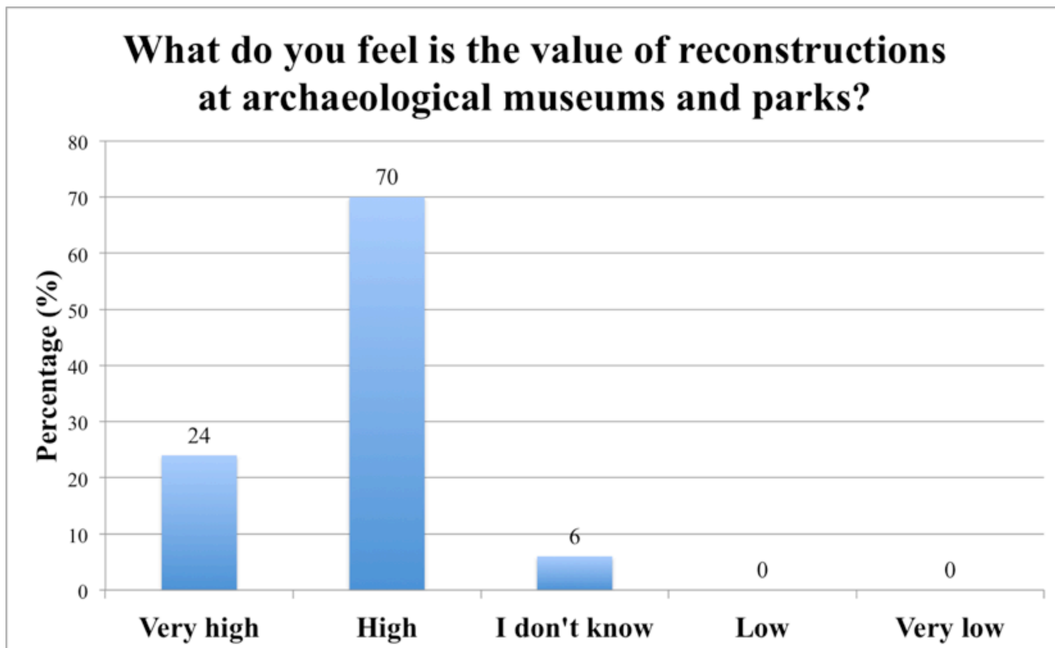

Figure 7-40: The value of reconstructions, according to the respondents at Dublinia.

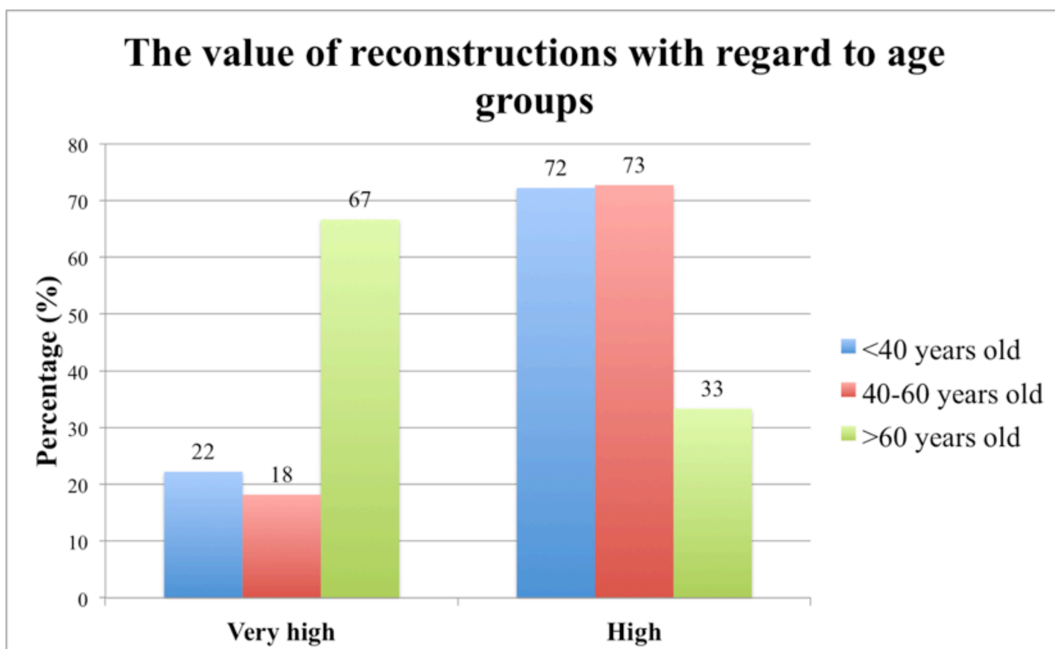

Figure 7-41: The value of reconstructions, according to the respondents at Dublinia with regard to age groups.

Most respondents (70%) felt that the reconstructions presented life in earlier times accurately. 10% believed they presented it very accurately and 12% were undecided. When the data was analysed with regard to sex, it became evident that more women than men felt they represent life very accurately (see Figure 7-42).

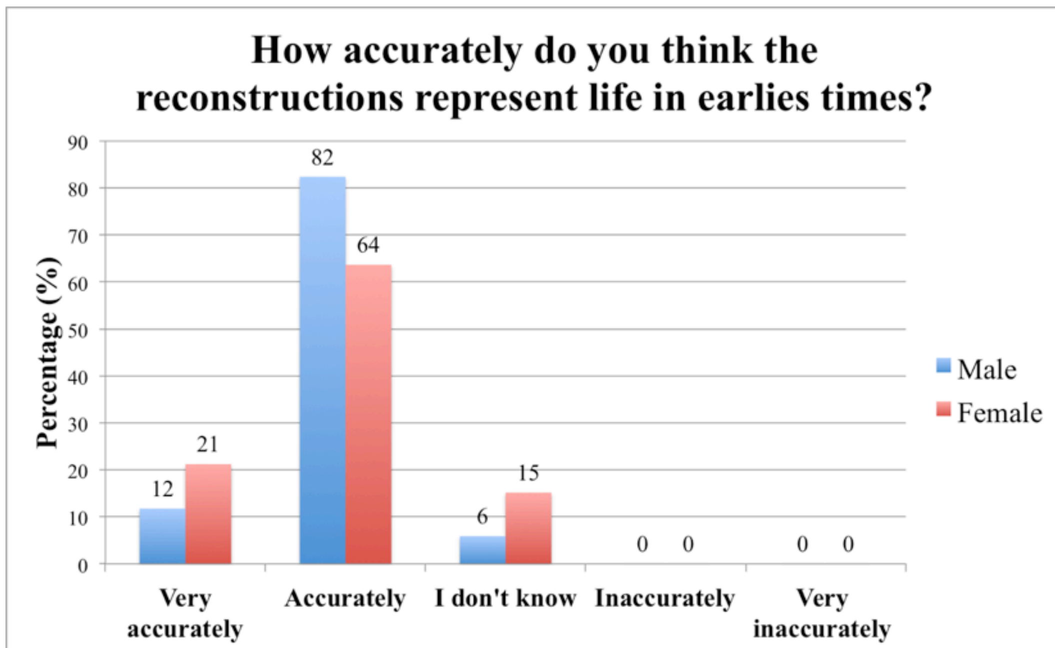

Figure 7-42: The accuracy of reconstructions, according to the respondents at Dublinia, with regard to sex.

Over three quarters of the respondents believed that the reconstructions represent one of many possible stories. Only 12% felt they represent the absolute truth and just as many were undecided (see Figure 7-43).

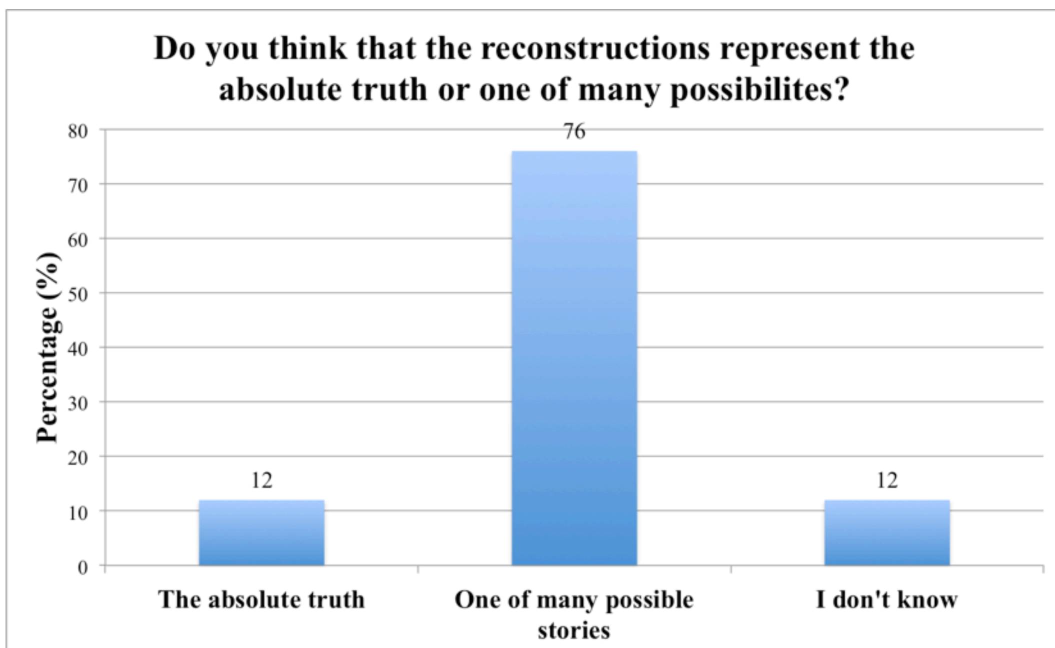

Figure 7-43: The respondents' believe in the absolute truth or one of many possibilities at Dublinia.

