

Session 1: Archaeologies of inequality – Implications for societal change

Marika Hyttinen – marika.hyttinen@oulu.fi

Archaeology, University of Oulu

Tuuli Matila – tuuli.matila@oulu.fi

Archaeology, University of Oulu

Oula Seitsonen – oula.seitsonen@oulu.fi

Archaeology, University of Oulu

Format: Standard paper session

Abstract

Archaeological / heritage research is never performed outside social and political realities. Research can have various societal impacts which archaeologists and heritage professionals should be aware of. Especially important are the experiences of those often marginalized in society and archaeologists have indeed researched their experiences for decades. Archaeologists and heritage professionals have used their work as an inclusive strategy so that everyone might have a say in what heritage is or what is important to study archaeologically. In this session we ask, what are some of the impacts of archaeological knowledge production for multiple groups who may experience the effects of inequality in society? How can archaeology best work to bring out the inequalities of the past and the present? How can the groups themselves participate in making their experiences visible? What kind of long-term impacts can archaeology have on societies? The themes of proposed papers might include, but are not limited to:

- feminist archaeology
- community-based approaches to marginalization/inequality
- the effects of globalization and neoliberalism
- minority groups in archaeology and heritage

Session 2: The Politics of Archaeology: from outdated rallying cries to actual critique

Artur Ribeiro – aribeiro@sfb1266.uni-kiel.de

Kiel University, Germany

Jan-Eric Schlicht

Kiel University, Germany

Format: Standard paper session

Abstract

The collapse of the global financial market in 2008, the covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, are all symptoms of a global state of affairs that have affected the lives of people in a variety of ways. Yet, from a political standpoint, archaeology remains stuck in outdated ways of thinking the world, one that only knows how to critique binary forms of seeing reality, modernist enlightenment structures, and place-based forms of struggle.

As the prefix “post-” indicates, postmodern and postcolonial theorists never tire of critiquing and seeking liberation from the past forms of rule and their legacies in the present. The world we live in today is very different than that postmodern and postcolonial thinkers critique – it is a world that has transcended nation-states, with powers operating over networks and flows at a global scale; it is a world of short-termism, which exploits workers through the gig economy; it is world of self-surveillance and self-discipline, leading to burnouts and suicides; it is a world of hyperculture, that homogenizes all practices yet promotes hyper-individuality; and above all it is a late capitalist consumer society that confuses agency with consumerism, one where “lifestyles” are sold as commodities.

This view of the world has been critiqued since the 1930s by Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and was critiqued again by Marshall McLuhan, Jean Baudrillard, and Guy Deleuze, and continues being critiqued today, by Byung-Chul Han, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, to name only a few. Why has archaeology failed to address this form of political critique? The aim of this session is to correct this issue and address globalization, burnout, short-termism, accelerationism, hyperculture, hyper-individuality, among other contemporary topics, that is to say to create an archaeological politics beyond the limited scope it has today.

Session 3: Entangled Worlds, Entangled Methods: Archaeologies of Nature

Anatolijs Venovcevs – Anatolijs.Venovcevs@oulu.fi

University of Oulu

Marjo Juola – Marjo.Juola@oulu.fi

University of Oulu

Vesa-Pekka Herva – vesa-pekka.herva@oulu.fi

University of Oulu

Format: Standard paper session

Abstract

The nature-culture binary has been extensively critiqued within archaeology and heritage studies to the point where its dismissal has become a given. Archaeologists and other heritage practitioners have routinely begun stepping out of their traditional disciplinary boundaries to study the heritage of things that have previously been relegated to other disciplines. Non-human animals, plants, fungi, bacteria, geological formations, and etc. have come under scrutiny as inherently entangled objects of study while the enduring remains of the human past have become celebrated for their ecological affordances. While these developments have been promising in overcoming the exclusivity of cultural heritage there has been less emphasis on what an archaeology beyond the nature-culture split can actually look like. As such, this session seeks to bring heritage practitioners from within archaeology and beyond to interrogate the uncomfortable practicalities of working in the grey zone between clearly defined disciplinary boundaries. What new tools are necessary in order to conduct an archaeology of a deeply entangled world? What opportunities become available when heritage practitioners reach out to other scholars, scientists, and citizen science groups? How can heritage studies approaches contribute to biodiversity preservation and multi-species sustainability in the Anthropocene? And, ultimately, how can we learn with and not just about the heritage of non-human others? While framed as practical questions, this session rejects the clear division between theory and method whereby working and thinking with non-human others ultimately challenges our understandings of what archaeology and heritage studies is or can be.

