

<!DOCTYPE html>

Session ID	35
Session Title	Sensory Archaeology across Space and Time
Start Time	Tue Dec 17 14:00:00
Room	731/6

The study of the past is currently experiencing a spatial and sensory turn, affecting the work of prehistorians, classical, medieval, and historical archaeologists alike. Across disciplines sensory archaeology allows us to engage with, and challenge, our knowledge of the past through experience and experimentation. Despite the benefits and a growing number of approaches developed by specialists in different fields, attempts to develop a diachronic conversation on the matter have been limited. The aim of this session is to bring together scholars from a variety of backgrounds to create a lively and challenging setting to discuss new theoretical and methodological approaches to sensory archaeology. By exploring an interdisciplinary and cross-period consensus, this session aims to advance the ongoing debate about the potential of this relatively new discipline to engage with specific themes across space and time. The session draws upon three themes across any period; Experiences of 'Body', 'Place' and 'Materials', as well as engaging with the conference's broader theme; Power, Knowledge and the Past. The session will adopt a mixed format consisting of traditional presentations, followed by a 'hands-on' session with multiple participants demonstrating a sensory approach. Participants will be able to interact with different materials across several tables to allow for a sensory experience within the session.

14:00	Nicky Garland, Newcastle University; Adam Parker (PhD Candidate), Open University; Dr Giacomo Savani, University College Dublin	Introduction	This paper will provide a short introduction to the session, outlining current theoretical and methodological approaches to sensory archaeology, as well as the aims of this session. The introduction will also outline the structure of the session including the standard paper and workshop elements.
14:05	Dr Kelly Britt, Brooklyn College, CUNY	Somatic Mapping: Historic Landscapes Empowering Future Communities	Sensory experience of space in cities provides an experiential practice that illuminates an understanding of history not accessed through traditional archaeological narratives. This sensory knowledge is informative for community-based archaeological projects working directly with these communities or diaspora. A past directly tied to power relations grounded in confinement and freedom based on race, class and gender that continue into the present, provides a unique opportunity to trace these power dynamics through the somatic response to the materiality left behind. Additionally, as the past is embodied through first-hand or empathetic experiences in the present, space is created to actively shift those historic power relations in the future through harnessing the power of collective action. The historically African American community of Bed Stuy, Brooklyn, NY is home to the United Order of Tents (the Tents), Eastern District headquarters. The Tents is the oldest Black women's benevolent society in the US and was founded by two former enslaved African women at the end of the Civil War. As the Tents begin to preserve the materiality of their 19th century structure in a 21st century rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood, can somatic explorations of urban space be harnessed to not only better understand the history of the organization and the neighbourhood, but also impart activism to preserve the landscape and empower the community moving forward? Building on phenomenology and sensory discourse and an activist framework, this paper explores the use of somatic mapping of urban space to understand history and re-shape the future of this community.

