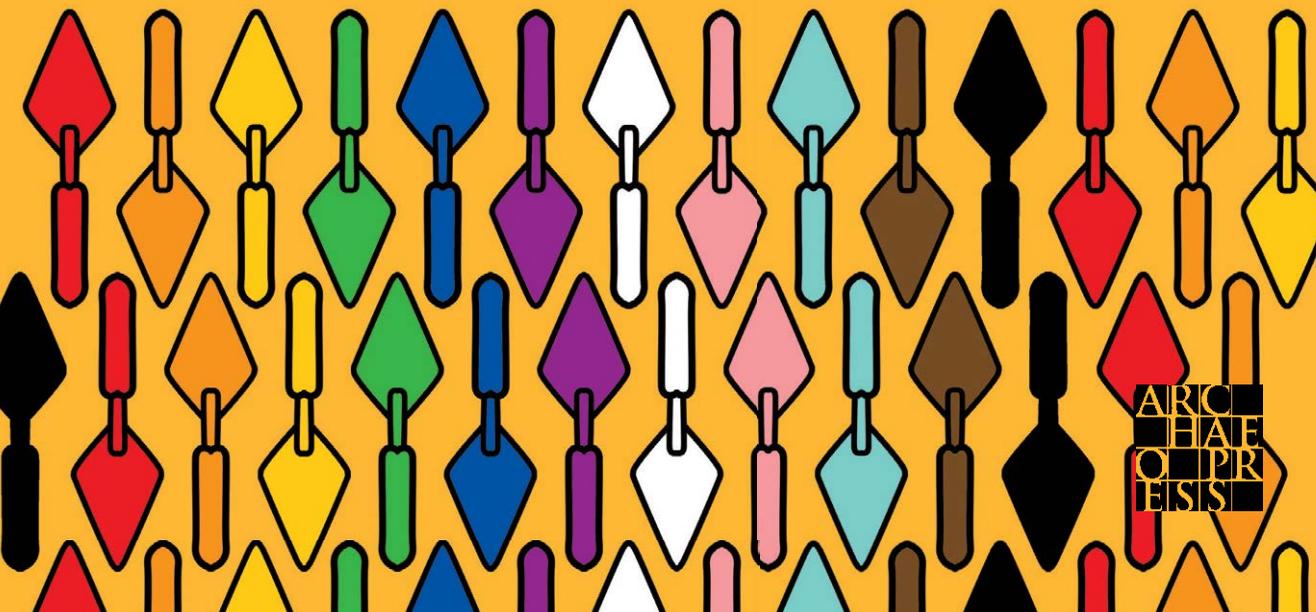


# DOCUMENTING ACTIVISM, CREATING CHANGE

Archaeology and the Legacy of  
#MeToo

Edited by Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins



ARCHAEOLOGY  
OF  
FEMINISM



# Documenting Activism, Creating Change

Archaeology and the Legacy of  
#MeToo

Edited by  
Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins

ARCHAEOPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY



ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD  
13-14 Market Square  
Bicester  
Oxfordshire  
OX26 6AD  
United Kingdom  
www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978-1-80583-006-1  
ISBN 978-1-80583-007-8 (e-Pdf)

© the individual authors and Archaeopress 2025

Cover: Pride trowels © Archaeopress



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

This book is available direct from Archaeopress or from our website [www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

# Contents

<b>Author Biographies</b> .....	vii
<b>Definitions</b> .....	xvi
<b>Organisations, Groups, Social Media Communities, Hashtags and Abbreviations Mentioned in This Book</b> .....	xvii
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	xix

## SECTION 1. Setting the Scene: Documenting Activism, Creating Change

<b>Chapter 1. Documenting Activism and Creating Change: Why Here? Why Now?</b> <b>Introduction to the Volume</b> .....	3
Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins	
<b>Chapter 2. Archaeologists, Activists, and Angry Trolls: Using Social Media for Digital Activism in Archaeology</b> .....	17
Alex Fitzpatrick	
<b>Chapter 3. ‘Illustrating’ the Voices of Female Archaeologists</b> .....	30
Rita Pedro	

## Section 2. Raising Awareness: Highlighting Harassment

<b>Chapter 4. From the Balkans to the Rest of Europe and Beyond: Raising Awareness about Harassment, Assault, Bullying, and Intimidation (HABI) in European Archaeology</b> .....	37
Laura Coltofean and Biserka Gaydarska	
<b>Chapter 5. Serbian Archaeology and the Rise of the Awareness of Sexual Assault</b> .....	49
Radmila Balaban, Monika Milosavljević and Tanja Ignjatović	
<b>Chapter 6. The Role of Small Groups in Big Issues. The Work of the Archaeology and Gender in Europe Community in the European Association of Archaeologists</b> .....	57
Biserka Gaydarska and Laura Coltofean	

<b>Chapter 7. #everyDIGsexism and Everything After .....</b>	<b>67</b>
Hannah Cobb	
<b>Chapter 8. A Peruvian Feminist Archaeology? An Initial Assessment.....</b>	<b>75</b>
Carito Tavera Medina	
<b>Chapter 9. Turkish Archaeology and Activism .....</b>	<b>91</b>
Yağmur Heffron and Elif Koparal	
 <b>Section 3. Online Activism: Creating Communities, Challenging Norms, Driving Change</b>  	
<b>Chapter 10. Forging Online Queer Activist Communities in a Time of Social Media Disintegration .....</b>	<b>103</b>
Nathan Klembara	
<b>Chapter 11. Feminist Resistance in Archaeology: The Cases of France and Belgium....</b>	<b>114</b>
Laura Mary, Béline Pasquini and Ségolène Vandevælde	
<b>Chapter 12. Acting Against Sexual Harassment in UK Archaeology: The RESPECT Campaign.....</b>	<b>123</b>
Kayt Hawkins and Cat Rees	
<b>Chapter 13. #ExcavationInProgress: Insights and Experiences of Sexism and Sexual Harassment from the Archaeological Sector in ‘Gender Equal’ Sweden .....</b>	<b>135</b>
Liv Nilsson Stutz, Petra Aldén Rudd and Ingrid Berg	
<b>Chapter 14. Mentoring: Women in Archaeology and Heritage. The Positive Power of Social Media within Women’s and LGBTQIA+ Spaces. ....</b>	<b>142</b>
Ruth Humphreys, Amy Talbot, Rosie Loftus, Alex Grassam	
<b>Chapter 15. TrowelBlazers as a Noun and a Verb: Online Activism through Sharing Histories of Women in Archaeology .....</b>	<b>148</b>
Brenna Hassett, Rebecca Wragg Sykes, Suzanne Pilaar Birch, Victoria Herridge	

## Section 4. Activism in the Workplace: Disrupting Structures of Discrimination

<b>Chapter 16. Future Challenges for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in Spanish Archaeology .....</b>	<b>163</b>
María Coto-Sarmiento, Ana Pastor Pérez, María Yubero Gómez, Paloma Zarzuela Gutiérrez	
<b>Chapter 17. Union Activism and #MeToo in UK Contracting Archaeology .....</b>	<b>174</b>
Jessica Bryan, Penelope Foreman, Isobel Phillips and Sadie Watson	
<b>Chapter 18. Making a Difference Together: Unionism, Archaeology and Change Over Time .....</b>	<b>187</b>
Megan Schlanker and Jane Evans	
<b>Chapter 19. In Pursuit of Systemic Equality: The UK's First Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff in Development-led Archaeology.....</b>	<b>203</b>
Shantol Campbell, Veronica Abadie, Rosanna Volpe, Sara Perry	

## SECTION 5. Commentary and Conclusion

<b>Chapter 20. Strategies and Tactics for Addressing Interpersonal Abuses of Power in Archaeology: A Commentary on <i>Documenting Activism, Creating Change: Archaeology and the Legacy of #MeToo</i> .....</b>	<b>218</b>
Barbara L. Voss	



# List of Figures and Tables

## **Chapter 6. The Role of Small Groups in Big Issues. The Work of the Archaeology and Gender in Europe Community in the European Association of Archaeologists**

- Figure 1. The illustration by Nikola Radosavljević which accompanies the text by Laura Coltofean-Arizancu and Bisserka Gaydarska deconstructing the stereotype that ‘Archaeology is free of harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation’ (after Coltofean-Arizancu and Gaydarska 2021)..... 62

## **Chapter 7. #everyDIGsexism and Everything After**

- Figure 1. Anonymised examples of the use of #everyDIGsexism from Twitter in April 2015 70

## **Chapter 11. Feminist Resistance in Archaeology: The Cases of France and Belgium**

- Figure 1. One of the posters in the exhibition highlighting the sexism, misogyny and objectification of female field archaeologists (image source: authors)..... 117
- Figure 2. One of the posters in the exhibition highlighting sexual harassment (image source: authors)..... 118
- Figure 3. The Archaeo-Sexism exhibition at the headquarters of the Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (INRAP) (image source: authors) ..... 119

## **Chapter 12. Acting Against Sexual Harassment in UK Archaeology: The RESPECT Campaign**

- Figure 1. A PowerPoint slide showing the members of IDEAH (image source: Hannah Cobb)..... 126
- Figure 2. RESPECT button badges (image source: Cat Rees) ..... 128
- Figure 3. Delegates at the Cifa conference 2023 visiting the Archaeo-Sexism exhibition (image source: Hannah Cobb)..... 130
- Figure 4. Sticky notes, added on the last day of the conference, denote the experiences that conference attendees had also had in their own careers (image source: K. Hawkins) ..... 130
- Figure 5. Gender of authors in Issues 97 and 107 of The Archaeologist..... 132

## **Chapter 15. TrowelBlazers as a Noun and a Verb: Online Activism through Sharing Histories of Women in Archaeology**

- Figure 1. The Raising Horizons exhibition was a collaboration in 2016 and 2017 between TrowelBlazers and photographer Leonora Saunders, creating portraits highlighting historical women in archaeology and geoscience staring contemporary women in these fields. The exhibition was exhibited by the Royal Geological Society at Burlington House in London in 2017 and was accompanied by an educational programme hosted by the Society of Antiquaries. In this image Amara Thornton portrays Margaret Murray (image copyright Leonora Saunders, reproduced with permission) ..... 152
- Figure 2. Brenna’s Chuck Taylors and her yellow archaeopteryx, posted on Twitter as part of the TrowelBlazers #InMyShoes campaign (image source: Brenna Hassett. More about the campaign in Suhay 2015) ..... 153

**Chapter 19. In Pursuit of Systemic Equality: The UK’s First Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff in Development-led Archaeology**

Figure 1. NEDS members and allies featuring in an introductory video about the Network for MOLA staff, filmed in 2022. Screenshot by: NEDS ..... 205

Figure 2. Campbell (left), NEDS lead, and Abadie (right), co-lead, visiting the In the Black Fantastic exhibition at Southbank Hayward Gallery in 2022 with former colleague and Network ‘alumni ally’ Emily Wilkes. Photo credit: Emily Wilkes... 209

Figure 3. Members and allies on a 100 miles challenge as part of a fundraising effort for Cancer Research UK in May 2023. Photo credits: Shantol Campbell, Rosanna Volpe, Katrina Foxton, Kate Faccia ..... 210

Figure 4. NEDS members and allies on a guided nature hike with Wild in the City psychotherapists and nature guides in September 2023. Funded by AHRC as part of the Together We Flourish project (Demicoli and Campbell 2023). Photo credit: Shantol Campbell ..... 212

Figure 5. NEDS members and Allies after a self-guided exploration of the various exhibitions at Museum of London in November 2021. Photo credit: Museum of London steward ..... 214

**Chapter 20. Strategies and Tactics for Addressing Interpersonal Abuses of Power in Archaeology: A Commentary on Documenting Activism, Creating Change: Archaeology and the Legacy of #MeToo**

Table 1. Structural Barriers to Eliminating Harassment and Other Interpersonal Abuses of Power in Archaeology ..... 235

Table 2. Organisations, Groups, Social Media Communities and Hashtags Mentioned in This Book ..... 236

## Author Biographies

**Veronica Abadie** is a Governance, Risk and Compliance professional with a focus on ethics, ESG and policy making, and specialised in privacy law. She is an advocate for the responsible use of technology and is now training in AI algorithm auditing for ethical standards, compliance, safety and the prevention of potential harm to individuals and society. Veronica is a former co-lead of MOLA's Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff and a member of both MOLA's EDI and Sustainability Working Groups. One of her personal interests is to follow and support the research done by meaningful organisations such as the World Justice Project and the Mozilla Foundation, as she strongly believes in the importance of equality, human rights and the rule of law in the creation of a sustainable future.

**Petra Aldén Rudd** has a bachelor's degree from Gothenburg University and has worked as a contract archaeologist for the past 30 years, currently at Rio Göteborg. Her fieldwork is mainly focused on Western Sweden, and her area of expertise is the Swedish Iron Age. She is currently the chair of the Swedish Contract Archaeology trade association, SUBO. Petra was one of the informal leaders of the #excavationinprogress movement in Sweden where she carefully administered and protected the collection of testimonies, and took a leading role in disseminating the work through presentations at universities and professional organisations. She was also one of the main organisers of the conference on sexual harassment in archaeology in Sweden after #MeToo in 2020.

**Radmila Balaban** is a PhD candidate at the Department of Archaeology of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade where she is also a librarian at the same Department. As a team member, she contributed to improving the *Policy on the Protection against Sexual Harassment and Blackmail* at the at same institution. Her research focuses on the methodology of collecting and selecting archaeological information used in creating Big Data. Her academic interests also lie in the social relations and role of material culture in the formation of social structures in the Neolithic period.

**Ingrid Berg** has a PhD in Archaeology from Stockholm University. She is an historian of archaeology, specialising in the history of Swedish fieldwork in the Mediterranean. Her other research interests include contemporary uses of heritage, gender and academia, and interdisciplinary method and theory. She held the position of president of the Swedish Archaeological Society from 2018–2020 (during the #MeToo period), was active in the #excavationinprogress movement in Sweden and was one of the main organisers of the conference on sexual harassment in archaeology in Sweden after #MeToo in 2020. She is currently the Deputy Director of the Centre for Integrated Research on Culture and Society (CIRCUS) at Uppsala University.

**Suzanne Pilaar Birch** is Associate Professor in Anthropology and Geography at the University of Georgia, USA. Her research combines zooarchaeology and stable isotope analysis to investigate changes in diet, mobility, and settlement systems in the period spanning the end of the last ice age to the arrival of farming in the circum-Mediterranean. She is an active advocate of open access publishing and online data and research sharing. She co-founded

TrowelBlazers, which highlights women in the fields of archaeology, paleontology, and geology, and is also an editor-in-chief of the open access journal for Quaternary science, Open Quaternary.

**Jessica Bryan** is a Project Officer for MOLA London, and has worked in developer-led archaeology for nearly 20 years, specialising in field work and excavation. Jessica is also the Chair for the Archaeologist branch of Prospect Union. Her union membership began in her early career and she has been a union rep for over ten years, initially focusing on Health and Safety, and was elected as Branch Chair in 2020. Jessica is also an elected member of the Prospect National Executive Committee. Jessica's union work is guided by her desire to make archaeology a safe, fair and rewarding industry to work in.

**Shantol Campbell** is currently Project Coordinator at Kent and Medway Medical School, supporting the implementation of programmes and conduct of research. Shantol has a background in project management, with years of experience between 2021 and 2023 leading a commercial engagement team within the Museum of London Archaeology Research and Engagement department. Her experiences include designing, developing and coordinating the delivery of meaningful projects for a wide range of diverse communities and audiences. She was lead and founder of Network for Ethnically Diverse staff. Shantol passionately advocates for racial inclusion and dismantling barriers to underserved and underrepresented communities. By exploring themes of intersectionality, racial inequity and nuanced experiences, she aims to build a sense of belonging through creative community and research projects.

**Hannah Cobb** is a Professor of Archaeology and Pedagogy at the University of Manchester and the University's Academic Lead for Academic Development. Hannah is a founder of #everyDIGsexism, was a founding Trustee of the Enabled Archaeology Foundation, and she founded and chaired the Cifa Equality and Diversity Group between 2015 and 2022. She also leads on global conversations about teaching and learning in archaeology and heritage. Hannah has published extensively on teaching and learning in archaeology, including in the major publication *Assembling Archaeology: Teaching, Practice and Research* (Oxford University Press, 2020) and the 6th edition of the classic textbook *Archaeology: An Introduction* (with Greene and Moore, Routledge 2024). Through her teaching, research and leadership she passionately advocates for inclusion, equity and diversity in the past, present and future.

**Laura Coltofean** is an archaeologist of Hungarian and Romanian origin, who has lived and worked in multiple European countries. She is the chair of the Education, Training and Professional Development Advisory Committee of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) and a member of the EAA's Appeal and Anti-Harassment Committee. She also chaired the Archaeology and Gender in Europe (AGE) Community of the EAA between 2018 and 2021. Her research interests include safety, well-being and inclusivity in contemporary archaeological practices. Her recent work in this area includes co-authoring the first Europe-wide survey on harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation in archaeology (<https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2023.58> [doi.org]), as well as co-organising the annual workshops and discussion sessions on preventing such behaviors at the Annual Meetings of the EAA. She was a member in the task forces which drafted the EAA 2020 Statement on Archaeology and Gender, the section on Safe Work Environment, Equality and Inclusion in the EAA's Code of Practice (2020–2021), and the Safe Space Policy for the EAA Annual Meeting in Budapest (2021).

**Maria Coto Sarmiento** is a postdoctoral researcher in the Centre for the Evolution of Urban Networks (UrbNet) at Aarhus University (Denmark). She previously worked as a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Early Prehistory and Quaternary Ecology at the University of Tübingen (Germany). Her research interests include the study of cultural and economic dynamics in the past, including the application of computational methods. Her work is broadly multidisciplinary, combining her current work with the analysis of the role of women in Spanish fieldwork. She also collaborates as an editor and writer, mostly on women in academia, for 'La Paradoja de Jevons' [The Jevons Paradox], a blog published in *El Salto Diario*, about technology and science.

**Alex Fitzpatrick** (FSA Scot) is a zooarchaeologist and interdisciplinary researcher who is particularly interested in making archaeology and the broader heritage sector more inclusive, diverse and anti-oppressive. Her work is particularly focused on embedding anti-racist and anti-ableist practices within the field, based on her own experiences as a disabled Chinese-American migrant in the UK sector. She currently sits on the Enabled Archaeology Foundation committee as their acting Research Officer. Alex is also the creator and host of the ArchaeoAnimals Podcast, which ran for over five years on the Archaeology Podcast Network, and also runs the Animal Archaeology blog. She is currently a Research Associate of the Science Museum and holds a Visiting Research Fellowship at the University of Leeds.

**Pen Foreman** (PCiFA) is a Senior Inclusive Heritage Advisor for Historic England, where they work on sector-wide projects to develop inclusion and access to heritage and archaeology for employees, volunteers, visitors and learners. They were formerly a project manager for national programmes at the British Museum and Head of Community Archaeology for the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. Pen is Chair of the Board for the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, having been a member of the EDI SIG since 2016 and then becoming Board EDI Champion and one of the founders of the EDI Standing Committee in 2022. Pen has been a Trade Union activist for over 15 years with NASUWT, UNISON and Prospect, particularly focused on LGBTQ+ rights and disability rights.

**Bisserka Gaydarska** is a Bulgarian-born prehistorian who lives and works in the UK. She is currently a member of the EAA (European Association of Archaeologists) Executive Board and served as a co-chair of the AGE (Archaeology and Gender in Europe) community between 2019 and 2022. Her main research interests are prehistory of Eastern Europe, fragmentation in archaeology, early urbanism and gender in the past and current archaeological practices. With others, she has edited and published research on various aspects of gender (past and present) in archaeology and is a co-organiser of the now annual workshops at the EAA meetings on preventing practices of harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation.

**Alex Grassam** (BA Hons, MSc, MCiFA) worked for around 20 years in the heritage sector, starting out as a field archaeologist before specialising in assessment and post-excavation reporting, before progressing to a heritage consultancy role for a multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy, working on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. She was a member the CiFA Equality and Diversity Group from 2017 to 2021, and took on the role of Fairness, Inclusion and Respect ambassador. In 2022, Alex took the decision to pursue her career-long interest in engagement and is now a Stakeholder Engagement, Consultation and Communications consultant, specialising in construction. Despite no longer working

professionally in the heritage sector, her passion for the discipline remains; she is the leader of Pontefract Young Archaeologists Club, a role she has held now for 13 years. She is also a founding member of MWAH.

**Brenna Hassett** (FSA) is a Lecturer in Forensic Osteology and Archaeology at the University of Central Lancashire and a Scientific Associate at the Natural History Museum London. She is one quarter of the TrowelBlazers Project ([www.trowelblazers.com](http://www.trowelblazers.com)) which seeks to improve representation of women in the digging sciences by collecting and sharing stories of women's work. Brenna conducts research on child health and evolution as well as the history of women in archaeology and related disciplines, and writes books for popular audiences including the Times UK Top 10 Science Book (2017) *Built on Bones: 15,000 Years of Urban Life and Death* (Bloomsbury, 2017) and her most recent work *Growing Up Human: The Evolution of Childhood* (Bloomsbury, 2022).

**Kayt Hawkins** is a Senior Archaeologist at Archaeology South-East, UCL Institute of Archaeology, having worked in commercial archaeology for over 25 years as a Romano-British ceramics specialist. Alongside her archaeological work, Kayt is committed to improving working conditions for archaeologists and heritage professionals across the UK sector. A co-author of the BAJR RESPECT in Archaeology Guide, Kayt is also a key member of the RESPECT team, working to highlight and tackle harassment and bullying within the profession. Kayt has also previously been active within the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, most recently as a project board member for the 'Qualitative Inequalities Research in the Archaeology Sector' study. In 2023, Kayt secured funding for the printing of an English language version of the Archaeo-Sexism exhibition, and has worked with colleagues in the European Association of Archaeology to help provide training and information on ways to challenging sexism and harassment.

**Yağmur Heffron** is Lecturer in the History of the Ancient Middle East at UCL, a specialist in the archaeology and social history of ritual practices of *karum* period societies of Middle Bronze Age Anatolia, and a field archaeologist working in Türkiye. Her research interests also include the history and historiography of archaeological interpretation, archaeological labour relations, and issues surrounding equity and injustice in archaeological field practice. Since 2022, Yağmur has been Assistant Director of the Uşaklı Höyük Archaeological Project in Yozgat, Türkiye.

**Ruth Humphreys** (BA Hons, MPhil, MCIFA) is a Senior Consultant (Cultural Heritage) within the Specialist Environmental Services team at Arup, and founder member of Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage (MWAH). She has over 15 years experience working as a field archaeologist, ceramicist and heritage consultant in the UK, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Ruth is a member of the CIFA International Practice Specialist Interest Group committee and advocates for locally led, high quality cultural heritage practice at an international level, as well as supporting efforts to decolonise our practice at home and abroad.

**Tanja Ignjatović** is a psychologist, a PhD in political science and a member of the Autonomous Women's Center (Belgrade, Serbia) since 2001. She is the coordinator of programmes for knowledge development, education, research, analysis of public policies and advocacy. Tanja is the author of accredited training programmes for professionals, with the largest number

of realisations in Serbia. She has taught at the Center for Women's Studies and is currently co-leader of the course Politics of Representation: Gender, Violence and Media at the Faculty of Media and Communication (Belgrade). Her specific research interest is in coordinated institutional response to violence against women.

**Nathan Klembara** is a Teaching Assistant Professor Kansas State University. He combines archaeological, ethnographic, and linguistic methods to study the entanglement of archaeological knowledge production and queer politics. His current research examines the epistemic status of queer theory in archaeology as it is understood and used (or ignored) by practicing academic archaeologists. In addition, he is interested in applications of queer theory to the Upper Paleolithic in an effort to denaturalize problematic heteronormative assumptions about the past.

**Elif Koparal** is a professor of Archaeology at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University. Her interest areas are landscape studies, theoretical archaeology and digital archaeology. She is one of the founders of TAG Turkey. She has conducted long term projects in Western Anatolia, and published extensively on Ionian archaeology.

**Rosie Loftus** (BA Hons, ACIfA) is a Commercial Field Archaeologist from West Yorkshire UK. After going on a school trip to the research dig at Wood Hall in East Yorkshire she fell in love with being in the field. She attended Newcastle University and gained a BA in Ancient History and Archaeology in 2010. Rosie gained her first archaeology job in 2015 and started volunteering at her local Young Archaeologist Club. She wrote a short article for CIFA's magazine (*The Archaeologist*) in 2019 on her experience of being a dyslexic archaeologist. Rosie is one of the founding members and admins of MWAH and is passionate about providing a safe space and a voice for those who have traditionally been othered in the heritage industry.

**Laura Mary** is an archaeologist working for the ASBL Recherches et Prospections archéologiques (Belgium). As a project manager, she manages a team responsible for the conservation of archaeological material at the Agence wallonne du Patrimoine's Centre de Conservation et d'Études which was affected by the Belgian floods in July 2021. She is also the founder of the *Paye ta Truelle* collective, which fights for equality and diversity in archaeology. She is one of the three curators of the 'Archéo-Sexisme' exhibition and an active member of the Archéo-Éthique association. Since 2017, she gives courses, lectures and seminars in France and Belgium to raise awareness of the issue of discriminations in French-speaking archaeology. With Isabelle Algrain, she co-authored the first manual on gender archaeology in French, *Introduction à l'archéologie du genre* (Ed. Fedora, 2024).

**Monika Milosavljević** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Archaeology, at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade, as well as the head of the Center for Theoretical Archaeology of the same department. Her research interests delve into theory and methodology within the history and philosophy of science – particularly the philosophy of archaeology, the political usage of archaeology, the history of archaeology, the archaeology of identity and general archaeological theory. In recent years, Monika has focused on medieval mortuary archaeology of the Balkans. As a team member, she contributed to the *Policy on the Protection against Sexual Harassment and Blackmail* at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade as well as one of the initiators of the adaptation of the *Ethical Codex*

*of the Department of Archaeology within the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, whose 5th principle promotes safe educational and workplace environments.*

**Liv Nilsson Stutz** is a professor of Archaeology at Linnaeus University. Her research focuses on a range of issues pertaining to burial archaeology and the archaeology of death, including archaeoethnology, ritual practice, body theory, sensory archaeology, ethics, and repatriation. She has also published extensively on interdisciplinarity in archaeology, and its implications on intellectual debate, power, and resources. She was active in the #excavationinprogress movement in Sweden, and one of the main organisers of the conference on archaeology in Sweden after #MeToo in 2020. She also initiated the university wide ‘Lucia action’ at Linnaeus University in 2023, to raise awareness of issues of gender inequality in Swedish academia and to demand action for change. This work is still ongoing.

**Béline Pasquini** received her PhD from Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. She is a specialist in economic history and archaeology of the Roman world. She also worked extensively on ethics in archaeology. In 2018 she was one of the organisers of the Archéo-Ethique conference in Paris. Béline is now working as a collection registrar in an archaeology museum near Paris.

**Ana Pastor Pérez** is a Sr Project Specialist in Archaeological Collections at the Getty Conservation Institute (Los Angeles, US) and lecturer with experience in critical heritage studies, conservation, and social archaeology. Ana holds a PhD and an MA in Cultural Heritage Management and Museology from the University of Barcelona, a degree in Archaeological Conservation from the ESCRBC of Madrid, and a degree in History from the Autonomous University of Madrid. In 2011, she participated in the ICCROM’s course “Reducing Risks to Cultural Heritage,” developing a holistic view of research and practice. Her PhD focused on Social Archaeological Conservation integrating ethnographic techniques and sustainable conservation strategies. Prior to the GCI, she worked as postdoctoral researcher at the Norwegian Institute of Cultural Heritage and the Autonomous University of Barcelona, leading different community-based projects. At GCI Ana works with archaeological collections to fill knowledge gaps and highlight the work of conservation from an inclusive and contextualized perspective.

**Rita Pedro** is a commercial archaeologist in East Anglia. Rita studied Archaeology at Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto in Portugal (BA) and Anthropology and Archaeology of America at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (MSc), in Spain. She worked in Portugal and Spain, in both rescue and research archaeology projects, before moving to the UK in 2016. Having always been interested in painting and drawing, in 2021 Rita started to do satirical illustrations about the life and struggles of an archaeologist. In 2022 Rita presented her art at the Symposium on Identity, Archaeology and Semiotics at the Università Ca’Foscari, in Venice, and in 2024 at the Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (UCL). The comic-like illustrations aim to spotlight and criticise the often precarious work conditions in archaeology, but also to emphasise the gender-based discrimination that exists in this industry, giving voice to female archaeologists who are still regularly discriminated against today.

**Sara Perry** (PhD, FSA) is Associate Professor in Digital Public Archaeology at UCL and formerly Director of Research and Engagement at Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) (2019–2023).

She is Honorary Professor and, previously, Senior Lecturer in Cultural Heritage Management at the University of York (UK).

**Isobel Phillips** is a Prospect EDI Rep who works extensively with other Prospect Reps to champion and advocate for inclusion and diversity in the archaeological sector. During her time working at Wessex Archaeology she worked on updating policies and guidance to make them more inclusive, promoting menopause awareness and guidance, creating toilets for all genders and greatly improving parental leave pay. Throughout this time Isobel worked on opening and maintaining transparent and honest dialogue with senior management and with staff members to improve equality and inclusion for all. Isobel now works at LUC where she advocates equality and diversity in the workplace.

**Cat Rees** (MCIfA) is a partner at CR Archaeology and is currently undertaking a PhD in partnership between Amgueddfa Cymru and Manchester Metropolitan University. She has worked in commercial archaeology since 2002, and in 2017 co-authored the BAJR Respect in Archaeology Guide. As a member of the RESPECT team, Cat campaigns tirelessly against harassment and bullying across the archaeology and heritage sector, and uses her voice in support for those less well represented in the profession.

**Megan Schlanker** (BA Hons, MSc, PCIfA) is a Graduate Teaching Fellow and PhD Researcher in the School of Humanities and Heritage at the University of Lincoln. While working on this volume, Megan worked as an archaeologist for Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). In this role, she was a representative for Prospect Union, and a member of the MOLA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group. Megan was the Honourary Chairperson of the CIfA Early Career Special Interest Group committee from 2021 to 2024, and in 2022 was named Highly Commended Early Career Archaeologist at the Archaeological Achievement Awards. Megan's current research focuses on the history of museum education and youth engagement in the heritage sector. She is passionate about diversity, equity and inclusion, and is an advocate for neurodiversity inside and outside of the archaeology and heritage sector.

**Amy Talbot** (BA Hons, MA, ACIfA) worked in commercial archaeology from 2012 to 2020 across a variety of roles from field archaeologist to heritage consultant. Amy is currently working as a consenting manager for Locogen, specialising in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage related constraints. She is a founder member of Seeing Red and MWAH.

**Carito Tavera Medina** is a PhD student at the University of Barcelona and a researcher in the project ArqueologAs/Herstory funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and the European Union. She is a founder member of the Network of Women in Peruvian Archaeology and presides the Peruvian Institute of Archaeological Studies. Carito is a member of the Committee on the Status of Women in Archaeology of the Society of American Archaeology. She was a guest professor at the San Antonio Abad National University of Cusco (2021–23). She is currently the co-director of the Chicama Archaeological Program, where she studies pre-Hispanic foodways on Peru's north coast, focusing on the Moche society. Her research addresses gender violence and highlights the history of women in Peruvian archaeology. Her articles "A Feminist Perspective on the Peruvian Archaeological Community" (2019) and "Printed Inequalities: A First Step for the Study of Women's History in Peruvian Archaeology"

(2021) provide critical insights into structural violence and gender disparities in the field. She also co-edited in 2022 the book *Women of the Past and Present: A Vision from Peruvian Archaeology*.

**Ségolène Vandeveld** holds a PhD in Archaeology, Anthropology and Prehistory from the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. As Adjunct Professor and Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Canada, she is working on the development of new methods for dating rock art sites in Quebec. More generally, she is interested in the dynamics of the occupation of archaeological sites in caves or rock shelters through the high-resolution analysis of anthropic traces (soot, pigments) recorded in speleothems. She has also published on ethics in archaeology and science, and in 2017 founded the association Archéo-Éthique with Béline Pasquini. This led to the symposium 'Archéo-Éthique' in Paris in 2018, which was published in the Canadian Journal of Bioethics. In 2019 she co-curated the exhibition 'Archéo-Sexisme' with Laura Mary (*Paye Ta Truelle* collective) and Béline Pasquini (Association Archéo-Éthique), before officially joining the *Paye Ta Truelle* collective in 2020 to develop further actions to fight discrimination in archaeology as a feminist archaeologist.

**Rosanna Volpe** (PCIFA) is a Research and Consultant Archaeologist specialising in underwater heritage at the 'JF Champillion' Study Centre for Egyptology and Coptic Civilization in Genoa-Cairo, as well as the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism in Egypt, Cairo. She was a NEDS Co-Lead, and held various posts at MOLA supporting different teams including engagement, field archaeology, finds and environmental processing, and CITIZAN. Her expertise lies in underwater archaeology, with a focus on exploring and preserving submerged cultural heritage sites. Her interest is in the heritage preservation and law of antiquities, maritime history, and the cultural exchanges that took place through ancient ports in west Mediterranean civilisations.

**Barbara L. Voss** is Professor of Anthropology at Stanford University, where she is also affiliated with the Stanford Archaeology Center, the Center for Comparative Studies of Race and Ethnicity, the Program on Asian American Studies, the Program on Urban Studies, and the Program on Gender and Sexuality Studies. Major books include *Archaeologies of Sexuality* (Routledge, 2002, with R.A. Schmidt); *The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis* (University of California Press, 2008; University of Florida Press, 2015); *The Archaeology of Colonialism* (Cambridge University Press, 2012, with E.C. Casella); and *铁路华工的跨国生活* [Transnational Lives of Chinese Railway Workers] (China Social Sciences, 2019, with J. Tan and J.R. Kennedy). Her 2021 two-article series in *American Antiquity* ('Documenting Cultures of Harassment in Archaeology' and 'Disrupting Cultures of Harassment in Archaeology') document the severity of sexual harassment in archaeology and proposed trauma-informed interventions to support survivors and prevent further harassment.

**Sadie Watson** (PhD, FSA, MCIFA) is a Senior Research Fellow at MOLA London, undertaking a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship, intending to ensure cultural and social impacts of developer-funded archaeology become primary considerations of future projects. Prior to this Sadie spent more than 20 years in the London field team, responsible for complex urban excavations. This shaped both her academic research focus, and her commitment to equity and inclusion. Sadie first joined Prospect at the beginning of her career and has been a rep for many years, more recently with a focus on EDI.

**Rebecca Wragg Sykes** is an archaeologist, author and public scholar, with affiliations as Honorary Research Associate at the McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, and Honorary Fellow in the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool. She combines collaborative academic research focusing on prehistory and history of archaeology with work beyond academia, ranging from writing and collaborative artistic projects to scientific consultancy across heritage, television and film and publishing. Rebecca's work has been recognised with the 2022 Public Anthropology Award from the Royal Anthropological Institute, the 2022 President's Award from the Prehistoric Society, and the 2023 the Darwin Medal from Humanists UK . Her first book *Kindred: Neanderthal life, love, death and art* was awarded the 2021 PEN Prize for History. As co-founder of TrowelBlazers, she led the *Raising Horizons* project (2015–17), a touring photographic portrait exhibition juxtaposing women past and present in archaeology and the Earth Sciences, and is co-developing a new project to investigate women connected with Neanderthal research

**Maria Yubero Gómez**, PhD, is Training Coordinator at Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO), former Talent Officer at the Institute of Marine Science (CSIC) and the Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology. She holds a PhD in Spatial Analysis in Archaeology (2016) from the University of Barcelona. Currently her work focuses on fostering and promoting healthy research environments. She is REMO (Researcher Mental Health Observatory) Ambassador at COST Action CA19117 since 2023.

**Paloma Zarzuela Gutiérrez** is a PhD candidate at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Her interest in understanding how historical knowledge is created has led her to write a thesis focusing on the role of women in Spanish Archaeology from a feminist perspective. Drawing from her experience as a Field Technician in archaeological consulting firms in both Spain and Ireland, she brings a comprehensive perspective of archaeology to her publications. She is affiliated with the CGT union, where she advocates for labour improvements, particularly for those working in academia. In 2024 the documentary 'Off the Archaeological Record', which she co-directs, will be released.

# Definitions

Papers in this volume refer to a number of social media. We recognise that these may change or become obsolete over time so we begin with a brief explanation of what these are at the time of writing.

- **Bluesky:** microblogging platform which uses limited characters for mainly text based posts.
- **Discord:** platform for closed online communities to share media and have conversation, including functionality for live calling.
- **Facebook:** a social networking site for sharing content and connecting with individuals and communities. Profiles can be set to public or private. Facebook pages promote individuals, organisations and businesses. Facebook groups enable people to connect around a shared interest and can be publicly accessible or limited to invited people only.
- **Facebook Messenger:** an instant messaging app owned by Facebook.
- **Instagram:** a photo and video sharing platform, where uploaded media can be organised by hashtags and geolocation and set to public or invited viewers.
- **Mastadon:** microblogging platform which uses limited characters for mainly text based posts.
- **Slack:** a team communication platform which enables file sharing, aimed primarily at business users.
- **TikTok:** a platform for short-form video sharing.
- **Tumblr:** a platform for microblogging, image sharing and social networking.
- **WhatsApp:** an encrypted instant messaging app for messaging between individuals and groups.
- **X:** formerly known as Twitter (and mostly referred to as Twitter in this volume). A social networking site for microblogging, sharing news, media and short text (limited to 280 characters) posts.

We acknowledge that there are many other forms of social media, for example SnapChat and WeChat, but they were not discussed in this volume and thus are not defined here.

# Organisations, Groups, Social Media Communities, Hashtags and Abbreviations Mentioned in This Book

(reproduced from Chapter 20, Table 2)

#DiggingWhileDepressed

#EveryDIGSexism

#MeTooArchaeology

#TimesUpArchaeology

#utgrävningpågåår

91 Stories of Archaeology

AGE (Archaeology and Gender in Europe community of the European Association of Archaeologists)

Archaeologists in the Andes

Archéo-Sexisme

ArkeoGazte

Arqueólogas feministas

Association Archéo-Éthique

BANEA (British Association of Near Eastern Archaeology)

BAJR (British Archaeological Jobs and Resources)

Beyond Notability

Black Trowel Collective

BWA (British Women Archaeologists)

CEPA student union

Chantier-Éthique

CifA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists)

CII-IAUB (Equality and Intersectionality Commission of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Barcelona)

CRAS (Centro Revolucionario de Arqueología Social)

DAN (Disabled Archaeologists Network)

Diggers' Forum

EAA (European Association of Archaeologists)

EAF (Enabled Archaeology Foundation)

Early Career Professional

ESBAA (European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists)

Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers

Finding Ceremony  
FLAMA (Collective of Feminist Archaeologists)  
Gender Commission of the Professional College of Archaeologists of Peru  
HABI (Harassment, Assault, Bullying and Intimidation)  
Heritage Group, Archaeology Branch of Prospect Union  
ICAC Equality Committee (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology)  
IDEAH (Inclusion, Diversity and Equality in Archaeology and Heritage)  
Indigenous Archaeology Collective  
IPHES (Catalan Institute of Human Paleoecology and Social Evolution)  
Museum Detox  
Museum Senses  
MWAH (Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage)  
NEDS (Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff at the Museum of London Archaeology)  
Neurodiversity in Archaeology Network  
Paye ta Truelle collective  
Prospect Union  
Protect  
Queer Archaeology  
Queer Archaeology Interest Group (Society for American Archaeology)  
Raising Horizons  
RED MAP (Network of Women in Peruvian Archaeology)  
REM (Race Equality Matters)  
RESPECT Campaign  
RESPECT LGBT+ in Archaeology and Heritage  
RWAH (Respect Women in Archaeology and Heritage)  
Save Sheffield Archaeology  
Seeing Red Campaign  
SAA (Society of American Archaeologists)  
Society of Black Archaeologists  
The Collective Change  
The Fieldwork Initiative  
TrowelBlazers  
TUC (Trade Union Congress)  
UNISON  
WILLKAS (Peruvian Network of Feminist, Dissident and Decolonial Archaeology)

# Acknowledgements

As we outline in our introduction, the seeds of this book were sown not just in our own online activism, but from witnessing inspirational online activism of others, and between 2018 and 2023 in numerous conference sessions hearing about the need for such activism, and the difference it has made in a variety of ways. We thank contributors and audience members who informed the original conference sessions that this volume arose from, and all the amazing online activists we have encountered over the years. We also thank some key individuals and organisations; we are deeply grateful to Barbara Voss for taking the time to provide such a brilliant and thought provoking commentary for and conclusion to this volume, to UCL for their support to make this volume open access, and to the University of Manchester whose National Teaching Fellowship stipend awarded to Hannah has supported some of the other costs associated with the volume. We also thank our families for their unwavering support. Finally, we thank Mike Schurer and the team at Archaeopress for their assistance in bringing this volume to fruition.

All individual author opinions are their own, and we acknowledge the bravery, resilience and strength of all of the participants for doing the work they do and taking the time to record it in so many creative and thoughtful ways here. Thank you!



SECTION 1.  
Setting the Scene:  
Documenting Activism, Creating Change





## Chapter 1.

# Documenting Activism and Creating Change: Why Here? Why Now? Introduction to the Volume

Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction to an Introduction

There has been a tremendous wave of feminist, intersectional, anti-harassment, anti-discrimination activism that has swept archaeology and heritage since at least 2010, and unlike at any other time in archaeology's short history, much of this has taken place online. This has created a space to have open conversations that previously only existed in whisper networks, and this openness has meant that sexism, misogyny and harassment can no longer be ignored or dismissed. This has forced our sector to listen, and organisations have had to confront hard truths and, in some instances, begin to make changes to their practice. As this book shows, the picture is not necessarily global, but none the less the ubiquity of social media has brought activism around gendered inequalities and violence against women and minorities to the fore in archaeological practice around the world.

But, unlike at any other time in archaeology's short history, the activism that has unfolded over the last fifteen years has almost always occurred in temporary, transient spaces. Online meetings, websites, blogs and of course social media platforms do not share the permanence of standard academic publications. They happen in a moment, sometimes a furious raging moment where just 140 characters may burn as brightly as the brightest beacon and provide the fuel for many years of change. But, as social media feeds become full, as domain subscriptions end, as passwords are lost or the ethical foundations of a social media platform change, so as quickly as they ignite, these beacons are extinguished, or lost, or forgotten. Indeed, as we write this in 2024, the increasingly fragmented landscape of social media means that there are fewer eyes on these beacons of activism. Moreover, much of the activism that has happened in these temporary fora has been undertaken by many for free, in their spare time; in a lunch break, on the bus, in the middle of the night whilst feeding a tiny baby. This is the liberating power of social media activism – anyone can do it at any time, and thus women and people facing minoritisation in other ways can raise their voices like no other time in history. But this is also the curse of social media activism; whole swathes of society whose voices have been silenced in the past can be heard, but only in their voluntary, spare time, only in this transitory moment, and only often at the expense of vicious attack (e.g., Perry, Shipley and Osborne 2015).

---

<sup>1</sup> Hannah Cobb (✉) CAHAE, 2.9 Samuel Alexander Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M33 6HY, UK. Email: Hannah.Cobb@Manchester.ac.uk.  
Kayt Hawkins, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31-34 Gordon Sq, London, WC1H 0PY, UK.

There have been some recent powerful publications documenting and challenging cultures of harassment (Voss 2021a, 2021b), and a range of recent surveys evidencing the wide-spread nature of sexual harassment in archaeology have been published (Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023; Hodgetts *et al.* 2020). But despite these brilliant and important studies, there have been few permanent spaces which have specifically sought to document the incredible (predominantly) online activism of the last decade, and its impacts. This is a dangerous position to be in for several reasons. The fluidity of online and discursive spaces are such that these efforts could be lost; that either corporate organisations claim the narrative of change as their own but distil it to fit their business models, or that changes they made in the face of sustained activism get quietly reversed ‘when all the fuss dies down’. Either way, the time, labour (often unpaid and unacknowledged) and care of brave, powerful, committed activists is in danger of being lost. This book aims to challenge this by providing a space to record this work, to amplify activist voices and share the good practice and positive change that their work has engendered, bringing together accounts from leading individuals and organisations. In doing so, it acts to capture a moment in time of powerful change and collective action in archaeology and heritage practice in a way that does not exist elsewhere. It also provides a resource to allow future practitioners to understand the developments that such activism has enabled and to see tangible examples of the kind of good practice that they can also employ to challenge harassment, discrimination, sexism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and ableism, and embed principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in their work.

To bring this volume together we have made some important choices. First and foremost, against a backdrop of the current trans-exclusionary rhetoric of the culture wars, we want to begin with a clear statement that papers in this volume take a trans-inclusive stance. When we say women in this volume, that always includes trans women. Moreover, we recognise that gender fluid, gender queer, gender non-conforming and non-binary archaeologists often face even more harassment and discrimination than those who present as women. Therefore, where possible, we and our contributors try to speak in a way that acknowledges this and makes space for a conception of gender that is not reductively binary. Furthermore, we recognise that discrimination is also always intersectional (Crenshaw 1989; Agbe-Davies 2024) and that intersectionality means that people will experience discrimination and harassment differently depending on the intersecting dimensions of their race, gender, age, sexuality and disability. Accordingly, there are no universalising statements here – no contributors assume that harassment and discrimination occur in a singular way.

Another choice we have made in this volume is stylistic. Capturing activist work in the format of a book means asking those people who wrote tweets, or guidance, or who stood up to systemic inequity in their free time, and who continue to do this work for free, to do even more work in that same unpaid, voluntary space. Moreover, we recognise that transforming the momentary dynamism of a post of social media, or the more personal confessional style of a blog or conference paper, into something more traditional can lose the essence, power and impact of that work. As a result, rather than take this dynamic work and try to ‘shoehorn’ it into formal academic papers here, which involve more free labour in voluntary time, we have encouraged contributors to write in formats that suit them. Consequently, this volume comprises a range of formats of papers, pieces of both short- and long-form traditional academic writing sit next to illustrations, personal blog-style reflections, and a number of conversation pieces. The latter took place online, through video-conferencing platforms,

highlighting in themselves the continuing power of the online space for creating communities for change. It is also of utmost importance to us that this volume is open access. It provides a permanent space, bringing together and documenting the work of the practitioners whose activism is leading to tangible changes in the way that archaeology and heritage address cultures of harassment, bullying and inequality. But so much of the activism it documents was only possible itself because of open, accessible media and we recognise the continued activist potential of this volume lies in its continued accessibility.

The activism that this book captures has not happened in a vacuum, however. It emerges from the dual context of the growing feminist and intersectional discourse of archaeologists since the 1980s, alongside wider social activism beyond our discipline, which so acutely coalesced into a wave of global activism in the #MeToo movement in 2017. In the rest of this introduction, therefore, we set the scene for this volume. We highlight, and pay respect to, work that has gone before us within archaeology and outline how movements outside of archaeology such as #MeToo and other online activism have stimulated a vibrant body of archaeological grassroots activism on equalities issues in a dynamic and impactful way.

### **Contextualising Archaeological Activism**

The archaeological activism we see today has its roots in work that has been taking place (in press at least) for exactly 40 years at the time of writing. Margaret Conkey and Janet Spector's revolutionary paper 'Archaeology and the study of gender' (Conkey and Spector 1984), was the first publication to highlight gendered inequalities in both interpretations of the past and in archaeological practice in the present. Their work was a catalyst for the development of feminist approaches to archaeology and throughout the 1980s and 1990s a sustained critique emerged. This work highlighted that normative modern, western, binary understandings of gender were repeatedly and uncritically applied to interpretations of the past, and at the same time they were constantly reproduced in present day practice, with men dominating public-facing roles and women regularly doing 'the archaeological house-keeping' (Gero 1985). By the 1990s this critique had coalesced around an engendered approach (Claassen 1994; Conkey and Gero 1991 and papers therein; Sørensen 2000; Spector 1993). Engendered archaeologies demonstrated that archaeology needed to do more to challenge gendered inequalities than simply taking an 'add women and stir' approach. Instead, engendered approaches argued that the discipline needed to explicitly recognise, interrogate and theorise the active role that gender played in both past societies and in contemporary archaeological practice.

The legacy of the engendered approach to archaeology has been to stimulate an extensive body of literature that has highlighted the breadth of issues that must be addressed to make the pasts we tell and the presents we live more inclusive. These include intersectional approaches (Franklin 2001, Heath-Stout 2020; Agbe-Davies 2024), Black and anti-racist archaeologies (Battle-Baptiste 2011; Brunache *et al.* 2021; Flewellen *et al.* 2021; Franklin 2001; Franklin *et al.* 2020; Society of Black Archaeologists 2020; Sterling 2015), anti-colonial archaeologies (Atalay 2006; Atalay 2012; Cipolla, Quinn and Levy 2019; Colwell 2016; Watkins 2005), queer archaeologies (Blackmore 2011; Blackmore *et al.* 2016; Dowson 2000; Geller 2017; Voss 2000), and studies of difference (Moore 1993; Moore 1994) and personhood in the past (Fowler 2004; Marshall 2008; Marshall 2012).

Yet, despite this substantial body of academic work, extensive inequalities persist in contemporary practice. In the UK, the archaeological workforce demographics evidenced in the regular *Profiling the Profession* exercise provide an important insight. Although the gender gap has narrowed significantly from around 70% of archaeologists being male in 1997 to almost equal figures in 2020 (Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021), this is not the case for all age brackets. Most archaeologists aged 45 and over are men (Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021, fig. 2.4.2), reflecting that most senior roles are still male dominated. Moreover, *Profiling the Profession* demonstrates that 97% of archaeologists in the UK are white and 89% are not disabled (Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021), whilst studies of diversity in archaeology students suggest significant barriers to progression persist as they show a much greater diversity amongst students than professionals (Cobb 2015). Similar gendered imbalances at senior levels, and a lack of racial diversity and disabled archaeologists are evidenced in other studies of the archaeological workforce in America (Zeder 1997), Canada (Overholtzer and Jalbert 2021), Australia (Ulm *et al.* 2013) and across Europe (Aitchison *et al.* 2014) (for a fuller discussion of these statistics, see Cobb and Croucher 2020, 93–102). Furthermore, workforce statistics are only one part of the picture. Alongside these figures, a series of recent quantitative and qualitative accounts highlight the prevalence of sexual harassment within the entirety of archaeological practice, from the professional settings of developer-led and cultural resource management (CRM) archaeology to academic field schools and research (Colaninno *et al.* 2020; Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023; Hawkins and Rees 2018, Hawkins and Rees 2020; Hodgetts *et al.* 2020; Voss 2021a, 2021b).

This brief literature review highlights the robust legacies of feminism and intersectional approaches to inequality in archaeology and the many academic publications that have raised and attempted to address the gendered and intersectional inequalities that continue to persist in our subject. This means that, as social media platforms grew from the first decade of the 21st century and opportunities arose for women and minoritised archaeologists to speak out about their experiences of harassment and inequity, there was a strength of academic work that bolstered the growing online critique (Cobb and Crellin 2022). We return to explore this in archaeology shortly, but crucially it is not only the strength of academic voices that emboldened archaeological activists online. Beyond archaeology, a broader global development of social media activism had been on the rise since the mid 2000s, most powerfully exemplified by the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements, and these also played a key role in connecting and galvanising grassroots activism against harassment and discrimination in archaeology.

### **Online Activism and the Emergence of #MeToo and #TimesUp**

As we will discuss shortly, the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements gained global traction in 2017, but to understand their story it is important to recognise that from as early as the first decade of the 21st century there were already a number of powerful national and transnational online activist movements and associated social media hashtags which aimed to highlight issues of harassment and discrimination. #MeToo itself began as a grassroots movement in 2006 in the United States, instigated by survivor and activist Tarana Burke, as a way to empower Black women who had experienced sexual violence, to create support networks and resources and remove feelings of isolation (me too 2022). Also in the US in 2008 the #StopStreetHarassment campaign and hashtag was founded with the aim of documenting

and ending gender-based street harassment, and by the early 2010s this had quickly become a transnational hashtag and movement (Bowles Eagle 2015). Similarly, beginning in the UK but quickly gathering international recognition was the #EverydaySexism project. This was founded by Laura Bates in 2012 to document every day occurrences of sexism and sexual harassment, with the project existing in both a social media account and hashtag and with an accompanying online form for people to record their experiences in order to create a detailed evidence base of such occurrences. Within the first three years of its existence the Everyday Sexism project had collated 100,000 entries in 13 different languages, and this database is now undergoing detailed analysis by researchers at the University of Oxford (Melville, Eccles and Yasseri 2019). In France the #PayeTaShnek movement, founded by Anaïs Bourdet, did a similar piece of work (see Mary *et al.* this volume). Also founded in 2012, and also using social media and an online form to collect testimonies, it culminated in the publication of a volume of selected testimonies edited by Bourdet (Bourdet 2014). Elsewhere localised grassroots social media movements have also had powerful impacts. In India the #BoardtheBus movement was founded in 2014 and encouraged women to reclaim mobility and public spaces (Bowles Eagle 2015). In Argentina the #NiUnaMenos (not one less) movement was founded in 2015 by a collective of artists, journalists and academics as a campaign against femicide and gender-based violence, and with a focus particularly on rights to safe and legal abortions (Diaz 2021). It quickly spread across Latin America and has contributed to the legalisation of abortion in Argentina and movements towards great liberalisation of abortion laws in Mexico and Chile (Diaz 2021). Meanwhile, back in the US, Janet Mock's #GirlsLikeUs and the National Black Justice Coalitions #BlackTransProud have worked to raise awareness about the 'intersection of racial justice and trans equality' (Martin and Valenti 2013).

These social media movements and their accompanying websites and blogs are part of a wider movement of online feminist and intersectional activism that flourished from the 2000s onwards. Their presence, alongside blog sites such as *The Vagenda*, provided a new platform for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (henceforth EDI) activism, and have been identified by many as a fourth wave of feminist activism (Martin and Valenti 2013). Although there have been mixed discourses about the problems and limitations of the online space for feminist activism (Martin and Valenti 2013; Mendes, Ringrose and Keller 2018; Ott 2018), its value for providing a voice for those who might ordinarily be silenced, or have no space to be heard, is undeniable. This is perhaps best exemplified by the explosion of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements in 2017. By 2017, over a decade of online activism and the effective deployment of other equity related movements such as #EverydaySexism, alongside a more ubiquitous social media culture than ever before, meant that not only were women already primed to use this kind of media to speak out, but that businesses, workplaces, governments and individuals were primed to listen. Thus, when a number of actors began to use the #MeToo hashtag on their social media platforms to highlight the sexual abuse and harassment they had been subjected to by film director Harvey Weinstein and a number of other prominent male figures in the film industry, the world took notice. Very quickly women across the globe took to social media, using the #MeToo hashtag to highlight their own experiences of sexual harassment and abuse in their own lives and workplaces on a scale that had never been seen before. At the same time the Time's Up movement was also launched, which also aimed to use social media platforms and the hashtag #TimesUp to highlight gender based discrimination in the workplace (TIME'SUP 2022). The powerful combination of these two hashtags enabled a global outpouring of the discrimination and harassment many women experienced in workplaces

and throughout their lives. From these broader movements sector specific hashtags emerged, such as #TimesUpAcademia, highlighting the extent and specific nature of harassment and abuse within different workplaces.

The long term implications of these movements are notable in many ways. In the film and theatre industries, for example, cultural changes have taken place with the introduction of intimacy co-ordinators, the removal of known sexual predators from their media platforms, and the high profile imprisonment of the most prolific of such predators, Harvey Weinstein. In the global media (papers in Fileborn and Loney-Howes 2019) and health industries (Choo *et al.* 2019) changes are being noted whilst in the UK, the impacts of the #MeToo movement have been felt even at the heart of government, with the movement leading to the 2018 Women and Equalities Select Committee (WESC) *Sexual Harassment in The Workplace Report* and subsequent 2021 consultation, Dame Laura Cox's (2018) independent review into *The Bullying and Harassment of House of Commons Staff*, Gemma White QC's (2019) *Bullying and Harassment of MPs' Parliamentary Staff* inquiry; and Naomi Ellenbogen QC's (2019) *An Independent Inquiry into Bullying and Harassment in the House of Lords* (Julios 2022). In addition, the UK Parliament's Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme has been established, and their Helpline contacted by 388 people in 2021/2022 (Julios 2022), whilst 56 MPs are currently facing investigations for sexual misconduct. Of course this doesn't mean change has been ubiquitous (indeed in the case of the UK Parliament Julios (2022) argues that significant changes to the status quo are needed for change to really take place), or that digital feminist activism doesn't have limitations (Mendes 2018; Ott 2018), but none the less social media activism has provided a globally recognised discourse around addressing cultures of harassment in a way that has not been seen before, and in a way that has led to fundamental and tangible change.

### **Impact of #MeToo in Archaeology**

It is no exaggeration to say that, despite the wide body of academic literature in archaeology and heritage that we cite above which has addressed EDI issues in both our contemporary practice and our interpretations of the past, archaeologists have felt increasingly angry that in practice they have seen little in the way of tangible changes to their lived experiences of harassment, discrimination and bullying. As a result, both as part of and stimulated by the social media activism that we review above, this anger has come to the fore over the last decade in the form of a growing movement of grass roots, intersectional activism. This has developed, globally, within the Archaeology and Heritage sector, to play an important role in challenging practices of sexual (and other) harassment, discrimination and bullying in our profession on a scale that has not been seen before. Crucially, rather than occupying traditional academic spaces of discourse, many of these activist movements have been enacted through social and digital media. Sometimes such activism has taken the form of highlighting an immediate moment of harassment and inequality using #MeToo, #TimesUp and #EveryDaySexism and discipline specific hashtags such as #TimesUpArchaeology and #everyDIGsexism in social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Sometimes the same media and same hashtags have been powerful tools for the telling of stories of sustained experiences of inequality and harassment experienced over decades. Sometimes the activism we see has taken the form of personal blog posts, dedicated websites or the production of video or digital art – again all shared and reproduced via social media. Sometimes this activism has taken the form of network building through spaces such as Facebook groups, and other social media platforms,

coalescing into the formation of organisations such as Mentoring Womxn in Archaeology and Heritage (hereafter MWAH!), British Women Archaeologists, TrowelBlazers, the RESPECT Campaign (established by one of this volume's editors, Kayt Hawkins), *Paye ta Truelle*, Queer Archaeology, the Enabled Archaeology Foundation, the European Society for Black and Allied Archaeologists, the Society of Black Archaeologists, the Indigenous Archaeology Collective and the Black Trowel Collective (many of these are discussed throughout this volume, and see both front matter and Chapter 20 for full list). All of these forms of activism have enabled immediate, responsive and, crucially, very public ways of highlighting sexual, gendered and intersectional harassment and discrimination, and thus they have been powerful for pushing employers and professional bodies to recognise and act on inequalities in ways that decades of traditional academic discourse have never before been able to. Crucially, though, they have also been important for providing a space for those often rendered voiceless to speak out, and for networks of support and action to emerge.

The development of these movements mirrors the wider global trends in online feminist activism reviewed above. Some, such as TrowelBlazers and the British Women Archaeologists, harnessed the power of blogging and social media networks from very early on, whilst others such as #everyDIGsexism (co-founded in 2015 by one of this volume's editors, Hannah Cobb – and see Cobb this volume) drew on broader trends in hashtag activism to call out sexism. But the real momentum in online activism in our profession followed the explosion of #MeToo from 2017 onwards, as papers in this volume attest. Globally accounts of sexism, sexual harassment and sexual violence in archaeology and heritage were shared using #MeToo and many more were shared in confidence, with a new energy, anger and determination to finally address this issue. In addition to general #MeToo accounts, archaeologists started their own hashtags such as #utgrävningpågår in Sweden (#excavationinprogress, Nilsson-Stutz *et al.* this volume), #PayeTaTruelle in France (Mary *et al.* this volume) and various blogs started to draw together accounts of harassment such as *91 Stories of Archaeology* (Rocks-Macqueen 2018).

Survivor accounts have always been a part of awareness raising, and activism found a renewed strength in sharing these stories. In 2018 at the European Association of Archaeology conference in Spain activists stuck posters around the conference venue with the results of a survey on sexual harassment with space for individuals to add anonymised personal accounts (Coto Sarmiento *et al.* 2018, 2020, 2022, this volume). In 2019, a series of #MeTooInArchaeology conference sessions were organised by The Collective Change, a group of North American archaeologists, during which anonymised accounts of sexual misconduct, harassment and violence, accounts which spanned decades, were read out-loud to the delegates (Collective Change 2019, 12). So powerful was this session at the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) 2019 conference that the room was full and delegates filled the space outside the room in an emotional and resolute show of solidarity. Ironically, at the same meeting the SAA also experienced its own #MeToo moment when an academic, recently banned from his own institution for sexual harassment, was able to register and attend the meeting where his accusers were also present (Flaherty 2019). Women are well practised at implementing, through necessity, buddy-systems and ways of navigating harassers at such events (Voss 2021a, 2021b) however on this occasion, the organisation was called out on social media for failing to act (and eject the alleged harasser) and for gaps in its new anti-harassment policy that allowed such a situation to occur (Flaherty 2019). This has led to direct changes at the SAA and elsewhere, and indeed many organisations have, since 2018, developed policies and

statements relating to sexual harassment, often focusing specifically on their events (though how to protect delegates from harassers in realms outside of the event remains an issue, due largely to a fear of potential legal ramifications). Grass roots activism remains committed to change; further conference sessions followed, within the UK at the Theoretical Archaeology Group conference (2019), at the annual conference of the professional organisation the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2021), and at the European Association of Archaeology (EAA) in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Many of the papers in this volume began their life as papers delivered, or conversations shared, at these conferences.

### **How this Volume is Organised**

This brings us neatly to introduce this volume itself. As we note above, many papers arise from the important conference sessions cited here, but it is not a conference proceedings. Indeed, with its mix of conversational pieces, images, blog style reflections and academic style papers, this book may be unlike any archaeological publication that has come before. These different formats reflect a desire to capture activist work, to document it, but also to allow for reflective freedom and, as discussed above, to reduce the burden of voluntary labour on those already engaged in so much of such work via social media and beyond. To enable an ease of referring to different social media platforms without having to constantly define them, the front matter includes a list of social media commonly discussed throughout the volume, and a list of abbreviations, which readers might find helpful.

The volume is structured into five sections. Section one, where you find yourself now, comprises this paper, and one by Alex Fitzpatrick (itself adapted from a combination of blog and conference paper), which set the scene, highlighting the broader debates and context from which papers in the volume arise. This volume also begins each section with an illustration by field archaeologist and artist Rita Pedro, and so the third paper in this introduction is a short piece by Rita providing the background to her illustrations and the issues that they are designed to highlight. Section two brings together accounts of activism which have acted to raise awareness of harassment. In all of these accounts, social media has of course played a part, from acting as a tool to share surveys and toolkits (e.g., Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.*, Balaban *et al.*), to call people out, and to embolden others to speak out about their experiences (e.g., Koparal and Heffron). These papers are also woven into a broader tapestry of activism and awareness raising beyond social media. The third section directly highlights examples of activism, campaigns and resources to address harassment and equity issues which were 'born digital'. Many utilised hashtag activism (e.g., Mary *et al.*; Nilsson Stutz *et al.*), and provide both positive exemplars (e.g., Klembara; Hassett *et al.*), opportunities to form online communities, and online guides to good practice (e.g., Hawkins and Rees; Humphreys *et al.*), all of which have gone on to have significant impacts beyond the online world. The fourth section picks up activism in the workplace, demonstrating how online campaigns have been powerful drivers in stimulating and shaping workplace activism, whether driven by Union engagement (e.g., Watson *et al.*; Schlanker *et al.*), cross-sector initiatives (Coto-Sarmiento *et al.*), or intersectional work place networks (Campbell *et al.*). Finally, the book concludes with a commentary and conclusion paper by Barbara Voss, whose recent papers on harassment (Voss 2021a, 2021b) have shaped and influenced all of the contributors in this volume.

Despite the broad divisions that we have drawn to organise the papers in this volume, there are some notable cross cutting themes which appear throughout. The legality, for example, of holding data about known harassers, of sharing such data, and of naming names in public, is a constant and understandable concern. This concern manifests itself in different ways in different papers. For those who speak for, or represent, broader heritage organisations or universities, speaking out about harassment risks reputational damage and legal charge beyond the individual themselves and may result in them losing their job. On the other hand, for those who may make claims as an individual, there may be no wider legal protection, no workplace safety net, and naming names or speaking out about a known harasser can lead individuals to be both isolated and to have to tread difficult legal paths alone. The flip side of this argument is in the question of anonymity of those undertaking activism or speaking out about harassment. Some papers advocate for such anonymity, recognising how it can be liberating and allow a frank detailing of experiences harassment, whilst others worry that anonymous accounts can undermine the credibility of activism that aims to expose harassment and discrimination.

Many papers in the volume also express the broader tensions of being both activists affiliated with a larger organisations, and activists who are independent of affiliation. The latter means that activists carry heavy burdens of others' trauma and cannot tap into wider support structures to help deal with the personal impact of this. Moreover, independent activists, who are often minoritised already, feel a sense of exhaustion from constantly pushing for change from without, constantly causing trouble, and in turn constantly feeling alienated or isolated because of their stance. In contrast, activists affiliated with organisations feel a suite of other frustrations; the lack of ability to be responsive on social media in the moment because of having to seek organisational permission, the precarity of going against central communication directives, and again the exhausting sense of constantly pushing for change, but this time from within, constantly hitting bureaucratic walls and/or being shut down by hierarchical power structures. For many activists, however they are working, the sense of legacy, of who will take up the baton next, whilst all the while social media fragments, is a pressing concern. Likewise, no matter whether activists are within or independent from larger organisations, the fact that much of the pushing, much of the support for others and the advocacy for change and direct activist actions are in the background, unseen by social media and a wider watching world, is also exhausting.

As Cobb and Crellin have argued (Cobb and Crellin 2022), whatever form it takes, activist work *is* exhausting, but they point to the affirmative ethics of posthumanist feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti, who argues that 'anger and opposition alone are not enough: they need to be transformed into the power to act so as to become a constitutive force' (Braidotti 2019, 36). And herein lies the final connecting, cross cutting theme of this volume – because each of these papers represents that transformation of anger and opposition into constitutive force. Each of these papers represents amazing and powerful work that is driving change across our sector, and this is our primary aim of the volume; to showcase this incredible activist work in all its forms, so that it will not be lost, forgotten, or consumed by 'ethics-washing' narratives of big business.

### **Who is Missing?**

Undoubtedly there are gaps in this volume, and it is important to hold our hands up and clearly acknowledge these. We are, for instance, painfully aware that the Global South is poorly represented here and for this we are deeply sorry. This is not from a lack of reaching out to colleagues, but represents a range of different trends that have prevented their involvement. In some instances, those we reached out to highlighted that the dangers of activism, and of speaking out about it and publishing on and putting one's name to activism were simply too high. The threats to careers, to lives even, were too huge. In other instances, activists felt they were a single voice in their country and that their activism had not elicited change enough to cover. For others still, the voluntary and unpaid nature of their activist work simply meant that their time and resources were already too stretched to be involved. Indeed, this is just as true of colleagues in the Global North too. Another reason for absences here is because some colleagues we reached out to, again across the world, were in the midst of processing traumatic experiences that had arisen precisely because of their activism, and they simply were unable to contribute because they needed to protect their own wellbeing and mental health. Indeed, the preparation of this volume spanned the global Covid19 pandemic, and for many this meant their time was even further stretched through extraordinary workplace changes and through extraordinary home and care responsibilities, and thus having the voluntary time to do or write about activism, on top of everything else, was impossible.

Another thing we have wrestled with is where we should draw a line within the fuzzy, intersectional boundaries of the work presented here in terms of what is included. In the end we decided to keep the focus of this volume around sexual and gendered harassment, and though we have maintained an intersectional stance, it would be remiss not to highlight that online activism around other areas of discrimination, particularly work to establish race equity, have also been incredibly powerful and deeply inspirational. We acknowledge that the intersections of this work with activism around harassment could have been explored more explicitly, and hope this might provide fertile ground for a future volume.

### **One Last Gap as a Conclusion, and as a Beginning**

We have highlighted the gaps in this volume, but it is perhaps the most telling gap of all that despite all of the brilliant work on gender equity and fighting sexual harassment that is documented here, it remains mainly women and non-binary colleagues that have led the field in this activism. We are sure that many men consider themselves allies, but in the end we need more than this to achieve the equity we seek and to end cultures of gendered violence and sexual harassment that globally continue to pervade archaeology. We need men who are willing also to be activists for this cause, and thus to also carry the burdens of voluntary labour, of hearing and supporting those going through trauma, of pushing workplaces and societies and professional bodies for change. So, we conclude this introduction by appealing particularly to male readers. As Flewellen *et al.* (2021) have called for not just allies but accomplices in striving for race equity, so the same is needed around harassment too. The papers in this volume are sometimes shocking in the harassment and perpetuation of systematic gendered inequity that they highlight, and almost all speak to the need for structural change. If you are reading this volume and, however you identify, you are in a position to help, to push for change, and to raise your voice in support or more, we urge you to do it. Because in the end,

social media activism can only take us so far – real world structural change has to follow, and we urge you to take the papers in this volume as your inspiration and to be active in making such change happen.