Just over 80% of the respondents would like to be presented with multiple viewpoints of a single story. Only 8% would not be interested in multiple viewpoints (see Figure 7-44).

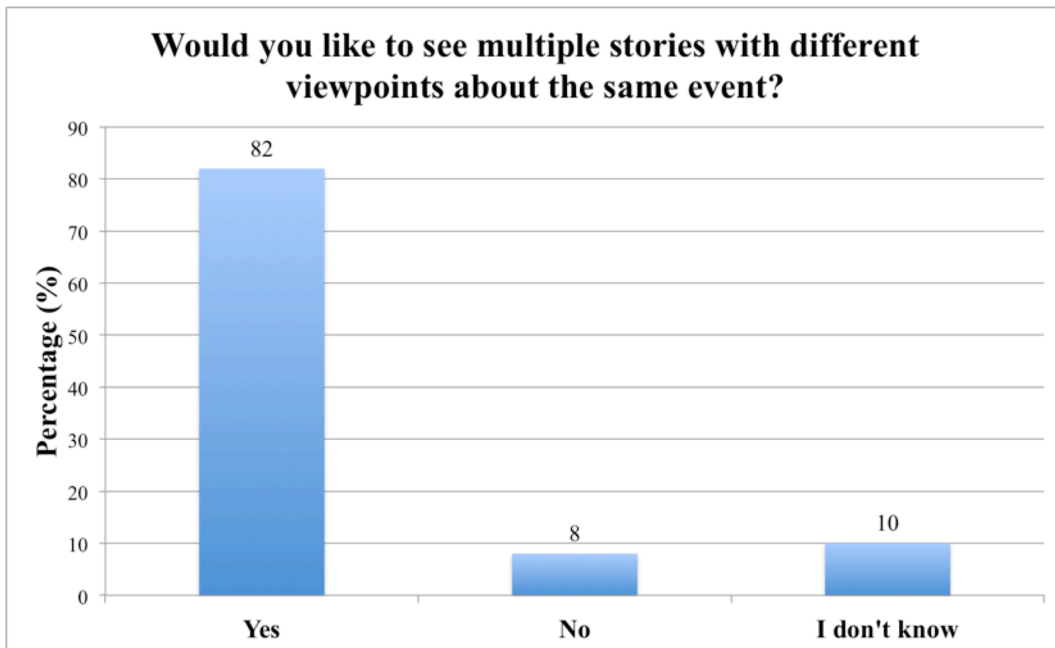

Figure 7-44: The respondents' interest in multiple viewpoints at Dublinia.

The respondents were asked whether they felt that the characters in the displays at Dublinia related in any way to the modern day inhabitants of Dublin. Just over 40% felt that they did, just under half of that believed that they did not and 40% were undecided (see Figure 7-45). It is worth noting that most of the people who answered this question negatively were between 40 and 60 years old (see Figure 7-46). Only 20% gave a reason for their answer. Most of them mentioned heritage as the common feature (14%).

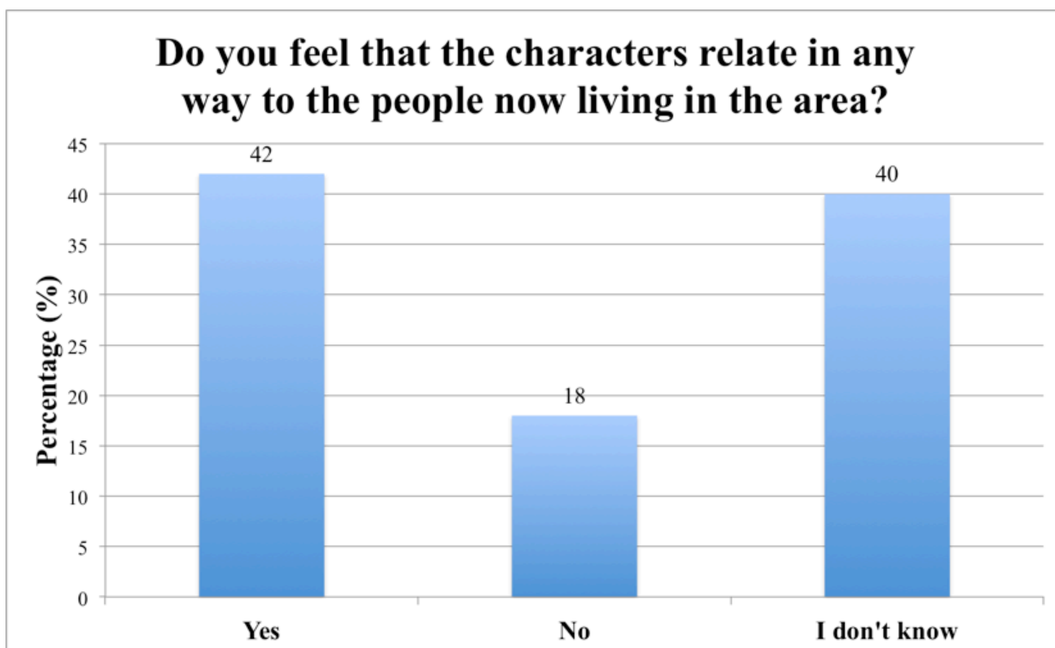

Figure 7-45: The relation between the characters in the displays and the modern day population of Dublin.

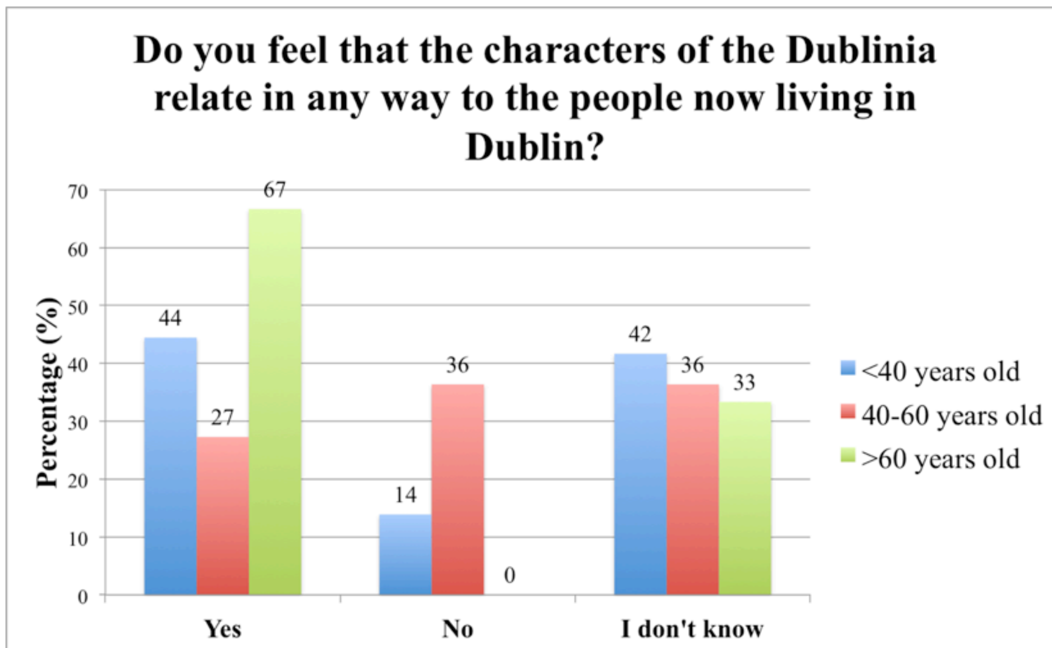

Figure 7-46: The relation between the characters in the displays and the modern day population of Dublin with regard to age groups.

Only 36% of the respondents would be interested in finding out more about the process of excavation. Almost half of them were not interested in finding out more (see Figure 7-47). People belonging to the age group of 60 years or older would all be interested in finding out more. The other two groups gave similar responses as the other (see Figure 7-48).