Session 4: Archaeological education, expertise, and heritage management

Liisa Seppänen – liseppa@utu.fi

Docent of archeology and urban archaeology, expert in cultural environments

University of Helsinki, University of Turku, Hämeenlinna City Museum

Per Cornell – per.cornell@archaeology.gu.se

Professor, University of Gothenburg

Petri Halinen – petri.halinen@museovirasto.fi

Chief-intendant, docent of archaeology, Finnish Heritage Agency

Pirjo Hamari – pirjo.hamari@museovirasto.fi

Director of Development, partner in CHARTER project (2021–2024), Finnish Heritage Agency

Mika Lavento – mika.lavento@helsinki.fi

Professor, University of Helsinki

Format: Workshop

Abstract

In recent decades, the scope of archaeology has expanded both in research, heritage management and related practices in organizations and private sector. In Finland, the Museums Act (in effect since 1.1.2020) specified and strengthened the role of the regional museums as expert organizations providing information and services in cultural heritage including archaeological and built heritage, and issues related to cultural environment. As consequence, the responsibility of the local museums as heritage authorities increased, and in practice, the Act created new jobs for archaeologists at the regional level. In today's situation, where organizations, institutions, and archaeological companies require experts with wide knowledge, diverse qualifications and practical skills, there is a justified concern about the relationship between praxis and education in archaeology and heritage.

In this workshop, we discuss the skills and expertise needed in the field of archaeology, archaeological heritage management, and related practices and reflect how the education provided in the universities can respond to these needs both in quality and in quantity in the future. One may question whether the education provided by universities with limited resources, finance-oriented accountability and interests should be responsive to the needs of the field beyond academia. On the other hand, we need to ask how to make sure that the field can provide society with the expertise it needs. Ultimately, questions of education and expertise are entwined with the discussion about the role of archaeologists and archaeology both in society and in academia. How to ensure the progression of the field and increase comprehension of the meaning of archaeology in heritage sector and in sustainable development of societies?

The aim of this workshop is to increase understanding about the situation in different countries, share ideas about the prospects of archaeology, and promote collaboration for the benefit of the field, heritage sector, and society.

Session 5: No more lost futures; Postcapitalism and Cultural Heritage

Yorgos Paschos – yorgos.paschos@york.ac.uk

White Rose College of Arts and Humanities- funded doctoral researcher at the Department of Archaeology, University of York in collaboration with York Music Venue Network

Format: Lightning round

Abstract

Given the ongoing, multi-modal crisis of capitalist modernity in recent years, there has been an unexpected epistemological and social turn towards a discussion about alternative futures and prefigurative politics. Academic debates around post-capitalism, ranging from socio-ecological futures to spatial imaginaries and topologies, are emerging as a reflection on alternatives to capitalist realism. However, the relationship between postcapitalism and heritage is severely under-explored, leaving a gap in literature regarding the role of cultural heritage in an alternative future society. The need for a relevant debate around this connection is driven by the fact that heritage is not strictly about the past and its remnants. People's relationship with the past is perceived through their relation to present experiences. Hence, heritage is shaped and manifested in the present, aiming to produce itself in the future by looking critically at the past. Hence, this proposal aims to initiate a debate concerning the exploration of alternative futures emerging from and through heritage practices. It also aims to consider the possibilities of prefiguration that the exploration of both tangible and intangible heritage can offer, driven by the desire for something new. For instance, researching the social value of heritage sites can draw forth attempts that manifest the future society being sought. Therefore, reflecting on how cultural heritage and its values have been appropriated and used by capitalism as something sanitised and monetised, this proposal focuses on heritage to conceive it as a pool of past resources, for the production of postcapitalist narratives that will lead to something radically new and unexpected. It welcomes contributions that imagine a heritage-centred future beyond capitalism, considering the effects of capitalism on placed histories and heritage sites, while paving a way out of the present dominant social system. It intends to focus on under-represented groups and ponder on the power relations that are (re)produced through heritage practices.

Session 6: Who's in? Who's out? Interrogating the limits of inclusivity and exclusivity in the study of the Viking Age

Frida Espolin Norstein – frida.espolin.norstein@ark.su.se

University of Stockholm

Russell Ó Riagáin – russell.oriagain@ucd.ie

University College Dublin

Format: Standard paper session

Abstract

Recent decades have seen an expansion of what is understood as 'the Viking Age' and of who, where and what were involved. This expansion has taken place as part of what might be termed a 'global turn' in archaeology and historiography, necessitating a consideration of wider events and processes c.AD750–1050. Post-/de-colonial perspectives have also led to a greater consideration of the relationship between the multiplicity of speech communities within Fennoscandia itself, but often at the price of essentialising and othering those communities and relationships. There has also been a shift to multi-/inter-/transdisciplinary work on the period.

This session will explore why these inclusions/expansions in archaeological constructions of the Viking Age have occurred, why they took so long to come about, what is still excluded, what has been gained, and why, and what—if anything—should be done about these exclusions. Papers are also encouraged asking related questions such as:

Have these changes gone too far—or not far enough?

