**Book of Abstracts**

1. The archaeologists’ body as medium for historical narratives **(17.45-18.05)**

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**Abstract**

In recent decades, the body has been at the centre of philosophical, social and political discourse under different declinations: as an element of resistance and conflict (Bourdieu 1990), as an instrument to control social reality (Foucault 1970) or as an alternative to conceive new ways of being (Taylor 1996; Viveiros de Casto1998, 2004). One aspect that has been little explored is that which conceives of the body as a *medium*, an interface between representation and perception of the world, or as an agent capable of mediating between different epistemological spheres and the production and interpretation of reality: in other words, as the main channel of engagement with reality, or as a historical element of mediation.

This is an aspect that springs clearly from archaeological practice.

The body in archaeology is omnipresent. This omnipresence reflects both the position of the body at the centre of social theory and its materiality and concreteness (Borić and Robb 2008). Not only do ancient bodies surround us, in representations, burials, objects, hands holding tools, architecture and monuments. But it is through the body that archaeologists experience the past. The introduction of phenemonological thinking into archaeology has raised the question of how the very experience of excavation is an embodied process, launching several lines of enquiry into the archaeology of the sensitive body. The body - which used to serve only as a kind of theoretical *proxy* - has become a concrete procedure of connection between past and present. A privileged mode of access to the past and its interpretation in the present. The body is a true archaeological interface, a component of the matrix whose position can change in relation to the others. Reflecting on the archaeologist's body and its modes of engagement with reality means relating practice and theory through the body and placing archaeology and its bodies at the centre of a broader debate. What about the body in the posthuman era? Since the human has been reduced to a thing, or a non-human, the body has been rethought through the concept of the interweaving of thing and non-thing or human and non-human. The body is the surface of the entanglement and the first place of contact between past and present, the first *medium*of experience, it also risks being our one and only point of view.

1. Archaeologists Unframed: The Shaping of Perceptions Beyond the Profession **(18.05-18.25)**

**Cecilia Galleano**

Historic Environment Consultant

LUC – Land Use Consultants

**Abstract**

Frequently, archaeologists are called to use their body during investigations. Professionals in the field are expected to physically perform archaeological activities as well as using their knowledge and competencies to expose, understand, excavate, record, and interpret heritage assets.

However, the combination of manual and intellectual skills required are often and persistently

unspoken and underrepresented in their complexity. Consequently, the reality of working conditions, physical struggle, skills and level of experience required are also overlooked.

This might derive from the limited agency, representation and responsibilities assigned to field

archaeologists as professional figures within the broader heritage sector.

Focusing on the body of the archaeologists provides an opportunity of discussion regarding the

current state of the commercial archaeological sector and to reflect on the significance of field

investigations, which remain a crucial element of the archaeological research and business.

1. The Racialised Body in Greek and Roman Archaeology: Racial Difference on Site **(18.25 – 18.45)**

**Lylaah L Bhalerao**

PhD Candidate

Institute for the Study of the Ancient World

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**Abstract**

What does it mean to embody racial difference at an archaeological site? What impact does this have on scholars of color in our field? From childhood visits to Rome to working as an archaeologist in Athens, Lylaah Bhalerao reflects on her experiences of racialisation in archaeological spaces. Rather than discussing racial differences in antiquity, this paper focuses on the historical experiences of scholars of color in Greek and Roman archaeology, asking whether the field has become a more inclusive, welcoming space or continues to be engaged in processes of racialisation to this day.

1. Sexism in Archaeology: ‘illustrating’ the voices of female archaeologists **(18.50 – 19.10)**

**Rita Gonçalves Pedro Casimiro da Costa**

PCA - Pre-Construct Archaeology

**Abstract**

We live in a highly patriarchal society, where women are often regarded as secondary, the ‘other sex’. This bias, unsurprisingly, extends to the field of archaeology. Literature often reflects the narrow interpretation of women's roles, and female archaeologists face regular sexist challenges in their profession. Comments such as "This is not a job for a woman" and various forms of uninvited derogatory comments are common. Other such remarks include catcalling, remarks on physical appearance, sexual harassment, sexual assault, benevolent sexism, patronising attitudes, and disparity of opportunity, to name but a few. This increases in commercial archaeology which intersects with the male-dominated construction sector. Such biases are not limited to external sources; they sometimes come from peers and superiors, indicating a deeply entrenched societal prejudice where this is materialised in a far more discrete and undetected type of sexism. This makes archaeology a hostile and oppressive field for women. This paper intends to delve into sexism in archaeology by addressing pertinent questions: How are women perceived and treated in this field? What are their career prospects, especially in fieldwork? Why is there an evident lack of older female professionals in senior roles? Fieldwork requires female archaeologists to challenge traditional gender norms, a path laden with hurdles. Addressing these issues is complex and won't find resolutions swiftly. However, making our voices heard and taking action is vital. Illustrations can spotlight the struggles female archaeologists face, such as workplace gender-based violence. In our visually-driven society, these drawings become potent tools to communicate these silent battles.