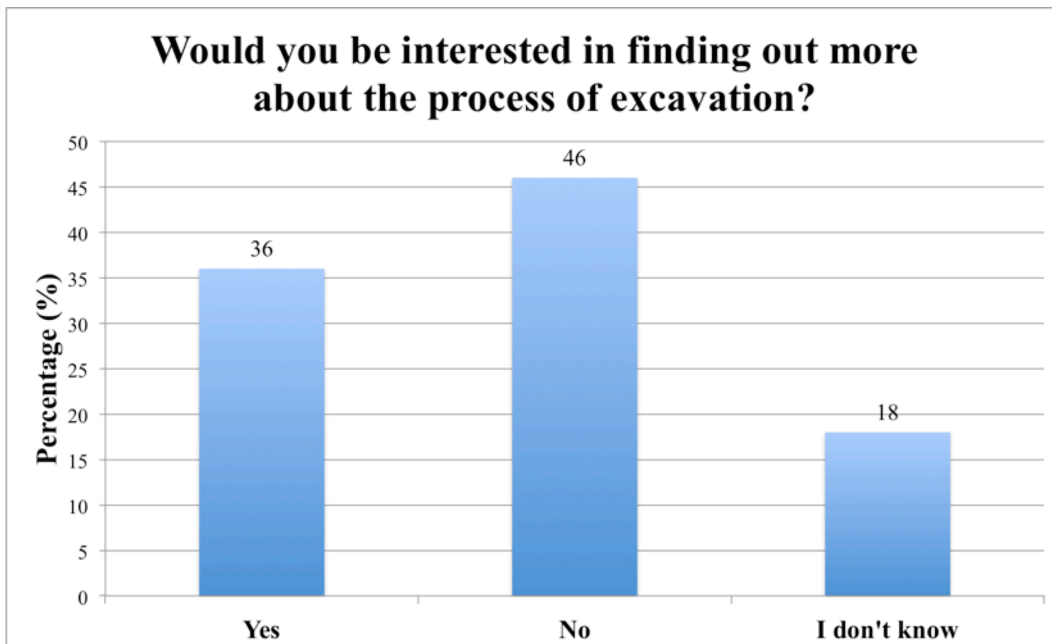

Figure 7-47: The respondents' interest in finding out more about the process of excavation at Dublinia.

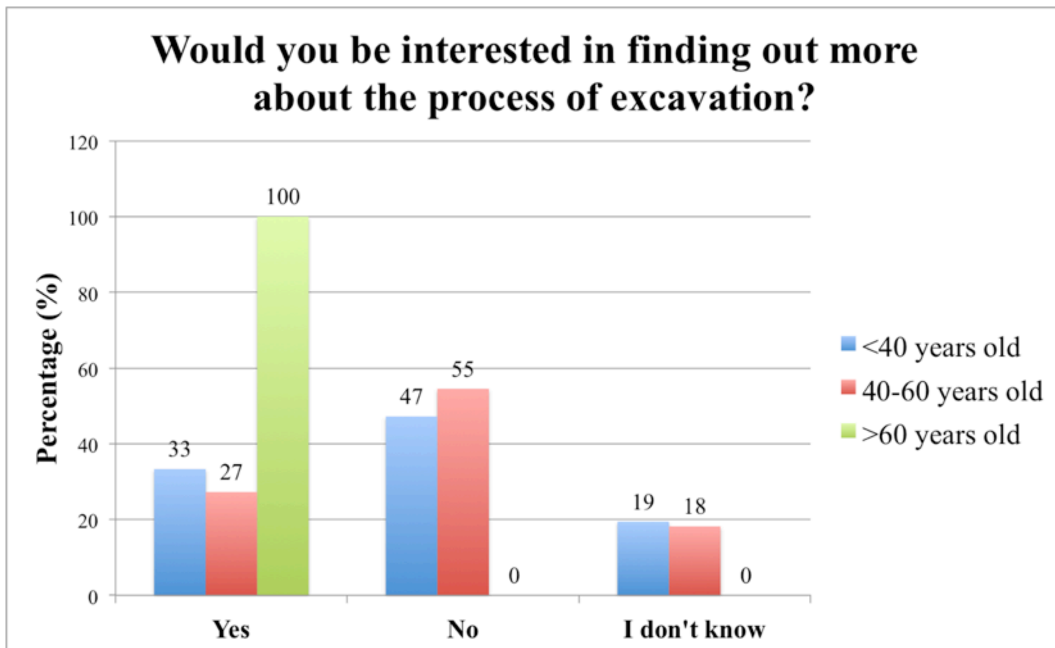

Figure 7-48: The respondents' interest in finding out more about the process of excavation with regard to age groups at Dublinia.

Most of the respondents (88%) would be interested in finding out more about the history and archaeology of Dublin. 12% would not be interested. 70% of the participants would be interested in finding out more about the past of Dublin (see Figure 7-49).

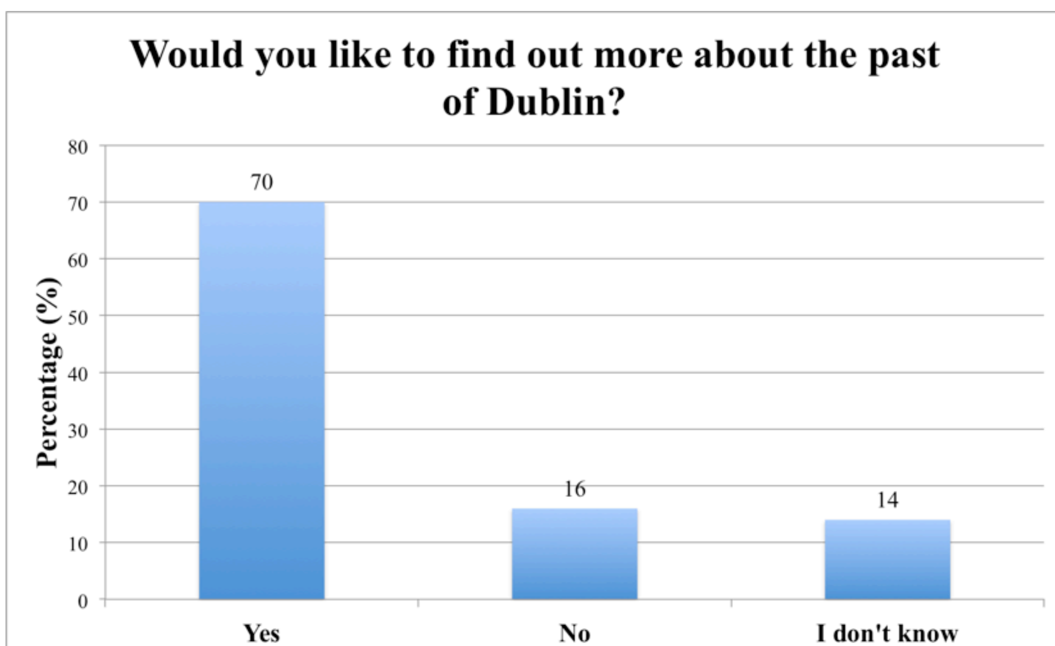

Figure 7-49: The respondents' interest in finding out more about the past of Dublin.

Every respondent at Dublinia, except one, felt that they had had their expectations met by their visit. The one exception was undecided.

7.5. Discussion

Sampling

The participants of the survey were randomly selected from the body of visitors to each museum or centre (see Table 5-1). The age division between the respondents at PAM Ename and Jorvik Viking Centre was very similar, as can be seen in Figure 7-2 and Figure 7-18 above. As the age division was very similar for the two locations, it probably represents the age combination of the parent population fairly accurately. In Dublinia the amount of people in each age group from young to old was descending. As seen in Figure 7-33, the majority belonged to the youngest age group, roughly one fifth were between 40 and 60 years old, and only 6% over 60 years old participated, all of them women. That amounts to three people. Therefore, the results regarding this age group should be interpreted with caution.

Table 7-1: Age distribution at all three locations.

	PAM Ename	**Jorvik Viking Centre**	**Dublinia**
<40 years old	35%	34%	72%
40 - 60 years old	50%	48%	22%
>60 years old	15%	18%	6%

It should also be noted that as the method of distinguishing between age groups was very subjective, some caution regarding the comparison of age groups should be exercised. Another bias that should be taken into account regarding the sampling is the fact that the people who are more likely not to want to participate in a survey will be underrepresented in the sample. It was noted during the survey that these were especially people who are not native English speakers and families with very young children.

The ratio between the sexes was also very similar at PAM Ename and the Jorvik Viking Centre, though slightly more women than men participated at the latter location. However, approximately two thirds of the respondents at Dublinia were women. During the survey, it was noted that the population at Dublinia was largely comprised of groups of people in their 20s and early 30s, the majority

female. This is in accordance with the sample obtained. It seems, therefore, that Dublinia attracts a different audience than the other two locations.

Visitor's preference of presentation methods

It did not come as a surprise that most people enjoyed the presentations both in the form of information panels and through a more character-based approach, i.e. videos or reconstructions. However, when asked to choose between the two, most people preferred the narrative approach to the more traditional presentation. These results concur with the general conclusions drawn from the surveys mentioned in chapter 2.3. They indicate that the visitors to heritage sites most enjoy, amongst other things, models and partial reconstructions of ruined sites, re-enactments, costumes and video presentations.