14:30	Dr Dan Stewart, School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester	The Power of Place in Greek Archaeology: The Impact of Text on Sensory Experience	<p>This paper examines the interplay between archaeological material, textual description and physical experience of place on the development of Classical Archaeology in Greece. Unlike elsewhere, archaeologies in Greece often started from textual representations of place, with text serving as an axle around which archaeological practice, interpretation, and experiences of place revolve (Stewart 2013). Far from being fixed, however, texts are often subject to repeated re-interpretation and re-reading, resulting in a complex mix of relationships/outputs akin to film that has seen multiple exposures. The result is a contemporary archaeology that is a curious superimposition of different experiences of place from different times, presented as a single image (cf. Lightfoot and Witmore 2019). These ideas will be explored through the case study of the Temple of Hephaistos, Athens.</p> <p>The best-preserved temple in mainland Greece, it was long identified as the 'Theseum' or temple to Theseus, due to a (mis)reading of the 2nd-century AD author Pausanias'. Experiences of this place in the 19th century, by antiquarians (Leake and Dodwell), early archaeologists (Stuart & Revett, Frazer), and artists (Müller and Lear), were framed around a sense of place emanating from this textual reading. This reading changed in the 1950s, when the temple was re-interpreted as a Temple of Hephaistos, though this identification is not universally accepted (Wycherley 1959; Harrison 1979; Emerson 2007). By examining the shifting readings of text and monument through time, this paper will highlight the power of selective readings of text on determining the nature of the sensory experience in Greece.</p>
14:55	Andrew Watson (PhD Candidate), University of Glasgow	Archaeology of the past, present and future!	<p>As a discipline we are focused on understanding the past. It is what we yearn to know more about. But can we truly understand people's engagement with prehistoric monuments at their point in time? This paper will present initial findings from phenomenological fieldwork carried out with three different focus groups over three days at one Neolithic long barrow. Although marred by the debates of the mid 1990's and early 2000's, I believe phenomenology has a place in our discipline. Through using phenomenology in a different manner to before, I believe we can begin to look forward, not back.</p> <p>I will demonstrate that every person in our focus group had different experiences at the long barrow, but that some overarching themes emerged. Could this suggest that a visitor's experience may have similar components? How far can we claim our unified experiences at a barrow could be the same as that of someone in the Neolithic? Phenomenology allows us to bodily and sensorially understand people's engagement at prehistoric sites. Documenting this now may not yield its fruits for centuries to come, but when archaeologists of the future look back at us in 2019, they will have recorded evidence of how we as archaeologists and members of the public engage with and interpret these monuments.</p>

15:20	Adam Parker (PhD Candidate), Open University; Dr Erica Rowan, Royal Holloway, University of London	Jet-Set: Sensory experiences of Whitby Jet in Britain, Eating Saturnalia: Authenticity and Seasonality	<p>The shiny, black, coal-like substances found washed up on the shores of North and East Yorkshire has been present in the material culture of personal adornment in Britain from the Neolithic to the present day. Its colour afforded it a visual experience that was, for much of human history, contrasting, unusual, or even exotic when compared to other common materials. Its natural electrostatic properties have also, undoubtedly, led to a strong association with the rituals, magic, and religions of the people of these islands. The ability of Jet to take a static charge and thus attract cloth fibres or human hair provides a unique opportunity to explore sensory engagement with this material - evidence survives on some [Roman] objects that were clearly handled and rubbed extensively as part of their function.</p> <p>Each historical period had its own nuances within its use of and engagement with Jet. Did the community in attendance at a bronze age cremation ceremony have a markedly different experience of the material than say, a 13th century monk in York touching rosaries during worship, or a Victorian widow wearing mourning clothing? It is the purpose of this poster and hands-on session to explore some of the commonalities and differences of experiences that may be explored through a diachronic approach. The study of ancient dietary practices is one that lends itself particularly well to sensory archaeology. Unlike some materials, practices or technologies that have long since gone out of use and are no longer readily accessible in many forms, the consumption of food, due to obvious necessity, remains a universal sensory experience. Observing or experiencing consumption practices, food preparation, and cooking techniques are, for the most part, readily available to scholars. In Graeco-Roman scholarship, the interest in the sensory experience of food and drink consumption has expanded exponentially in recent years. Yet despite this growing interest and the widespread accessibility of many ingredients, sensory archaeology and experiment archaeology have rarely united in the study of ancient diet. This workshop will explore the benefits and potential dangers of experimental archaeology, using the experience of seasonality and the problem of authenticity as its twin foci. How did seasonal dietary patterns in the Graeco-Roman world influence the way people created individual and collective memories? The problem of authenticity will be discussed both in the context of academic research and in the engagement of the public in archaeological experiences and discussions. Can an authentic taste, flavour or experience ever be achieved? If not, what questions can experimental archaeology help to answer? How do we tackle the problem of perceived authenticity when participating in educational or outreach events involving food?</p> <p>*Food will be served at the workshop. All ingredients will be clearly labelled.</p>
15:40	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
16:00	Prof. Sue Hamilton, Institute of Archaeology, UCL; Prof. Ruth Whitehouse, Institute of Archaeology, UCL	Revisiting Sacred and Profane: 'domain change' in south Italian prehistory	<p>The paper addresses sensory aspects of domestic and ritual prehistoric sites in south Italian prehistory. We (and others) have looked at this subject before in terms of broad contrasts, including in sensory characteristics, between the two types of site and environment, but on this occasion we are considering movement from one to the other. In prehistory such movements would have taken place in the context of specific ritual activities, such as initiation rites, commemoration events and pilgrimages. We aim to reconstruct, or re-imagine, the journeys from settlements to ritual sites and the series of sensory transformations that would have taken place en route. Sensory aspects of the movement from profane to sacred are important because they would have played a major role in instilling in individuals the feeling of irrevocably changed personhood that is fundamental to rituals of the kind described.</p>
16:25	Chloe Clark, Kings College London	Colour of the dead	<p>The word colour is mentioned by Pliny in his Natural Histories 123 times (this figure increases to 887 in English translations of the same text). Colour is a constant refrain and oft remarked upon characteristic used by Pliny to explain the world around him. To Pliny, the origin, quality or effectiveness of anything from precious stones to medicines is revealed in their colour and so forms an integral element of the ancient world he documents. However, colour within archaeology is easily overlooked. Often due to post-depositional processes that destroy, obscure or alter the colours of artefacts, colour is secondary to form and type, with little systematic space being given to the study in excavation reports. This is unfortunate, particularly when considering ornaments and dress, specifically the dress ornaments people chose to bury their loved ones with, because colour would have been a notable and noticeable feature of such items, possibly even before the shape of a brooch or bead was considered.</p> <p>Complementing the session themes of Body, Place and Material, this paper will explore the role of colour in the dress of the dead within funeral ritual and burial in Roman Britain. Colour will be considered as both a signifier of material, but also as a symbolic trigger for elements in the socio-cultural and environmental worlds. It is hoped that this avenue of investigation will further develop our knowledge of the sensory experience of mourners during funerals, as well as the role of colour symbolism in this space.</p>