## Bibliography

- Agbe-Davies, A.S. 2024. 'Intersectional thinking in archaeological analysis', in M. Moen and U. Pedersen (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Gender Archaeology*. London: Routledge: 73–86.
- Aitchison, K., Alphas, E., Ameels, V., Bentz, M., Borş, C., Cella, E., Cleary, K., Costa, C., Damian, P., Diniz, M., Duarte, C., Frolík, J., Grilo, C., Initiative for Heritage Conservancy, Kangert, N., Karl, R., Kjærulf Andersen, A., Kobrusepp, V., Kompare, T., Krekovič, E., Lago da Silva, M., Lawler, A., Lazar, I., Liibert, K., Lima, A., MacGregor, G., McCullagh, N., Málcalová, M., Mäesalu, A., Malińska, M., Marciniak, A., Mintours, M., Möller, K., Odgaard, U., Parga-Dans, E., Pavlov, D., Pintarič Kocuvan, V., Rocks-Macqueen, D., Rostock, J., Pedro Tereso, J., Pintucci, A., Prokopiou, E.S., Raposo, J., Scharringhausen, K., Schenck, T., Schlaman, M., Skaarup, J., Šně, A., Staššíková-Štukovská, D., Ulst, I., van den Dries, M., van Londen, H., Varela-Pousa, R., Viegas, C., Vijups, A., Vossen, N., Wachter, T., and Wachowicz, L. 2014. *Discovering the archaeologists of Europe 2012–14: Transnational report*. York: York Archaeological Trust.
- Aitchison, K., German, P. and Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2021. *Profiling the profession 2020*. London: Landward Research. Online: <https://profilingtheprofession.org.uk/>. [Accessed 30 September 2024].
- Atalay, S. 2006. 'Indigenous archaeology as decolonizing practice'. *American Indian Quarterly* 30 (3/4), 280–310.
- Atalay, S. 2012. *Community-based archaeology: Research with, by, and for indigenous and local communities*. Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.
- Battle-Baptiste, W. 2011. *Black feminist archaeology*. Walnut Creek (CA): Left Coast Press.
- Blackmore, C. 2011. 'How to queer the past without sex: Queer theory, feminisms, and the archaeology of identity'. *Archaeologies* 7, 75–96.
- Blackmore, C., Drane, L., Baldwin, R. and Ellis, D. 2016. 'Queering fieldwork: Difference and identity in archaeological practice'. *SAA Archaeological Record* 16(1), 18–23.
- Bourdet, A. 2014. *Paye Ta Shnek: tentatives de séduction en milieu urbain*. Paris: Mazarine.
- Bowles Eagle, R. 2015. 'Loitering, lingering, hashtagging: Women reclaiming public space via #BoardtheBus, #StopStreetHarassment, and the #EverydaySexism Project'. *Feminist Media Studies* 15(2), 350–353. doi: 10.1080/14680777.2015.1008748.
- Braidotti, R. 2019. *Posthuman knowledge*. London: Polity.
- Brunache, P., Dadzie, B., Goodlett, K., Hampden, L., Khreisheh, A., Ngonadi, C. and Plummer Sires, J. 2021. 'Contemporary archaeology and anti-racism: A manifesto from the European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists'. *European Journal of Archaeology* 24(3), 294–298.
- Choo, E.K., Byington, C.L., Johnson, N.L. and Jagsi, R. 2019. 'From #MeToo to #TimesUp in health care: Can a culture of accountability end inequity and harassment?' *The Lancet* 393(10171), 499–502.
- Cipolla, C.N., Quinn, J. and Levy, J. 2019. 'Theory in collaborative indigenous archaeology: Insights from Mohegan'. *American Antiquity* 84, 127–142.
- Claassen, C. (ed.) 1994. *Women in archaeology*. Philadelphia (PA): University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Cobb, H. 2015. 'A diverse profession? Challenging inequalities and diversifying involvement in British archaeology', in P. Everill and P. Irving (eds) *Rescue archaeology: Foundations for the future*. Hereford: RESCUE, 226–245.
- Cobb, H. and Crellin, R.J. 2022. 'Affirmation and action: A posthumanist feminist agenda for archaeology'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 32(2), 265–279.
- Cobb, H. and Croucher, K. 2020. *Assembling archaeology: Teaching, practice and research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Colaninno, C.E., Lambert, S.P., Beahm, E.L. and Drexler, C.G. 2020. 'Creating and supporting a harassment- and assault-free field school'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 8(2), 111–122. doi: [dx.doi.org/10.1017/aap.2020.8](https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2020.8).
- Collective Change, The. 2019. '#MeToo in archaeology'. *SAA Archaeological Record* 19(4), 12–15.
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B., Plutniak, S., Mary, L., Hlad, M., Algrain, I., Pasquini, B., Vandeveld, S., Stamataki, E., Janežič, P., Wouters, B. and Sengeløv, A. 2023. 'Harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation (HABI) in archaeology: A Europe-wide survey'. *Antiquity* 97(393), 726–744. doi: [10.15184/aqy.2023.58](https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2023.58).
- Colwell, C. 2016. 'Collaborative archaeologies and descendant communities'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 45, 113–127.
- Conkey, M. and Gero, J. (eds) 1991. *Engendering archaeology: Women and prehistory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Conkey, M. and Spector, J. 1984. 'Archaeology and the study of gender', in M.B. Schiffer (ed.) *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*, vol. 7. London: Academic Press, 1–38.
- Coto Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Martín Alonso, J., Pastor Pérez, A., Ruiz, A. and Yubero, M. 2018. *Informe: acoso sexual en arqueología (ASA)*.
- Coto Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Martín Alonso, J., Pastor Pérez, A., Ruiz, A. and Yubero, M. 2020. *Informe sobre el acoso sexual en arqueología (España)*. Barcelona, Granada and Madrid: Zenodo. doi: [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3662763](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3662763).
- Coto-Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Pastor Pérez, A., Ruiz, A. and Yubero, M. 2022. 'Acoso sexual en la arqueología española: voces, silencios y retos de futuro', in M. Díaz-Andreu, O. Torres Gomáriz and P. Zarzuela Gutiérrez (eds) *Voces in crescendo: del mutismo a la afonía en la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología española*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, Publicaciones INAPH, 339–355.
- Cox, L. 2018. *The bullying and harassment of House of Commons staff: Independent inquiry report*. House of Commons report. Online: <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/conduct-in-parliament/dame-laura-cox-independent-inquiry-report.pdf> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Crenshaw, K. 1989. 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics'. *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, 139–167.
- Diaz, J. 2021. *How #NiUnaMenos grew from the streets of Argentina into a regional women's movement*. Online: <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/15/1043908435/how-niunamenos-grew-from-the-streets-of-argentina-into-a-regional-womens-movemen?t=1653423579600> [Accessed 24 May 2022].
- Dowson, T.A. 2000. 'Why queer archaeology? An introduction'. *World Archaeology* 32, 161–165.
- Ellenbogen, N. 2019. *An independent inquiry into bullying and harassment in the House of Lords*. House of Lords report. Online <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/lords-committees/house-of-lords-commission/2017-19/ellenbogen-report.pdf> [Accessed 19 March 2024].

- Fileborn, B. and Loney-Howes, R. (eds) 2019. *#MeToo and the politics of social change*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Flaherty, C. 2019. 'Unwanted attendee: Society for American Archaeology faces major backlash over how it handled a known harasser's attendance at its annual meeting'. *Inside Higher Education*, 15 April. Online: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/04/15/archaeology-group-faces-backlash-over-how-it-handled-known-harassers-attendance>. [Accessed 25 January 2021].
- Flewellen, A.O., Dunnavant, J.P., Odewale, A., Jones, A., Wolde-Michael, R., Crossland, Z. and Franklin, M. 2021. "'The future of archaeology is antiracist': Archaeology in the time of Black Lives Matter'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 224–243. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.18>.
- Fowler, C. 2004. *The archaeology of personhood: An anthropological approach*. London: Routledge.
- Franklin, M. 2001. 'A Black feminist-inspired archaeology?' *Journal of Social Archaeology* 1, 108–125.
- Franklin, M., Dunnavant, J.P., Flewellen, A.O. and Odewale, A. 2020. 'The future is now: Archaeology and the eradication of anti-Blackness'. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 24, 753–766. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-020-00577-1>.
- Geller, P. 2017. *The bioarchaeology of socio-sexual lives: Queering common sense about sex, gender, and sexuality*. New York (NY): Springer.
- Gero, J.M. 1985. 'Socio-politics and the woman-at-home ideology'. *American Antiquity* 50(2), 342–350.
- Hawkins, K. and Rees, C. 2018. *RESPECT: Acting against harassment in archaeology, British Archaeology Jobs Resource Guide* 44. Online: <http://www.bajr.org/BAJRGuides/44.%20Harrasment/Sexual-Harassment-in-Archaeology.pdf> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Hawkins, K. and Rees, C. 2020. *Reporting of bullying and sexual harassment in archaeology*. Online: <http://www.bajrfed.co.uk/bajrpress/respect-workshop/> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Heath-Stout, L. 2020. 'Who writes about archaeology? An intersectional study of authorship in archaeology'. *American Antiquity* 85(3), 407–426.
- Hodgetts, L., Supernant, K., Lyons, N. and Welch, J.R. 2020. 'Broadening# MeToo: Tracking dynamics in Canadian archaeology through a survey on experiences within the discipline'. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 44(1), 20–47.
- Julios, C. 2022. *Sexual harassment in the UK Parliament: Lessons from the# MeToo Era*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marshall, Y. 2008. 'Archaeological possibilities for feminist theories of transition and transformation'. *Feminist Theory* 9(1), 25–45.
- Marshall, Y.M. 2012. 'Personhood in prehistory: A feminist archaeology in ten persons', in D. Bolger (ed.) *A companion to gender prehistory*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 204–225.
- Martin, C. and Valenti, V. 2013. *#FemFuture: online revolution*. Barnard Center for Research on Women. Online: <http://bcrw.barnard.edu/wp-content/nfs/reports/NFS8-FemFuture-Online-Revolution-Report.pdf> [Accessed 24 May 2022].
- Me too. 2022. *Get to know us: History and inception*. Online: <https://metoomvmt.org/> [Accessed 24 May 2022].
- Melville, S., Eccles, K. and Yasseri, T. 2019. 'Topic modelling of everyday sexism project entries'. *Frontiers in Digital Humanities* 5: 28. doi: [doi.org/articles/10.3389/fdigh.2018.00028](https://doi.org/10.3389/fdigh.2018.00028).
- Mendes, K., Ringrose, J. and Keller, J. 2018. '#MeToo and the promise and pitfalls of challenging rape culture through digital feminist activism'. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 25(2), 236–246.

- Moore, H.L. 1993. 'The differences within and the differences between', in T. del Valle (ed.) *Gendered Anthropology*. London: Routledge, 193–204.
- Moore, H.L. 1994. *A passion for difference: Essays in anthropology and gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Ott, K. 2018. 'Social media and feminist values: Aligned or maligned?' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 39(1), 93–111.
- Overholtzer, L. and Jalbert, C.L. 2021. 'A "leaky" pipeline and chilly climate in archaeology in Canada'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 261–282.
- Perry, S., Shipley, L. and Osborne, J. 2015. 'Digital media, power and (in)equality in archaeology and heritage'. *Internet Archaeology* 38 <http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.38.4>.
- Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2018. *91 Stories of archaeology*. Online: <https://dougсарchaeology.wordpress.com/2018/04/14/91-stories-of-archaeology/> [Accessed 24 May 2022].
- Society of Black Archaeologists. 2020. *Archaeology in the time of Black Lives Matter: Resources list*. Online: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ba9378ebfba3e7b319e2ce6/t/5f2f05c509e14e53cb898607/1596917190138/Compilation+of+Resources+SBA+2020.pdf> [Accessed 25 January 2021].
- Sørensen, M.L.S. 2000. *Gender archaeology*. London: Polity Press.
- Spector, J. 1993. *What this awl means: Feminist archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota village*. St Paul (MN): Minnesota Historical Society Press.
- Sterling, K. 2015. 'Black feminist theory in prehistory'. *Archaeologies* 11, 93–120.
- TIME'SUP. 2022. *About*. Online: [www.timesupnow.com](http://www.timesupnow.com) [Accessed 24 May 2022, site subsequently discontinued].
- Ulm, S., Mate, G., Dalley, C. and Nichols, S. 2013. 'A working profile: The changing face of professional archaeology in Australia'. *Australian Archaeology* 76, 34–43.
- Voss, B.L. 2000. 'Feminisms, queer theories, and the archaeological study of past sexualities'. *World Archaeology* 32, 180–192.
- Voss, B.L. 2021a. 'Documenting cultures of harassment in archaeology: A review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative research studies'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 244–260. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.118>.
- Voss, B.L. 2021b. 'Disrupting cultures of harassment in archaeology: Social-environmental and trauma-informed approaches to disciplinary transformation'. *American Antiquity* 86(3), 447–464. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.19>.
- Watkins, J. 2005. 'Through wary eyes: Indigenous perspectives on archaeology'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34, 429–449.
- White, G. 2019. *Bullying and harassment of MPs' Parliamentary Staff: Independent inquiry report*. House of Commons report. Online: [https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/Conduct-in-Parliament/GWQC-Inquiry-Report-11-July-2019\\_.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/Conduct-in-Parliament/GWQC-Inquiry-Report-11-July-2019_.pdf). [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Zeder, M.A. 1997. *The American archaeologist: A profile*. Walnut Creek (CA): AltaMira.

## Chapter 2.

# Archaeologists, Activists, and Angry Trolls: Using Social Media for Digital Activism in Archaeology

Alex Fitzpatrick<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

With the rise of social media as a prominent centre of discourse and content creation over the past two decades, it comes as no surprise that activists and advocates for social justice would be drawn to these digital hubs. Not only does digital activism through social media allow for much more expansive outreach, but it also allows for likeminded groups and individuals to be connected, regardless of how niche or narrow their field of interest is. For archaeology, a field that continues to struggle with the remnants of its colonial past and the longstanding impact it has had on the contemporary sector, social media has been a vital place for advocates and activists within the field to connect and communicate with each other, as well as the wider field.

This paper, written in the informal and self-reflexive style that I often utilise in my own online content, looks at digital activist interventions made by archaeologists over the past two decades. To contextualise this, I also briefly examine the development of digital activism and how social media became so central to contemporary social movements. I reflect on my own experiences in utilising social media to advocate for change within archaeology while also examining how using such a personal and intimate approach to my content creation has impacted the ways in which it has been received by others, both positively and negatively. Finally, I end this paper with a ‘call to action’ in which I suggest several ways in which we, as activists and advocates in the field, can ensure that our online discourse translates into something more tangible.

### Is Archaeology a ‘Problematic Fave’?

Let me first start off by saying that no, I do not *seriously* consider archaeology to be a ‘problematic fave.’ After all, I don’t think this particular term – often utilised within social media discourse as a shorthand (which could also be viewed as a meme, see KnowYourMeme 2022) to acknowledge how certain people and projects may be both beloved as well as harmful – does justice to the centuries of actual harm that has been wrought through the discipline’s complicity in colonialism and white supremacy. Nor does it fully encapsulate the current harms that occur within the field as well – whether it is being used to support the

---

<sup>1</sup> Alex Fitzpatrick (✉) Email: alex@animalarchaeology.com

dehumanisation or oppression of others, or refusing to adapt to the inclusion of anyone who isn't a cisgendered, heterosexual, non-disabled, white man. The harms that archaeology has caused and is continuing to cause will take decades, perhaps even centuries, to truly make amends.

But I want to begin this paper through the framing of a 'problematic fave', as ridiculous as it is, for two reasons: firstly, the development of 'problematic fave' as an identifier within online discourse speaks to the unique ways in which social justice, activism, and advocacy is engaged with online culture, particularly on social media – a phenomenon that will become somewhat of a recurring theme throughout. Secondly, I also think that 'problematic fave' – as, well, *problematic* as the term may be for the historical context of archaeology – may actually best describe the complicated relationship that some of us have with the field.

It is this conflicting and frustrating relationship – one in which we may enjoy our work and even the discipline itself in the abstract, but also understand the harm it has caused and continues to cause on people both within and outside of archaeology – that I think pushes many of us to become activists and advocates within the field. We see that there is so much potential in archaeology as a concept, but also recognise that this potential will never be realised unless we make a more accountable and equitable field that actually actively works to mitigate the continuation of harm for anyone who engages with (or ultimately is engaged by) the field.

Of course, this is easier said than done – from my experience, the most invigorated motivators for change in archaeology are often already marginalised and early in their careers, meaning that there are not only centuries of harms to contend with, but also a hierarchy of power often led by those who are unenthused about deviating from the status quo. So, what do you do? How do you try to get your message across when so many odds are stacked against you?

Well, you Tweet<sup>2</sup> it, of course. Or you make a video on Instagram. Or start a hashtag.

Generally speaking, social media has changed the landscape of discourse – where it once required substantial resources and public attention to get your message across, today you can simply send a Tweet that can be read by millions around the world. A person from Australia can commiserate with a person from Greenland about their shared experiences of marginalisation on social media, while another person from Japan can jump in and connect them to a community group on Facebook that is working to organise internationally against those issues. Social media has expanded the reach of social movements, inviting a level of international solidarity and organisation that has never been seen before – and many archaeologists have taken notice.

This paper is an expansion of a talk I gave in April 2022 as part of a workshop on social media and archaeology organised by the ARCHON Research School of Archaeology (see Fitzpatrick 2023 for full transcript). Instead of focusing on the role of social media in diversifying the field, I'll be broadening the scope to discuss digital activism in archaeology as a whole (although, of

---

<sup>2</sup> At the time of this writing, Twitter is owned by Elon Musk and called 'X'; however, as that is a ridiculous name and I refuse to acquiesce to Musk's weird attempt at being 'edgy', I'll continue to refer to it as 'Twitter' and the act of posting on the platform as 'Tweeting'.

course, there will be a lot of overlap – after all, a lack of diversity is one of many *major* issues that remain within the field).

You may have noticed that this paper isn't necessarily written within the sort of 'formal voice' associated with academic publications. Although you can chalk that up to me being a bad writer (a very valid interpretation according to many Reviewer #2's), there's a bit of a reason for that. You see, I've tried to write this using the self-reflexive, informal voice that I utilise in my social media content – we'll explore the reasons why later, but for now, I hope this helps frame the conversation into something more intimate and personal, reflecting many of our own approaches to the sort of 'digital activism' that is prevalent within archaeology.

### **Digital Activism and Social Media**

Given that – from my experience – there continues to be pushback against serious engagement with social media by many within archaeology (if not the wider academy), perhaps it would be useful to contextualise *why* social media is so crucial to any discussion regarding contemporary activism and advocacy work, particularly within the digital landscape. It should also be acknowledged that serious scholarly consideration of social media as part of social movements is a relatively recent phenomenon, arguably starting with the Arab Spring in the early 2010s (Gerbaudo 2012, 3). Since then, we have continued to see the importance of social media as a tool for social movements, from the Occupy movement (DeLuca *et al.* 2012), through to the #MeToo movement (Jaffe 2018), to the more recent Palestine movement (Ferrari 2023).

But what is it about social media that makes it so vital to digital activism? Well, we can trace this back to the origins of these Web 2.0 technologies, as social media platforms were intentionally created to be interactive and participatory spaces; this was part of a broader idealist attitude at the time, which truly believed in the potential of the Internet as a means of connecting the world and building digital communities (Van Dijck 2013, 10–11). From the perspective of activists, social media held a promise of a more decentralised approach, one which Gerbaudo (2012, 22–23) connects to what Castells (2009, 416) referred to as 'self-mass communication' as well as other notions of digital anti-authoritarianism.

Gerbaudo (2012, 4) has also recognised that social media has filled the unique role once played by newspapers, leaflets and posters in the historic labour movement – all were forms of communication that didn't just express opinions but also choreographed collective action as well. Social media not only replicates this, but has also made some fundamental changes to how organisation and communication occurs – for example, it now allows direct mobilisation and interaction to occur regardless of location, and its lack of relative barriers of access and use has caused the breaking down of traditional hierarchies within many organisations as well (Murthy 2018, 1–2).

Twitter, in particular, has become a dominant force of communication *and* organisation, with Segerberg and Bennett (2011, 201) referring to it as an 'organising mechanism' that not only transmits information but also acts as a networking agent within the protest space. The ways in which social media has generated new spaces of vulnerability and community-building has also helped create new generations of activists – for instance, tumblr has been cited by many as their first real exposure to social justice as a concept, as it allowed them to interact

with others from very different backgrounds and beliefs on a (relatively) much more sincere level (Sarappo 2018). The conversations that arose from such a unique platform were not always perfect (to return to the start of this paper, this is where ‘problematic fave’ was born), but its impact led to a very specific type of language and approach to activism that is still seen in digital activism today (particularly as the early ‘tumblr generation’ has become more confident and established in participating in social movements).

Now, actually *defining* what sets apart ‘digital activism’ from other activities that occur online is a bit tricky – because social media has this inherent ability to blur and disrupt the lines between our online and offline lives (Van Dijck 2013, 4), it stands to reason that digital activism should also be considered as a hybrid concept that includes both online and offline activities. As social media also becomes more expansive in how it touches parts of our everyday life, it is perhaps even more difficult to differentiate the amount of participation and engagement that constitutes ‘activism’ online.

For the purposes of this paper, I will be using Özkula’s (2021, 63–67) definition of digital activism, which views it as both online/digital activity as well as anything ‘digitally-assisted’ offline, utilising sub-categories to further define specific practices that make up this form of activism. Such practices include advocacy and political commentary, recruitment and movement-building, organisation and coordination, online direct action, hacktivism, and civil disobedience, and research and documentation.

Although I have attempted to focus primarily on social media, I have also included some examples of digital activism that occur outside of what we may consider to be the main arenas of social media today; this is partly because much of this work (e.g., creating a website about a specific issue) will likely become circulated and popularised via social media anyway. One example of this that I think is particularly pertinent with regards to archaeology is the blog – although they predate the coinage of the term ‘social media’ and there is a case to make of them not really being ‘social’ (particularly if your blog lacks engagement elements such as likes, comments, etc.), they are arguably the root of all social media, with many content creators having originally developed their following via blogs and many social media platforms taking their cues from blogging (Rettberg 2014, 13–15). Blogs in particular have also been thoroughly examined from an archaeological perspective in the past (Morgan and Winters 2015) and could be viewed as foundational to the more recent iterations of digital activism discussed in the next section.

### **Archaeological Digital Activism and Advocacy**

For many archaeologists – particularly those from marginalised and underrepresented backgrounds – social media provides an expansive reach that allows them the space and audience necessary to express perspectives and opinions that would often be more restricted (if not downright censored) through more ‘formal’ methods of communication (i.e., academic publications and events). And for archaeology, this disruption is entirely necessary – the discipline itself remains a particularly exclusive one, with the archetypal archaeologist seemingly still viewed as a white, cisgendered, heterosexual, and non-disabled man from either North American or Europe. As such, those whose experiences or identities deviate from this archetype are often deprived of the sort of platforms to disrupt such an otherwise

homogeneous landscape, both internally and externally. But social media provides a means to circumvent these barriers and speak directly to the masses – and many archaeologists have fully embraced this to embark on the difficult progress of pushing for change in a discipline that sorely needs it.

To further explore the ways in which archaeologists have been utilising social media for their activism and advocacy work, I return to Özkula's (2021, 67–70) defined categories of digital activism. The various websites that I cite under each category can be found in a full list at the end of this paper.

### ***Advocacy and Political Commentary***

Özkula (2021, 67) defines this category quite broadly, identifying it as anything online that expresses support and disseminates information for a particular position (including memes, social media challenges, and other forms of digital solidarity). This is arguably the category that best describes many individuals in archaeology whose activism and advocacy work is based on their own experiences in the field, particularly those who mainly utilise microblogging platforms such as Twitter. But it also describes those who are not only utilising social media to spread light on important issues that may otherwise be obscured, but are also developing tools and resources as well.

Perhaps it is unsurprising that many disabled archaeologists have turned to digital activism for their advocacy work; not only does the unique multimedia nature of social media mean that many disabled individuals can adapt their work based on their particular needs, but they can also develop and disseminate inclusive approaches and practices in ways that non-disabled individuals may not be able to conceptualise themselves without that particular knowledge and experience. For example, Amelia Dall (Dall 2024) has been advocating for accessibility in archaeology for d/Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, as well as translating archaeological terminology into American Sign Language and sharing her work via Instagram and YouTube. Cheryl Fogle-Hatch has similarly created resources for blind and visually-impaired individuals through her blogs at *Museum Senses*, which develops multisensory approaches to heritage.

Digital repositories of testimonials and resources are not only useful for those who have been failed by a wider lack of consideration within the sector, but also for individuals who may require specific help and are unable to openly ask for support. This is touched upon within this volume particularly around instances of sexual harassment, but open-access resources are also particularly lifesaving for LGBTQ+ individuals, who may not feel comfortable or safe enough to look for help in-person. Digital groups such as *Queer Archaeology* are able to not only act as a network for LGBTQ+ archaeologists and others who may be researching related topics in the field, but also as a space that provides both support and resources to anyone who may need it (see Klembara *et al.* this volume).

### ***Recruitment, Movement-Building, and Campaigns***

Özkula (2021, 67–68) describes this category as similar to the previous one, but arguably more targeted at inclusion and mobilisation and requiring more effort and commitment, such as through membership or active participation offline. This category includes many

advocacy groups in archaeology that have since evolved into more formalised organisations with membership and organised events (e.g. internal workplace networks such as MOLA's Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff discussed in Campbell *et al.* this volume, or the European Association of Archaeologists Archaeology and Gender in Europe Group discussed in Gaydarska and Coltofean this volume). As many of these groups broadly target archaeologists without a regional restriction, having a digital element to their work is a necessity in order to connect with others from around the world.

Amongst advocates for accessibility and inclusion of disabled archaeologists, there are groups such as the *Enabled Archaeology Foundation* and the *Disabled Archaeologists Network*, both which have utilised hybrid approaches to dissemination of their advocacy work. Given the predominantly white background of the sector, groups dedicated to anti-racism and providing individuals from the Global Majority space to talk about their experiences of racism within the field have become necessary, with many organising in light of the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. These groups, which include the *Society of Black Archaeologists*, the *Indigenous Archaeology Collective*, and the *European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists* (Brunache *et al.* 2021), also predominantly utilise digital tools like video conferencing technology to hold events online, while turning to social media to publicise them.

There have also been individual campaigns that have focused less on community-building and more on targeting particular issues with a specific goal in mind. A recent example of this has been the *Seeing Red* campaign, which used social media to demand better support and hygiene equality for menstruating people on excavation sites. The campaign, created by Amy Talbot, was successful in getting several commercial units to utilise their period packs through heavy promotion via social media and other online groups (see Humphreys *et al.* this volume).

### ***Organisation and Coordination***

Özkula (2021, 68–69) sees this category as being one that is particularly characterised through action – specifically the organisation and coordination of protests and other forms of mobilisation online and offline. This is also a form of digital activism that has seemingly become more prevalent within archaeology as the sector faces further precarity due to budget cuts, lack of employment opportunities and worsening working conditions. In the 2010s, for example, archaeologists in Italy and Turkey were able to mobilise on social media and coordinate occupations of government buildings in protest against rampant exploitation and unemployment within their respective sectors (Hardy 2015).

Of course, it isn't just internal concerns that require mobilisation – unfortunately, there are also many institutions that continue to act unethically with regards to cultural heritage and human remains, which has resulted in archaeologists taking action against them. Recently, anthropologist Lyra Monteiro and activist Abdul-Aliy Muhammad have created *Finding Ceremony*, an initiative that aims to create descendent community-controlled processes for the return of human remains from institution collections, with regular online meetings held for individuals who identify as descendants. They are currently focused on Black Philadelphian human remains being held at Penn Museum, and have used Twitter and email lists to organise in-person direct action at the institution.

### ***Online Direct Action, Hacktivism, and Civil Disobedience***

To differentiate this category from the previous one, Özkula (2021, 69) emphasises that this is specifically about direct actions of dissent and protest in wholly digital spaces. In the mid 2010s, for example, archaeologists inspired by the broader Everyday Sexism Project created the hashtag #everyDIGsexism to explicitly expose and create a platform to catalogue everyday instances of sexism within archaeology (Cobb this volume; Cobb and Hawkins this volume).

This form of digital activism has also seen some further activity utilising the videoconferencing platforms that were popularised by necessity due to the coronavirus pandemic. In 2021, the *Save Sheffield Archaeology* campaign was organised by staff and students in light of the University of Sheffield's announcement that they would be closing the department. As we were still in the throes of the pandemic, the campaign used both Twitter and Facebook to coordinate online rallies, mobilise others to write in support to university management, and promoted the use of social media via a hashtag (#savesheffieldarchaeology) to express anger at the decision to university accounts and senior figures online.

Another example of more online-based action can be seen with the work of the *Black Trowel Collective*, a group that consists of anarchist archaeologists who run a mutual aid microgrants scheme, where others are encouraged to donate to help support marginalised and in-need archaeologists through small grants. This allows them to directly meet the needs of others by bypassing the bureaucracy of institutional granting bodies and only requiring basic information of people requiring funds. The Black Trowel Collective has utilised social media platforms to collect donations, as well as provide further support and solidarity towards other social movements, such as trans liberation.

### ***Research and Documentation***

The last category from Özkula (2021, 70) is perhaps the one most suited for a sector that is primarily anchored to academia, as it is mainly focused on the dissemination of information related to advocacy work, countering propaganda and documenting unethical behaviours. Archaeologists have often utilised this approach to fight not only a biased history of the field itself, where contributions made by non-cishet white men have often been erased, but also the weaponisation of archaeology itself, which has historically been used to push propaganda and pseudoscience.

*TrowelBlazers*, an organisation that grew from a Twitter conversation between Brenna Hassett, Tori Herridge, Suzanne Pilaar Birch, and Rebecca Wragg Sykes, aims to promote the profiles of women in archaeology and adjacent disciplines, whose work may have otherwise been obscured by patriarchal interpretations of the history of archaeology (see Hassett *et al.* this volume). Their website hosts articles written about women from the past and present, which are further disseminated through their social media as well as used for their offline and online events.

Of course, it isn't just history that is obscured and requires further documentation – this form of digital activism amongst archaeologists has become vital to tackle history that is being *distorted* as well. As much as I want to use this paper to sing the praises of social media, I also

can't ignore the downsides as well. Although social media was able to give anyone a platform... well, that's the problem I guess. *Anyone was given a platform*. And while that is fantastic for disrupting disciplines that sorely need inclusion and diversity, such as archaeology, it also means that bad faith actors and others looking to disseminate pseudoscience have a similar opportunity for outreach.

Pseudoarchaeological beliefs have existed prior to social media, of course, but platforms such as Twitter are able to amplify these messages in collaboration with other digital circles focused on racist conspiracies and white supremacy (Nugroho 2022). In response to the rise of pseudoarchaeology online, archaeologists such as Steph Halmhofer and Flint Dibble have taken to social media to refute these claims through threaded responses, blogging, and video essays.

Of course, this is far from an exhaustive summary of digital activism in archaeology – as this volume demonstrates, other prominent individuals and groups have used social media to advocate for other issues, including those specific to first generation academics, non-academics, volunteers, commercial workers, ex-archaeologists, hobbyists, and migrants. However, this hopefully provides a glimpse of how expansive the world of activism amongst archaeologists is just within the digital landscape.

### **Some Personal Reflections on Being an 'Accidental Activist' Online**

Part of how I approach utilising social media (and other digital outputs for content creation) has always involved a self-reflexive element – not just because I find that an informal, self-reflexive form of writing is more digestible by readers regardless of their level of academic familiarity, but also because I am, more often than not, writing from my own experiences. You know when you take your first creative writing course in school and get told to 'write what you know'? Apparently, I never really moved beyond that with my own work – but hey, it seems to be doing well so far.

So I guess to really frame this paper within that approach, it stands to reason that I should spend some time discussing my own experiences of digital activism – or, 'activism', I guess. You see, I don't *really* see myself as an activist – if anything, I am just quite prone to oversharing my own frustrations and poor experiences in the field, which seems to occasionally gain traction with others and results in invitations to contribute to broader advocacy work (e.g., my work with the *Enabled Archaeology Foundation*) or to further explore these conversations at events and within publications (like right now!). If anything, I guess you can say I'm more of an 'accidental activist' whose online rants occasionally lead to something a bit more coherent and organised by others (and perhaps in that case, more meaningful and useful to the wider movement at hand).

To cut a long story short, I came to social media as my main outlet for my 'professional' work following a nervous breakdown that completely disrupted the start of my PhD in 2017. Recognising that I needed to 'get myself out there' after months of hiding out in my flat and avoiding any semblance of academic life, I decided to create a Twitter account specifically for promoting myself as a researcher and highlighting my current work. To accompany this new account, I also created a blog as well as an Instagram account – at the time, I basically wanted

to ensure I got as much coverage as possible after having felt so small and unwanted during my time away from academia.

In the beginning, I mainly focused on writing primarily on my field of expertise (zooarchaeology) and on the specific topics of my PhD thesis. But by 2018, I had developed enough confidence in my abilities as a writer and communicator to start tackling topics that were much more serious and had personally affected me as a queer and disabled Chinese-American migrant woman in archaeology. It was this part of my social media content that got much more traction and visibility, leading to further opportunities to expand my reach further through other channels (e.g., podcasting, guest-writing, invited speaking, etc.).

At this point, I was also able to see that things I wrote were actually resonating with others – for example, after a depressive episode spurred by an injury onsite, I started #DiggingWhileDepressed as a hashtag on Twitter to encourage discussion on the impact of excavation on mental health. I was surprised to see that others felt similar, with many using the hashtag as a space for vulnerable and personal conversations over the next few days. #DiggingWhileDepressed never really took off as a hashtag campaign beyond its brief moment in the sun in 2018, but it still had an impact – not only have I continued to expand on the idea on my blog (Fitzpatrick 2018) and in follow-up papers (Fitzpatrick 2024), but it has also become one of my more cited topics in my independent research as the topic of mental health in archaeology was more widely discussed.

Of course, it hasn't always been particularly easy being so open on social media – while it has been touching to receive messages from others who feel represented or otherwise seen by my work, I've also received plenty of hate and harassment as well (in fact, I no longer have commenting or messaging enabled on my blog due to the intense amount of racist and ableist messages that I would receive). And while a lot of that comes from racist trolls that are likely not connected to the field at all, there has unfortunately been pushback from other archaeologists who find that I am too abrasive, or believe that my social media work is a detriment to my professional career.

But regardless of what others say, I'm happy to continue to speak out online. Because it matters to me that these issues also matter to other people – that I am no longer alone in feeling alone and unwanted because of the way the field has been developed to cater to the most privileged. Some people have accused me of 'hating' archaeology, and while I will admit to being mostly angry about the state of the field, I don't really hate it as much as people think. In fact, I think that there might actually be hope for archaeology – you might just need to actually read what we're saying online to understand what we mean.

### **Conclusion: Translating the Digital to the Tangible**

In a way, I guess a lot of my 'activism' is fuelled by anger and frustration with the field, which boils over into the digital sphere via my writing. And one of my *biggest* frustrations with the broader field's attempts at engaging with social justice has been the lack of tangible engagement and follow-through – although there have been many workshops, conference sessions, and edited volumes produced to highlight the pertinent issues facing archaeologists, these discussions are rarely followed up by action. Part of this problem may be apprehension

of what it means to really commit to resolve what are ultimately immense, longstanding problems, many of which have been embedded into the foundations of archaeology. So, with that all in mind, it stands to reason that I should end this paper with a sort of ‘call to action’, a series of potential actions that we can all take to bridge that gap between the digital and the tangible.

Before you take action, however, the first thing I recommend for others looking to be good accomplices (*not just allies* – as per Flewellen 2021; Indigenous Action 2014) in archaeology is to actually do some self-reflection first and recognise what your positionality and power is within the field. Are you someone who feels well-represented amongst your colleagues? Are you in what would be considered a ‘senior’ position? It may sound silly, but from my experience, some people don’t actually realise that they are among the majority in many cases, or that they actually *do* have influence and power over the field. It’s important internal work that has to be done in order to identify how you may be able to utilise your own privilege and power for those who have none.

So then, now that we have done some soul-searching, what’s next? Well, we can start thinking about how we leverage the privilege and power we previously identified to support others. Are you a well-known academic with tenure and a six digit follower count on Twitter? Maybe make a point of following groups and individuals representing or advocating for important issues and amplify their voices – whether that’s retweeting information for an event they’re hosting or posting a link to their latest publication, anything that translates to getting more eyes (and ears) on their work. Of course, you should also try to substantially engage with the work as well – consider where it may or may not apply to you, or how you may be able to embody their points more tangibly. For example, it could be that you are running an excavation in the summer and can take on their points related to inclusive practices. Or maybe you can sign up to be part of their mentoring programme.

While being present is important for many things in digital activism, sometimes *not* being there is also important too. Identifying the amount of space you take is arguably another exercise of self-reflection to undertake concurrently with thinking about positionality too. It could be that you have the opportunity to provide a platform to an advocate or activist – whether that through your popular social media account or even by inviting them to speak at an upcoming event. As I previously mentioned, one of the important aspects of social media as a tool of disruption for activism is that it does away with many of the barriers in place in institutional spaces of communication – how can you embody that disruption offline by utilising your own privilege of access into these spaces that others may be lacking?

For those who are among the underrepresented and marginalised groups in archaeology, perhaps one of the most useful things you can do is to find community with others – something that social media can facilitate and can be translatable into offline engagement and support. Not only is having a network of support something that can be ultimately life-preserving and healing when you’re working in otherwise hostile spaces, but it is also a means of building power and presence to help push for change. Of course, there also needs to be some self-reflection here as well – perhaps not about positionality and power as much as capacity. One thing that I still struggle with is understanding my limits – I have a terrible habit of saying ‘yes’ to everything, which results in a burnt out accidental activist that is no help to

anyone. We may be our best advocates for our needs, but we're also humans who can't take on everything at once.

Putting the burden entirely on those who are already marginalised is unfortunately a common occurrence, especially in archaeology. And while I understand that ideally we want to be uplifting the people most directly impacted by marginalisation and harm in the field, sometimes that translates into them doing *all* of the work, which can be both intimidating as well as exhaustive. This is where resource building is vital – are you able to give people the support they need – financially, materially, physically, or otherwise – to do the work that needs to be done? What are you doing to ensure that you are not exploiting others for the performance of inclusion and diversity?

And I guess that brings me to my final point – which is that the best action you can take to support advocacy and activism in archaeology is to *actually commit to change*. And no, I don't mean just liking a Tweet or writing a post saying that you stand in solidarity (although those aren't necessarily bad things either!). But you need to commit *tangible things* to the movement – maybe that's time, maybe that's money, maybe it's your actual skills and expertise. Maybe you can organise to fund fellowships for early career researchers from the Global Majority. Maybe you can create a paid internship to train disabled students. We are no longer in a place where performative and passive solidarities are needed – instead, what we *do* need is the courage and creativity to create the form of archaeology that we *want* to be working within.

Social media is not a magical solution to all of archaeology's problems, of course, and there is much to be done to make the field more progressive and inclusive – much of which has to be done offline, to be honest! But social media can be an important first step towards tangible change, disrupting assumptions and biases that may be held within the field and giving a platform to people who may have already begun to do the work of realising a more accountable, accessible, and inclusive archaeology. We can recognise that the digital does not always translate into the tangible, of course, but it can at least show up the way forward towards a better future for the discipline – just be ready to put in the work, though.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to acknowledge and thank the editors, Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins, for the invitation to contribute to such a vital volume, as well as their continued support throughout the writing process.

### **Websites of Organisations and Individuals Cited in this Paper**

Amelia the Archaeologist <https://www.ameliathearchaeologist.com/>  
Black Trowel Collective <https://blacktrowelcollective.wordpress.com/>  
Disabled Archaeologists Network <https://disabledarchnetwork.weebly.com/>  
Enabled Archaeology Foundation <https://enabledarchaeology.com/>  
European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists <https://twitter.com/ESBAArchaeology>  
everyDIGsexism <https://everydigsexism.wordpress.com/>  
Finding Ceremony <https://findingceremony.com/>  
Flint Dibble <https://twitter.com/FlintDibble>

Indigenous Archaeology Collective <https://www.facebook.com/indigarchs/>  
 Museum Senses <https://museumsenses.org/>  
 Queer Archaeology <https://queerarchaeology.com/>  
 Save Sheffield Archaeology <https://sites.google.com/view/save-sheffield-archaeology/home>  
 Seeing Red <https://mentorwomxn.org/seeing-red/>  
 Society of Black Archaeologists <https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/>  
 Steph Halmhofer <https://bonesstonesandbooks.com/>  
 TrowelBlazers <https://trowelblazers.com/>

## Bibliography

- Brunache, P., Dadzie, B., Goodlett, K., Hampden, L., Khreisheh, A., Ngonadi, C. and Plummer Sires, J. 2021. 'Contemporary archaeology and anti-racism: A manifesto from the European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists'. *European Journal of Archaeology* 24(3), 294–298.
- Castells, M. 2009. *Communication power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dall, A. 2024. *Amelia the Archaeologist*. Online: <https://www.ameliathearchaeologist.com/> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- DeLuca, K.M., Lawson, S. and Sun, Y. 2012. 'Occupy Wall Street on the public screens of social media: The many framings of the birth of a protest movement'. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 5(4), 483–509. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2012.01141.x>.
- Ferrari, B. 2023. 'Pro-Palestinian TikTok creators aren't backing down'. *Vice*. Online: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/pkav5y/pro-palestine-tiktok-gen-z-digital-activism> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Fitzpatrick, A. 2018. 'Digging while depressed: Struggling with fieldwork and mental health'. *Animal Archaeology Blog*. Online: <https://animalarchaeology.com/2018/07/09/digging-while-depressed-struggling-with-fieldwork-and-mental-health/> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Fitzpatrick, A. 2023. Promoting progress: Using social media to diversify archaeology. *Animal Archaeology Blog*. Online: <https://animalarchaeology.com/2023/09/12/promoting-progress-using-social-media-to-diversify-archaeology/> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Fitzpatrick, A. 2024. 'Digging while depressed and disabled: Mental health and accessibility in archaeological practice'. *Animal Archaeology Blog*. Online: <https://animalarchaeology.com/2024/01/09/digging-while-depressed-and-disabled-mental-health-and-accessibility-in-archaeological-practice/> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Flewellen, A.O., Dunnavant, J.P., Odewale, A., Jones, A., Wolde-Michael, R., Crossland, Z., and Franklin, M. 2021. '“The future of archaeology is antiracist”: Archaeology in the time of Black Lives Matter'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 224–243.
- Gerbaudo, P. 2012. *Tweets and the streets: Social media and contemporary activism*. London: Pluto Press.
- Hardy, S. 2015. 'Resistance to precarious archaeological labour'. *Internet archaeology* (39). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.39.4>.
- Indigenous Action. 2014. 'Accomplices not allies: Abolishing the ally industrial complex'. *Indigenous Action*. Online: <https://www.indigenoussaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Jaffe, S. 2018. 'The Collective Power of #MeToo'. *Dissent* 65(2), 80–87.
- KnowYourMeme. 2022. *Problematic Fave/Laughing Chris Evans*. Online: <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/problematic-fave-laughing-chris-evans> [Accessed 19 March 2024].

- Morgan, C. and Winters, J. 2015. 'Introduction: Critical blogging in archaeology'. *Internet Archaeology*, (39). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.39.11>.
- Murthy, D. 2018. 'Introduction to social media, activism, and organizations'. *Social Media + Society*, 4(1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117750716>.
- Nugroho, A. 2022. 'Twitter analysis of pseudoarchaeology and conspiracy theories in archaeology'. *Cornell Undergraduate Research Journal*, 1(2). doi: <https://doi.org/10.37513/curj.v1i2.680>.
- Özkula, S.M. 2021. 'What is digital activism anyway? Social constructions of the 'digital' in contemporary activism'. *Journal of Digital Social Research*, 3(3), 60–84. doi: <https://doi.org/10.33621/jdsr.v3i3.44>.
- Rettberg, J.W. 2014. *Blogging*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Sarappo, E. 2018. 'How Tumblr taught social justice to a generation of teenagers'. *Pacific Standard*. Online: <https://psmag.com/social-justice/how-tumblr-taught-social-justice-to-a-generation-of-teenagers> [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Segerberg, A., and Bennett, W.L. 2011. 'Social media and the organization of collective action: Using Twitter to explore the ecologies of two climate change protests'. *The Communication Review*, 14(3), 197–215. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2011.597250>.
- Van Dijck, J. 2013. *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Chapter 3.

# 'Illustrating' the Voices of Female Archaeologists

Rita Pedro<sup>1</sup>

As the papers in this volume demonstrate, despite extensive activism we exist in a highly patriarchal society where women are still often regarded as secondary, as 'the other sex': inferior, with their identities dictated by canons designed by privileged, straight, white men in positions of power. Globally, women are discriminated against, objectified, hyper-sexualised, exploited, abused, overlooked and regularly seen as secondary to men in society. Unsurprisingly, this is also true in the field of archaeology. This bias is perpetuated in academic literature, where, despite a robust feminist critique and some brilliant work through the lens of gender archaeology, narrow reconstructions and interpretations of women's roles throughout time still persist. It is also visible in the lived experience of female archaeologists who are subject to continued sexism and misogyny.

Wherever archaeologists practice in the world, some of the uninvited derogatory comments female archaeologists are subject to on a regular basis in their workplace include:

- 'You dig fast for a woman'.
- 'This is not a job for a woman'.
- 'You should change jobs, so you can have kids'.

As this volume demonstrates, other displays of sexism include (but are not limited to) catcalling, uninvited comments on physical appearance, sexual harassment, sexual assault, benevolent sexism, patronising attitudes and disparity of opportunity.

These are ever more prevalent in commercial archaeology which intersects with the construction sector, a highly male-dominated environment (Seidu *et al.* 2022). But, such biases are not limited to external sources; they can come from peers and superiors too, reflecting deeply entrenched and well-established societal prejudices that materialise in both explicit actions, as discussed above, and discrete and often systemically normalised sexism. Working in archaeology can often translate into a hostile and oppressive work environment for women.

As studies of the age of archaeologists (e.g., Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021) show, long-term fieldwork career prospects are much less common for women. This may be due to ageism; women's health on-site being often overlooked; because of the lack of 'institutional' support for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or even menopausal. The truth is that the constant gender-based violence and discrimination that we face in archaeology can end

---

<sup>1</sup> Rita Pedro (✉) Independent artist, Project Officer at Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA). Email: ritinhapedrocc@yahoo.com. Instagram: @rita\_pedro\_illustrations

up wearing us out and lead us to look for different jobs (Cultural Associates Oxford 2023). Ponder the following:

- How many times have you, regardless of your gender, normalised or perpetuated toxic masculinity and misogynistic attitudes? (e.g., by giving lighter tasks to women and more physically challenging tasks to men; by automatically approaching men on site, assuming that the site supervisor would be a man).
- Have you got used to or learned to ignore being catcalled at work? Or being told (or being the one telling someone else) that this is not a job for a woman, and been asked/asking why are we (women) not having kids instead, with nothing more than a shrug of the shoulders and a rolling of the eyes?
- Have you avoided (or tried to avoid) certain situations in order to keep your integrity, even if without noticing? This can be ever more evident in fieldwork, especially if it involves working within the construction sector: e.g., avoiding passing through some areas of the site alone, so you don't have to feel the stare of six men, or hear unpleasant, invasive or harassing comments because you are a woman?
- Have you ever felt unsupported or even ridiculed when complaining to a superior about harassment and sexism at work? Have you felt unsupported or ridiculed when putting complaints, queries, or suggestions to a superior purely because these are coming from a woman?
- Have you considered changing profession in the future if you ever want to have children?
- Have you ever felt your intellectual and/or physical abilities and your professional credibility are being questioned because you are a woman?
- Have you, especially those doing fieldwork, felt your general wellbeing is affected during your menstrual cycle? Perhaps because the welfare conditions were poor or with insufficient hygiene standards. Maybe because there was no access to period supplies (which could/should be provided as part of the items included in a first aid kit). Maybe because your productivity levels are expected to remain unchanged, while in reality they can be greatly affected by your cycle.

Doing the exercise of replying to above questions, regardless of your gender identity, or background, highlights the (often silent) struggles and disparity of treatment of women within our industry. Female archaeologists are constantly required to step out of structurally imposed traditional gender norms and this does not come without obstacles and violence.

As an archaeologist and an artist I started to create the drawings included throughout this volume out of an urge to illustrate and highlight, in a satirical and often humorous way, the different problems archaeologists face. My work expresses the implications that the (often poor) work conditions (including precarious contractual agreements, lack of Employee Assistance Programmes, low wages, long and unpaid commuting hours, etc.) have on archaeologists individually and collectively, on the socio-economic as well as on the physical and mental wellbeing spheres. Being a woman and having worked as an archaeologist in different countries (Portugal, Spain and now in the UK) both in commercial and research contexts, I have felt in my own skin, the extent of deeply ingrained sexism in our profession and how that is an added layer to all the issues we face across the industry.

More and more I have felt the need to speak up and protest, but also to try to bring a positive change to these inequalities. Change is only possible when there is awareness, understanding, and compassion. More and more I have felt the desire to give voice to female archaeologists.

With the rise of the #MeToo movement, awareness has been increased regarding gender inequalities across several sectors. However, the expression of this movement in archaeology still has some way to go before it makes notable changes, and consequently we still have a long path to tread until we attain equity. Unfortunately, as this is an institutional and societal problem, addressing these issues is complicated and will not be resolved overnight. However, the more we speak up and the more we show how the industry can provide us with a safe and equal working environment, the faster we bring about change. And sometimes it only takes very simple steps and a clear recognition of the issues, which I hope is reflected in my drawings.

A lot of activism has and is being done by both women and men. Gradually we are starting to witness some changes and improvements, an increase of awareness and inclusion. It is, therefore, crucial to keep making our voices heard by speaking up, through artistic expression, through education and information sharing, and through action and activism. It is equally vital to spread the wings of this activism towards an intersectional approach. Trying to understand how a still very post-colonial and white male-predominant industry has led to the current underrepresentation of other groups, including individuals with disabilities, individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds or LGBTQIA+ people (Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021). It is time to unmask the romanticised and embellished Indiana Jonesesque idea of the archaeologist, so that we can have a realistic strategy to tackle very real problems and inequalities. In our visually-driven society, drawings can become potent tools to communicate these silent battles. Let us engage in this activism, let us speak out and speak up, let us educate and bring about positive and inclusive change...and let these changes not only impact our present and future lives, but also re-draw the past in a prejudice-free retelling of our history.

### **Acknowledgements**

I am extremely grateful to my friends' support, in particular my dear friends and colleagues Kerry Boughton and Charlotte Lockwood for all the support, opinions and grammar checking of most of my illustrations. I am also thankful for their support in my journey into activism towards equity, diversity and inclusion in archaeology.

I am also grateful to Kayt Hawkins and Hannah Cobb for the opportunity to be part of this great project of activism toward gender equality and the promotion of positive change within the social dynamics in archaeology.

### **Bibliography**

Aitchison, K., German, P. and Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2021. *Profiling the profession 2020*. London: Landward Research. Online: <https://profilingtheprofession.org.uk/>. [Accessed 30 September 2024].

- Cultural Associates Oxford. 2023. *Qualitative inequalities research for the archaeology sector: Final Report by Cultural Associates Oxford for the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*. Online: <https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/projects/CIFA%20QIR%20for%20the%20archaeology%20sector%20-%20CAO%20Final%20Report%20rev%20Aug%2023.pdf>. [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Palha, J. 2022. *Women in construction: Gender equality is in our sites*. Ayming Online Report. Online: [https://www.ayming.co.uk/insights/whitepapers/women-in-construction/?gad=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAo7KqBhDhARIsAKhZ4uieqmKEfOCiYeX9Fz1I6GSazFFWyUCmxuXOFf\\_7ebh60JO3jBz606YaAm6oEALw\\_wcB](https://www.ayming.co.uk/insights/whitepapers/women-in-construction/?gad=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAo7KqBhDhARIsAKhZ4uieqmKEfOCiYeX9Fz1I6GSazFFWyUCmxuXOFf_7ebh60JO3jBz606YaAm6oEALw_wcB). [Accessed 19 March 2024].
- Seidu, R.D., Young, B.E., Meyer, C.L., Thorpe, J., Fong, D. and Madanayake, U. 2022. 'Gender diversity in the UK construction industry'. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 1101(3), 032032. doi: <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/1101/3/032032>.



SECTION 2.  
Raising Awareness:  
Highlighting Harassment





## Chapter 4.

# From the Balkans to the Rest of Europe and Beyond: Raising Awareness about Harassment, Assault, Bullying, and Intimidation (HABI) in European Archaeology

Laura Coltofean and Bisserka Gaydarska<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Harassment practices are very common in archaeology but only in the last decade has there been a slow process of exposing and calling them out (see Voss 2021a). They vary from micro-aggression and banter to sexual assault and rape. Very little, if anything, is done to combat such practices (although see suggestions in Voss 2021b) and one reason for that is the low level of reporting and general lack of widely available information for the nature and range of unwanted behaviours. This chapter discusses the experience of two consecutive surveys of harassment, assault, bullying, and intimidation (HABI) practices in European archaeology, focusing on the team-work aspects, how to turn such a project into research, and the challenges that such projects raise at various stages, including publication. The first survey was conducted initially by the board of the Archaeology and Gender in Europe (AGE) Community of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) in 2020, covering Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and Hungary. This was followed by a Europe-wide coverage in cooperation with the *Paye ta Truelle* collective in 2021. The chapter highlights that, while it is very important to know one's rights, it is also crucial to have appropriate systems in place for the reporting, investigation, and accountability of HABI, if archaeology is to become a safe and empowering learning environment and workplace for all.

### The Story Behind the Two HABI Surveys

The story of the HABI surveys that this chapter discusses goes back to the realisation in early 2020 that one author (Laura) had been subjected to various forms of HABI in archaeology during my entire young adulthood. This is not the place to disclose my personal HABI experiences. It will be enough to say that I have been exposed to HABI both as a subject and a witness since my first participation on an excavation as a fresh high school graduate in the summer of 2008, continuing through all levels of my university studies, at each fieldwork I joined and in my workplaces. I knew tens of other student colleagues and co-workers who

---

<sup>1</sup> Laura Coltofean (✉), Archaeology and Gender in Europe (AGE) Community of the European Association of Archaeologists, Romania. Email: [laura.coltofean@gmail.com](mailto:laura.coltofean@gmail.com).  
Bisserka Gaydarska, Archaeology and Gender in Europe (AGE) Community of the European Association of Archaeologists. UK. Email: [b\\_gaydarska@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:b_gaydarska@yahoo.co.uk).

had been subjected to similar experiences, and I had heard rumours about many others. And I knew from personal experience and as a witness that, besides sexual harassment and assault, there are many other more frequent and naturalised forms of harassment.

Blame-shifting, self-blame, anger, fear, humiliation, helplessness, frustration, internalisation, denial and Stockholm syndrome were among the feelings, reactions, and coping mechanisms that I generated as a response to the situations I had experienced. They all culminated in early 2020, when I felt that changing the situation depended on a change in my attitudes – to be more proactive, speak up and make my voice heard. I wanted to know to what extent harassment was occurring in archaeology, both in my home country, Romania, and elsewhere, and the best way to do this was through a survey. This is when I contacted Bisserka, with whom I was co-chairing AGE at the time (see Gaydarska and Coltofean, this volume). Although back then we did not know each other as well as we do now, I felt that she was the only person with whom I could carry out this survey. She had a frankness, sense of justice and dedication to the causes she believed in that I have rarely seen and that had struck me from the very first time I heard her speaking at the AGE meeting in the 2018 EAA Annual Meeting in Barcelona. Bisserka was glad to join the project. It turned out that she had had her own HABI experiences, based on which she suggested the inclusion of bullying and intimidation in our research. We have continued researching and developing projects together on HABI in archaeology ever since. Our next step was to invite French-born archaeologist Sébastien Plutniak to join our team. I had met him a year earlier at a conference in Rome, where I was impressed by his meticulousness and research on the history of archaeology. He was also academically trained in sociology, which made him a perfect match for the theoretically and methodologically complex project ahead of us.

The aim of our small team was to build on previous experience and to go beyond sexual harassment and assault – on which, thus far, most surveys have focused on in the West – and assess the existence of a wide range of harassment, assault, bullying, and intimidation in Central-East and South-East European archaeology. At that time, no survey existed on HABI in this area of Europe as compared to the West, where there were several such initiatives (see Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023). To our knowledge, there were only two articles signalling HABI in this region – the articles of gender archaeologist Nona Palincaş about Romanian archaeology (2006; 2010).

We decided to survey four countries – Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Serbia – where there was no public discussion and research on HABI in archaeology. Both authors were aware of this situation because we studied and/or practiced archaeology in these countries (Bisserka in Bulgaria, Laura in Romania and Hungary) for several years before moving to Western Europe. Serbia, where the situation was similar, was included in the project at the suggestion of Serbian-born gender archaeologist Uroš Matić, who is an active AGE member and one of its former co-chairs (2016–2019). Archaeologists from the four surveyed countries but living abroad, like us, were also encouraged to participate in the survey, but asked to limit their comments to incidents experienced within the archaeological settings of their home countries.

Together with Sébastien, we designed an online questionnaire in Google Forms to collect the data for the survey. A year later, while preparing the Europe-wide survey on HABI, we used the same survey administration platform. In fact, the format and content of this second

survey derived from the first one. They both surveyed a similar number of misconducts (17 vs 18) which included sexual harassment and assault; gender, racial, religious, personal, sexual orientation-based, age-based, and disability-based harassment; psychological and power harassment; physical harassment and assault; online harassment; retaliation; bullying and intimidation; and anti-Semitic harassment as the additional question in the second survey. Furthermore, both questionnaires consisted of defined and open-ended questions similar in content and number (33 vs 37), designed to capture the various aspects of HABI experiences in as much detail as possible. Sébastien's sociological training was essential to developing the logic behind, and accurate phrasing of, each question. While the language of the questionnaire on Central-East and South-East Europe was English, the one dealing with European archaeology was also translated into French. Importantly, both allowed respondents to answer open-ended questions in their native languages.

As both of us were AGE co-chairs at the time of the survey on Central-East and South-East Europe, we decided to carry it out under the auspices of the AGE Board. This was a strategic decision which gave more weight, credibility, and visibility to a project which dealt with such a sensitive, uncomfortable and controversial topic in archaeology and even beyond. The third AGE co-chair, Margarita Sánchez Romero (2017–2020) from Spain, followed by Ana Cristina Martins (2020–2023) from Portugal, did not actively participate in this project, but have provided strong support.<sup>2</sup>

The main dissemination channels of the survey on Central-East and South-East Europe were social media and email. To our surprise, it was the personalised invitation emails and Facebook messages that we sent to over 200 archaeologists, students and archaeological organisations and institutions in all four countries that were the most effective in generating answers. We had switched to this strategy after observing that targeting the three largest archaeology and cultural heritage Facebook groups in Romania, which in theory could have helped us reach 6600 people, produced little reaction. Those whom we invited via email were in part our contacts but most names were identified on, and retrieved from, the websites of universities, museums, associations and research institutes with archaeology departments. In Romania and Serbia, some of our contacts supported us with wider dissemination of the questionnaire among their students and colleagues or suggestions as to which people to contact. All this involved laborious work which was even more challenging as it was carried out only by the two authors. Sébastien was in charge of data analysis, and he was unfamiliar with the people, institutions and organisations in the archaeology of the study area.

Our dissemination of the survey on Central-East and South-East Europe resulted in 42 answers. They were collected in just over a month, between 8 July and 12 August 2020, when we retrieved the answers to have enough time to analyse the data and prepare the paper presenting the results for the upcoming 2020 EAA Virtual Annual Meeting. We had hoped to gather more answers, but reality showed us how difficult this was in countries where HABI was such a taboo subject, not just in archaeology but more generally in society. Despite the small size of our data, we were grateful to all our contributors. We left the questionnaire open, allowing space for anyone who needed more reflection on taking the survey, and we received two more

<sup>2</sup> Ana Cristina has been regularly informing us about events, projects, and publications on HABI in other fields, encouraging us to initiate a wider, cross-disciplinary discussion on the topic, which we hope to complete in the near future.

answers.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, once we stopped actively disseminating the survey, the answers also stopped coming in.

One year later, our survey on HABI in European archaeology was disseminated using a strategy developed from the previous survey. We were again reaching out to individuals, institutions and organisations through email and social media which, besides Facebook, now also included Twitter. This time, however, our team had nine more members from different countries, each with their own personal and professional networks. The *Paye ta Truelle* collective's presence on the team (see below) also brought large and well-established online and offline communities. There were two other novelties. Firstly, we distributed the questionnaire link in all these networks with a poster designed for visual impact. Secondly, we organised a 'hackathon' for a final push in circulating the survey before closure, in which three team members gathered online and posted the survey in c. 150 pre-selected archaeology-related Facebook groups for two hours. Thanks to a larger team and our collective dissemination efforts, this survey had a much wider reach. It has mobilised respondents from most parts of Europe and resulted in 1134 answers which are now part of the largest dataset on HABI in archaeology in Europe (see Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023).

The number of answers was strikingly different in our two surveys, but both showed a fact that was no longer deniable: that HABI in archaeology exists across Europe, and that it can be experienced by anyone, regardless of gender, age and professional setting (see Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023). The experiences that have been shared with us are devastating. Processing such qualitative data requires much attention and care, as well as mental readiness, because reading the accounts can be an emotionally charged process which may feel like reliving both the respondents' and one's personal HABI experiences.

The answers that we received in the surveys place a huge responsibility on us: that of making the voices of the HABI survivors heard. We believe that currently the best way to do this is through conference papers and publications. We must talk about HABI precisely where it is the most uncomfortable: in the formal settings of conferences and academic journals. It is there where we must raise awareness, not in the comfortable gatherings of like-minded people. This is why the preliminary analysis of the quantitative data from both surveys was presented at the EAA Annual Meetings in 2020 and 2021 (see Coltofean-Arizancu, Gaydarska and Plutniak 2020; Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2021). In fact, the survey on Central-East and South-East Europe was presented in the first session on HABI organised at an EAA Annual Meeting, 'Not another 25 years! Combatting harassment and assault in archaeology', which one author (Laura) had organised together with Ingrid Berg, the then president of the Swedish Archaeological Society, who was at the forefront of the #Metoo movement in Swedish archaeology. Both the session and our paper were well received. Gathering several of the pioneers of HABI research in European and United States archaeology, the session's success is shown by the fact that it was the fourth best-attended session at the EAA that year, with an audience of 72 participants (Salisbury and Rebay Salisbury 2020, 9, Table 2).

Before turning to some of the challenges we have encountered in our research on HABI, it is important to go back to the inception of the second survey, as it demonstrates the power of

<sup>3</sup> As these answers arrived after 12 August, their analysis was not included in the paper presented at the 2020 Virtual EAA Annual Meeting.

public presentations to embolden colleagues to come forward or perform similar activities. After the 2020 EAA Annual Meeting, we were planning to revise our dissemination strategy to collect more answers from the Central-East and South-East European space, undertake an in-depth analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data and publish an article. We were also aiming at a gradual extension of the survey to other European countries in the future, as the questionnaire was intentionally designed so that it could be applied to any country. However, an email that we received shortly after the EAA Annual Meeting from Marta Hlad changed the course of this survey. Originally from Slovenia, Marta is a PhD researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, and had listened to our paper and session on HABI at the conference. She wished to carry out similar research on HABI in archaeology in Belgium, Slovenia and Greece and was in contact with colleagues in these countries who were willing to join her. Among them was also archaeologist Laura Mary, the founder of the well-known *Paye ta Truelle*<sup>4</sup> collective, which is fighting for equality and diversity in archaeology, especially in Francophone countries.

Marta's email was a trigger point which shifted the course of the survey. We replied to the invitation to join her initiative by inviting her and her colleagues to join us in extending our survey to Belgium, Slovenia, Greece and France and, subsequently, to the whole of Europe. Marta quickly contacted everyone and, on 12 November 2020, a group of 13 people met online for the first time to plan the Europe-wide survey on HABI in archaeology. In the next three months, a series of email exchanges and hours of work followed in order to discuss and revise the questionnaire on HABI in Central-East and South-East Europe and adapt it to the broader European context. This work culminated in the launch of the survey on 27 January 2021.

The survey on HABI was no longer solely the project of three people and of the AGE Board. It was the project of a larger and stronger international team including AGE and *Paye ta Truelle* members as well as archaeologists outside these groups. Everyone joined forces with the hope of raising awareness about HABI in archaeology, to make the voices of thousands of survivors heard, and to ultimately contribute to a better and safer discipline. The acceptance and publication of the survey's quantitative data as a research article on HABI (see Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023) for the first time in a world-ranking European archaeology journal – *Antiquity* – is a milestone and an essential step in this direction. This gives us confidence that our upcoming publications on the survey's qualitative data will also be well received by academic journals.

Having the survey as a foundation, we were able to take the necessary steps beyond mapping HABI to start thinking about anti-HABI measures and train our fellow colleagues in preventing such situations. This is why we organised the discussion session 'The anti-HABI toolkit: Practical solutions and measures for preventing and addressing harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation in archaeology (HABI)'<sup>5</sup> at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the EAA in Budapest. This was followed by the workshop 'The Anti-HABI Toolkit: Practical workshop on solutions and measures for preventing and addressing harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation in archaeology'<sup>6</sup> which, in 2023, provided for the first time training on HABI at

<sup>4</sup> See <https://payetruelle.wixsite.com/projet>, accessed 29 January 2023.

<sup>5</sup> EAA Session #392, organised by Laura Coltofean-Arizancu, Bisserka Gaydarska, and Marta Hlad on 1 September 2022. For more details, see <https://www.e-a-a.org/ea2022>.

<sup>6</sup> EAA Session #664, organised by Laura Coltofean-Arizancu, Kayt Hawkins, and Marta Hlad, in collaboration with

an Annual Meeting of the EAA. Another major achievement was to obtain financial support for a workshop of this topic from the EAA and *Paye ta Truelle*; their sponsorship allowed us to cover the costs of the training by the Active Bystander Company (United Kingdom) and of the materials needed for the group activities. The objectives of the workshop – to provide high quality bystander training so that participants feel empowered to react to the HABI situations they witness in both their personal and professional life, and to carry out activities where participants could put the theory into practice using basic tools of verbal self-defence – were achieved, and all the participants found the workshop very useful. Prompted by the success of the workshop, we proposed to the EAA Executive Board that we continue delivering such training at future Annual Meetings, which they agreed upon. At the time of writing this chapter, we are developing the content of the second workshop<sup>7</sup> which will take place at the Annual Meeting in Rome in 2024.

We have chosen the EAA Annual Meetings as a venue<sup>8</sup> for these actions because of their wide reach, gathering thousands of archaeologists yearly from all over Europe. All these may seem like small steps from the outside but, for those of us who are actively working on HABI in archaeology and taking part in the life of professional organisations like the EAA, these are huge steps, for which we have long fought (see Gaydarska and Coltofean, this volume).

### Challenges of Researching, Surveying, and Publishing on HABI

The analysis of the quantitative data resulting from the survey on HABI in European archaeology is now published (Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023) but the full assessment of its implications is still pending. Thus, in this section of the chapter, we focus on issues that arose from our experience during the survey itself, the analysis of the data and the preparation for publication. This is important insofar as it may influence any future surveys. We divide the discussion between pre- survey and post-survey issues. Due to word restrictions, we concentrate on six points from a much longer list of comments.

#### *Pre-survey Issues*

##### *Why people do not take part in surveys*

We were very surprised by the lack of HABI reporting from certain contexts and areas, such as Bulgaria. The fact that there were no respondents from this country in either survey does not mean, however, that HABI does not take place there. This is shown by the sole example of HABI in Bulgaria brought to light by a foreign female who participated in the first survey. The personal experience of one author (Bisserka) also confirms that such misconducts exist, while the results from our surveys showed their presence in Romania, Greece, and Serbia – all neighbouring Bulgaria and with broadly similar archaeological traditions. We conclude that the absence of reports mirrors the failure to participate in the survey rather

---

Bisserka Gaydarska, on 31 August 2023. For more details, see <https://www.e-a-a.org/ea2023>.

<sup>7</sup> EAA Session #1138, organised by Laura Coltofean-Arizancu, Bisserka Gaydarska, Kayt Hawkins, and Marta Hlad, on 31 August 2024. For more details, see <https://www.e-a-a.org/ea2024>.

<sup>8</sup> Choosing the EAA Annual Meeting as a venue for our discussion session and workshop on HABI has advantages and disadvantages (e.g., high fees hinder wide and representative participation in the conference; the setting's formality may discourage the attendance of participants from and outside archaeology) which we will not discuss here given the limited space.

than the reality of the conditions. We have identified four possible reasons for the lack of participation. First, but not very likely, is that the survey did not reach the targeted audience (see previous section for survey dissemination). Second is the conscious silence out of fear of repercussions – a concern that was raised by some respondents. This goes hand in hand with personal feelings such as shame and the upset caused by bringing back painful memories. Third is the deep sense of distrust that surveys like that have any impact on HABI practices – a fear that was corroborated by personal statements in our survey which pointed out that nothing was done to perpetrators even after reports of unwanted behaviour. Last but not least is the normalisation of HABI practices, leading to denial of their presence and advancing explanations of misunderstanding based on cultural or generational differences.

Even if there were more and/or different reasons, all reasons need to be mitigated in future surveys to ensure better representativity and maximum outreach. The higher the proportion of concealment by those who have suffered from HABI, the weaker our research conclusions.