The highest proportion of the respondents chose narrative presentation over the information panels at the Jorvik Viking Centre (82%). The ratio was lower at Dublinia (60%) and PAM Ename (50%). The Jorvik Viking Centre also had the lowest rate of undecided people (8%), but Dublinia the highest (30%) (see Table 7-2).

Table 7-2: Visitors' preference of presentation methods.

	PAM Ename	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Information panels	28%	10%	10%
Stories/reconstructions	50%	82%	60%
I don't know	18%	8%	30%
Not answered	4%	-	-

It is difficult to ascertain the reasons behind the difference. It might originate in the fact that the reconstructions are the main attraction of the Jorvik Viking Centre. Therefore, most visitors know about them beforehand or even come especially to experience them. Another possible explanation might be that the presentation during the ride at Jorvik Viking Centre is more effortless to the visitors than the videos at PAM Ename. However, the ride does not offer any choice to the visitors. On the other hand, the videos at the *Feast of a Thousand Years* require the visitors to choose which videos to watch and which not to

watch. As some of the respondents at PAM Ename and Jorvik Viking Centre commented that they liked to have a choice, this seems at odds with the popularity of the reconstructions.

Visitor's preference with regard to age

At all the exhibitions, the group that was most keen on the narrative approach was the youngest one, except at Dublinia where the oldest group topped it by a few percentages. However, as so few participants were 60 years and older at Dublinia, the percentage rate is somewhat exaggerated. These results do not come as a surprise, as younger people are more likely to adopt new and often more technical approaches. The oldest respondents gave very different answers at the three exhibitions. At PAM Ename, most of them preferred the information panels; at the Jorvik Viking Centre, the majority preferred the reconstructions, although this group was still the least keen on the reconstructions at this location. At Dublinia the majority of the oldest participants also preferred the reconstructions.

Visitors' preference: active or passive audience

It is noticeable that, of the people who commented that they liked the freedom and choices a presentation method offered, none was older than 60 years old. This is the same group that is least keen on the *Feast of a Thousand Years at PAM Ename.* These results indicate that the oldest visitors prefer to be passive viewers, rather than having to participate in the exhibition. This is worth considering with regard to Silberman's (2004, 121-123) suggestion that the narrative form must move from a monologue, where the visitor's role is entirely passive, towards a dialogue (see chapter 4.2).

This difference between the age groups might be explained by different educational practices. When the oldest participants went to school, pupils were expected to passively absorb knowledge. This both applied in the classrooms as well as during museum visits. More modern teaching practices, however, focus more on active participation. The difference between the responses of the age groups might therefore originate in different habits of learning.

The fact that most of the respondents enjoyed the narrative interpretation methods indicates that the interpretations reached the audience that they were

intended for. Coupled with the fact that almost every visitor had their expectation met by the visit, it seems that the concern of Joyce (2002, 121-122), namely that narrative interpretations rarely reach the intended audience, is groundless.

Information panels, narrative presentation or both?

The original intention of question 3, which asked for the respondents' preference, was to have the respondents choose one (either information panels or the narrative interpretations) and not offer the option of "both" presentation methods. Afterwards, it is apparent that this was not the correct approach, as some visitors ticked two boxes or none at all. Most of these respondents commented that they liked both presentation methods or that they complemented each other. At Dublinia, 24% commented that they enjoyed both methods and 20% at PAM Ename. The ratio was less at the Jorvik Viking Centre, where 12% claimed to enjoy a combination of both.

It is interesting that up to a quarter of the respondents commented that they would like to see a combination of the two methods, even though they were not presented with this option. As the narrative interpretations were presented through "unconventional" presentation methods, this could be related to the claim of Callebaut and Van der Donckt (2004, 96), mentioned in chapter 4.4, that technology should be supplemented by a more classical form of interpretation.

Responses to the open questions

Even though question 1b (1c at PAM Ename), which asked why the respondents liked or disliked the presentation panels, was an open question and offered a free choice of answer, similar themes appeared in the responses at all three locations. The most frequently given answer as to why the respondents liked the information panels was that they contained clear information that was easy to follow. This especially applied at the Jorvik Viking Centre where 56% of the respondents gave this reason (see Table 7-3). Other factors that also seem to be important to keep the visitors interested in an exhibition are appropriate amount of information on the panels and good design.

These replies emphasize the importance of clear and coherent interpretations and suggest that the visitors do not want to be overwhelmed by too much

information. This is in accordance with the promotion of more simple and declarative sentences in interpretations by Deetz (1998, 94), mentioned in chapter 3.3.

Table 7-3: The most frequent responses to question 1b (1c at PAM Ename), asking why the respondents enjoyed the information panels.

	PAM Ename	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Clear information that is easy to follow	15%	56%	30%
Appropriate amount of text	15%	8%	20%
Design	13%	14%	16%

The above-mentioned results also indicate that presentations should be well deliberated and appealing to the eye. It should be noted that the exhibitions at PAM Ename and Jorvik Viking Centre are both very modern in design and use contrast in lighting to guide the visitors through the displays. The information panels at Dublinia are also well designed, though very different from the ones at the Jorvik Viking Centre. Many of them have three font sizes. This gives the visitors the opportunity to easily choose how deeply they want to delve into the specific topic.

The answers to question 2b, which asked what the respondents liked about the narrative presentation, were similar at all three locations, even though it was an open question. The respondents at all the exhibitions mentioned that they enjoyed the narrative interpretations because they offered clear and accessible information and they were considered realistic (see Table 7-4). Other responses varied more, which is not unusual as the narrative interpretations made use of varied presentation techniques. It can be noted, however, that the answers at the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia were quite similar, perhaps because they both make use of reconstructions in their displays.

Table 7-4: The most frequent responses to question 2b asking why the respondents enjoyed the narrative presentations.

	PAM Ename	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Clear and accessible information	18%	12%	32%
Realistic	10%	18%	28%

The fact that visitors at all three exhibitions mentioned that they liked the realistic appearance of the enacted stories and reconstructions indicates that the visitors feel authenticity is important, or at least the appearance of authenticity. As discussed in chapter 3.1, authenticity is a complex term that can carry different meanings. In this case, it refers to the authenticity of the museum interpretation and data interpretation, rather than the material integrity of objects on display.

These results are interesting in relation to the survey discussed by Holtorf and Schadla-Hall (1999, 230). The results from that survey indicate that visitors consider authenticity in museums extremely important and that it is sometimes used as a legitimation for the visit.

On the meaning of the term authenticity, Holtorf and Schadla-Hall (1999, 232) also comment that in relation to ancient art and monuments, authenticity has usually been understood as the material integrity of the object itself. However, this research indicates that the material authenticity of artefacts is not the only aspect of authenticity that is important to the public. The authenticity of the museum and data interpretation also plays an important role.

The fact that many of the respondents mentioned the clarity and accessibility and the appropriate amount of text as a reason for them liking a presentation method indicates that the information being presented was to their liking. None of the exhibitions are based on oversimplified presentation, which can be defined as "work of popular culture", as Silberman (2008, 138) terms it (see chapter 3.3). To the contrary, many of them aim to correct common misconceptions the public has about the past, for instance that Viking helmets were adorned with horns. It should also be noted that at the Jorvik Viking Centre a rather complex analysis method on skeletal material is explained in detail to the visitors. Even though this part of the exhibition is quite detailed, the visitors did

not seem to like it less than other parts of the exhibition. In fact, one respondent commented that he liked this part in particular.

These results indicate that McCarty (2008, 540) and Praetzellis (1998, 2) are correct in assuming that the public is cleverer and more willing to learn than they are generally given credit for and that there is no reason for "dumbing down" archaeological interpretations for their benefit. On the contrary, they should rather be challenged by specialized knowledge.

However, the presentation method matters. Even though the content that is being presented is complex, it does not need to be presented in a complex way. The same goes for simple facts: they can be presented in either a complex or a simple and more accessible way. The observations of Hodder (1989, 273), Cooper (2008) and Joyce (2002, 1) on the use of language (see chapter 4.2) are therefore a highly relevant issue when it comes to making successful narrative interpretations.

It seems to me that they key to a good interpretation is accessibility and the appropriate amount of text, or at least the chance to choose how deeply one delves into the subject. Archaeologists working with heritage presentation should keep this in mind and not be afraid to make use of tools from other disciplines to make the interpretations as clear and accessible as possible.

Value

When the results on the value of stories or reconstructions at archaeological exhibitions were examined with regard to age groups, a striking difference was apparent. At PAM Ename, the respondents belonging to the youngest age group most commonly felt that the value was "very high", as opposed to "high". This fits well with the results from the previous question, which asked for the respondents' preference, as the youngest respondents were most keen on the narrative interpretations. At Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia, however, the pattern was the opposite. The respondents who felt that the reconstructions have a "very high" value mostly belong to the oldest group of people. Visitors in the age range of 40-60 years old, on the other hand, responded very similarly at all locations, though at Dublinia the rate of undecided was higher.