16:50	Dr Emma J. Wells, University of York	Sensed Spirituality: The Experience of Ab“sense” in Medieval Pilgrimage	<p>Despite a wealth of approaches, the “intangibility” issue of medieval religiosity remains, leading to a lacuna in scholarship attempting to uncover just how devotion was experienced. The general problem has centred around understanding an element of the past which is, fundamentally, ephemeral, elusive, and untraceable – or, sensory. What, exactly, does the historical record convey in terms of what was seen, tasted, felt, smelled, or heard?</p> <p>While many scholars recognise the bodily senses as fundamental to human experience, there is an innate questioning of the feasibility of exploring sensorial arenas: how can there be material remains of past sensory interactions left as archaeological evidence? An acceptance of this perspective, notes Yannis Hamilakis in <i>Archaeology and the Senses: Human Experience, Memory, and Affect</i> (2014: 6), has led to analyses that are anaisthitoi, or “insensitive”. This is even more frustrating given that, as archaeologists and historians, the materiality of the world is at our fingertips and we are in a privileged position to uncover the sensorial aspects of this evidence.</p> <p>This paper addresses the role of the senses in medieval religiosity and spirituality, namely pilgrimage, and how current understandings have arisen, before revealing the outcomes of more explorative research that has sought to understand better how the senses were used and impacted the church building. It then highlights the challenge for scholars to invigorate analyses of their own subject matter with methodologies and theoretical approaches that allow a rigorous, fully sensory interpretation of past devotional practices.</p>
17:15	Nicky Garland, Newcastle University; Adam Parker (PhD Candidate), Open University; Dr Giacomo Savani, University College Dublin	Final Discussion	
17:30	END	END	END