#### *GDPR*

The ever-increasing threat of the digital trade of personal data has justifiably brought about the introduction of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in Europe. Such regulations, however, can be problematic for HABI surveys (see below, post-survey issues of anonymity). By nature, HABI surveys are very personal – even intimate – while at the same time they are designed to identify, expose and address unwanted, unethical and/or unlawful practices. In order to act upon HABI behaviours, these need to be made public, which contradicts the spirit of GDPR. In the United Kingdom, this clash can be alleviated by procedures in Ethics Committees present in most, but not all, of the workspaces of practicing archaeologists. Ethics Committees, however, are not as common in the rest of the world. More importantly, as the existing surveys on HABI in archaeology show (e.g., Clancy *et al.* 2014; Coltofean-Arizancu, Gaydarska and Plutniak 2020; Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2021, 2023; Coto Sarmiento *et al.* 2020, 2022; Hodgetts 2020; Nakhai 2017; Nieto-Espinet and Campanera 2022; Radde 2018; Vanderwarker *et al.* 2018), these are usually not commissioned by institutions hosting such Committees, and are generally the result of personal, grassroots, trade union and professional organisations' initiatives, which can get into serious trouble if they fail to mitigate the GDPR. There is an obvious need for GDPR to take account of the conflicting demands of investigating and preventing HABI.

#### ***Post-survey Issues***

##### *Lack of clear procedure following the reports of HABI*

There are now several surveys from North America and Europe (e.g., Clancy *et al.* 2014; Coltofean-Arizancu, Gaydarska and Plutniak 2020; Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2021, 2023; Coto Sarmiento *et al.* 2020, 2022; Hodgetts 2020; Nakhai 2017; Nieto-Espinet and Campanera 2022; Radde 2018; Vanderwarker *et al.* 2018) and they all point to the same practices in the survey areas. Clearly the time has come to move from just reporting HABI but doing something about it (Voss 2021b). If there is a denial that HABI exists or is a serious problem (including the negation of the severe and long-lasting effects of HABI on the survivors), or if there is a

creeping sense of the normalisation and acceptance of such practices, no measure to uproot them can be successful.

The very few cases currently known in archaeology in which measures were taken after HABI reports were prolonged and traumatising for the survivors (see Vandekerckhove and Bergmans 2022 for Belgium; and Associated Press 2019; Flaherty 2019; Hanlon 2019; Wade 2019 for the United States). These cases often required significant financial contributions from the victims (e.g., for legal representation), and in many cases led to them having to quit their position and leave their institution. Despite the legal arguments for scrutiny, since false accusations are not impossible, such a long process with an *a priori* unknown outcome can be psychologically and professionally devastating for survivors. Moreover, we are also aware of a case in which, despite a court conviction of the perpetrator, the survivor was further victimised and shamed by their co-workers as being a problematic member in the research project and institute.

The above cases are among the few that have led to some punitive measures. There are many more instances in which HABI complaints remained unanswered or are even turned against the reporting individual. The few court cases and convictions should not delude us that there is a clear practical procedure of what is to be done after HABI takes place or is reported. It is often left to the personal determination of the survivors to seek justice, which usually requires emotional, social, and financial support and resources. It is clear that we need to push for a stronger system of official responses to complaints rather than the usual institutional silence.

#### *Anonymity that protects the survivors but casts doubt over research results*

The previous section refers to real people but their names are not mentioned. This is done to respect and protect their privacy. The lack of names, however, can cast doubt over the credibility of their claims about HABI. There can be no doubt that anonymity is and should be guaranteed to anyone who is prepared to report HABI. But there should also be mechanisms (like those shown on TV with actors' voices and blurred faces) that allow the public exposure of a single case or a survey of HABI, while keeping the identity of those reporting unknown. One solution, suggested by Sébastien, was to publish the raw data in the supplementary material as a mix of empty tables (emptied of data which could possibly identify a person) and of non-empty tables (containing data which could not identify a person). All tables would have randomly sorted rows whose variables could not be matched, and therefore associating the data with a person would be impossible. The 12-person team working on the publication of the above-mentioned Europe-wide HABI survey could not agree on such a mechanism, in major part due to the lack of precedents.

#### *Difficulty for proposing and justifying an activist position in a research paper*

Most of the results of the surveys conducted thus far are presented in academic publications. Such formats militate against the presentation of activist statements (for an exception, see Cobb and Crellin 2022), personal accounts and emotional outbursts. If any of these surveys is to generate change, this needs to happen on two levels – the creation of strong professional anti-HABI policies and wider public education on the effects of HABI. Neither of these matches well with the content of standard academic publications. Making a real impact requires dissemination genres akin to those used by trade unions and civic movements. On

the policy-making front, only recently codes of practice including anti-harassment principles (e.g., the EAA Code of Practice [EAA 2022]; see Gaydarska and Coltofean, this volume) and similar preventive measures (e.g., the Society for American Archaeology's [SAA] resource guide for addressing harassment and violence at its events [SAA Board 2016], and its Task Force on Sexual and Anti-Harassment Policies and Procedures) have been introduced by professional organisations and academic institutions, but this is only the first theoretical step. Time is needed for those to take decisive effect and such measures are far from being widely introduced and applied. The fading of these codes of conduct into the background will introduce very little change and risk leaving institutions too comfortable, believing they have already done enough. Thus, we need to be vigilant, energetic and explicit in demanding change. In terms of education, the situation is woefully inadequate, with no resources, patchy training, often paying lip service to top-down decision with no real effect, and no overall strategy to help archaeologists identify, call-out and combat HABI. This is why we initiated the anti-HABI training workshop at the 2023 EAA Annual Meeting in Belfast, which is specifically tailored for the contexts in which archaeologists may encounter HABI. Ways forward also include targeted videos, workshops and conference discussions and, if agreed, the sharing of powerful personal experiences in a sensitive arena. Their effectiveness, however, needs to be assessed on a regular basis, and if possible by impartial bodies, to prevent turning such measures into the training which everyone attends but which lacks a practical effect. Such initiatives require urgent implementation so as to protect the large number of archaeologists at risk from HABI.

#### *Open access*

Due to the sensitivity of the topic and perhaps, in some cases, even repercussions, the organisers of the surveys acted as individuals or members of grassroots organisations rather than representing institutions. The advantages of this freedom were clouded by the aforementioned GDPR approval, but importantly, also by 'catch 22' difficulties of getting Gold Open access for our publication. Open access was critical for the wider dissemination of the results of the survey, especially in places lacking the luxury of institutional access to Western journals, or for unemployed colleagues or those interested individuals outside archaeology. However, open access is granted primarily through funding by institutions, which was not only against the spirit of our initiative, but also posed many dilemmas. For example, since no institution had any formal involvement in the HABI project in terms of support or resources, why should they be acknowledged? In addition, the possible use of a fee waiver was not available in this particular case. We were facing either yet another set of many hours and hard work in crowdfunding, or knowingly allowing access only to privileged institutions and individuals through standard publication. We have managed to resolve the issue by last-minute, explicit support by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel but the fundamental issue of the 'strings attached' for granting open access remains unresolved.

The lesson here is that there is much to be done for the wide dissemination of projects that are not strictly academic. Social media, digital repositories, self-archiving platforms and academic journals have different, and only partially overlapping, audiences. If we are to make an impact and trigger change, we need presence on all of them!

## Conclusions

This chapter examined the experience of carrying out projects and research on delicate, uncomfortable, and controversial topics in archaeology, such as oppressive behaviours in current archaeological practice and education. We did this through two surveys on harassment, assault, bullying, and intimidation (HABI) that we undertook in 2020 in Central-East and South-East Europe and in 2021 on a European level.

These projects were born from our own personal experiences with HABI, both as survivors and witnesses. They represent our reaction towards perpetrators, towards the naturalisation and denial of HABI and towards the lack of real support and measures from institutions. We turned suffering into action by stepping out of our comfort zones and actively fighting against HABI. These are our ways of bringing justice and solace. What started out as a small project has gradually turned into an international Europe-wide project, as well as into one of our main research lines and our form of activism. We are at a stage where there are several small and large-scale surveys which together point to one clear conclusion: that HABI is endemic in archaeology. Carrying out further surveys on the topic is undeniably important, especially in places where data on HABI are non-existent. However, it is essential not to get stuck in pointing towards the existence of HABI but rather to move towards developing preventive measures and reporting mechanisms which are specifically adapted to the various situations that archaeologists and archaeology students regularly encounter. The existence and implementation of preventive measures and reporting mechanisms is uneven and insufficient across Europe, and the effects of those which exist are unclear. It is therefore time to think about measures and reporting mechanisms, and experiment with them in accordance with each country's socio-cultural contexts, so that we get closer to ensuring a better, safer, and empowering archaeology.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Kayt Hawkins and Hannah Cobb for the useful comments provided on this chapter. We are also incredibly grateful to all the people who took part in our surveys, to the teams with which we are working on researching and taking practical measures against HABI in archaeology, as well as to the people in the EAA, AGE, and the editors and reviewers of the journal *Antiquity*, who have supported our projects on HABI and/or our insistence on including it in the EAA's official documents. Special thanks also go to John Chapman for his careful language revisions.

## Bibliography

- Associated Press. 2019. 'UAA investigated ex-professor over sexual misconduct allegations', *Anchorage Daily News*, 27 March. Online: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/anchorage/2019/03/27/uaa-investigated-ex-teacher-over-allegations/>. [Accessed 16 February 2023].
- Board of Directors of the Society for American Archaeology. 2016. *SAA Background and resource guide for addressing harassment and violence*. Online: [https://documents.saa.org/container/docs/default-source/doc-careerpractice/harassment\\_resource.pdf?sfvrsn=d5b7b7d8\\_4](https://documents.saa.org/container/docs/default-source/doc-careerpractice/harassment_resource.pdf?sfvrsn=d5b7b7d8_4). [Accessed 16 February 2023].

- Clancy, K.B.H., Nelson, R.G., Rutherford, J.N. and Hinde, K. 2014. 'Survey of academic field experiences (SAFE): Trainees report harassment and assault'. *PLoS ONE* 9(7), e102172. doi: doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172.
- Cobb, H. and Crellin, R.J. 2022. 'Affirmation and action: A posthumanist feminist agenda for archaeology'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 32(2), 265–279. doi: 10.1017/S0959774321000573.
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B. and Plutniak, S. 2020. 'Breaking the taboo: Harassment and assault in Central-East and South-East European archaeology', paper presented at the *26th Virtual Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, Budapest, 24–30 August 2020*. Online: <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-03287731>. [Accessed 16 February 2023].
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B., Plutniak, S., Mary, L., Hlad, M., Algrain, I., Pasquini, B., Vandeveld, S., Stamataki, E., Janežič, P., Wouters, B. and Sengeløv, A. 2023. 'Harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation (HABI) in archaeology: A Europe-wide survey'. *Antiquity* 97(393), 726–744. doi: doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2023.58.
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B., Plutniak, S., Mary, L., Hlad, M., Algrain, I., Vandeveld, S., Pasquini, B., Janežič, P., Stamataki, E., Sengeløv, A. and Wouters, B. 2021. 'How safe are archaeological environments? Arguing for a common European framework for preventing and combating harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation (HABI)', paper presented at the *27th Virtual Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, Kiel, 6–11 September 2021*.
- Coto Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Martín Alonso, J., Pastor Pérez, A., Ruiz, A. and Yubero, M. 2020. *Informe sobre el acoso sexual en arqueología (España)*. Barcelona, Granada and Madrid: Zenodo. doi: doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3662763.
- Coto Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Pastor Pérez, A., Ruiz, A. and Yubero, M. 2022. 'Acoso sexual en la arqueología española: voces, silencios y retos de futuro', in M. Díaz-Andreu, O. Torres Gomáriz and P. Zarzuela Gutiérrez (eds) *Voces in crescendo: del mutismo a la afonía en la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología española*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, Publicaciones INAPH, 339–355.
- European Association of Archaeologists. 2022. *EAA codes and principles*. Online: <https://www.eaa-a.org/EAA/About/Codes.aspx>. [Accessed 9 January 2025].
- Flaherty, C. 2019. 'Unwanted attendee: Society for American Archaeology faces major backlash over how it handled a known harasser's attendance at its annual meeting'. *Inside Higher Education*, 15 April. Online: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/04/15/archaeology-group-faces-backlash-over-how-it-handled-known-harassers-attendance>. [Accessed 16 February 2023].
- Hanlon, T. 2019. "'He asked me point-blank if I wanted to have sex with him": VUB professor fired for harassment', *Anchorage Daily News*, 9 April. Online: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/anchorage/2019/04/09/former-uaa-professor-banned-from-alaska-campus-in-wake-of-sexual-misconduct-allegations/>. [Accessed 16 February 2023].
- Hodgetts, L., Supernant, K., Lyons, N. and Welch, J.R. 2020. 'Broadening #MeToo: Tracking dynamics in Canadian archaeology through a survey on experiences within the discipline'. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 44 (1), 20–47.
- Nakhai, B.A. 2017. 'Keeping archaeological field work safe from sexual harassment and physical violence'. *Mar Shiprim: Newsletter of the International Association for Assyriology*, 17 July 2017. Online: <https://iaassyriology.com/field-work-safe/?cn-reloaded=1>. [Accessed 16 February 2023].

- Nieto-Espinet, A. and Campanera, M. 2022. 'De la invisibilización a la impunidad. (Des)cifrando la discriminación de género y el acoso sexual en arqueología', in M. Díaz-Andreu, O. Torres Gomáriz and P. Zarzuela Gutiérrez (eds) *Voces in crescendo: del mutismo a la afonía en la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología española*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, Publicaciones INAPH, 315–337.
- Palincaş, N. 2006. 'On power, organisation and paradigm in Romanian archaeology before and after 1989'. *Dacia* NS 50, 7–56.
- Palincaş, N. 2010. 'Living for the others: Gender relations in prehistoric and contemporary archaeology of Romania', in L.H. Dommasnes, T. Hjørungdal, S. Montón-Subías, M. Sánchez Romero and N.L. Wicker, *Situating gender in European Archaeologies*. Budapest: Archaeolingua, 93–116.
- Radde, H.D. 2018. 'Sexual harassment among California archaeologists: Results of the gender equity and sexual harassment survey'. *California Archaeology* 10(2), 231–255. doi: doi.org/10.1080/1947461X.2018.1535816.
- Salisbury, R. and Rebay-Salisbury, K. (eds) 2020. 'EAA virtual annual meeting report', in *The European Archaeologists. The newsletter of EAA members for EAA members* 66, Autumn/Fall: 6–10.  
Online: [https://www.e-a.a.org/EAA/Publications/TEA/Archive/EAA/Navigation\\_Publications/TEA\\_content/Archive.a.spx](https://www.e-a.a.org/EAA/Publications/TEA/Archive/EAA/Navigation_Publications/TEA_content/Archive.a.spx) [Accessed 16 February 2023].
- Vandekerckhove, S. and Bergmans, E. 2022. "'He asked me point blank if I wanted to have sex with him": Victims of VUB professor dismayed by university attitude', *DeMorgen*, 28 January.  
Online: <https://www.demorgen.be/nieuws/hij-heeft-me-op-de-man-af-gevraagd-of-ik-seks-met-hem-wou-slachtoffers-vub-prof-onthutst-over-houding-universiteit~b7f6177b/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.brusselstimes.com%2F>. [Accessed 16 February 2023].
- Vanderwarker, A., Brown, K.M., Gonzalez, T. and Radde, H. 2018. 'The UCSB Gender Equity Project: Taking stock of mentorship, equity, and harassment in California archaeology through qualitative survey data'. *California Archaeology* 10(2), 131–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1947461X.2018.1535791>.
- Voss, B.L. 2021a. 'Documenting cultures of harassment in archaeology: A review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative research studies'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 244–260. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.118>.
- Voss, B.L. 2021b. 'Disrupting cultures of harassment in archaeology: Social-environmental and trauma-informed approaches to disciplinary transformation'. *American Antiquity* 86(3), 447–464. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.19>.
- Wade, L. '#MeToo controversy erupts at archaeology meeting', *Science*, 15 April. Online: <https://www.science.org/content/article/metoo-controversy-erupts-archaeology-meeting>. [Accessed 16 February 2023].

## Chapter 5.

# Serbian Archaeology and the Rise of the Awareness of Sexual Assault

Radmila Balaban, Monika Milosavljević and Tanja Ignjatović<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction<sup>2</sup>

Stemming from the dedicated work of the Autonomous Women's Center (AWC 2024), the Women Against Violence Network (2024) in Serbia and social changes in Serbian society, more light has recently been shed on sexual-assault awareness affecting archaeology in Serbia. This has also been stimulated by the global #MeToo movement and changes in European Associations of Archaeologists in the last few years.

Sexual assault/harassment (here understood interchangeably) is generally legally defined and understood through its associative discriminatory and illegal practices. In terms of the archaeological community, Barbara Voss identifies that while 'most people tend to distinguish between nonphysical and physical harassment [...] it would be a mistake to assume that one is more or less severe than the other' (Voss 2021a, 2). Harassment can be direct and indirect, with the latter being commonly overlooked because it may be determined by environment or behaviour, such as being an abetting witness. Harassment/assault does not merely impact the individual; rather it affects the discipline as a whole because harassment is a mechanism that increases self-exclusion from teams where one may otherwise develop their expertise and credibility. Consequently, this is a common reason to shift one's specialisation in archaeology or withdraw from it altogether (see Overholtzer and Jalbert 2021). Regardless, harassment creates a cognitive burden for its victims/targets. However, harassment itself occurs due to structural conditions and disciplinary culture.

Serbian archaeology is highly centralised (Novaković 2021, 188). There is a single institution of higher learning in Serbia in which students may obtain a degree in archaeology – the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Archaeology. Consequently, this institution was also the starting point for structural change since it is where future archaeologists are instructed to manage power and authority.

---

<sup>1</sup> Radmila Balaban (✉) Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Archaeology, University of Belgrade, Čika Ljubina 18-20, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia. Email: radmilab@gmail.com; radmila.balaban@f.bg.ac.rs  
Monika Milosavljević, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Archaeology, University of Belgrade, Čika Ljubina 18-20, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia. Email: monika.milosavljevic@gmail.com; momilosa@f.bg.ac.rs  
Tanja Ignjatović, Autonomous Women's Center, Tiršova 5a, Belgrade, Serbia. Email: tanja@azc.org.rs; tanja.ignjatovic333@gmail.com.

<sup>2</sup> Note that a shorter version of this work was first presented in 2020 within the EAA session 'Not another 25 years! Combatting harassment and assault in archaeology [AGE]' (organised by Laura Coltofean-Arizancu and Ingrid Berg).

The *Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment and Blackmail* (University of Belgrade 2022) at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia) initially came into force at the Faculty of Philosophy in December 2019. For the first time in the history of this educational institution, sexual assault and harassment were publicly acknowledged and procedures to report such behaviour provided. However, the policy remained somewhat ambiguous in its terms and methods as we will explain in further detail below. As a result, the policy was revised throughout 2021 and the integral version adopted in early 2022.

### **Social Background and Recent Calls for Change in Serbian Society**

Sexual harassment and assault has come to the forefront of public awareness and has become a concern globally. To better understand the social context of Serbia, it is necessary to briefly present the social background of the position of women and the awareness of sexual harassment in Serbia.

For awareness to occur, it was first necessary for a transformation in public attitudes to happen. In Serbia, the first steps were laid by figures in the public sphere coming forward. Among such instances, sexual harassment finally became a felony in the Serbian criminal code in 2002, a year after the spokeswoman of the Social Democratic Party of Serbia accused the then-Deputy Prime Minister of harassing her (Grujić 2001). However, due to its omission from the 2005 Criminal Code, it became decriminalised again, with lawmakers not explaining why this was the case. Only in 2016, after Serbia complied with the standards of the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Council of Europe 2014), was sexual harassment recriminalised (Republic of Serbia, 2016, Article 182a). Counterintuitively, the recriminalisation was met with backlash from the Serbian public and media. Yet the statistics demonstrate a continued high level of sexual harassment suggesting that the sexual harassment provisions in the broader legislation and criminal code of the Republic of Serbia<sup>3</sup> may be seen to be insufficient to protect the victim/survivor (Reljanović 2020, 40). For example, 41.8% of women over the age of 15 in Serbia have reportedly experienced sexual harassment, a high rate for the Balkans but lower than registered in the European Union (OSCE 2019, 33–35). The discrepancy may be attributed to the negative social opinion of reporting harassment, as well as a lack of public understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment. Additionally, 18.3% of women in Serbia have experienced sexual harassment in the work environment, with 5.5% in an educational environment and 3.2% in institutions. These experiences are usually left unreported; even when disclosed, they are done so privately and not officially (Babović 2020, 27).

The #MeToo movement, globally, started in 2006. Its first appearances emerged in Serbia in 2017, gaining momentum in 2021 after women, also in the entertainment industry, began to come forward with allegations. Concurrently, women in Serbia first started speaking out about their own experiences of sexual harassment via social media in 2017 (Batričević, Stevanović and Višnjić 2020, 133). Most prominent among them was Marija Lukić, who worked as an assistant to the Mayor of the City of Brus (Serbia). Based on her charges as well as those of other victims, an indictment was brought against the Mayor in mid-2018 for sexual

---

<sup>3</sup> These may be found in the Republic of Serbia's broader laws covering labour practices, prevention of workplace harassment, prohibition of discrimination and promotion of gender equality.

harassment and abuse of office. Her case garnered significant media attention (Veselinović 2019), assisting its transfer to a non-local court where she could receive a trial free of local corruption and social pressure. Although it was lengthy, the trial concluded 18 months later with a verdict against her abuser.

The prevalence of sexual violence and harassment against women grew even more visible to the Serbian public in 2021 with the revelations of actress Milena Radulović, who publicly accused and filed charges against her former acting coach for the years of rape and abuse she had experienced as a minor.<sup>4</sup> Other former students of the same coach also came forward with their own accusations of sexual abuse taking place from 2008 to 2020. Their publications prompted actresses and artists from the former Yugoslavia to share similar experiences under the hashtag ‘NisamTražila’ (‘#IdidNotAskForIt’). This second wave of accusations shed light on silent abuse experienced prevalently in state institutions. In response, the Faculty of Dramatic Arts (FDA) in Belgrade has launched the platform ‘FDA-Against Violence’, and the platform ‘Ne znači Ne’ (‘No Means No’) was created on social media to support the recognition, response and protection from sexual predators in Serbian state institutions (Vladisavljević 2021). Numerous instances have come to light of educational and governmental institutions engaging in predator protection at all levels of power. Often, these have been cases in which the abuser was protected due to political influence, while the victims’ claims were frequently first disregarded (Stojanović 2021a, 2021b).

Research conducted into sexual harassment in Serbian institutions of higher learning had almost been non-existent until 2014, when a study was conducted by the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, with another conducted in 2018 by the AWC. A more comprehensive survey was conducted during 2021 as part of the project ‘Sexual violence at the universities in Serbia: Raising awareness and developing innovative mechanisms of victim support’ by the Victimology Society of Serbia (Nikolić-Ristanović and Čopić 2022, 11). The survey, conducted online among university students from 5 March to 10 May 2021, had its results published in 2022.<sup>5</sup> The chief findings were that victims of sexual harassment/assault did not report sexual harassment, which for many was due to a socially-induced sense of shame in which they would be blamed instead. They reported the depreciation of the seriousness of the event. The victims claimed to feel able to solve it better for themselves, expressing a distinct lack of trust in established institutions and fear that no one would believe them (Nikolić-Ristanović and Čopić 2022, 96). It must be noted that none of these results specifically addressed archaeology students, nor archaeology as a discipline.

### **Historical Preconditions for Assault and Harassment in Serbian Archaeology**

A detailed quantitative study on the number of sexual harassment cases in Serbian archaeology has not yet been undertaken. Some data have been collected by Laura Coltofean-Arizancu, Biserka Gaydarska, and Sébastien Plutniak, though within the context of general harassment affecting archaeology in Europe (Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2020; Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Since 2022 the case has been in litigation for which exhaustive testimony has been received by the court and bias has been alleged against the judge in favour of the defendant.

<sup>5</sup> The survey was anonymous and its data collected through informed consent. The survey was conducted on a convenient stratified sample, consisting of 1597 student respondents from across one private and five state universities in Serbia. The sample consisted of 1293 (81%) female and 304 (19%) male students (Nikolić-Ristanović and Čopić 2022, 12).

Numerous other studies (see Clancy *et al.* 2014; Meyers *et al.* 2015, 2018; Hodgetts *et al.* 2020) also attest to patterns of sexual harassment in archaeology in general. Most prominent of these are two papers by Barbara Voss (Voss 2021a, 2021b), who found patterns of harassment to exist globally within archaeology as a profession and these mirror the same practices of harassment found in Serbia.

Dating back to the end of the 19th century, archaeology's development as a discipline in Serbia is akin to its counterparts elsewhere in Europe as being identifiable as a 'gentleman's science' dominated by white and upper class men (Лазич 1998; Михаљчић 1998; Милинковић 1997). Socialist Yugoslavia, of which Serbia was a member from 1945 to the 1990s, led improvement in gender-equality. Women became actively involved in various archaeological activities and started to be appointed to steering positions. However, it was not until the 1980s that a slightly higher number of women became employed in Serbian archaeology (Novaković 2021). Even though women of the post-WWII generations quickly advanced in education to take teaching and research positions at universities, museums or institutes, masculinisation and militarisation became dominant tendencies in Serbian society following the civil wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Serbian archaeology, thereafter, followed the behavioural norms of the time, which posed a potential danger to the position of women in the field and led to various forms of discrimination and harassment being normalised.

### **The High-Risk Circumstances in Serbian Archaeology Conducive to Harassment**

It is not easy to speak openly about sexual harassment. In some cases, many are unaware of what harassment is and where the boundaries are, due to normalisation established through intergenerational exchange and pressure to harass others as part of group solidarity. In the case of Serbia, there is no sufficient quantitative survey on which to base conclusions. Rather, tendencies may be mapped according to personal experiences and informal discussions within members of the archaeological community, as well as the rare public discussion of these issues raised by young professionals and students. Although lacking formal data, the ubiquity of harassment points to the necessity for action against it. Following the recommendations of Barbara Voss, harassment in archaeology should not be treated as an interpersonal matter but as scientific and professional misconduct (Voss 2021b, 9).

The high-risk factors for harassment and assault in Serbia, particularly for sexual misconduct occurring in educational and workplace environments, are marked by patterns of:

1. *A heavier use of alcohol and informal 'party' culture that evades responsibility and erodes a sense of agency/reporting after harassment.* Indeed, alcohol is regularly present in the workplace and in the field, where consuming it is a right of initiation that students proudly retell and is important for acceptance into the group. However, lowered inhibitions caused by alcohol consumption may be used as an excuse for harassment, maltreatment and abuse against women. Such cases are rarely reported due to the victim's feelings of shame and the fear of being ostracised from the archaeological community (Succinct Research 2017).
2. *Senior men harassing junior women due to gender inequality being part of the disciplinary culture where harassment is normalised.* Although harassment in archaeology may equally occur from the university hall to the trench, fieldwork in the Serbian context bears a higher

risk. Since inclusion in a fieldwork team is crucial for archaeological work, there is a constant, tacit obligation to tolerate inappropriate comments, obscenities (especially concerning women's bodies) and behaviour. As a consequence, women withdraw, and modify their physical appearance to mitigate potential comments. Furthermore, the norms of gender labour division in the field are passed on transgenerationally, becoming a normalised practice. This is exemplified by commonly articulated male declarations that 'women are not strong enough to dig or push full wheelbarrows' or 'women are better at cleaning trenches or washing pottery'. Women are also far more likely to experience the translation of these attitudes into practice, being assigned to administrative, kitchen or janitorial duties in camp rather than to fieldwork (cf. Meyers *et al.* 2018; Voss 2021a). Due to this dominant male culture, women are therefore forced to 'fit' into the image of social norms assigned to them, which has greatly contributed to the power imbalance in fieldwork.

### **Legal Framework Targeting Sexual Harassment and Blackmail**

To address all that we have outlined above, it is critical that there are mechanisms of protection against harassment that rely on structural rather than individual solutions. Employees of the Faculty of Philosophy are protected by the Republic of Serbia's Labour Law (Republic of Serbia 2018), the Faculty's Statutes (University of Belgrade 2006) and regulations elsewhere. Students are protected by the Faculty's Rulebook (University of Belgrade 2018). These all prohibit any discrimination, as well as sexual or any other forms of harassment. However, the framework is general, offering no measures in concrete situations.

On 24 December 2019, the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade adopted its *Policy on the Protection against Sexual Harassment and Blackmail* (University of Belgrade 2022). The Faculty of Philosophy has ten departments; the Department of Archaeology is only one of them. The adoption of the policy sent a clear message that the Faculty of Philosophy publicly acknowledged, for the first time in its history, that sexual harassment was occurring at the Faculty and that rules must be put in place to deal with it. While commendable, the policy at the time required improvement by further revision of a number of issues including, but not limited to, the fact that the terminology used was outdated as it did not account for gender but only biological sex, that the statute of limitations was insufficient for the victim to have the ability to report any incidents, that deans within the institution were given too much oversight power and that no clear terms were provided for conducting mediation if accepted. Intensive work was undertaken to revise this in 2021, and a new policy was adopted in early 2022. The updated policy offers a two-stage mechanism to report sexual harassment and assault, first providing for consulting before escalating to report. Those involved in working with victims are professionally trained to deal with trauma, violence and its legalities. Another improvement to the policy is that the first version offered a statute of limitation of ten months to report any harassment; under the revised policy, students may report their harassment at any time while they are still enrolled within the Faculty.

The policy stipulates the obligation to inform and educate employees and students. However, prior to adopting the policy, the Department of Archaeology in Belgrade had only held one in-person workshop on sexual harassment in cooperation with the AWC (NGO sector) on 25–26 March 2019. Fifteen female archaeology students participated, who reported finding it useful

to learn more about what harassment and violence are, recognising certain behaviours as harassment and learning to say no in hostile situations.

In response to mounting pressures, the University of Belgrade adopted a universal *Policy on the Prevention of and Protection against Sexual Harassment* in 2021 which must be followed by all Faculties, Departments and Institutes operating within the institution, should they have no policies in place themselves.<sup>6</sup>

### Closing Thoughts

Unfortunately, despite their noted bravery, those who have come forward have been vocal targets of harassment in Serbia facing the common scepticism of ‘Why not come out with these allegations sooner?’ and ‘They were asking for it’. Unlike the global #MeToo movement, which resulted in more than 200 men losing power and position, there have been no such outcomes in Serbia (Stojanović 2021c). Without the empowerment of a change in public opinion, many archaeologists in Serbia still consider sexual harassment as unlikely to happen to them and regard talking about it to be a shameful process that unjustly humiliates the victim and their family. Therefore, there is still much work to be done and we argue that more robust mechanisms for prevention and protection must be specifically developed for archaeological fieldwork.

Rooted in patriarchy, Serbia has a long and difficult road ahead to address a culture of endemic harassment and gender-based discrimination. However, the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements and other international examples of good practice, awareness in educational institutions and survivors coming forward to shine light on past and current abuse, all pave the way to a future free of harassment and promising better equality for women.

### Bibliography

- Autonomous Women’s Centre Belgrade (AWC). 2024. *Autonomous Women’s Centre Belgrade*. Online: <https://www.womenngo.org.rs/en/>. [Accessed 10 June 2024].
- Babović, M. 2020. ‘Sexual harassment in Serbia, analysis based on the data from the OSCE-led survey on the well-being and safety of women in Southeast and East Europe’, in M. Babović and M. Reljanović, *Sexual harassment in Serbia*. Belgrade: OSCE Mission to Serbia, 5–34.
- Batričević, M., Stevanović, A. and Višnjić, J. 2020. ‘Kampanje kao mogući instrumenti borbe protiv nasilja nad ženama u savremenoj Srbiji’. *Antropologija* 20 (3), 117–140.
- Clancy, K.B.H., Nelson, R.G., Rutherford, J.N. and Hinde, K. 2014. Survey of academic field experiences (SAFE): Trainees report harassment and assault’. *PLoS ONE* 9 (7), e102172. doi: [doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172).
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L. and Berg, I. 2020. ‘Not another 25 years! Combatting harassment and assault in archaeology’ [Archaeology and Gender in Europe sponsored session], in *Abstract Book of 26th Virtual Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, Budapest, 24–30 August 2020*. Prague: European Association of Archaeologists, 351.

<sup>6</sup> A comparative analysis of several policies that have been adopted within Serbian institutions of higher learning may be found in Malbaša (2022) ‘Protecting students from sexual harassment in Serbian institutions of higher learning – Challenges in establishing regulations and gaining confidence’ (Zaštita studentkinja i studenata od seksualnog uznemiravanja na fakultetima u Srbiji – izazovi u uspostavljanju regulative i poverenja).

- Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B. and Plutniak, S. 2020. 'Breaking the taboo: Harassment and assault in Central-East and South-East European archaeology', paper presented at the *26th Virtual Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, Budapest, 24–30 August 2020*. Online: <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-03287731>. [Accessed 28 August 2024].
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B., Plutniak, S., Mary, L., Hlad, M., Algrain, I., Pasquini, B., Vandeveld, S., Stamataki, E., Janežič, P., Wouters, B. and Sengeløv, A. 2023. 'Harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation (HABI) in archaeology: A Europe-wide survey'. *Antiquity* 97 (393), 726–744. doi: 10.15184/aqy.2023.58.
- Council of Europe. 2014. *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210)*. Online: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=210>. [Accessed 10 June 2024].
- Grujić, J. 2001. 'Intimnost pod lupom', *Vreme*, 3 October. Online: <https://www.vreme.com/vreme/intimnost-pod-lupom>. [Accessed 09 April 2022].
- Hodgetts, L., Supernant, K., Lyons, N. and Welch, J.R. 2020. 'Broadening #MeToo: Tracking dynamics in Canadian archaeology through a survey on experiences within the discipline'. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 44(1), 20–47.
- Malbaša, D., Ignjatović, T. and Mitić, M. 2022. 'Zaštita studentkinja i studenata od seksualnog uznemiravanja na fakultetima u Srbiji – izazovi u uspostavljanju regulative i poverenja', in Z. Spahić Šiljak, J. Kovačević, and J. Husanović (eds) *Uprkos strahu i tišini: Univerziteti protiv rodno zasnovanog nasilja*. Sarajevo: Univerzitet u Sarajevu and TPO Fondacija, 200–208.
- Meyers, M.S., Boudreaux, T., Carmody, S., Dekle, V., Horton, E. and Wright, A. 2015. 'Preliminary results of the SEAC sexual harassment survey'. *Horizon and Tradition* 57 (1), 19–35.
- Meyers, M.S., Horton, E.T., Boudreaux, E.A., Carmody, S.B., Wright, A.P. and Dekle, V.G. 2018. 'The context and consequences of sexual harassment in Southeastern archaeology'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 6(4), 275–287.
- Nikolić-Ristanović, V. and Čopić, S. 2022. *Sekusalno nasilje nad studentima na fakultetima u Srbiji*. Beograd: Viktimološko društvo Srbije-VDS.
- Novaković, P. 2021. *The history of archaeology in the Western Balkans*. Ljubljana: Ljubljana University Press.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). 2019. *Well-being and safety of women for Serbia*. Vienna: OSCE Secretariat. Online: [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/419750\\_1.pdf](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/419750_1.pdf). [Accessed 14 April 2022].
- Overholtzer L. and Jalbert, C.L. 2021. 'A "leaky" pipeline and chilly climate in archaeology in Canada'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 261–282.
- Reljanović, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment at work in the Republic of Serbia: Regulatory framework and its implementation', in M. Babović and M. Reljanović, *Sexual harassment in Serbia*. Belgrade: OSCE Mission to Serbia, 37–96.
- Republic of Serbia. 2018. 'Labour law'. Online: <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2005/24/1/reg>. [Accessed 18 August 2022].
- Republic of Serbia. 2016. 'Criminal law: Sexual harassment - Article 182a'. Online: <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2005/85/6/reg>. [Accessed 10 June 2024].
- Stojanović, M. 2021a. 'Serbian media name famous actor as alleged rapist', *Balkan Insight*, 22 March. Online: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/03/22/famous-serbian-actor-denies-link-to-actress-rape-allegation>. [Accessed 13 April 2022].

- Stojanović, M. 2021b. 'Veteran Serbian politician faces sexual exploitation investigation'. *Balkan Insight*, 20 April. Online: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/04/20/veteran-serbian-politician-faces-sexual-exploitation-investigation/>. [Accessed 13 April 2022].
- Stojanović, M. 2021c. 'Victims discouraged by "lenient" sentences for sex crimes in Serbia'. *Balkan Insight*, 5 April. Online: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/04/05/victims-discouraged-by-lenient-sentences-for-sex-crimes-in-serbia>. [Accessed 13 April 2022].
- Succinct Research. 2017. 'The drinking culture of archaeologists, Part II'. Online: <https://www.succinctresearch.com/drinking-and-archaeologists-part-ii/>. [Accessed 10 June 2024].
- University of Belgrade. 2022. 'The policy on protection against sexual harassment and blackmail', Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). Online: [https://www.f.bg.ac.rs/files/akta/Prav-oIDZSU\\_pr\\_tekst.pdf](https://www.f.bg.ac.rs/files/akta/Prav-oIDZSU_pr_tekst.pdf). [Accessed 10 June 2024].
- University of Belgrade. 2018. 'The Faculty's Rulebook', Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). Online: [https://www.f.bg.ac.rs/files/akta/Statut\\_2018.doc](https://www.f.bg.ac.rs/files/akta/Statut_2018.doc). [Accessed 18 August 2022].
- University of Belgrade. 2006. 'The Faculty's Statutes', Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia). Online: <https://www.f.bg.ac.rs/files/akta/Prav-OS-2006.doc>. [Accessed 18 August 2022].
- Veselinovic, M. 2019. 'Serbia's #MeToo moment as alleged harassment victim fights lonely battle for justice', *CNN*, 30 June. Online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/30/europe/serbia-metoo-trial-intl/index.html>. [Accessed 10 April 2022].
- Vladislavljević, A. 2021. "'I didn't ask": Balkan women share sexual abuse traumas'. *Balkan Insight*, 20 January. Online: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/01/20/i-didnt-ask-balkan-women-share-sexual-abuse-traumas>. [Accessed 10 April 2022].
- Voss, B. 2021a. 'Documenting cultures of harassment in archaeology: A review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative research studies'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 244–260. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.118>.
- Voss, B. 2021b. 'Disrupting cultures of harassment in archaeology: Social-environmental and trauma-informed approaches to disciplinary transformation'. *American Antiquity* 86(3), 447–464. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.19>.
- Women Against Violence Network. 2024. 'Women Against Violence Network'. Online: <https://www.zeneprotivnasilja.net/en/>. [Accessed 10 June 2024].
- Лазич, М. 1998. Археолошка збирка Филозофског факултета, у Р. Михаљчић (ур.) Филозофски факултет 1838–1998, период 1963–1998: 440–445. Београд: Филозофски факултет. [Lazić, M. 1998. Arheološka zbirka Filozofskog fakulteta, u [in] R. Mihaljčić (ur.) *Filozofski fakultet 1838–1998, period 1963–1998*: 440–445. Beograd: Filozofski fakultet.]
- Милинковић, М. 1997. Филозофски факултет у Београду – Одељење за археологију, у С. Ђирковић и Р. Михаљчић (ур.) Енциклопедија српске историографије: 134–137. Београд: Knowledge. [Milinković, M. 1997. Filozofski fakultet u Beogradu – Odeljenje za arheologiju, u [in] S. Ćirković i R. Mihaljčić (ur.) *Enciklopedija srpske istoriografije*: 134–137. Beograd: Knowledge.]
- Михаљчић, Р. (ур.) 1998. Филозофски факултет 1838–1998, период 1963–1998. Београд: Филозофски факултет. [Mihaljčić, R. (ur.) 1998. *Filozofski fakultet 1838–1998, period 1963–1998*. Beograd: Filozofski fakultet.]

## Chapter 6.

# The Role of Small Groups in Big Issues. The Work of the Archaeology and Gender in Europe Community in the European Association of Archaeologists

Bisserka Gaydarska and Laura Coltofean<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

One may often wonder if there is any role for small, bottom-up, grassroots activist groups in large corporations or professional organisations. In this chapter, we argue forcefully that this role exists. AGE (Archaeology and Gender in Europe) is one such group and community within the EAA (European Association of Archaeologists). This chapter discusses five projects that were either developed or carried out by AGE as stand-alone initiatives or in cooperation with the EAA from 2020 to 2022: the issuing of the *EAA 2020 Statement on Archaeology and Gender*, followed by the revision of the EAA's Code of Practice and the creation of the EAA's Anti-Harassment and Appeal Committee; the publication of the illustrated booklet *Gender Stereotypes in Archaeology* (Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2021); and contributing to the EAA's 2022 Safe Space Policy. It argues that while important top-down decisions or wide academic discussions matter in creating a fairer and more diverse past and present world, this goes hand in hand with the often invisible hard work and commitment of individuals who implement these policies or ideas and develop them further. This chapter reveals how the hard work behind the scenes on such projects is itself a form of activism.

### The EAA 2020 Gender Statement and its Follow-Up Projects

The three-year period between 2020 and 2022 was prolific for AGE in terms of advancing gender issues on the EAA's agenda through various projects. This section will deal with the first of these projects, the *EAA 2020 Statement on Archaeology and Gender* (European Association of Archaeologists 2020; henceforth Gender Statement) and its follow-ups.

From the very beginning, the Gender Statement was to be part of a series of statements (European Association of Archaeologists n.d.) which the EAA had begun to issue on a range of topics of concern (e.g., cultural heritage, democracy, climate change, good archaeological practice) on a yearly basis since its Annual Meeting in Barcelona in 2018.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bisserka Gaydarska (✉) Archaeology and Gender in Europe (AGE) Community of the European Association of Archaeologists, United Kingdom. Email: b\_gaydarska@yahoo.co.uk  
Laura Coltofean, Archaeology and Gender in Europe (AGE) Community of the European Association of Archaeologists, Romania. Email: laura.coltofean@gmail.com

In fact, the Gender Statement derives from the *EAA 2019 Bern Statement on Archaeology and the Future of Democracy* (henceforth Bern Statement), which highlights that ‘Responsible archaeology seeks to widen discourses and respectful dialogue by seeking to focus on the social relevance of its discipline in the modern world and to include all social groups within open and democratic societies’ (European Association of Archaeologists 2019). Building upon the Bern Statement, the Gender Statement’s aim was and continues to be ‘to alert us to continuing discriminatory practices on the basis of gender and sexuality in our profession and, on the other [hand], insists that gender inequality can no longer be tolerated’ (European Association of Archaeologists 2020). The Bern Statement and the Gender Statement were part of a larger vision of the EAA; together, they were meant to serve as the foundation of the EAA’s forthcoming revision of codes of ethics and conduct, as Felipe Criado-Boado (personal communication, 11 June 2020), the EAA President at that time, highlighted in discussions in the early days of this project.

The history of our contribution to the Gender Statement goes back to 2020. It was in June 2020 that EAA Executive Board member Maria Mina – who is also an active member of AGE – contacted us, Bisserka and Laura, as well as Margarita Sánchez Romero, as the then co-chairs of AGE, and informed us about the EAA’s intention to create a task force for drafting a statement on gender and archaeology. Owing to its remit and the expertise of its members, AGE was specifically chosen to play an essential role in producing this document (Maria Mina, personal communication, 9 June 2020). Besides Maria and ourselves, the task force was meant to consist of two more AGE members, ideally men, in order to ensure gender balance. After Maria’s call for action, we quickly organised ourselves and invited Uroš Matić and Enrique Moral de Eusebio to join us in the task force; they were and continue to be among the few AGE members identifying as men in an EAA Community dominated by women. Doris Gutsmedl-Schümann, another active AGE member and one of its former co-chairs (2013–2016), also expressed interest in drafting the statement and joined us too.

We began and ended the Gender Statement’s drafting process with Zoom meetings in which we discussed our thoughts and concerns. We came up with a structure consisting of three sections (i.e., an introduction describing the context in which the statement appeared; the current situation of gender inequality and discrimination in archaeology; and measures to remedy gender discrimination) which we divided among ourselves under the form of sub-teams to share the workload. Each task force member participated in producing the overall Gender Statement by providing comments. Reaching agreements within the team was easier than in the process to follow (see below). In fact, it was quite surprising to see how well our thinking coincided on the points in the statement, including very delicate matters, such as harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation (henceforth HABI).

Before sending the Gender Statement to the EAA’s Executive Board, we requested feedback from AGE members. After taking these comments into account, we presented it to the Executive Board which provided its own comments, resulting in several rounds of editing. The principal tension over the Gender Statement was the Executive Board’s wish for a general and short text, while the task force preferred a comprehensive and straightforward text. The ensuing negotiations produced another series of revisions both in terms of content and length. What surprised us in this prolonged negotiation was the sometimes harsh criticism

that we received on certain points such as HABI and the extent of divergence between our views, the opinions of other AGE members and the EAA Executive Board. Such feedback proved to be a useful reality check. In addition, it once again showed how sensitive gender can be as a topic and how challenging it is to distance one's views from one's personal experiences and beliefs, as well as from the cultural, social and economic contexts of the discussion.

Our strategy with the Gender Statement was to tackle as many gender-related issues as possible (hence the document's initial length), along with proposing measures to remedy them, while preserving the most pressing matters in later drafts. The issues that the document dealt with included gender stereotypes; fair pay; the glass ceiling; unequal representation in the submission, evaluation and award of grant proposals, in decision-making positions and bodies, as well as in the authorship of publications; and motherhood, harassment, illness and disability. The Statement's final version is the result of persistence in long-lasting and sometimes challenging negotiations. We must admit that as task force members, we were often unhappy with requests to remove, rewrite and revise certain aspects that we considered particularly important. However, we were generally satisfied with the outcome.

The Gender Statement was presented at the Annual Membership Businesses Meeting (henceforth AMBM) held at the 2020 Virtual EAA Annual Meeting in Budapest and it was voted on during the same assembly. However, the voting was happening online for the first time in the history of the EAA (Eszter Bánffy, personal communication, 13 January 2024), and this came along with technical issues and a lack of clarity regarding the unfolding of the voting process among the attending delegates. The result was therefore invalidated. As a solution, the EAA decided to repeat the vote at the AMBM organised online and *per rollam* between 27 and 29 April 2021, while at the same time allowing more time for the EAA membership to familiarise itself with the Statement's contents and to submit questions about it. Knowing the sensitivity and controversial nature of gender issues within the archaeological community both inside and outside the EAA, we were worried that the Statement would not win a majority. Nevertheless, this saga ended successfully – the Statement was approved by the majority of EAA members and it now stands among the series of statements issued by the EAA.

Given the importance and timeliness of the Gender Statement, the EAA entrusted the AGE Board with translating it into several languages. We therefore launched a call for translators via email in the AGE network and brainstormed for archaeologists who were interested in gender issues but were not necessarily part of AGE. Our aim was to translate the Statement into a diverse range of languages, some of which are spoken in countries which – from a Western perspective – have controversial views on gender issues. Our efforts resulted in translations in 14 languages in addition to English, such as Bulgarian, Catalan, Danish, Galician, German, Greek, Hungarian, Persian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish.

The Gender Statement had a snowball effect. A year later, in 2021, Maria Mina was asked by the EAA Executive Board to lead the task force which would revise the EAA's Code of Practice and Principles (European Association of Archaeologists 2022a; henceforth Code). Maria sought to involve in the task force representatives of EAA Communities; as a gender archaeologist and AGE member herself, she was particularly keen on having this EAA Community represented. With the experience of the Gender Statement still

fresh in mind, she invited the team which drafted this document to join the task force. Of particular concern was the inclusion of points that were removed from the Gender Statement in the EAA's revised Code – in particular, the section which dealt with anti-HABI measures. Having primarily drafted this section, Laura volunteered to join the new task force. Both being AGE members, Maria and Laura were mainly in charge of writing a section on safe work environment, equality, and inclusion in the EAA's revised Code (European Association of Archaeologists 2022a, Section 1d).

Just like with the Gender Statement, the drafting and revision of the Code went through a long and extremely critical process of negotiations and feedback provision. This time, however, it was the views among the task force members that were often shockingly different. Persistence, standing our ground, diplomacy and negotiations were key in the inclusion of sentences and even sections in the Code's final version, which the EAA membership voted on at the 2022 EAA Annual Meeting in Budapest.

Despite its unavoidable limits, the Code seems to us to be a novel initiative in the world of archaeology. Its content is modern and adapted to many of the sociocultural and political realities of the twenty-first century, as well as to those of current archaeological practice. We suggest that this Code places the EAA at the forefront of archaeological organisations in its incorporation of equality, diversity and inclusivity issues. At the time of writing this chapter, we believe that the EAA is the only archaeological organisation with such an inclusive and comprehensive Code.

As mentioned before, the Gender Statement's section on measures to remedy gender discrimination in its various forms was supposed to be included in the EAA's Code. Its points were revised and included in the Code's initial drafts, but negative feedback suggested they were too specific – and, we would add, probably a bit uncomfortable due to the nature of the topic and the boldness of the points we proposed – for inclusion in the document's final version. It generated debate among the task force members and to a certain extent within the EAA Executive Board, but Maria fiercely defended and insisted upon it, as she did with several other delicate points in the Code. Thanks to her persistence, as well as to her negotiation and leadership skills, the section was finally concluded. Some of its points were kept in the Code, while others, such as specific anti-HABI actions, were included in the remit of the EAA's newly formed Appeal and Anti-Harassment Committee at the Executive Board's suggestion. This Committee – whose existence was officially announced at the 2022 EAA Annual Meeting in Budapest<sup>7</sup> and which includes three AGE members – is yet another success of AGE.

The projects presented in this section are the results of AGE members' largely invisible and often unacknowledged voluntary work. These examples reveal the importance of persistence, negotiation, and patience, as well as of the willingness to take on unpaid roles in laborious task forces and committees to advance gender-related matters on the agenda of organisations like the EAA. As a matter of fact, apart from a handful of hired staff at the EAA headquarters in Prague, Czech Republic, all EAA members actively involved in the organisation's structures perform voluntary and unpaid work (Eszter Bánffy, personal communication, 13 January 2024).

## **The Booklet ‘*Gender Stereotypes in Archaeology*’**

### ***The Idea***

As is clear from its name, the main preoccupation of the AGE Community is gender (Archaeology and Gender in Europe n.d.). Traditional academic engagements with the topic have variable understanding, acceptance, and impact worldwide with one common denominator – widespread misconceptions of the key tenets of gender archaeology, its practitioners and their rationale – which amounts to stereotyping. Exposing stereotypes for what they are – unfounded and unsupported statements turned into the normative and natural state of affairs – has a long history in our discipline but is currently in need of a shake-up to address the complacency in Western archaeological traditions and to combat simplistic interpretations in narratives dominated by culture history. Such a broad spectrum of issues required not only as wide a participation as possible but also a different format from the research papers we are more familiar with. An illustrated booklet with short, targeted texts seemed appropriate since the initial inspiration was to caricature a stereotype with an image and deconstruct it with a text. As for potential authorship, with its multinational composition AGE was ideally placed to fulfil such a task. That the concerns of the three editors-to-be were widely shared by the group became immediately obvious, when the call for suggestions of topics and authors was swiftly answered. Among the many research and community initiatives we (Bisserka and Laura) have been part of over the years, there has never been such enthusiasm and *camaraderie* about a project. We started the process in late September 2020 and, by the end of September 2021, the booklet had already been printed.

### ***Fundraising***

A key aspect of the project was to find a sympathetic publisher and resources to cover their costs and the cost of illustrations. When we approached Sidestone Press the booklet may have appeared left-field and risky. The vision of Sidestone to take on unconventional ventures should be acknowledged, as is the important role of independent and relatively small publishing houses.

The next step was perhaps the most challenging, as there are hardly any grant schemes aimed at supporting archaeological publications, let alone experimental formats. Crowdfunding was the only option, despite all the risks that this entails and the additional work it involves in creating, producing, and disseminating rewards for backers. As with the spontaneous reaction of would-be authors, the public support, as measured by the number of backers (156) and some very generous individual donations, exceeded our expectations. Crucially, a substantial contribution in the form of matching funding was provided by the EAA, which boosted the campaign in its early days. The target was reached in six days, and the overall success was 134% or €1823 in excess of the €5300 we needed to raise. The lesson of this campaign is that crowdfunding is a viable option for archaeological publication. It produces a faster turn-around than any other funding scheme and may be the only route for grassroots and civic movement publications, but it is also hard and time-consuming work, from building the campaign to preparing, sending and tracking the backers’ parcels all over the globe.

### Content and Impact

We have elaborated elsewhere on the structure, content, authorship and illustrations of the booklet (see Coltofean *et al.* forthcoming); however, there are two points relevant to the current volume. The first is straightforward – the last stereotype in the booklet is entitled ‘Archaeology is free of harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation’ (see Coltofean-Arizancu and Gaydarska 2021, Figure 1) and in 250 words tries to deconstruct this misconstrued belief. The second is broader and concerns the success of the format of the booklet, which is much better suited for activist purposes than most academic formats. Metaphorically, it could be described as a ‘pocket travelling exhibition’, whereby a powerful combination of image and text delivers a strong message. The impact of the booklet – whether its content or format – can be formally measured by the number of downloads on the day of its release or by the over 9817 downloads to date (8 January 2024). Now, the booklet has a life of its own, and we are aware of some aspects of this (e.g., being a part of an editorial piece in the journal *Antiquity* – see Witcher 2021) while others we find by chance (e.g., being a part of ‘archaeology-themed’ Christmas hampers).

By way of conclusion, it is important to point out that not all authors would agree with everything covered in the booklet but for us it was very important to maintain and indeed emphasise this plurality of views, as the tolerance of difference is not a notable hallmark



Figure 1. The illustration by Nikola Radosavljević which accompanies the text by Laura Coltofean-Arizancu and Biserka Gaydarska deconstructing the stereotype that ‘Archaeology is free of harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation’ (after Coltofean-Arizancu and Gaydarska 2021).

of our discipline. However, if there are two words that characterise this project, they are 'community spirit'.

### **The EAA's Safe Space Policy**

In mid-October 2021, a rather unpleasant incident took place on Twitter, where a legitimate concern very quickly escalated into a bad-tempered and ill-advised exchange of soundbites, with blocked access to the EAA Twitter account for some of the participants in this exchange. The issue at stake was the safety of the LGBTQIA+ community at the time of the EAA Annual Meeting in Budapest in the view of the 'family protection' laws introduced by the Hungarian government in July and August 2021.

For those not taking part directly in this debate, it was obvious that there was gross misunderstanding on both sides, such as that the decision to hold the meeting in Hungary was taken before these laws were introduced, or that concerns of fear and unease need to be alleviated, not diminished and disregarded. However, such rational and level-headed arguments were lost in the heat of the moment and many more people were indirectly implicated in this debate, including the broader EAA membership and especially AGE.

The matter became a formal issue, with official complaints being sent to the EAA Secretariat. Behind the scenes, there was an intensive discussion between the EAA President Eszter Bánffy, the Officers, Executive Board members and Secretariat and the AGE co-chairs on the appropriate next steps. In a fast-evolving situation, it was decided that, in addition to the immediate statement on Twitter and an open email line to the EAA Helpdesk, a more permanent and long-term solution for the concerns initially raised about safety was to be drafted by AGE and offered to the EAA Executive Board for consideration and implementation.

The first step was to mobilise the AGE membership for a general meeting and the response was overwhelming. The Zoom meeting was passionate, soul-searching, and above all, constructive. An eight-member task force of volunteers (Laura, Bisserka, Kayt Hawkins, Ana Cristina Martins, Maria Mina, Nona Palincás, Rachel Pope and Andrea Mouriño Schick) was formed whose responsibility it was to act upon the ideas mentioned during the online discussion by researching the local situation in Budapest and following up with suggestions for support for any EAA members with safety concerns. After an intensive week of work by the task force, a draft was sent for consultation to the wider AGE community, receiving mostly positive and constructive feedback. The amended document was submitted to the EAA Executive Board and later adopted as a crucial enhancement of the EAA's Safe Space Policy (European Association of Archaeologists 2022b). It offered a brief overview of the situation, expressing strong support for both the LGBTQIA+ community and our Hungarian colleagues. It also acknowledged the concerns of individuals who may have felt threatened by the new Hungarian legislation, whilst pointing out key facts of LGBTQIA+ realities in Hungary with links to back up these facts. It also provided a list of useful links and contacts for people to check prior to arriving in Budapest, as well as for emergency cases during the meeting.

There were three initiatives that arose from this policy that turned into a process of ensuring the safety of anyone in the Budapest meeting who may feel threatened. First was a webinar (European Association of Archaeologists 2022b) set up by the local organising committee and the EAA President, Eszter Bánffy, and moderated by an AGE co-chair (Bisserka). The webinar was presented by Róbert Buzsáki, representative of the Háttér Society (Háttér Society 2011–2024) – the leading civil organisation on LGBTQIA+ matters in Hungary. It presented the most up-to-date information about these communities, their rights and multiple contacts for support within Hungary. The recording of the webinar was available till the end of the Annual Meeting in Budapest and is still available online (see footnote 10). The second initiative was set up following the suggestion of an AGE member. The so-called ‘buddy system’ was meant to offer personal support to concerned individuals during the meeting itself. Three AGE members volunteered to offer tailored care but nobody came forward seeking support during the meeting. Last but not least was the launching of the EAA’s Appeal and Anti-Harassment Committee in Budapest itself, which was described earlier in this chapter.

There will be various assessments of this episode in the history of the EAA. For us, the question is who would have stepped up to take the role of mediator if AGE was not in place, or was less alert to contemporary issues both within and outside archaeology? It is clear that a small community within a much larger organisation could be instrumental in solving disputes and offering personal, targeted support for individuals alongside its more traditional academic remit.

## Conclusions

This chapter discussed the various projects in which AGE has been involved within the EAA, either independently or in collaboration between 2020 and 2022. In our view, these have all been pioneering projects in the often-conservative world of archaeology, which were carried out with the purpose of making our discipline better and safer, both for our wellbeing and day-to-day professional activities. Their effects in practice are yet to be seen; we are convinced that they will slowly but steadily come.

It is important to recognise the largely invisible work behind these projects. They have all involved very long hours of demanding work including writing, revisions, meetings, discussions, and – perhaps most importantly – negotiations. The beauty of these projects resides not only in their outcome – which is accessible to everyone – but also in the teamwork behind them and in the challenge of reaching a consensus on various matters for the sake of the common good. Moreover, the people behind these projects – including ourselves – are all volunteers. They are people with diverse backgrounds, brought up in various cultures, and often with very differing and clashing opinions and beliefs. However, they are all driven by fierce passion and a concrete mission (whether conscious or not) to make archaeology a discipline which is in line with the evolution and needs of today’s fast-developing society.

The type of projects and work that we have presented in this chapter are a very specific form of activism; some activism is visibly situated at the front and centre of a movement, shouting loud and raising awareness from the front lines. However, what we highlight here is the often silent or less visible, but no less important, activism happening in many large organisations.

This kind of activism takes on the arduous task of advocating for, and introducing, matters concerning gender equality, wellbeing and safety in official and far-reaching (more than we may think) documents such as codes of conduct and practice, among others. The activism here represents the kind of constant advocacy and pushing behind the scenes that is rarely celebrated but without which structural changes are impossible. Of course, structural change may be slow, but having such documents as reference points is essential for real changes to happen. This is why the work of individuals and of relatively small communities such as AGE has an essential role within organisations like the EAA and in archaeology as a whole.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Kayt Hawkins and Hannah Cobb for recognising the value of AGE's work and for inviting us to expand on the contribution of this EAA Community to a better and safer archaeology. We are also grateful to them, as well as to Eszter Bánffy, Maria Mina and John Chapman for the useful comments provided on this chapter. Special thanks also go to John Chapman for his careful language revisions.

### Bibliography

- Archaeology and Gender in Europe, N.d., Archaeology and Gender in Europe, Home, viewed 9 January 2025, <https://www.archaeology-gender-europe.org>.
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L. and Gaydarska, B. 2021. 'Stereotype 24: Archaeology is free of harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation', in L. Coltofean-Arizancu, B. Gaydarska and U. Matić (eds) *Gender stereotypes in archaeology: A short reflection in image and text*. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 56–57. Online: <https://www.sidestone.com/openaccess/9789464260250.pdf>. [Accessed 12 October 2024].
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B. and Matić, U. (eds) 2021. *Gender stereotypes in archaeology: A short reflection in image and text*. Leiden: Sidestone Press. Online: <https://www.sidestone.com/openaccess/9789464260250.pdf>. [Accessed 12 October 2024].
- Coltofean, L., Gaydarska, B., Matić, U. and Radosavljević, N. forthcoming. 'What is wrong with this image? Reflecting on past diversity through visual representations of gender stereotypes in archaeology', in J.Z. Matias, N. Scheyhing and D. Gutschmiedl-Schumann (eds) *Representation matters: Diversity in visual representations of the past* (Themes in Contemporary Archaeology Series). Springer.
- European Association of Archaeologists. N.d. *EAA Statements*. Online: <https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Statements.aspx>. [Accessed 9 January 2025].
- European Association of Archaeologists. 2019. *EAA 2019 Bern Statement on Archaeology and the Future of Democracy*. Online: [https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Statements\\_2018-2024/Statement\\_2019.aspx](https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Statements_2018-2024/Statement_2019.aspx). [Accessed 9 January 2025].
- European Association of Archaeologists. 2020. *EAA 2020 Statement on Archaeology and Gender*. Online: [https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Statements\\_2018-2024/Statement\\_2020.aspx](https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Statements_2018-2024/Statement_2020.aspx). [Accessed 9 January 2025].
- European Association of Archaeologists. 2022a. *EAA Codes and Principles*. Online: <https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Codes.aspx> [Accessed 9 January 2025].
- European Association of Archaeologists. 2022b. *EAA Safe Space Policy for Budapest*. Online: [https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA2022/General\\_Info.aspx?WebsiteKey=13a70299-9cf2-4cc8-98c2-2862c5c6a8dd&hkey=ac8c68ba-2a4f-4dc2-9864-ebb05e47d2fa&New\\_](https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA2022/General_Info.aspx?WebsiteKey=13a70299-9cf2-4cc8-98c2-2862c5c6a8dd&hkey=ac8c68ba-2a4f-4dc2-9864-ebb05e47d2fa&New_)

ContentCollectionOrganizerCommon=6#New\_ContentCollectionOrganizerCommon.  
[Accessed 9 January 2025].

Háttér Society, 2011–2024, Háttér Society, viewed 9 January 2025, <https://en.hatter.hu>.

Witcher, R. 2021. 'Editorial'. *Antiquity* 95(384), 1375–1386. doi: <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2021.166>.

## Chapter 7.

# #everyDIGsexism and Everything After

Hannah Cobb<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction: Setting the Tone

Dear Reader, I hope you won't mind that I take advantage of this volume's stylistic approach to write in something of an informal tone. I choose this tone, not because this is a hastily scrawled paper written in between all the facets of caring for a family and doing my job (though it is), or because it is hard to reflect on one's own contributions (though it is). I choose this tone because I have been deeply influenced by bell hooks (1994) and her argument that in challenging systemic gendered inequities, we must be free to disrupt precisely the tools used to perpetuate these. For hooks, at the heart of this is the fallacy of objectivity within formal and impersonal writing. The subjects in this book are painful and hard, and the people writing or talking about them (myself included) have poured hours and hours of their mostly unpaid time into them. To pretend this is not personal, emotive and passionate does it more than a disservice – it plays it down and it plays into the hands of the patriarchal systems we all seek to challenge.

### Digging Diversity

So, with my tone established, I want to begin by being clear on my standpoint. I am a middle class, white, cis woman with no physical disabilities and in a straight presenting relationship. Yet even with the degree of privilege that this affords me, like most women and minoritised individuals, I have had to navigate the swirling currents of gendered inequity, harassment and discrimination my whole life. So, from my undergraduate dissertation<sup>2</sup> onwards, I have been researching and writing about this in relation to the past (e.g., Cobb 2005; Cobb and Gray Jones 2018) and the present (Cobb 2015; Cobb and Croucher 2014, 2016, 2020). But there were three specific things that prompted and inspired me to go beyond academic publication and into practical activism, and the first of these was my students...

In my twenties, working in developer-led archaeology and throughout my postgraduate studies, the inequities and harassment in archaeology were ever present. However, it was when I got my first academic post as a technician and lecturer, and I was struck by how diverse my students were in contrast to the workforce, that the barriers to diversity and the systemic nature of inequity in our profession were most explicitly exposed. I set out to examine this through two studies of student diversity in the UK in 2011 and 2017, *Digging*

---

<sup>1</sup> Hannah Cobb (✉) CAHAE, 2.9 Samuel Alexander Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M33 6HY, UK. Email: Hannah.Cobb@Manchester.ac.uk

<sup>2</sup> This critically examined the impacts on hunter gatherer studies of the sustained historical use of the masculine pronoun as a generic term for all of society.

*Diversity 1* (published in Cobb 2015; Cobb and Croucher 2016) and *Digging Diversity 2* (published in Cobb and Croucher 2020, 93–103), with the aim of producing data to compare with the UK's *Profiling the Profession* labour market studies (Aitchison *et al.* 2008, 2013, 2021) in order to prompt further consideration of where barriers existed and how we address them.<sup>3</sup> Of course, it will come as no surprise that the barriers appeared everywhere; in 2011 and 2017 around 93% of UK archaeology students surveyed were white, compared to an eye watering 99.2% of professionals in the 2013 *Profiling the Profession* survey (Aitchison *et al.* 2013) and a still dismal 97% in the 2020 study (Aitchinson *et al.* 2021). More students reported disabilities, and a much greater range of disabilities was noted amongst students than amongst professionals (Cobb 2015; Cobb and Croucher 2016, 2020). In terms of gender balance, the *Profiling the Profession* studies have shown a positive picture as the gap between male and female archaeologists has narrowed over time to nearly equal figures (47% women, 53% men) in 2020 (Aitchison *et al.* 2021). But this hides some issues; the number of women in professional roles has consistently fallen significantly after the age of 40 (Aitchison *et al.* 2021), suggesting that fewer women are staying in the profession and fewer are in senior roles. Meanwhile the number of people identifying with non-binary or other gender identities in the various iterations of the *Profiling the Profession* studies have been so few that they have not been recorded, in order to avoid making respondents identifiable (Aitchison *et al.* 2021). In contrast, 4.3% of students in *Digging Diversity 1* and 2.5% of students in *Digging Diversity 2* either chose not to define their gender at all or chose a non-binary description for their gender identity (Cobb 2015, 237; Cobb and Croucher 2020, 96).

If you are the kind of reader who switches off at all the statistics, let me summarise: by the early 2010s the first *Digging Diversity* study made the obvious clear: there was a notable disjuncture between the diversity of UK archaeology students and the UK archaeology workforce, and it was clear that something needed to be done. For me, it seemed that a two-pronged approach was needed; to support and encourage the diversity of the student body by developing inclusive teaching and learning practices, and to change the profession to make it a place where minoritised colleagues could progress, free of discrimination and harassment.

The first item in that wish list, developing inclusive teaching in archaeology, is something I have worked on, in partnership with Karina Croucher (University of Bradford), throughout my career and it has underpinned all of my pedagogic research. That said, I am not sure if it really counts as activism (though it is increasingly getting more activist – see Cobb 2024), so I won't expand on it here, except to say that the inclusive approach we have developed, which we call inclusive learning assemblages, can be found (at different stages of development!) in our publications (Cobb and Croucher 2014, 2016, 2020, 2022). And, if you're interested (and assuming they are still running at the point in the future when you read this!), come and join us online in our (roughly monthly) teaching and learning roundtable events which regularly cover questions of inclusive teaching (Cobb and Croucher 2024).

---

<sup>3</sup> In 2020 the *Profiling the Profession* survey introduced their own study of students and I would direct readers to this as it goes further than my own work by also comparing student diversity figures against the statistics from the UK's Higher Education Statistics Agency to understand the broader picture.

### Everyday Sexism, Online Activism and Glass Ceilings

At the same time as Karina and I set out to develop our approach to inclusive teaching, in the early 2010s, online activism began to grow both within archaeology and without, and this was the second thing that inspired me. By 2014, not only could I see how systemic inequities were preventing diverse student's career chances, but also I had two children under the age of three, I was working all the hours I could, jumping through hoops I was not contracted for just to compete with all my contemporaries who had not taken maternity leave, and the online activism I saw illuminated how women and minoritised colleagues all over the world were not only fighting similar battles, but also facing worse in the form of discrimination, bullying and harassment. The Everyday Sexism project, which began in 2012, was particularly inspirational for me, and within archaeology, the work of TrowelBlazers and British Women Archaeologists also filled me with a passion to do something.

At this time much of the activism in British archaeology was pushing from the outside in – that is to say, it was led mostly by independent activists, or collectives of people, who had set up organisations, social media accounts and online spaces to battle against the system. But I began to wonder whether we needed people to push from inside too. In 2014, with our work on inclusive teaching and learning, Karina and I presented at a wide range of conferences and at one – ironically about women in archaeology – we listened to (straight, white, cis men) make the following statements:

*'Archaeology needs to be a financially sustainable profession and only when we have resolved that can we address less pressing issues like gender'.*

*'We need to make sure jobs aren't being lost before we deal with diversity'.*

I was already angry, and I left this conference raging. This confirmed to me that, if we were going to change these kinds of attitudes, change had to be driven from within – from the heart of the very structures of our profession – and as a member of the UK's professional body, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (henceforth CifA), it felt to me that this surely should be the body to drive change. CifA set the professional standards for archaeological practice, and surely issues of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) should be at the heart of those standards.

Joyously I was not alone in thinking this. In fact, a few people told me that CifA had engaged with these issues before, and that there had been an Equal Opportunities Officer at CifA in the 1990s, but they couldn't remember who.... We shall return to this later in the paper. Meanwhile, working with Amanda Feather, the then Head of Capacity Building at Historic England, we made enquiries about what we could do and how we could work with CifA to engage with the EDI agenda. CifA is a formally structured organisation and so we were advised that the only way to bring EDI to CifA was in the form of a special interest group. So, in 2015, I attended CifA's annual conference and gave a paper entitled '*Let's DO something! The potential for a CifA Equality and Diversity special interest group*' and I was overjoyed to come away with seven volunteers to be committee members and 20 members willing to sign to say they would join the group.

