



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



The Object Habit: legacies of field work and the museum

Institute of Archaeology, UCL
April 7th–8th 2016

The term ‘object habit’ describes the phenomenon and associated practices of collecting material culture and specimens out of sociological, cultural and historical interest. It takes into account not just the physical nature of an object or specimen, but also the transformations in its relationships, meanings and receptions after it has left its original context and typically entered into a collection in another part of the world.

The aim of this conference is to explore the tensions surrounding historical and contemporary object habits and the constructions of knowledge that spring from cultures of field-collecting between the late eighteenth century and the present day. We seek to examine how provenanced objects and collections instantiate different sorts of knowledge as they are dispersed outwards from the fieldsite; how the material results of fieldwork are transformed or are emergent through curatorial practices; how they might reflect or reproduce national identities and imperial ideologies; the ways in which they may, or may not, remain connected with or relate back to the field; and what effect shifts in contemporary interests have upon the way individuals and communities relate to objects and their institutional histories.

Conference Details

This two-day, cross-disciplinary conference at University College London will take place on the 7th and 8th April 2016 at the Institute of Archaeology. The conference is linked to the AHRC-funded project ‘Artefacts of Excavation: the international distribution of artefacts from British excavations in Egypt, 1880–1980’, which is seeking to situate the treatment of archaeological finds from Egypt within broader, multi-disciplinary perspectives.

Attendance of the conference is free, but registration essential. Please contact project post-doctoral research associate Dr Emma Libonati (e.libonati@ucl.ac.uk).

For more information about the project please contact project lead Dr Alice Stevenson (alice.stevenson@ucl.ac.uk)

April 7th 2016

9:30-10:00 Registration

10:00-10:30 *The Object Habit*
Alice Stevenson and Emma Libonati, UCL

10:30-11:00 *Dr. Broom and the mammal-like reptiles: settler networks and international dimensions in early-twentieth century palaeontology*
Chris Manias, Kings College London

11:00-11:30 Coffee

- 11:30-12:00 *A 'Missionary exhibitionary complex'? re-presenting the field in pre-disciplinary contexts*
Chris Wingfield, Senior Curator of Archaeology, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge
- 12:00-12:30 *Collections in conundrum: the 1867 Universal Exhibition and the making of prehistoric archaeology*
Nathan Schlanger, Ecole nationale des chartes, Paris / UMR Trajectoires

12:30-12:45 Morning Discussion

12:45-1:45 Lunch

- 1:45-2:15 *Images and indigenous voices from the "field": museum representations of the world of Benin City and its Palace in contemporary displays of royal objects taken by British military forces in 1897*
Felicity Bodenstern, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz
- 2:15-2:45 *Monuments and the 'Mission civilisatrice': French encounters with Roman Lambaesis, 1844-1852*
Bonnie Effros, University of Florida
- 2:45-3:15 *Dysfunctions as "object habit"*
Marco Tamborini, Leibniz Institute for Evolution and Biodiversity Science, Museum für Naturkunde
Mareike Vennen, Institut für Kunstwissenschaft und Historische Urbanistik, Technische Universität Berlin

3:15-3:45 Coffee

- 3:45-4:15 In conversation: Claire Warrior
- 4:15-4:45 *Creating knowledge through archaeological representations: displaying Mesopotamian objects in Italian museums*
Melania Savino, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

4:45-5:15 Introducing new doctoral research 1

- 4:45-5:00 *Between the field and the museum: collections in transition at the annual exhibitions of Egyptian archaeology*
Alice Williams, University of Oxford
- 5:00-5:15 *Objects from India and Egypt in British museums*
Charlotte Coull, University of Manchester

5:15-5:30 or 5:45 Afternoon Discussion

5:30/5:45-8:00 Reception at the Petrie Museum

April 8th 2016

9:30-10:00 Registration

- 10:00-10:30 *An advantageous proposition*
Lucia Patrizio Gunning, UCL
- 10:30-11:00 *Reconstructing the past: displaying ancient monumental architecture within museum galleries*
Mathilde Touillon-Ricci, The British Museum

11:00-11:30 Coffee

- 11:30-12:00 *Whose objects? Ancient Egyptian collections in the UK between colonial guilt and universal identities*
Heba abd el-Gawad, University of Durham
- 12:00-12:30 *Beyond anecdote: writing the excavation and dispersal history of Nimrud*
Eleanor Robson, UCL

12:30-12:45 Morning Discussion

12:45-1:45 Lunch

- 1:45-2:15 *Objects, artworks, bodies: photographic modes and the making of Tutankhamun's treasures*
Christina Riggs, University of East Anglia
- 2:15-2:45 *Transforming objects through media: strategies of archaeological visualisation at late nineteenth-century German excavations*
Stefanie Klamm, Collection of Photography, Art Library, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
- 2:45-3:15 *"A Foreign Field" – how archaeologists shaped and reshaped news*
Amara Thornton, British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellow, UCL Institute of Archaeology

3:15-3:45 Coffee

- 3:45-4:15 *Talismans and tombs-chapels: Winifred Blackman's collections as source for modern Egyptian history*
Taylor Moore, Rutgers University

4:15-5:00 Introducing new doctoral research 2

- 4:15-4:30 *How Idrimi came to London*
Helene Maloigne, Department of History, UCL
- 4:30-4:45 *Mapping the field: armchair archaeology at Tell el-Yabudiyeh, 1870-1880*

Meira Gold, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University
of Cambridge

4:45-5:00 *Domesticating the Sumerians in Mandate Iraq (1922-1934).*
Agnes T. Henriksen, Department of History, UCL

5:00-5:15 or 5:30 Afternoon Discussion