

Digging into the archives: new perspectives on documentary legacies in the history of archaeology

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Abstract:

The 21st century has seen a substantial leap forward in research on the history of archaeology. This progress has largely been driven by the discovery and re-evaluation of personal archives and documentary legacies left by pioneering archaeologists. Examining these materials not only enhances our understanding of the scientific contributions of women and other disadvantaged groups made by these foundational figures but also sheds light on new data related to historic excavation sites. Additionally, it reveals how the social, political, and gendered contexts have influenced archaeological practice and interpretation over the past two centuries.

This session invites scholars to explore the importance of engaging with historical documentation in archaeology and to address critical questions such as: What previously unpublished insights can be revealed in original documents—correspondence, photographs, and excavation diaries? In what ways have the contributions of women and other disadvantaged groups been overlooked in the history of archaeology? How might transdisciplinary approaches, drawing on history, heritage studies, gender studies, and digital humanities, open new avenues for interpreting archival sources?

We also encourage submissions that consider how the digital era will shape future historiography in archaeology, including the process of heritage-making both in its historical development and in the dissemination of its history. This session provides a platform for reflection and dialogue on these issues, highlighting the transformative impact of

historiographical research on archaeology and its potential to shape the discipline's future. While organised by the UISPP History of Archaeology commission and the ArqueólogAs/Herstory project (PID2023-149477NB-I00), this is an open call to researchers working in archives worldwide