But, as with anything this formal, the road to setting up the group was a long one. We had to submit the required proposal paperwork, it had to be considered by a variety of committees, and then more paperwork, more committees, and we had to hold an AGM and so on. Yet the conference session where I had called for us to do something was one of those amazing conference sessions where every paper pops and fizzes and, in this case, angrily shouts for change! The session was entitled ‘*Glass Ceilings, Glass Houses, Or Glass Parasols?*’ and was organised by Hilary Orange and Paul Belford (you can see all the papers and read their abstracts thanks to Rocks-Macqueen 2015). And so this was the third thing that inspired me to activism – not just because it was such an inspiring session (though it was!), but also because here somebody suggested that we needed an Everyday Sexism for archaeology. So, as we went through the slow process of setting up the CIFA E&D Group, Cath Poucher (who I had met in the session) and I seized the moment and created #everyDIGsexism.

### #everyDIGsexism

The energy from the Glass Ceilings session coalesced with a broader zeitgeist for online activism and, although trolls were already inevitable (see, for example, Perry *et al.* 2015), this was a time when Twitter was still a positive force for networking and sharing and making change. The hashtag quickly caught on, and with the Twitter account of the same name, Cath and I retweeted, replied, amplified others and anonymously shared accounts of sexism and harassment when people wanted to get their voice out into the world, but wanted to remain anonymous. Although we all knew and still know what goes on, the things people shared were shocking, and remain visible on Twitter (now X) via a search of both our account, and the hashtag. If you no longer wish to visit Twitter/X, however, here are just a few examples (Figure 1):

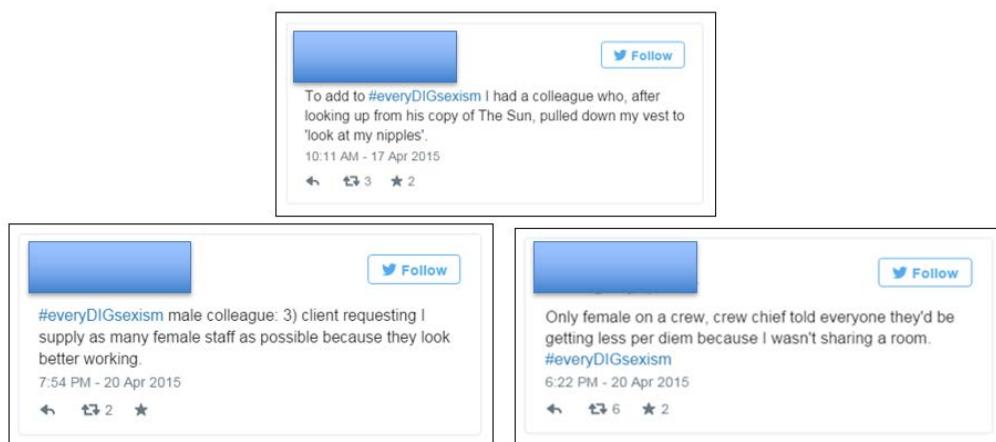


Figure 1. Anonymised examples of the use of #everyDIGsexism from Twitter in April 2015

Coltofean-Arizancu and Gaydarska (this volume) talk about the energy and the hours of silent work behind the scenes that need to go into activism, and our work on #everyDIGsexism was no different, so when the Cifa EDI group finally passed through all the paperwork hurdles and began to come to life, Cath and I both made the decision to put our voluntary time behind that instead. But I am proud of what we started and the joy of this burst of activism is that it had impacts that rippled out beyond the projects and over the years. The testimonies that it elicited inspired others into their own activism (see Mary *et al.* this volume), they were drawn upon to illustrate the need for action in other organisations, and they supported the case for much of what the Cifa E&D group went on to do. Moreover, the hashtag has provided a place for people to be able to talk and share still. If you look on Twitter at the hashtag, it lives beyond our account and archaeologists continue to use it express their rage and frustration. It remains a clarion call to shine the light on the endemic sexism and harassment in our profession.

### **Cifa Equality and Diversity Group 2015–2022**

A number of the papers in this volume reflect on the challenges of where their activism sits. What comes across in many who have not been affiliated with larger organisations is how liberating this can be. You can Tweet what you want, when you want. You can shout and rage at the structures and formal organisations of archaeology when they are out of step with good practice. You can call out harassers and institutions that don't do enough to eject them. All of this is wonderful. But you are also working alone and tirelessly – there is no support, no one to check the emails or help to arrange events. You have no financial support, and those whose minds you are trying to change may feel you have limited legitimacy precisely because you are an independent voice. Meanwhile, to be affiliated with a large organisation provides legitimacy, funds, and support in a myriad of ways. But it also means you can't be agile and responsive when things happen that need comment or reaction. You need to be cautious on social media because you speak for a wider organisation. And though you are in a place to make change happen at the heart of the structures that need it, this is a tough job that involves constant pushing, constant action and constant fighting against your own erasure by the system that you are trying to change in your own voluntary time. Coltofean-Arizancu and Gaydarska's paper in this volume highlighted this and it resonated deeply with me because, in the Cifa E&D group, our activism was twofold – both externally facing with the aim of changing the professions, but also internally with the aim of better embedding EDI within Cifa's own practice too. Thus the group, which was a voluntary group run by a voluntary committee<sup>4</sup> all working in their own time, faced resistance on two fronts. I am proud, then, that within all of these challenges, we did so much from our constitution in late 2015 through to our dissolution in January 2022.

During this time we ran conferences, conference sessions and training events, including two Mental Health first aid training sessions (Feb 2017, January 2018, total c.100 attendees). We ran eight Decolonise Archaeology workshops (March – December 2020, total c. 350 attendees).

---

<sup>4</sup> The committee members between autumn 2015 and January 2022 were: Jim Brightman (Co-opted as chair 2016 – 2017 whilst Hannah was on maternity leave, Treasurer 2017 – 2022), Adam Brossler, Hannah Cobb (Chair 2015 – 2022), Chloe Duckworth, Amanda Feather (Secretary 2015 – 2017), Joe Flatman (Secretary 2017 – 2022), Pen Foreman (Comms 2018 – 2022), Alex Grassam (Mentoring lead 2018 – 2022), Brian Kerr, Mike Kimber, Laura Hampden (Comms 2018 – 2021), Sarah MacLean (Treasurer 2015 – 2017), Emily Plunket, Catherine Poucher, Cat Rees, Amanda Talboys (Comms 2020–2021), Emily Taylor, Sadie Watson, Kevin Wooldridge.

We ran a one day conference, themed ‘Inspiring Equality’ (March 2020, 20 attendees). We ran four sessions at Cifa conferences between 2016 and 2019 – including workshops providing training in diversity in the workplace (c. 30 attendees at each, c. 120 attendees in all). At all of those conferences we also had a stand where colleagues could come and get support, share experiences and find comfort. We also contributed to a range of other conferences including the Public Archaeology Twitter Conference 2016 and all UK Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) conferences between 2017 and 2020. We were also very visible in other ways. We had representation at London Pride, for example, in conjunction with the Museums Association. Despite the constraints highlighted above, we were very active on social media, with nearly 1000 followers on Twitter by 2020, and we used our platform to support and amplify the voices of others, and particularly to support other EDI groups. We also supported the TrowelBlazers Raising Horizons exhibition to be present at the 2017 Cifa conference. In 2020 we formed IDEAH (Inclusion, Diversity and Equality in Archaeology and Heritage), an EDI Industry group, which I will return to later in the paper. We connected explicitly with other external bodies too, such as Prospect and the Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors, where we sought exemplars of good practice around EDI that we could develop in our own practice. We also produced ‘diversify your workplace’ guidance.

One thing I feel very proud of is that we held a one day cross-sector event, on 6 July 2018, where we invited the leads of all of the UK’s major commercial archaeological units and heritage bodies to sit round a table and hear an impassioned account of the issues around sexism, harassment and discrimination from Rachel Pope and Anne Teather of British Women Archaeologists, and then to be challenged to ask: what next? What should we be doing? The result was the stimulation of a pan-sectoral strategy on EDI that was represented by the Industry Working Group Statement on harassment, discrimination and bullying. This statement committed to taking action on this and other EDI issues. Sadly, the Industry Working Group has dissolved but legacies of this statement include the support and adoption of initiatives like Seeing Red (see Humphreys *et al.* this volume) by many of the Industry Working Group’s members.

Most fundamentally the E&D group stimulated changes within Cifa’s own practice including changing binary gendered language in their principles document, introducing maternity and sick leave into special interest group constitutions, establishing an Advisory Council working party on EDI, establishing a Board working party on EDI, and driving Cifa to become members of the whistleblowing charity Protect (enabling all Cifa members to use whistleblowing services). The group also contributed to the Cifa Ethics practice paper, their accessibility guidance for online documentation, and statements on conference accessibility and panel guidance, as well as feeding in to consultations on individual chartership and strategic planning, and updating Cifa’s disability practice paper.

If we were so successful in our activism and in achieving and feeding into all of the above, you may be wondering why the group was dissolved in January 2022. Although it doesn’t sound like it at first, this was perhaps the group’s greatest success. This is because, when we first proposed the group, the only way it could be brought into existence within Cifa’s structures was for it to be constituted as a special interest group. This is clearly problematic – EDI issues

are not a *special* interest. As the papers in this volume attest, sexism, harassment, misogyny and discrimination are endemic, they are systemic, and they are always intersectional. Framing them as only a special interest is not enough. And this is a point that, as a group, we made repeatedly. It was therefore with much joy that the 2019 Advisory Council working party on EDI recommended that CifA should embed EDI within its own structures. This was then taken up by the Board working party on EDI, and the result was the creation in January 2022 of a Standing Committee on EDI, whose mission was to both further understand the EDI challenges for the profession, understand CifA's role within them, and lead on making changes within CifA's own practice, as well as to continue the sector leading activism that the EDI Group had done. As Chair of the E&D Special Interest Group, when I handed over to the new Standing Committee it felt like an ultimate outcome of the activism of our group, and it is exciting to see the work that the standing committee has done.

### **Ending on an IDEAH**

As I have been writing this paper, I can't shake a lingering sense of discomfort. I realise this is because this paper is framed quite personally, but the bottom line is that this is not just my story to tell as I was only one part of what I outline here. This is ultimately a story of amazing collective activism. The work that Cath Poucher and I did on #everyDIGsexism would have been nothing without the people who came forward and shared their testimonies, and the people who shared and re-tweeted and amplified their voices. The CifA E&D group achieved what it did because of an amazing committee of individuals and the amount of work they put into everything we did, and because it was part of a wider network of activists – many of whom have written in this volume. We may still have a long way to go in the fight against harassment and discrimination, but the gains we have made in the UK have happened because we have all been able to raise our voices in unison. One of the legacies of the CifA E&D group is the formation of IDEAH (Inclusion, Diversity and Equality in Archaeology and Heritage), an EDI Industry group. IDEAH brings together all of the many archaeological activist groups in the UK roughly once a year (see Hawkins and Rees this volume), so that we can share what we are doing, we can share how we can help to amplify each other's voices, and we can support one another too in what is ultimately hard and exhausting work.

The collective action of these many people is, in the end, why documenting this activism is so important – because it is precisely this kind of work, which takes the dedication of so many people (usually acting in a voluntary capacity) to push and challenge systemic inequity in archaeology, that never usually makes it into academic papers. As a result, even when change occurs and the legacies of activism remain, the people who fought for those changes can be erased from history as organisations retell their own narratives and as people move on and institutional memory is lost. I want to end on a personal example of exactly this. I mentioned earlier in the paper that people told me there had been a CifA Equal Opportunities officer in the 1990s but they weren't sure who it was...well, as it turns out, she was the co-editor of this volume, Kayt Hawkins! In fact CifA, or the IfA as it was known then, had had a whole Equal Opportunities committee in the 1990s, they had instigated an equal opportunities policy and guidelines, they had introduced policy and procedures for maternity leave and they had researched questions of equity in the disciplinary profile (see Pope and Teather forthcoming, for further details). The subsuming of these important advances into organisational narratives, and the erasure of the people whose activism had

driven these changes, highlights how essential it is that we share our activist stories. In the end, none of the activism engendered by #everyDIGsexism or the CifA E&D group would have been possible without those who had gone before, and those who continue the legacy, and for that, I am eternally grateful!

## Bibliography

- Aitchison, K. and Edwards, R. 2008. *Archaeology labour market intelligence: Profiling the profession 2007-08*. Reading: Institute for Archaeologists.
- Aitchison, K., German, P. and Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2021. *Profiling the profession 2020*. London: Landward Research. Online: <https://profilingtheprofession.org.uk/>. [Accessed 30 September 2024].
- Aitchison, K. and Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2013. *Archaeology labour market intelligence: Profiling the profession 2011-2012*. London: Landward Research.
- Cobb, H.L. 2005. 'Straight down the line? A queer consideration of hunter-gatherer studies in north-western Europe'. *World Archaeology*, 37(4), 630-636.
- Cobb, H.L. 2015. 'A diverse profession? Challenging inequalities and diversifying involvement in British archaeology', in P. Everill and P. Irving (eds) *Rescue archaeology: Foundations for the future*. Hereford: RESCUE, 226-245.
- Cobb, H., L. 2024. 'Feminist archaeological pedagogies', in M. Moen and U. Pedersen (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Gender Archaeology*. London: Routledge, 15-29.
- Cobb, H. and Crellin, R.J. 2022. 'Affirmation and action: A posthumanist feminist agenda for archaeology'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 32(2), 265-279.
- Cobb, H. and Croucher, K. 2014. 'Assembling archaeological pedagogy: A theoretical framework for valuing pedagogy in archaeological interpretation and practice'. *Archaeological Dialogues* 21(2), 197-216.
- Cobb, H. and Croucher, K. 2016. 'Personal, political, pedagogic: Challenging the binary bind in archaeological pedagogy'. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23(3), 949-969.
- Cobb, H. and Croucher, K. 2020. *Assembling archaeology: Teaching, practice and research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cobb, H. and Croucher, K. 2022. 'Wellbeing and archaeological pedagogy', in P. Everill (ed.) *Wellbeing in archaeology*. London: Routledge, 223-238.
- Cobb, H. and Croucher, K. 2024. *Teaching and learning in archaeology and heritage virtual roundtable discussions*. Online <https://archaeologytandl.wordpress.com/>. [Accessed 22 February 2024].
- Cobb, H. and Gray Jones, A. 2018. 'Being Mesolithic in life and death.' *Journal of World Prehistory* 31(3), 367-383.
- hooks, b. 1994. *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Perry, S., Shipley, L. and Osborne, J. 2015. 'Digital media, power and (in)equality in archaeology and heritage'. *Internet Archaeology* 38. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.38.4>.
- Pope, R.E. and Teather, A. forthcoming. 'Documenting the profession: Recording historic access and retention issues for women archaeologists'. *Archaeological Dialogues*.
- Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2015. *Glass ceilings, glass houses, or glass parasols?* Online: <https://dougсарchaeology.wordpress.com/2015/08/19/glass-ceilings-glass-houses-or-glass-parasols/>. [Accessed 30 August 2024].

## Chapter 8.

# A Peruvian Feminist Archaeology? An Initial Assessment

Carito Tavera Medina<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Old World Feminism has gone through several transformations, especially as it arrived in the Global south. It is nowadays impossible to speak of a single Feminism. Or, as Mexican feminist Marta Lamas said during an interview for the Spanish newspaper *El País*, ‘Feminism doesn’t exist anymore...’ (Morán Breña 2021), as it has been substituted by a multiplicity of feminisms with their own agenda and revindications. These movements appeared due to the needs that each of these groups, affected by the patriarchy and impoverished by advanced capitalism, had to fight. The case of South America, as a continent, is also affected by processes that include imperialism, slavery, exploitation and racism, and whose consequences are still ongoing.

Papers in this book examine one of the most active of the media movements that have originated from recent feminisms: the #MeToo movement. This social phenomenon, initiated in 2007 by Tarana Burke, gained visibility through its use by North American actresses, achieving an undeniable impact worldwide. In the following article I seek to analyse whether any traces and/or repercussions of this movement can be found in the Peruvian archaeological community. To do this, I will offer an account of the events, spaces and texts that address the history and situation of women in Peruvian archaeology, as well as the perceptions that may characterise how feminism and archaeology are perceived within our community.

With the previous objective in mind, it is necessary to point out some historical references relating to the country we are focusing on. The young Peruvian republic was born in 1821 in the aftermath of Enlightenment ideals, which promulgated equal freedoms and rights for everyone. Despite this, it was not until 1956 that women were granted legal suffrage. Initially, the right to vote was exclusively granted to educated women, while marginalised collectives, notably indigenous and Afro-descendant women, were systematically excluded from this inaugural democratic exercise. It was not until 1980 that all women were accorded the right to elect their political representatives.

The integration of women into the newly created South American republics took place within the framework of a still-current colonial social structure characterised by the classism, racism and centralism notable in the growing cities. Furthermore, the impact of centuries of the prevalence of the Catholic religion also needs to be taken into account. This involved the

---

<sup>1</sup> Carito Tavera Medina (✉) Pascual de Andagoya 369, San Miguel, Lima, Peru. Email: caritotaveramedina@ub.edu/caritotaveramedina@unmsm.edu.pe

adaptation of new structures of power and valuation in the public and private spheres of society. As both pre-Hispanic archaeological evidence (Haas *et al.* 2020) and early colonial chronicles (Salles *et al.* 2006) show, the role and agency of indigenous women had been modified and subverted with the arrival of Western colonial ideologies and norms. In line with this, the new Peruvian republic easily forgot the important role that women had played in the independence process. In this way, '[...] the liberal elites [established themselves in power] behind the multicultural reality of the country [...]' (Muñoz and Monzón 2022, 41). In this context we ask ourselves: how many of these social and political defects are we still carrying? And how many have percolated into academic spaces? Let's see...

### **On Gender and Women in Andean Archaeologies**

Throughout its history, archaeology has been affected by the reflections of different critical social movements, including feminisms. Although feminist archaeology (Conkey and Spector 1984; Conkey and Gero 1997) is currently recognised as a theoretical trend within the discipline (Fries *et al.* 2024), this has not prevented attempts to diminish its political and epistemological value from the 1990s, for instance through the appearance of gender archaeology.

In 1997 Margaret Conkey and Joan Gero pointed out that, despite the abundance of research on the archaeology of gender globally, this by no means implied the existence of common methodological and theoretical grounds across this research. In response, the authors invited us to break away from the apparent 'neutrality' of gender studies in archaeology to pursue instead an explicitly feminist approach, '[...] that is committed to changing the way archaeology is practiced, the way it is presented, and the nature of archaeological interpretation' (Conkey and Gero 1997, 412).

In the case of South American archaeology, and especially in the Andean context, the impact of these feminist epistemological reflections and critiques found its first response in the work of Bellelli, Berón and Scheinsohn (Bellelli *et al.* 1993), who analysed how gender affected archaeological practice in Argentina. They proposed '[...] a way of entry to the analysis of the sex/gender system from professional practice rather than in relation to the production of knowledge in archaeology' (Bellelli *et al.* 1993, 48). Their research focused on understanding how gender inequality is built in relation to more limited access to research funding for women, as well as limited access to the positions of prestige and power wherein decision making in academia takes place. In contrast to Joan Gero (1985), Bellelli and her colleagues considered that the problem did not lie in the number of women working in research, but in their position within academia.

Although the early publication of Bellelli and her colleagues could make us think that South America internalised and adopted the issues debated by Global North archaeologies, the situation was quite fragmentary in space and time, as we will show. In this sense, Alberti and Williams (2005) point out that the study of gender in South American archaeology has been influenced by the nationality and origin of those doing research. They argue that there are clear distinctions between research carried out by foreign researchers in South American contexts, and those carried out by South American researchers (Alberti and Williams 2005). From my own point of view, the limitations in the kind of feminist research undertaken by local archaeologists is clearly connected with issues such as the lack of independence and

resources in South American research institutions, as well as with historical and political processes. This is evidenced by the absence of a book or article presenting a general and diachronic balance of gender archaeological research in Argentina. When searching for the first research representing this theoretical trend, the contribution of Joan Gero from the site of Yutopian (2015) appear as one of the earliest. This situation confirms the arguments of Alberti and Williams (2005) which relate to how new theoretical trends reach the ‘academic peripheries’ and who applies them. However, it is worth highlighting the extensive work that Argentine colleagues (Gluzman 2023) have been developing in recent years in relation to the stories, roles and contributions of women to the archaeological discipline as seen in the volume *Género en la Arqueología. Experiencias, análisis y perspectivas futuras*, published in 2021 and edited by Cristina Prieto Olavarría and María Gabriela Chaparro, or more recently the volume *El Pasado nos convoca. Arqueologías sudamericanas en diálogo* published in 2023 and edited by Bárbara Carboni, Amanda Ocampo and Sabrina Labrone.

Regarding Chile, we can see that efforts have been made to publicise the contributions of women within the discipline (Acevedo and Glaser 2014; Ayala 2023; Ballester Riesco 2016; Brinck *et al.* 2021; González-Ramírez 2021; Marinov Martinic 2016; Museo Nacional de Historia Natural 2012; Museo Nacional de Historia Natural 2014; Mostny Glaser *et al.* 2008; Ortiz-Troncoso 1992; Uribe 2022). In such publications the names of archaeologists such as Grete Mostny, Eliana Durán, Silvia Quevedo, Vjera Zlatar and Victoria Castro stand out. Among the methodologies used, obituaries, analyses of their scientific contributions, interviews and sociological studies on women’s experiences within the discipline constitute the main ones. Regarding gender studies from Chilean archaeology, there has been an important Marxist influence with a biological focus on the sexual division of society (González-Ramírez and Sáez Sepúlveda 2011; González-Ramírez *et al.* 2021; Núñez Henríquez 2004, among others).

On the other hand, in the last decade, Ecuadorian colleagues were pioneers in resuming a critical vision on the composition and practice of the discipline from the perspective of gender in the Andean area, as shown in the book *De Arqueología Hablamos las Mujeres* (Cordero 2018) and the analysis of the invisibility of women within the discipline (Cordero 2023). These efforts have been reinforced with travelling exhibitions such as the one that revolves around the figure of Resfa Parducci (Sánchez Mosquera 2015), and with virtual spaces such as the website Arquetipas (Arquetipa. n.d). One of the countries where the history of women in the discipline has been worked on to a lesser extent is Bolivia, where the roles of Teresa Gisbert, Geraldine Mary Byrne de Caballero and Julia Elena Fortún stand out (Casanovas 2018; Sánchez Canedo *et al.* 2017).

This brief and initial compilation of research linked to the study of gender in the archaeologies of the Andean area shows us the exploratory state in which these studies are found. One of the most developed themes is that linked to the stories and experiences of archaeologists in their respective communities. Likewise, the bulk of this research began developing in the last decade, with the Argentinian academy being the one that has been most productive. I consider that this situation is not random and is linked to the impact of the fourth wave of Latin American feminisms, which have been able to penetrate to a greater or lesser extent due to the level of conservatism of each countries’ academies. But, in relation to this topic, what is happening in Peru?

## Dyeing Peruvian Archaeology Purple?

The introduction of feminist questioning into our archaeological interpretations came from the hand of Joan Gero (1991). Years before, María Rostworowski and her colleagues (Hernández *et al.* 1987; Rostworowski 1987) carried out research on the female role in the foundational myths of the Inkanate, but their emphasis was not on the epistemological question of feminist archaeology. In this same lineage, we cannot fail to mention the pioneering research of Rebeca Carrión Cachot (1923), a founding figure of Peruvian archaeology, on the role of women and childhood in Andean prehistory, as well as contributions made from history (for a recent assessment, see Rosas Lauro 2019), which I consider should be studied in order to understand their theoretical and methodological genealogies, as well as the paths taken.

As is known, at the end of the 1980s Peruvian archaeology presented a research boom on the northern coast, made visible worldwide by Walter Alva, Susana Meneces and their team's discovery of the Lord of Sipán (for more details and perspectives on them consult Asensio 2018). Shortly thereafter, two 'exceptional women' were identified in the archaeological record of prominent sites on the northern coast of Peru: the Ceremonial Centre of San José de Moro and the El Brujo Archaeological Complex.

It was these findings that made archaeologists rethink what was perceived about power, social dynamics and the roles that had been pre-assigned to indigenous women in traditional archaeological interpretations. However, this did not mean the existence of a fertile environment for the development of a feminist archaeology. On the contrary, it is possible to observe the concern about the violation of neutrality and scientific rigour, as we can see in the following quote: 'We believe that there is a serious risk that this approach [gender archaeology] becomes only a doctrinal position and not a scientific position. We must not forget that when we talk about gender we have at least two, and that both must be treated with rigor' (Castillo Butters and Holmquist 2000, 14).

These positions occur within the framework of an archaeological community strongly hit by ideological repression, dictatorship, violence and conservatism; the same one that took over Peruvian university classrooms in the 1990s. After a terrible economic crisis in the 1980s, Peru fell into the hands of the Fujimori dictatorship, a period in which the military government intervened in the main national universities and 'an ideological cleansing' of the classrooms was carried out, adding to the fear that many felt of being designated as terrorists and detained by State Security (Tantaleán 2019). This generated a great impact on the theoretical trends that were 'discussed' in the classrooms, leading Peruvian archaeology towards empiricism, descriptivism and scientific 'neutrality'. Likewise, the instability and internal armed conflict that was experienced in the country led colleagues who were researching in localities in the Andean area to change their 'laboratory' and migrate to neighbouring countries (for more implications about this period in the history of Peruvian archaeology, see Tantaleán 2019).

However, and contrary to what would be expected from a dictatorial government, it was during the 1990s that Peruvian feminists managed to institutionalise themselves through political participation in state spaces, social programs and NGOs (Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristan 2004). Nevertheless, the university feminist movement was weakened by the political conditions that prevailed. Likewise, working class and union feminists were intimidated by

actions of the Sendero Luminoso group, or coerced by fear of the paramilitary groups existing at the time (Burt 2011; Martínez Álvarez 1999; Stern, 1999). In this context, the absence of feminist publications from Peruvian archaeologists becomes more than evident.

The beginning of the new millennium inaugurated a new phase in the political history of Peru, with a resurgence of democracy, and this process was accompanied by a slight change in the university atmosphere. Change was evident through both academic and professional events and through written contributions. As I have previously explored (Santana Quispe and Tavera Medina 2022), the first steps in the study of gender in Peruvian archaeology can be seen in the Round Table *Mujer y Poder en los Andes Prehispánicos*, organised by Luis Jaime Castillo and Sofia Chacaltana in 2012 in the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. The event was mostly attended by female researchers, totalling 79% of those attending. The event allowed the presentation of contributions in two modalities: presentations (67%) and posters (33%). Regarding the type of institution to which the researchers were affiliated, a preponderance of researchers from private Peruvian universities stands out (42%), which highlights the absence of researchers affiliated to public Peruvian universities. Regarding the study periods that were discussed at the event, there was a special interest in the study of the participation of women in late societies of Peruvian pre-Hispanic history, as well as in the study of post-Inca periods and in the beginning of the Spanish Colonial period. Finally, regarding the distribution of research throughout the Peruvian territory, we can observe that a preponderance of studies were carried out in coastal areas, in particular those that focused on the northern Peruvian coast (33%).

This first event did not find an echo in the classrooms or in the Peruvian archaeological community, and it was not until June 2018 that a group of archaeologists involved in the Qhapaq Ñan Project organised the symposium *Arqueólogas: investigaciones y experiencias*, held on 19 and 20 June 2018, within the framework of this important project instigated by the Ministry of Culture of Peru (MINCUL). This initiative, in the words of the then project director, was born from the researchers themselves. The event was co-organised by Andrea Gonzales and Nathaly Abad, who, during the opening of the event, told us the reasons that drove its creation ‘[...] we opened this space in which we seek to make visible the professional work of women, in this case, that of the archaeologists’ (Qhapaq Ñan Perú 2018). With this objective, presentations of the research developed by the researchers of this project were made, along with a discussion about their personal experiences and academic contributions.

This work would be continued by the Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Peru (MNAAHP), under the direction of Iván Ghezzi, when the Conference Series *Mujeres en la Arqueología: Pasado, Presente y Futuro: Contribuciones a la praxis arqueológica en el Perú* was organised by Maricarmen Vega and Diana Fernández. For three days (from 21 to 23 August 2018) several archaeologists met to present their contributions to Peruvian archaeology, as well as discuss what it meant to be a woman within that discipline. Likewise, in March 2019, when Sonia Guillén was already the director of the MNAAHP, and within the framework of the commemoration of Women’s Day (March 8), two lectures, *Conversando sobre las mujeres en la arqueología* and *Yo recolectora, tu cazador*, were given by Lady Santana Quispe and the author of this article. Both presentations were developed from a clear feminist standpoint.

Also in 2019, between 26 and 28 June, the International symposium *Mujeres del Pasado y del Presente: Una visión desde la Arqueología Peruana* was held at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos. This event was co-organised by Lady Santana and the author of this article (for more details on the event see Santana Quispe and Tavera Medina 2022 and Tavera Medina and Santana Quispe 2022). The editors of the volume pointed out that:

*‘We editors started this project with an initial idea: (1) to expose and problematise the role and stories of women who are part of Peruvian archaeology [...] (2) to emphasise the plurality of experiences and spaces where archaeologists participate throughout their training and professional development [...] (3) and the introduction of studies that addressed problems connected with gender archaeology or feminist archaeology’. (Santana Quispe and Tavera Medina 2022, 16).*

It is also important to note that this theme also received attention within student spaces, as at the XXVII National Congress of Archaeology Students through the round table *Perspectivas actuales: Arqueología de Género*.

As we can see, between 2018 and 2019 there was an effervescence of activity around women archaeologists, as well as about indigenous women within the pre-Hispanic societies. This shows an intellectual opening of the hegemonic spaces of Peruvian archaeology, such as the MNAHP or MINCUL itself, that began to engage with these topics. The situation also responded to a context of transversal public policies that led the Peruvian State to create the National Gender Equality Plan 2012–2017 and the subsequent National Gender Equality Policy in 2019. It was precisely in this period that public policy emphasised the strengthening of women’s roles across all sectors of society and in their diversity (Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables 2017).

As previously mentioned, during this period in Peru’s recent history, several feminist groups started highlighting the conditions of structural violence affecting Peruvian women. This process reached its peak with the ‘Ni una Menos’ (‘Not one [woman] less’) movement, which was joined by several sectors of Peruvian society. This fostered the development of a social platform to address the issue, which now could be labelled: feminicide. Although feminist archaeologists did not participate as unions or as a group, many joined marches that were organised at the national level, and the problem began to be addressed in the professional spaces of archaeology. However, they had little success in the institutional space, as the topic never progressed beyond being a light topic of conversation during coffee breaks.

In terms of the impact of these academic and professional events on the production of literature, we can see that between 2019 and 2022 there was a brief ‘purple wave’ of feminism in Peruvian archaeology. Among the main themes several stand out including the construction of memories (Arroyo Abarca 2019; Boswell 2022; Cabrera Romero 2019; Pacheco Neyra 2019; Young 2022; Bachir Bacha 2022; Del Aguila Ríos 2022; Salazar 2022), critical reflections on archaeological practice (Artzi 2022; Rodríguez Yábar 2022), the study of gender violence in archaeology (Tavera Medina 2019), the analysis of participation in academic dissemination spaces and the production of written knowledge by Peruvian archaeologists (Santana Quispe 2019; Tavera Medina and Santana Quispe 2021; Márquez Abad and Cisneros Del Río 2023;

Shady 2023; Suárez Ubillus 2023) and studies of gender and women from the pre-Hispanic world (Bachraty 2019; Ramos Luque 2022; Rodríguez Sumar 2022). It is important to be aware that not all the articles produced during this period are statements made from a feminist perspective. I outlined all the listed publications as part of a ‘purple wave’ since they resulted from academic events born from critical and reflective theoretical frameworks on Peruvian archaeological and interpretative practices (Santana Quispe and Tavera Medina 2022), but this does not mean that the authors or their articles were written from a feminist approach.

And yet, it is also essential to point out that in the years prior to this ‘purple wave’ it is possible to identify isolated contributions that sought to discuss archaeological interpretations of the roles attributed to past women. Thus, for example, early on we found the work of Juan Carlos De la Torre and Barbara Lapi (2014) or more recently that of Sofia Chacaltana (2019). Regarding the history of archaeology, the works which focused on female figures are minimal (Díaz-Andreu 2013). They have focused on reconstructing their stories through archival work (Novoa 2013; Nuñez 2016), tributes (Pozzi-Escot 2008; Silva 2004) and their own memories (Lavallée 2013). In this compilation I have not included the contributions of Carlos Wester, Régulo Franco, Gabriela Cervantes or even Mary Weismantel, among others. These authors studied women of the pre-Hispanic past and sexuality, but I would not include them in the ‘purple wave’ from 2018–2019. This period was characterised by works that focused on highlighting the contributions, experiences and stories of women archaeologists as historical agents in a constantly evolving science.

From my perspective, each of the academic events and publications added, without any coordinated objective, to the creation of an appropriate environment for political discussions regarding the working conditions that Peruvian archaeologists would like to have. Some took these ‘coffee chats’ a step further. In 2020, two groups of Peruvian feminist archaeologists saw the light, first through the creation of *FLAMA: Colectivo de arqueólogas feministas - Peru* (on 5 March 2020), and then of *WILLKAS: Red Peruana de Arqueología Feminsita, Disidente y Decolonial* (on 13 September 2020). Both groups were founded by archaeologists trained at universities in Lima, the capital of Peru. In the case of FLAMA, its members and founders achieved their undergraduate studies at the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, while in the case of the second, its members were mostly from the private Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. Due to their form of activism, both collectives could be labelled as cyberfeminists (Flama – Colectiva Feminista de Mujeres en Arqueología 2020a; Willka Kuna 2020; Willkas: Red Peruana de Arqueología Feminista, Disidente y Decolonial 2020). Both focused on creating material that was uploaded to social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and, in FLAMA’s case, a website (FLAMA, 2020a). Members of FLAMA participated in the marches on 8 March 2020, in a decentralised manner in the cities of Lima, Trujillo and Huánuco (Flama-Colectiva Feminista de Mujeres en Arqueología 2020b, 2020c), during which they shared the handout ‘¿A dónde fueron las hijas de Lucy?’ or in English ‘Where are Lucy’s daughters?’, as stated on their social media (Flama – Colectiva Feminista de Mujeres en Arqueología 2020d; FLAMA, 2020b).

During 2020, Peruvian archaeology was not only hit by the global COVID19 pandemic, but also by a much deeper and more structural endemic problem of our discipline: gender violence (Tavera Medina 2019; Bradford and Crema 2022; Rivera Prince *et al.* 2022; Voss 2022). The networks of power and academic ties were shaken and put under scrutiny after the denunciation of two important Andean archaeologists, who were accused of being aggressors.

This unprecedented event left the previously mentioned collectives in a very complex situation. Due to the political and academic influence of those involved, the cases attracted the concern of the Andean archaeological community, generating virtual spaces that brought together women and archaeological dissidents from diverse countries with varied feminist positions. These meetings joined Argentinian, Ecuadorian, Colombian, Paraguayan, Chilean, Bolivian and Brazilian archaeologists. Issues such as the ‘place of speech’ (Ribeiro 2020), class differences, academic hierarchies, legal vulnerability, unequal access of power and dependence on labour networks were some of the subjects that were raised during the meetings held to address the actions to be taken in the face of these denunciations. The positive impact of these meetings is indisputable as they provided a recognition between groups of feminist archaeologists, resulting in the emergence of collaborative virtual actions (Carina Jofré *et al.* 2021). Further effective actions were promoted as demonstrated by the virtual events developed by the ‘GEFAS – Género Feminismos y Arqueología’ collective of Colombia. Despite the complex situation, the only two spaces of feminist activism sought to be platforms of echo, reflection and information for the Peruvian archaeological community.

These events have marked a turning point in Peruvian archaeology, as they have highlighted the need to create spaces that address the various types of violence related to the field. An example of an important response to address this was the creation of the list ‘Archaeologists in the Andes’, a space promoted by North American archaeologists Lisa Trever and Alicia Boswell. This space aimed to create a broad and diverse community by bringing together archaeologists from Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina, all united by a multinational and inclusive vision. One of the main objectives was to provide archaeologists with basic tools and knowledge to understand how to address sexual harassment and gender inequality within our communities. In this manner, between July 2020 and May 2021, virtual talks and training were held that facilitated learning about the legal regulations in the field of sexual violence in Peru and the United States. Two sessions were dedicated to the history of women archaeologists in Bolivian and Ecuadorian archaeology. Finally, the organisers invited two lectures that explored the issues surrounding female participation in editorial spaces in our field. Concomitantly, a virtual space was established on the Slack platform, thus providing a private space for sharing and dialogue between the more than one hundred members (Boswell and Trever 2021).

During this time, the Gender Committee of the Professional Association of Archaeologists of Peru (‘Comisión de Género del Colegio profesional de Arqueólogos del Perú’ – COARPE) was created and was active during the 2020–2021 term. This committee was formalised in 2021 through a decanal resolution, and its members were the archaeologists Clide Valladolid, Moira Novoa and Carmen Rodríguez. However, this proposal was born as an initiative of the archaeologists who were part of the Board of Directors and not those raising the concerns of the professional body. The committee’s main objective was to collect reports of gender violence, thereby serving as a bridge to the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, and fulfilling an informative role. Due to the lack of its own regulations, it was not possible to put the committee’s proposal to a vote for potential integration into the COARPE Statute. Thus, any sanction had to be processed by the Ethics Commission, and only under a pre-existing judicial process (Personal communication, Moira Novoa, 22 January 2024). After receiving these initial harassment reports, MINCUL, in coordination with the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, organised the first virtual lecture on the identification

and prevention of sexual harassment in the framework of the VII National Congress of Archaeology (16–21 August 2021) (Márquez Abad and Cisneros del Río, 2023).

Subsequently, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Lima announced the ‘Notice of Funding Opportunity for Network of Women in Archaeology’ on 31 March 2021. This gave rise to the birth of the *Red de Mujeres en Arqueología Peruana* (RED MAP), a space that was possible thanks to the collaborative, transgenerational and decentralised work of the Founding Executive Committee composed of Bernarda Delgado, Martha Cabrera, Gabriela Oré, Michel Young, Grace Alexandrino and the author of this article. The RED MAP has been conceived as a space that

*[...] transcends national barriers and provides empowerment and visibility to people identified with feminine spaces regardless of the sex with which they were assigned at birth, and who are part of Peruvian archaeology. From this space we seek to create the foundations to build a lively, diverse, multivocal and in constant development community of women and sexual and gender minorities dedicated to the study and management of Peruvian archaeological heritage, who share the need to promote changes for participation in equality of conditions within our professional community’ (Red de Mujeres en Arqueología Peruana, 2022).*

The launch of the virtual platform and its activities occurred on 8 March 2022.

This short review shows how things are changing, but there is still a long way to go. During the process of the reports several female Peruvian archaeologists were the target of cyber violence, often being attacked on Catholic moralistic grounds with an aim of weakening their academic positions, whilst they also contended with the massive and overwhelming silence of male academics.

### **Final Comments**

This initial assessment, which I consider to be in a preliminary state, highlights the diverse ways in which women and dissident archaeologists have expressed their discomfort with their experiences within the professional Peruvian community. As we have seen throughout the first part of the article, the development of gender or feminist archaeology research in the Andean area is quite limited and does not have a deep theoretical tradition. This condition is aggravated by the absence of this theoretical approach as a key point in the university archaeology curricula. Moreover, despite the many growing movements outlined here, there remains a limited mainstream presence of feminism as a theoretical and political current in Peruvian university classrooms. As outlined above, this emerged from the Peruvian political environment in the 1990s, as well as the situation that the Peruvian feminist movement was going through. The lack of political participation by students in critical feminist spaces and the lack of chairs that address this issue contributed to inaction, and led to a late ‘awakening to the gender perspective’ within our community.

It is only in the last decade that spaces for reflection begin to emerge, which I believe found the ideal political context with global feminist movements like *Ni una Menos*. This allowed the emergence of professional and academic spaces for discussion, as well as the creation of feminist and gender-focused projects within Peruvian archaeology. The impact of #MeToo

can be felt for the first time through investigations that address gender violence and is reinforced through the process of events experienced during the year 2020. This situation has, for the first time, openly exposed the various forms of violence present within the Peruvian archaeological community, including harassment, sexual and/or psychological violence, abuse of academic and professional power, labour exploitation and racism, among others. Now, women archaeologists have opened the debate on the needs and demands for structural changes in our community. It is essential to engage in a critical and intersectional analysis of academic and professional structures and dynamics. This approach is essential for identifying those mechanisms that reinforce and perpetuate patriarchal practices.

This balance has also shown us that it is not possible to talk about a single Peruvian feminist archaeology, and though the beginning of the feminist struggle is already installed in our community, it still lacks the means for consolidation. This would be due to features of our society, such as conservatism and the constant call for apolitical scientific and professional practice. The emergence of self-training spaces and/or feminist archaeology chairs in Peruvian universities is prevalent. For many archaeologists, the investigations and events developed between 2018–2019 were the first contact with this theoretical current and have represented a turning point in reflection on archaeological practice and the questioning of the classic interpretations of our discipline.

In closing, I would dare to say that, although #MeToo has not had a structural impact on the Peruvian archaeological community, it has managed to crack its patriarchal foundations, generating doubts, and giving archaeologists the opportunity to raise their voices and begin to demand changes within educational and professional dynamics. Now they know that they are not alone in the fight and that a wider movement is also stirring in sister countries.

### **Acknowledgements**

I am deeply grateful to Marcela Sepúlveda, Cristina Prieto, Verónica Williams, Dante Angelo, and Benjamín Ballester for their invaluable assistance with bibliographical queries. The responsibility for any errors or omissions rests solely with me. I would also like to express my deepest thanks to ‘Charly’ José Román for his generous hospitality in Paris, and to Henry Tantaleán for his unwavering support. I would also like to acknowledge the Quebrada del Oso excavation team—Diana Huachaca and Juanma Quispe—for their thoughtful contributions. Finally, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the editors of this volume, whose patience and insights were crucial to the success of this endeavour. This article forms part of the Herstory project (ref. PID2023-149477NB-I00).

### **Bibliography**

- Acevedo, N. and Glaser, G.M. 2014. ‘Recordando a Greta Mostny Glaser al cumplirse cien años de sus natalicio’. *Boletín Del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Chile* 63, 225–237.
- Alberti, B. and Williams, V. 2005. ‘Introducción: género y etnicidad en la arqueología sudamericana’, in V. Williams and B. Alberti, *Género y etnicidad en la arqueología sudamericana*. Olavarría: Instituto de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Paleontológicas del Cuaternario Pampeano, 7–20.

- Arquetipa. n.d. *Arquetipa: Comunidad de arqueología feminista*. Consultado el [January 2024]. <https://arquetipa.org>.
- Arroyo Abarca, P.M. 2019. 'Arqueólogas cusqueñas: Pasado y presente'. *Desde El Sur* 11(2), 293–303. doi: . [Arttps://doi.org/10.21142/DES-1102-2019-293-303](https://doi.org/10.21142/DES-1102-2019-293-303).
- Asensio, R.H. 2018. *Señores del pasado: arqueólogos, museos y huaqueros en el Perú*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.
- Artzi, B. 2022. 'Penetrando la tierra, sembrado conocimiento: la división del trabajo en función del género en la práctica arqueológica y en el mundo Andino', in H. Tantaleán and L. Muro Ynoñán (eds) *Arqueologías subalternas: voces desde el Perú pasado y presente*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 131–154.
- Ayala, P. 2023. 'Homenaje a Silvia Quevedo Kawasaky'. *Boletín de La Sociedad Chilena de Arqueología*, 55, 9–15. doi: <https://doi.org/10.56575/BSCHA.0550023>.
- Bachir Bacha, A. 2022. '(Re)construyendo la historia de 'las otras' desde la mirada de la arqueóloga: el peso y riqueza del género y la otredad', in C. Tavera Medina and L. Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 165–174.
- Bachraty, D. 2019. 'La imagen de lo femenino: la estatuilla antropomorfa de la Capacocha del cerro El Plomo'. *Desde El Sur*, 11(2), 317–329. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21142/DES-1102-2019-317-329>.
- Ballester Riesco, B. 2016. 'Memorias de té: conversaciones con Guacolda Boisset Mujica'. *Chungará*, 48(3), 359–364. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-73562016005000032>.
- Bellelli, C., Berón, M. and Scheinsohn, V. 1993. 'Una arqueología de distinto género'. *Publicar*, 2(3), 47–61.
- Boswell, A. and Trever, L. 2021. *Reflexiones desde 'Arqueólogas en los Andes'* [Virtual presentation]. Presentación de la Red de Mujeres en Arqueología Peruana, 15 October.
- Boswell, A. 2022. 'Reflexiones personales de una arqueóloga extranjera', in C. Tavera Medina and L. Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 175–187.
- Bradford, D.J., and Crema, E.R. 2022. 'Risk factors for the occurrence of sexual misconduct during archaeological and anthropological fieldwork'. *American Anthropologist* 124(3), 548–559. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/AMAN.13763>.
- Brinck, A., Dávila, C., Fuenzalida, N. and Moya, F. 2021. 'Experiencias de mujeres en la arqueología y la Universidad de Chile (1960–1980): aprendizajes y desafíos actuales'. *Revista Chilena de Antropología* 43, 1–18. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-1472.2021.64431>.
- Burt, J.M. 2011. 'Accounting for murder: The contested narratives of the life and death of María Elena Moyano', in K. Bilbija and L. Payne (eds) *Accounting for violence: The marketing of memory in Latin America*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 69–97.
- Cabrera Romero, M. 2019. 'Balance y perspectivas de la presencia de mujeres en la carrera de arqueología de la Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga'. *Desde El Sur*, 11(2), 283–291. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21142/DES-1102-2019-283-291>.
- Cachot, R. 1923. 'La mujer y el niño en el Antiguo Perú'. *Inca, Revista de Estudios Antropológicos* 1, 329–950.
- Carboni, B. S., Labrone, S. A., Ocampo, A. E., Pineau, V., Salerno, V., Sokol, O., Mazzia, N., Galligani, P. E., Fiel, M. V., Lozano, M., & Catella, L. 2023. 'Presentación editorial del Dossier «El pasado nos convoca. Arqueologías sudamericanas en diálogo'. *Práctica Arqueológica*, 6 (2), 26–31. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.10257756>

- Casanovas, C.R. 2018. 'Teresa Gisbert y la arqueología andina'. *Chungará* 50(4), 533–536. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-73562018005002601>.
- Castillo Butters, L.J. and Holmquist Pachas, U.S. 2000. 'Mujeres y poder en la sociedad Mochica tardía', in N. Henríquez (ed.) *El hechizo de las imágenes: estatus social, género y etnicidad en la historia peruana*. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 13–34.
- Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristan. 2004. *25 años de feminismo en el Perú: Historia, confluencia y perspectivas: seminario nacional, 16–17 de septiembre 2004*. Berlin: Heinrich Böll Stiftung.
- Chacaltana-Cortez, S. 2019. 'Mujeres e identidades de género en el Colesuyo'. In C. Rosas Lauro (ed.) *Género y mujeres en la historia del Perú: Del hogar al espacio público*. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 27–55.
- Conkey, M. W., and Spector, J. D. 1984. Archaeology and the Study of Gender. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*, 7, 1–38. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-003107-8.50006-2>
- Conkey, M.W. and Gero, J.M. 1997. 'Programme to practice: Gender and feminism in archaeology'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26, 411–437. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.26.1.411>.
- Cordero, M.A. (ed.). 2018. *De arqueología hablamos las mujeres: perspectivas sobre el pasado ecuatoriano*. Manta: Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí.
- Cordero, M.A. 2023. 'Las invisibles: The unrecognized contributions of women to Ecuadorian archaeology', in S. Lopez (ed.) *Women in archaeology: Intersectionalities in practice worldwide*. Cham: Springer, 141–156. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27650-7\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27650-7_7).
- Del Aguila Ríos, I. 2022. 'Museo y pedagogía en la experiencia del MAJRC – Museo de Arqueología Josefina Ramos de Cox', in C. Tavera Medina and L. Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 189–204.
- De La Torre Zevallos, J. C., & Lapi, B. 2014. '¿Dónde están las mujeres?: Reflexiones desde la arqueología peruana'. *Revisa de Investigaciones del Centro de Estudiantes de Arqueología (C.E.A.R.)-UNMSM*, 8, 47–62.
- Díaz-Andreu, M. 2013. 'Epílogo. Últimas reflexiones y nuevas propuestas', in H. Tantaleán & Astuhamán, C. (ed.) *Historia de la Arqueología en el Perú del siglo XX*. Lima: IFEA Institut Français d' Études Andines & IAR Institute of Andean Research, 603–616.
- FLAMA. 2020a. Available at: [https://arqueoflame.wixsite.com/arqueologiafeminista?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR2z-RiR5WqD6rOrY3KCcu3\\_kcEjw8oUpmNkIcy8qhOERkyiNTsAckgBYQo\\_aem\\_Ck\\_\\_XbswV2wSvQt4QLQkPw](https://arqueoflame.wixsite.com/arqueologiafeminista?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR2z-RiR5WqD6rOrY3KCcu3_kcEjw8oUpmNkIcy8qhOERkyiNTsAckgBYQo_aem_Ck__XbswV2wSvQt4QLQkPw). (Accessed: 12 January 2024).
- FLAMA. 2020b. ¿Dónde están las hijas de Lucy?. Available at: <https://arqueoflame.wixsite.com/arqueologiafeminista/post/copy-of-international-women-s-day-2-000-march-downtown> (Accessed: 12 January 2024).
- Flama – Colectiva Feminista de Mujeres en Arqueología 2020a. Facebook. Available: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=108929880720818&set=a.109222527358220> (Accessed: 12 January 2024).
- Flama – Colectiva Feminista de Mujeres en Arqueología. 2020b. #8M en la ciudad de Trujillo. Facebook. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/12BrE96uga2/> (Accessed: 12 January 2024).
- Flama – Colectiva Feminista de Mujeres en Arqueología. 2020c. #8M en la ciudad de Huánuco. Facebook. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19pHw6cApF/> (Accessed: 12 January 2024).

- Flama – Colectiva Feminista de Mujeres en Arqueología. 2020d *¿Dónde están las hijas de Lucy?* Facebook. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/15fiE3Ysa6/> (Accessed: 12 January 2024).
- Fries, J.E., Gaydarska, B., Ramírez Valiente, P. and Rebay-Salisbury, K. 2024. 'Feminist archaeology', in E. Nikita and T. Rehren (eds) *Encyclopedia of archaeology*, vol. 1. 2nd edn. Amsterdam: Academic Press, 293–304. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-90799-6.00123-3>.
- Gero, J. 1985. 'Socio-politics and the woman-at-home ideology'. *American Antiquity* 50(2), 342–350.
- Gero, J. 1991. 'Who experienced what in prehistory? A narrative explanation from Queyash, Peru', in R.W. Preucel (ed.) *Processual and postprocessual archaeologies: Multiple ways of knowing the past*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 126–139.
- Gero, J. 2015. *Yutopian: Archaeology, ambiguity and the production of knowledge in Northwest Argentina*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Gluzman, G.A. 2023. 'Myriam N. Tarragó, a woman at the crossroads of Argentinian archaeology', in S. Lopez (ed.) *Women in archaeology: Intersectionalities in practice worldwide*. Cham: Springer, 157–177. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27650-7\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27650-7_8).
- González-Ramírez, A. 2021. 'Otras compañeras que no continuaron...Más que olvido, el ojo caníbal'. *Boletín de La Sociedad Chilena de Arqueología* 50, 3–8.
- González-Ramírez, A. and Sáez Sepúlveda, A. 2011. 'Aportes para una bioarqueología social y feminista'. *Revista Atlántica-Mediterránea* 13, 81–96. doi: [https://doi.org/10.25267/rev\\_atl-mediterr\\_prehist\\_arqueol\\_soc.2011.v13.07](https://doi.org/10.25267/rev_atl-mediterr_prehist_arqueol_soc.2011.v13.07).
- González-Ramírez, A., Sáez, A., Soto, M.J.H., Leyton, L., Miranda, F., Santana-Sagredo, F. and Rodríguez, M.U. 2021. 'Política sexual y reproducción social en la Pampa de Tamarugal: estructura sexo-edad en el cementerio Tarapacá 40 (1000 AC–600 DC)'. *Chungará* 53(3), 442–463. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-73562021005001801>.
- Haas, R., Watson, J., Buonasera, T., Southon, J., Chen, J.C., Noe, S., Smith, K., Llave, C.V., Eerkens, J. and Parker, G. 2020. 'Female hunters of the early Americas'. *Science Advances* 6 (45), 1–10. doi: 10.1126/sciadv.abd0310.
- Hernández, M., Lemlij, M., Millones, L., Péndola, A. and Rostworowski, M. 1987. *Entre el mito y la historia: Psicoanálisis y pasado andino*. Lima: Imago Editores.
- Jofré, C., Gamboa, M., Morales, M., Gasetúa, F.E. and Pessio Vázquez, M.F. 2021. 'Mujeres y disidencias feministas en las arqueologías sudamericanas'. *Anales de Arqueología y Etnología* 76(2), 69–95. .
- Lavallée, D. 2013. 'La arqueología francesa en el Perú', in H. Tantaleán & C. Astuhamán (eds.) *Historia de la Arqueología en el Perú del siglo XX*. Lima: IFEA Institut Français d' Études Andines & IAR Institute of Andean Research, 303–332.
- Marinov Martinic, B. 2016. 'En recuerdo de Vjera Zlatar Montan (1926–2015)'. *Hombre y Desierto* 20, 11–17.
- Márquez Abad, C. and Cisneros Del Río, N. 2023. 'El Congreso Nacional de Arqueología y su democratización hacia nuevos públicos'. *Badilejos del Sur: Boletín de la RED MAP* 1, 24–30.
- Martínez Álvarez, P. (ed.) 1999. *Kausayta paqarichispam difindiniku: porque damos la vida la defendemos*. Lima: Centro de Promoción y Desarrollo Poblacional.
- Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables. 2017. *La igualdad de género en las políticas y la gestión de desarrollo local: contribuyendo a la información de las autoridades locales*. Online: <https://www.mimp.gob.pe/files/direcciones/dcteg/Brochure-Gobiernos-Locales.pdf>. [Accessed 04 September 2024].

- Morán Breña, C. 2021. 'Marta Lamas: "Muchas chicas llegan al feminismo desde el dolor, pero les falta entrenamiento político"'. *El País Mexico* 02 May. Online: [https://elpais.com/mexico/2021-05-01/marta-lamas-muchas-chicas-llegan-al-feminismo-desde-el-dolor-pero-les-falta-entrenamiento-politico.html?event\\_log=go](https://elpais.com/mexico/2021-05-01/marta-lamas-muchas-chicas-llegan-al-feminismo-desde-el-dolor-pero-les-falta-entrenamiento-politico.html?event_log=go). [Accessed 04 September 2024].
- Mostny Glaser, G., Yáñez, J. and Ambiental, G. 2008. 'Grete Mostny Glaser y el Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Chile (1914-1991)'. *Gestión Ambiental* 15, 1-4.
- Muñoz, F. and Monzón, F. de M. 2022. *La igualdad de las mujeres en la República: una promesa por cumplir* (UNMSM). Lima: Ministerio de Cultura, Proyecto Especial Bicentenario de la Independencia del Perú.
- Museo Nacional de Historia Natural. 2012. *Eliana Durán Serrano*. Santiago de Chile: Museo Nacional de Historia Natural. Online: [articles-5321\\_archivo\\_01.pdf](articles-5321_archivo_01.pdf) (mnhn.gob.cl) [Accessed 04 September 2024].
- Museo Nacional de Historia Natural. 2014. *Grete Mostny (1914-1991)*. Santiago de Chile: Museo Nacional de Historia Natural. Online: [articles-5237\\_archivo\\_01.pdf](articles-5237_archivo_01.pdf) (mnhn.gob.cl) [Accessed 04 September 2024].
- Novoa, P. 2013. 'Una aproximación a la obra de Rebeca Carrión Cachot entre 1947 y 1960', in H. Tantaleán and C. Astuhamán (eds.) *Historia de la Arqueología en el Perú del siglo XX*. Lima: IFEA Institut Français d' Études Andines & IAR Institute of Andean Research, 529-550.
- Núñez Henríquez, P. 2004. 'Arqueología y cambio social: una visión de género y materialismo histórico para el Norte de Chile', in 'Simposio marxismo y arqueología', special issue, *Revista de Antropología Chilena* 36(1), 441-451.
- Núñez Huallpayunca, E. 2016. 'Rebeca Carrión Cachot, la primera arqueóloga y mujer en asumir la cátedra en la universidad'. *Arqueología y Sociedad*, 31, 287-304. doi: <https://doi.org/10.15381/arqueolsoc.2016n31.e13301>
- Ortiz-Troncoso, O. 1992. 'Grete Mostny (1914-1991)'. *Journal de La Societé Des Américanistes* 78(1), 192-194. Online: [https://www.persee.fr/doc/jsa\\_0037-9174\\_1992\\_num\\_78\\_1\\_2765](https://www.persee.fr/doc/jsa_0037-9174_1992_num_78_1_2765). [Accessed 04 September 2024].
- Pacheco Neyra, G. 2019. 'Relaciones de género: mujeres, sanmarquinas y chicheras'. *Desde El Sur* 11(2), 305-316. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21142/DES-1102-2019-305-316>
- Pozzi-Escot, D. 2008. 'Mi reconocimiento a Rosa Fung Pineda', in E. Vergara (ed.) *Arqueología y Vida* 2. Museo Arqueología, Antropología e Historia de la Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, 13-16.
- Prieto-Olavarría, C. and Chaparro, M.G. 2021. 'Feminismos y género en arqueología: acerca de la importancia de encontrarnos y reflexionar en tiempos de pandemia y distanciamiento social'. *Anales de Arqueología y Etnología* 76 (2), 61-67. <https://revistas.uncu.edu.ar/ojs3/index.php/analarqueyetno/article/view/5393>.
- Qhapaq Ñan Perú. 2018. *Simposio / Conversatorio "Arqueólogas: Investigaciones y Experiencias" Mesa: Museos, Educación y Difusión del Patrimonio*. Facebook. Available: <https://www.facebook.com/QhapaqNanPeru/videos/2041181615923787> (Accessed: January 2024).
- Ramos Luque, E. 2022. 'Representaciones de Mujeres con Instrumentos Musicales en la Cultura Moche', in C. Tavera Medina and L. Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 55-77.
- Red de Mujeres en Arqueología Peruana. 2022. *Sobre Nosotras*. Available at: <https://arqueologasperu.pe/sobre-nosotras/> (Accessed: 14 January 2024).
- Ribeiro, D. 2020. *Lugar de enunciación*. Madrid: Ambulantes.

- Rivera Prince, J.A., Blackwood, E.M., Brough, J.A., Landázuri, H.A., Leclerc, E.L., Barnes, M., Douglass, K., Gutiérrez, M.A., Herr, S., Maasch, K.A. and Sandweiss, D.H. 2022. 'An intersectional approach to equity, inequity, and archaeology: A pathway through community'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 10(4), 382–396. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2022.26>.
- Rodríguez Sumar, P. 2022. 'Repensando las categorías de género y poder en los Andes prehispánicos: el caso de Mama Huaco', in C. Tavera Medina and L. Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 79–96.
- Rodríguez Yábar, A. 2022. 'Arqueología de género y arqueología feminista: hacia una arqueología reflexiva', in C. Tavera Medina and L. Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: Una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 49–54.
- Rosas Lauro, C. 2019. *Genero y mujeres en la historia del Perú: del hogar al espacio público*. Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.
- Rostowrowski, M. 1987. 'La mujer en la época prehispánica'. *Cuicuilco Revista de la Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia* 6(18), 80–85. <https://revistas.inah.gob.mx/index.php/cuicuilco/article/view/19563>
- Salazar, L. 2022. 'La creación del museo Machu Picchu: la visión de una arqueóloga', in C. Tavera Medina and L. Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 205–222.
- Salles, E.C. and Noejovich Chernoff, H.O. 2006. 'La herencia femenina andina prehispánica y su transformación en el mundo colonial'. *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Études Andines* 35(1), 37–53. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4000/BIFEA.4758>.
- Sánchez Canedo, W., Sáenz, V. and Rivera Casanova, C. 2017. *Tres mujeres en la arqueología Boliviana*. Guía de exposición. Cochabamba: Universidad Mayor de San Simón.
- Sánchez Mosquera, A. 2015. *Las más mimada Resfa Parducci: pionera de la arqueología ecuatoriana. Exposición en conmemoración por los 100 años de su nacimiento 1915–2015*. Quito: Universidad San Francisco de Quito. CD ROM.
- Santana Quispe, L. 2019. 'Entre techos de cristal y nichos académicos: estado actual de las mujeres en la arqueología peruana'. *Desde El Sur* 11(2), 261–281. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21142/DES-1102-2019-261-281>.
- Santa Quispe, L. and Tavera Medina, C. 2022. 'Deconstruyendo a la arqueología peruana: una introducción al estudio de las mujeres del presente y del pasado', in C. Tavera Medina and Lady Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima, Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 15–31.
- Shady, R. 2023. 'Talleres de empoderamiento y de revaloración del rol de la mujer científica'. *Badilejos del Sur: Boletín de la RED MAP* 1, 31 – 47.
- Silva, J. 2004. 'Breve semblanza sobre la trayectoria profesional de la Dra. Rosa Fung Pineda', in Museo de Arqueología y Antropología de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (ed.) *Quehaceres de la arqueología peruana: compilación de escritos*. Lima: Museo de Arqueología y Antropología de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 15–22.
- Stern, S. (ed.) 1999. *Los senderos inólitos del Perú: guerra y sociedad, 1980–1995*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.

- Suárez Ubillus, M. 2023. 'Cerro Sechín celebra 85 años de descubrimiento con nuevo ciclo de conferencias virtuales organizado por Yaguar y el Proyecto Sechín'. *Badilejos del Sur: Boletín de la RED MAP* 1, 17–23.
- Tantaleán, H. 2019. *Una historia de la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and Universidad San Francisco de Quito.
- Tantaleán, H. and Gonzales, A. 2017. 'La arqueología de contrato en el Perú: surgimiento, caracterización u perspectivas', in J.R. Pellini (ed.) *Arqueología comercial: dinero, alienación y anestesia*. Madrid: JAS Arqueología, 177–198.
- Tavera Medina, C. 2019. 'Una mirada feminista a la comunidad arqueológica peruana'. *Desde El Sur*, 11(2), 239–260. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21142/DES-1102-2019-239-260>.
- Tavera Medina, C. and Santana Quispe, L. 2021. 'Desigualdades impresas: un primer paso para el estudio la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología peruana'. *Chungará* 53(1), 145–159. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-73562021005000301>.
- Tavera Medina, C. and Santana Quispe, L. (eds). 2022. *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos.
- The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Lima. 2021. *Notice of Funding Opportunity for Network of Women in Archaeology*. Official document. Available at: <https://www.highergov.com/grant-opportunity/notice-of-funding-opportunity-for-network-of-women-in-archaeology-332443/> (Accessed:: 14 January 2024).
- Uribe, M. 2022. 'Ha sido enhorabuena... In memoriam María Victoria Castro Rojas (1944–2022)'. *Revista Chilena de Antropología* 46, 133–144. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-1472.2022.69189>.
- Voss, B.L. 2022. 'Contra las culturas del acoso en la arqueología: enfoques socioambientales y basados en el trauma para la transformación disciplinaria'. *Latin American Antiquity* 33(1), 1–19. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/LAQ.2021.83>.
- Willka Kuna. 2020. Facebook. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=114485270394306&set=a.114465877062912> (Accessed: 12 January 2024)
- Willkas: Red Peruana de Arqueología Feminista, Disidente y Decolonial. 2020. Facebook. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=112990590544671&set=a.112984003878663> (Accessed: 12 January 2024).
- Young, M. 2022. 'Barreras y oportunidades de una identidad interseccional en la práctica de la arqueología en el Perú', in C. Tavera Medina and L. Santana Quispe (eds) *Mujeres del pasado y del presente: una visión desde la arqueología peruana*. Lima: Instituto Peruano de Estudios Arqueológicos, 141–164.

## Chapter 9.

# Turkish Archaeology and Activism

Yağmur Heffron and Elif Koparal<sup>1</sup>

In conversation with Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins

*Content Warning: This conversation discusses instances of sexual harassment and rape.  
This conversation took place over MS Teams in December 2023.*

### Introductions and the Context of Activism around Harassment in Turkey

**Yağmur:** My day job is teaching at UCL in the History department, but I am an archaeologist and I've been excavating in Turkey for 20 years now. I've almost exclusively worked with international, and mostly Anglophone teams, so my experiences of working in the field in a more traditional Turkish academic environment are limited. But I was a student in Turkey, and I work with Turkish colleagues and students, so I know the lay of the land. I come to this from the angle of fieldwork injustice, based on the work I do as a Turkish translator for international teams, in addition to excavating. My contribution to this conversation is to speak from a broader perspective – looking at how harassment and other types of exploitation are maintained in a hierarchical system that's unfortunately characteristic of a lot of fieldwork projects in Turkey.

I've been spending more and more time thinking about these issues and I am running a workshop about this at the British Association of Near Eastern Archaeology (BANEAE) Conference in January 2024. The session is called *Big Dig Energy: Gendered practices and internalised patriarchy in archaeological fieldwork in West Asia* and we'll talk about how being in the field itself is such a hyper masculinised activity – for men as well – but especially for women. To participate in fieldwork you have to either submit to behaviours that aren't ideal, or join in and become 'one of the lads'. A lot of emphasis is placed on 'the first', 'the best', 'the most' or 'the biggest' and there is a lot of posturing, which creates a harmful value hierarchy of individuals and their contribution. So my work has been examining this, but I also wanted to bring Elif into this conversation because she's been a lot more active, vocal and visible on issues of harassment in Turkey, and can speak from a place of greater knowledge about these things. Elif, over to you.

**Elif:** My research area is landscape archaeology, and currently I am teaching at Mimar Sinan University in İstanbul. I've been undertaking field archaeology since 1992, and I have had the chance to work with several different teams in a range of places. My first excavation experience was as a student in a Turkish team, in İzmir. As a student and scholar, I also collaborated with foreign teams working in Turkey. Right from the beginning, as a student, I

---

<sup>1</sup> Yağmur Heffron (✉) Department of History, University College London, 25 Gordon Sq, London, WC1H 0PY, UK  
Email: y.heffron@ucl.ac.uk.  
Elif Koparal, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (İstanbul). Email: elif.koparal@msgsu.edu.tr.

was very disturbed by the hierarchical structures in the practice of archaeology. I was vocal about the issues I saw, and this caused difficulties at times, including being fired from one excavation, and being isolated. One of the most disturbing things for me was the division of labour in the Turkish teams. Female students were not allowed to use technical gadgets like digital cameras, theodolites, total stations etc., but instead were given tasks like pottery washing, managing the kitchen chores and so on. The tasks to be done at the excavation house were overlooked and people who undertook the responsibilities other than fieldwork were known as ‘home archaeologists’. As a female student that was a challenge for me, and I tried hard to overcome such discrimination.

As a scholar, I had the chance to work in several different universities in Turkey. In fact, I’m one of the few archaeologists in Turkey who has worked in different universities. In general, in Turkish academia, most people spend their whole career in the same institution and call it ‘big tradition’. I had my PhD degree from a top university (METU), then worked at a provincial university, and finally found myself in MSGSU, Istanbul. All through my career I have collaborated with foreign institutions and scholars, which gave me the perspective to compare working environments both within universities and on excavations. Until recently there were not any platforms to discuss the hierarchies, discrimination and harassment issues. But in 2013, with several colleagues, we initiated the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) in Turkey, and we held the first meeting with the theme ‘Changing Archaeology’. That was a big step for discussing harassment and discrimination in Turkish archaeology openly as well as other issues. My presentation, which was published later, was on power relations in archaeology (Koparal 2014). The TAG meetings encouraged many people, but particularly young students and scholars, to speak about discrimination and harassment issues. They created a vibrant medium for all of us to contact each other and share personal experiences and problems that have been mostly ignored in the past. In those days we were using social media very actively, which enabled us to create a network for communication.

Harassment has always been present in the practice of archaeology. The good thing is people now find the courage to speak about it. Unfortunately, recently there were several cases of harassment in Turkish archaeology that came to light after the #MeToo movement. However, there are only a handful of people participating in these debates openly and following the cases. Most people are uneasy about getting harmed professionally and prefer to stay silent even if, behind closed doors, they believe the victims. Two years ago, there was a big case in Turkish archaeology, when victims revealed the identity of their harasser by sending an email to all the institutions and academics involved in Turkish archaeology, explaining their experience. Only a handful of us supported the victims openly and this has in turn had repercussions for us, including accusations of slander (though so far, there is no law case against us). Despite the accusations there is no law case against the harasser as the courts made a decision of non-prosecution. The victims are now living abroad in other countries, one of them keeps on writing about what she’s been living through on Twitter. People keep telling us to mind our own business and give up following the case. Honestly, I would prefer to concentrate on my fieldwork rather than talking about this, but until we have mechanisms to challenge harassment, it is important to continue to stand up to it. We have to deal with these issues for a better professional environment.

### Activism in the Present

**Hannah:** It sounds like it's an extremely hierarchical system that perpetuates harassment. Would you be happy to tell us a little bit more about it and then about the kind of activism that people have been engaged in to address it?

**Elif:** Of course, but I think it's worth starting with the broader picture. At the moment in Turkey, and for the past two decades, there has been growing social and cultural conservatism. Turkey withdrew from the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (also known as the Istanbul Convention)<sup>2</sup> in 2021. This created an even more tense environment for women, not only in archaeology but more broadly.

