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Session ID	40
Session Title	Excavating Archaeology: The Power of Process
Start Time	Wed Dec 18 09:30:00
Room	728

When working on an excavation, we move down the stratigraphic profile of a site, stripping away layers as we define new contexts. In moving down through the soil, we build up an understanding of the site, adjusting our approach accordingly (Hodder 1999). But the work of archaeology does not end when objects are lifted from the ground. Processes such as conservation, restorations, and subsequent de-restorations add physical layers to the surface of objects as we attempt to organise and interpret them. We also build up by adding metaphorical layers of meaning. Finds become enmeshed with other objects through the generation of archival records, practices of storage and display, and through the making of reproductions. With the recent archival turn in archaeology (Baird 2011; Baird and McFadyen 2014) the excavation of these accumulated layers of meaning has become part of archaeologist's work. This opens up the idea of the field site, demonstrating an urgent need to examine these processes of meaning making across a variety of settings. We invite commentators to discuss the fundamental methodological questions of where and how we construct archaeological knowledge and the power that these processes hold over our understanding and interpretation. Papers could consider, but are not limited to:

The production of knowledge in the archaeological record and excavations in the archive
The use of reproduction-making in learning about the past
Restoration and de-restoration as shaping perceptions of ancient objects and societies
Conservation as interpretation
Ethnography as a tool for excavating archaeological knowledge.

References:

Baird, J.A. 2011. Photographing the Dura Europa's 1928-1937: An Archaeology of the Archive. *American Journal of Archaeology* 115(3), 427-446.
Baird, J.A. and McFadyen, L. 2014. Towards an Archaeology of Archaeological Archives. *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 29(2), 14-31.
Hodder, I. 1999. *The Archaeological Process: An Introduction*. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford.

9:30	Session organisers	Introduction	
9:40	Abbey Ellis, University of Leicester and Ashmolean Museum, Oxford	Cast in the Past: Histories Ancient and Modern	Where do we construct archaeological knowledge? During my time as a classical archaeology undergraduate, my answer would have been simple: "in the lecture hall." I was taught about antiquity using plaster casts: exact replicas of ancient Greek and Roman sculptures made from Plaster of Paris. These casts are primarily used as archaeological teaching tools: one does not look at them but through them to understand the ancient world. But during my PhD, I began to look at casts as objects in their own right. By talking to visitors in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford's Cast Gallery, I learned that casts too were valued due to their status as historic objects, as well as the fact that they had ancient precedents. The evident visitor interest in ancient casts led me to question just how prevalent this plaster sculpture really was in antiquity. My research argues that plaster statuary was more visible in antiquity than previously thought: the existing archaeological evidence for plaster statuary in the ancient world, including the famous Baiae casts and the Begram plaster medallions exhibited by the British Museum in 2011, might be reinterpreted. In this paper I will demonstrate that looking more closely at the tools used to teach archaeology can (a) provide a better understanding of how our experiences of archaeology have been shaped and (b) help us to better understand the past.