1. Documenting Gaza’s submerged landscapes: prospects and challenges **(19.30 – 19.50)**

**Georgia Andreou**

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**Abstract**

Conducting archaeological research in the Gaza Strip even prior to its unprecedented devastation, came with multiple and substantial limitations impacting the physical and intellectual labour involved in data collection. From financial and technological constraints, limitations to acquiring experience and developing expertise, to conditional and prescribed integration of local voices in the production of archaeological knowledge, archaeology and heritage in Gaza tend to be presented as victims of “historical circumstances”. A deeper look into the threads and disturbances impacting Gazan archaeology from the early 20th century onward provide a clearer understanding of the factors impacting its preservation and ultimately contributing to its destruction.

This talk presents a maritime archaeological survey conducted in Gaza between 2021 and 2023 (GAZAMAP). Emphasis in placed on the survey design, selection and training of archaeology students, as well as the limitations involved in conducting a survey project according to our discipline’s standards. The talk concludes with a discussion on the impact of the ongoing war on the lives of the students and partners involved in this project, highlighting the need to protect not only Gaza’s heritage but also its heritage professionals, many of whom are anonymous in the context of large-scale documentation and restoration projects.

1. Archeology or Archeologist? Navigating health injury and disability on archeological field sites. **(19.50 – 20.10)**

**Allyson Blanck**

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**Abstract**

Disabled scholars work as archeologists, and are already present on many excavation sites. Further, those who may be able-bodied now - always exist within the potential of experiencing a disabling event or injury during the course of their careers. Archeology can be many things - tough manual labor, fine detailed conservation work, long days in a lab or storage space corners - but it is fundamentally a bodily experience, performed and embodied by unique individuals. Yet, different and disabled bodily experiences, along with the inimitable insights of disabled scholars, are often not considered in field work logistics and project operations. When disabled scholars in particular seek placement on archeological teams, they are often inappropriately questioned about ‘liability’, particularly under the guise of safety. Health and safety considerations should be fundamental priorities on any archeological field site, but, it is essential to engage with concepts of accessibility from the beginning of these complicated discussions. Such conversations become indispensable when we consider the diversity of bodies which populate our excavations - including disabled, injured, and potentially disabled bodies. So, when we engage with what some may consider to be a rhetorical question with no clear answer, this perceived ambiguity in fact points to the necessity of developing an archeological discipline that unequivocally prioritizes the archeologist, and embodied nature of our discipline. We cannot have any Archeology without the Archeologist. And, we must embrace an active experience where disabled and chronically ill people can participate as an authority on their own bodily abilities and boundaries. Overall, our approach to health, safety, and general operations on site as archeologists must not be reliant solely on a consistent able-bodied expectation and, in fact, has been stifled by establishing its own artificial boundaries to disabled participation.

1. “Where are all the archaeological remains of Trans people?” A discussion on potential moral responsibility with disproving transphobic rhetoric **(20.10 – 20.30)**

**Tyler J Kelly**

McA Student

Oxford University

**Abstract**

This talk examines the possible ethical duty of archaeologists to counter transphobic rhetoric that misuses archaeology to deny the existence and validity of transgender identities. Historical and contemporary evidence shows that gender nonconformity (GNC) existed, and differed, across many cultures - yet transphobic narratives often distort archaeology to claim that “trans people didn’t exist,” that “true” gender can be determined from remains, or that GNC researchers fabricate findings. These assertions, amplified on social media, spread misinformation and contribute to a hostile environment for transgender people within and outside the field.
As archaeologists, do we perhaps bear a moral responsibility to refute such misinterpretations, particularly when misunderstandings are weaponized to support harmful agendas? By presenting evidence and discussions of diverse gender expressions in archaeology—and demonstrating how these interpretations are made—we can actively work cohesively to counter these claims and affirm the presence of GNC individuals in human history. This responsibility also includes actively supporting our current GNC archaeologists who advocate for such transgender representation in historical narratives. Despite backlash and accusations of bias, their work is vital to ethical, inclusive scholarship. This paper further argues that promoting an environment of support and recognition is essential for advancing a fuller understanding of humanity’s gender-diverse past and fulfilling archaeology’s role in addressing present-day transphobia.