Thinking of women's position in archaeology, it is ironic that when the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923 there were a number of leading female archaeologists, such as Jale İnan, Muhibbe Darga and Halet Çambel – all pioneering female archaeologists of the young Turkish Republic. In those days, there was more space for women and they were encouraged to take part in professions as much as men, including archaeology. In other words, archaeology was never defined as a manly work. But also, reading the memoirs of these women, they mostly defined themselves as tough and 'bad-ass', where femininity is not involved much. Five or six years ago [Turkey's President since 2014] Erdoğan made a statement and said that women are fragile and vulnerable and that's why women shouldn't be allowed to do hard work. Of course, there was a big uproar on social media, and the majority of the women archaeologists put photographs on Facebook and Twitter showing them digging with mattocks. But this is also a problematic narrative. Archaeology is not just digging in the field, or doing hard physical work. Probably this stemmed from the big separation in Turkish archaeology which sees archaeologists as either field archaeologists or 'domestic' archaeologists. When I say 'domestic', I mean the work to be done at the lab or excavation house.

I remember this attitude was such a shock to encounter for the first time when I was a student in the 1990s. I had graduated from a high school which was only girls, and we were raised reading feminist authors, and taught to be against gender discrimination. Then I became an archaeology student in İzmir, which is a relatively modern town, and also my hometown. So, I went on an excavation with a Turkish team, in the early years when excavations were beginning to use digital recording, like digital cameras and total stations. Although it was not openly announced, only the male students were responsible for using the gadgets, and neither I nor any of the female students were allowed to touch them. I remember waking up early and taking the equipment to the field on off days, to try and learn how to use them myself, but I was warned several times not to touch them. I understand that this equipment was extremely expensive and the excavation budgets were very small, but still one could see that female

<sup>2</sup> The Istanbul Convention is a treaty of the Council of Europe, passed in 2011 to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. It has been ratified by 39 countries and Turkey is the only country to have ratified it and then withdrawn this. The Council of Europe states that: "The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also known as "the Istanbul Convention", is based on the understanding that violence against women is a form of gender-based violence that is committed against women because they are women. It is the obligation of the state to address it fully in all its forms and to take measures to prevent violence against women, protect its victims and prosecute the perpetrators. Failure to do so would make it the responsibility of the state. The Convention leaves no doubt: there can be no real equality between women and men if women experience gender-based violence on a large-scale and state agencies and institutions turn a blind eye". (Council of Europe 2024).

students were not seen as reliable to take care of these. That was a clear discrimination. Yağmur does this sound like what you have experienced?

**Yağmur:** Absolutely. These endless stories of separating men and women start at the level of undergrads and even off site, because there's always a lot of non-archaeological work to be done on a dig. We all share household chores and things like that, but then it's very clear what household chores are gendered. If it's anything to do with cooking or cleaning or around the kitchen, women will be told to take those chores, and anything that's to do with moving heavy crates, driving the truck or anything like that, it will be the men. This division can be very obvious and also internalised.

My one and only experience of working on a fully Turkish and heavily hierarchical project was a decade ago. There was a very clear and strict hierarchy of status between undergraduate students, postgraduate students, junior and senior academics, and also a hierarchy of division of labour that was very gendered. Students were mostly on rotation, so they would excavate in different areas every day or be in the house, so they weren't always in the same place. One day I was working with a group of three women undergrads. We had a nice day working, and when we got to the end of the day I said 'OK, it's now time to pick up all the equipment', meaning the wheelbarrow and all the digging equipment. They looked around and they said, 'the boys aren't back yet, and we can't move the equipment – it's the boys that do that'. And for a moment I just lost my filter and I turned around and said, 'well, what do we have to wait for? Why should it be the boys to do it? I mean, are they going to do it with their genitalia? Because that would be the only reason we would specifically require men for this job'. Then they looked at me and they were so shocked! They'd never heard anything like this, especially from a person in authority. Then we all just burst out laughing because it was very clearly absurd what was going on. And once we stopped laughing, we just picked up the equipment and left. So, a lot of it is very internalised and I think it would be a mistake to see younger students or women or minorities, or anyone who identifies with a protected characteristic, only as victims. I think there's a lot of enabling and perpetuating the system because it's so internalised people don't notice – they don't even see that there's anything wrong or to be critical about.

Sometimes, even when there is awareness, a survival mechanism kicks in. You put up with it because then it gets you something and then you can get a little bit ahead. It's quite unhealthy because it really pits people against each other and again, that is something that perpetuates and protects the system as well by creating conflicts of interest.

I like that Elif mentioned the very beginning of the history of Turkish archaeology because it was part of a very conscious state project. Partly it was about the new Turkish Republic, founded in 1923, trying to forge a brand new national identity based on its ancient past. That's very similar to other narratives in early twentieth-century nation states, and in this case it drew upon ancient Anatolia as a unifying identity. So part of the job of archaeology was to gather data to foster this kind of idea. But the second job of archaeology, and I don't think this was any less important, was to demonstrate that Turkey was also a modern, or a modernising, Western nation. This is because archaeology, and especially academic archaeology, and other related disciplines such as philology and ancient history, were seen as signifiers of participating in a European-style cultural environment. The very practice of archaeology

showed that Turkey belonged to the West rather than to the East, which again, is why women easily found a place in archaeology because it was something that actively encouraged women to participate.

So, as Elif said, some of the clear pioneering figures of early Turkish archaeology were women. But, if you take a closer look, it's not one of equality. It's just that they were allowed to exist or to be visible to a certain extent. So, to be a bit flippant, I could say there were only two ways if you were a woman in Turkish archaeology to make an impact. Either you had to be married to a powerful archaeologist, or you had to be unmarried, childless, no attachments, completely alone. Anything in between, you're in a dead zone. I know this is part of a global pattern where a lot of archaeology has had these couples, and a lot of these archaeology couples are often a senior man and a former student woman, so this isn't a unique pattern. But this pattern comes through quite clearly in Turkey, which I would always connect back to how deeply hierarchical the whole system has been from the very start. These things are so standard and internalised that opening a conversation that questions it can be a surprising act.

**Elif:** One of the pioneer male archaeologists is supposed to have said, if you want to be a female archaeologist, you have to be beautiful and you have to come from a rich family, otherwise you don't have any chance. So Yağmur is right, although there was more space for women in the early days of Turkish archaeology, there was still a highly gendered hierarchy. Reading Muhibbe Darga's memoirs, for example, although she was rich, good looking and charming it was not enough. She had to struggle.

**Yağmur:** Yes. She was married. She also had a child, so part of her memoir is about the struggle to come back into the field and how she had to push constantly for that.

**Elif:** Also the title of the book is *Arkeolojinin Delikanlısı*.

**Yağmur:** *Delikanlı* is the word for a dashing, strapping young man. It has connotations of a healthy and energetic youth. But it's also got all these masculine qualities of being a protector and tough, and not a pushover, and 'a good lad' that you want to have on your side to step in if necessary, and brave and courageous. When you refer to a woman as a *Delikanlı*, that is a compliment which means 'you're one of the boys', and that's the title of her autobiography, so it translates as 'one of the boys in archaeology'.

**Elif:** So the title of her memoir suggests that she had to embrace some manly qualities to maintain her position in Turkish archaeology.

Although there are not any good sources to reveal how harassment and discrimination was common in Turkish archaeology in the past (even in the form of memoirs) we can at least document it in the present day. In the last couple of years Çiler Çilingiroğlu and Berkay Dinçer undertook an anonymous survey and they found that 70% of the students in Turkish archaeology had been sexually harassed, and it was not only by men. In some cases students reported both physical harassment from female excavation directors and requests to alter their appearance to attract the sponsors of the excavations.

But this is a minority. It is usually men who are accused within harassment cases and this has increased in the last decade. There have been two cases in recent years that illustrate this, both of which have received a lot of social media coverage. One was an alleged attempted rape of a female student on a university excavation. The other was an open letter from a postgraduate student detailing her experience of being harassed over a period of years by the director of a well-known excavation. In both cases there was an uproar on social media, particularly Twitter. The student in the second case received a lot of support from other students and some academics, and two more published open letters which were also widely circulated. Legal proceedings were initiated by the student, but were not continued, with lack of evidence being cited. The students involved were left feeling isolated and the narrative then flipped against them with accusations that they were simply jealous, and instead they faced the prospect of a lawsuit being brought against them and their supporters.

It's important to say this is happening not only in archaeology – this is also the situation throughout Turkey at the moment in every academic area, and in every neighbourhood all over the country. A famous academic example from 2019 is the murder of a female lecturer in law, Ceren Damar, in her office by a male student (Şahoğlu 2021).

### **The Future of Activism in Turkey**

**Hannah:** This is so shocking to hear. It sounds like people have been really buoyed up by social media activism, but then online activism has also made things very difficult for them. Is that a fair interpretation? And in the face of this, what are your hopes for the future of activism (whether online or not) against sexual harassment and gendered discrimination in Turkey?

**Elif:** Well, in the end there are only few people vocal on social media. It is promising that students are also becoming more active and vocal about the accusations though and I think it would be great if there were a grassroots movement against sexual harassment in Turkey, but I'm not sure if it is possible. But I do feel hopeful for the future because, in protesting online we started to find small groups of students and professors in universities. For example, one of the people accused of harassment that I mentioned earlier was invited by my university to give an opening lecture in the museum, and the students wrote to the director and said that they would protest if he came, so they cancelled it. So, there are supportive people making these decisions, and they listened to the students. I have hope because from my generation there are only a few people standing up to this, but today's students are raising an awareness. It's not only the children from democratic families, but also students from very conservative families – they're all at the front and protesting this, which is great.

In my generation very few people would do that. I would define myself as a radical in my generation because I was fired because I supported my female team friends who had to wash pottery for twelve hours a day. There were a number of professors who would not hesitate to flirt with the female students in the past. And the students would stay silent and try to protect themselves by either leaving the excavation or staying at a distance to confirm that they were not that 'type of girl'.

**Yağmur:** I agree. I think that hope is something that lies more with a grassroots awareness because it's very difficult to do anything top down. Even when you have a job and you look

like you're in a position of relative power, it doesn't always work that way because, as Elif said, systematically it's actually a very difficult thing to fight, even if you might have more colleagues who will support you in spirit. This is because of the way field archaeology is regulated in Turkey – all your field activity rests on the annual renewal of a permit. The permit issuing body is the Ministry of Culture and, if you want to start a brand-new project, a survey or excavation, the initial permit is granted by the Council of Ministers and it has to be granted Presidential approval as well. Then every year you renew the permit application and every year it's very stressful because you might be denied your permit for that season. There's a very long history of, for instance, foreign excavations finding their permits being denied because there's a political spat happening between Turkey and the country of which a director happens to be a national. It's very easy for your fieldwork to be disrupted or to be cancelled permanently, or to be taken away from you and given to somebody else. These are very real dangers. Even at the point of an initial survey permit or an excavation permit, you still have to pass through a panel of professional colleagues in Turkey, and of course all these panels have some of the most powerful archaeologists, and they're always on the side of the status quo. So it's very easy for people to feel threatened that if they say the wrong thing, they will get a retaliation by having their professional activities disrupted. That's definitely a major reason, especially in archaeology, why people might be less willing to stand up against sexual harassment, because you may not lose your job, but you might lose all means of doing your job. That's why I think, again, a grassroots awareness is key, if we can build better awareness among students towards women's empowerment so that they see better where boundaries should be, when they can say no, when they can resist and so on. There's hope that each generation will take less crap than the generation before because Elif is right – when we were students, there was no example of anybody speaking up in any context.

**Elif:** Now at least we can discuss it openly. And students are supporting each other, so that's why there is hope. It's very different from the past. So that's why I'm hopeful, even under these circumstances.

**Hannah:** I'm so glad that there is a sense of hope, despite everything you've said! Are social media useful for that grassroots side of things, or is it more word of mouth and networks of support that exist on campuses?

**Elif:** That's another issue. Students *are* founding groups online. For example, there was a group which was called Feminist Archaeologists, and we wanted to support them as professors, but they were anonymous. We [the professors] said, if you want to support victims of sexual harassment in archaeology, you should really put your name on this as well. But they don't do that. This is the difficulty at the moment as things are going very anonymous. So there are different groups, different organisations, and they might name themselves feminist archaeologists, or something else, but ultimately they want to stay anonymous so that they will not be threatened.

**Kayt:** I suppose that's the compromise with the use of social media – it enables all of those connections to be made, to engage with support networks, but it also provides that anonymity if you need it. Increasingly, and understandably in the face of litigation, people are choosing to stay anonymous and in some cases it is a necessity for safety, but it can also be used to undermine and discredit. It's a difficult space to occupy. Maybe visible anonymous accounts

do help remove that sense of isolation though, for those that are or who have experienced these behaviours, to see that they are not alone.

**Yağmur:** It's also good to see that it's happening even if you're not actively participating in a conversation, just to see that a conversation is taking place because when people are openly talking about it, that makes it more normal. You get a better sense of not having to put up with something next time it happens. I've had students come and say, 'I'm so glad you said that because that wasn't the kind of thing I could have said out loud'. I always say it's fine – everybody does what they're capable of doing. You don't have to die on every single hill, and you also need to look after yourself. You need to avoid totally self-destructive things so that you can stick around and fight another day. What I can do sometimes is more than what a student can do; at other times it is less than what others can do. But it can be enough for someone to just see it, because when they feel empowered enough or safe enough, they will also speak up or they'll join a protest. So I think social media does make a difference.

I don't remember seeing anything like this when I was a student partly because visibility was different. I vaguely remember a story about a women's toilet at an (American?) university where women left graffiti warning others against predatory professors because this was the best way to disseminate this kind of knowledge. It's the same principle. Unofficially, I think we are looking after each other a lot better, and that's a start. If you can't fight things openly, officially, if people have too much impunity for anything to fundamentally change, at least informally we look after each other, we make notes of where to avoid, whom to avoid. We keep lines of communication open and let each other know of projects where we have sent our students and they have been safe. We let each other know: this is a safe place. That person is not a safe person. So there's lots of ways of networking. It's very difficult to document and quantify from a research perspective because it's very invisible but I think also that's where hope lies, with the more informal networks.

**Kayt:** I think it's interesting, what you said then, about the little things that we do – I bet every single woman who was on that excavation when you said 'let's pick up all the equipment' will remember that, and they're carrying that with them. It's those moments, those little things that we say – like you say, it doesn't have to be big hills – it's just a constant reassurance and reminder.

Everything you have said today has been a real eye opener. It's been really quite shocking listening to you. I wonder what happens if you have students coming from international contexts, who through their university have been told that there's certain behaviours that they shouldn't accept, does this create another kind of tension?

**Yağmur:** I mentioned earlier I'd been on a very traditional Turkish excavation. At the time my plan was to stay on for the long term, build a satellite project, generate funding, and continually bring in students. But after my first season it was such a shocking experience I thought it would be absolutely irresponsible for me to take students there because I'd seen the way students were treated. They were bullied, belittled, exploited, and it was just a really unhealthy environment for students. So again, it comes down to communicating and knowing where might be safe. Students from the UK do go to excavations in Turkey, but they tend

to be either international projects or Turkish projects that have a very heavy international component.

**Elif:** Also the pressure from the top has been increasing over the last two decades, with the government saying that they don't want foreigners in Turkish archaeology, and it is only a one man show in Turkish archaeology – just like Erdoğan, most of the excavation directors are a one man leader. So that's why what was happening with international teams could not diffuse to the other excavations.

**Hannah:** That's really interesting. Thank you. It feels like an absolute honour to be able to speak to you both and to hear about your work, and to understand how you are playing a transformative role – even if it feels that you're constantly fighting, clearly you are making a real difference and that is really amazing.

**Elif:** Thank you for the space to talk about it. I hope we've been able to show how power relations and unfair hierarchies in excavation houses, teams and faculties have created an environment of harassment and discrimination in Turkish archaeology. Unfortunately, the victims are mostly women or LGBTQ+, and we have shared some of our personal experiences and observations about gender issues and harassment. But it is important to underline that it should be investigated, analysed and published further and in a more scholarly way – we need more discourse on this to be able to challenge it. That said, the best thing, and the thing we both agree on, is that the new generation of archaeology students are much more aware of the issues, and they know how to get organised and stand up against discrimination and harassment. Although the general socio-political environment is cultivating poor conditions in Turkish archaeology, and there are so many things to cope with, with a greater awareness and activism amongst our students there is also so much hope for younger generation.

## Bibliography

- Council of Europe. 2024. *About the convention*. Online <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/about-the-convention>. [Accessed 20/02/2024].
- Koparal, E. 2014. 'Türkiye Arkeolojisinde İktidar, Mikro İktidar ve Biyo İktidar Odakları', in Ç. Çilingiroğlu and P. Özgüner (eds) *Değişen Arkeoloji: 1. Teorik Arkeoloji Grubu Türkiye toplantısı bildirileri =Changing archaeology: Proceedings of the 1st TAG-Turkey meeting*. Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 101–110.
- Şahoğlu, C.T. 2021. 'Sexist hate speech and the reproduction of power inequalities on social media: The murder of Ceren Damar in Turkey', in M. Marron (ed.) *Misogyny across global media*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 263–279.



SECTION 3.  
Online Activism:  
Creating Communities,  
Challenging Norms, Driving Change





## Chapter 10.

# Forging Online Queer Activist Communities in a Time of Social Media Disintegration

Nathan Klembara<sup>1</sup>

In conversation with Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins

This conversation took place via MSTeams in December 2023 between the volume editors and Nathan Klembara, who led the Queer Archaeology web team as a doctoral student at Binghamton University, USA. The conversation explores the advent and the work of the Queer Archaeology website (<https://queerarchaeology.com/>) and their associated social media accounts; on X/Twitter @Queerarch; on Facebook as LGBT Archaeologists; on Instagram @queerarchaeology. At the time of writing Twitter is now known as X, but throughout the conversation we refer to X as Twitter.

Apart from the three major social media platforms of X, Facebook and Instagram, we also discuss a range of other social media platforms. We recognise that these may change or become obsolete over time so we begin with a brief explanation of what these are at the time of writing.

- **Discord:** Platform for closed online communities to share media and have conversation, including functionality for live calling.
- **Tumblr:** Platform for microblogging, image sharing and social networking.
- **TikTok:** Platform for short-form video sharing.
- **Mastadon and Bluesky:** In the reaction against Twitter/X after it was taken over by Elon Musk in 2022, a number of similar platforms which use limited characters for mainly text based posts have arisen, including Mastadon and Bluesky.

The conversation begins with the background to the Queer Archaeology website, and associated social media accounts, and an exploration of the kind of work they do.

### **Action and Reaction: Introducing Queer Archaeology**

**Nathan:** The social media platform, Queer Archaeology and its associated Twitter account (@Queerarch) originated out of the Society for American Archaeology's (SAA) Queer Archaeology interest group (QAIG). That group was started by Chelsea Blackmore and Dawn Rutecki in 2015 and they had slowly been building the group's membership and making concrete change within the Society for American Archaeology. For example, they've advocated for gender

---

<sup>1</sup> Nathan Klembara, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, Kansas State University.

neutral bathrooms, using pronouns on name badges, and promoting debate and space to share research through sessions at the SAA's annual conference dedicated to queer archaeology.

As QAIG started to grow, they wanted it to seek a further footprint outside of the SAA so they developed a Facebook group and a Twitter account, which were the two major platforms that existed at that time. However, these accounts were not in regular use, and they were also conscious that everything that they would post on these social media channels, if it was coming from the SAA's Queer Archaeology interest group, was going to have to be vetted by the SAA leadership. This meant that what they could say was ultimately constrained, either because the SAA didn't agree or in case it might have legal ramifications for the SAA.

So in 2017 Chelsea and Dawn announced that they were looking for people to run these social media channels and that's when I got involved, along with Gabriela Oré Menéndez. The two of us worked with Chelsea Blackmore to build the website and figure out a social media strategy, and that's when the website and the blog appeared as something separate and distinct from QAIG. That's when we started really using the Twitter account. That's when we started posting to the Facebook group, and slowly we've started developing other social media channels that we're still trying to figure out how to use properly, like Instagram and Discord.

**Kayt:** It is really interesting hearing the tensions of starting within a formal organisation, like the SAA. You can really understand how the wider organisation enables that bringing together of people initially, but then how those structures, and their understandable legal frameworks that they have to adhere to, start to become constrictive until you need to step beyond them to carry on the work.

**Hannah:** And equally it's interesting how this articulates with other papers in this volume because some people have had the exact opposite experience – people who have started off independently, like TrowelBlazers, have reached a point where they feel like they need the support of formal organisations to be able to develop further. So there is obviously a tension between how much online activism both needs the umbrella and platform of large organisations to provide funding and networks, but also how those same structures can constrain activism. Addressing those conflicting needs and those tensions is a real challenge for online activist work.

**Nathan:** Yes, Queer Archaeology has certainly benefitted from the structure that the SAA's Queer Archaeology interest group provided for us, but as we have developed we have been able to say clearly that we are not affiliated with that. So on one hand, we always advertise QAIG events and initiatives, and the members of the overall leadership of the Queer Archaeology social media platforms are also chairs and members of QAIG. So QAIG are always very closely connected to us, but at the same time, we're always very clear that the Queer Archaeology platforms are not formally affiliated with the SAA or QAIG. And that independence is really important because part of social media activism is the ability to be fluid and to be on top

of things as they happen – being able to post when things are announced and things are happening, rather than needing to get wording checked and vetted.

**Kayt:** Absolutely. You need to be reactive and if you've got to wait to get things signed off, the moment's gone.

**Nathan:** Yes, sometimes we don't even talk to each other about posting things. We have this idea and this ethic that if you really feel strongly that something should be posted, go for it.

### **Queer Archaeology in the Context of Social Media Activism**

**Hannah:** It's really interesting that you started in 2017, which was basically at the point when #MeToo and #TimesUp really came to global prominence and when those movements were really vocal on social media. Do you see Queer Archaeology's emergence into social media activism as being connected to that broader activist context?

**Nathan:** I'm not sure if we ever really intersected with #MeToo and #TimesUp directly, but I think that it was movements like that that showed the power of social media as a force that could be for political good. They showed social media provided a way of building community, talking about issues that you couldn't talk about in traditional publications or in traditional informal channels, which really inspired a lot of the work that we were doing.

That said, as the social media platforms in Queer Archaeology first developed, there was still something of a false binary between feminist and queer archaeology, and in those early days there was still this idea that things like #MeToo and #TimesUp were very much a feminist concern, and not necessarily our concern. I think we were wrong in thinking that, but we were still trying to figure out what our place in this online activism was. I think there's also the issue that a lot of the forerunners of Queer Archaeology writ large were men. It's not that men, including myself, aren't concerned with these issues and don't support these issues, but I think it's that kind of Donna Haraway situated knowledges critique (Haraway 1988) where a lot of the efforts of queer activism in the early days were placed elsewhere. Luckily, we've quickly caught up with that, and Chelsea Blackmore and Dawn Rutecki were really instrumental in making sure that we were still concerned with issues of harassment and the experiences of people, particularly queer archaeologists, non-binary archaeologists and trans archaeologists, in the field and the experiences that they were going through.

Despite all the activism, I think we've still struggled, to this day, to figure out what we can do to support queer archaeologists to ensure they don't experience harassment. One thing that we had earlier on, pre-pandemic, was field school information, so that people could see what policies were in place in individual field schools to protect gender nonconforming and queer students – for example, information about the living situations and the bathroom situations. But we always ran into structural problems where we could never say that we were vetting these field schools, we could only say that this information was coming directly from the field school directors, not from us. This allowed us to give information out, but we weren't about to do anything more. We weren't able to get a badge or an official certification or anything, which I think really limited the impact we could have. And post pandemic we've not really gone back to doing this because, again, we didn't have that legal standing to be able to actually say anything about field schools.

Another sticking point for us, and I'm not sure if other online spaces have the same issue, is that within queer communities there's a lot of conversations around toxic positivity, and I think that there's a lot of push in the queer community to only talk about good things: queer accomplishments, the positives of queer people and being queer and queer experiences. This is because so much of queer history and queer storytelling in the past has been centred around queer trauma. So there's this push to only talk about the good things, to only talk about the people who have succeeded. I don't want to speak for the entire Queer Archaeology web team, but I know I got wrapped up in this overarching discourse as well, where I didn't know if I wanted to talk about some of the darker or the harder elements of being queer in archaeology. I wanted to highlight queer archaeologists, trans archaeologist and archaeologists who were doing great things, and I think that this pushed us into an area that was very different from a lot of other online activism because we weren't doing work like statistical analyses of how often people are being harmed in the field. There are of course people doing great work like that, such as Laura Heath-Stout (2019, 2023). But I think that, as a social media team, we have definitely focused on pushing in this positive direction.

**Hannah:** I think that this is really interesting to hear in the context of this volume, because actually that's how a lot of this book is framed too – highlighting the positive things that have come out of social media activism. Of course it is also really important to give space to the accounts of harassment and discrimination and the trauma that they cause, but then highlighting the positive change that has come out of it, which isn't often actually captured in press, is just as important. In fact, I think what a lot of social media activism like the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements are about is that holistic picture; both providing a platform for and highlighting the power of speaking out, but also highlighting how that can enable significant structural changes to happen.

**Kayt:** This has made me reflect on the work we have been doing with Respect. One of the things we wanted to do was highlight the good practice too, but we invariably found ourselves highlighting the bad stuff more often. And with undertaking surveys to highlight that, we found ourselves constantly in that negative loop.

**Nathan:** Yes, I want Queer Archaeology's social media channels to always talk about the positives. But on the other hand, I didn't want it to become an issue of survivorship bias where, yes, queer archaeologists have done really great things. They've gone on to really successful careers and they've become really big names in the field and have done all these wonderful contributions to archaeology and academia in general. But I didn't want it to just be that because, if you're struggling, then that's a huge issue. It starts to read like 'look at all these other people who overcame challenges. Like, what's wrong with you?' So, there's clearly an important balance to be struck between not wanting the social media channels to just say 'the world is burning down around us and everything sucks' or 'look at all these people who have done amazing things'. I think the answer is making it clear that yes, you can succeed, but there are still a lot of structural barriers in place, and recognising those structural barriers exist.

**Hannah:** And do you think the Queer Archaeology web space and social media have been able to play a role in addressing those kind of structural barriers? Have you been able to support

people? The TrowelBlazers ethos is ‘if you can see it, you can be it’. Have you seen that happen through your work too in terms of making changes?

**Nathan:** Yes, we’ve made a lot of positive inroads in accomplishing our goals. For example in terms of building communities – the SAA’s Queer Archaeology interest group (QAIG) was a wonderful group and it’s a wonderful space, *but* you have to go to the SAA conference to be a part of that community because that community doesn’t exist on the other 364 days between the conferences. That means that you need to have money to travel. You need to have membership of the SAA. A lot of the time that means being from North America in the first place. So these online spaces that we’ve created decrease these financial barriers.

I think one of the real challenges we have is in addressing barriers. We want to decrease barriers to access because we have a lot of young people in particular who want to get involved in queer archaeology, who want to talk to other queer archaeologists about their experience and have this community. Queer archaeology as an academic discipline has been around for 25 years at least, but a lot of that work has been done in academic publications which are behind paywalls. They’re not really accessible to people who don’t have access to an academic library. So we’ve been able to build these online communities.

But on the other hand, the problem with online spaces and online discourse is that you still need to create some barriers because you want these to be safe spaces. We’ve debated amongst ourselves a lot about how you set up enough barriers to protect people but not too many barriers where you are actually keeping people out. One of our big ideas was creating a Discord for queer archaeologists, and we have gone through multiple prototypes of what this could look like. So we’ve done soft launches of the Discord and then realised that it’s not working and we have had to pull back.

Discord is a great place to allow people to have conversations with one another, to share opportunities and to set up informal mentorship networks. But the challenge is, how do you set that up in such a way that it doesn’t get attacked by anti-queer, very problematic individuals? So one of our ideas was to set up a referral program, by which I and the two other people who are in charge of the Discord space would send out invites to people we know, and then they would send out invites to people they know. Then people wanting to join would have to say ‘this is the person who referred me’. But that creates barriers because that means that you initially have to be a part of my professional and academic network, which is going to mean that it’s mostly US based, and it’s pretty much exclusively anglophone. That not only creates barriers to access but also reproduces the harmful idea that you need to have a professional network to get anywhere in academia or in archaeology.

So our second Discord prototype doesn’t have a referral program, but requires significant and extensive moderation to make sure that you know that comments are being moderated, that the anti-queer people are not coming in. But then that gets us into ideas of structural support because none of us are getting paid for this. If you go back to 2017, when I started, I was a master’s student, Gabe was in her PhD program and Chelsea Blackmore was an early career academic. So none of us were getting compensated for this, and none of us were really getting anything out of this work. Universities didn’t care about this as being a legitimate form of service. We could put it on our CVs, but how many people would acknowledge this work as important or significant enough when making decisions on hiring, promotion, or advancement?

This highlights an issue that emerges from any online activist work, because we've done a lot of good things, we've created community, but, given that it is voluntary work, how do we make creating community sustainable for us? We run into this issue repeatedly – every two years we have to hit a soft reset on everything because everybody gets busy. The QAIG chairs change, and people go on and finish their PhDs and need to focus on getting jobs or trying to get tenure and just don't have time. So we've rotated through different people and that's been really hard because a lot of online activism is about building momentum and a lot of momentum arises from the social memory that gets passed down from one person to the next, and that hasn't always happened. This isn't just about the way we build our own narrative and movement, but practical things too. So, for example, we don't have the original passwords to the Queer Archaeology Twitter account. Nobody knows who has that password because that was started even before I joined the team. So if Elon Musk ever decides to lock us out or makes us verify anything, we would lose everything. The only way we've been able to continue to use it is to give permission to other people to add it as a secondary account to their personal Twitter accounts. So we've had a really hard time building momentum because we don't have money or institutional support, just on-the-ground grassroots effort.

**Kayt:** Everything you're saying is ringing so true with me, with the Facebook groups that we set up with Respect, for example. It seems that there were so many of us doing all of this and running into all of these same barriers.

**Nathan:** It's also hard because social media is starting to fragment. Twitter was a great place in the mid/late 2010s, because everybody in academia and archaeology who was on social media was on Twitter. Probably also Facebook as well, but Twitter was the space everyone used. But then, as Twitter was bought by Elon Musk, a lot of people left. Facebook has also had the same thing. We often find that a lot of young people, who are probably the ones who are most likely to be looking and craving for queer archaeology content, aren't joining Facebook. But the trouble is that there isn't a single place that people are going instead. So, as I discussed above, we have been working on a Discord space, and that's great and a lot of young people have joined. However, one of our things is that we wanted to create an intergenerational mentoring network, but we find that a lot of older archaeologists do not want to sign up to Discord, or generally are not keen on finding another platform. That said, we've seen some people move to Mastodon or Bluesky, but many haven't, and each of those platforms have their own barriers too. Obviously, a lot of younger people are using things like Tik Tok, but that algorithm is nearly impossible to figure out in a way to get any traction. I have tried, and in my personal Tik Tok I haven't been able to even get archaeology Tik Tok videos to pop up on my feed. And then the other one that we thought of is Instagram, which is really good for highlighting queer themes, but it's not a great place for creating community or creating

discussions and conversations. So as social media has fragmented, we really haven't found that next replacement and that next place to do a lot of the things we would like to do.

**Kayt:** Other papers in this volume have also highlighted this. The TrowelBlazers team, for example, were saying they are considering going back to using Tumblr.

**Nathan:** We have one of our team looking into whether Tumblr would be worth it for Queer Archaeology too.

**Hannah:** I feel like Tumblr is somewhere between the closed community spaces of Discord and the image sharing platform of Instagram, so again has its own problems in that regard.

It's such a shame that Discord isn't as widely embraced as it has more functionality than Facebook in terms of having a space where you can share information and have communities and be relatively closed.

It's absolutely fascinating to hear how you're working around the challenges of the fragmenting social media landscape. And despite these challenges, are there success stories that have come out of your work? For example are there people who've been able to engage with the kind of mentoring that you were hoping for, or people who've felt that you are providing a community where they previously felt isolated?

**Nathan:** Yes. The biggest thing is just having the accounts and having them existing and even just posting on them a little bit, even if it's not doing the full community building that we haven't yet fully realised in the way that we envisioned. I think it shows people that we exist. We constantly get emails and DMs on our social media accounts from people interested in connecting to other queer archaeologists, or interested in doing queer archaeology courses, or interested in incorporating queer theory into things like their master's thesis but who don't have the support at their institution. Because most universities don't have somebody specialising in queer archaeology, and universities really aren't hiring in that area either, it's really helpful to be able to show that there is that appetite out there and to help people make those connections. So we are helping to establish those mentorship networks, and helping young archaeologists to know that, if they are at a university where they might feel like they're the only queer student in archaeology or anthropology, there are other people out there and that this community is here.

It does mean that for me and for a bunch of the others, a lot of the time we are individually connecting people, and reaching out to say 'hey, Professor X, there was a student that contacted me. Would you be willing to mentor them?' So, as I've said above, I would hope to one day find an online space where those connections happen a bit more organically. But meanwhile we've definitely been able to help a lot of people who have contacted us, and not only students. For example, we've been contacted by a Swiss playwright who's writing a play set in Paris about an archaeological artifact and who was interested in queer perspectives on archaeology. We were also contacted by somebody writing a TV comedy pilot about being an anthropology grad student and they reached out to say 'hey, one of our characters is queer. What is that experience like?' So we're also showing people outside of the Academy that this is real, that this exists and that there are these ideas and these people out here.

**Hannah:** I think one of the most exciting things is how much this has shaped and inspired your own doctoral research too.

**Nathan:** Yes! This one hundred per cent inspired my current dissertation project. What I had started to realise by doing all of this activist work in online spaces is that we just didn't have a good enough understanding about what, in an applied way, it meant to be a queer archaeologist. Broadly, across archaeology, so much queer critique has been interpreted as just 'hey, don't be homophobic'. Obviously this is really important, but it means that queer narratives have been confined to diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that equate to universities and CRM companies simply saying 'we welcome queer people to come and work for us'. But there has been little understanding of what the actual status of queer people in archaeology is, and very limited clarity about the status of queer ideas and what queer perspectives of the past are in academia. So I developed a project that is a meta study of archaeology, which is both an ethnography of archaeology and a linguistic analysis of how archaeologists are talking about queer issues, so that we can get better understanding of what queer theory actually is doing and accomplishing in archaeology.

What my research is showing is that we've made some inroads as queer archaeologists as it reveals that a lot of archaeologists [in North America and the UK] are not homophobic. But queer ideas and queer theory have had much less of an impact on the discipline in that archaeologists today still don't see it as being useful or having broad applicability. There is still a sense that if you're not queer, you shouldn't use queer theory. I was definitely inspired by a lot of these conversations that I was having as we were building the Queer Archaeology Discord, Twitter and Facebook spaces because I did feel as if we were doing some good, but we still didn't understand the field enough in regard to its intersection with queer issues, so that's definitely what has inspired my work.

**Hannah:** I wonder if it's helpful to think about how the online space, and the way that it works, resonates with queer discourses like David Halperin's? So if you examine how we operate as academics through the lens of Halperin's definition of queer as being anything in opposition to the 'normal, the legitimate, the dominant' (Halperin 1995, 62),<sup>2</sup> this highlights how the normative, hegemonic academic practices which privilege the single academic voice in emotion free, 'objective', single authored academic papers are rooted in heteronormativity and sexism. And in turn it really emphasises how online activism using social media is the absolute antithesis of that. The collective coming together of multiple voices in online communities that have the power to act is a form of queering academic discourse.

**Nathan:** I don't disagree but it's important to highlight that there is considerable debate around Halperin's idea that queer is simply anything against the norm (Giffney 2009; McKee 1999). It is problematic in the sense that this idea that queer doesn't mean anything except that 'you feel marginalised' goes against a lot of the experiences of queer people and the fact that people are being marginalised for very specific reasons related to gender and sexual identity. There's still a lot of disagreements, even amongst people who are running these social media platforms, about how broadly we want to talk about queer issues and how broadly we are defining queer because the broader we make it, the less directly impactful we

---

<sup>2</sup> The expanded quote is 'Queer is ... whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence' (Halperin 1995, 62).

can be. But equally, the more restrictive we are, the more restricted are the goals that we want to accomplish. So, from the Queer Archaeology perspective, we've had a lot of conversations to work through the focus of the things we should be posting.

**Kayt:** Increasingly I think that there is also an added challenge, because of course you want to keep on focus, and then navigating the toxic politics of social media comes into that too. For example, on Twitter in the past I used to retweet and amplify other's posts, but now I find I very much censor myself because I'm really cautious of that balance between wanting to amplify something somebody's doing in a good way but, because the platform can be so toxic, being aware that by raising their visibility you're also invariably opening them up to attack. So I find that I'm censoring a lot of things that I do because I don't want to accidentally cause people grief for trying to do things the right way.

**Nathan:** With self-censoring, this is also compounded by algorithms that are working more and more today to remove language that violates the community standards of whatever platform that you are on. So people are having to develop their own 'Algo Speak' to get around this (Steen *et al.* 2023), for example, using un-alive instead of died, because things related to death might be suppressed by the algorithm. But what a lot of people are finding is that talking about queer issues, particularly on Twitter, is being suppressed by the algorithm. So people are trying to find alternative ways of talking about these issues, but I think it's really taken the power away from me to actually engage in discourse because I'm trying to talk around an issue without using any of the words or phrases that are going to get flagged by an algorithm. That has really damaged our ability to have actual conversations, both our desire to self censor to protect ourselves, but also to try to make sure that our tweets and our posts are seen by more than five people.

### Queer Archaeology in the Future

**Hannah:** Looking to the future what kind of things do you want to see next in terms of the Queer Archaeology platform and social media?

**Nathan:** So, most narrowly, we have a new social media team for Queer Archaeology. We've been working on things since last summer and we have two grad students in addition to me who are working on a bunch of issues. One of those grad students is in charge of building the Tumblr and the Discord and platforms like that. So we've got a lot of exciting things planned. But we're moving very slowly because we want to make sure everybody's protected and we're also cognisant of everybody's time and effort and the money that they're putting into this. So, in the kind of narrow sense, we want to create these spaces defined more around mentorship and community. We want to talk more about people's success. We want to figure out a way to keep building the momentum and, we hope, actually to make that a singular line instead of a bunch of starts and stops.

More broadly, one of the things I would like to see is more institutional support for a lot of these initiatives. I don't know what that institutional support looks like because ideally I just want an organisation or a university or somebody to give me lots of money and then say 'no strings attached! We're not going to comment on it, and we're not going to tell you what you're allowed and not allowed to do.' I know that this is not realistic in any meaningful way,

but I honestly think that we could be doing a lot of good if we had somebody whose job, or even just a properly paid internship, was to do this full time or nearly full time. The idea of having someone who could moderate things and constantly post things and build new social media platforms so that we weren't always straddled by the whims of the work calendar or the academic calendar would be brilliant. We're always trapped by this cycle and this calendar without institutional support. So that's what I'd really like to see in a very practical way. The reality is that we would benefit from having a paid employee who is specialised not only in archaeology but also in social media, who professionally understands how to do a lot of these things.

**Hannah:** In the UK we've got a group called IDEAH (Inclusion, Diversity and Equity in Archaeology and Heritage) which is a network of all the groups of people doing online activist and social justice work, many of whom are not affiliated with any larger organisations. Listening to you, it sounds like maybe we need international IDEAH, because everyone's in the same boat of doing all this activist work in their voluntary time in a way that is often unsupported and maybe we need to bring people together to at least have that support, and to work through how we can amplify each other's voices as social media fragments. And of course then if anyone finds that source of magical money, they can share it too!

**Nathan:** That would be great because there's still an idea that all this work that Queer Archaeology are doing is through the Society for American Archaeology. This means that people think it's only by and for the SAA. So we would definitely be interested in finding connections to other professional organisations and other similar activist groups so that we don't feel like we're just serving the members of the SAA.

And it would also be helpful to support one another because we don't know what things are going to look like politically. We lost a lot of our momentum, partly through the pandemic when everybody was just trying to get through that, but also the fact that a lot of people, at least in the US, were kind of able to breathe a little bit, at the end of 2020 and post 6 January 2021 when Biden succeeded Trump as President. But I think there is a danger that a lot of people online have become complacent. Next November, we might flip back to the Trump administration and I'm interested to see how that's going to impact social media and online activism as well as the political circumstances, at least here in the United States. But whatever happens, we can't get complacent. We need to remember that a lot of the on-the-ground embodied experiences of archaeologists happen irrespective of who's President of the United States, and so Queer Archaeology needs to continue to always tell positive stories and connect queer archaeologists.

## Bibliography

- Giffney, N. 2009. 'Introduction: The "q"word', in N. Giffney and M. O'Rourke (eds) *The Ashgate research companion to queer theory*. London: Routledge, 1–14.
- Halperin, D.M. 1995. *Saint Foucault: Towards a gay hagiography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haraway, D. 1988. 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective'. *Feminist Studies* 14(3), 575–599. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.
- Heath-Stout, L.E. 2019. Diversity, identity, and oppression in the production of archaeological knowledge. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University.

- Heath-Stout, L.E. 2023. 'The invisibly disabled archaeologist'. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 27, 17–32. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-022-00653-8>.
- McKee, A. 1999. 'Resistance is hopeless: Assimilating queer theory'. *Social Semiotics* 9(2), 235–249.
- Steen, E., Yurechko, K. and Klug, D. 2023. 'You can (not) say what you want: Using algospeak to contest and evade algorithmic content moderation on TikTok'. *Social Media + Society* 9(3), 1–17. Online: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/20563051231194586>. [Accessed 06 September 2024].

## Chapter II.

# Feminist Resistance in Archaeology: The Cases of France and Belgium

Laura Mary, Béline Pasquini and Ségolène Vandeveldel<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In 1985 Joan Gero wrote, in the introduction of her article *Socio-Politics and the Woman-at-Home Ideology*, that ‘focused on action, the “cowboys of science” [...] have dabbled little in self-reflective criticism’ (Gero 1985, 342). For this reason, she also stated that ‘this community was slow to embrace a feminist perspective’ (Gero 1985, 344). Since the publication of that article, the situation in archaeology has fortunately changed. The tools, methods and theories developed by feminist researchers and activists are now used by a growing number of archaeologists in the English, Scandinavian, Spanish and German-speaking worlds. They apply these methods to the interpretation of archaeological remains as well as to the discrimination faced by women and minorities within our profession. Unfortunately, their work has little resonance in the French-speaking world of archaeology. In an article presenting an overview of the development of gender archaeology in various European countries in 2012, Liv Helga Dommasnes and Sandra Montón-Subías are surprised by the lack of interest in this topic among French archaeologists. They note that ‘[...] surprising is the case of France, where feminism and archaeology seem to have followed completely different paths’ (Dommasnes and Montón-Subías 2012, 439). The observation can also be extended to French-speaking Belgium. The language barrier, the failure to integrate archaeology into the departments of social sciences in universities, a lack of interest in theoretical research within the discipline and a general anti-feminist climate have been put forward as explanations for this lack of development in our countries (Algrain 2020; Algrain and Mary 2024; Mary 2020a, 2020b). The archaeology of gender finally took off, timidly, in the second half of the 2010s. The first publications in French appear after 2012 and focus mainly on the use of gender as a theoretical and interpretative tool for the material remains of the past (e.g., Algrain 2020; Belard 2012, 2017; Trémeaud 2015, 2018). Such works struggle to reach the sphere of mainstream archaeology. For the majority of French-speaking archaeologists gender remains at best a ‘non-issue’, at worst an obscure activist claim that has no place in our discipline and should be disdained. The same applies to discrimination experienced by women and minorities. ‘The myth of objective research’ (Gero 1985, 342) is still alive and well in French archaeology. This is why we decided to create *Paye ta Truelle*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Laura Mary (✉) ASBL Recherches et Prospections archéologiques; collectif Paye ta Truelle. Email: laura.l.mary@hotmail.com.

Béline Pasquini, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne; collectif Paye ta Truelle. Email: beline.pasq@gmail.com

Ségolène Vandevelde, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi; collectif Paye ta Truelle. Email: segolene.vandevelde@univ-paris1.fr

### **Igniting the Spark: The Birth of *Paye ta Truelle***

The *Paye ta Truelle* collective was created on the basis of three observations. The first is that the issues we face in archaeology are not specific to our discipline but are systemic. The second is that one can no longer separate today the struggle for a more just, non-hierarchical, non-capitalist society from the anti-patriarchal struggle, from anti-racist struggles or from those for the rights of LGBTQIA+ and disabled people (Federici 2019, 22). Finally, dismantling the systems of oppression can only be done collectively over the (very) long term. As we have seen above, outside the French-speaking world, feminist resistance in archaeology took more than thirty years to develop with varying degrees of success. From academic institutions to archaeological firms, from the online sphere to the IRL (in real life) sphere, from the blog article to the setting up of collectives, the forms of feminist struggle are diverse (see the other articles in this book). In the French-speaking world, none of this existed by the end of the 2010s. The first step therefore consisted in raising political awareness and bringing together individuals. On 23 January 2017, *Paye ta Truelle*<sup>2</sup> was born.

The project started with an online platform aiming at collecting anonymous testimonies on sexism in archaeology (<https://payetatruelle.tumblr.com>). These testimonies were then shared on the Facebook and Twitter accounts of the project (@payetatruelle), created in parallel with the Tumblr account to increase the outreach. Starting with the online sphere was both practical and efficient: we created the project ourselves at a low cost, while quickly reaching a large number of people. This approach was deliberately similar to those of other feminist projects founded at the same time. *Paye ta Truelle* explicitly links to two of them: *everyDIGsexism* (<https://everydigsexism.wordpress.com/>) and *Paye ta Shnek* (<https://payetashnek.tumblr.com/>). Founded in 2015 by Hannah Cobb and Catherine Poucher, *everyDIGsexism*'s mission was to catalog every day sexism in Archaeology and Heritage and had never percolated to the French-speaking world. Founded in 2012 by French feminist graphic designer Anaïs Bourdet, *Paye ta Shnek* ('shnek' means 'pussy' in slang) is a website that collects testimonies from women who are victims of sexist and sexual harassment in the street. The website became increasingly popular by the end of 2016, at a time when French-speaking feminists were taking over the net to convey their message. Parallel projects began to spring up spontaneously on the web and aimed above all at denouncing sexism in various professional circles: *Paye ta Robe* for lawyers, *Paye ta Blouse* in hospitals, *Paye ton Journal* for journalists, etc. We chose to join the trend for two reasons. Firstly, to show that sexism affects the whole of society and is not limited to certain countries, and that it is therefore naive to think that the French-speaking archaeological community would be spared for some miraculous reason. Secondly, to show that this community belongs to a more global movement, and to build external alliances. The establishment of a network of solidarity on a national and international scale is indeed necessary in order to be able to hold on in the long term.

### **Lighting the Fire: The Archaeo-Sexism Exhibition**

In September 2017, *Paye ta Truelle* joined forces with *L'Association Archéo-Éthique*, which aims to support and promote research on ethics in archaeology (<https://archoethique.wixsite.com/association>) to create the exhibition *Archéo-Sexisme*. After more than a year and a

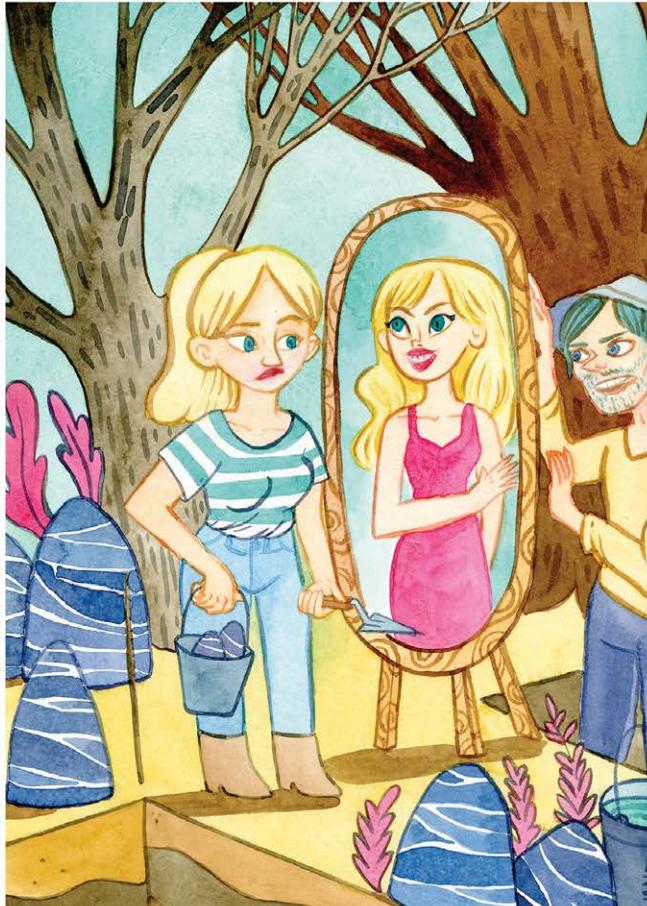
<sup>2</sup> '*Paye ta*' or '*paye ton*' (pay your) is slang and a set expression to denounce something as crap, with the *truelle* (trowel) here being a symbol of archaeology.

half of collecting and sharing testimonies online, it became necessary to extend the fight outside the web to reach a wider audience within academic institutions and professional organisations. Many French archaeologists do not have social networking accounts or do not read the feminist press we use to support our initiative. The Archaeo-Sexism exhibition was designed as an illustrated version of the testimonies received so far on the *Paye ta Truelle* platform. We launched a new call for testimonies for the occasion, recruited illustrators and applied for funding to pay for their work and the printing of the panels. On 8 March 2019, on the International Women's Rights Day, the Archaeo-Sexism exhibition opened at the Maison Archéologie et Ethnologie René Ginouvès<sup>3</sup> in the university of Nanterre (France). The twenty or so posters of the exhibition are divided by theme to highlight the many aspects that patriarchy can take on in our field: exclusion from fieldwork, gendered division of labour, paternalism, mocking over physical appearance (Figure 1), insults, discrimination linked to pregnancy and maternity, sexual harassment (Figure 2), sexual assault, etc. These illustrated posters are accompanied by introductory and conclusive posters, one of which gives a brief overview of the situation and the other lists a series of practical tips for fighting against discrimination. Two other panels only contain text: one focuses on ingrained sexism and gendered organisation of work; the other addresses the fact that discrimination in archaeology is not limited to sexism but also includes racism, homophobia and transphobia. Reinforcing the message conveyed by the testimonies with an illustration contributed greatly to the success of the exhibition. In 2019 it toured a series of Parisian archaeological institutions, including the headquarters of the Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (INRAP) (Figure 3) and the University of Paris-Nanterre. It was also exported outside Paris to an archaeological museum in Mayenne (Pays de la Loire region) and finally arrived in Belgium with the support of the Walloon Heritage Agency (AWaP). Since then, the exhibition has been enriched with new illustrated testimonies and circulates from institution to institution in France, Belgium, Switzerland and Quebec. It has also been translated into four languages: French, Dutch, English and Catalan. Outside the French-speaking world, it is now touring in England (University College of London, other venues to come), Greece (French School of Athens), Spain (Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica) and the United States (Stanford University). On certain occasions, it also temporarily took the form of an online exhibition.

Raising awareness and educating on the issue of discrimination in archaeology is the main objective of the Archaeo-Sexism project. Every opening of the exhibition in a new venue is an opportunity for the collective to set up conferences, courses, seminars, workshops, guided tours, etc. Since 2019, more than forty events have been organised in connection with the exhibition. The complete list can be found on our website (<https://payetatruelle.wixsite.com/projet>). The themes addressed during these meetings are varied and range from feminist fights to the promotion of gender archaeology studies. During the summer of 2020, the opening of the Archaeo-Sexism exhibition at the Namur archaeological museum encouraged the museum's team to set up the first French-speaking exhibition devoted to 'gender archaeology', entitled '*Pas son genre! The question of gender in archaeology*'. On 6 October 2021 the *Paye ta Truelle* team was invited to the University of Lyon 2 (France) to give two lectures on gender in archaeology and discrimination within the field. These two lectures were part of a workshop about awareness-raising on discrimination in archaeology and research organised by local research units and institutions (UMR 5189 HiSoMA, Lyon 2 University, MOM, CNRS).

<sup>3</sup> Now Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (MSH) Mondes.

“I was called Barbie the entire fieldwork



I ended up giving everything up”

Everything is wrong with me in the world of archaeology. I'm a woman. I am tall and I am blond.

On an excavation it was not unusual for me to be called “Barbie” during the entire time I was there. Even when I made it clear that I didn't appreciate the joke.

For them it was a compliment. No matter how hard I tried, they refuse to understand that being compared to a doll whose only role is to look pretty and never open her mouth was far from being flattering.

Original testimony in French. Translated by Maï-Ly Dubreuil  
© Archaeo-Sexism Exhibition, all rights reserved

Illustrated by  
Julte dans  
la Jungle  
<https://jandanslalajungle.fr>  
@jandanslalajungle

Figure 1. One of the posters in the exhibition highlighting the sexism, misogyny and objectification of female field archaeologists (image source: authors).

## Sexual harassment



I was training in the field throughout the summer and one day whilst I was putting away some equipment the director walked behind me and whispered in my ear: "I really want to slap your ass but my wife is too close." I was shocked. I later learned that I wasn't the only one to whom he had made that sort of comment.

Original testimony in French. Translated by Mâ-Ly Dubreuil  
© Archaeo-Sexism Exhibition, all rights reserved

illustrated by...  
**Louise Ternat**  
louiseternat.ultra-book.com  
@louiseternatshop

Figure 2. One of the posters in the exhibition highlighting sexual harassment (image source: authors).

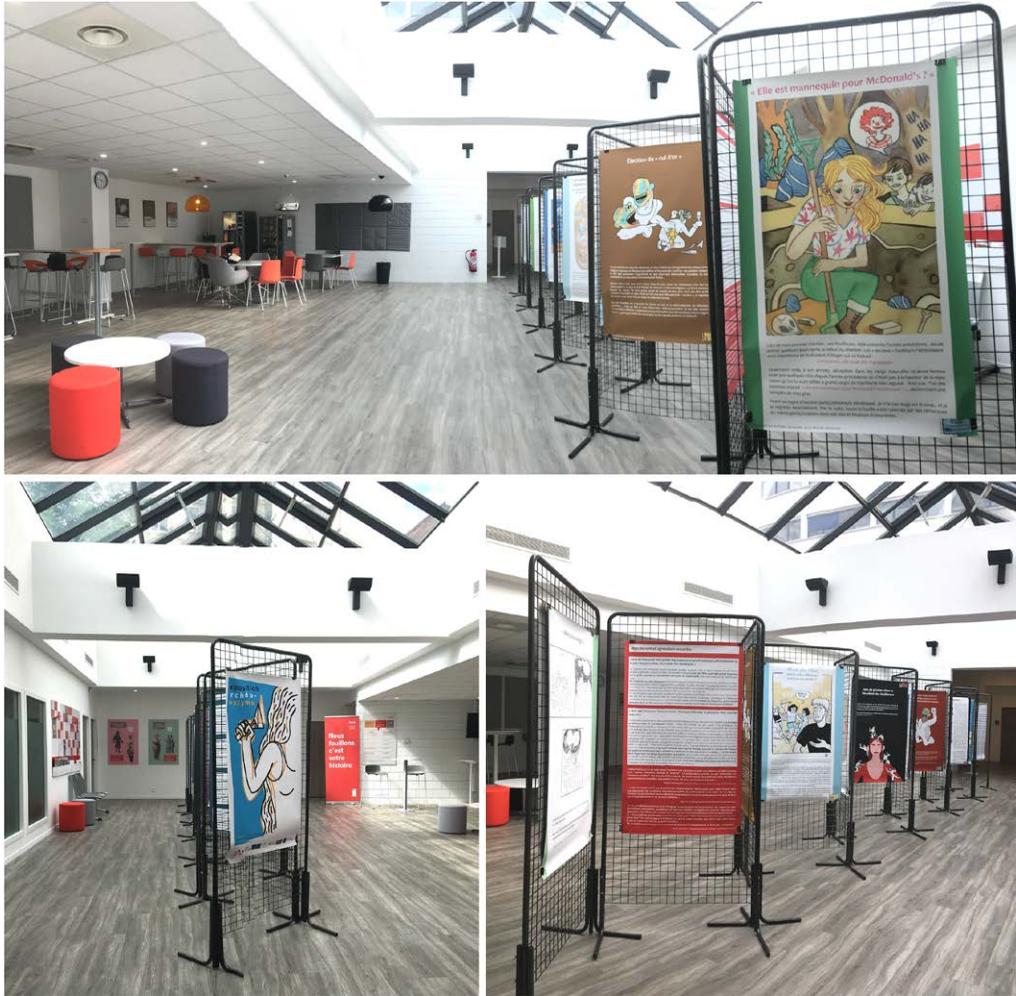


Figure 3. The Archaeo-Sexism exhibition at the headquarters of the Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (INRAP) (image source: authors).

Lawyers, physicians and human resources managers also participated, presenting the existing procedures and training programmes that might be used to fight efficiently against sexist and sexual violence within the academic environment. In Québec, Archéo-Sexisme-Qc was exhibited at the University of Montreal from January to March 2022. It coupled the original panels with some testimonies from Québec collected for the occasion, an animated video on periods in the field, new panels about gender archaeology, showcases containing a few reference publications, and a copy of one of the first two dissertations on the subject defended in France, which could be consulted freely (published as Belard 2017).

## Keeping the Flames Alive

Working for social change takes time and requires careful planning to prevent exhaustion. Before we take any action, we always ask ourselves: is it really effective? Or in other words: does it really help to advance feminist resistance in one way or another, both in archaeology and globally? We try to carry out actions as diverse as possible while communicating clearly and adapting our vocabulary to the audience. At the same time, we support the creation of projects by other teams to ensure that the movement continues to progress even if *Paye ta Truelle* were to disappear.

Since 2017 we have very much remained active online. In addition to Facebook and Twitter, *Paye ta Truelle* now also has Instagram and Bluesky accounts. Through posts, threads and stories, the collective regularly updates its followers on its news, informs them on various themes such as ableism in archaeology, while spreading the projects of other associations, collectives and unions in archaeology and outside. *Paye ta Truelle* also published a series of free-access articles on the feminist webzine *Simonae* which aim to popularise gender archaeology in French and to highlight the work of women archaeologists (Mary 2016, 2017a-c, 2019). In partnership with the *Sans PagEs* project, which aims to bridge the gender gap on the French Wikipedia, the collective also wrote the article ‘archéologie du genre’ (Wikipedia (FR) 2025) and numerous biographies of women archaeologists such as Margaret Conkey, Janet D. Spector and Patty Jo Watson. In 2020 we built a partnership with Manon Bril of the YouTube channel *C’est une autre histoire* to produce a video entitled ‘*Les erreurs sexistes de l’archéologie*’. Thanks to this popular historical outreach channel, we reached a new audience and made gender archaeology more widely known. This video is now used as a teaching tool for primary and secondary school pupils, implemented in schools by museum institutions such as the Musée archéologique de Namur. It has also been recommended to first-year students (Licence 1) at the University of Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, as a complement to their courses, as an introduction to the archaeology of gender. We are continuing this work of outreach by participating in numerous podcasts on major national radio stations such as *France Inter* and *RTBF La Première*, or smaller programs such as ‘*Sortie d’amphi*’ on Radio Campus Besançon, ‘*les Petits Cailloux*’ on Radio Campus Paris, ‘*Histoire de savoir*’ on Radio Campus Brussels, or more specialised podcasts such as *Mesdames le Podcast* in an episode devoted to the French archaeologist Jane Dieulafoy.

In addition to this popularisation work, we published numerous research articles (Algrain 2020, 2021a, 2021b; Algrain *et al.* 2022; Mary 2020a, 2020b, 2021; Mary, Pasquini and Vandeveldé 2019, 2024) and reviews in French. They are available in open access so that everyone can take advantage of the tools and references for their own research and actions. The *Chantier-Éthique* ethical code and vademecum developed with *L’Association Archéo-Éthique* association to provide a framework for fieldwork and to reduce discrimination in archaeology (mainly programmed) is another initiative that, we believe, should be widely disseminated, adapted or imitated. *Chantier-Éthique* is once again a pioneer initiative in the world of French-speaking archaeology, where codes of ethics are largely absent. The charter and the vademecum were adopted by more than fifteen French and Belgian digs in the summer of 2021. It has since been translated into English, Spanish, and Catalan.

## Conclusion

More than seven years have passed since *Paye ta Truelle* shared the first testimony online. The fight is still in its early stages, but our determination remains intact, our message is slowly getting through, and we are no longer alone. ‘Rebellions are built on hope’, and we have no shortage of it.

## Bibliography

- Algrain, I. (ed.) 2020. *Archéologie du genre: construction sociale des identités et culture matérielle*. Bruxelles: Université des Femmes.
- Algrain, I. 2021a. ‘Genre et diversité dans les contextes archéologiques’. *Revista Arqueologia Pública* 16(1), 92–110. doi: 10.20396/rap.v16i1.8663897.
- Algrain, I. 2021b. ‘Un exemple de genre fluide dans la nécropole du Céramique?’ *Frontières, Revue d’Archéologie, Histoire and Histoire de l’Art* 5(1), 27–36. doi: <https://doi.org/10.35562/frontieres.849>.
- Algrain, I. and Mary, L. 2024. *Introduction à l’archéologie du genre*. Talence: Éditions Fedora.
- Algrain, I., Mary, L., Pasquini, B. and Vandeveld, S. 2022. ‘Archéologie féministe: histoire, politique et actions (Norvège, États-Unis, France)’. *Les Nouvelles de l’Archéologie* 168, 24–27. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4000/nda.13965>.
- Belard, C. 2012. ‘Les ceintures de l’âge du fer en Champagne: genre et archéologie’. *Clio. Histoire, Femmes et Société* 2(36), 183–190. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4000/clio.10804>.
- Belard, C. 2017. *Pour une archéologie du genre: les femmes en Champagne à l’âge du fer*. Paris: Hermann.
- Dommasnes, L.H. and Montón-Subías, S. 2012. ‘European gender archaeologies in historical perspective’. *European Journal of Archaeology* 15(3), 367–391. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1179/1461957112Y.0000000016>.
- Federici, S. 2019. *Le capitalisme patriarcal*. Paris: Éditions La Fabrique.
- Gero, J.M. 1985. ‘Socio-politics and the woman-at-home ideology’. *American Antiquity* 50(2), 342–350.
- Mary L., 2016. Faire de l’archéologie en tant que féministe : une introduction, Simonae, [[https://web.archive.org/web/2024000000000\\*/https://simonae.fr/articles/archeologie-feminisme](https://web.archive.org/web/2024000000000*/https://simonae.fr/articles/archeologie-feminisme)].
- Mary L., 2017a. L’archéologie du genre : une introduction, Simonae, [[https://web.archive.org/web/20210301000000\\*/https://simonae.fr/articles/larcheologie-du-genre-une-introduction](https://web.archive.org/web/20210301000000*/https://simonae.fr/articles/larcheologie-du-genre-une-introduction)].
- Mary L., 2017b. Passé Sauvage : Dépoussiérer l’archéologie avec Clothilde Chamussy, Simonae, [[https://web.archive.org/web/20210301000000\\*/https://simonae.fr/articles/passe-sauvage-depoussier-larcheologie-avec-clothilde-chamussy](https://web.archive.org/web/20210301000000*/https://simonae.fr/articles/passe-sauvage-depoussier-larcheologie-avec-clothilde-chamussy)].
- Mary L., 2017c. La place des femmes dans la discipline archéologique : compte-rendu de l’appel à témoignages, Simonae, [[https://web.archive.org/web/20210301000000\\*/https://simonae.fr/articles/place-des-femmes-archeologie-compte-rendu-appel-temoignages](https://web.archive.org/web/20210301000000*/https://simonae.fr/articles/place-des-femmes-archeologie-compte-rendu-appel-temoignages)].
- Mary L., 2019. Quand “archéologie” rime avec “discriminations” : focus sur l’exposition Archéo-Sexisme, Simonae, [[https://web.archive.org/web/20210301000000\\*/https://simonae.fr/articles/archeologie-discriminations-focus-exposition-archeo-sexisme](https://web.archive.org/web/20210301000000*/https://simonae.fr/articles/archeologie-discriminations-focus-exposition-archeo-sexisme)].

- Mary, L. 2020a. 'Le féminisme et la question du genre en archéologie: de la théorie à la pratique', in I. Algrain (ed.) *Archéologie du genre: Construction sociale des identités et culture matérielle*. Bruxelles: Université des Femmes, 197–210.
- Mary, L. 2020b. 'Paye ta Truelle: la lutte féministe en archéologie'. *Chronique Féministe* 125, 39–41.
- Mary, L. 2021. 'Déstabiliser la binarité en archéologie: le cas des tombes 137 et 260 de la nécropole mérovingienne de Bossut-Gottechain'. *Frontières* 5(1), 17–25. doi: <https://doi.org/10.35562/frontieres.819>.
- Mary, L., Pasquini, B. and Vandevelde, S. 2019. 'Le sexisme en archéologie, ça n'existe pas ! = Sexism in archaeology, it doesn't exist !' *Canadian Journal of Bioethics*, 2(3) 215–242.
- Mary, L., Pasquini, B. and Vandevelde, S. 2024. 'On ne naît pas archéologue, on le devient. Les femmes de terrain au sein de l'archéologie préhistorique française: une perspective féministe', in «*Hiatus, lacunes et absences : identifier et interpréter les vides archéologiques*», proceedings of 29th Congrès préhistorique de France, 31 May–4 June 2021, Toulouse, p. 29–38. <https://hal.science/hal-04648419v1>
- Trémeaud, C. (ed.) 2015. 'Conclusion', in 'Genre et archéologie', special edition, *Les Nouvelles de l'Archéologie* 140, 59–60. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4000/nda.3039>.
- Trémeaud, C. 2018. *Genre et hiérarchisation dans le monde nord-alpin aux âges du bronze et du fer*, BAR International Series 2912. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2018.
- Wikipedia (FR). 2025. *Archéologie du genre*. Online [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arch%C3%A9ologie\\_du\\_genre](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arch%C3%A9ologie_du_genre) [Accessed 14/01/25].

## Websites

- Association Archéo-Éthique, official website: <https://archeoethique.wixsite.com/association>.
- everyDIGsexism, official website: <https://everydigsexism.wordpress.com/>.
- Paye ta Shnek, platform for collecting testimonies: <https://payetashnek.tumblr.com/>.
- Paye ta Truelle, platform for collecting testimonies: [https://payetatruelle.tumblr.com](https://payetatruelle.tumblr.com/).
- Paye ta Truelle, official website: <https://payetatruelle.wixsite.com/projet>.

## Chapter 12.

# Acting Against Sexual Harassment in UK Archaeology: The RESPECT Campaign

Kayt Hawkins and Cat Rees<sup>1</sup>

### Introducing RESPECT

It is well documented that where gendered power imbalances exist in the workplace there is a greater likelihood of sexual harassment occurring (Riger 1991) and this is as true as ever in UK archaeology (Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021; section 2.4). There is well recorded sex-based inequality throughout the sector (See Bryan *et al.* this volume) and as such sexual harassment invariably sits within a wider landscape of power and discrimination. It is important to highlight too that to merge sexual harassment with workplace bullying negates the underlying sexual element inherent of this behaviour, risking normalisation of this behaviour as a form of sexual violence. Yet, despite the wider recognition of all these factors, British archaeology had seen no concerted, sector wide mechanism to confront and tackle these issues. The British Archaeological Jobs and Resources (BAJR) RESPECT campaign (henceforth RESPECT) was therefore conceived to do exactly this. The RESPECT campaign addresses sexual harassment, bullying and all forms of discrimination in UK archaeology, recognising the intersectional nature of these behaviours. The campaign, as will be outlined further below, has included a Guide addressing these issues in archaeological workplaces, an online campaign of activism, and a series of closed Facebook Groups for different minoritised groups to provide support and solidarity. It was launched in 2017, against the backdrop of the #MeToo movement and the widespread exposure of institutionalised misogyny and abuse that this movement highlighted, both within and beyond archaeology. This paper is a personal reflection by the two authors and founders of the RESPECT campaign, exploring our motivation and the personal and professional impact of undertaking this type of activism.

Although the launch of the campaign and publication of the RESPECT Guide (Hawkins and Rees 2018) coincided with the global explosion of the #MeToo movement, both authors had been working independently on versions of what was to become the Guide for a number of years – sexual harassment has always been pervasive across archaeology, existing in and enabled by the organisational structures within academia and the commercial sector (Voss 2021a). Many women, ourselves included, have experienced sexual harassment during our studies and/or employment. However, the fear of speaking up in what was at the time a culture of inaction and intimidation, fuelled by the lethargy of our profession to step up and address these behaviours, had held us back from taking action. Hearing of a serious sexual

---

<sup>1</sup> Kayt Hawkins (✉) Archaeology South-East, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31–34 Gordon Sq, London, WC1H 0PY, UK. Email: [kayt.hawkins@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:kayt.hawkins@ucl.ac.uk).  
Cat Rees, independent researcher.

assault on a female member of a UK fieldwork project lead both of us to independently contact David Connolly, founder of the British Archaeological Jobs Resource (BAJR), a UK based web portal (and associated Facebook group) providing educational and employment resources for archaeologists. We recognised BAJR's potential, as an independent body with considerable sectoral reach, for publishing a guide aimed at providing information and resources to tackle harassment. The collaboration that followed meant the Guide, and subsequent Campaign, became reality.