10:00	Annelies Van de Ven, Université Catholique de Louvain	Questioning the Copy: Squeezes as Subjective Interpretations in the Archaeological Record	<p>Squeezes were once the preferred medium for documenting inscriptions in the field. Though they have recently been replaced by digital techniques, collections of paper squeezes continue to be used as sources for both teaching and research on ancient texts. The physical interaction with an inscription that is required to make a squeeze gives it an air of being an accurate copy, a direct imprint in paper of the engraved text. However, squeezes are far more complex than they let on.</p> <p>The squeeze itself can be cropped, divided or retouched, while the inscription itself is continuously transformed both physically and conceptually through its publication, display and restoration. This divergence in the two artefacts' biographies calls our understanding of original and copy into question. Instead of treating squeezes as immediate likenesses of the originals, we should consider them as traces of the research process, indicative of archaeological responses to material and textual heritage.</p> <p>This paper will use examples from Musée L's collection of early Christian squeezes made at the turn of the 20th century in Rome by Belgian archaeology and theology professor René Maere. By comparing the squeezes with their related inscriptions across Rome, and placing these comparisons within the context of archaeological developments at this time through the use of Maere's archives, I will highlight the tension inherent in collections of epigraphic squeezes as both scientific records and subjective interpretations.</p>
10:20	Chloë Ward, UCL	Counting cards – Archiving the Excavation and Excavating the Archive	<p>In Flinders Petrie's 1925 publication of the Tombs of the Courtiers excavation at Abydos(1921–1922), 121 burials are listed in the appendices. The information provided for each of the burials is primarily based on a specific archival document known as a tomb-card. Exploring archival material in the Petrie Museum has indicated that there are in fact 682 surviving tomb-cards from this excavation. This type of material is typically used by archaeologists to extract unpublished data about the remains and their context. However, exploring the way that each card was filled out or even numbered reveals just as much about the methods used and the production of archaeological knowledge. Subtle differences in the way that burials were recorded in the Archive also begin to emerge. What can the basic information, numbers, page indications and annotations on archaeological archives reveal about practices of constructing archaeological knowledge? This paper will consider examples of historical archaeological archives and how they fit together, as well as within the wider contexts of archaeological sites themselves, their publications, and objects in museums. Can we piece together the archival and recording processes of this information over time, and what can be established by exploring the life cycle of this information? Rather than considering the archaeological archive as another tool in archaeological research, archive production in archaeology and the role of archival processes in knowledge production will be considered.</p>
10:40	Dr. Heather Keeble, Independent researcher	Many Hands in the Pot: the production of archaeological knowledge in nineteenth-century Britain	<p>Today we assume that archaeological knowledge is produced by professional archaeologists and academics, excavating in the field, and then diluting the results for a wider audience. This 'top-down' model of information transfer, from expert to public, is not appropriate for archaeology in the nineteenth century. The majority of finds were made accidentally by labourers, whose decisions affected the survival of artefacts and had a huge impact on the dissemination of archaeological knowledge. This paper uses two case studies, starting at the point of discovery and following the chain of information from the local to the national scene, through the press, personal networks and journals. It looks at the ways in which archaeological knowledge is selected and exchanged, with each stage being filtered for a variety of motives. Only close examination of the whole process can lead to an understanding of the factors influencing the information that is later taken as 'fact'.</p>
11:00	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK

11:30	Beth Hodgett, Birkbeck College, University of London & Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.	"Our footprints in these sands of time": Time, travel and legacy in O.G.S. Crawford's photographs of Sudan	<p>In 1952 O.G.S. Crawford scrambled up the side of a sand dune, leaving behind him a trail of footprints as he began to plan the extent of a ruined fort on the banks of the Nile. Later that day he mused in his diary "Our footsteps in these sands of time will be obliterated by a few strong winds".</p> <p>For the past seven years Crawford had been working fervently on a project that was to become The Fung Kingdom of Sennar; a weighty and ambitious volume of historical research which strayed far from the more practical manuals on aerial photography and field-archaeology which he is most well-known for in the present. Yet, in his final years Crawford predicted that it was The Fung Kingdom that would be his most enduring legacy. In this paper I explore Crawford's process of crafting his own legacy; from the deliberate placement of selected archival records in university archives, to ambitious attempts to recreate the journeys of nineteenth-century explorers in Sudan. I argue that Crawford's photographs of Sudan, taken between 1950 and 1952, played a critical role in this legacy building project. But in the present, this corpus of work has been barely acknowledged in contemporary accounts of his life, so by returning to these neglected archival prints I reflect on process of remembering and forgetting in archaeological archives.</p>
11:50	Dr. Katy Soar, University of Winchester	Mino-tourism: Picture postcards and the creation of the Minoans	<p>Sir Arthur Evans' excavations at the Palace of Knossos on Crete were the beginning of the development of what is now the most popular tourist spot on the island. From the start, this site was created to be a living monument, a theatre of the past, albeit a specific vision of the past, and one grounded in modernity.</p> <p>Evans was aided in his endeavours by another innovation of modernity – photography. Photography allowed for quick, accurate recording of things and its placing of distant objects, places and people, directly in front of the viewer, had the apparent effect of abolishing both time and distance. Similarly, modernist interpretations of Knossos contradicted the distance between the ancient and the modern. I wish to show how popular photographic representations of Knossos– namely, picture postcards – worked to further the idea of Knossos as the cradle of European modernity by examining them as interpretive frames which were used to make sense of and shape contemporary ways of viewing the past.</p> <p>The heyday of the tourist postcard was the Edwardian period – the period which coincides with the Evans excavations. Through their mass-production and circulation, postcards transformed a place into a commodity for global consumption. This talk offers an overview of my developing research in this area, by examining examples of these representations of Knossos to show how they produced an enduring picture of the Minoans and consider how far the performativity, circulation and consumption of these specific images of the Palace authenticate understanding of the past.</p>
12:10	Jonathan Paul Mosca, University of Aberdeen	The Language of Archaeology: How the Presentation of Archaeological Research Changes in Different Languages	<p>Presenting archaeological findings is essential in the development of the discipline. The peer review and publishing process are a means to ensure that up-to-date information is available to archaeologists the world over. This presentation highlights how vastly differently archaeological findings are portrayed to different audiences. When researching archaeological sites in one language, particularly one foreign to the site's location, there are challenges faced that researchers may not even be aware of. From one language to another information may be: skewed or altered to appeal to trends within the academic culture of the published language; present ethnographic information differently; be presented from an alternative theoretical perspective, or without a theoretical background at all; simply be unavailable.</p> <p>Focussing on Spain's Castro de Baroña, the presentation compares scholarly articles available in Spanish to those in English. It then draws from wider and more diverse examples, showing how the differences in published knowledge between languages on an important archaeological site can alter perception of a site, or an entire region's archaeology. Findings explore how colonialist, Marxist, and feminist archaeological theories are variously applied in different languages.</p> <p>With findings that expose a shortcoming in the availability of archaeological resources to a global network of archaeologists, this is a matter of consideration that has surely affected and will continue to affect the perception of archaeological findings and its implementation in further research. This is especially true in an international context.</p>

12:30	Mark Dolan, University of Southampton & British Museum	Boats out of Water: Tracing the impact of whim, bias and disinterest on archaeological knowledge through Cypriot terracotta boat models	<p>In the beginning, it was all about objects. Artefacts piqued the antiquarian interest in a way that nothing else on Cyprus did. Objects made money and motivated excavations, furnishing museum cases, the pages of auction catalogues and even the occasional pharmacy along the way (Merrillees 2014). The archival turn is now changing how we engage with the objects and their histories, and although terracotta boat models may not be at the forefront of these discussions, these seemingly innocuous objects have plenty of stories to tell.</p> <p>Starting with one of the early systematic excavations on Cyprus, this paper presents the challenges of incomplete, muddled, and inconsistent data. In the 1890s museum cabinets beckoned and excavations filled them, with some artefacts falling easily into starring roles. Others were less glamorous. Enter terracotta boat models. Although some examples are detailed, impressive and widely discussed (e.g. Steffy 1996; Basch 1999; Carbillet 2011), others – often from the same sites and deposits – have received less preferential treatment. The whims, biases and inclinations of excavators, curators and scholars alike have shaped what we know, how we discuss, and how we represent these objects.</p> <p>Objects’ histories bear the scars of the changing socio-political worlds in which they have existed. The methods, models and frameworks that become embedded and fundamental in academic study require a heightened focus in collections-oriented research. This is explored here with a brief glance at the era-defining work of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition (spanning from 1927-1972) and its impact on Cypriot archaeology to this day.</p>
12:50	Session organisers	Discussion	
13:00	END	END	END