Table 7-5: The value of stories at archaeological museums and parks.

	PAM Ename[12]	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Very high	38%	42%	24%
High	53%	58%	70%
I don't know	10%	-	6%

The results indicate that the respondents have a positive attitude towards interpretative narratives offered through reconstructions or individual stories on videos. The majority of the respondents, however, felt that the narrative interpretations were of "high" rather than "very high" value (see Table 7-5). This suggests, together with the results from question 3, which asked for the respondents' preference, that some combination of both is presumably the most preferable method of presentation at archaeological exhibitions.

Accuracy

At all three exhibitions the majority of the respondents felt that the narrative interpretations represent life "accurately" rather than "very accurately" (see Table 7-6). At PAM Ename more women responded with "accurately" and slightly more men "very accurately". At Dublinia this ratio was, however, the opposite. The difference is not large and might possibly be explained by the lower ratio of men participating in the survey at Dublinia. Thus, relatively small variations in the statistics can be overrepresented when measured in percentages.

Table 7-6: The accuracy of the stories and reconstructions.

	PAM Ename[13]	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Very accurately	25%	20%	24%
Accurately	53%	64%	70%
I don't know	20%	16%	6%
Inaccurately	3%	-	-

[12] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.
[13] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.

The fact that only one visitor at PAM Ename felt that the narrative interpretations represent life in earlier times inaccurately is in accordance with the claim of Addyman (1990, 257) and Swain (2007, 214) that visitors to museums expect to be presented with the objective evidence of the past (see chapter 3.1).

The next question on the questionnaire also relates to the "truth" of the interpretations. Most respondents felt that they were being provided with one of many possible stories about the past (see Table 7-7). No apparent difference between the answers of the sexes could be distinguished. The answers to questions 5 and 6, which related to the accuracy and the truth of the narrative interpretations, indicate that many of the visitors are aware of the limitations of archaeological evidence and interpretations. This is interesting with regard to the former question, as it indicates that the visitors expect to be presented with accurate information, even though they realize that the evidence has limitations.

Table 7-7: Responses regarding the truth of the stories presented by the videos or reconstructions.

	PAM Ename	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
The absolute truth	25%	10%	12%
One of many possible stories	70%	86%	76%
I don't know	5%	4%	12%

Given these results, it can be assumed that the public is aware, at least to a certain degree, of the issue of authenticity. However, they seem to put their faith in the museum to present them with correct information. The integrity of the museum seems to be high in the public's opinion, as Swain (2007, 214) and Addyman (1990, 257) suggest. Trust is put on the objectivity of the scientists and in what they believe is the empirical truth, as McCarthy (2008, 541-542) implies, even though the public seems to be aware that there is perhaps an alternative story available.

Multiple viewpoints

There was a clear variation in the attitude towards stories with multiple viewpoints of an event. At PAM Ename, only about half of the respondents would be interested in such a presentation. In contrast, 82% of the respondents at both the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia would like to see multiple viewpoints (see Table 7-8). McManamon (2007, 123-125) suggests that the key to a good interpretation is to recognize different viewpoints and take them all into account, as mentioned in chapter 3.4. Only presenting one side of a story could be seen as one way of "oversimplifying" the interpretation, depriving the visitors of the full information. It seems that the majority of the respondents feel the same and would be interested in having such presentations.

Table 7-8: The respondents' interest in seeing multiple viewpoints of a single event.

	PAM Ename[14]	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Interested	53%	82%	82%
Not interested	38%	12%	8%
I don't know	10%	6%	10%

There is no apparent explanation for the low interest in multiple viewpoints of stories at PAM Ename. It might be that the stories at the *Feast of a Thousand Years* are quite long as taken together the videos amount to over two hours in length. Therefore, one could imagine that perhaps it feels overwhelming to the visitors and makes them reluctant to either spend more time there or to be offered too much choice. Another possibility could be that social desirability (see chapter 5.2.9) increases the positive answers at the other exhibitions, but it does not explain why this would not affect the results at PAM Ename as well.

Identity

The answers to question 8, which was on the presumed relation between the historical population of the areas and the modern day population, were very varied. At PAM Ename and Dublinia, roughly 40% answered positively and 20%

[14] Due to rounding of numbers the total percentage is more than 100.

negatively. At Jorvik Viking Centre, however, more people answered negatively (46%) and only 32% positively. At all locations many people were undecided (see Table 7-9).

Table 7-9: The ratio of respondents who felt that the characters of the narratives relate to the modern day population.

	PAM Ename	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Relation	43%	32%	42%
No relation	20%	46%	18%
I don't know	38%	22%	40%

What Silberman (2004, 124) has termed *communal autobiographies* (discussed in chapter 3.2) was not detected in any of the exhibitions. The results from the survey indicate the same, as only relatively few respondents felt that there was a relation between the characters in the displays and the modern day population. However, the results confirm the impression that the inhabitants of York do not see the Vikings as their ancestors. The Vikings are rather regarded as temporary inhabitants of the area who were later driven away. The exhibitions at PAM Ename and Dublinia, on the other hand, emphasize the development of the settlements through the ages.

Respondents belonging to the youngest age group most frequently felt there was a relation between the modern day population and the characters in the narratives. This applied to all the exhibitions, except at Dublinia, where the oldest respondents topped them by just over 20%. However, as these numbers are only based on very few people, the results should be interpreted with caution. It should also be noted that the difference between the age groups is less at the Jorvik Viking Centre than at the other locations. It came as a surprise that the youngest people seem to have the strongest relation with the historical characters. It was anticipated that the older generations would relate more strongly to the people of the past.

Table 7-10: The most common answers when the respondents were asked how the historical characters related with the modern day population of the area.

	PAM Ename	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Similar problems and themes in life	10%	12%	2%
Heritage/ancestry	-	6%	14%

Most of the respondents who gave a positive answer to this question felt that the ancient characters had similar problems and themes in their lives as people do today. The responses from Dublinia, however, stand out a bit. The respondents there most frequently named ancestry or heritage as the common factor (see Table 7-10). It must be noted, however, that the answer rate for the open question, which asked the respondents to explain their answer further, was very low, with an average of 23%. The fact that many of the respondents mentioned similar themes and problems in life was not unexpected, as these aspects of life are consciously used, very subtly though, in all the exhibitions. The reason for this is probably to engage the public with the past by emphasising similarities.

This represents a move towards a new approach that is in accordance with Högberg's theories (2007, 29 and 42) discussed in chapter 3.6. He emphasises that archaeology cannot be separated from the audience and that presentation methods should aim to tell "stories about the present referring to the past". As some of the respondents seem to have related to the characters of the past through these references, this method seems to work, at least to some degree.

Finding out more

A comparable proportion of visitors were interested in finding out more about the process of excavation at both PAM Ename and Jorvik Viking Centre, i.e. 60% of the respondents. Only 36%, however, gave the same answer at Dublinia. The age division is quite different between the respondents at the three locations. The visitors between 40 and 60 years old to the PAM Ename were most likely to be interested in learning more about the process of excavation and the oldest visitors least likely. At Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia this ratio was the opposite. The most obvious reason would be that the display regarding the process of excavation

at PAM Ename appeals to a different age group than the corresponding displays at Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia.

At the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia considerably fewer respondents were interested in finding out more about the process of excavation than they were about the past of the area. However, at PAM Ename, more people were interested in the process of excavation than they were in the past of the area (see Table 7-11). These results may be interpreted in different ways. Either the promotion of the archaeological process leads to more interest in the subject, or the visitors feel that they have learned enough about the subject after the visit. It should be noted that at the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia, the displays on the process of excavation were more elaborate and took up a larger part than they did at PAM Ename. This indicates that the latter explanation could be correct.

It is also interesting to consider Silberman's (2004, 121) theory of the *archaeological tale of adventure*, discussed in chapter 3.5, in relation to these results. He suggests that the emergence of the archaeologist as a leading character is a negative development, one that is not suitable to interest the public.

At the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia, an average of 90% of the respondents indicated that they had gained new insights into the history and archaeology of the area. Between 70% (Dublinia) and 82% (Jorvik Viking Centre) were interested in finding out more. The responses at PAM Ename were, however, quite different. 60% of the participants indicated that they had gained new insights into the history and archaeology of Ename. Only 38% were interested in finding out more.

The difference could originate either with the audience themselves or the exhibitions. The first explanation could be that the visitors to PAM Ename already know more about the local history and archaeology, that they can only learn a few new things and that they are thus less interested in finding out more. The Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia attract more tourists that have come form abroad than the PAM Ename. The visitors to these two locations are thus less likely to be well educated about the local history and archaeology.

Another explanation could be found in the exhibitions themselves. One of the main presentation methods at the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia is reconstruction. At PAM Ename there are reconstructions as well, but they are not as central to the exhibition as they are at the other locations. Instead, video

presentation depicting ancient characters are used to present life in earlier times. The conclusion might therefore be drawn that the information presented through the use of reconstruction increases the interest of the visitors to find out more.

