

Session ID	21
Session Title	Challenging narratives and legacies in the archaeology and heritage of the Middle East and North Africa
Start Time	Mon Dec 16 13:30:00
Room	W3.06 (Level 3)

The focus of the session is on the legacy and practice of archaeology and heritage in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Archaeology and heritage in the region are often seen as heavily influenced by old practices and theories of early excavators. The session seeks to consider and challenge old or traditional narratives of archaeological research in the region. As well as how past research is used in current interpretations and the influence of past practices on knowledge production. The papers and discussion will consider the role of archaeology and heritage on past or current political situations like colonialism and current uprisings. This includes: the influence of past practices or narratives on archaeology and heritage today. The use of archives and archival research in modern archaeological or heritage practices. New or 'non-traditional' methods in heritage and archaeology for a better understanding of archaeological context or engagement with local people and the public; the influence of colonialism and decolonisation in the interpretation of archaeology in the region. This could include from a cultural perspective but also the influence of professional privilege and control of archaeological information. The portrayal of the past in museums and in the media (e.g. documentaries, social media, field-work websites...) to the public/non-subject specialists and how this affects both public perception and professional practices in archaeology and heritage.

13:30	Session organisers	Introduction	
13:35	Brian Boyd, Columbia University	In the context of settler colonialism, what counts as archaeological/historical archive?	<p>Despite a rise in “archive fever” in the humanities and social sciences at the turn of the century, the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of archive, as a political organizing principle, are discussed only rarely in archaeological writings. In <i>Archive Fever</i>, Derrida distinguished between archive as (a) the relationships involved in memory, the writing of history, and the political authority to identify, classify and interpret and, (b) archive as “shelter”: relegating, reserving, and forgetting -“to burn the archive and to incite amnesia ...aiming to ruin the archive as accumulation and capitalisation of memory on some substrate and in an exterior place” (Derrida 1996).</p> <p>With this in mind, this paper focuses on the notion of archive in the continuing injuries of colonialism and settler colonialism in Palestine. Discussion will focus on two current archaeology/museum anthropology projects in the Jordan Valley and the West Bank. Following Achille Mbembe, I discuss archive as both architecture and document, but will counter the prevalent nostalgia that regards archive (in both senses) as a kind of sepulchre, a place to bury stories, memory, people, lifeworlds. In other words, as a ruin. Instead, I argue that archive should be seen not as a desire, a nostalgia, wreckage or ruin, but as a container of fragmentary records that allow unresolved histories to be written. Those histories may sometimes be stories of the colonial order of things, but equally they can tell of unfinished projects, missed opportunities, and concepts for future developments. In other words, archives remain alive as stories wanting and waiting to be told.</p>

13:55	Chloe Emmott, PhD candidate, University of Greenwich	The influence of the Classical World and Imperialism on Archaeology in Palestine	The British Mandate era in Palestine is seen by some as the 'Golden Age' of Biblical archaeology and was an era in which colonialism and imperialism were deeply intertwined with archaeology. The Bible and the Classical world were the two primary 'lenses' through which ancient Palestine was understood in Britain, and they also played an integral role in the colonial discourse of the British Empire. Drawing on Richard Hingley's Roman Officers and British Gentlemen and Nadia Abu El-Haj's Facts on the Ground; I will focus on the role the classics played in the British imperial discourse and how this was reflected in the British Mandate's attempts to regulate, display, interpret, and promote archaeology in Palestine through initiatives such as the Antiquities ordinance and the Palestine Archaeological Museum, and how these were reported in the press. I explore how these two 'pillars of civilisation' were imposed upon Palestine, and how archaeology was used as part of the British imperial project as an 'Imperial Archaeology' as defined by Bruce Trigger (1984). From this we can glean how and why archaeology and the interpretation of the past, and control of these narratives has developed in Palestine today.
14:15	Nourhan Nassar MPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge	An Egyptian counter-narrative to nineteenth century British Egyptology: A reading in the Khitat Ali Mubarak	The protagonists of nineteenth century British Egyptology often thought of Egypt in Biblical terms. Egypt reimagined through Biblical language and analogies captured the British public and continued to shape the field of Egyptology well into the end of the nineteenth century. The pyramidologist, Charles Piazzi Smyth, for example was amongst those inspired by a religious reading and his fascination with the pyramids stemmed out of a belief in their status as sites of divine and ancient knowledge. While this intertwining of Egyptology and religion in early British Egyptology has been explored, little has been written on the Egyptian perspectives towards it. This is partly due to the dearth of primary sources which reveal Egyptians voices in a field dominated by non-Egyptians. In the few cases when Egyptian names appear it is often as assistants to Western Egyptologists during excavations and surveys. The 'Khitat' of Ali Mubarak however provides a rare example of nineteenth century Egyptian commentary on the ideology behind British Egyptology. Citing and commenting on Smyth's work on the pyramids, Mubarak disagrees with the notion that the only explanation for the expertise of the ancient Egyptians was that it came through divine inspiration. By exploring the writings of Ali Mubarak, this paper offers an example of critical engagement with the theories driving British Egyptologists. Through this, the paper will aim to challenge assumptions on the disinterest of Egyptians in the Pharaonic history and provide an early example of Egyptians reclaiming the narratives driving Egyptology.
14:35	Nora Shalaby, Humboldt University, Berlin	The Abydos Temple Paper Archive Project: Exploring Egyptian Histories from early Egyptology	Recently, there has been a growing interest in the study of the history of Egyptology amongst a wide spectrum of researchers. Most studies, however, are written based on the archives of western excavators who worked in Egypt around the beginning of the 20th century. In effect, they transcribe a historical trajectory based on western perceptions with little or almost no mention of Egyptian histories and viewpoints. While several revisionist studies have begun to reveal the extent to which western excavators in fact relied on Egyptian labour, and confirm the presence of Egyptians in archaeological practice, they ignore their intellectual contribution. In 2012, a previously unexamined archive was discovered in a storage room in Abydos which challenges the view of Egyptian heritage workers as victims of the colonial discourse of Egyptology and bystanders in the production of historical knowledge. Dating from the mid-19th century to the 1960's, the documents, written by employees of the then Egyptian Antiquities Service, contain detailed insights into the everyday management of archaeological sites by Egyptians and highlight their roles during Egyptology's formative years. This paper will present an overview of the main findings of the Abydos archives, underlining the responsibilities, duties, and agency of Egyptian scholars and employees as they worked to manage their heritage in an environment of exclusion and marginalization.
14:55	Session organisers	Discussion	
15:10	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK

15:40	Bonnie Effros, University of Liverpool, Department of History	Reviving Carthage's Martyrs: Archaeology, Memory, and Catholic Devotion in the French Protectorate of Tunisia	In 1874, Alfred-Louis Delattre (d. 1932) joined the Société des missionnaires d'Afrique (White Fathers) in Algiers. From 1876, he received permission from Archbishop Lavigerie to dedicate his time to archaeological exploration in and near Carthage. Lavigerie was enthusiastic about the potential of the ancient city, with its wealth of martyrs, not only to advance research on early Christianity but to support the conversion of the Berber and Arab populations from Islam. Inspired by the example of Giovanni Battista de Rossi in the Roman catacombs, Lavigerie and Delattre believed that religiously grounded archaeological research would hasten the restoration of Christian Africa as it was in the time of Augustine of Hippo (d. 432). Focused on Delattre's excavation and modification of the Carthage amphitheater, this presentation explores the impact of faith-based research in the development of nineteenth-century archaeology in the French Protectorate of Tunisia (established in 1881). Delattre viewed the amphitheater not as a static archaeological monument but as a living and active lieu de mémoire which might be revived to promote conversion and popular religiosity.
16:00	Kelley Tackett, Brown University, Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World	Half as old as time: archaeology and the constructed past in Petra Archaeological Park	Petra Archaeological Park in southern Jordan is often lauded as a city lost in time, its rose red tomb facades supposedly abandoned for generations before their "discovery" by a Swiss traveler in 1812. This narrative is evident in early photographs and maps of the site, which consistently portray the ancient monuments on lifeless or otherwise barren landscapes. Even the newly minted site museum chooses to end its displays in the thirteenth century CE, with no acknowledgement of later occupancy. Yet Petra was continuously inhabited until 1985, immediately prior to its UNESCO World Heritage inscription, when the B'doul Bedouin living on the site were displaced to a government-built village on the outskirts of the park. All traces of B'doul architecture and life in Petra were systematically destroyed, finally fulfilling the myth of a lost city in ruin. Drawing upon recent ethnographic fieldwork, this paper will examine the role of archaeology and archaeological archives in preserving and perpetuating narratives which prioritize the ancient over the living in Petra, and their consequences. Present efforts to ossify the park as a heritage site continue to negatively impact and ostracize the B'doul, who maintain strong relationships to the monuments and landscape. It is necessary to imagine an archaeology which engages and values modern heritage alongside—even above—the ancient material remains we excavate.
16:20	Eman Shokry Hesham, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg	"Ancient Thebes" and Modern Luxor: the history of the management of a World Heritage Site	<p>The European re-discovery of Ancient Egyptian monuments in Upper Egypt that was pioneered by the French expedition in the early 19th century led to the broad scientific study of the Ancient Egyptian ruins. While the growing fascination with the Ancient Egyptian history and its allure impacted the art and design fields in the Western World, reversely, the widely increasing number of curious European visitors and their expectations had their consequences on the archaeological sites and their contexts, and the lifestyle and economies of the local communities.</p> <p>This paper investigates how colonial practices in late 19th and early 20th centuries in Archaeology by chief inspectors such as Arthur Weigall, Egyptologists such as Gaston Maspero and Wallis Budge, and novelists such as Amelia Edwards shaped not only the management policies of the archaeological site, but also the quality of life of the local community in Upper Egypt. Besides, the paper briefly studies how the UNESCO "World Heritage" inscription of the site "Ancient Thebes" contributes to the already established colonial perspective of Luxor city to this day. Furthermore, this paper examines to what extent these practices have impacted the post-colonial and contemporary national and local vision of the management of cultural heritage sites, focusing on Luxor city in Upper Egypt.</p>
16:40	Session organisers	Discussion	
17:00	END	END	END