The Guide in its current format<sup>2</sup> is split into several sections, which cover the variety of archaeological work, particularly fieldwork, that can increase the likelihood for sexual harassment and assault occurring, emphasising the importance of organisational codes of conduct, maintenance of professional boundaries and individual responsibilities. It provides practical information and signposts to support and resources. The RESPECT Guide was first published on the BAJR website in 2017 and subsequently updated in 2018 (Hawkins and Rees 2018) and, when announced on social media via the BAJR Facebook group, it received an outpouring of positive comments and initiated impromptu personal accounts of harassment. In addition to the online commentary, we both received comments of support and the document was widely shared by individuals across social media networks. It was printed out and placed in many archaeological workplaces, prompting many to check what policies and procedures were in place within their own organisations. The RESPECT Guide was (and still is) promoted by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), being highlighted in their membership magazine *The Archaeologist* (2018) where members have been encouraged to engage with the Guide and the resources highlighted. The subsequent RESPECT Campaign (discussed in further detail below) was never a planned outcome from the Guide, rather it grew organically in response to the outpouring of support, which articulated with our own anger and frustration at the limited sectoral assistance for women experiencing harassment and discrimination; the Guide had unintentionally given a voice to what we all knew through the 'whisper network'.<sup>3</sup>

Our work did not emerge in a vacuum, however. It was also influenced by and emerged against the backdrop of the ground-breaking work of those who had previously campaigned against such harassment and discrimination. This itself was part of a much bigger movement that had been steadily gaining momentum from the first feminist archaeology of the 1980s to the growth of online social justice activism in the 2000s, growing into a passionate and vibrant community of activists. Much of this growth has its roots in the unpaid, voluntary activism of other women, highlighting the andro-centric, hetero-normative, misogynistic interpretations in archaeological narratives and inherent in archaeological workplaces. Within these two different threads, the *content* and *equity* critiques defined by Alison Wylie (Wylie 1997), the RESPECT Campaign is situated well within the latter.<sup>4</sup> Previous works by Dr Anne Teather and Dr Rachel Pope at British Women Archaeologists (Archaeowomen 2025), Hannah Cobb and Cath Poucher at #EveryDigSexism (Cobb, this volume), Elaine Morris's pivotal 1992 survey (Morris 1992) and the work of Trowelblazers (Hassett *et al.*, this volume) in highlighting

<sup>2</sup> Due for update in 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Whisper networks in this context refer to the informal verbal communications between women warning of sexual harassers in the workplace. See Viaene *et al.* 2023, 218.

<sup>4</sup> See the introductory chapter to this volume for a comprehensive list of feminist archaeologist contributions to these debates (Cobb and Hawkins this volume).

women's contributions to archaeology also helped pave the way. All have, and many continue to, speak up for all women in the archaeology and heritage sector.

There have been a number of challenges in undertaking this work. We are very aware, for example, that as two cis-gendered, white women, we did not want our work to solely focus on the experiences of our own demographic given the intersectional nature of sexual harassment. Moreover the primary challenge faced by the RESPECT campaign, was how to approach this subject so that dialogue could be opened that focused upon specific issues within the profession – those which make women and archaeologists from minoritised groups more vulnerable to abuse – and also then breaking down the barriers which prevent them from coming forward to report and achieve any positive change. As volunteers, with busy work and family lives, time is precious and to make sure we used what little of it we had as effectively as possible, our activities focused around four key aims:

1. To *campaign* to end sexual harassment across the sector,
2. By *challenging* harassment in the workplace
3. Through *collective action* with other organisations representing many aspects of our profession and the challenges we are facing,
4. To be a *confidential point of contact* and support for those experiencing harassment.

### Why the Campaign?

Harassment is endemic within modern societies globally (Lim, Ghani and Remme 2018). The RESPECT Guide stresses that archaeology is a no more dangerous or predatory profession than others, but there are certain elements within how archaeological fieldwork is structured which can place individuals at increased risk of sexual harassment (Voss 2021b). The requirement to have participated in archaeological fieldwork during undergraduate studies has existed throughout archaeology's history and studies have shown that there is a high likelihood of witnessing harassment behaviours in field school environments (Clancy *et al.* 2014; Lambert and Colaninno 2023; Meyers *et al.* 2018), yet these behaviours have also historically been ignored or even rewarded, and perpetuated into professional practice. Several UK based surveys have shown the prevalence of such behaviours in professional, developer-led archaeology (Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021, section 2.18.1) and although UK archaeology does have a higher than average level of reported harassment by third parties (Andrew, Bryan and Watson 2020),<sup>5</sup> this is still lower than the amount of harassment reported as perpetrated by other archaeologists.

In 2017 when the Guide was first published, it felt as though we were constantly battling against ingrained and entrenched institutional attitudes and toxic work cultures. However, social media enabled us to succeed further in pushing for change than previous campaigners in that we were able to maintain the visibility of this constant battle via our social media accounts. This was an inherently collaborative process – through our own online activism, combined with responses from other individuals and voluntary groups, we were able to constantly promote examples of best practice, call out poor practice and push for change

<sup>5</sup> A survey on workplace harassment by the Archaeology Branch of the Prospect Trade Union reported a rate of 19% third party harassment, a stark comparison to a wider UK survey by the Trade Union Congress where a rate of 7% was reported for this type of harassment (Andrew *et al.* 2020).

within organisations. A respondent to a 2019 RESPECT survey on workplace harassment (Hawkins and Rees 2021) stated that ‘it is not the levels of awareness that have changed, but rather the levels of acceptance’ and it was that reduced level of acceptance that we were able to utilise. This constant, visible, questioning led to the inclusion in 2020 of questions around bullying and harassment within large sector-wide surveys of the UK profession (i.e., Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021).

### Online Activism and Collective Action

The collective action in which we were able to participate was only achievable due to the rise of social media, which offered an unprecedented level of networking. The visibility and ease of communication with other groups across the globe engaged in similar activism was fundamental to our work; within the UK, the establishment of IDEAH (Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Archaeology and Heritage) by Hannah Cobb in 2020 provided a forum for numerous groups including, but not restricted to, RESPECT, the Enabled Archaeology Foundation (EAF), Museum Detox, British Women Archaeologists (BWA), European Association of Black and Allied Archaeologists (ESBAA), TrowelBlazers and Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage (MWAH) (Figure1). The ability to network with these other groups was vitally important, not just in terms of support for the cause, but for us as individuals.

The practicalities of archaeological fieldwork in particular, but also the academic structures of archaeology and academia, means that many of the problems we face in tackling harassment



Figure 1. A PowerPoint slide showing the members of IDEAH (image source: Hannah Cobb).

in the UK are mirrored in other countries, certainly our European neighbours (Coltofean-Arizancu *et al.* 2023). The incredible work being undertaken by The Fieldwork Initiative (2025), based in the USA but supporting individuals around the globe, shows this only too well. Networking with activist groups in other countries has also been a big part of RESPECT's journey. The issues faced by colleagues in Swedish archaeology, for example, with regard to collating accounts, negotiating how to safely use the testimonies whilst protecting one's own emotional health, are the same issues encountered by all of us undertaking this work (Nilsson Stutz *et al.* this volume). Being able, therefore, to share, to amplify and to promote resources with other groups undertaking similar activism in other countries has been invaluable and only really possible through the availability and ease of communication afforded by social media platforms.

### Outcomes

Initially we endeavoured to make ourselves as accessible as possible, at the time this was via social media; on Twitter @Bajr44Respect and on Facebook where we established two groups, using Facebook's 'secret' mode to protect (as far as is possible on such a platform) individual's identities and the nature of the conversations. The first of these, the inclusive *RESPECT Women in Archaeology and Heritage* (RAWH), was established in January 2018 jointly between RESPECT and BWA, and with 400 or so members. It enables all who identify as women, or with non-binary and gender non-conforming identities, who have previously experienced or who are currently experiencing sexual harassment, to talk to other women for shared experiences and support. The second group was *RESPECT LGBT+ in Archaeology and Heritage*, established later that same year. A significant component of RESPECT's interaction with individuals is, by its very nature, kept confidential and anonymous through the provision of support to those experiencing sexual harassment. In addition to online activism, the RESPECT Campaign has resulted in several physical outcomes. We realised from the outset that to be most effective we should narrow our focus to what we knew best and where we could make the most difference: commercial archaeological practice. At the initiation of the Campaign we created additional materials including posters, a printed version of the Guide and button badges (Figure 2) for use primarily during fieldwork however the Guide and posters were also displayed in communal office areas. The badges too were popular, both their inception and design the result of discussion within the wider BAJR community. There was no charge for the badges (aside from postage), instead people were encouraged to make a small donation to a local charity of their choice, which many did. Over 200 badges were distributed, even making an appearance on the Great British Dig (2020) when worn by all members of the team during filming to promote the ethos behind RESPECT. The badges also, however, proved controversial; concerns were raised on social media that some individuals were wearing the badge to negate or disguise bad behaviours and therefore undermining RESPECT. We were perhaps naive in not anticipating this response, which although unexpected was also understandable after all, the wearing of a badge is not an automatic defence shield, and ultimately if someone wears a RESPECT badge, they are by default inviting questions on either past or present behaviours. The reactions were, however, one of the reasons RESPECT did not embark on a wider scheme akin to that of the *Chantier-Éthique*, as without the necessary financial support and structures it would be impossible to ensure that those claiming to uphold the values of RESPECT were actually doing so, and not simply using the campaign in a performative way.



Figure 2. RESPECT button badges (image source: Cat Rees).

Although the Equality Act had come into effect in 2010<sup>6</sup> and employers were obliged to have policies and procedures in place to deal with incidents of harassment, when the Campaign launched in 2017 there was no baseline data to assess archaeologists' confidence in using such policies to report incidents. Anecdotally many incidents were going unreported, leading to toxic environments and the perpetuation of the fear of reprisal or victimisation for speaking out. The *Reporting Bullying and Sexual Harassment: A Workplace Survey* (Hawkins and Rees 2021) sought to address this lack of data, and the results have been used to push for greater accountability in workplace reporting systems and for sector-wide bystander training. The collaborative relationships that RESPECT has worked hard to achieve within the sector mean that a follow up survey is now being planned with the support of several employers through an industry framework. The independent nature of RESPECT also enabled quick responses to situations; following a spate of online harassment towards archaeologists during 2019 RESPECT produced a resource list, endorsed by both the archaeology branch of the Prospect Trade Union and Cifa, for individuals who might find themselves the target of such behaviours (BAJR RESEPECT 2025) One of the most common reasons for contact with RESPECT is over workplace 'banter'. Making inappropriate or derogatory comments and then trying to dismiss them as just 'harmless workplace fun' is not acceptable and minimises the fear and humiliation they cause. RESPECT produced, in collaboration with the Cifa Diggers Forum, a factsheet entitled '*Ten things it is useful to know about banter*' (BAJR RESPECT 2022), addressing the most common instances and excuses (which are not excuses). There is, however, a lack of training available to commercial archaeologists in dealing effectively with challenging situations, apart perhaps for archaeologists located within statutory or academic organisations where mandatory training often encompasses harassment or EDI focused topics. Following the feedback from the 2019 RESPECT survey on reporting bullying and sexual harassment, RESPECT embarked on creating an easily accessible, online course (BAJR RESPECT 2021) that covered the basic of the law around sexual harassment, situations and scenarios and signposting for advice and further support; this resource is jointly hosted by BAJR and Cifa.

<sup>6</sup> Following submission of this article, the Equality Act was updated on the 26th October 2024 with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, which places a pre-emptive duty on employers to prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment of their employees.

## Stronger Together

Our work through the RESPECT campaign is not alone, as papers in this volume attest. Perhaps it might seem that a number of the individual groups with a focus on sexual misconduct are disparate entities; however, the value of online activism is the ability to link with other organisations and through collaboration and mutual support to engender change by reaching wider audiences. A recent example of this is the Archaeo-Sexism Exhibition, created by the *Payeta Truelle* Project and the *Archeo-Ethique* association (Mary *et al.* this volume). First launched in 2019, this French language exhibition, comprising a set of illustrated personal testimonials highlighting individual experiences of harassment and discrimination, had been shown across numerous educational institutions across Europe and North America. The team behind the exhibition had spoken at the 2021 #MeToo in archaeology CIfA conference session,<sup>7</sup> organised by Kayt Hawkins and Hannah Cobb, the papers in that session providing the inspiration behind this volume. Funding by University College London<sup>8</sup> to print the posters in English and display the exhibition in the UK opened this up to new audiences, including the students at the Institute of Archaeology and the wider UCL student body; many subjects engage in fieldwork and experience many of the same types of harassment as archaeologists (Carlin *et al.* 2023). It was also then possible to use this resource with colleagues in the commercial archaeology sector at the 2023 CIfA annual conference (Figure 3). The exhibition is a powerful, visual experience, and elicited strong emotional responses. For this reason it was located in a room in the main social area of the conference, so that people could choose to view it if, and when, they decided; and view it they did. The first day many delegates who identify as women visited, the next day some returned with other colleagues who identify as women, or with colleagues who identify as men (usually senior). Listening to women discussing the scenarios presented to them, most could name individuals from their career who had participated in the behaviours on display. Not just one scenario either, often several. On the last day, thanks to a suggestion by a colleague, delegates were invited to take a sticky-note and place it on any posters if that scenario was something they had experienced (Figure 4). Quickly women went from sticking plain notes on posters to writing their own experiences on the notes and sticking them to the wall. For all those who had visited and dismissed the exhibition, this simple act of engagement was a stark and strong message. This would not have been possible had it not been for the connections made online and the collective spirit, determination and the support of numerous voluntary activists.

## Final Thoughts

Reflecting on the seven years since RESPECT was launched left us pondering whether we would embark on this activism again. We absolutely would, however with the benefit of hindsight, we might be better prepared for the toll such work demands. On an individual level, the work undertaken as part of the RESPECT Campaign has tested personal levels of resilience. Aside from attempts to discredit both the activism and us as individuals, time spent away from family, and the risk of vicarious trauma, does indeed all take its toll. Seven years will have passed in 2024 since the publication of the Guide, and the feeling of burnout is real; however, there is still more

<sup>7</sup> Full session details here: [https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/METOO%20TIMESUP%20ARCHAEOLOGY%20-%20Influencing%20positive%20change\\_0.pdf](https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/METOO%20TIMESUP%20ARCHAEOLOGY%20-%20Influencing%20positive%20change_0.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> The principal funding was provided by the UCL Institute of Archaeology Deans Strategic Fund, alongside a small grant from CIfA to complete the partial translations, with administrative and logistical support from RESPECT.



Figure 3. Delegates at the CfA conference 2023 visiting the Archaeo-Sexism exhibition (image source: Hannah Cobb).



Figure 4. Sticky notes, added on the last day of the conference, denote the experiences that conference attendees had also had in their own careers (image source: K. Hawkins).

we would like to do and we will keep persevering, although now, through the connections made, increasingly working in collaboration, alongside sharing our experiences with, and hopefully empowering, the next generation of archaeological activists.

There is still a reluctance to accept that archaeology has a problem when it comes to sexual misconduct. The majority of those experiencing it are not in a position within the system to make their voices heard. Organisations would still prefer to ‘tinker around the edges’, making small changes here and there, rather than embark on full structural reform, yet ultimately structural change is what is needed; there is still little real acknowledgment that it is the entire precarious business model of commercial archaeology that places people at risk.<sup>9</sup> We don’t need more tinkering around the edges and as voluntary activists have no real power other than to lobby those who do, and this is exhausting. It is probably not disingenuous to suggest that those resisting change know this is the situation and also know, or hope, that eventually the latest round of activists will eventually be ground down and so all they have to do is sit it out and wait. One of the reasons why it is so exhausting is that the value of this work may be increasingly recognised yet not enough so to be properly funded, although organisations are happy to take the credit for this free emotional labour. A gender imbalance is clear in this type of work too; women have consistently been shown to undertake more wellbeing, equity and inclusion work than male colleagues (Hunt 2022) and a quick look at two volumes of the CifA popular publication *The Archaeologist* clearly and unintentionally provides an illustration. Volume 97 (Spring 2016) with a focus on the impact of Planning Policy Guidance 16, which for the first time placed the responsibility of archaeological work made necessary by development with the developer, contains eight papers, of which six are authored by men. Conversely Volume 107 (Summer 2019), ‘Championing employers who make a difference’ and highlighting wellbeing initiatives within archaeological organisations, has twelve papers, eight of which are authored by women (Figure 5).

Those in more senior positions either don’t experience sexual harassment, or don’t hear about it so think it doesn’t apply or isn’t happening in their organisations. It almost certainly is. The push back from some women too has led to some interesting conversations, particularly those of older generations for whom harassment was a regular part of the job and who believe that the younger generation should just ‘toughen up’ and ‘get over it’. And herein lies an interesting dynamic; the influx into the workforce of millennial and GenZ archaeologists who identify as women or with non-binary genders, who have seen the #MeToo movement and lived through the Covid pandemic, are increasingly not prepared to tolerate harassment in the workplace (Cosgrove *et al.* 2018; Luttrell and McGrath 2021, 32). These women are encountering a swathe of women Gen X managers who have had many years of working in systems that perpetuate patriarchal norms and who are now in employment positions where they can actively support younger colleagues and stand up to these behaviours. It is this motivation, in conjunction with the continuation of online support and communication, that we hope will continue the push for structural change.

---

<sup>9</sup> Chelsi Slotten summarises a lot of the problem on the Women in Archaeology Blog in ‘UK Archaeology has a problem’ (Slotten 2021).

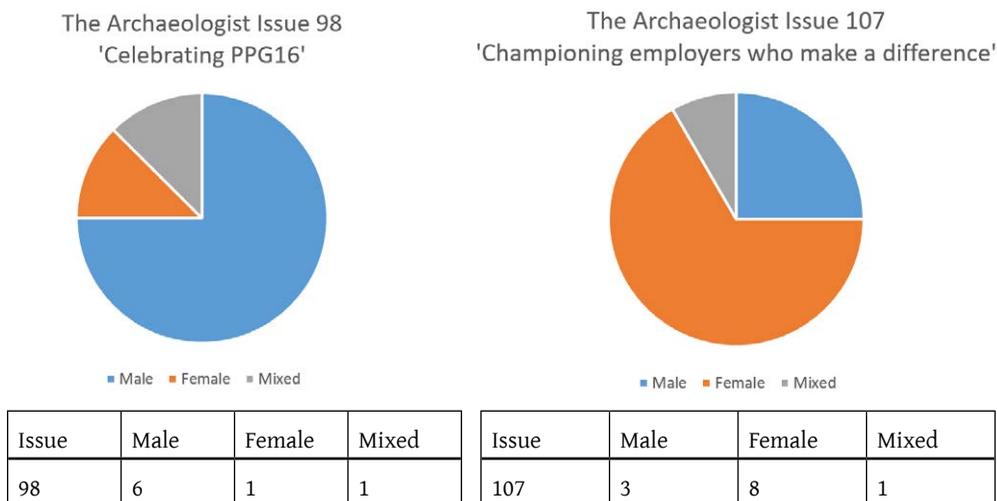


Figure 5. Gender of authors in Issues 97 and 107 of *The Archaeologist*.

## Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the courage of all the individuals who have shared their experiences with us, and to thank all the individuals, colleagues, groups and organisations who have amplified and supported our work. Thanks are also extended to David Connelly (BAJR) and Alex Llewellyn (CifA). We could not have embarked on and persisted with this work without the unwavering love and support of our families.

## Bibliography

- Aitchison, K., German, P. and Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2021. *Profiling the profession: 2020 survey*. Landward Research. Online: <https://profilingtheprofession.org.uk/>. [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- Andrew, J., Bryan, J. and Watson, S. 2020. *Getting our house in order: Archaeologists' responses to Prospect's workplace behaviours survey, Archaeologists Branch Research Paper No. 1*. Online: <https://famearchaeology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Archaeologists-Branch-Research-Paper-1.pdf>. [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- The Archaeologist*. 2018. Volume 103, Winter 2018, 18. Online: <https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/60189%20%20The%20Archaeologist%20Magazine%20Section%201.pdf>. [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- Archaeowomen. 2025. *About*. Online: <https://archaeowomen.wordpress.com/about/> [Accessed 14/01/25].
- BAJR RESPECT. 2021. *Understanding sexual harassment in archaeology: a guide for archaeologists, an online course*. <http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/elearning/module5/index.html> [Accessed 18 September 2024]

- BAJR RESPECT. 2022. 10 Things it is useful to know about 'Banter'. Diggers Forum Factsheets [https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/DF\\_BAJR\\_RESPECT\\_factsheet\\_2022\\_NEW.pdf](https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/DF_BAJR_RESPECT_factsheet_2022_NEW.pdf). [Accessed 18 September 2024]
- BAJR RESPECT. 2025. Online Bullying Guide. BAJR Guides. [http://www.bajr.org/BAJRGuides/OnlineBullyingGuide/Online\\_Bullying.pdf](http://www.bajr.org/BAJRGuides/OnlineBullyingGuide/Online_Bullying.pdf). [Accessed 10 September 2024]
- Carlin, B., Sikka, T., Hopkins, P., Braunholtz, L., Mair, L. and Pattison, Z. 2023. 'Identifying the barriers to inclusion in field-based environmental sciences research'. *Studies in Higher Education* 49 (9). doi: 10.1080/03075079.2023.2274378.
- Clancy, K.B.H., Nelson, R.G., Rutherford, J.N. and Hinde, K. 2014. 'Survey of academic field experiences (SAFE): Trainees report harassment and assault'. *PLoS ONE* 9, e102172. doi: doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172.
- Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B., Plutniak, S., Mary, L., Hlad, M., Algrain, I., Pasquini, B., Vandeveld, S., Stamataki, E., Janežič, P., Wouters, B. and Sengeløv, A. 2023. 'Harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation (HABI) in archaeology: A Europe-wide survey'. *Antiquity*, 97(393), 726–744. doi: doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2023.58.
- Crosgrove, D.M., Ariss, S., Nigem, K. and Wedding, D.K. 2018. 'Sexual harassment attitudes across generation and gender: Troubling differences between male and female views. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice* 19(4), 35–55. doi: <https://doi.org/10.33423/jmpp.v19i4.191>
- Fieldwork Initiative. 2025. *The Fieldwork Initiative: Welcome!* Online: <https://www.fieldworkinitiative.org/> [Accessed 14/01/25]
- Hawkins, K. and Rees, C. 2018. *RESPECT: Acting against harassment in archaeology, British Archaeology Jobs Resource Series Guide 44*. Online: <http://www.bajr.org/BAJRGuides/44.%20Harrasment/Sexual-Harassment-in-Archaeology.pdf>. [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- Hawkins, K. and Rees, C. 2021. 'Reporting bullying and sexual harassment: A workplace survey by BAJR Respect'. *British Archaeology News Resource* 6 January 2021. Online: <http://www.bajrfed.co.uk/bajrpress/reporting-bullying-and-sexual-harassment-a-workplace-survey-by-bajr-respect/>. [Accessed 11 September 2024].
- Hunt, G. 2020 "'No reward or recognition": Why women should say no to "office housework"'. *The Guardian*, 09 May 2022. Online: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/may/09/they-feel-guilty-why-women-should-say-no-to-office-housework>. [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- Lambert, S.P. and Colaninno, C.E. 2023. 'Bending the trajectory of field school teaching and learning through active and advocacy archaeology'. *Humans* 3(1), 10–23. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/humans3010002>.
- Lim, S.C., Ghani, F. and Remme, M. 2018. *Sexual harassment: A global problem*. Policy brief. United Nations University, International Institute for Global Health, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Online: [http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7881/n2019-11-22\\_PB\\_SH\\_A\\_Global\\_Problem.pdf](http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7881/n2019-11-22_PB_SH_A_Global_Problem.pdf). [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- Luttrell, R. and McGrath, K. 2021. *Gen Z: The superhero generation*. London: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Meyers, M.S., Horton, E.T., Boudreaux, E.A., Carmody, S.B., Wright, A.P. and Dekle, V.G. 2018. 'The context and consequences of sexual harassment in southeastern archaeology'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 6(4), 275–287.
- Minnotte, K.L. and Legerski, E.M. 2019. 'Sexual harassment in contemporary workplaces: Contextualizing structural vulnerabilities'. *Sociology Compass*. 13(12), e12755. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12755> <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12755>.
- Morris, E. (ed.) 1992. *Women in British Archaeology, IFA Occasional Paper 4*. Birmingham: Institute of Field Archaeologists.

- Riger, S. 1991. 'Gender dilemmas in sexual harassment policies and procedures'. *American Psychologist* 46(5), 497–505. Online: [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Stephanie-Riger/publication/232499604\\_Gender\\_Dilemmas\\_in\\_Sexual\\_Harassment\\_Policies\\_and\\_Procedures/links/5512b3c30cf20bfdad51cc44/Gender-Dilemmas-in-Sexual-Harassment-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Stephanie-Riger/publication/232499604_Gender_Dilemmas_in_Sexual_Harassment_Policies_and_Procedures/links/5512b3c30cf20bfdad51cc44/Gender-Dilemmas-in-Sexual-Harassment-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf). [Accessed October 2023].
- Slotten, C. 2021. 'UK archaeology has a problem', *Women in Archaeology*. Online: UK Archaeology Has a Problem – Women In Archaeology, 9 June 2021. [Accessed 12 September 2024].
- Trade Union Congress (TUC). 2016. 'Still just a bit of banter: Sexual harassment in the workplace survey 2016'. Online: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/SexualHarassmentreport2016.pdf>. [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- Viaene, L., Laranjeiro, C. and Tom, M.N. 2023. 'The walls spoke when no one else would: Autoethnographic notes on sexual-power gatekeeping within avant-garde academia', in E. Pritchard and D. Edwards (eds) *Sexual misconduct in academia informing an ethics of care in the university*. London: Routledge, 208–225. Online: (PDF) The walls spoke when no one else would: Autoethnographic notes on sexual-power gatekeeping within avant-garde academia (researchgate.net). [Accessed 10 September 2024].
- Voss, B.L. 2021a. 'Documenting cultures of harassment in archaeology: A review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative research studies'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 244–260. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.118>.
- Voss, B.L. 2021b. 'Disrupting cultures of harassment in archaeology: Social-environmental and trauma-informed approaches to disciplinary transformation'. *American Antiquity* 86(3), 447–464. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.19>.
- Wylie, A. 1997. 'The Engendering of Archaeology Refiguring Feminist Science Studies'. *Osiris*, 2nd Series 12, 80–99.

## Websites

- <https://archaeowomen.wordpress.com/about/>. [Accessed 11 September 2024].
- <https://everydigsexism.wordpress.com/>. [Accessed 11 September 2024].
- [http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7881/n2019-11-22\\_PB\\_SH\\_A\\_Global\\_Problem.pdf](http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7881/n2019-11-22_PB_SH_A_Global_Problem.pdf). [Accessed 11 September 2024].
- <https://fieldworkinitiative.org/>. [Accessed 11 September 2024].
- <http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/elearning/module5/index.html> [Accessed 18 September 2024]
- [http://www.bajr.org/BAJRGuides/OnlineBullyingGuide/Online\\_Bullying.pdf](http://www.bajr.org/BAJRGuides/OnlineBullyingGuide/Online_Bullying.pdf). [Accessed 11 September 2024].
- [https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/DF\\_BAJR\\_RESPECT\\_factsheet\\_2022\\_NEW.pdf](https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/DF_BAJR_RESPECT_factsheet_2022_NEW.pdf). [Accessed 11 September 2024].
- [https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/METOO%20TIMESUP%20ARCHAEOLOGY%20-%20Influencing%20positive%20change\\_0.pdf](https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/METOO%20TIMESUP%20ARCHAEOLOGY%20-%20Influencing%20positive%20change_0.pdf). [Accessed 11 September 2024].

## Chapter 13.

# #ExcavationInProgress: Insights and Experiences of Sexism and Sexual Harassment from the Archaeological Sector in 'Gender Equal' Sweden

Liv Nilsson Stutz, Petra Aldén Rudd and Ingrid Berg<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

From the outside, Sweden is often hailed as a leader in gender equality politics and policies. Our parental leave policies are among the most generous in the world (with 480 paid days per child to be shared by both parents), the representation of women in politics (43.6% of the Swedish parliament in 2017)<sup>2</sup> and in leadership positions on the boards of state authorities and national politics is close to equal (Regeringskansliet i Sverige 2018), and at 78%, Sweden has the highest employment rate of women in the EU. Given this track record, it could easily seem as if we do not have a problem with sexism in the workplace. Perhaps it is because of this seemingly gender equal reputation that the #MeToo movement came as a surprise to many in Sweden as testimonies were made public in a series of articles in November 2017.

In Sweden the #MeToo movement was primarily approached as a workplace and labour law issue, focusing on how sexism and sexual harassment affected the professional experiences and opportunities for women in different fields. Women and gender non-conforming individuals in different professions, including physicians, lawyers, university employees, journalists, actors, politicians, police, etc., organised in sector specific calls that all testified to systemic sexism and sexual harassment across Swedish workplaces. To some, in particular to many men, this came as a complete surprise, while many women and gender non-conforming individuals felt that their reality finally was given a voice.

Swedish archaeology organised under the label #utgrävningpågår (#ExcavationInProgress) and gathered testimonies from across several different workplace contexts that employ or train archaeologists, including universities, the contract archaeology sector and museums. The testimonies revealed that despite existing laws and regulations, sexism remains pervasive in Swedish archaeology, and that sexual harassment, ranging from micro-aggressions to open threats and actual assaults, were common.

---

<sup>1</sup> Liv Nilsson Stutz (✉) Department of Cultural Sciences, 351 95 Växjö, Sweden. Email: liv.nilssonstutz@lnu.se  
Petra Aldén Rudd, RIO Göteborg.  
Ingrid Berg, Uppsala University.

<sup>2</sup> Despite almost equal representation, studies show that women face steeper challenges to access positions of power in Swedish politics, see Säll 2019.

In this chapter we present the history of the #MeToo movement in Swedish archaeology and how it has affected the sector of archaeology more broadly.

### **Excavation in Progress**

During the autumn of 2017 the hashtag #MeToo started trending on social media platforms around the world. In Sweden, a Facebook group for academics formed under the hashtag #akademikeruppropet. When reading through this material, one of us (Petra Aldén Rudd) was especially struck by one testimony in which an archaeology student at a Swedish university described her experience with sexual harassment and the complete lack of response from her institution as she tried to report it. While this testimony emerged from the university context, it seemed as if there might be consequences for this kind of experience throughout Swedish archaeology, also outside of the university structures. To capture the dynamics across the broader range of workplaces that employ archaeologists in Sweden, Petra initiated our own group: #utgrävningpågåår (#ExcavationInProgress).<sup>3</sup> The group grew, with members inviting friends, colleagues and university classmates to join as we together created the structure that we needed to organise ourselves within the group.

To collect the testimonies, a separate Google mail address was created. Participants were asked to explicitly give informed consent in their email to publish their testimonies if we were to make our movement public, as so many of the #MeToo groups had done during this time. Most participants agreed to this, but a few opted to only share their story in the email and did not want it to become public. Of course we respected these wishes. The emails were only accessible for log in by Petra. Each email was downloaded and removed from the server. Before being shared, all identifiers were removed. The need to speak out, share and listen was balanced against the need for all of us being able to handle and process the information shared. One of the first discussions among the group's administrators came to be about anonymity, and a decision was made that none of the names of the abusers were to be shared in the Facebook group that was eventually created as part of the structure. That policy was also extended to include workplaces, universities and other units that could, with our testimonies, come to harm, or which could, by being named, identify a survivor or abuser (for example, identifiers such as the names of cities where an event had taken place were removed). The routine was not created to protect the abuser but was aimed at keeping the focus on what had happened and the structures that facilitated and supported it, not on who *did* it. We wanted the focus to be on structures and processes, not on gossip and individuals. It turned out that this approach was strategic in more direct ways too. When there eventually was a backlash in Sweden against the #MeToo movement, the critique came to focus on named individuals, court cases and slander. Since #ExcavationInProgress had already, from its very conception, acted to place the focus elsewhere, the movement was protected from these types of accusations and attempts to undermine our legitimacy.

The testimonies were serious and bore witness to sexual harassment and sexism across Swedish archaeology. The testimonies that surfaced from universities speak of inappropriate sexual attention and harassment from senior male staff. The victims are female or non-binary students and staff. Statements from university staff concern inappropriate groping,

---

<sup>3</sup> For a summary of the early stages of working with #ExcavationInProgress, see Petra Aldén Rudd's article entitled '#utgrävningpågåår' in *Current Swedish Archaeology* (Aldén Rudd 2018).

unwanted sexual comments and invitations in professional settings such as conferences, fieldwork and seminars. The following story from the witness statements shows an example of sexual extortion by a superior against a student:

*'I was sexually harassed by my teacher/professor in archaeology between 2011–2012. He wanted to discuss my written assignments over coffee, dinner and cinema visits. I was told during my thesis supervision that I was "incredibly sexy" and that he wanted to have sex with me. During our last supervision meeting he said that he wanted to have sex with me and that he was so horny that he didn't know what to do with himself. I had so much anxiety and worry over this and I couldn't sleep or eat. I cried a lot. I still felt like my career would go to hell if I said no'.*

In contract archaeology, the stories concern harassment from both superiors, colleagues and external staff such as operators of heavy machinery. Witness statements from fieldwork concern inappropriate commentary, such as this operator's comment that 'it's so lovely with all the nice butts sticking up when female archaeologists clean in front of the machine'. The testimonies also speak of a sexist jargon between colleagues at field sites, such as a male archaeologist asking a male colleague how many of the female archaeologists on site he slept with.

The public and visitors to both museums and excavation sites also contribute with demeaning comments often directed against female archaeologists about age and competence with questions like 'Are you getting paid for this?' or 'Do you have training in this?' frequently appearing in the collected witness statements.

The different kinds of workplaces have their own dynamic and conditions, but what they all have in common is a significant level of job insecurity with temporary appointments, and very few permanent positions. To make matters worse, Swedish archaeology is a small world, and personal connections and networking are important to secure opportunities and employment. Many archaeologists feel that it is more important to maintain good connections and a reputation as a collegial co-worker than to stand up for themselves in these situations. Harassment is also linked to the lingering and pervasive sexist structures that traditionally reward male authority and male relationships. This still puts women in a subordinate position which is not only frustrating but also makes them more vulnerable in instances of harassment.

After a few weeks of gathering testimonies, we approached Swedish media and the newspaper Dagens Nyheter published '#utgrävningpågår' in November of 2017 (#utgrävningpågår 2017). The publication was overall well-received by the Swedish archaeological community, and many were horrified and alarmed by what they read. Calls for action started to spread as the anonymised testimonies circulated at workplaces around the country.

The need for new policies was recognised as workplaces checked their routines and Sweden's professional organisation for contract archaeology, SUBo, held a workshop with the theme #utgrävningpågår at their 2018 annual meeting that following spring. During their meeting the question of management's responsibility was discussed. Were there common factors that enabled the harassment that the #MeToo movement showed? Risk analyses were discussed, for example short term contracts as a possible factor which could hinder the filing of a report

for fear of not being hired for following projects if one had complained. Routines to handle reports of improper behaviour and its consequences were created.

### **After the Testimonies**

After the dust had settled following the initial publication of the testimonies, members of the working group published articles and op-eds, participated in national and international conference sessions devoted to the topic, and worked on raising awareness in meetings with professional organisations and in university seminars. While this work was important to spread the word and stimulate discussion, the working group and their allies felt that, in order to affect real change, we needed to continue with more systematic data collection, analysis and discussion.

A first important step was a survey initiated in October 2018 and published in 2020, by the Swedish Archaeological Society, of how Swedish archaeology had responded to #ExcavationInProgress (Macheridis, S., *et al.* 2020). The aim was to map how #ExcavationInProgress and the collected testimonies had been received throughout the archaeological sector, and what effects it had had. In the survey, representatives of archaeological workplaces were asked to address how they have worked to promote gender equality and enforce anti-sexual harassment measures before and after #ExcavationInProgress. While there are limitations to the study in terms of representativity in the responses (the response rate was 55%), the study demonstrated that #ExcavationInProgress had had a clear effect on the sector. Almost all workplaces that participated in the survey were aware of the #MeToo-movement and had addressed the issues it identified, and many had made changes to their action plans or initiated new policy documents. Many also reported ongoing informal work such as seminars and workshops. For workplaces that did not have any action plan against sexual harassment before the call, almost all now reported that they had made some form of change since the call for action. While somewhat vague on the exact details, the report clearly shows that the movement had a significant effect on the workplace culture in archaeology in Sweden.

To explore the issue in more depth, the working group also organised the conference *Vägskäl: arkeologin före och efter #utgrävningpågår* (Crossroads: archaeology before and after #ExcavationInProgress) in October 2020 at Linnaeus University in Växjö. The conference included sessions on historical perspectives on gender and power in Swedish archaeology, on the current state in Swedish archaeology and tools for change, and on visions for the future. Speakers included representatives from contract archaeology, County Administrative Boards, museums, universities and the unions. For international perspectives, the conference also included a keynote by Professor Robin Nelson at Santa Clara University, USA on her survey of sexual harassment and fieldwork, and Kayt Hawkins (University College London) who provided valuable experience from the UK in general and from the RESPECT campaign in particular. The conference, which was the first academic conference on a #MeToo call in Sweden, was attended by delegates from across Swedish archaeology and had a long lasting impact on the conversations in the field. In the following year (2021) the organisers, speakers and participants were collectively awarded the honourable mention in the yearly prize awarded by the contract archaeology firm Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis (SAU) in Uppsala. The motivation for the prize underscored the importance of breaking the culture of silence and of working collectively towards quick and enduring improvement.

## Impact

Assessing the impact of #ExcavationInProgress since 2017 is a difficult procedure. The diversity of initiatives across the sector (some unknown to us, others well-documented) makes it difficult to create a comprehensive overview. Nonetheless, the report from 2020 is a clear indicator that the sector has taken action and that these actions have a direct correlation with #ExcavationInProgress. Here, we would like to highlight two important initiatives that have potential to contribute to workplace safety and equality integration in the years to come.

In 2021, the Swedish National Heritage Board issued a report on equality integration (Riksantikvarieämbetet 2021), an incentive by the Swedish Government to ensure that the Heritage Board contributes to the national equality goals. In the report, #ExcavationInProgress is mentioned as a key initiative that has highlighted issues of unequal workplaces and sexual harassment in, primarily, the contract archaeology sector. In response, the Heritage Board has pledged to address these challenges during the coming years. In 2021, we in the working group for #ExcavationInProgress were invited to participate in a digital exhibition in connection with the commemoration of the centenary of women's right to vote. The exhibition titled *Jämställt kulturarv - Demokratin 100 år* (Equal heritage - Democracy 100 years) examined different thematic democratic challenges facing the heritage sector. We recorded a short film, aimed at a general audience, which was made available on YouTube and where we discussed the rise of #ExcavationInProgress and the impact it has had in the sector (#utgrävningpågår 2021). Importantly, sexual harassment and gender inequality were highlighted by the Heritage Board as being among the challenges facing democratic development in the Swedish heritage sector – a major outcome of the #ExcavationInProgress movement.

One practical outcome of the Heritage Board's commitment to equality work is that a representative from the Board will serve on a committee to examine and make changes to the policies for contract archaeology together with the County Administrative Boards. The County Administrative Boards are responsible for initiating, awarding and evaluating contract archaeology projects. As the responsible authority, the County Boards effectively decide which companies will be granted permits to excavate lands under development. Permits are issued in competition after a procurement procedure where companies present economic estimations and scientific intentions regarding the forthcoming excavation. The work of the committee is ongoing at the time of publication, but the vision of the working group is to introduce a stricter emphasis on equality at work as a prerequisite for gaining excavation permits in the future. In connection with the policy work of the committee, an educational platform for companies in contract archaeology is planned. If the policy is put in place, it will mean that having active anti-harassment and pro-gender equality measures will be considered an essential part of archaeological field practice and a prerequisite for economic growth in the sector.

## Conclusions

During the now five years of #ExcavationInProgress, we have made progress but we still have a long way to go. Gender inequality is not a problem that can be solved by a quick-fix. Persistent work is needed in the future to keep the issues in the spotlight. Men and women in senior positions in the archaeology sector, from museums, contract archaeology,

County Administrative Boards and universities need to be actively involved in the continued conversation.

One key component will be the education of future generations of archaeologists. By including teaching about good fieldwork and office praxis with an emphasis on archaeological knowledge production as a collective engagement, we can create workplace environments that will no longer be breeding grounds for inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment. We need to explicitly talk about undesired and inappropriate behaviour and its gendered aspects. By educating students on the history of inequality in archaeology and its ramifications in the present, we can ensure that future generations will be aware of the challenges facing different student populations. Another key component is employment security – an issue not easily fixed in a deregulated job market – but an issue that cannot be left out of the conversation.

Employment insecurity is not limited to contract archaeology but can be viewed as pervasive throughout the entire sector. We note that while contract archaeology and the administrative structures that frame it, including the National Heritage Board and the County Administrative Boards, have made concrete steps, including financial incentives, to promote gender equality in the workplace, universities have been slower to act. While sexual harassment in contract archaeology may have received the most attention in the reactions to the calls, the universities should not be let off the hook. It was, after all, a testimony from a university department that inspired #ExcavationInProgress in the first place. The pervasiveness of sexism in Swedish academia remains an impediment for women to rise into roles of authority and leadership. This is a problem for all of archaeology since the training of future archaeologists is their responsibility.

It is important to remember that #ExcavationInProgress could not have taken place without a history of personal and structural engagements to improve gender equality in Swedish archaeology. The problems of sexual harassment and gender discrimination have been well-known for decades, discussed in private at parties, pubs and coffee breaks, at conference dinners and archaeological lunch-rooms. #MeToo opened up a window of opportunity for us to make these discussions public in order to combat the culture of structural silence which had been created out of fear of retaliation and exclusion. Anonymity was, and continues to be, key in this process. Moving forward, we need to make sure that the window remains open.

## Bibliography

- Aldén Rudd, P. 2018. '#utgrävningpågår'. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 26, 267–268.
- Macheridis, S., Berg, I., Bergerbrandt, S., and Nilsson, P. 2020. *Kartläggning av svenska arkeologibranschens respons till #utgrävningpågår – en rapport*. Stockholm: Svenska Arkeologiska Samfundet. [https://www.arkeologiskasamfundet.se/document/events/rapport\\_sas\\_kartlaggning.pdf](https://www.arkeologiskasamfundet.se/document/events/rapport_sas_kartlaggning.pdf). [Accessed 17 December 2024]
- Regeringskansliet i Sverige. 2018. *Könsfördelningen i statliga myndigheters styrelser och insynsråd är jämn*. Diarienummer: S2018/05551/JÅM, 12 November 2018. Online: <https://www.regeringen.se/rapporter/2018/11/konsfordelningen-i-statliga-myndigheters-styrelser-och-insynsrad-m.m/>. [Accessed 12 September 2024].
- Riksantikvarieämbetet i Sverige. 2021. *Jämställdhetsintegrering*. Visby: Riksantikvarieämbetet.

- Säll, L. 2019. 'Kvinnor har det tuffare än män i politiken'. *Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*. 24 September 2019. Online: <https://jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/media/q3emapd4/kvinnor-har-det-tuffare-an-man-inom-politiken-2019-10-24.pdf>.
- #utgrävningpågår. 2017. '#utgrävningpågår - 387 arkeologer i upprop mot sexuella trakasserier', *Dagens Nyheter*, November 30 2017. Online: <https://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/utgravningpagar-387-arkeologer-i-upprop-mot-sexuella-trakasserier/>. [Accessed 12 September 2024].
- #utgrävningpågår. 2021. '#utgrävningpågår: arbetet för en demokratisk och jämställd arbetsmiljö inom svensk arkeologi', *You Tube*, 1 December 2021. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vurKW3skyVI&t=104s>. [Accessed 12 September 2024].

## Chapter 14.

# Mentoring: Women in Archaeology and Heritage. The Positive Power of Social Media within Women's and LGBTQIA+ Spaces.

Ruth Humphreys, Amy Talbot, Rosie Loftus, Alex Grassam<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Mentoring: Women in Archaeology and Heritage (MWAH) was established in December 2018 to create a safe space within which women and non-binary heritage professionals could forge connections, seek (and provide) advice and peer support, and engage in honest discussion about the issues that we face within the wider heritage industry.

This paper seeks to outline the story and achievements of MWAH and its sister project Seeing Red, an initiative dedicated to raising awareness and improving sanitary and hygiene practices in the construction sector. This paper will set out some of the historic and current initiatives MWAH has employed to encourage participation and engagement with the group and share some of our anonymous member feedback highlighting the positive impact that MWAH has had on its community members. It will also touch on the contribution made by MWAH founders and members to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA) Neurodiversity in Archaeology support system.

### Who We Are

The genesis of MWAH was an evening of intense discussion by four female friends, all working within the heritage sector, who felt that there was a fundamental lack of peer support available within the profession, particularly for those who identify as women or as non-binary. What also emerged from that evening's debate was that opportunities to provide mentoring were similarly thin on the ground and so MWAH was born as a Facebook group, with a view to connecting those seeking advice to those with the experience and knowledge to provide it.

It is fair to say that those four founding members of the group were not anticipating the level of interest and engagement which quickly emerged. The group's numbers rapidly swelled and, as of February 2024, the membership stands at 2029. It became clear that the historic lack of this safe space had been felt more widely than we could ever have anticipated and that we

---

<sup>1</sup> Ruth Humphreys (✉) Arup Nottingham, East West Building, 1 Tollhouse Hill, Nottingham, NG1 5AT. Email: ruth.humphreys@arup.com  
Rosie Loftus, CFA Archaeology.  
Amy Talbot, Oxford Archaeology.  
Alex Grassam, AECOM.

had, inadvertently, provided a much-needed forum for women and non-binary people within our industry to connect.

Content and output by MWAH includes, but is not limited to, networking opportunities, career advice at any stage, information on personal safety at work, mental health and wellbeing resources, and identification of sector-wide issues/barriers to progression for women/non-binary people. Members are also simply able to check in to the Facebook group at any time with questions or issues to receive support and suggestions from others in the online community.

MWAH comprises individuals who have many different backgrounds and experiences working in the heritage industry. Together we provide a fantastic and unique resource for our members to utilise. However, we are at times hampered by the relatively small size of the archaeological community and our large number of group members. Even though the admins work to make the group a safe place, it is still a public forum. As such, we have always striven to allow our members to retain anonymity when asking questions of a potentially sensitive commercial or personal nature to alleviate fears of professional repercussions when seeking advice. Asking questions anonymously also allows our responding members to answer more honestly, lowering the pressure both on the person asking the question and also on those responding. We ask our members to keep comments supportive and we provide a good level of content moderation, in addition to our group rules (which all members must agree to abide by when they ask to join).

Our moderation team has now grown from our original founding four to include three additional volunteers who enable us to continue to run the group alongside full-time employment. We are also grateful for the ongoing support the group has received from BAJR's RESPECT group, an initiative targeting unwanted behaviours and sexual harassment in the heritage sector (see Hawkins and Rees this volume).

### **Engagement Initiatives**

At MWAH we recognise the importance of mental health in the workplace. As archaeologists, job insecurity, poor wages and large amounts of working away have traditionally contributed to a culture of poor mental health across the industry.

During the pandemic, being connected to people online became incredibly important in combatting mental health issues, particularly as many fieldwork projects continued after being classified as essential work as part of major infrastructure/development projects. At the same time, home working often made our small professional community feel a lot more dispersed and our members feel isolated. The movement of in-person events such as conferences to an online setting also prevented early career heritage professionals from building their networks. These factors contributed towards a concerted drive from within MWAH to combat professional and social isolation. Group polling, undertaken in 2019 prior to the pandemic, indicated that 60.7% of respondents felt that regular interaction with other group members had resulted in a positive effect on their mental health overall.

We hold regular events online to encourage our members to interact with each other and expand their professional connections. These events also serve as low-pressure ice breakers to encourage purely social interaction and help forge human connections.

### **We Rock Wednesday**

Every Wednesday we encourage our members to tell us what they have achieved that week. Any and all achievements are celebrated, from getting a promotion at work to having a really nice sandwich for dinner. For some people, getting out of bed can feel like an achievement and should be celebrated in the same way as someone who has just secured their first job within the sector or completed their PhD. Wednesday is the traditional 'hump day', an informal term which highlights the middle of the working week that people sometimes feel they need to get over to make it to the weekend, and we chose the name both for this reason and its alliterative function.

Celebrating achievements is very important for women and non-binary people as it helps to combat imposter syndrome, something which many of our members have shared experiences of within the group. The term 'imposter syndrome' emerged in the later 20th century and refers to the belief that you are not as competent as people around you perceive you to be. This can lead to a lack of confidence, feeling like a fraud and a desire for perfectionism, resulting in a detrimental effect on a person's mental health. It can also prevent people from seeking promotions to jobs that they are more than qualified to do. Many of the issues that women and non-binary people face in the heritage industry stem from a lack of representation in managerial positions. We Rock Wednesday encourages women to vocalise their achievements and to have others celebrate with them. We believe that this positive reinforcement helps to combat imposter syndrome.

### **FriYAY**

During the pandemic, we celebrated the end of the working week by posing our group members a 'just for fun' question. Previous questions have included:

- What is your weirdest food habit?
- Replace a word in a song title to make it archaeology themed.
- What are your personal landmarks (literally)?
- If you could be any historical person, who would it be and why?

With this little bit of fun, we were encouraging participation in a low-pressure environment with the aim of facilitating participation in the group more widely when members need help and advice. We allowed our members to informally network to make professional meetings, in person or online, a lot less intimidating.

### **Selfcare Sunday**

The last regular event of the week is Selfcare Sunday. Any of our members can start this post, allowing them extra interaction with the group. Selfcare Sunday is a way of checking in with people by asking what they have done that day (or week) to take time for themselves. The

post and its responses tend to be a bit more narrative than interactive, with members posting photos of pets, descriptions of non-work related activities or pictures of events they have attended outside of the heritage sector. This event is a lot more personal than our others and has become a weekly ritual for many members as a space to ask, 'what have I done for myself lately?'

### **Seeing Red**

Seeing Red was founded by MWAH founding member, Amy Talbot, as a response to personal frustration at the poor quality of sanitary hygiene facilities across the wider construction sector. She initially requested input from MWAH for tips, help and advice, but instead all that came back was further anecdotes of how poor sanitary conditions on site are found across the commercial, academic and voluntary sector, which then resulted in poor job retention and high instances of staff leave and sickness days. Amy then started collecting these anecdotes and began formulating ways to initiate awareness and education at management level within the archaeological sector on how poor sanitary hygiene was a factor in poor wellbeing and staff retention.

Through MWAH, Amy was able to interact directly with a wide range of heritage professionals, as well as make connections with individuals who were experienced in creating platforms for change. One of these individuals was the late Theresa O' Mahoney who reached out to Amy with her experience in setting up the Enabled Archaeology Foundation and provided direct mentoring in setting up the Seeing Red period and menstrual positivity scheme. It was also through MWAH that Amy was able to engage with individuals who could create online instruction guides, of which the result was the Seeing Red menstrual hygiene guide for employers within archaeology, which is published on the British Archaeological Jobs and Resources (BAJR) website (Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage 2020). Other connections made through MWAH which enabled the successful continuous rollout of Seeing Red included support from the RESPECT anti-bullying and sexual harassment campaign, support from the British Women Archaeologists community and Prospect Union. In turn these led to backing from industry-wide institutions including the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME).

Seeing Red consists of a guide, written using current UK Government health and safety advice and legislation for the workplace, which outlines to archaeological employers why the scheme is needed, using the anecdotal evidence from MWAH (re-used in the guide with permission from the members), and how employers and employees can have conversations around menstrual health on construction sites and what employers can do to support menstruating staff. Using advice from MWAH, Seeing Red also encourages the creation and use of 'period packs' to be placed in all toilets that provide sanitary and additional hygiene supplies for any staff who need them.

As a result, Seeing Red has been widely adopted within UK commercial, voluntary, and academic archaeology, with the Seeing Red BAJR guide re-written with the CBA specifically for voluntary staff and community archaeology, as well as for Historic England staff. It has also received academic recognition as a piece of sector shaping feminist activism (Cobb and Crellin 2022), and has influenced other work around toilet provision within the commercial

sector (see Bryan *et al.* this volume). Within the wider construction community, Seeing Red has also been adopted by staff who work within the ecology, geology and geography sectors as it is aimed at people who work within all aspects of fieldwork, and has made its international debut in Ontario (Canada).

### **Neurodiversity in Archaeology**

The Cifa ‘Neurodiversity in Archaeology’ network was initiated as a result of one of the occasional Question and Answer (Q&A) series run by MWAH. These sessions enable members to freely ask leading industry professionals questions on pre-defined topics and they have covered a wide range of subjects including the realities of working as a television expert, and ‘Tips and Tricks for surviving away work’.

In 2019, a Q and A series with a panel of neurodiverse archaeologists, comprising of speakers who are diagnosed with dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia as well as wider neurodiversity and mental health, proved immensely popular and garnered a lot of support within the group. As a result, many members felt empowered to engage, with many positive feedback comments including ‘it’s nice to know I’m not the only one’ (MWAH member posting in 2019).

Following further discussions with neurodiverse individuals in MWAH, as well as within Seeing Red, opportunities for change within the wider sector came about. In February 2020 Cifa began working with MWAH founders Amy Talbot and Rosie Loftus, both of whom are diagnosed with dyslexia, and dyspraxia with dysgraphic and dyscalculic tendencies, respectively. This work included setting up an industry-wide survey for neurodiverse individuals (Llewellyn 2020a) which helped Cifa formulate a response for better industry practices and support, alongside case studies. The results of the survey noted that out of 209 individuals, 37% suffered discrimination at work, which in turn lead to poor mental health (Llewellyn 2020b).

In its current form, the Cifa ‘Neurodiversity in Archaeology’ programme consists of regular support and chat groups for all industry members and professionals, as well as cross-sector collaborations with the Enabled Archaeology and Early Career Professional platforms. The Cifa 2022 conference also included a workshop and support session titled ‘Exploring neurodiversity in archaeology past and present’. The group is also working alongside the British Dyslexia Association in providing advice to adults within the heritage sector who are struggling with dyslexia.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Through the activities and support systems implemented by MWAH, the platform has created a safe space for individuals to come forward and discuss wider issues within the archaeological industry and provide areas for advice, help and outreach for topics including menstruation and neurodiversity. These topics were previously not widely discussed within the sector. However, due to MWAH, they have become industry-wide in the UK with practical applications for ensuring support for menstruating staff and neurodiverse individuals across the sector.

MWAH and Seeing Red have future plans to expand their advice to include menopause and pregnancy, whilst continuing to provide their current suite of resources for its members. We are guided by the needs of our membership and will continue to actively advocate for safe spaces in which they can share their experiences and develop professional support networks. We invite anyone who wishes to be involved to contact us through our Facebook hub (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1587710151360340>) or through the authors' personal LinkedIn profiles.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to our moderators, Emily Eastwood, Jasmine Porter and Aisling Nash, and a special thank you to Kathryn Ormston for proof reading one very dyslexic puffin's contribution.

### Bibliography

- Cobb, H. and Crellin, R.J. 2022. 'Affirmation and action: A posthumanist feminist agenda for archaeology'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 32(2), 265–279.
- Llewellyn, A. 2020a. 'Dyslexia in archaeology questionnaire'. *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CiFA)*, 01 June 2020. Online: <https://www.archaeologists.net/news/dyslexia-archaeology-questionnaire-1591021688?fbclid=IwAR2Yx1xJyQV9EyS7cEo5cEFzlwNshf4My6N7ycYpbCbQcGg6aWwIB1qxEuM>. [Accessed 16 September 2024].
- Llewellyn, A. 2020b. 'Dyslexia in archaeology'. *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CiFA)*, 12 October 2020. Online: [https://www.archaeologists.net/news/dyslexia-archaeology-1602512316?fbclid=IwAR0cSUtIsI2AT1-7h\\_AfVkJAt3oWzVUIdSXWzr64DCI2ltGdhHqGXP-g9MI](https://www.archaeologists.net/news/dyslexia-archaeology-1602512316?fbclid=IwAR0cSUtIsI2AT1-7h_AfVkJAt3oWzVUIdSXWzr64DCI2ltGdhHqGXP-g9MI). [Accessed 16 September 2024].
- Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage. 2020. *Seeing Red: Period and Menstrual Hygiene Equality Guide*. Online: [https://www.bajr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Seeing\\_Red\\_Guide\\_FinalV1.pdf](https://www.bajr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Seeing_Red_Guide_FinalV1.pdf). [Accessed 16 December 2024].

## Chapter 15.

# TrowelBlazers as a Noun and a Verb: Online Activism through Sharing Histories of Women in Archaeology

Brenna Hassett, Rebecca Wragg Sykes, Suzanne Pilaar Birch,  
Victoria Herridge<sup>1</sup>

In conversation with Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins

### Introduction – Hannah and Kayt

In the short history of online feminist activism in archaeology, there are few who have played as fundamental a role in trailblazing the use of social media to rewrite the accounts of our discipline's past whilst fighting for equity in the present than TrowelBlazers. Formed in 2013 (as the conversation below will go on to discuss), the mission of TrowelBlazers is underwritten by the belief that 'if you can see it, you can be it' and thus they are:

*'...dedicated to highlighting the contributions of women in the 'digging' sciences: archaeology, geology, and palaeontology, and to outreach activities aimed at encouraging participation, especially from under-represented minorities. Apart from the website, we're on the socials too - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok - sharing stories of women past and present'.*

(TrowelBlazers 2024).

This conversation piece took place in autumn 2023 via MSTeams and explores TrowelBlazer's history, their role in online activism and the legacies of their work, with two of the four TrowelBlazers, Brenna Hassett and Rebecca Wragg Sykes. The paper refers to a number of social media platforms, especially Twitter, which at the time of writing is known as 'X' but we primarily refer to it as Twitter in the context of this conversation.

### Origin and Evolution: The Story of TrowelBlazers

**Rebecca:** Our official birthdate, the birthing of TrowelBlazers, is 2013. But actually, we started talking about it and growing the idea the year before, stimulated very much by interactions on Twitter. We have previously set this history out in other publications (Hassett *et al.* 2018,

---

<sup>1</sup> Brenna Hassett, University of Central Lancashire (✉) Email: bhassett@uclan.ac.uk.  
Rebecca Wragg Sykes, University of Liverpool and Cambridge University.  
Suzanne Pilaar Birch, University of Georgia Athens.  
Victoria Herridge, University of Sheffield.

2019) but, as we'll discuss in this conversation, how we think and feel about that is a little bit different after a decade.

**Brenna:** Absolutely. The potted history of our origin story is that we were four early career researchers who happened to be on Twitter and getting angry about the same things; largely the lack of women in archaeology. Each of us had stories of women who had contributed to our fields and they seemed to not be known of or recognised in the mainstream. So we set out to do four Tumblr posts [social media network largely focusing on image-based posts] about these women. We thought that would be it, and it would just be a small Tumblr thing, but it snowballed because immediately other people on social media also had stories of their own, of women that they knew about, who were not being recognised. So it really blossomed over ten years, going from being an organisation that collected these histories to trying to add an academic and activist role to understanding why these histories played out the way they did, and to identifying what are common trends and what are factors that are still affecting attraction, retention, and the recognition of women in the digging sciences. Our role has morphed from being collectors of interesting stories to a group of people who would like to do something about the fact that these are all stories of women who have not been recognised, and that this is a trend that continues to the present day.

**Rebecca:** Our journey has been a little bit like the process people often follow through their academic life – where you discover information, get super passionate about it and think 'Oh my God, nobody knows about this!' Then you research it further and realise actually, some other people *have* written about this in marginal places, and you gain nuance and perspective. As Brenna was saying, a lot of the things that we felt at the beginning of TrowelBlazers were driven by our own passion and excitement at discovering these women. Of course, some historians of archaeology knew and had written about some of these women, but the majority of the archaeological community didn't seem that aware. And the way that archaeology as a discipline is presented, for example in textbooks for undergraduates, there was very little in those sources, which is why it was all new to us. As we've gone forward and changed how we encounter the material and understand the context of previous research, that's also led us to gain more nuance and diversity in what it is that excites us.

One of the things that came through a lot quite early on was being interested not solely in individual women, but in who *those* women knew: who trained them, who did they train, who did they collaborate with. That network approach came into our work quite early and I think that is one of the things that, at least a decade ago, was less covered in the literature. It is becoming much more common now and so that's something that has evolved since TrowelBlazers began. Because of course what we do too has changed over the years. Like Brenna says, we've done some original research on certain women, and we've had a presence on social media and our website, but then we have also had collaborations that were a different facet of what TrowelBlazers has become. These have been focused on how we communicate and get people excited about the existence of the vast numbers of women who have always been part of the discipline. So there has been this development in what TrowelBlazers is over time.

**Hannah:** I wonder if your evolution is something of an iterative process as well? So the lack of those stories meant that when you found them a decade ago, you were really excited about

them, and your work has made those stories more mainstream, through things like textbooks, which presumably stimulates more interest and in turn brings more stories of women to the fore.

**Brenna:** Yes. I think textbooks are a really relevant example because after about seven years of doing *TrowelBlazers*, we were approached by the editors of the famous ‘Renfrew and Bahn’ archaeology undergraduate textbook series (Renfrew and Bahn 2020) to address their lack of women, or more specifically, their corralling of women in small text boxes in the history of archaeology. We were able to consult with them and they were very open to our suggestions on how to look at this core undergraduate text and see how women could be included not just as ‘weirdo outliers’, but to highlight that women were everywhere, and note that we didn’t talk about them or recognise them in the same way for various structural reasons. So we were able to integrate a lot of women’s contributions to archaeology back into this history where they had been edited out in the past, or just included in small boxes (see Renfrew and Bahn 2020 for the outcome of this work). I think that’s a good example of how our own research has led into activism and change.

**Hannah:** It’s not just Renfrew and Bahn you have influenced! I’ve joined Kevin Green and Tom Moore as a co-author of the latest edition of the textbook *Archaeology: An Introduction* (Cobb, Greene and Moore 2024) and I have drawn upon your work and infused *TrowelBlazers*, past and present, through the volume, and highlighted your website in the further reading sections. Though I should apologise as I have also put you in a box in the volume! A box specifically called ‘*TrowelBlazers*’! But hopefully this doesn’t frame you as the ‘women-as-weirdo-outliers’ that you’ve worked to resist, hopefully it draws attention to your activism further. In that box I also particularly highlighted the entry you have written about Gussie White and the Irene Mound Project which took place in 1930s Georgia, USA. I thought this was such an important story you tell as not only are you drawing attention to women in archaeology’s history, but also Gussie White and the team she worked with were women of colour and their work on the project was largely ignored for some time, so you are highlighting women who have been even further marginalised in our histories. I also loved that you had collaborated with students to write that entry. In a textbook, it seemed like a brilliant way to bring in student voices, but also to highlight the self-reflection you’ve engaged in about highlighting archaeology’s diverse past.

**Brenna:** That’s a good example of how our own work in *TrowelBlazers* has led into activism, both in shaping other academic work, but also as we’ve collected stories of women, we’ve realised that the stories of rich white people are, unsurprisingly, easiest to collect. So we’ve had to look at our own methods and the way we create our archive and our own biases. We assumed we were ‘just collecting stories’ at the start, but of course wealthy white women who contribute to archaeology in the past are the most visible in the archives, and then all of these women are networked too. We know about them because they’re easier to find, being networked into the same sort of academic worlds that we still live in, whereas contributions by people who are less well-networked are much more difficult to find. I think one of the most interesting stories that we talk about is the story of Yusra, a Palestinian local who worked with Dorothy Garrod (famously the first female professor of archaeology) on her excavations in the earlier part of the 20th century. So highlighting stories of all kinds of women working in the field is something that is really important and we do now try and focus on these untold

stories much more. When I run an undergrad class on it, I encourage the students to ask the same questions we have been asking; ‘What are the stories of past archaeologists you can’t find and why is that?’

**Rebecca:** Following the connections to be able to highlight other stories is really interesting, like Yusra for example. Dorothy Garrod was one of the first website biography posts that we did. In fact we’ve got two on her (I wrote both of them), and she was one of those first very obvious ones to do. But through researching her we were able to share the story of Yusra, thanks to reading work by Pamela Jane Smith, who did her PhD on the history of archaeology at Cambridge and had included this aspect of who was actually excavating at Tabun (a site including Neanderthal remains in present-day Israel) in the late 1920s and 1930s. Pamela Jane Smith had written about Yusra based on visiting archives relating to the fieldwork (Smith *et al.* 1997), and she tried to find out more about her but there’s very little because obviously there’s a wider geopolitical context to what then happened in the 1940s in that region, and the villages where the local excavators came from were destroyed (Smith 2009). But we’ve tried to pick that up and are trying to delve a little bit deeper. We’ve been looking for a while to get funding to go to Dorothy Garrod’s personal archive in a museum in France, and this is looking increasingly likely. But in the meantime, part of the archive for Tabun is at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, where there’s also some interesting material which we think has potential to help us to get a little bit deeper into understanding more women who were at Tabun. Hopefully we will also be able to integrate these with contemporary written accounts like Dorothy Garrod’s and other excavation diaries from Tabun, these personal archives which have never been published. There is so much that can be stitched together, and we can perhaps pull out some of these stories of the less well-known women, some of whom we may only ever know by their first names, but it allows us to highlight that richer texture of who was actually doing things at Tabun under Dorothy’s directorship.

Of course this requires a lot more intensive research so this is something we have only just begun and are aiming to continue in the future. But fitting it around everything else we do is challenging. What I think is really nice is that, for us, this was not our primary academic training area, nor our primary academic subject of research post-PhD, but it was for other people, and we have been able to collaborate. For example, Amara Thornton has been working on women in the history of archaeology for years (e.g., Thornton 2018) and after informally connecting on Twitter, we invited her to be part of the *Raising Horizons* project and to embody one of those women, Margaret Murray (Saunders 2024) (Figure 1). Amara has wanted to establish a proper, documented database of women who had contributed to the development of archaeology in all sorts of ways, and I’m so happy to see that this is happening through her *Beyond Notability* project – led by Katherine Harloe, and which is ‘exploring the histories of women active in archaeology, history and heritage as revealed in the archives of the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Royal Archaeological Institute’ (Beyond Notability 2024). That’s the kind of thing that TrowelBlazers couldn’t really ever do when we started because of where we were in our career stages. We were too early to be able to apply for any big grants for that kind of research, and we didn’t have permanent positions. So I’m thrilled to see that work being done by other people who we’ve been in communication with for so long, and happy to see that their work is expanding and those webs of connections that have always excited us are being formally studied and the stories told.



*Figure 1. The Raising Horizons exhibition was a collaboration in 2016 and 2017 between TrowelBlazers and photographer Leonora Saunders, creating portraits highlighting historical women in archaeology and geoscience starring contemporary women in these fields. The exhibition was exhibited by the Royal Geological Society at Burlington House in London in 2017 and was accompanied by an educational programme hosted by the Society of Antiquaries. In this image Amara Thornton portrays Margaret Murray (image copyright Leornora Saunders, reproduced with permission)*

### TrowelBlazers as Online Activism

**Hannah:** From your discussion of TrowelBlazer’s history, obviously you’ve emerged in a world of social media and through social media conversations, and everything from the way you came into being to the kind of connections you have forged with other people have all been rooted in online networks. Given this, we would be really interested to hear more about your relationship with online activism around issues of gender equity and combatting harassment. Obviously TrowelBlazers itself is a form of online activism, but as things really developed around 2017 with #MeToo and #TimesUp and associated hashtags, did you see a direct impact of that on the work of TrowelBlazers?

**Brenna:** Well, we had started off as quite shouty online. We were always campaigning. We set up social media accounts and we argued for things that we liked and we called out things that we didn’t like on various social media platforms. And we had a number of things where we made a real difference. For example, Clarks shoes were only selling dinosaur shoes for boys, which we highlighted as problematic by encouraging female scientists around the world to take photos of their shoes using the hashtag #InMyShoes (Figure 2). In turn this opened a conversation about discrimination that women in science had faced. I think it’s interesting because we’ve talked a lot in our archive about women working in the field, but I don’t think we had ever really directly talked about some of the things that keep women out of the field. Of course these things include harassment, a danger of sexual assault, and of being mistreated because of gender. But we hadn’t directly addressed it. Then there was the big study by Kate Clancy *et al.* (2014), and that was definitely on our radar. But there was already a lot going on in terms of activism, and so it was very difficult to understand how TrowelBlazers would be best placed to be active. We had a lot of back-channel conversations at that time about what is the best way to contribute to this.

**Rebecca:** Yes, we questioned whether #MeToo and #TimesUp and all of the associated activism was something that we could usefully contribute to in an original sense or whether it would be better if we were to boost, platform and share the work that other people were doing and make it clear that this is part of the topic of being a woman in archaeology.

**Brenna:** We had large followings on Facebook (at the time around 6000 followers) and Twitter (at the time around 11,000 followers) and a very engaged digital



Figure 2. Brenna’s Chuck Taylors and her yellow archaeopteryx, posted on Twitter as part of the TrowelBlazers #InMyShoes campaign (image source: Brenna Hassett. More about the campaign in Suhay 2015).

community, so we thought very seriously about whether there was a role for us to play in combatting harassment and what that role would look like. Would an anonymous reporting tool, for instance, be useful? And could you host that on a website like TrowelBlazers? What would be the legal ramifications of doing that? As it turns out they would be quite scary!

**Rebecca:** That was when we started intersecting with other organisations more, and realised that other organisations or initiatives, like RESPECT (see Hawkins and Rees this volume for more detail) were doing similar things and asking similar questions.

From a purely personal perspective, the various instances of online activism changed how I read the original sources. Coming back to Dorothy Garrod, for example, I ended up finding an online edition of the memoir of Henry Field, who was the curator of the Field Museum. He was a student in Oxford around the same time as Garrod was, and afterwards they both went to train with the eminent prehistorian Henri Breuil in France and Spain (Field 1953). But what Henry Field felt was OK to remember and write about in terms of Garrod herself and her female companion on their expeditions was extremely revealing, including how tight their breeches were. That made me think, what narrative is actually in the archives? Whose perspectives do we see? I've never read anything in historical accounts by women that we've worked on that mentioned their male colleagues' physical appearances in a sexualised way. Yet you read that in Field, who is a contemporary of so many active women in the 1930s, and suddenly it highlights that this kind of behaviour was there in the history of archaeology too. Unquestionably. So just from a personal perspective, it did make me sit up and rethink some of the contexts where women were able to be active agents. For example, it's always been intriguing to consider why at Tabun so many women may have wanted to go and be on an excavation directed by a woman, and how that was perhaps an exciting, interesting, even radical thing to do.