Yet another explanation could be that the reconstructions do not offer detailed information enough. However, the reconstructions and the information they provide increase the interest of the visitors to find out more about the subject of the exhibition. Therefore, the best presentation method would include a combination of reconstructions and more detailed information in some other form.

It should be noted that questions 9 to 11 on the questionnaires discussed above have to do with knowledge or interest in gaining knowledge. Questions of such nature run the risk of being biased by social desirability, as mentioned in chapter 5.2.9. Social desirability means that respondents might want to make a good impression, for instance by pretending to be interested in something they are not.

Successful interpretations

There were several questions in the questionnaires that aim to evaluate whether the narrative interpretations are successful, as defined in chapter 1.2. Question 2 asked the visitors directly if they enjoyed these types of presentation methods and question 3 enquired after their preference. Question 10 asked the visitors if they gained new insights during their visit. Questions 9 and 11 queried if the visitors would like to find out more about either the process of excavation or the past of the area. These questions should shed some light on the interest people have in the subject, as well as whether the desire to learn more is related to the level of interest a person feels. The visitors were also asked if the museum or centre had met their expectations.

Table 7-11: Positive replies to the questions used to evaluate the *success* of the narrative interpretations.

	Response	PAM Ename	Jorvik Viking Centre	Dublinia
Question 2a	Enjoyed the narrative presentation method	83%	100%	96%
Question 3a	Preferred the narrative presentation method	50%	82%	100%
Question 10	Gained new insights into the past of the area	60%	96%	88%
Question 9	Interested in finding out more about the process of excavation	58%	56%	36%
Question 11	Interested in finding out more about the past of the area	38%	82%	70%
Question 12	The museum/centre met expectations	90%	98%	98%
Average		**63%**	**86%**	**81%**

The results (see Table 7-11) indicate that the visitors to the museums and centre enjoyed the narrative interpretations. When the average of the positive answers is compared, the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia, however, score much higher than PAM Ename. The difference is most apparent in questions 3a, 10 and 11. The reason for the difference can be manifold. It could for instance originate with different audiences, or the use of different presentation methods, as discussed above.

However, from the results of the survey it can be concluded that the narrative interpretations are a success, according to the definition provided in chapter 1.2. This especially applies when the presentation method includes reconstructions. The video displays portraying the past characters living in Ename are not as successful, even though they are very well done. One possible explanation is that they do not offer information in a "quick" way as the

reconstructions do. In the modern world, people are used to getting what they need with considerable speed, and they live by the motto “time is money”. However, to gain a full image of life in Ename through the narratives, one would have to watch all the video clips, which would equate to total viewing time of over two hours. This is only a hypothesis, but one that should perhaps be explored further.

8. Conclusions

The aim of this research is to discover the public's attitude towards interpretative narratives and to find out to what extent the problems that the literature suggests are associated with using narrative interpretations affect the visitor's experience. Most of the problems regard the content of the narratives and ethical issues, rather than technical aspects. They are as follows:

- The compromise of authenticity;
- Inclusion of propaganda in the form of *communal autobiographies*;
- Oversimplification of facts;
- Inclusion or exclusion of multiple viewpoints;
- "Adventurous" portrayal of archaeologists;
- The use of narratives told in the present and referring to the past or narratives about the past referring to the present;
- Reaching the audience.

In addition, the research also aims to evaluate whether narrative interpretations can be used successfully and whether visitors prefer them to other, more traditional presentation methods. For the purpose of this research, a presentation is considered *successful* if the visitors enjoyed the interpretation, found it interesting, and learned something from it.

The data was collected through a survey conducted at three archaeological museums or centres: Provincial Archaeological Museum (PAM) Ename in Belgium; Jorvik Viking Centre in York, the United Kingdom; and Dublinia in Dublin, Ireland. The survey was self-administered. That means that the participants filled out the questionnaires themselves. At all the locations the visitors proved willing to participate in the survey.

These three exhibitions were chosen because they include narrative interpretations. However, these exhibitions did not offer the possibility to address all of the above-mentioned problems directly, as they were not all present in the exhibitions. Instead, the respondents were asked in some questions about their opinion in a hypothetical situation or in a more general sense than within the confines of that specific exhibition.

Lack of time and resources affected the research too. The most regrettable limitation it imposed was that it offered no opportunity to test the questionnaire. A pilot survey would have offered the chance of improvement and probably better results. Afterwards, it can be recognised that the most obvious fault of the questionnaire lies within question 3. The goal of the question is to find out which presentation method the respondents prefer: a narrative one or a more traditional information panel. The options for an answer were three: the narrative method (stories/reconstructions), information panels and "I don't know". Some respondents ticked either two boxes or none at all, and commented in the b. section of the question that a combination of both was the most preferable option. Still more respondents chose only one of the options provided, but also commented that they preferred a combination of both methods. Therefore, a fourth response option, "both", should have been added to the questionnaire. If this had been done, the results would probably have been different.

Another result of the time and resource restriction was that it was not possible to get a statistically representative sample for the survey. For a continuous analysis, between 117 and 118 participants would have been needed, and for a categorical analysis, for example by age groups and sex, between 374 and 384 participants would have been needed. Instead, 50 people participated at the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia. However, at PAM Ename, time and resources only allowed for 40 participants. These low participation rates especially affect the categorical analysis, as in some groups only a few individuals are present. This is the case for participants older than 60 years old at Dublinia, as only three participants fall into that category. Therefore, comparison between age groups may be misleading.

The data was analysed with a method called coding. This was performed for the responses from each location within a Microsoft Excel workbook. This method made the analysis of the closed questions very quick. However, analysing the open questions was more time-consuming. The coding method required the responses to be categorized before they could be analysed, which is quite a subjective process. Excel has the advantage that once the first workbook had been built and formulated, it could, with only minimal adjustments, be copied to use for the other locations as well. Once the data was in, graphs were easy to plot from the database.

The results of the survey will be discussed below with regard to the research questions. First the above-mentioned problems will be addressed in relation to the results. Secondly, it will be evaluated whether interpretative narratives can be used successfully and which presentation visitors prefer.

The compromise of authenticity

The results from the survey indicate that the public's faith in the authenticity of the archaeological exhibitions is quite high. This is deduced from the fact that almost all respondents felt that the narrative interpretations represent ancient life either "accurately" or "very accurately". Many also mentioned that they liked how realistic the narrative presentations were.

It seems that Swain (2007, 214) and Addyman (1990, 257) are correct in suggesting that the public expects to be presented with correct information when entering a museum. However, the results from the survey indicate that the expectations of the visitors do not only relate to the material integrity of the objects on display, but also to the authenticity of the museum and data interpretations.

Even so, the results also revealed that the public is, to an extent, aware of the limitations of archaeological evidence, as the majority of the respondents believed they were presented with one of many possible stories and that the narrative interpretations presented life in earlier times "accurately" rather than "very accurately".

However, I feel that to maintain the faith of the public in the authenticity of archaeological exhibitions, it is necessary to draw a line between what Merriman (2000a, 8) describes as institutions "whose prime aim is to make money and whose secondary aim, if it exists at all, is to provide educational experience" (see chapter 3.3). This could be achieved by inclusion of the ambiguity of the archaeological evidence in archaeological exhibitions, as was, for instance, was done at the Alexander Keiller Museum in Avebury, Wiltshire, where a life-size figure of a Neolithic man was created and dressed in two different sets of clothes (discussed in chapter 3.1). Such presentation can motivate the public to consciously contemplate the authenticity of exhibitions they attend and appreciate the data the exhibition is based on.

Inclusion of propaganda in the form of communal autobiographies

A question about the relation between the characters of the narrative interpretations and the modern day inhabitants of the area was included in the questionnaires. The question's purpose was to evaluate the visitor's attitude toward the identity of the characters of the narratives and to shed light on the possible affects of *communal autobiographies*.

Even though *communal autobiographies* were not detected at the exhibitions used as case studies, this question yielded interesting results. A relatively low rate of the respondents felt that the modern day people related in any way to the past inhabitants of the area. These results support the conclusion that *communal autobiographies* were not present in the exhibitions.

However, the rate of positive answers was noticeably lower at the Jorvik Viking Centre than at the other two locations. This response rate is reflected in the approach of the exhibitions: at the Jorvik Viking Centre the Viking Age is represented as an isolated or detached part of the history of York, but at PAM Ename and Dublinia, the exhibitions aim to present the development and growth of the settlement throughout the ages.

It also came as a surprise that the youngest respondents seem to have the strongest relation to the historical characters. It was anticipated that the older generations would relate more strongly to the people of the past. The reason for this difference is not apparent, but the responses could perhaps be influenced by different approaches and the different history education the various age groups received at school.

Oversimplification of facts

None of the exhibitions in the case studies have oversimplified presentations, which can be defined as what Silberman (2008, 138) terms "work of popular culture". On the contrary, they strive to correct common misconceptions the public has about the past. Many of the displays also include very technical and detailed explanation about complex methods of analysis used for archaeological research. The case studies did not therefore offer an opportunity to address this supposed problem of the narrative interpretation properly.