Has there been any shifts in wider research and popular discourse on the period in line with reframing the period?

To what degree is it tokenism using new terminology to obscure a failure to escape ethnic-based culture-historical thinking?

Are approaches from different disciplines being integrated sufficiently? Are we too beholden to historiography for framing the period?

Do we still have a terminological problem: what do we mean by terms such as viking, Scandinavian?

What is the historicity of the term 'Viking Age'? Did contemporaries see themselves as living in a Viking Age? Are there other ways of framing this period?

Do we need to think more about what/who/where we include and exclude when we use the term Viking Age, not least Sámi and Finnic groups, but also the Rus', Chud', and their neighbours?

Session 7: Heritage/Archaeology of Nuclear Power

Marko Marila – marko.marila@liu.se

Postdoctoral researcher, Linköping University

Anna Storm – anna.storm@liu.se

Professor, Linköping University

Format: Standard paper session

Abstract

From uranium prospecting to operating power plants and long-term storage facilities for nuclear waste, the nuclear power cycle produces tangible and intangible heritages. The scars of uranium mining linger in the surrounding nature in the form of waste rock and radiation. Nuclear power plants undergoing decommissioning evoke strong emotions in those who once worked in them, as well as in those who opposed their commissioning in the first place. The most enduring – and most well-researched – legacy of the nuclear power cycle is high-level waste which can stay radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years, forcing us to adopt a radically future-looking approach to heritage, but also calling for archaeological knowledges in attempting to predict the meanings and uses of nuclear heritage in the far future.

We offer this session as an opportunity for current reflections on the heritages and archaeologies of nuclear power. We welcome theoretical, practical, and speculative papers exploring, but in no way limited to, heritological and archaeological treatments on the following themes:

- contemporary archaeologies and materialities of the nuclear power cycle
- the heritages and archaeologies of anti- and pro-nuclear movements
- nuclear power as cultural and natural heritage
- nuclear decommissioning as heritagisation
- the heritages of nuclear disasters
- nuclear tourism

Session 8: Take a walk on the wild side or why Should we be creative in archaeology?

Joel Santos – joelrosantos@gmail.com

University of Leicester

Inês Castro – donaines.castro@gmail.com

Nova University of Lisbon

Tania Casimiro – tmcasimiro@fcsh.unl.pt

Nova University of Lisbon

Format: Standard paper session

Abstract

Be creative. Innovate. Make something new. Most of us have heard this recommendation from others or even from ourselves when trying to figure out what kind of archaeologists we are or want to be. Often this results in two polar opposite reactions; either we aim for creativity or avoid it, thinking it would mean sacrificing the scientific objectivity or seriousness of the discipline.

A general definition of creativity is the use of imagination or original ideas to create or invent something or to look at what exists from a different viewpoint and give it new meanings. Whatever it is, it is always associated with new meanings, new ideas, and new perspectives. As archaeologists, we try this daily in our minds, our teaching, our projects, our grant applications, our teams, and even our dreams.

This session aims to debate how being creative can help us develop different ways of seeing the world. We want to discuss how creativity is something that shouldn't be feared but rather something that is important and even necessary, something we should embrace if we truly want to fully engage with the past. We invite people that have generated new ideas for investigating and showing how archaeology can be creative in academia, in public presentations, in literature, in paintings, in music, in movies, and in any form of demonstration.

Session 9: Trans-digital Cultural Heritage Experiences – the Robbit

Christina Toreld – christina.toreld@bohuslansmuseum.se

Archaeologist and Curator of Education, Bohusläns museum, Sweden

Jienny Gillerstedt – jienny.gillerstedt@bohuslansmuseum.se

Exhibition Curator, Bohusläns museum, Sweden

Format: Workshop

Abstract

How can cultural heritage institutions create accessibility, social sustainability, and relationship-creating effects through trans-digital experiences with remote controlled game-based robotics? During 2022 and 2023 Bohusläns museum has, together with partner organisations, investigated and method-developed digital visits at museums and cultural heritage places in an interdisciplinary project enabled by the Swedish Arts Council. With our innovative solution we try to reach our visitors by a combination of an open, customizable distance robot solution, game design, user design, museum narratives and educational interaction. We enable museums to provide interesting and new perspectives to its remote visitors, through game design to create exciting and relevant experiences and to open parts of cultural heritage, exhibitions and collections that are otherwise inaccessible.

In our workshop we invite you to try out and further develop the cultural heritage experience. You will get the opportunity to test a museum visit where you control a small robot, a Robbit, remotely at Bohusläns museum. Which path do you chose?

After your visit, we will work together and discuss and create scenarios that would optimize the experience in terms of engagement for, and interest in archaeology, history, and cultural heritage. The results from the workshop will be included in our future work on displaying, communicating, and transferring cultural heritage in accessible and sustainable ways.