But, as Brenna said, how we actually wove the broader issue of harassment into the way that TrowelBlazers communicates more broadly, in the end we didn't choose to directly do any #MeToo and #TimesUp work in a primary sense. Instead, we worked with other people, or we platformed them, and since then we have tried to integrate it into how we think about the individuals that we research.

**Hannah:** That's really interesting, and I think it goes back to what I was saying earlier about how the activism in your work is quite iterative – you didn't see women in histories of archaeology and then you highlighted their work, and then that stimulated other people and so on. That highlighting of women in equal and empowered positions is a piece of activism in and of itself. Even if you weren't using that explicitly as part of movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp, just changing and shifting the narrative from people commenting on Dorothy Garrod wearing tight breeches to bringing into mainstream discourse how she was someone who made important contributions to archaeology and worked with and empowered other women, both in the local communities where she worked and women in the UK like Jacquetta Hawkes – that is activism right there. Without that, we wouldn't have the kind of brilliant, empowered women, feeling able to call out harassment today. Obviously, it's not singularly causal, but it's about changing the environment around the way that women are presented

and spoken about and empowered to act within the profession. It's a piece of crucial activism within itself.

**Kayt:** I agree. From my and Cat Rees's perspective, when we started doing RESPECT, having had the work of British Women Archaeologists and TrowelBlazers was a big influence on us in that sense of creating the feeling that it was safe to stick your head up above the parapet. Having that history and having all of that work that you had done before was hugely empowering for us.

**Rebecca:** It's nice to hear that, and we definitely have to shout out to British Women Archaeologists (BWA, directed by Rachel Pope and Anne Teather) too, as being enormously impactful as activist role models for us.

**Brenna:** As you highlight, I think what our contribution to the #MeToo movement may have been is that we were very active on social media and we were very loud, and it felt as if there was a large number of people in the discipline (and outside it) who were feeling the same way. It felt safer to say some things and to take some positions than perhaps it had in the past because there were other voices saying it too. That was part of the point of #MeToo, wasn't it? All these calls for action by telling stories, by repeating stories and by tacit admission that actually these things are wrong. But there are a group of people who are aware of that and want to fix it, so I think at some point some of our most useful work has been sharing other people's work, whether it's academic like Amara's work or direct activism by others like BWA or RESPECT.

**Hannah:** Yes – the rising tide raises all the boats!

### **Making a Difference and Shaping the Future**

**Hannah:** It's really interesting to hear your reflections on the nuances of being involved in online activism, and it would be great to hear you elaborate on how you feel your work has made a difference. I know we have covered this in some ways already – for example in your impact on textbooks, and changing practical things like the gendering of shoes. And, though you haven't mentioned it yet, I want to take a moment to say how brilliant the Fossil Hunter Lottie doll was, which TrowelBlazers co-developed<sup>2</sup>. I bought her for my then seven year old, and I'm conscious that since then the range of Barbie dolls representing STEM careers has expanded, which must have been stimulated, at least in part, by the appetite for Lottie dolls.

**Rebecca:** It's a difficult question because it is hard to know what would be different if TrowelBlazers hadn't existed. But at the same time, one of the things that most confirms that we have made a difference is how many people you meet, or you see online, or you read, who use the word 'trowelblazer'. They might not even be aware of our website, or anything else we have done, but there is that recognition, after a decade of our work, that 'trowelblazer' has become a noun and 'trowelblazing' has become a verb, and it has filtered through very widely. The fact that mentions of TrowelBlazers as an organisation and the women we feature

---

<sup>2</sup> Lottie action figures are a brand of toys manufactured by Arklu which focus on representing diversity, STEM education, and body positivity; Fossil Hunter Lottie was palaeontology themed and a finalist for international Toy Of The Year 2017.

appear to now be included in a large percentage of current UK undergraduate teaching syllabi, in some form or another, is extraordinarily important, and just knowing that people are talking about and questioning these issues in terms of the presence of women, what's their importance, what are the connections, what are the challenges... I think that's the most that we might ever have hoped for! But I don't think we ever, ever thought that it would be the case at the beginning because we were just doing something we thought was worthwhile, and also fun, and we wouldn't have dreamed that there would be a big impact. When we see it, it's extremely wonderful, but also humbling at the same time.

**Brenna:** It's a testament to [one quarter of TrowelBlazers] Victoria Herridge's power of finding catchy names! But also, more seriously, I think our work fitted very well into a national, and international, moment of reflecting on representation more broadly. There's a cultural movement that we are part of, which is looking at women in STEM subjects. It is no coincidence that activist organisations were starting to protest against the underrepresentation of women at about the same time that we started, and the last ten years have seen enormous numbers of organisations, from governments to voluntary clubs, who are trying to address issues of representation, particularly with women and all sorts of minoritised people in STEM. I think a lot of what we were able to accomplish or do was because we fit into that moment.

I also think we started off with an attitude of 'yay women in archaeology!' and I think we grew up a bit over the last ten years as we recognised both that not all women were being celebrated and that some who were perhaps we shouldn't be celebrating. Some of them are pretty terrible, in terms of their wider social beliefs or activity.

**Rebecca:** I do wonder as well how much the context in which we started makes a difference. Like I said before, I wonder how easy would it be for us to begin it now? If you put aside where we are individually in our professional and personal lives with much greater caring and complex time commitments than we had (and that's a whole other thing to consider in general for women's careers!), would there be a fertile bed in 2023 waiting for TrowelBlazers to germinate and bloom in? I mean both in a disciplinary context, but also in the very visible decay of social media platforms as places favourable and welcoming to projects of this kind. TrowelBlazers came about in that moment of early Twitter being a very active, energetic, largely positive and interconnected community generally. In that context, the reach that we had in what was then a space without such managed hierarchies of visibility, I don't know if we could ever get that kind of platform and that kind of followership now, partly because where would you put it, now Twitter has become X and is very different? Where would you find a home for it that would have a very democratic structure and broad reach that would allow the online community to really interact?

**Brenna:** We may have to go back to Tumblr!

**Hannah:** Yes, it's interesting. I feel like with BlueSky [a relatively new social media platform at the time of the conversation] for example, people really like this platform at the moment and are saying it is like what Twitter was like in its heyday, but I wonder if the only people on it are the people who were on Twitter before? I'm not sure if early career and younger people

are going on BlueSky. My teenage daughter actually really wants a Tumblr account, but she's not interested in BlueSky or Twitter!

**Brenna:** Maybe we will have to restart our Tumblr after all!

**Rebecca:** Beyond social media though, or perhaps because of it, what TrowelBlazers is, for all four of us, is something that professionally has opened so many interesting doors for us, and personally it's given us this incredible dynamic of a decade long 'quad' friendship. As Brenna often says, TrowelBlazers is like an anarchic, feminist, multi-headed hydra! It has been really challenging keeping it going and certainly as our lives, careers and workloads have changed we haven't been able to do those big projects that we used to do beyond the website.

**Brenna:** I haven't answered the TrowelBlazer's email for some time!

**Rebecca:** Yes, increasingly it is hard to keep up with everything, and it's not because there's been no effort.

**Hannah:** Sounds like you need *TrowelBlazers: The Next Generation!* And as we come towards the end of this conversation this brings us neatly on to the final question we had for you; what would you like to see next, in both the future of TrowelBlazers and the future of the activism of which you are part?

**Rebecca:** Our future is something that we have been talking about for a long time. How do we continue to evolve in a positive way, while wanting to keep this small structure as a four-person community that works and collaborates well together? It is a real challenge and I think that's probably faced by all organisations at some point that are not part of a larger structure. So we're working those things through and trying to see what we can profitably focus our time on to make a difference. It's interesting because the challenges that we've got now are really different to what they were at the beginning, or even halfway through. Our *Raising Horizons* project, the biggest thing we ever did in terms of a single demanding project, was 2017 to 2018. That's already quite a long time ago.

**Hannah:** Now you have media connections, are you tempted to have a TrowelBlazers TV programme or something similar?

**Rebecca:** We've been talking for a long time about a possible radio programme, but it's very complicated to get that kind of thing from an idea to something formalised. The thoughts and intentions are there, but the actual pathways to it happening are less clear.

But we have got ongoing collaborations. For example, because I have an affiliation now at Cambridge, it's allowing me to look at Garrod's archives a bit more, in collaboration with Emma Pomeroy, Director of Studies for Archaeology, which is the same role Garrod had! I was actually in the Newnham archive a week ago, looking at materials there, but we also found an incredible 1930s scrapbook made by Winifred Lamb, which has endless reams of newspaper cuttings mentioning women in science, and individual women in archaeology, that's never been digitised or published. Nobody's read through all that, it has so much new material. So we all have our own personal interests and projects that intersect with TrowelBlazers, and

they're all slightly different, and that's why it's always worked for us, because we all have unique disciplinary interests and strengths. So I hope it will continue, but in what form is still to be worked out.

**Brenna:** Just to pick up on what Becky said, something we have talked about quite a bit is how do you sustain activism without institutional support? And the answer is you don't. I think if we were able to secure funding and regular academic input through hosting things like undergrad classes then we can maintain our website. But obviously the kind of archival research that Becky is talking about is a postdoc or a full time job!

So perhaps the best way to bring this conversation to a conclusion is to highlight that the thing we would all like to see for the future is institutional buy in/institutional support. Not necessarily for TrowelBlazers specifically as an organisation, but for the kind of work we do. There needs to be the recognition that it is not a crazy-out-there-weirdo tangent of interest or research, but that all of these social issues, such as harassment, underrepresentation, and retention, that everyone in our discipline is supportive of addressing, are connected to telling the stories of women in archaeology past and present. Raising the profile of women is integral to how we do archaeology now, and in the future. But to do this, and to sustain a future in which all of archaeology is a space for trowelblazing women, we have to go from creative online activism to systemic, structural change driven from our institutions.

## Bibliography

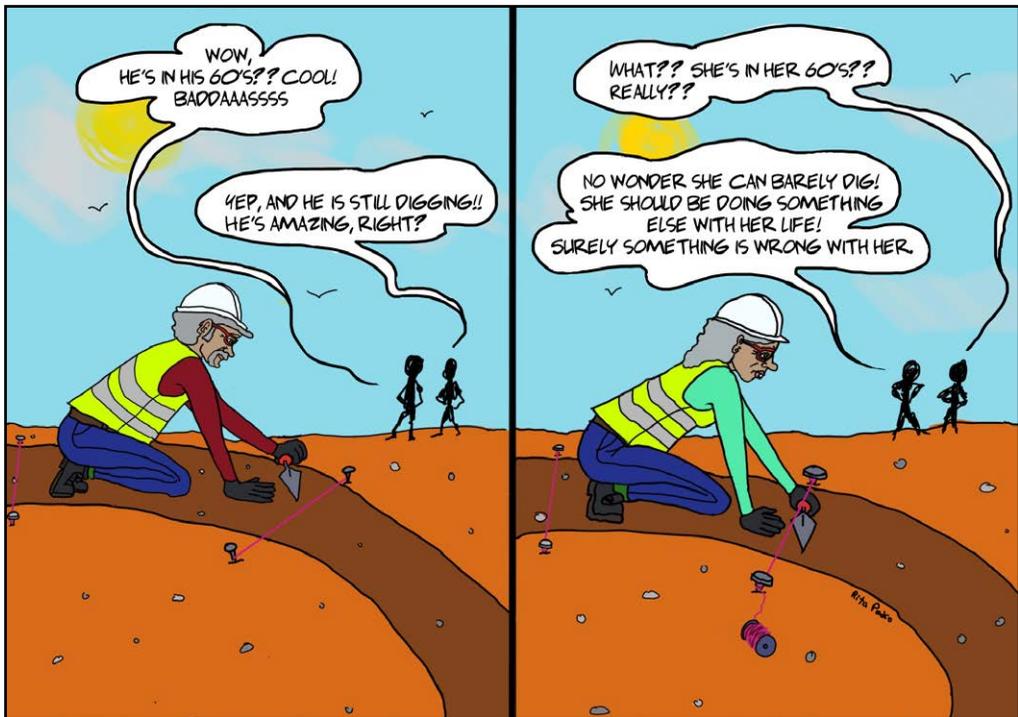
- Beyond Notability. 2024. *Beyond Notability: Re-evaluating women's work in archaeology, history and heritage in Britain, 1870-1950*. Online: <https://beyondnotability.org/> [Accessed 16th December 2024].
- Clancy, K.B.H., Nelson, R.G., Rutherford, J.N. and Hinde, K. 2014. 'Survey of academic field experiences (SAFE): Trainees report harassment and assault'. *PLoS ONE* 9(7), e102172. doi: [doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172).
- Cobb, H., Greene, K. and Moore, T. 2024. *Archaeology: An introduction*. 6th edn. London: Routledge.
- Field, H. 1953. *The Track of Man: Adventures of an anthropologist*. New York: Doubleday and Company.
- Hassett, B., Herridge, V., Wragg Sykes, R. and Pilaar Birch, S. 2018. 'TrowelBlazers: Accidentally crowdsourcing an archive of women in archaeology', in V. Apaydin (ed.) *Shared Knowledge, shared power: Engaging local and indigenous heritage*. Cham: Springer, 129-141.
- Hassett, B., Herridge, V.L., Wragg Sykes, R. and Pilaar Birch, S. 2019. 'Activism from the archives: Changing narratives to engage new communities', in J.H. Jameson and S. Musteață (eds) *Transforming heritage practice in the 21st century: Contributions from community archaeology*. Cham: Springer, 399-413.
- Hassett, B., Herridge, V.L., Wragg Sykes, R. and Pilaar Birch, S.E. 2023. 'No pay, low pay, and unequal pay: The TrowelBlazers perspective on the history of women in archaeology', in S.L. López Varela (ed.) *Women in archaeology: Intersectionalities in practice worldwide*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 381-398.
- Renfrew, C. and Bahn, P. 2020. *Archaeology: Theories, methods and practice*. 8th edn. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Saunders, L. 2024. *Leonora Saunders: Raising Horizons*. Online: <https://www.leonorasauanders.com/raisinghorizons> [Accessed 16th December 2024].

- Smith, P.J. 2009. *A Splendid idiosyncrasy: Prehistory at Cambridge 1915–1950*, BAR British Series 485. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Smith, P.J., Callander, J., Bahn, P.G. and Pinçlon, G. 1997. 'Dorothy Garrod in words and pictures'. *Antiquity* 71, 265–270.
- Suhay, L. 2015. '#InMyShoes: How a girl's quest for dinosaur shoes is leaving a big footprint on Twitter'. *The Christian Science Monitor*. Online: <https://www.csmonitor.com/Science/2015/0311/InMyShoes-How-a-girl-s-quest-for-dinosaur-shoes-is-leaving-a-big-footprint-on-Twitter>. [Accessed 08 February 2024].
- Thornton, A. 2018. *Archaeologists in print: Publishing for the people*. London: UCL Press.
- Trowelblazers. 2024. Trowelblazers. Online: <https://trowelblazers.com/> [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024].
- Wragg-Sykes, R., Herridge, V., Hassett, B.R., Pilaar Birch, S. 2013. 'A splendid regiment of women: 20th century research networks among women scientists in archaeology, geology and palaeontology', in S. Charman-Anderson (ed.) *A passion for science: Stories of discovery and invention*. London: Finding Ada Project.



# SECTION 4.

## Activism in the Workplace: Disrupting Structures of Discrimination





## Chapter 16.

# Future Challenges for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in Spanish Archaeology

María Coto-Sarmiento, Ana Pastor Pérez, María Yubero Gómez,  
Paloma Zarzuela Gutiérrez<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

This article highlights that within Spain's archaeological practices and the broader academic discipline, the structural violence found across Spanish academia is present, which may extend beyond sexual contexts, often manifests hierarchically, and could involve forms of mistreatment, such as bullying or harassment, whether physical or psychological (Täuber and Mahmoudi 2022). The repressive practices exercised by the perpetrators of harassment can be more or less subtle: slander, abuse of power, strategies to render victims invisible, intellectual appropriation, or the threat of reprisals if one dares to express dissatisfaction.

Traditionally, there has been impunity for perpetrators, leading many survivors to decide to leave the academic system due to a lack of support (Ruiz Martinez *et al.* 2023). Perpetrators often act under the protection of a system that tends to shield them and does not want to be tainted by any scandal. Despite their prevalence, these behaviours are increasingly being analysed and exposed by academia (Täuber *et al.* 2022), and we are moving towards greater visibility of the tools to combat these inequalities on both a general and academic level. This is due in part to a variety of factors, such as pressure from feminist movements and the global #MeToo phenomenon (D'Agostino and Elias 2020), especially visible in Catalonia (Tomàs 2023). This has resulted in the recent release of a harassment protocol for all universities which, for the first time, incorporates the notion of repair for victims (Generalitat de Catalunya 2023).

For these more general actions, the particularities of the archaeological fieldwork must be taken into consideration (Voss 2021a, 2021b). In our opinion, it will be necessary to analyse, using both quantitative and qualitative data, the effectiveness of these tools and where the stumbling blocks prevent us from moving towards more intersectional archaeology. This intersectional approach aims to foster an environment free from psychosocial risks associated with workplace, gender, or sexual harassment, which we will explore in this paper.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ana Pastor Pérez (✉) Getty Conservation Institute, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 700, 90049, Los Angeles, CA, US. Email: Apastorperez@getty.edu  
María Coto-Sarmiento, School of Culture and Society, Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (UrbNet), Aarhus University. HUMANE, Human Ecology and Archaeology Research Group, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Milà i Fontanals Institution for Research and Humanities, IMF-CSIC, C. Egiptciaques 15, 08001, Barcelona, Spain. Email: mcotsar@gmail.com  
María Yubero Gómez, Independent researcher. Email: mariayubero@gmail.com  
Paloma Zarzuela Gutiérrez, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). Email: paloma.zarzuela@uab.cat

### ***Brief Notes about Gender Archaeology in Spain***

The rise of gender archaeology in Spain is framed within a wider sociopolitical context of openness, secularisation, and the fostering of rights and freedoms, including women's emancipation. This process of democratisation, also known as the Spanish Transition (1975–1982), occurred after dictator Francisco Franco's demise and was accompanied by various student uprisings (Calvo Romero and Lázaro Arnal 2022; González Calleja 2018). During those years, the feminist movement achieved new regulations on divorce, abortion and contraception, as well as better working conditions and opportunities for women (Guil Bozal and Flecha García 2015). Nevertheless, the feminist struggle was not focused only on legislative changes to improve the quality of life for women but was also implemented by grassroots activists in other spaces, such as their workplace). Then, many scientists saw a need for a fairer and more equitable science, and, in the field of archaeology, this resulted in the emergence of gender as a subject of study (Cruz Berrocal 2009; Montón-Subías and Moral 2014).

In Spain, the first known circle that brought to light feminist demands was based in Barcelona. Several female archaeologists, who also had a Marxist background, criticised the androcentric bias within the discipline (Sanahuja Yll 1983). An illustrative example of how this circle cooperated is the creation of the category of analysis of 'maintenance activities', a dynamic concept that refers to all activities required to cover basic needs and to ensure the sustainability of a social group in the past (Alarcón García and Sánchez Romero 2010, 262). The concept of maintenance activities originally emerged in the 1990s, thus facilitating an innovative methodological framework that allowed researchers to investigate women's daily lives in past societies as opposed to ahistorical descriptions of household chores if mentioned at all (González-Marcén, Montón-Subías and Picazo 2008, 4). Over the last decades of the 20th century, the establishment of new universities, the rapid growth in the number of students and the significant increase in funding allowed a much-needed renewal of the Spanish Higher Education sector (Egido 2011). This modernisation encouraged the arrival of new insights, as was the case in gender archaeology (Montón-Subías 2011, 281). Sessions and communications on the topic began to take place, and knowledge sharing about gender in archaeology was enabled by funded research visits abroad, in combination with the translation into Spanish and Catalan of key publications and lectures (see Colomer *et al.* 1999; Dowson 1998; González-Marcén, Montón-Subías and Picazo 2005). Spanish feminist archaeologists have made a significant contribution since then by incorporating new topics into the research agenda, such as the study of museography and the visibility of women in archaeological museums (Querol 2014; Querol and Hornos Mata 2011), women's identity (Hernando 2012, 2022) and infancy in past societies (Sánchez-Romero 2008). Most recent contributions derive from debates on LGBTI+ and queer theories (Moral de Eusebio 2016) as well as from a considerable number of doctoral theses on this topic in the last few years (Rivera 2021; Rodríguez-González 2022).

Unfortunately, these research advancements are not matched by developments in practice. Academia and our profession remain intertwined with structural violence and a lack of specific agreements or a strong trade union organisation, which has delayed the consolidation of more egalitarian scenarios. As a result, most Spanish female archaeologists experience discomfort, insecurity or 'impostor syndrome' in certain work contexts, especially when assuming leadership roles in a *macho* work culture (Zarzuela Gutiérrez 2022, 275).

### **Framing Harassment within Structural Violence in Spain**

In Spain, structural discrimination and violence permeate the male-dominated profession of archaeology, both academic and commercial. Its physically demanding and field-based nature marginalises certain groups, particularly women. Conversely, the huge presence of women in certain subfields, such as museum studies, conservation or restoration, is widely accepted precisely because these roles involve the care and maintenance of archaeological objects (Bellido Blanco, 2022; García-Patrón Santos and Díaz-Martínez 2022). The demands of archaeological work pose obstacles to the inclusion of women in the field, given that positions often necessitate extensive time commitments, geographic mobility, insecurity of employment and added responsibilities. These aspects counterbalance a harmonious work-life balance, affecting women disproportionately due to their traditional roles in bearing the brunt of unpaid work, primarily encompassing household chores, motherhood and caregiving for the elderly, among other responsibilities (Zarzueta Gutiérrez 2022, 276–277). Furthermore, various experts have conducted statistical and analytical studies that have revealed the presence of violence and inequalities in commercial archaeology (Parga-Dans, Barreiro, and Varela-Pousa 2016; Zarzueta Gutiérrez *et al.* 2019). However, these issues have received less attention in academic research, with only a few exceptions focusing on both gender and non-gender related (psychosocial risks) discrimination in the workplace (Nieto-Espinet and Campanera 2022).

In contrast, academic careers in Spain exhibit endogamous trends and lack clear definitions at multiple colleges and institutions. They are characterised by instability, precarity, competitiveness, elitism, racism and patriarchy (Borra 2023; Ruiz Martínez *et al.* 2023). Gender segregation, underrepresentation in university teaching and management and invisibility in educational curricula are challenges faced by women researchers. Gender studies research is undervalued, less cited and paternalistic. Meanwhile, the burden of balancing work and family life or taking care of people continues to fall on women. Moreover, gender-based sexual and workplace harassment disproportionately affects young women and early-career researchers, is more common in the public sector and is underpinned by heterosexist power hierarchies and a culture of impunity (Bernardo 2021; Cagliero and Biglia 2019; Coto-Sarmiento *et al.* 2022).

### ***Equality Units, Commissions and Equality Plans***

Spain has had a Ministry of Equality since 2008, established as a result of ‘Law 3/2007 of March 22 on effective equality between women and men’ (Ministry of Equality of Spain 2007), which defined the scope and purpose of equality plans. At the academic level, these plans could be considered elements of the intervention that works through a series of objectives and strategies to integrate gender equality into the university structure and management (Ruiz-Rico Ruiz 2018, 154), while promoting transversality and permeability concerning gender. The promotion of equality policies at the university level has given rise to the Network of Gender Equality Units for University Excellence (RUIGEU 2023), which brings together experts from different fields who collaborate with women’s studies units and institutes. In Spain, the Equality Units of each university and research organisations are usually in charge of carrying out equality plans and harassment protocols (Comisión de Igualdad IPNA-CSIC 2021; Comisión de Mujeres y Ciencia del CSIC 2021). These groups usually address four fundamental aspects: firstly prevention and action policies, secondly processes of design and implementation

of improvements, thirdly preventive measures (i.e., communication, dissemination and awareness-raising) and fourthly training measures (Cagliero and Biglia 2019, 148). However, few Spanish universities had equality plans and protocols commissioned by experts, and as Cagliero and Biglia (2019) revealed, these are not particularly participatory. Furthermore, a lack of economic resources and investment often leads to a subsequent failure in monitoring these programmes and in the training of both committee members and other academics (Ruiz-Rico Ruiz 2018, 160).

As a result, most members of equality units and commissions are volunteers with little or no training in gender studies, legislation or the culture of harassment, or they begin training after joining the commission. The aforementioned factors generate a situation of imbalance and uncertainty, which perpetuates hetero-patriarchal inequity and violence in the field of archaeology. This situation persists due to the ineffectiveness of prevention policies, a sense of impunity despite protocols and the lack of experts in providing training courses.

Sexual harassment remains a pervasive issue globally, especially within early career stages and during volunteer fieldwork campaigns (Colannino *et al.* 2020). Students, trainees and entry-level archaeologists are vulnerable and defenceless (at this point reputation, limited credibility and job instability come into play). Spanish universities and institutions, especially in Catalonia, are creating observatories, specialised commissions and equality plans, some of which are tailored to the archaeological ecosystem, to prevent this. Other goals include providing training and advice on using an intersectional perspective in all institutional activities and collaborating with other commissions to promote university policies on safer spaces. Some examples of Spanish and Catalan institutional initiatives are ICAC's Equality Committee (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology 2020), Equality and Intersectionality Commission of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Barcelona (CII-IAUB) and IPHES (Catalan Institute of Human Paleoecology and Social Evolution 2017). Some of these protocols also transcend sexual harassment, including special safe-space protection for the LGBTIQ+ community, psychosocial risks and measures to include functionally diverse groups.

### **How We Started, How We Are Now: Toward the Birth of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Protocols**

Spain has always had cases of archaeology-related sexual harassment, but it was not widely reported until recently. Bilbilis, an archaeological site in Zaragoza (Spain) where fieldwork campaigns are held annually, was one of the most notorious cases (Ming 2017). CEPA, a student union, reported that several women were sexually harassed at an archaeological site years ago. For years, rumours circulated about why numerous women ceased participating in the excavation and cautioned others against joining. In recent years, a team collected testimonials about this and they reported back in 2017 (Salguero 2017). Most women said they were afraid to attend the excavation, and some left due to sexual harassment during fieldwork (Salguero 2017). The report highlighted testimonials of abuse through touching and verbal sexual harassment from an individual who held a position of power on which many of these women depended for fieldwork (Salguero 2017). The CEPA union organised many performances and wallpapered the university with the quote 'We already knew what happened in Bilbilis' to publicise the abuse that many women suffered during the fieldwork. Finally, the fieldwork

campaign manager denied the facts and denounced the union. Since then, there has been no transparency about whether they faced any punitive consequences (Salguero 2018).

This example and others highlight how female Spanish archaeologists have been rendered invisible in a highly discriminatory environment. To challenge this invisibility and track cases, a group of Spanish archaeologists also published an online survey about sexual harassment (Coto-Sarmiento *et al.* 2020, 2022). This work sought to first identify harassment and violence and then create new spaces for denunciation. This group's actions were inspired by the idea of bringing to light a common but ignored issue. The main goals of this sexual harassment survey were: firstly to increase the visibility and detection of sexual harassment in archaeological fieldwork, commercial archaeology and universities; secondly to share the consequences of sexual harassment and impunity experiences; thirdly to track and monitor previous cases of harassment that had already been detected; fourthly to analyse the survey results and compare them to other surveys with similar patterns; and fifthly to try to use the survey results as a preventive measure for the continuity of sexual harassment.

The survey attracted 358 respondents and the results revealed a more serious problem than had previously been recognised: a substantial number of women reported experiencing sexual harassment (51% of 227 women); the proportional percentage of men who had experienced harassment was 15% (of 87 men). Most of the harassers were men (89%), in a higher position of authority than the person they were harassing. This shows that there is a hierarchy of power (Coto-Sarmiento *et al.* 2020; Ruiz Martínez *et al.* 2023). A higher number of sexual harassment incidents occurred in public institutions than in private companies (77% compared to 23%), demonstrating that the latter have more effective detection and prevention mechanisms. The survey revealed complete impunity across the sector despite the existence of protocols against sexual harassment: 89 women (19% of individuals who suffered a harassment episode) responded that there were no consequences for the harasser and that they lacked reporting mechanisms. The fear of retaliation for those in dependent and hierarchical relationships with the harasser played a significant role in the persistence of sexual harassment in Spanish cases. In addition, numerous potential victims were unable to identify situations that were appropriately labelled as harassment, despite recognising instances of harassment suffered by victims close to them. Faced with this situation, which appeared alarming but was not new, as previous studies in Spain have shown, various voices in archaeology advocated for making this problem visible in our country. Collectives, such as ArkeoGazte, 'Arqueólogas feministas' and 'Centro Revolucionario de Arqueología Social (CRAS)', organised a series of training workshops between 2019 and 2021. Institutionalised responses finally followed these activist initiatives. Although the increase in protocols at universities and institutions has enhanced the experience of reporting sexual harassment, it is important to note that there are certain restrictions to consider, as we will explore in the following section.

### ***Anti-Sexual Harassment Protocols and their Limitations in Spanish Archaeology***

Within and beyond archaeology in Spain there is little history or culture of considering the consequences of sexual harassment (Ruiz Martínez *et al.* 2023). Social media cases prompted universities to adopt sexual harassment policies; however, many university protocols do not cover fieldwork situations or project displacements, such as those that may occur in the disciplines of archaeology, anthropology or biology. In many cases, archaeology needs

a specific protocol including guidelines for travel, support during non-academic months or an emergency hotline. Many protocols strictly forbid this. For instance, the Equality Unit at the University of Barcelona responsible for bringing together sexual harassment complaints related to archaeological excavations remains closed throughout the entire month of August and only comes back into operation in mid-September. The most significant campaigns carried out by university students take place during the summer break, leaving a conspicuous shortage of protection.

In 2018, ArkeoGazte, the aforementioned archaeological feminist collective, proposed a new protocol to address sexual harassment in archaeology (Comisión Feminista Arkeogazte, 2018). The procedure included both internal and external measures, with particular emphasis on addressing any potential incidents that may arise during fieldwork. In addition, the protocol included definitions of offences to identify sexual harassment or harassment based on sex and sexual orientation (Comisión Feminista Arkeogazte 2018, 38–39) and provided support for those facing aggression. Sexual harassment is defined as workplace sexualisation, unwanted sexual questioning or propositioning, and the aggravating factor of the contact being made by a hierarchical superior. ‘It will not be tolerated that any partner cooperates directly or indirectly with sexual harassers and offenders’, a sentence which shows that neglecting victims is a crime, is another important part of this document (Comisión Feminista Arkeogazte 2018, 44). In our view, this is an important issue because archaeologists often downplay the perpetrator’s actions by saying ‘he was having a bad day’ or ‘he had a bit too much to drink but he is a nice person’, but this rationale only acts to normalise and perpetuate harassment within our field.

In the same manner, the Protocol of Action in Sexual Harassment of the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC) of December 2020 was born from an initiative of the institute’s own Equality Commission, created in 2017. It is an extensive document that includes a series of very useful templates and where a flow of action is clearly visualised. It is undoubtedly a very professional document that picks up the baton from the ArkeoGazte protocol and improves it, clearly defining the stages that will accompany a possible complaint. The document covers a wide range of situations and institutional responses, with the particularity of describing a series of sexist behaviours. It also contains a section about preventive measures, including awareness-raising actions, training, and the commitment that, in the case of working with third parties, they will be obligated to follow this protocol. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the protocol has not yet been formally implemented. Still, its creation resulted in workplace conflicts for the promoters (González pers. comm.) Following this work, the Equity and Intersectionality Commission of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Barcelona (CII-IAUB) is currently drafting an anti-harassment protocol, a comprehensive equality plan and innovative teaching initiatives to ensure that the prevention of harassment permeates through the different subjects taught as part of the Degree of Archaeology. In summary, both of the protocols mentioned here have a number of very useful pieces of information that show a clear flow of action. However, there are still some issues with the limited scope of these protocols, especially for the ones at the university where the archaeological field is not specifically included. The lack of knowledge of the actions to take to implement the protocols (i.e., the bureaucratic maze), the impact of the lack of victim support culture training, the absence of provision of caring dialogues with the sufferer (re-victimisation), and the lack of feminist-conscious and supportive staff are some of the problems that protocols need to

deal with in the future. Moreover, in this regard, and based on our personal experiences as victims or witnesses of our institution's occupational risk prevention programme, we have been re-victimised. While there are protocols, their slow implementation and functioning increase the vulnerability of victims. Several victims choose to keep their experiences a secret since 'the treatment may be worse than the disease'. Complaints are not spoken about and are forgotten. In other cases, universities and institutions are closed during August when the majority of archaeological excavations take place, and thus there are simply no mechanisms for an independent reporting structure outside of the excavation.

### **Future Challenges**

As discussed above, gender archaeology in Spain emerged from the strong commitment of some students and professionals in a sensitive political moment. Since then, feminist research has initially focused on historical women, and is moving towards the analysis of current struggles. Eventually, many researchers began advocating for gender equality and better working conditions, but there is room for continued growth. This has highlighted the importance of analysing current archaeological practices through the lens of the gender perspective and intersectional studies. We have learned that institutions must present clear policies on harassment, abuse, assault and other forms of violence, along with carrying out disciplinary measures for these incidents in order to ensure proper archaeological practices. We propose and encourage a pro-active perspective that promotes collaborative work, strives to dismantle hierarchical dominance behaviours, and supports feminist movements through equity networks, as these are essential for reducing harassment in the short and long term (Valls-Carol *et al.* 2008). Policies should raise awareness of all forms of abuse, promote zero tolerance for violence and end abuse perpetrated by a superior. In particular, we have demonstrated here that the activism that has been followed until now has laid the foundations for the protocols to be changed.

In conclusion, workplace education and training are critical in identifying sexual harassment while understanding both its institutional and personal consequences. Privacy, confidentiality, speed, impartiality, non-revictimisation and avoiding reprisals are included in the protocols for victim reports. These patterns of behaviour and the resulting harm are complicated for survivors to report which often results in survivors downplaying their experience. This leads to many victims remaining in a state of victimhood, forced into giving up their careers while their perpetrators continue their own. All of this propels us to utilise the necessary tools we need to support victims while dealing with harassers in our field. There have been a multitude of conferences and sessions organised to discuss this issue in recent years. Each of these events has highlighted the altruistic and volunteering work carried out by many women who are passionate about creating safe, inclusive spaces for women in their institutions and countries. Nonetheless, it is imperative to remember that many harassers are still key figures within these institutions, attending conferences, and able to maintain their privilege in these spaces. Thus, we conclude with an urgent call for the structural changes outlined here. These changes are imperative to holding harassers accountable and putting an end to the perpetuation of sexual harassment in the workplace.

## Note

The authors are in alphabetical order. All authors contributed equally to this chapter.

## Bibliography

- Alarcón García, E. and Sánchez Romero, M. 2010. 'Maintenance activities as a category for analysing prehistoric societies', in L.H. Dommasnes, T. Hjørungdal, S. Montón-Subías, M. Sánchez Romero and N.L. Wicker (eds) *Situating gender in European archaeologies*. Budapest: Archaeolingua, 261–282.
- Bellido Blanco, A. 2022. 'Museos de arqueología: mujeres y arqueólogas en Castilla y León en los siglos XIX y XX', in M. Díaz-Andreu, O. Torres Gomáriz and P. Zarzuela Gutiérrez (eds) *Voces in crescendo: del mutismo a la afonía en la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología española*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, Publicaciones INAPH, 375–388.
- Bernardo, Á. 2021. *Acoso: #MeToo en la ciencia española*, *El Café Cajal* 20. Pamplona: Next Door.
- Borra, A. 2023. 'El enclaustramiento de la universidad pública española'. *El Salto Diario*. Online: <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/educacion/enclaustramiento-universidad-publica-espanola>. [Accessed 30 January 2023].
- Cagliero, S. and Biglia, B. 2019. 'Políticas sobre violencias y abusos sexuales en las universidades catalanas'. *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* 50, 141–170.
- Calvo Romero, S. and Lázaro Arnal, M. 2022. 'Las aulas se vacían y las calles se llenan'. *CIAN-Revista de Historia de Las Universidades* 25(2), 28–59. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20318/cian.2022.7359>.
- Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology / Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica. 2020. Protocol de l'Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica per a la prevenció, detecció i actuació contra les situacions d'assetjament sexual i per raó de sexe, identitat de gènere i orientació sexual. Available at: <https://recercat.cat/handle/2072/522378> [Accessed 22 January 2023]
- Catalan Institute of Human Paleoeology and Social Evolution / Institut Català de Paleoeologia Humana i Evolució Social. 2017. Conflict Resolution Procedure. Available at: <https://www.iphes.cat/conflict-resolution-procedure> [Accessed 22 January 2023]
- Colaninno, C.E., Lambert, S.P., Beahm, E.L. and Drexler, C.G. 2020. 'Creating and supporting a harassment- and assault-free field school'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 8(2), 111–122. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2020.8>.
- Colomer, L., González-Marcén, P., Montón-Subías, S. and Picazo, M. (eds). 1999. *Arqueología y teoría feminista: estudios sobre mujeres y cultura material en arqueología*. Vilasar de Dalt: Antrazyt-Icaria.
- Comisión de Igualdad IPNA-CSIC. 2021. *Primera Encuesta Sobre Igualdad de Género (2021)*. Informe. San Cristóbal de la Laguna: IPNA. Online: [https://ipna.csic.es/sites/default/files/2021\\_Informe Encuesta CI-web2.pdf](https://ipna.csic.es/sites/default/files/2021_Informe Encuesta CI-web2.pdf). [Accessed 26 September 2024].
- Comisión de Mujeres y Ciencia del CSIC. 2021. *Informe Mujeres Investigadoras*. Madrid: CSIC. Online: [https://icp.csic.es/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/informe\\_mujeres\\_investigadores\\_cmyc-2021\\_0.pdf](https://icp.csic.es/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/informe_mujeres_investigadores_cmyc-2021_0.pdf). [Accessed 26 September 2024].
- Comisión Feminista de Arkeogazte. 2018. 'Protocolo de Arkeogazte para la prevención y actuación ante situaciones de acoso, abusos y agresiones sexuales o por razón de sexo'. *Revista Arkeogazte* 8, 35–46. Available at: <https://arkeogazte.org/protocolo-de-arkeogazte/> [Accessed 25 January 2023].

- Coto-Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Martín Alonso, J., Pastor Pérez, A., Ruiz, A. and Yubero, M. 2020. *Informe sobre el acoso sexual en arqueología (España)*. Barcelona, Granada and Madrid: Zenodo. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3662763>.
- Coto-Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Pastor Pérez, A., Ruiz, A. and Yubero, M. 2022. 'Acoso sexual en la arqueología española: voces, silencios y retos de futuro', in M. Díaz-Andreu, O. Torres Gomáriz, and P. Zarzuela Gutiérrez (eds) *Voces in crescendo: del mutismo a la afonía en la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología española*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, Publicaciones INAPH, 339–355.
- Cruz Berrocal, M. 2009. 'Feminismo, teoría y práctica de una arqueología científica'. *Trabajos de Prehistoria* 66(2), 25–43. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3989/tp.2009.09026>.
- D'Agostino, M.J. and Elias, N.M. 2020. 'Viewpoint Symposium introduction: #MeToo in academia: understanding and addressing pervasive challenges'. *Public Administration Review* 80(6), 1109–1110. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13318>.
- Dowson, T.A. 1998. 'Homosexualitat, teoria queer i arqueologia'. *Cota Zero* 14, 81–87.
- Egido Gálvez, I. 2006. 'La política universitaria en la España democrática: logros y carencias después de treinta años'. *Tendencias Pedagógicas* 11, 207–222.
- García-Patrón Santos, N. and Díaz Martínez, S. 2022. 'El papel de las mujeres en conservación-restauración de los yacimientos y bienes muebles en España', in M. Díaz-Andreu, O. Torres Gomáriz and P. Zarzuela Gutiérrez (eds) *Voces in crescendo: del mutismo a la afonía en la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología española*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, Publicaciones INAPH, 389–403.
- Generalitat de Catalunya. 2023. *Protocol·guia d'àmbit universitari per prevenir i reparar amb diligència deguda les situacions de violència masclista, assetjament sexual i assetjament per raó de sexe, orientació sexual, identitat de gènere o expressió de gènere*. Online: [https://recercaiuniversitats.gencat.cat/web/.content/11\\_ciencia\\_i\\_sociedad/dones\\_i\\_ciencia/documentos\\_enllacos/Protocol\\_guia\\_assetjament.pdf](https://recercaiuniversitats.gencat.cat/web/.content/11_ciencia_i_sociedad/dones_i_ciencia/documentos_enllacos/Protocol_guia_assetjament.pdf). [Accessed 20 September 2024].
- González Calleja, E. 2019. 'La movilización y la protesta estudiantil en el tardofranquismo y la democracia'. *Historia de la Educación* 37 (July), 223–255. doi: <https://doi.org/10.14201/hedu201837223255>.
- González-Marcén, P., Montón-Subías, S. and Picazo, M. (eds). 2005. 'Dones i activitats de manteniment en temps de canvi'. *Treballs d'Arqueologia* 11, 1–61.
- González-Marcén, P., Montón-Subías, S. and Picazo, M. 2008. 'Towards an archaeology of maintenance activities', in S. Montón-Subías and M. Sánchez-Romero (eds) *Engendering social dynamics: The archaeology of maintenance activities*, BAR International Series 1862. London: Tempvs Reparatum, 3–8.
- Guil Bozal, A. and Flecha García, C. 2015. 'Universitarias en España: de los inicios a la actualidad'. *Revista Historia de la Educación Latinoamericana* 17(24), 125–148. Online: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=86938947007>. [Accessed 20 September 2024].
- Hernando, A. 2012. *La fantasía de la individualidad*. Madrid: Katz Editores.
- Hernando, A. 2022. *La corriente de la historia y la contradicción de lo que somos*. Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños.
- Ming, W. 2017. *TODAS SABEMOS LO QUE PASA EN BÍLBILIS: El machismo, el acoso sexual y el abuso de poder en la Arqueología*. Available at: <https://grupoarqueologiasocial.wordpress.com/2017/11/22/todas-sabemos-lo-que-pasa-en-bilbilis-el-machismo-el-acoso-sexual-y-el-abuso-de-poder-en-la-arqueologia/>. [Accessed 22 January 2023].

- Ministry of Equality of Spain. 2007. 'Ley Orgánica 3/2007, de 22 de marzo, para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres'. *Boletín Oficial del Estado* 71, 12611–12645. Online: <https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2007/03/22/3>. [Accessed 19 September 2024].
- Montón-Subías, S. 2011. 'Las actividades de mantenimiento en la arqueología de género en España', in M.J. Rodríguez-Shadow and L. Campos Rodríguez (eds) *Mujeres: miradas interdisciplinarias*. México D.F: Centro de Estudios de Antropología de la Mujer, 281–297.
- Montón-Subías, S. and Moral, E. 2014. 'Gender, feminist, and queer archaeologies: A Spanish perspective', in C. Smith (ed.) *Encyclopedia of global archaeology*. New York: Springer, 4471–4479.
- Moral de Eusebio, E. 2016. 'Qu(e)rying sex and gender in archaeology: A critique of the “third” and other sexual categories'. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23(3), 788–809. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-016-9294-y>.
- Nieto-Espinet, A. and Campanera, M. 2022. 'De la invisibilización a la impunidad. (Des)cifrando la discriminación de género y el acoso sexual en arqueología', in M. Díaz-Andreu, O. Torres Gomáriz, and P. Zarzuela Gutiérrez (eds) *Voces in rescendo: del mutismo a la afonía en la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología española*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, Publicaciones INAPH, 315–337.
- Parga-Dans, E., Barreiro, D. and Varela-Pousa, R. 2016. 'Isomorphism and legitimacy in Spanish contract archaeology: The free-fall of an institutional model and the caveat of change'. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 22(4), 291–301. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2015.1137621>.
- Querol, M.Á. 2014. 'Museos y mujeres: la desigualdad en arqueología'. *ArqueoWeb: Revista Sobre Arqueología en Internet* 15, 270–280.
- Querol, M.Á., and Hornos Mata, F. 2011. 'La representación de las mujeres en los modernos museos arqueológicos: estudio de cinco casos'. *Revista Atlántica-Mediterránea de Prehistoria y Arqueología Social* 13, 135–156.
- Rivera, A. 2021. Infancia(s) y prácticas funerarias en las comunidades fenicias y púnicas del mediterráneo centro-occidental. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universitat Pompeu Fabra.
- Rodríguez-González, C. 2022. Una arqueología de género para el estudio de la sociedad de la Gallaecia de los siglos IV-VI DC. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universidade Santiago de Compostela.
- RUIGEU: Red de Unidades de Igualdad de Género para la Excelencia. 2023. Available at: <https://www.uv.es/ruigeu/es/red-unidades-igualdad-genero-excelencia-universitaria-ruigeu.html>. [Accessed 23 January 2023].
- Ruiz Martínez, A., Coto-Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Pastor Pérez, A. and Yubero, M. 2023. 'Unveiling sexual harassment in Spanish archaeology', in E. Pritchard and D. Edwards (eds) *Sexual misconduct in academia: Informing an ethics of care in the university*. Abingdon: Routledge, 132–151.
- Ruiz-Rico Ruiz, C. 2018. 'Planes de igualdad en la Universidad y evaluación de impacto de género', in J.C. Gavara de Cara and J.C. Remotti Carbonell (eds) *Perspectiva de género y gobierno de las Universidades*. Barcelona: J.M Bosch, 149–182.
- Salguero, M. 2017. 'La universidad de Zaragoza estudia las denuncias estudiantiles contra un profesor por abuso sexual'. *elDiario.es*. Online: [https://www.eldiario.es/aragon/sociedad/universidad-zaragoza-sexuales-excavaciones-arqueologicas\\_1\\_3050911.html](https://www.eldiario.es/aragon/sociedad/universidad-zaragoza-sexuales-excavaciones-arqueologicas_1_3050911.html). [Accessed 31 January 2023].

- Salguero, M. 2018. 'Los alumnos de la Universidad de Zaragoza no excavarán en Bómbis tras las denuncias estudiantiles a un profesor por abuso sexual'. *elDiario.es*. Online: [https://www.eldiario.es/aragon/sociedad/universidad-zaragoza-excavaran-bombis-estudiantiles\\_1\\_2042728.html](https://www.eldiario.es/aragon/sociedad/universidad-zaragoza-excavaran-bombis-estudiantiles_1_2042728.html). [Accessed 31 January 2023].
- Sanahuja Yll, M.E. 1983. 'El modo de producción doméstico'. *Poder y Libertad* 5, 69–75.
- Sánchez-Romero, M. 2008. 'Childhood and the construction of gender identities through material culture'. *International Journal of Childhood in the Past* 1, 17–37.
- Täuber, S. and Mahmoudi, M. 2022. 'How bullying becomes a career tool'. *Nature Human Behaviour* 6(4), 475–475. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01311-z>.
- Täuber, S., Keashly, L., Moss, S., Swann, J., Hollis, L., Crockett, L., Sareh, P. and M. Mahmoudi, 2022. 'Academic harassment: The need for interdependent actions of stakeholders'. *eClinicalMedicine* 49, 101481. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2022.101481>.
- Tomàs, N. 2023. 'Un Me Too en la universidad'. *El Diario.es*. Online: [https://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/sociedad/too-universidad\\_129\\_10033510.html](https://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/sociedad/too-universidad_129_10033510.html). [Accessed 23 March 2023].
- Valls-Carol *et al.* 2008. *Violencia de género en las universidades españolas*. Memoria Final 2008–2008. Madrid: Instituto de la Mujer.
- Voss, B.L. 2021a. 'Documenting cultures of harassment in archaeology: A review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative research studies'. *American Antiquity* 86(2), 244–260. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.118>.
- Voss, B.L. 2021b. 'Disrupting cultures of harassment in archaeology: Social-environmental and trauma-informed approaches to disciplinary transformation'. *American Antiquity* 86(3), 447–464. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.19>.
- Zarzuela Gutiérrez, P. 2019. Una radiografía necesaria del sector desde una mirada de género. *Arqueoweb: Revista sobre Arqueología en Internet* 19 (1), 33–49.
- Zarzuela Gutiérrez, P. 2022. 'Desenterrando historias: reflexiones femeninas sobre la arqueología comercial madrileña', in M. Díaz-Andreu, O. Torres Gomáriz and P. Zarzuela Gutiérrez (eds) *Voces in crescendo: del mutismo a la afonía en la historia de las mujeres en la arqueología española*. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, Publicaciones INAPH, 269–281.

## Chapter 17.

# Union Activism and #MeToo in UK Contracting Archaeology

Jessica Bryan, Penelope Foreman, Isobel Phillips  
and Sadie Watson<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

This paper is a reflective view of the work of unions within archaeology and wider society in the UK, written by union representatives within the Prospect Archaeologists branch. We will discuss ways in which the union movement, and our branch in particular, have tried to respond to the crisis highlighted by the #MeToo movement. Archaeology does not come out of this crisis unscathed, as the other papers in the volume show, but using case studies from Wessex Archaeology we highlight some ways in which union reps can start difficult conversations with management through our existing networks, and how wide-ranging and often unexpected the results of these conversations can be.

### Our Union Branch

The Archaeologists branch of Prospect Union has its origins back in the late 1970s when the overarching union for archaeologists in the UK was the Institute of Professionals, Managers and Specialists. At that time we were part of a branch, with a membership of a few hundred people, predominantly in larger employing sections such as the Museum of London, Oxford Archaeological Unit, Wessex Archaeology and the York Archaeological Trust. Elsewhere archaeologists joined as individual members, forming what, even today, remains the largest section of our membership; those who are not in official recognised bargaining units. These members work for employers who do not have official ‘recognition agreements’ with the union but nevertheless are supported by the branch reps and Prospect staff. Some of these early branch sections were more active than others but there was steady support for unionism amongst archaeologists, then a growing paid occupational sector due to the growth of development-led work through the 1970s and 1980s. There was a steady but limited growth in membership during the 1980s and 1990s, with a small branch committee, local reps and support from national negotiating officers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sadie Watson (EDI rep at MOLA) (✉) MOLA, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED. Email: [swatson@mola.org.uk](mailto:swatson@mola.org.uk)  
Jessica Bryan, Chair of Prospect Archaeologists branch, and a rep at MOLA. Email: [jbryan@mola.org.uk](mailto:jbryan@mola.org.uk)  
Penelope Foreman, was the LGBTQIA rep at Prospect Archaeologists branch until 2022, and was Historic England workplace EDI rep, and secretary of the HE North section. Email: [Pen.Foreman@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:Pen.Foreman@historicengland.org.uk)  
Isobel Phillips was an EDI rep at Wessex Archaeology at the time of writing, she has since moved on.

In 2001 the Institute of Professionals, Managers and Specialists merged with the Engineers and Managers Association and was renamed Prospect Union. Prospect today has a membership of over 150,000 and represents a wide range of people including scientists, engineers, tech experts and, of course, archaeologists (Prospect 2022). The modern Archaeologists Branch sits within the broader Heritage Group, currently representing over 10,000 members working in museums and galleries, historic gardens, heritage sites, archaeological trusts, natural heritage, unique library collections and historic records (Prospect 2022). We collaborate with these colleagues across campaigns, events and research projects. Over time archaeologists have been involved in occasional but significant industrial action called by Prospect, largely within the museum sector, for example, with Museum of London staff (including then the archaeologists employed at MoLAS) engaging in a national sector-wide strike in June 2008.

The picture in the UK for union membership in general shows a steady decline throughout the 1990s and early 2000s arising from the changing nature of employment, with more self-employment than ever before, a reduction in public sector jobs due to rampant privatisation, and a failure to organise in the new private sector companies (Machin 2000). Some of this is also linked to changes in society and the expectations of unions, and the reality of what unions could achieve given new restrictive legislation (between 1980 and 1993 there were six pieces of legislation which increased restrictions on union activity). The Trade Union Act in 2016 added further restrictions on industrial ballots and picket lines meaning that the expectation from members that a strike could be called at any time over any issue could no longer be met. Additionally, people had started to look to unions to provide support in wider work/life situations, and to plug the gap when their employer was potentially lacking expert knowledge such as with health and safety monitoring, advice on equality issues and financial advice. These are all relevant to archaeology which, since the formal instigation of archaeology as a stage of the planning process in the 1990s (for a full exposition of how archaeology is conducted within the planning system see Historic England 2022), has seen a growth in larger consultancies providing archaeological advisory services and a proliferation of smaller companies established to service the construction industry. Machin (2000) also specifically attributes low union membership numbers in the 1990s in general to the age of the employing body rather than the age of the members themselves, which is exemplified in archaeology where the sector was only just emerging. Moreover, as it grew in the 1990s and early 2000s, the archaeological sector became fragmented, dependant on commercial success and the significant degree of peripatetic jobs made union organising highly challenging.

Despite this highly complex sector, or perhaps because of it, there was a determined move within the Archaeologists branch to develop further and to embed the principles of unionism more widely across the sector. The Archaeologists branch is comprised of members who are assigned into sections based on employers or groups of employers. Sections always have been, and always will be, central to how the branch is organised. Sections where the employer formally recognises Prospect as the negotiating union provide the communication link and the bargaining unit for pay, terms and conditions. However, as we grew it became clear the branch needed to support the growing membership who worked for employers where Prospect was not recognised, or smaller employers with only one or two members. To address this, 2018 saw a relaunch of the national Prospect Archaeologists branch with the first national AGM for several years taking place in London. In 2020 a new chair was elected, placing a female rep at the head of the branch which galvanised reps and members. These changes have invigorated

the Archaeologists branch further and are reflected in a significant rise in members. In January 2018 the branch had 522 members, growing to 746 in January 2019 and up to 938 in January 2020. At the time of writing (January 2024) there are now over 1500 members. Since the mid 2010s modern unionism has also seen an exponential growth with the rise in overall membership driven by female<sup>2</sup> membership (BEIS 2022) and our branch reflects this phenomenon with an almost equal share of membership – a slightly more equal level than the sector more widely, which reports 47% women and 53% men, wholly representative of the UK workforce as a whole (Aitchison, German and Rocks-MacQueen 2021, table 2.4).

We are a fairly unusual union branch, however, bucking several trends, which have led to our branch being considered an exemplar in terms of our organising and inclusivity by Prospect as a whole. We have significantly younger members than other branches within Prospect and the union movement generally. This branch age profile since 2020 has been a consistent trend, with a third of our membership aged 25 to 34.

There are other areas where we fall short of course, largely reflective of our sector as a whole, but we have very small numbers of members who identify as Black or Minority Ethnic, which means that we are not at all representative of these populations (current UK statistics indicate 81.7% of UK residents identify as ‘white’, although this category includes minority populations (ONS 2021). In fact we do not collate these statistics as the numbers are so small that individuals would be recognisable. This is not just an issue for our branch of course, the archaeological sector is predominantly white, with 97% of the sector identifying as such to Aitchison, German and Rocks-MacQueen (2021, table 2.6).

There is also some work to be done on representation of both diverse gender identities and diverse sexualities. Whilst current data on the numbers of trans, non-binary, or genderfluid people in the sector is lacking, the data demonstrating that higher percentages of those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other (terms taken from Aitchison, German and Rocks-MacQueen’s *Profiling the Profession 2020* (2021) and therefore not fully representative) are higher than that of the population as a whole (Aitchison, German and Rocks-MacQueen 2021, tables 2.7 and 2.7.1). Here again, due to the small numbers involved, statistics are not collated to avoid individuals being identified by their sexuality or gender. The branch’s figures and understanding may be updated when the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa)’s<sup>3</sup> EDI Standing Committee publishes the result of its current survey into demographics and experiences in UK archaeology – a survey it intends to conduct biannually. Although the current statistics show a higher number of people with minority and marginalised sexualities within the sector, there are still considerable issues facing them; entrenched discriminatory attitudes, the higher incidence of harassment and bullying suffered by the LGBTQ+ community (CIPD 2021), the higher likelihood of living with mental health (Stonewall 2018), and the complicated intersection between race, sexuality, gender, disability and social class which is currently poorly addressed by the sector. The branch has made strides in being visible in its support of its LGBTQ+ members – contributing to Prospect-wide initiatives around Pride Month and LGBT History Month, attending the Trades Union Congress (TUC) LGBT conference

---

<sup>2</sup> We consider the definition of ‘female’ to be those who identify as female, and take a trans-inclusive approach.

<sup>3</sup> Cifa is the professional body for archaeologists in the UK, and across Europe. The Cifa staff have consistently supported our branch and have their own Prospect Archaeologists section which bargains on behalf of their staff.

to support important change-making motions and speaking at cross-sector professional development and equalities conferences and events.

It is within this backdrop of a growing and increasingly active branch with an unusually high percentage of young female members that we formulated actions to respond to the #MeToo movement.

### **Our Sector: Young, Female, Harassed.**

The implications of the #MeToo movement proved both an opportunity and a challenge for unions in the UK. Equality had been a central campaigning issue since its origins with the formation of the Women's Protective and Provident League (later the Women's Trade Union League) in 1874 (Phillips 2021) and significant developments in legislation are due to specific industrial relations events such as strikes at the Dagenham Ford factory in 1968 and the Grunwick Dispute in 1976 (ibid.). More recently, the Equality Act 2010 replaced nine major pieces of legislation, including the Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Religion or Belief Regulations 2003, Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003 and Age Regulations 2006. The umbrella body, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), conducts audits of all its member unions to ensure they are adhering to equality law within their own structures for staff as well as members (TUC 2021). Research has shown that where employers recognise unions it is more likely that their equal opportunity provision is more meaningful (TUC 2021).

The fact that #MeToo rose to global prominence in 2017 as a result of its use within the entertainment industry meant that there was much for Prospect's sister union Bectu to consider, with Bectu representing 40,000 staff, contract and freelance workers in the media and entertainment industries (Bectu 2021). There was now a clear imperative to provide both support for victim-survivors of harassment, and to present ways to reduce and remove these behaviours from the workplace.

In 2018 Prospect conducted a Workplace Behaviour Survey of all its members. The results were presented by Prospect Officer Jenny Andrew at the Prospect National Conference in June 2018, along with the launch of a new guide to members, 'A workplace guide to dealing with sexual harassment' (Prospect Bectu 2020). Within the survey data were a significant number of responses from our members, who then numbered 600. Almost half of these contributed to the survey, and so we published these results and analysis of them as a separate 'Research Report', available to members online (Andrew, Bryan and Watson 2020). Of the respondents, 61% identified as female and 39% as male. Of the women 35% reported sexual harassment of various kinds, with over 25% having been subjected to suggestive remarks or jokes or forced to endure unwanted comments about their appearance, and 4% had experienced physical abuse in the form of unwanted and inappropriate touching, hugging or kissing (ibid.). Worryingly, only 35% of those who had experienced it had reported this harassment, and distressingly only small numbers reported being satisfied with the outcome (ibid., fig. 2).

The results were illuminating in other unexpected ways, both in terms of how our sector was constituted, and in terms of who was harassing our colleagues. It became clear that we were working within a significant imbalance, with a sector response that was female dominated,

with a relatively even distribution across age groups – therefore better representing younger workers. This fits with the most recent data we had at the time about our sector, which had come from the 2012/2013 *Profiling the Profession* workforce survey and confirms that most archaeologists under the age of 40 were female and most of those over 40 were male (Aitchison and Rocks-Macqueen 2013). This demographic model has persisted to more recent studies, for example the 2020 *Profiling the Profession* survey reported that 75% of archaeologists aged 20–24 were female, yet for those aged 50–55 the percentages were 63% male, 37% female and for 60+ it was 67% male, and 33% female (Aitchison, German and Rocks-MacQueen 2021, fig. 2.4.2). Along with this interesting (and as yet unexplored) statistic was the disturbing information held within the survey on who were harassing our female colleagues. There had long been an assumption that much of the unwanted behaviours experienced on archaeological sites were due to third parties (or people external to our employer), such as site contractors. These reports had become accepted over time and had not been interrogated. However, the survey showed that in fact the majority of harassment was coming from immediate colleagues, that is those who were also employed as archaeologists (Andrew, Bryan and Watson 2020, fig. 1). Most of the unwanted behaviour came from senior colleagues (25% of respondents), direct managers (23% of respondents), and other immediate colleagues (22% of respondents) (*ibid.*, fig. 1). This led us to conclude that our employers, and managers, must not hide behind the idea that external workers are the primary source of the problem.

We should note here that the incidence of harassment from external contractors was still high for our sector (the fourth most common origin), but it is clear that these issues are interlinked. The high percentage of unwanted behaviours from employees (with little indication of meaningful attempts to tackle it), feeds a culture which also normalises misconduct from third party workers, whilst abdicating responsibility for behaviour not under their immediate employ. The ‘sexist builder’ is an easy trope to fall back on, but an unhelpful and irrelevant one. The systematic avoidance of tackling internal harassment enables others to model and escalate such behaviours. We concluded that ‘*it is the responsibility of employers to set a standard of behaviour for their own staff that will help to set an expectation of the behaviour of other, co-located workers*’ (*ibid.* 2020).

This urgent requirement to examine our own workplaces needs to focus on the power dynamic imbalance, as shown by the differing percentages of young female and older male colleagues. Survey respondents in the ‘less than 30 years old’ age group were ten times more likely (57%) to have experienced sexual harassment than respondents in the ‘greater than 60 years old’ age category (<6%) (*ibid.*, fig. 4). Sexual harassment, as well as other types of discriminatory behaviour, is abusive, and often seeks to reinforce well embedded power imbalances. These tend to intersect strongly with age, with younger workers more likely to be on precarious contracts, or in junior ranks of the workplace hierarchy. They are also more likely to belong to other workplace minorities (e.g., LGBTQIA+, Black and Minority Ethnic), which makes them more vulnerable, even in workplaces that are diversifying slowly (*ibid.*, fig. 4).

The workplace guide published in 2018 (Prospect Bectu) was recognised as an international exemplar (Uni Global Union 2018) and was updated in 2020 to reflect ongoing progress. It calls for a proactive approach, preventing harassment as far as possible and empowering people to raise complaints. It also encouraged other union members to call out harassment when they witness it, and this active bystanding is a key part of our ongoing approach, encouraging

our employers to roll out this training more widely (a good example is from Active Bystander 2022), although we are not aware of it having been provided in the UK to date beyond free sessions provided by ClfA's Scottish Group.

## **Our Challenges**

### *Leadership*

The union movement is not immune from issues surrounding harassment and discrimination. There have been some high-profile occurrences of harassment within unions themselves (Syal 2022), and there remains the likelihood that these discriminatory situations are arising within union branches, sections and organisations. So it is not just within our branch and sections where we need to be vigilant but also within our own networks and within the union itself. The reporting of Gender Pay Gaps has been a legal requirement in the UK for organisations employing more than 250 staff since 2017. Although this is in many ways a blunt instrument, which can mask significant issues such as part time roles, it is nevertheless a useful snapshot of equality over pay. Ideally employers would also report an Equality Pay Gap referencing comparisons between other demographic categories such as race or disability, but as already noted above the numbers in archaeology are too small to enable data to be collected safely so this remains an aspiration. There are two standard Gender Pay Gap measurements, the mean (average hourly earnings of all roles) and median (midpoint hourly rate of all roles). Many organisations with fewer employees chose to report for good practice, and the TUC reports annually. In 2022 they reported a relatively low mean gap of 1.7% in favour of male employees, and 7.4% median, illustrating that they have more men in senior positions than women (TUC 2022). Prospect Bectu's own employment data is less positive, with the 2022 report showing a mean gap of 16.6% and a median gap of 26.2% (Prospect 2022), largely due to there being more men in senior roles. This is not unusual and is borne out by results from across our sector.

For those employers where Prospect are recognised, the gender pay gaps were not insurmountable. (The UK Government's Gender Pay Gap service (Government Equalities Office 2022) is the source of all the data in this section). MOLA reported in 2022 a mean gap of 6.8% and a median of 3.2%. Wessex Archaeology reported a mean of 7.4% and a median of 1.3%. Cotswold Archaeology (who do not recognise Prospect) reported a mean of 11.5% and a median of 2.8%, whereas Oxford Archaeology reported a mean of 9.4% and a median of 4.6%. All these employers are ex-public sector organisations, now educational charities providing professional services to the construction sector. Within the private sector bodies employing a significant number of archaeologists the inequalities in the data are stark. By far the worse of these is the large consultancy RSK Group Ltd of which Headland Archaeology is a part. Taken as a whole, the RSK Group reported a mean gap of 41% and a median of 46%, although it is impossible to separate the data for Headland specifically from this. Another large consultancy, RSP Group Ltd, reported a mean of 24.9% and a median of 23.1%. ARUP had a mean of 14.1% and a median of 15.7%, WSP a mean of 25.6% and a median of 24.7. These results show many things of course, not least of which is a lack of women in senior roles. As union reps we often put pressure on higher levels of organisations to improve conditions for those at lower levels but these results show the challenge with this: leadership is crucial but lived experience can also prove to be a motivating factor when changing workplace behaviours, yet this is made considerably harder in workplaces where pay and roles are significantly imbalanced. Andrew,

Bryan and Watson (2020) concluded that *'workplace leaders, from the chief executive down, must understand their role in supporting culture change, and have a plan in place to deal with disclosures of misconduct'* and these less equal workplaces do not have either women in senior roles, or recognised union branches where we can facilitate negotiation and change.

### ***Bargaining, Personal Cases and HR***

From our experience it has been the case that some Human Resource (HR) departments can be defensive, protective and reactive rather than open and ready to adapt procedures. Much HR work is perceived by staff (perhaps wrongly) as there to protect the organisation and reduce the capacity of staff to progress how employees are treated. Archaeological employers are often corporate entities with Boards or other hierarchical structural systems that do not encourage open debate. An additional practice that persists within our sector is that it is highly risk-averse, and this conservatism often extends to staff terms and conditions. Minimum standards are often the best staff can expect, and in the event of difficulties (grievances, redundancies, disciplinaries) there are often expectations that staff will sign non-disclosure agreements and other forms of legal paperwork designed to quieten debate and critique. Despite the outward appearance of archaeology being a liberal, open-minded profession, there are often intensely conservative influences at high levels.

Often union reps must work behind the scenes, with little opportunity to inform members of progress until issues are resolved, or nearing resolution. This can be frustrating but it is usually necessary, particularly in large organisations where HR departments tend to be more remote from the wider staff body. In practice, although we represent people (our colleagues) in regular matters such as policy and procedure consultations, these often aim to remove personal impacts and reduce things to generic 'policy speak', so it is our job to translate that back into concerns for anonymous individuals as much as possible. Conversely, with personal cases, policies rarely respond effectively to what people actually need, taking the average need, or a standardised approach. This means that often we are navigating complex situations whereby the outcome might ultimately be unsatisfactory for the individual concerned. In fact, much of our work as reps is managing expectations of members. Few employers ever tell us (or report internally) how many such cases they have annually, and what the results of those cases are. This is reported to senior teams, but not to all staff, so there is no way of judging the actual perspective of HR departments and other managers on these issues, or the success of the policies they have in place to deal with them. All these issues are exacerbated in employers where we are not officially recognised (who make up 34% of our total branch) and therefore have little ability to represent our individual members.

### **Achievements**

Given all of the difficulties we face as Archaeologist branch reps, it is important to acknowledge where we do have successes. We have a steadily growing number of reps focusing on EDI matters, who meet to discuss sector matters but also work hard in their own organisations on specific local issues. Our reps sit on Equality-focused Committees at some of the major UK archaeological employers; MOLA, Oxford Archaeology and Wessex Archaeology. Our reps at Wessex Archaeology have had significant success on two initiatives which we use here to illustrate the value of local reps having a good relationship with senior management.

### *Gender Neutral Toilet Provision at Wessex Archaeology*

During 2020, the question of having non-gendered toilets was raised by staff members. This was then something that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Reps began to explore to understand how it could be implemented, whether there had been any other examples within the archaeology sector and the best way for this to be approached. The Wessex Archaeology (WA) EDI Reps led this initiative, conversing and consulting with senior management and the facilities department for how this could be achieved and why it was needed. The idea was also posed to some WA staff and resulted in many useful and interesting viewpoints, all of which were hugely insightful into the way staff viewed the toilet space.

Much of the initial feedback and questions involved:

- How people view the toilet space, including needing a 'safe space' to go to (feeding into wider issues about safe space provision and staff welfare).
- Concerns about the lack of hygiene in shared toilets (feeding into wider issues and the hope that this move to non-gender toilets would encourage people to keep the space clean).
- Questions about those with health conditions and odours.

During these discussions it became obvious that the toilet cubicles were often seen as safe spaces by members of staff, or spaces where they could have some time alone. This then resulted in further discussions about the provision of these spaces within WA's offices to facilitate other areas that could be used. Importantly, these conversations allowed for talks into why staff would feel that they needed a safe space and tried to identify the root causes. This aspect of the process was one of the most insightful as it fostered open and honest conversations about how and why people use the toilet space and allowed for the opening of wider dialogue on topics such as staff welfare. It was decided that the change to non-gender toilets would be accompanied by a document and company emails which would outline the reasoning behind the move. This included a FAQ section which was designed to draw out the issues raised and highlight that these are often related to hygiene, facilities and breakout spaces, rather than being attributes of a non-gendered space. It was hoped that this would answer some of the queries raised during the initial discussions, as well as provide contacts within the organisation of people to contact about other issues regarding welfare.