As mentioned in chapter 3.3, McCarty (2008, 540) and Praetzellis (1998, 2) believe that there is no reason to "dumb down" archaeological interpretations intended for the public. On the contrary, the public is cleverer and more willing to learn than they are generally given credit for. The results from the survey give momentum to their claim. Many of the respondents mentioned that they liked that the presentations were clear and accessible and contained an appropriate amount of text. These responses indicate a desire for a learning experience during the visit to the exhibitions.

It seems to me that what really matters is the way in which the information is presented. The emphasis should therefore be on making the information accessible to the public. The results from the survey support this opinion, as the visitors to exhibitions find accessibility one of the most attractive features of a display.

Inclusion or exclusion of multiple viewpoints

Not all scholars agree that multiple viewpoints are a desirable feature in an archaeological interpretation. As discussed in chapter 3.4, Hodder (1991, 15) and McManamon (2007, 123-125) feel that a good interpretation should include multiple viewpoints. However, it has been pointed out that there are challenges involved. It can be difficult to distinguish between theories and firmly grounded facts and the false appearance of multivocality (Silberman 2008, 141; McManamon 2007, 123-125).

When asked hypothetically if they would like to be presented with multiple viewpoints of a story, the majority of the respondents indicated that they were interested. However, there was a dramatic difference in the responses at PAM Ename from the other two locations. Only half of the respondents were interested in multiple viewpoints at Ename, as opposed to 82% at the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia. The explanation for this difference is not apparent. One might, however, imagine that as the *Feast of a Thousand Years* at PAM Ename already offers the visitors more narratives than can be viewed during one visit and multiple choices regarding this display, they might be reluctant to commit to spending more time there or being offered even more options.

"Adventurous" portrayal of archaeologists

Silberman (2004, 121) is of the opinion that the *archaeological tale of adventure* should be avoided. By *archaeological tale of adventure* he means the portrayal of the archaeologist as the leading character of a narrative. Only about half of the respondents (on average) were interested in finding out more about the process of excavation.

These results can be interpreted in two ways: either the promotion of the archaeological process leads to more interest in the subject, or the visitors feel that they have learned enough about the subject after the visit. As the interest in the process of excavation appears to be less than in other parts of the exhibitions, it seems that Silberman's theory is a cause for reconsideration of how much of archaeological exhibitions should be dedicated to this part and whether the archaeologist is a suitable main character for interpretative narratives.

The use of narratives told in the present and referring to the past or narratives about the past referring to the present.

The exhibitions all include aspects of daily life in their interpretations that are also relevant to modern day life. Those aspects feature, for instance, a quarrel about dinner or using the bathroom. It could be assumed that these references to daily life are an attempt to bring the past closer to the present. It represents a shift towards what Högberg (2007, 29 and 42) terms "stories about the present referring to the past". The results from the survey indicate that some of the respondents appreciate this aspect, as they mention similar themes and problems in life as the reason why they relate to the characters in the interpretations.

Reaching the audience

Joyce (2002, 121-122) has expressed concerns that narrative interpretation rarely reach the intended audience. However, the fact that most of the respondents enjoyed the narrative interpretations indicates that the interpretations reach the audience they are intended for. In addition, almost every visitor had their expectation met by their visit. It would seem, therefore, that the concerns of Joyce are groundless.

Can interpretative narratives be used successfully?

There were several questions on the questionnaires that contributed to the evaluation of whether narrative interpretations are successful or not. The average ratio of positive responses to these questions indicates that the narrative interpretations used in the case studies are indeed successful.

However, it is noticeable that the positive response rate at PAM Ename was considerably lower for some questions, especially those regarding the learning experience of the respondents and interest in finding out more (see Table 7-11). The reason for this is not clear, but it could originate within the exhibition itself or the audience. The survey took place in geographically and culturally different areas, a difference which could result in a varying emphasis on local history and knowledge of same. The location of PAM Ename also means that it attracts fewer tourists, who normally are less knowledgeable about the area than locals, than the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia do.

Another explanation might involve the presentation methods. Both the Jorvik Viking Centre and Dublinia rely largely on reconstructions. However, the PAM Ename centres on the *Feast of a Thousand Years*, which admittedly also contains reconstructions, but focuses mostly on video presentations. Another possibility regarding the presentation method is that the reconstructions offer information more quickly than the video presentations. The world moves ever faster and it could be imagined that the same demand might be put on museums as well, i.e. that they provide displays that provide information in a quick and accessible way. The conclusion might be drawn that the information presented through the use of reconstruction increases the interest of the visitors to find out more. However, this aspect requires more research in order to confirm this theory and establish which aspects of this presentation method increase the interest of the visitors.

Do visitors prefer interpretative narratives to other form of presentations?

Most of the respondents enjoyed both methods of presentation: information panels and the reconstructions or video presentations. When asked to choose either one, the majority chose the narrative approach. As with the questions that evaluated the

success of the narrative interpretations, very few respondents at Pam Ename preferred the narrative presentations.

As mentioned above, up to a quarter of the respondents commented that they preferred a combination of both presentation methods, even though this response option was not presented on the questionnaire. Callebaut and Van der Donckt (2004, 96) claim that technology should be supplemented by more classical forms of interpretation (see chapter 4.4). These responses indicate that the same might apply to the use of narrative interpretations. However, this aspect of interpretative narratives needs to be studied further, concentrating on finding the best combination of methods.

The results also revealed that the youngest respondents seem to be the keenest on the interpretative narratives. This does not come as a surprise as young people are usually more willing to adopt new technology than are other age groups. Many of the respondents also commented that they like the freedom and the choices offered by both the narrative presentations and the information panels. These results support Silberman's (2004, 121-123) suggestion, discussed in chapter 4.2, that the narrative form must move from a monologue, where the visitor's role is entirely passive, towards a dialogue. However, the results from the survey suggest that visitors older than 60 years old prefer passive interpretation methods, rather than displays that require them to participate actively. The narrative form must therefore be suited for the right target group.

Overview

The results indicate that visitors to archaeological exhibitions are confident in the authenticity of the displays, even though they are, to an extent, aware of the limitations of archaeological data. The survey also reveals that narrative interpretations seem to reach the audience well and the majority of the visitors would like to be presented with multiple viewpoints of a story. In general the use of interpretative narratives can be seen as successful. Though most visitors preferred this presentation method, many also suggested that the combination with other methods would be desirable.

On average only half of the respondents were interested in finding out more about the process of excavation. Considerably more respondents were, however,

interested in finding out more about the past of the area. This gives cause to reconsider how much of an archaeological exhibition should be dedicated to the process of excavation and if the archaeologist is suitable as the main character of the narrative.

The survey did not yield any definite results regarding the public's attitude towards the oversimplification of facts, communal autobiographies, and the use of narratives told in the present and referring to the past, or narratives about the past referring to the present.

Future work

The results from the survey lead to several new issues that call for further research. These regard specific elements of the physical presentation, the content of the narrative and the visitors' attitude.

- What is the best combination of narrative and other more "traditional" presentation methods?
- Does the use of life-size reconstructions increase the public's interest? If so, what aspect of the reconstructions are best suited to increase interest?
- Is there a benefit of using the archaeologist as a character in an archaeological narrative interpretation?
- Do young people relate more to characters of narrative interpretations than older people? If yes, then why?
- Do older visitors prefer to have a passive rather than active role in an exhibition?

In my opinion, these research topics will add to the knowledge about the public's attitude towards interpretative narratives, contribute to their improvement and lead to the establishment of narratives as a leading interpretative method.

Abstract

The 1980s saw a change in the way people regarded archaeological interpretations. The realization that the public was not very interested in archaeological findings and the growth of heritage tourism, along with a shift in theoretical perspectives, encouraged the development of new presentation methods.

The use of narrative interpretations was a part of this change. Narrative interpretations are character-based interpretations that have a plot and take place in a specific setting or around a specific event. However, little research has been done on the response towards different presentation methods.

The aim of this research is to find out to what extent problems that have been associated with using interpretative narratives affect the visitor's experience. These problems are as follows:

- The compromise of authenticity;
- Inclusion of propaganda in the form of *communal autobiographies*;
- Oversimplification of facts;
- Inclusion or exclusion of multiple viewpoints;
- "Adventurous" portrayal of archaeologists;
- The use of narratives told in the present and referring to the past or narratives about the past referring to the present;
- Reaching the audience.

In addition, the research aims to evaluate whether interpretative narratives can be used successfully and if the public prefers them to other presentation methods.

The data was collected through a survey amongst the visitors to three museums or centres that make use of interpretative narratives: the Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename, Belgium; Jorvik Viking Centre, York, The United Kingdom; and Dublinia, Dublin, Ireland.

The results indicate that most of these presumed problems affect the visitors very little. However, they give cause for the reconsideration of how much space should be dedicated to displays about the process of excavation and if the archaeologist is suitable as the main character of the narrative. In general the use of interpretative narratives can be seen as successful. Most visitors prefer this

presentation method to information panels. However, the results also suggest that the combination with other methods is desirable.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

In Appendix 1, the questionnaire used at the Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename can be found. The survey took place on September 24th – 25th 2011.

Archaeological Stories

Dear visitor.

I am doing a research about archaeological interpretation for my M.A. thesis in archaeology at Leiden University, The Netherlands.

I would be very thankful if you could fill out this questionnaire after your visit to the museum.

Thank you for participating!
Eva Kristín Dal

Question 1

a. At the museum there are panels with information about the site.

> **Example:** In the time-line zone there are a number of panels between the glass showcases.

Did you enjoy this way of presenting information? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. How about other panels in the museum? Did you also enjoy the way information was presented there? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

c. Could you please tell me what you liked or disliked about the information panels?

____

____

Question 2

a. At the museum there are also a number of stories used to present information.

> **Example:** At the *Feast of a Thousand Years* each characters tells his or her own little story.

Did you enjoy this way of presenting information? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me what you liked or disliked about the stories?

____

____

Question 3

a. Do you prefer one of these two types of presentation, the information panels (mentioned in question 1) or the stories (mentioned in question 2)? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Information panels
- ☐ Stories
- ☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me why?

____

____

Question 4

What do you feel is the value of stories at archaeological museums and parks? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Very high
- ☐ High
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very low

Question 5

The stories at the *Feast of a Thousand Years* are based on archaeological data and the interpretation of the storywriter. How accurately do you think they represent life in earlier times? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Very accurately
- ☐ Accurately
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Inaccurately
- ☐ Very inaccurately

Question 6

Do you think that the stories at the *Feast of a Thousand Years* represent the absolute truth or one of many possible stories? Please tick a box.

- ☐ The absolute truth
- ☐ One of many possible stories
- ☐ I don't know

Question 7

Would you like to see multiple stories with different viewpoints about the same event? This could for instance be two opponents' experience of a war. Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Question 8

a. Do you feel that the characters of the *Feast of a Thousand Years* relate in any way to the people now living in the area? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me how?

____

____

Question 9

Would you be interested in finding out more about the process of excavation? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Question 10

a. Did you gain new insights into the archaeology or history of Ename during the visit to the museum? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. If yes, could you please give an example?

____

____

Question 11

a. Would you like to find out more about the past of Ename. Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. If yes, what would you for instance be interested in finding out?

____

____

Question 12

a. Did the museum meet your expectations? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. If no, could you please tell me why?

____

____

This is the end of the survey.
Thank you for filling it out!

Appendix 2

In Appendix 2, the questionnaire used at the Jorvik Viking Centre, York, can be found. The survey took place on October 15th 2011.

Archaeological Interpretations

Dear visitor.

I am doing a research about archaeological interpretation for my M.A. thesis in archaeology at Leiden University, The Netherlands.

I would be very thankful if you could fill out this questionnaire after your visit to Jorvik Viking Centre.

Thank you for participating!
Eva Kristín Dal

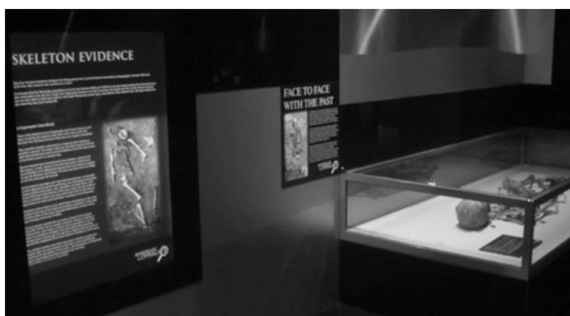
Question 1

a. At the *Jorvik Viking Centre* there are panels with information about the site.

Examples:

In the first hall (with the glass floor) information panels are set in the walls between the videos and artefacts.

In the hall immediately after the ride there are also a number of panels giving information about skeletons and how they have been studied.



Did you enjoy this way of presenting information? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me what you liked or disliked about the information panels?

____
____
____
____

Question 2

a. At the *Jorvik Viking Centre* reconstructions are used to tell the story of Viking Age Jorvik.

Example: The "ride" takes visitors through a reconstruction of Viking Age Jorvik.

Did you enjoy this way of presenting information? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me what you liked or disliked about the reconstruction?

____
____
____
____

Question 3

a. Do you prefer one of these two types of presentation, the information panels (mentioned in question 1) or the reconstructions (mentioned in question 2)? Please tick one box.

- ☐ Information panels
- ☐ Reconstructions
- ☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me why?

____
____
____

Please turn to the back side

Question 4

What do you feel is the value of stories created by reconstructions at archaeological museums and parks? Please tick a box.

☐ Very high
☐ High
☐ I don't know
☐ Low
☐ Very low

Question 5

The reconstructions mentioned in question 2 are based on archaeological data and the interpretation of archaeologists. How accurately do you think they represent life in earlier times? Please tick a box.

☐ Very accurately
☐ Accurately
☐ I don't know
☐ Inaccurately
☐ Very inaccurately

Question 6

Do you think that the reconstructions at the *Jorvik Viking Centre* represent the absolute truth or one of many possible stories? Please tick a box.

☐ The absolute truth
☐ One of many possible stories
☐ I don't know

Question 7

Would you like to see multiple viewpoints of the same event? This could for instance be two opponents' experience of a war. Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

Question 8

a. Do you feel that the characters of the *Jorvik Viking Centre* relate in any way to the people now living in York? Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me how?

____

____

____

Question 9

Would you be interested in finding out more about the process of excavation? Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

Question 10

a. Did you gain new insights into the archaeology or history of York during the visit? Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

Question 11

a. Would you like to find out more about the past of York? Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

Question 12

a. Did the *Jorvik Viking Centre* meet your expectations? Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

b. If no, could you please tell me why?

____

____

This is the end of the survey.
Thank you for filling it out!

Appendix 3

In Appendix 2, the questionnaire used at the Dublinia, Dublin, can be found. The survey took place on November 12th – 13th 2011.

Archaeological Interpretations

Dear visitor.

I am doing a research about archaeological interpretation for my M.A. thesis in archaeology at Leiden University, The Netherlands.

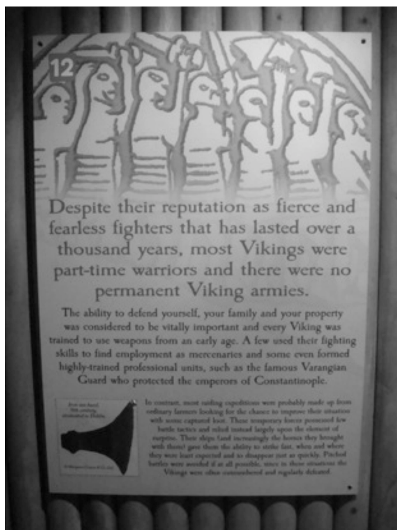
I would be very thankful if you could fill out this questionnaire after your visit to Dublinia.

Thank you for participating!
Eva Kristín Dal

Question 1

a. At *Dublinia* there are panels with information about the Vikings and Medieval Dublin.

Example:



Did you enjoy this way of presenting information? Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me what you liked or disliked about the information panels?

____

____

____

____

Question 2

a. At *Dublinia* reconstructions are used to tell about the life in Viking Age and Medieval Dublin.

Examples:

The reconstructed interior of a Viking Age house.

Did you enjoy this way of presenting information? Please tick a box.

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me what you liked or disliked about the reconstructions?

____

____

____

____

Question 3

a. Do you prefer one of these two types of presentation, the information panels (mentioned in question 1) or the reconstructions (mentioned in question 2)? Please tick one box.

☐ Information panels
☐ Reconstructions
☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me why?

____

____

____

Please turn to the back side

Question 4

What do you feel is the value of stories created by reconstructions at archaeological museums and parks? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Very high
- ☐ High
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very low

Question 5

The reconstructions mentioned in question 2 are based on archaeological data and the interpretation of archaeologists. How accurately do you think they represent life in earlier times? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Very accurately
- ☐ Accurately
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Inaccurately
- ☐ Very inaccurately

Question 6

Do you think that the reconstructions at *Dublinia* represent the absolute truth or one of many possible stories? Please tick a box.

- ☐ The absolute truth
- ☐ One of many possible stories
- ☐ I don't know

Question 7

Would you like to see multiple viewpoints of the same event? This could for instance be two opponents' experience of a war. Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Question 8

a. Do you feel that the characters of Dublinia relate in any way to the people now living in Dublin? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. Could you please tell me how?

____

____

____

Question 9

Would you be interested in finding out more about the process of excavation? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Question 10

a. Did you gain new insights into the archaeology or history of Dublin during the visit? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Question 11

a. Would you like to find out more about the past of Dublin? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Question 12

a. Did *Dublinia* meet your expectations? Please tick a box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

b. If no, could you please tell me why?

____

____

This is the end of the survey.
Thank you for filling it out!