In terms of the practicalities, some of the WA offices have single toilet facilities which, by default, were non-gender. However, it was felt that there needed to be a specific explanation and signage to make it clear as to why the toilet space was non-gender and the document and FAQ section was used to demonstrate this. To this end, all gendered signage was removed and the toilets cubicles were amended so that they contained the correct facilities for everyone (i.e., sanitary bins) to encourage use by all staff. The provision of non-gender toilets is currently in place in the Bristol and Kent offices with discussions aiming to facilitate this in the other offices too. This has been a really positive change for WA, particularly as it has allowed for discussions on wider topics such as safe space provision and mental wellbeing and fed into ongoing and further conversations between staff.

The implementation of non-gender toilets in some of WA's offices was never simply about the toilet space. By making all toilets non-gender and promoting discussions it is hoped to ensure that everyone is aware that there are facilities available to them without the need to identify with a binary gender. In turn, it was hoped that this would help to encourage conversations about gender, and create inclusive spaces for all by allowing people the ability to use these facilities without fear or discomfort.

### ***Parental Leave Improvements at Wessex Archaeology***

Following discussions between Prospect Reps and the Senior Management Team, WA made improvements to its Parental Leave policies in the summer of 2022. It was hoped that these changes would address concerns about the affordability of having children and continuing to work, as part of a wider move towards balancing and supporting the career development and home/life balance of staff. It was also part of an action plan to reduce the gender pay gap, recognising that the financial cost of returning to work often plays a factor in a person's decisions around their career, and that financial cost starts before birth. These changes were preceded by the introduction of carers' leave, which included up to five days leave for any staff member to care for a loved one who might need help and support.

The changes made to the parental leave policy included:

- Enhanced maternity pay, shared parental pay and adoption pay at 100% for 12 weeks, 90% for 21 weeks and Statutory Maternity Pay for 6 weeks.
- Enhanced paternity provision of four weeks paid leave which can be taken consecutively or non-consecutively.
- Paid antenatal appointments and IVF appointments, including for partners as well.
- Parental bereavement pay for two weeks at 100% pay.
- Improved provision if a child is lost before 24 weeks and the provision of bereavement leave for stillborn babies.
- The establishment of these as a day one right to all staff, with no qualifying period required.

During the course of these changes, the wording of the policies was updated to be more inclusive. Gendered terms were removed, being replaced by 'pregnant workers' and 'partners'. The use of the word 'chestfeeding' was also used in conjunction with breastfeeding. As part of these improvements Prospect and the Senior Management Teams spoke to members of staff who had lived experience to gain further insights and understanding into what improvements would be required. A staff handbook was also produced by Prospect Reps which provided guidance for pregnant workers, new parents and their line managers.

### **Future Plans**

The branch sets aims for each year, most of which are ongoing and cross over into subsequent years. Here we outline a few general aims that we hope to take forward with collaborations from both industry partners and the large number of voluntary groups working to improve sector equality, diversity and inclusion.

### ***Inclusive Working Environments***

An all-round approach is key to improving workplace cultures and ensuring that harassment of all kinds is removed. This is not something that union reps can tackle in isolation, but something that needs to be embedded at all levels of an organisation. Leadership is crucial here, with a strong commitment to change and vocal confirmation that policies and procedures will lead to a reduction in incidences. This naturally runs in parallel with increased (or improved) belief in these systems; that they will be carried forward with the victim-survivor at the heart of any resolution, that there may well be disciplinary proceedings against perpetrators, and that the organisation will learn from each incident and adapt appropriately.

Seemingly low-level harassment is the most common, with so-called ‘banter’ and unwanted jokes forming the largest part of this problem. Without tackling these the most serious incidences of harassment can go unchecked, so it is critical that all staff remain vigilant and call out this common behaviour. This is likely to be extremely challenging, as much of the language around this is framed as a joke, and can be used by anyone. People need support to feel able to complain about this, and active bystander training will help them to feel able to do that.

As we have seen, our sector operates with a clear power imbalance. This should be better understood, through mapping of internal structures, hierarchies and other interrelationships that occur commonly. Examples for our sector might include male supervisors with predominantly female field teams, teams of mainly male senior leaders deciding pay progression, promotions or redundancies, and teams of male union reps attending pay negotiations or commenting on policies. Balance is required, diverse groups are not always possible to arrange in all these cases but there needs to be a system of checks and balances on who is making decisions to ensure they have been fairly considered. Equality Impact Assessments are one formalised way to assess these issues in workplaces.

We have a general branch aim to ensure that flexible working is encouraged and enabled, including within our field teams. We are also keen to ensure that, at all levels, our colleagues are paid for the hours they work, as there are extreme levels of unpaid overtime across our sector. Unseen, unpaid overtime also has the potential to create unequal workplaces. Those who are able to undertake extra tasks in their own time could be seen as more productive and efficient members of the team, and more likely to receive promotion or reward.

### ***Sector Collaboration***

Prospect is a member of the Industry Working Group, set up in 2017 to further discussions over salary minima and national pay bargaining (CifA 2022) although its remit has since expanded to include Brexit, and other employment issues, for example construction site safety. We discuss these issues with other key members CifA, FAME (the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers), David Connolly of BAJR, and the Diggers’ Forum specialist interest group for field archaeologists. The umbrella curatorial group ALGAO is a corresponding member. One area where we have had less success in reaching collective agreement has been over equality, diversity and inclusion, with CifA taking the lead on funding further sector work. FAME have not engaged on this so far. We submitted a series of proposals aimed at the

employers represented by FAME in 2020, including (for example) the establishment of an EDI Committee for each employer, putting EDI-focused aims in each member of staff's annual appraisal, and encouraging the use of equality impact assessments within each employer's organisation. These were all suggested in the immediate aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, with the unarguable lack of racial diversity in archaeology having become a major concern. We still hope to be able to take some of these plans forward with the Industry Working Group.

More informally, we are proud to be a part of IDEAH (Inclusion, Diversity and Equality in Archaeology and Heritage), an umbrella body that encompasses many voluntary groups including the CifA Equality and Diversity Standing Committee, BAJR Respect, British Women Archaeologists, Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage, Trowelblazers, the Enabled Archaeology Foundation and the Seeing Red initiative. Through these informal (but gravely serious) networks we cooperate with valued colleagues and, as a funded member-led organisation, offer practical support by the provision of meeting rooms.

### ***Action as a Priority***

It could be noted that the reporting of data from the archaeological profession is well embedded with funding from Historic England and CifA providing the capacity for longitudinal research over a period of some years. However, factually reporting statistics needs to have an end game; some way of making the data relevant to practice and behaviours, otherwise it becomes a largely meaningless exercise. The most recent *Profiling the Profession* survey was presented as a dataset (Aitchison, German and Rocks-MacQueen 2021), without much analysis thereof, and although this may have been an aim of the survey, it does not fill participants with confidence that their data will be used for any positive action. Accordingly we suggest an end to EDI surveys, unless they have a clear purpose to provide a specific resolution in mind.

There were several aims set out in the Research Report from 2020 (Andrew, Bryan and Watson 2020) that are still to be implemented by any of our employers across the sector. The most challenging of these remain: tackling the internal workplace power dynamics, by mapping internal structures and acting on where there are unhelpful and potentially damaging hierarchies; and the creation of diverse, respectful workspaces. This, in simple terms, requires strong leadership working in close collaboration with grassroots activists to embed change from both directions. In practice, however, this is far from easy, as it requires a sea change in leadership style that will result from a ceding of power. We still have some way to go before we can confirm that we have witnessed this in our sector.

To conclude, we have received enough anonymous reports to know that the levels of harassment have not reduced and many instances of this behaviour are going largely unchecked. The intersectional nature of this has been noted by other papers in this volume, but still requires action in terms of acknowledging which communities amongst our colleagues are most at risk, and offering them protection and defending them through policies, procedures and behaviours. We acknowledge that our sector, the union movement and the world of work more generally have a long way to go before we can be confident that we are providing safe, harassment-free spaces in our workplaces.

## Acknowledgements

The positive action work at Wessex Archaeology would not have been possible without the support and work of Prospect Reps. Many thanks to Shônéd Jones, Sophie Thorogood, Naomi Brennan, Victoria Lambert and Isobel Phillips. The Archaeologist branch reps have had much support from Prospect Union, in particular from our Organiser Louise Staniforth and Researcher Dr Jenny Andrew (now at the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy). We would also like to thank the editors of this volume for inviting us to contribute this paper.

## Bibliography

- Active Bystander. 2022. *Active bystander training*. Online: <https://www.activebystander.co.uk/>. [Accessed 23 January 2023].
- Aitchison, K., German, P. and Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2021. *Profiling the Profession 2020*. Landward Research. Online: <https://profilingtheprofession.org.uk/>. [Accessed 8 January 2023].
- Aitchison, K. and Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2013. *Archaeology labour market intelligence: Profiling the profession 2012–13*. London: Landward Research.
- Andrew, J., Bryan, J. and Watson, S. 2020. *Getting our house in order: Archaeologists' responses to Prospect's workplace behaviours survey, Archaeologists Branch Research Paper No. 1*. Online: <https://famearchaeology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Archaeologists-Branch-Research-Paper-1.pdf>. [Accessed 27 September 2024].
- Bectu. 2021. *Who are Bectu and what do we do?* Online: <https://bectu.org.uk/about/who-are-bectu-and-what-do-we-do/>. [Accessed 8 January 2023].
- BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy). 2022. *Trade union membership, UK 1995–2021: Statistical bulletin*. Online: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1077904/Trade\\_Union\\_Membership\\_UK\\_1995-2021\\_statistical\\_bulletin.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1077904/Trade_Union_Membership_UK_1995-2021_statistical_bulletin.pdf). [Accessed 8 January 2023].
- CifA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists). 2019. *Bullying, harassment and discrimination: A joint statement by CifA, FAME and the Prospect Archaeologists' Branch*. Online: [https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/20190409%20Bullying%20and%20harassment%20joint%20statement\\_final.pdf](https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/20190409%20Bullying%20and%20harassment%20joint%20statement_final.pdf). [Accessed 23 January 2023].
- CifA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists). 2022. *The industry working group*. Online: <https://cifa-uat.opencloudcrm.co.uk/IndustryWorkingGroup>. [Accessed 23 January 2023].
- CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development). 2021. *Inclusion at work: Perspectives on LGBT+ working lives*. Online: <https://www.cipd.org.uk/knowledge/reports/inclusion-perspectives-lgbt/>. [Accessed 31 January 2023].
- Government Equalities Office. 2022. *Gender pay gap service*. Online: <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/>. [Accessed 22 January 2023].
- Historic England. 2022. *Planning and archaeology, Historic England Advice Note 17 (HEAN17)*. Online: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/planning-archaeology-advice-note-17/heag314-planning-archaeology/>. [Accessed 8 January 2023].
- Machin, S. 2000. 'Union decline in Britain'. *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 38(4), 631–645.
- ONS (Office of National Statistics). 2021. *Ethnic group, England and Wales: Census 2021*. Online: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/bulletins/ethnicgroupenglandandwales/census2021>. [Accessed on 8 January 2023].

- Phillips, A. 2021. 'A history of women and trade unions', *Bectu blog*, 5 March 2021. Online: <https://bectu.org.uk/news/a-history-of-women-and-trade-unions>. [Accessed 8 January 2023].
- Prospect Bectu. 2020. *A workplace guide to dealing with sexual harassment*. London: Prospect. Online: <https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2018/01069>. [Accessed 24 September 2024].
- Prospect. 2022. *World class heritage, second class pay: UK heritage cost of living campaign*. Prospect Research Briefing. Online: <https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2022/00591>. [Accessed 8 January 2023].
- Stonewall. 2018. *LGBT in Britain: Health*. Online: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/lgbt-britain-health-2018>. [Accessed 31 January 2023].
- Syal, R. 2022. 'Inquiry launched into alleged sexual harassment by union leader', *The Guardian*, Wednesday 21 September 2022. Online: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/sep/21/tuc-launches-inquiry-into-alleged-sexual-harassment-by-union-leader>. [Accessed 8 January 2023].
- TUC (Trades Union Congress). 2021. *Equality*. Online: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/resource/equality#:~:text=The%20UK%20has%20a%20comprehensive,belief%2C%20sex%20or%20sexual%20orientation>. [Accessed 8 January 2023].
- TUC (Trades Union Congress). 2022. *The TUC's ethnicity and gender pay gap 2022*. Online: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/tucs-ethnicity-and-gender-pay-gap-2022>. [Accessed 22 January 2023].
- Uni Global Union. 2018. *In the wake of #metoo: Unions as drivers of sector responses*. Online: <https://uniglobalunion.org/news/in-the-wake-of-metoo-unions-as-drivers-of-sector-responses/>. [Accessed 22 January 2023].

## Chapter 18.

# Making a Difference Together: Unionism, Archaeology and Change Over Time

Megan Schlanker and Jane Evans<sup>1</sup>

In Conversation with Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins

### Background

As we outline in the introduction, this volume primarily provides a space to record and examine the impact of online and social media activism in addressing sexual harassment and discrimination in archaeology. Such activism has taken place over the last two decades, yet it did not emerge within a vacuum. Feminist activism beyond our discipline has played a fundamental role in changing global conversations about sex and gender for over a hundred years and it is important to acknowledge these vital legacies that enabled the online activism that we document here. Within this the Trade Unionist movement has played an important role, worldwide, in raising feminist activist voices because ‘Trade unionism, by definition, exists to harness workers’ collective action in order to challenge the dominant power structures that seek to exploit their labour’ (kennedy-macfoy *et al.* 2021, 515).<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, this conversation piece brings two different generations of feminists, archaeologists and Trade Union activists into dialogue in order to reflect on changing lived experiences as activists in archaeology, to highlight what has changed, and to examine where more work is needed.

This conversation took place between UK archaeologists Jane Evans (UNISON) and Megan Schlanker (Prospect) over Teams in June 2023, and was facilitated by Hannah Cobb and Kayt Hawkins. Jane was the Worcestershire UNISON union Branch Secretary at the time of the interview and has since retired, whilst Megan was an early career archaeologist, working as field archaeologist at MOLA, and a member of Prospect Union’s Archaeologists Branch. She has since begun a Graduate Teaching Fellowship in History at the University of Lincoln. The conversation begins with Jane and Megan introducing their careers and the activism in which they have been and are engaged.

---

<sup>1</sup> Megan Schlanker (✉) University of Lincoln. Email: mschlanker@lincoln.ac.uk.

Jane Evans UNISON

<sup>2</sup> It is, however, important to note that Trade Unionism has also been a conflicted space for women too, and patriarchal models of power and domination have been highlighted globally as deeply problematic within Union structures (Britwum *et al.* 2012; Lawrence 2016). Moreover, racial discrimination within Trade Unions means that many Global Ethnic Majority women have faced further challenges (kennedy-macfoy *et al.* 2021). As kennedy-macfoy *et al.* note, ‘[t]he lived experiences of the women ... show how the intersection of gender, race, social class, migration status, and age exposes Black women workers to the specific harms of racist, capitalist patriarchy’ (kennedy-macfoy 2021, 213).

## Introductions

**Jane:** I've been an archaeologist for about 40 years; mainly working as a finds specialist. I came into archaeology following a rather unstructured route, perhaps typical of a time when there were no university fees and no defined career structure. I completed a degree in Archaeological Studies in 1979, then went to London; working in a shop and as a dresser in the theatre. I joined the Cusichaca Project in Peru in 1980, and then spent a couple of years working in Peru and Ecuador. Returning to the UK I worked as a volunteer on digs, only paid subsistence (but as I remember, also able to 'sign on'). Gradually I realised I had become an archaeologist and might as well get paid! I then worked on Manpower Services Commission-funded excavations<sup>3</sup> and from that moved into more permanent employment. I've worked through having children so had to adjust my working patterns for family commitments; short periods of maternity leave, going part time, then doing free-lance work while undertaking an MA. When I returned to employment, it was close to home, fitting in with my family, but lower paid. My children grew up, then about three years ago I became Branch Secretary of our UNISON Worcestershire Branch, which covers Local Government workers. My role within UNISON does not focus on archaeology, though I campaign on issues that affect archaeologists, but on much wider issues; such as equality, fair pay and protecting Local Government services. So my current activism supports all the people that archaeologists rely on, e.g., care workers and school support staff, as well as archaeologists and museum staff employed by Worcestershire Councils. I have always been a trade union member.

**Megan:** I've taken what is now the traditional route into British archaeology. I did a university degree and graduated from the University of Birmingham in 2019, and then I did a master's at the University of York. I graduated during the pandemic, which was a uniquely weird experience that a lot of the people that I work with now have shared. And I have been working in developer led, commercial archaeology for just over two years now, and there are a couple of other things that I do. I'm currently the Chair of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA) Early Careers Special Interest Group. I'm also a Prospect Union representative in my workplace as well as part of an equality, diversity and inclusion working group. The biggest sectoral issues I encounter in all my roles relate to pay, and to bullying and harassment. In addition, I am autistic, so one of the things I do in all of these roles is to advocate for other neurodiverse people, and there's a lot of neurodiverse people in archaeology. The time that I've spent learning about myself, I can channel into helping others. So I'm starting from where I am and I'm trying to make change in the sector that I'm in.

**Jane:** I suspect I'm neurodiverse as well, I think this explains a lot of things that I have found challenging in life, and I would agree that there's an awful lot of people who are neurodiverse in archaeology.

**Kayt:** It's interesting listening to you talking about your careers and some of these changes, such as a greater professional route into archaeological careers, provide a good starting point for reflecting on how things have changed around gendered discrimination over time. For example, as archaeology has become a profession how have your experiences of activism

---

<sup>3</sup> Manpower Services Commission: a UK employment scheme which ran primarily in the 1980s.

around sexual harassment changed? Has greater professionalism led to positive behavioural changes?

**Jane:** I have seen changes, but I think it's important to highlight that these haven't happened in a vacuum. My perception will also have changed, because of my new role and, of course, the fact that I've aged. So in terms of sexual harassment, I think that really explicit harassment has reduced, but something that continues is 'banter'. This is something that perhaps impacts most archaeologists out in the field. It is certainly an issue that we deal with as a Trade Union. There is a wider recognition that 'banter' can be offensive, and more employers are developing policies to manage this.

In terms of more explicit sexual harassment, well, I graduated in 1979, and this was the time of Rolf Harris and Jimmy Savile, and a very different view of things that were acceptable or ignored. I can certainly remember, as a young woman, a number of unpleasant incidents on trains; things happening to me and nobody around helping. I'm interested to see what Megan thinks about that; whether anything has changed. But in my experience I think (and hope) that we've all become more professional, that employers are much more aware of sexual harassment now and want to do the right thing. As a trade union we've recently had discussions with one of our employers (not archaeological) around 'banter' which was actually really offensive. They were very keen to work with us to get the message across. So hopefully that reflects change and hopefully that's impacting throughout archaeology.

**Megan:** Comparing and contrasting our experiences, attitudes have definitely changed. Unfortunately, things still happen and things still get ignored, or swept under the rug, or treated as if they're not a problem, even when they are. Before we talk about this more though I'd be really interested to know about the kind of conversations we've seen online and more broadly in workplaces, and in volumes like this – were there equivalents in the 1970s and 1980s? Were people talking about it on the same scale or is that something that's changed quite significantly?

**Jane:** There was so much going on around feminism, but I look back with some sadness now; we took quite a narrow view about some things, and some battles are still being fought. My mum was a 'housewife'; feminists were quite dismissive of that role, but she supported me and wanted me to have a career. In the 1980s, we were overtaken by *Cosmopolitan* and other magazines telling us we could have it all: go out to work, be a high powered exec, have ten children, and be beautiful/fashionable – everything! That put an awful lot of pressure on a lot of women. And you kind of come in naively thinking it's going to be different for you. But actually, if you have children, it does change things. You're torn between responsibilities, wanting to be a good parent and good at the career, and trying to balance these. So I think in many ways a lot hasn't changed, because there are still societal expectations that the woman will be the primary carer, and so women probably still feel that same guilt now. So maybe sexual harassment isn't as bad as it was in the 1970s but all of the other struggles for women, around working and having a family, having periods and menopause and all the other stuff women have to deal with, those pressures are still there.

**Hannah:** It is interesting that by the 1980s people were having these conversations in archaeology – obviously this is highlighted in Conkey and Spector's ground-breaking 1984

paper (Conkey and Spector 1984), and revealed by looking at works like Joan Gero's brilliant *Socio-politics and the woman at home ideology* paper (Gero 1985). In that she highlights how women were working in archaeology, but behind the scenes, doing things like lab work and finding work which she equates to the 'archaeological housework' so they can balance all the care responsibilities, just as Jane highlights, whilst men took the public roles and got all the credit. And, I think, by the time you get to the late 1980s and early 1990s, this discourse is really ramping up with conferences like the 1987 Wedge conference, which led to the 1991 volume *Engendering Archaeology* (Conkey and Gero 1991), the 1989 Chacmool conference on archaeology and gender and the 1991 Boone conference on the Archaeology and Anthropology of Women (Claassen 1992 provides a fascinating summary of other conferences of the time in that paper). Many of these were looking at gender in the archaeological record, but there were papers which highlighted gender roles and gender politics within the archaeological workplace. And then it feels as if something changed in the conversation over the 1990s, as intersectionality becomes a greater analytical lens, so that you get papers like the paper by 'She' in the 2000 *World Archaeology* volume about queer archaeologies (She 2000). 'She' writes anonymously so that she can highlight her experiences in archaeology as an out lesbian, and the way that her sexuality has shaped her career and in particular the power imbalances of relationships with people in senior roles to hers. It's such a powerful paper, and I think a turning point for people publicly talking about those power imbalances that constitute harassment that the last few decades of activism really owe a debt to.

**Jane:** It is interesting to think about the academic debates, which I'm sure came through and had impact, but I'm coming from the angle of somebody who wasn't reading a lot of feminist literature. I was just living my life as an archaeologist and a mum. So my memory looking back was that we were trying to live that life and do it all and feeling we should achieve everything and then finding out we couldn't. Something had to give.

**Kayt:** Hearing that reflection, I'm thinking about when I started working on site in the early 1990s and there was a lot of harassment happening, but I don't remember conversations about it. If that happened now, the thing that has changed is that there are mechanisms to talk about it more openly and to address it in the workplace. So the first thing I would probably do now is get straight onto the Mentoring Women (MWAH) or the Respect Facebook groups to seek support and advice, and look at my employer's reporting structures. But, like you said Jane, these things don't happen in a vacuum and I'm a lot more aware of issues around harassment and discrimination now, whereas I was very naive when I started on site. I'd experienced harassment before, but I wasn't quite prepared for the levels of it that we experienced when I started working on site.

Jane, when you said that hopefully people now are more professional, and you raised the point about banter, I think the increasing professionalisation of archaeology is really interesting. This is something that has changed that can be drawn upon to challenge offensive behaviours. So, for example, I was in a conversation at the CifA conference, and someone had said they didn't understand why women got so upset about banter because it was 'only' banter. But another person made the excellent point that even if you don't find it offensive, it's not professional behaviour. It's not a professional way to talk when you're in a work environment. And so even if you think the whole banter thing is nonsense, actually you should still be professional and you should still call somebody out for it. Because you don't know who else

it might be upsetting, and actually, is that really how you want to be seen, and how you want your profession to be seen?

**Megan:** I agree – there’s a lot of discussions around banter and how it is defined.<sup>4</sup> And I think if it’s between people who are happy that it is part of the way that they communicate with each other, that’s fine, but also, at what point does it cross the line? And I think that in a workplace environment it is very difficult to moderate that. I think you just have to accept that sometimes your sense of humour isn’t going to gel with another person, and that is going to upset them. And you need to accept that something has upset someone and apologise – that’s the important thing. There is that excellent metaphor that I think about a lot, where if you accidentally step backwards and stamped on someone’s toe, you didn’t mean to do it, but you’ve still hurt them. And so just saying ‘I didn’t mean to offend you’, doesn’t absolve what’s happened and I think that this can be applied in the case of banter as well.

**Hannah:** I really like your metaphor, and it’s important to think about professionalism, which I think is something of a double-edged sword. Sometimes professionalism is used as a means to suggest a very rigid, emotionless sort of way of behaving, and in these terms it is the tool of the patriarchy. But models of professionalism that allow for emotion, to hold up your hands and say ‘I’m wrong’ or ‘your behaviour is causing me distress’, or ‘I’m sorry that I’ve not thought about your lived experience, please tell me what I can do to make things better’ are so important for changing our workplaces. Framed in this way, professional behaviour is an ally in the fight against sexual harassment and bullying.

**Megan:** I agree, but it’s complicated because that rigid, unemotional view of professionalism is often the norm, so if you do face an unacceptable behaviour and you get angry you may face a reaction like ‘well, you’re not behaving like a professional. You’re behaving very emotionally!’

### **Has the Way that We React to Harassment Changed Over Time?**

**Hannah:** That’s the double-edged sword of professionalism right there! But perhaps this leads neatly to the second point of comparison and reflection we wanted to explore, which is whether the way we call out and challenge sexual harassment and discrimination and bullying has changed over time?

**Jane:** Perhaps we just need to define what professionalism is? At Worcestershire County Council we did ‘Preferences’ training. I don’t know if you’re familiar with this – it’s about looking at how you interact with other people, understanding your behavioural and communication characteristics and preferences. By sharing these, you learn to understand other people’s communication preferences as well. If you all understand each other, you can communicate better and ultimately that’s part of being professional. Also, knowing that a person who is menstruating, menopausal or otherwise hormonal might cry or get angry more

---

<sup>4</sup> Banter is defined in the dictionary as the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks. However, as much of this volume shows, teasing remarks that have a basis in misogyny and sexism and which make the subject of the comments feel humiliated or uncomfortable actually constitute a form of harassment. Further information can be found in the RESPECT/CiFA *10 things it is useful to know about* Banter factsheet (RESPECT/CiFA 2022).

easily, colleagues might better understand their reactions. So perhaps women having more say in defining what professionalism is would help.

**Megan:** Yes, talking about training is essential and something that is popular at the moment is looking at unconscious biases. When I was trying to find archaeological work during the pandemic, I had a non-archaeological job where they gave us unconscious bias training. It was split quite generationally in terms of who understood it. No one thought that it was a bad idea, but it was clearly a new idea for a lot of people. And then I didn't encounter it in archaeology until I got offered the training quite recently, to trial training that was to be given to managers. I wonder if it's going to be a thing in the future that all managers end up doing no matter what industry they're in? I wonder how that's going to impact workplaces?

**Jane Evans - Unison:** In the County Council we have mandatory training, which I think is really helpful. Completion of this is recorded and contributes towards your annual review. Training includes, for example, unconscious bias, menopause, equality and diversity and sexual harassment. It would be interesting to know whether archaeological employers offer that sort of training. There are many online resources that you can do quite quickly, so it doesn't have to be onerous. If you're out on site, it's possible to do on a phone. So that's a way forward.

**Kayt:** It's striking that, depending on who you work for, there's no set training in anything other than the vocational skills. There's no set training for the profession [in the UK] in how to work with your colleagues, like unconscious bias training, sexual harassment training, and so on, unless you work for a university or a local authority. With my RESPECT hat on (see Hawkins and Rees this volume), when people come to us having experienced or witnessed unwanted behaviours, it is clear the workforce would benefit hugely if employers would collectively arrange that kind of training and make it mandatory, but as a profession we aren't joined up like that yet.

**Hannah:** This makes me think of the cross-sector event that CifA's Equality and Diversity Group ran in 2018 where Sarah May made the excellent analogy that we need to treat EDI issues like we do health and safety. She was flagging how health and safety law is recognised as something that all employers and employees must comply with and that, to ensure that everybody at their entry point has an understanding of health and safety, they first have to obtain a CSCS card<sup>5</sup>. We need an EDI equivalent of that. That would be the kind of thing that could work across archaeology and across the construction industry, and that would be an amazing piece of work, really reinforcing EDI law, addressing harassment, and bringing together things that are happening in different parts of the sector so no one reinvents the wheel.

**Megan:** I agree with EDI being treated with the same rigour as health and safety, but I think I would go further and argue that, in a lot of cases, EDI itself is a health and safety matter. When we're talking about harassment on site, for example, that can get dangerous and that's

---

<sup>5</sup> A UK based scheme for health and safety certification across the construction industry and related professions, including archaeology.

a health and safety problem because it's about the welfare of your team. Harassment and bullying impact on people's mental health, and that is also health and safety!

**Hannah:** Absolutely! This really drives home the importance of EDI training. Though, I'm interested to know, from your experience as union activists, can you see that training actively making a difference? For example, in local and national government archaeology where there is much more structured training around things like sexual harassment and conscious bias and other EDI areas. Does that mean that workplaces are more equitable and that women are treated better in those places? And if it does, then it should be an argument for better training across the sector!

**Megan:** Wherever it happens, an important issue with things like sexual harassment training and unconscious bias training is that it must be mandatory, because if it is self-selecting it tends to only attract people who have already experienced an incident of harassment or discrimination and/or are already aware of their own unconscious biases. Whereas there will be people who will have absolutely no idea what to do when someone comes to them and says 'I'm being bullied' or 'I'm being harassed', and they may not have chosen to do optional training.

**Jane:** Working in a trade union provides an interesting insight on training, but I think this has to go hand in hand with policies. All archaeological workplaces should have policies around EDI, ideally with training too. From a union perspective, policies give you something to get to grips with to tackle the problem, because you can say, 'you have this policy, but it isn't being followed'. If you don't have the policies or if people haven't been trained in them, that can have serious legal implications. Archaeological employers need to take this seriously and make sure policies are in place and relevant training available.

**Kayt:** You would hope that policies against harassment and discrimination would also help in terms of reducing victimisation, because the fear of even reporting something is still very real, isn't it? Despite all the changes that have happened in the UK in terms of the introduction of the Equalities Act 2010. In fact, this brings us back to the earlier questions, whether the way women react to harassment can lead to further discrimination?

**Megan:** I think the simple answer to that question is yes. Unfortunately it still does have those implications and though we'd like to think that the fear is unfounded, it's not. That said, I do think one of the things that has changed is the wider awareness not just for the people who are being harassed, who are generally women, but for the wider workplace as well. Something I've done and I've experienced colleagues do, is put in formal and informal complaints about harassment we've witnessed when the victim has reported it first and it hasn't been given the weight that it deserved. The fact that people don't just say 'ohh, you know, it happens', but instead say 'No, that shouldn't happen - I've witnessed it so I'm going to write a witness statement for you' matters. Those things are the sort of solidarity that I've seen and I think that's such a positive change. And I think that this goes back to policies too, as Jane said - those policies are really helpful because they support that kind of solidarity.

**Jane:** In terms of that question of how women react to harassment and discrimination, I was in a session this morning on self-confidence and assertiveness, and it made me think it's a two-

sided thing, isn't it? Learning how to respond assertively, and then how to manage if other people aren't responding to you appropriately, and knowing how you deal with that.

**Hannah:** Absolutely. Like you were saying Jane, in 1979 harassment and discriminatory behaviour was normalised, whereas now we have ways of addressing those kind of things in the workplace, even down to that kind of training around behaviours and understanding behaviours. But, as we've said, that kind of training about things like active bystander training and dealing with unwanted behaviours is something that archaeology still needs to catch up on.

**Kayt:** We should more generally think about communication and how emotional responses are still often dismissed. For example there is a lot of data that has been gathered about discrimination in the profession in relation to a whole range of protected characteristics, but I have seen this being disregarded at conferences as being collected with an agenda or a bias, often because it is very emotive and often presented by women in an emotional way.

**Megan:** I find that critique really interesting because that happened to me and I wonder if I would have got the comments I got about data I have presented had I been a man. Because the data that I had collected was not all from women, but it did talk about feelings.

**Kayt:** I have seen this several times when papers at conference were dismissed because they were coming from a 'place of emotion'.

**Hannah:** This is where we need to think critically about the move to considering ethics in our profession and the relationship between legal discourses of ethics and emotion. It is so important that we are ethically driven, but we need to be very clear on what we mean by 'behaving ethically' because sometimes 'we need to think about ethics' is used as a shorthand for 'we need to take the emotions out of things by placing it in the framework of legal ethics'. And this can become a mechanism for dismissing the kind of emotional responses that emerge in the moment where there is discrimination, which is very different from the equally important ethical response formed in legal discourse. We need to be able to have space for emotion within our ethics!

**Kayt:** And we also need to be able to be emotional around data, because presenting some kinds of data will make you feel emotional. Surveys can be both methodologically sound and also really difficult to hear, so to then just dismiss it as somehow invalid because it comes from an emotional place and elicits an emotional response is unacceptable. And the critique of 'being too emotional' when presenting data, especially qualitative data, about things like harassment, I've only ever heard made to women.

**Megan:** There are a number of studies that show how, societally it is naturalised that men are 'allowed' to get angry, and process their feelings that way, whereas women who raise their voices and show anger are dismissed as emotional. This is something I've experienced within and outside of archaeology. As a neurodiverse teenager in particular it was hard to understand why the people that were perceived as boys around me were not getting treated the same way that I was getting treated when we had very similar responses to very similar things. I really hope that in the future, if I'm talking to someone who's 25 in 20 years time about my

experiences growing up, I want them to say ‘That’s horrible – I can’t believe that happened’. I want there to be disbelief. That’s why we’re having these conversations. We’re not just having a moan – we need to address these issues face on because they are where gendered discrimination is pervasive, and that seeps into workplace attitudes.

**Kayt:** The feeling you’ve expressed is exactly what inspired my activism with Respect – hearing reports of things like those I’d experienced on site 25 years ago and realising nothing had changed is what inspired both Cat Rees and me to just think ‘enough’!

**Hannah:** That’s similar with me and the forming the CifA EDI Group – that paper that I presented where I pitched the group back in 2015 was called ‘Let’s do something’ because I was so frustrated at the constant reiteration of the data that showed no change in disciplinary demographics. And by that point I’d done the first iteration of *Digging Diversity* which was a study of student demographics (Cobb 2015), so I could see the student body was far more diverse, and I just felt frustrated that there were clear barriers that, despite lots of critique, weren’t being structurally removed.

But though things don’t change overnight, I really feel that the slow grind of constant activism is making a difference. It does feel like change has happened and is happening.

**Jane:** I agree. On the one hand I think how depressingly similar an awful lot of stuff is, but the fact that we are having these conversations and normalising it and that workplaces are having policies that you can challenge, surely must be moving us forward. When I was young, I can remember working on one dig where we were next to a County Council depot with pictures of naked women all over the walls. Thankfully you don’t get that anymore.

**Megan:** Things have definitely gotten better on that front. I know things still happen, but the construction team seemed to be quicker to do something when discrimination occurs. From what I’ve seen, if someone on a construction team is harassing one of the archaeologists, they do not return to that site and they may be gone from the company.

Beyond harassment from external contractors, I think something that we don’t discuss enough, which I’m really glad that we’ve been focusing more on today, is the harassment within archaeological companies and within the sector. I’m glad we have policies but I think we still have work to do. For example I read a bullying and harassment policy for an archaeological company which was full of issues. They kept saying ‘women’ in the terms of the person that was being harassed, which I realise that we’ve been doing a lot in this conversation too. A lot of the time it is women facing harassment, but men and non-binary people also experience this and they need to be included too. The policy I’m thinking of also kept saying ‘we’ll only work with companies that we know are respectful to women’, so it kept putting the onus on these external contractors that we’re working with and not really thinking about the archaeologists – like the guy that’s been here for 30 years and says weird things to the girls that are fresh out of university. I think it’s one of those big misconceptions that harassment will always come from the construction workers, when that’s not always the case (see also Bryan *et al.* this volume).

**Kayt:** Yes, in fact I think a lot of the changes to address harassment in our own archaeological organisations are being driven because the changes and policies are required from the big contractors.

**Megan:** Yes, I still think there is a way to go – I’m sure there are people that have had bad experiences in the last year that haven’t been addressed properly. But I think if we were to look at it on a graph, well I’d like to think, that the number of incidents that are being correctly addressed would be going up.

**Hannah:** That’s great to hear. And earlier we were talking about having a greater solidarity among archaeologists too – people willing to stand up as active bystanders and be witnesses. I wonder if that kind of solidarity and culture change has increased with the increased unionisation of archaeologists? (See also Bryan *et al.* this volume for statistics on this).

**Kayt:** Yes – perhaps we have gone full circle. As Bryan *et al.* point out earlier in this volume, the development of commercial archaeology since PPG16<sup>6</sup> was actually detrimental in terms of the protections for archaeologists because it took them away from the unionised nature of local government archaeology. But now we’re reaching a point with more recognition of unions for commercial archaeologists and so we’re almost coming back to where we were pre-PPG16 in the sense of unionisation and archaeologists having that protection.

**Jane:** On this subject, I’d like to ask Megan about union membership, because I’ve just come back from the UNISON conference and we had a debate about young members. UNISON have raised the upper age defining a ‘young member’ from 27 to 30, because that gives people a fighting chance to get a job, get involved and get active. UNISON really struggles to recruit younger people because our profile is very much within local government and so is mostly older staff. But what’s the picture in archaeology generally, Megan? Are younger people joining Trade Unions?

**Megan:** In my experience, yes – and the paper by Bryan *et al.* in this volume has the exact figures for Prospect which show they are really bucking the trend in terms of high numbers of younger members. But something that I have come up against from some early career archaeologists is misconceptions about unions and why you would need to join one if you aren’t in an established role. For example, I was talking to someone who had only been working in archaeology a few months and I was talking about the benefits of joining Prospect. They agreed they wanted to join, but felt they ought to wait until after finishing their training because they felt it was too early to join as a trainee, whereas I would say this is exactly the time when you are more vulnerable and would benefit from union membership most. I have no idea where this misconception has come from. And then there’s also the more general attitude where people think ‘I really like my workplace and everyone’s really nice to me, so there’s no reason for me to join a union because I’m never going to have any problems’. And

---

<sup>6</sup> PPG16 stands for Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning. This this key piece of planning guidance was introduced in the UK in 1991 and led to the rise of the commercial, developer-led archaeology sector in the UK because it set out, for the first time, both a precautionary principle that all development had to ensure the mitigation of damage to the historic environment, and a requirement for the “polluter” (i.e. the developer) to pay for this.

then you have a problem and you're not in a union. Or you don't have a problem, but you don't have that network of support and discussion.

**Jane:** One of the challenges we face in UNISON is that we, as a union, have traditionally promoted a service model, focusing recruitment on 'what we can do for you' or 'you can benefit from our legal advice'. So Union membership is seen like insurance. Potential members ask, 'what can the Union do for me'. We're desperately trying to change that round. The strength of a Union lies in individual activism, with colleagues in the Union supporting each other and speaking up for themselves. It's not about some external body doing something for you. You are the Union. You're making the difference. You know what needs to change in workplaces. Being in a Union gives you the tools, support and confidence to make those changes.

**Megan:** Yes, exactly. The Union is the people that are in it. It's not this weird external organisation in which you don't have any say. If you've paid your membership, you are the Union. And having the discussion hub that unions provide is so valuable in the workplace, irrespective of whether there's been any particularly heinous violations of anything. But a lot of younger people working in archaeology at the moment that I talk to, such as new trainees that are coming in, really do get this. At least three people have said the first thing they did when they got their contract was to join the Union, which is great.

**Hannah:** That's really interesting to hear. As an academic, I've really noticed the change in students' engagement with social justice issues, particularly over the last decade. Even during the late 2000s there was still a degree of political apathy whereas now I find students show up with the attitude of 'I'm here, what can I do to change things with my archaeological practice?' Seeing that change in students is really powerful and exciting, and that must be feeding into the unionisation of the profession as those students graduate and become working archaeologists.

**Kayt:** My impression, talking to younger people at work, is that my generation on site would have just put up and shut up and not really said anything about harassment and discrimination. But I get the feeling that younger people now are less likely to do that and they're not going to put up with that kind of behaviour. They're either going to vote with their feet and leave or they're going to do something about it.

**Hannah:** Does this come back to professionalism as well? Perhaps the combination of being more engaged with social justice activism and the nature of being more professional creates an important sense of professional righteousness?

**Megan:** Yes, like righteous anger. I think it's also wider, outside of the sector, outside of the workplace. Culture has changed and sexism isn't accepted by my generation anymore. Some of the things that I have had said to me at work I've told to people who don't work in archaeology and they've been so shocked and even thought that I was exaggerating because some of the things are so absurd. For example, the idea that some men wouldn't swear in front of me because obviously I'm a very delicate flower! This sounds like a very benign example, not at

all like harassment – but being treated differently, being ‘othered’ or considered to be in need of protection because of being a woman, feels like something from the past.

**Hannah:** I don’t think that’s benign! Because even at its most seemingly gentle, sexism and misogyny is still sexism and misogyny! Perhaps that’s what’s changed – a recognition that it’s ok to call out even seemingly ‘benign’ things precisely because they aren’t benign.

**Megan:** I think it goes back to that question of intention again. Those guys thought that they were being nice to me. That was their intention. But what I saw was that they don’t see me as the same kind of person that they are and that wasn’t pleasant. This is something that we are thinking about increasingly.

**Jane:** It’s interesting, thinking about harassment and what you are describing here. I’m five foot tall and I remember being young and being patted on the head and how awfully patronising that was – how it was infantilising and how it undermined me as a professional. Whether they meant it that way or not, I look back and think: that made me feel that I was not taken seriously.

**Megan:** I agree. I’m fairly tall, five foot seven inches, so average height, but some of my colleagues are smaller and I have heard them referred to as ‘the little girl over there’. Of course, this does get challenged, you might say ‘ohh, you mean the supervisor?’ But it is a use of language that makes women out to be not really adult. Yet I’ve never heard anyone be referred to as ‘the little boy over there’, even when we’ve had very young people working on site. Unfortunately this is something that hasn’t changed, but through the union and this kind of thing we do now have more mechanisms to call this out.

### **Do You Think Online Activism Has Made a Difference to You as Union Members?**

**Hannah:** One of the catalysts for this book was the ‘bottom up’ online activism that we saw in the last decade and the way that it has impacted practice. And what I find really interesting in what you are saying here is that so much of the activism and calling out of harassment and discrimination and the making changes in the workplace is the same kind of ‘bottom up’ activism, which is the reality of the Union emerging from its members. Given this, do you think online activism has made a difference to you as Union members?

**Megan:** I think it has in the sense that this is what people who are online are being exposed to. If you’re seeing online activism then you’re recognising that other people are talking about the issues. So in this conversation Jane and Kayt both mentioned about having incidents that happened early in their careers and feeling a sense of injustice but simply keeping quiet and carrying on. But part of things like the #MeToo movement is seeing that there are other people that have had those experiences and deciding that you aren’t going to push that feeling of injustice away anymore. I think that’s something that I found in how people have reacted to situations that they faced. In the past they might not have wanted to tell their stories or make a fuss or make a big deal if it’s just them. But, when they find out that other people have been affected by the same thing as them, people are a lot more likely to speak up about it. I wonder how much of that is because they’re not just speaking up for themselves. They’re speaking up for everyone around them, and everyone in the future that might be harassed

by the same person or might fall victim to the same dodgy policies or lack of policies. I think that is something that online activism has clearly contributed to – people feel emboldened to speak out because they’ve seen others do it.

**Jane:** Certainly things like Mentoring Women in Archaeology (MWAH) Facebook group, where you know you have a safe space where you could talk about something happening at work, have helped. You can go on and say, ‘look, this is happening to me, am I being mad worrying about this, or overthinking it?’, and the value of having other people saying ‘no, that’s not right, you shouldn’t be treated like that’ is so validating. And this is so important for other things, as I was just thinking about menopause. The impact of the menopause on women and then how you’re treated because of the symptoms you’ve got is still not as openly discussed as other forms of harassment and discrimination. That said, there’s a lot more policy and training around the menopause in some workplaces. Worcestershire County Council, for example, have recently developed menopause policies, support and training, including for managers. They’re recognising that in the County Council, and probably a lot of local government employers actually are too, there’s a high proportion of female employees, many of whom are older. They’re realising that they’re losing skilled and experienced staff of a certain age and are trying to combat this. But this is only one employer. There is so much that you could discuss about what harassment is, in terms of the way people going through the menopause in other parts of archaeology are treated.

**Kayt:** It’s interesting seeing the recent activism around menopause and how that’s taking off. I mean, we saw it in archaeology with menstruation through the Seeing Red Campaign (Humphreys *et al.* this volume) and making sure menstrual hygiene and onsite welfare was provided in the workplace. Although, that said, the profession was very enthusiastic about it but some parts of the sector were not as enthusiastic about paying for it themselves. But Seeing Red was really effective activism because it was very targeted, and [Seeing Red founder] Amy Talbot got it out there and she hit all the socials. It was a good example of how you can use online activism to chip away to make these important changes.

**Megan:** Yes! I have experienced the impact of that personally. Though perhaps another issue around menstrual hygiene that attitudes need to shift on is around hand washing. For instance, if it’s winter and the water is frozen in the toilet sinks but not in the kitchen canteen, those who don’t menstruate might assume that people could simply wash their hands in that sink after using the toilets.

**Hannah:** Absolutely. I think this has changed over time, so that people are more willing to talk about the things that happen to bodies, and they are more willing to stand up about it. And actually, activism like Seeing Red, which frames itself as for *people who menstruate*, not just for women, is so important because it opens up the space for people who identify with non-binary identities, or people whose bodies are transitioning in different ways, to also enter the conversation about what their bodies need in archaeological workplaces. And that might be bodies transitioning in terms of gender, but also bodies who are coming to the end of a non-full term pregnancy, or bodies that are bleeding post-partum or breast feeding. I think there are so many instances where bodies are changing, and bleeding, or leaking fluids in all sorts

of ways, and normalising those kinds of conversations around bodies and what they need to make the workplace safe and practical to inhabit is so important.

**Kayt:** People who have talked about things like being menopausal and symptoms like vaginal dryness have been a huge influence and inspiration for me because that is also about normalising things that happen to 50% of the population. And maybe that's one of the things that has changed, that we are more confident to have those conversations in the workplace and recognise the importance of having to talk about them.

**Hannah:** That must surely be an impact of online activism too. As Megan was saying, that thing of 'if you can see it, you can be it'. There are people talking about menopause, about periods and about bodies online and that really does make a difference.

**Jane:** There's a lot on the television as well, and it's something that people are much more accustomed to talking about. I'm just wondering though, for people who don't always want to be open about this, do employers have health passports or similar to make reasonable allowances in the workplace? Does that happen in archaeology? For example, if a woman has endometriosis?

**Megan:** Yes, they're called personal risk assessments and they help reasonable adjustments to be made for individuals.

**Kayt:** I think there is some variability in both personal risk assessments and reporting procedures depending on the size of the organisation you work for though. You might have all the reporting procedures in the world but if you are working for a small company you may feel unable to declare anything.

**Megan:** Yes, and identifying as disabled, that is quite a personal and complex thing.

**Hannah:** I think it's important to consider these things when talking about harassment because sexual harassment, gender based discrimination and bullying don't happen in a vacuum. So many intersecting facets of bodies and identities can be subject to all sorts of power relations, so it's important that we talk about this.

## Conclusions

**Hannah:** So it's nearly time for us to end this conversation and we've looked at the past and what has changed in the present, but we wanted to conclude by asking, what's the single biggest positive change that you'd like to see in the future? What would you like to see as the next things to change?

**Jane:** I would like Megan to get to my age and see that things have changed. For people of her generation to feel that if they have a family or other caring responsibilities, they are supported in their careers, can have career progression, and have support coming back into

careers after having children. Ultimately, I want young women coming into the profession to have a better experience of a career where there is real equity.

**Megan:** Yes, it is really heart breaking to hear people talking about having to choose between a career they love and a family that they've always dreamed of having. You shouldn't have to choose that, so I would like to see that change too!

In addition, the biggest positive change that I want to see, as I said earlier, is for things to change so much that this becomes history! I want people to look back at a conversation like this and think 'I really can't believe that happened because it shouldn't have happened, and it doesn't happen anymore and that's right'.

**Jane:** For this to happen it would be good for activism to be mainstream, happening as conversations when you are having tea on site or wherever, and with people of all genders having these conversations.

**Megan:** Yes. The change I've already started to see is that guys are getting involved in these conversations that they may not have been involved in before, and as a result sometimes you'll be talking to a friend who is a man and he'll bring something up that you know that every woman knows, and it's a real revelation for them. For example, I remember explaining to my friend why I didn't want to walk home alone after a night out and he said 'ohh cause you're afraid you'll get mugged'. I pointed out that I was most concerned about sexual assault, and he had never considered that as a worry. But it's including people in those conversations and having people become willing to get involved in conversations about how we can make a difference together that's so important and I'm glad that it's already happening. I look forward to seeing the changes it leads to.

**Hannah:** Maybe we should call this paper 'making a difference together' to reflect this as it is what has come through in this conversation, whether it is through working together as union colleagues, or working together with the construction industry, or working together with archaeological colleagues of all genders – the changes that have come about have been from people coming together for collective, systemic change, and we need more of that to achieve both of your aspirations for the future.

Thank you both so much for talking with Kayt and me. I know many of the things we've discussed today are things we talk about on site or in the workplace and it's so important to have captured those kind of conversations about both continuities and change so that we can evaluate the changes in the future.

**Jane:** And I hope we'll be able to talk again in 30 years time – I hope I'll come along on my Zimmer frame and hear Megan talking about how the changes we want have happened!

## Bibliography

- Britwum, A.O., Douglas, K. and Ledwith, S. 2012. 'Women, gender and power in trade unions', in S. Mosoetsa and M. Williams (eds) *Labour in the Global South: Challenges and alternatives for workers*. Geneva: International Labour Office, 41–64.
- Britwum, A.O. and Ledwith, S. (eds). 2014. *Visibility and voice for union women: Country case studies from Global Labour University researchers*. Mering: Rainer Hampp Verlag.
- Claassen, C. 1992. 'Questioning gender: An introduction', in C. Claassen (ed.) *Exploring gender through archaeology: Selected papers from the 1991 Boone Conference*. Madison, Prehistory Press, 1–10.
- Cobb, H.L. 2015. 'A diverse profession? Challenging inequalities and diversifying involvement in British archaeology', in P. Everill and P. Irving (eds) *Rescue archaeology: Foundations for the future*. Hereford: RESCUE, 226–245.
- Conkey, M. and Gero, J. (eds) 1991. *Engendering archaeology: Women and prehistory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Conkey, M. and Spector, J. 1984. 'Archaeology and the study of gender', in M.B. Schiffer (ed.) *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*, vol. 7. London: Academic Press, 1–38.
- Gero, J.M. 1985. 'Socio-politics and the woman-at-home ideology'. *American Antiquity* 50(2), 342–350.
- kennedy-macfoy, M., Gausi, T. and King, C., 2021. 'When a movement moves within a movement: Black women's feminist activism within trade unions'. *Gender and Development* 29(2/3), 513–528.
- Lawrence, E., 2016. *Gender and trade unions*. London: Routledge. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315276618>.
- RESPECT/CifA. 2022. *10 things it is useful to know about 'Banter'*. Online: [https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/DF\\_BAJR\\_RESPECT\\_factsheet\\_2022\\_NEW.pdf](https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/DF_BAJR_RESPECT_factsheet_2022_NEW.pdf). [Accessed 02 October 2024].
- She. 2000. 'Sex and a career'. *World Archaeology* 32(2), 166–172. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240050131153>.

## Chapter 19.

# In Pursuit of Systemic Equality: The UK's First Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff in Development-led Archaeology

Shantol Campbell, Veronica Abadie, Rosanna Volpe, Sara Perry<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Across UK archaeology a growing number of initiatives, partnerships and cooperative societies have emerged to address systemic inequities in the profession and to advocate for change (e.g., Society of Black Archaeologists, European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Equality and Diversity Working Group and strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion, Council for British Archaeology's Equity and Inclusion Hub). These much-needed efforts have primarily centred on academic or university-based archaeology or professional associations which represent or regulate archaeologists and their practices. With the vast majority of archaeological practitioners in the UK working within developer-funded (commercial, contract or cultural resource management (CRM)) units like MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology), successes, failures and opportunities within these units as they relate to equity, diversity and inclusion are difficult to discern and consequently difficult to learn from.

In February 2021, the Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff (otherwise referred to as NEDS or 'the Network') was launched at MOLA, one of the largest archaeological charities in England and the only Independent Research Organisation in developer-funded archaeology in the UK (UKRI 2023). Its lead and founder, Shantol Campbell (also lead author of this chapter), sought to open a conversation around culture and ethnicity in the workplace through the Network, and worked for two years to get it off the ground. The Network was relatively short lived (2.5 years of operation) as a result of management and staffing changes, but this paper presents an account of the work that it did and the challenges that it faced. It was written at a point when the network was still in existence and, beyond the introduction, the rest of the text below reflects the situation at the time of submission of the paper in 2023.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sara Perry (✉) Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), 31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PY. Email: sara.perry@ucl.ac.uk  
Shantol Campbell, Independent.  
Veronica Abadie, Independent.  
Rosanna Volpe, Independent.

The authors of this chapter were all members or allies of the Network, and although none of the authors are now MOLA employees, at the time we represented most areas of the organisation in terms of our professional roles: field excavation, operations, processing, public engagement, project management, and executive leadership. We identify with a variety of national and cultural backgrounds which influenced our work at MOLA and our experiences on NEDS:

- Shantol Campbell is Black British, of Caribbean heritage, born in the UK. Formerly an employee of MOLA, she is lead and founder of NEDS.
- Veronica Abadie is of mixed Latin American and European ethnicity. She was formerly an employee of MOLA, and a member and co-lead of NEDS.
- Rosanna Volpe is white-Italian and has lived in the UK for over five years. She initially served as a member of NEDS and later assumed the role of co-lead until August 2023.
- Sara Perry is white-Canadian and has been resident in Britain for the past 15 years. She was an ally of NEDS, and through her role in senior management supported its establishment and accessibility to staff. She is now an Associate Professor at UCL.

Committed to honest reflection, our chapter is interwoven with direct quotes from us as authors and from members and allies of the Network collected in interviews with Campbell. In the interests of public access to our experiences, and connecting with the themes of online activism outlined elsewhere in this volume, some of the reflections in this chapter are also available as blog posts (Campbell 2022, 2023).

We begin by providing context on recent movements towards equity in UK archaeology and heritage practice, briefly offering definitions of key terms and touching on existing and emerging scholarship, and ground-up efforts to achieve systemic change. From there, we review some of the literature on staff support networks, which we used to help design the foundations for NEDS and to navigate the complexities of intertwining NEDS with other interests and initiatives at MOLA. We then discuss the emergence and embedding of the Network within MOLA, and consider the internal and external challenges and enablers that affect its growth and development.

Ultimately, with this chapter we aspire to make visible the labour, methods and people behind the establishment of MOLA's Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff, and to reflect honestly on its many obstacles and joys (Figure 1). We do this to support others in constituting anti-racist workplaces and in pursuing organisational change that foregrounds racial justice in developer-funded archaeology. We hope that in sharing our experiences, we contribute to breaking down competitive, proprietorial barriers within contract units which often hinder transparency and collective action around fundamental values and rights, such as equity and inclusion. We believe these barriers can only be fully demolished through cooperative, cross-institution structural transformation.



Figure 1. NEDS members and allies featuring in an introductory video about the Network for MOLA staff, filmed in 2022. Screenshot by: NEDS.

### Context: In Pursuit of Systemic Equality

*‘I felt that colleagues and I needed a safe space as it’s difficult to navigate conversations about racial equality, especially in the workplace where hostility or inclinations to erase identities, and cultural, ethnic and diverse histories may thrive. Who can you speak to about these experiences? What if I’m misunderstood? As a Black British Caribbean young woman, I understand how it can feel isolating in any setting – home, work or social. Ethnicity is a complex topic, and no experience is the same’.*

Shantol Campbell

In the UK, 97% of archaeologists identify as white, 74% have witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment at work (inclusive of all forms of hostility, intimidating and malicious behaviours, unwanted sexual attention and inappropriate comments on appearance), and 26% have specifically experienced or witnessed racially motivated bullying or harassment (Aitchison, German and Rocks-Macqueen 2021). At roughly the same time as these data on the prejudices and harms confronting UK archaeologists were collected, persistent inequities were being foregrounded in unprecedented ways in different parts of the world: as stated in Rivera Price *et al.* (2022), ‘The year 2020 was another inflection point in Western society’s reckoning with racism and social justice...The growing consciousness surrounding racial injustice in majority-white societies compelled individuals and organisations to examine their participation in the marginalisation of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color’.

In archaeology, such reckoning has manifested in a variety of ways, from social media activism, forums and seminar series, to manifestos and alternative futures (e.g., Black Trowel

Collective *et al.* 2024; Brunache *et al.* 2021; Flewellen *et al.* 2021; Franklin *et al.* 2020). Much of this work, especially where it relates to racial equality, is being pursued in academic contexts, and it is acknowledged that research into equity within developer-funded or cultural resource management (CRM) contexts is negligible (Gonzalez 2018). Few reflections on anti-racist theory and practice engage seriously with the unique circumstances of the competitive commercial marketplace, and indeed existing efforts may lead to a sense of exclusion of archaeological practitioners employed in such contexts, given the focus on university-based constituencies and environments (e.g., scholars, students, faculty and campuses). The forms of praxis advocated in these initiatives generally do not take account of the range of actors, business models, and approaches to governance (amongst other things) that are routine in developer-funded archaeology.

One simple example is that the largest commercial units in England are mostly registered charities, regulated by the UK Charity Commission and governed by boards of trustees/directors. Guidance around navigating anti-racist praxis in charitable organisations with boards is virtually non-existent, limited to a handful of isolated but revealing critical reflections primarily based on experiences in the USA (e.g., Hutchings 2021; Minkoff *et al.* 2022; Montgomery and Fryer 2023). Yet, as governors of commercial archaeology units, the role of trustees is elementally important to the nature of everyday business, including recruitment, working conditions and enforcement of policies. Importantly, Historic England has undertaken a programme of work, released in 2024, on board diversity in the heritage sector (Shah 2024), which may help to address aspects of this major gap in guidance. When NEDS was conceived, however, guidance was meagre—primarily confined to closed professional organisations that require membership, the payment of dues, or permission from employers for time to participate during the working day. The inequities and exclusions embedded in the various organisations pushing forward anti-racist archaeology thus add further obstacles to the already challenging pursuit of systemic equality.

Employees at MOLA have a long history of attempting to create more just and safe working spaces, and in 2019 Shantol Campbell initiated efforts to do so for ethnically diverse staff. By ethnically diverse staff we mean people employed at MOLA who come from varied global, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, particularly those who may also have experienced discrimination, isolation and racism in workplace or personal life because of their backgrounds. Campbell sought to carve out an environment at MOLA where these experiences – including, but not limited to, microaggressions, stereotyping, prejudice, gaslighting, racism and discrimination – could be discussed in a safe space for all, one which would have longevity, be shaped in a collaborative and inclusive way, and lead to the active highlighting and challenging of barriers and exclusions.

Whilst anti-racist practice in developer-funded archaeology could take very many forms (mentorship, training, staff recruitment and retention initiatives, design and implementation of specific anti-racist archaeological methods, activities and outputs for different audiences, etc.; also see Cifa n.d.), the lack of any collective and coherent voice on these matters at MOLA, and staff's own struggles with racial injustice, meant that a support and advocacy network of ethnically-diverse members and allies (staff who do not experience prejudice, marginalisation, or racism because of their ethnicity but who want to actively support, advocate, and engage with members) seemed an obvious first step.

## Staff Support Networks

*‘Interesting to hear other people’s stories, good to hear from allies too. The Network is good because it provides support where previously [we] had none...’*

Network Member

NEDS was borne in a professional sector – developer-funded archaeology – at a time when few anti-racist or racially-just models were available for us to follow, and in an organisation where attention to diversity was mostly concentrated in a handful of policies of variable rigour. While an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) working group had been set up at MOLA in 2018, this group was still nascent, it focused on all aspects of EDI, it was accountable to the Board of Trustees hence necessarily formal and bureaucratic in its constitution and, most problematically, it permitted representation from just a fraction (about 3%) of employees of a total personnel of c. 400 people.

Seeking to create a welcoming, empowering and truly inclusive environment for cultural diversity across MOLA, Campbell began to investigate the potential to establish an informal employee network, following guidance published by other sectors (e.g., Business in the Community 2020). No such network existed at MOLA at the time (although attempts had been made and abandoned – e.g., to institute a general ‘workplace’ network), and the closest parallel to Campbell’s vision was the cross-sectoral Museum Detox, specifically for people of colour with experience of working anywhere in museums, galleries, libraries, archives and heritage. At the time, openness to the formation of staff support networks at MOLA was mixed, stymied by concerns, for example, that they might duplicate efforts of the existing EDI group, that learnings would not be communicated to senior management, and that staff involvement in networks could interfere with everyday business or become financially unsustainable. (Notably, these concerns were most visible to Perry, in her executive team role, and less so to members and allies in roles outside of senior leadership).

Research into staff support groups, especially those focused on a ‘single category’ or ‘single identity’ (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, parental status), is also mixed. Sloodman (2022) identifies three fundamental ‘sociological dilemmas’ which underpin such networks and fundamentally threaten their efficacy: their tendency towards homogenisation; an ongoing tension between individual benefit versus wider systemic change; and the consequences and compromises that come with operationalising networks within the institutional status quo. As Dennissen *et al.*’s various studies (e.g., 2019, 2020) show, employee networks, owing to their ‘single category’ nature, often cannot account for intersectionality and multiple identities, and hence may contribute to the further marginalisation of both their members as well as others within the organisation. Where multiple such networks exist in an organisation, they may become competitive and implicated in efforts to prove their worth to management. This competition undermines collaborative action in identifying privilege and dismantling forms of oppression that the organisation may be guilty of perpetuating.

Moreover, Dennissen *et al.* (2019) suggest networks tend to be more successful at helping participants to develop their individual career goals, to develop their sense of belonging within an organisation, or to share experiences, create personal connections and build community, than at actual structural change. Most networks appear to have difficulty in conveying how to

remove barriers to inclusion and hence force change to institutional practices, and this leads Dennissen *et al.* (2019, 967) to call networks better at addressing ‘individual’ and ‘group level’ equality matters, rather than systemic equality, suggesting they ‘sometimes tame diversity instead of changing the status quo’. Corresponding evidence suggests that these networks are often used by organisations simply to increase numbers of individuals who identify as diverse into management (or other) roles.

Despite the critiques of staff support networks, the research is clear that the micro-political strategies utilised by their members and allies can be powerful (Gremmen and Benschop 2024), and that in understanding their tensions we are better able to design them to effect change (Slootman 2022). With this in mind, Campbell and Perry (with some counsel from trustees on MOLA’s board) discussed forming a network that reported to and interacted with the overarching EDI working group on a quarterly basis to ensure a direct connection to senior management, and to set the stage for other networks to be accommodated in the future, enabling people’s different views and identities to be equitably represented rather than operating independently.

### **Development and Embedding of the Network at MOLA**

*‘I responded to the call to join the network as soon as it was launched...I sensed the same urge for engagement in other members’ voices: the first meeting felt comfortable and relaxed, and everyone seemed eager to interact and engage in a common goal...I had previously attempted to join a workplace network in a larger setting, which left me with a strange feeling of failure; to my understanding, the network had been created for diverse ethnic backgrounds, but I was told I could not be accepted as I did not qualify as BAME’.*

Veronica Abadie, Network Co-Lead

Across 2020, and with verbal support from the then-CEO, Campbell worked with light-touch help from Perry to research staff support groups, and draft terms of reference for NEDS (outlining aims, objectives, membership, meetings, communications, and roles and responsibilities of leads, members, and allies). In February 2021, Campbell announced the Network to all MOLA staff, asking for members and allies to put their names forward to join. Those who expressed interest then attended a one-to-one phone call or online meeting with Campbell where she enquired into why they wished to join, and explained the commitment involved. Following this meeting, prospective members would choose whether or not to confirm their participation in the Network.

In order to distribute the weight of responsibility for leadership, a lead/co-lead structure was devised, with co-leads recruited shortly after the launch of the Network from those who had joined as members. The lead (Campbell) took overall responsibility for the Network, its communications and infrastructure; whereas co-leads supported organisation of events and meetings and took responsibility for specific initiatives (e.g., branding; liaising with other external staff networks; confidential listening to members’ experiences of ethnic inequalities and other challenges).

To kick-start NEDS, a series of confidential sessions were hosted online for members. Here they discussed values, images, words and stories related to their understandings of safe spaces

for discussions of race. Campbell collated the responses, drew out overarching themes, and shared them back to members. Four themes were then agreed as group shared goals:

- We will always be confidential (especially with sensitive information).
- We will be good listeners and open to hearing different opinions.
- Ultimately, we want to empathise with and support each other.
- We try to uplift each other and share our different ethnic and cultural traditions to learn from each other's experiences.

These shared goals were then circulated to each new member and ally as part of their commitment to joining NEDS. They were written on each Network invitation, or verbally mentioned at in-person sessions. And each year since NEDS's initiation, they were used to set ambitions and hopes for the subsequent year.



*Figure 2. Campbell (left), NEDS lead, and Abadie (right), co-lead, visiting the In the Black Fantastic exhibition at Southbank Hayward Gallery in 2022 with former colleague and Network 'alumni ally' Emily Wilkes. Photo credit: Emily Wilkes.*

NEDS saw a participation peak of 30 allies and members, with some carrying on their relations even after leaving MOLA (Figure 2). Uptake from allies was immediate, whereas members joined gradually over time, a phenomenon attributable to multiple factors: distributed offices; difficulties in spreading the word to different teams across MOLA; slow building of trust; lack of time. The initial spike from allies likely relates to the timing of the launch of the Network – i.e., soon after George Floyd’s murder and alongside the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as Covid-19 lockdowns, when mostly online activism brought these issues into widespread consciousness and colleagues were looking for a proactive and uplifting environment in which to invest their compassion and agency.

The Network facilitated monthly confidential virtual meetings for members, and hosted two closed Microsoft Teams chats (one for allies, the other for members), as well as arranging bespoke training sessions, presenting to staff at all-MOLA briefings, writing blog posts, fundraising for different causes (cancer research, British Ukraine aid), and planning social gatherings, sometimes for members only, sometimes for both members and allies, sometimes for all staff across the organisation or its individual offices (Figure 3). The variety of activities and inclusion of different groups (members, members + allies, wider employees) in these activities created opportunities for manifesting serious and creative responses to complex

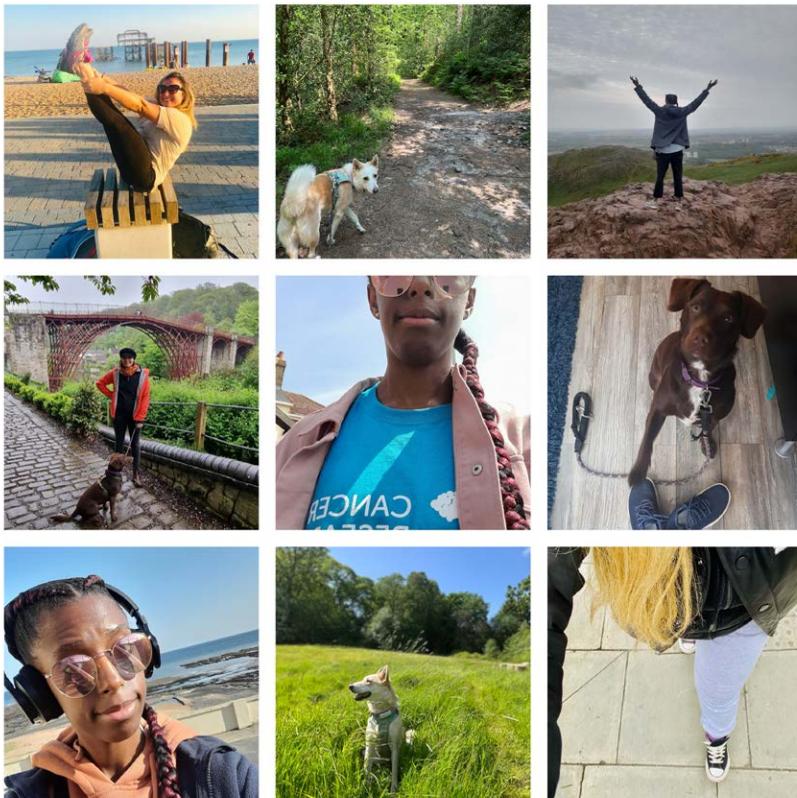


Figure 3. Members and allies on a 100 miles challenge as part of a fundraising effort for Cancer Research UK in May 2023. Photo credits: Shantol Campbell, Rosanna Volpe, Katrina Foxton, Kate Faccia.

issues, and for establishing trusting spaces leading to new and positive working relationships. NEDS advised on the establishment of similar endeavours at MOLA, i.e., on the launch of the LGBT+ Network, including co-organising events with this Network. It also provided a platform to bring people together around emerging crises (e.g., wars in Ukraine, Palestine and Israel) to share personal worries and concerns, and to seek comfort amongst respectful and trustworthy colleagues. Such camaraderie led to calls to action to educate staff in specific racial justice matters, and participation in peaceful protests and activist walks. Moreover, in recent organisational upheavals (e.g., redundancies, restructures) the Network drew people together around conversations beyond race – providing support and reassurance to colleagues that they are valued by their peers even if they have been made to question their value by the wider company.

### **The Future of NEDS and Similar Networks**

*‘I feel respected, included, my opinions matter. I’m being listened to. I enjoy the group. It’s a place to feel safe. [The Network] can contribute to positive changes at MOLA’.*

Network Member

*‘As a member of NEDS, from the beginning, I experienced a lot of hostility and obstruction from non-member work colleagues, almost as if we were stupid and naïve in believing that this group could change things within such a conservative and “cliquey” working environment which was their view of the archaeology field’.*

Rosanna Volpe, Network Co-Lead

The Network itself is praised by its members and allies, and its actions are directly linked to the implementation of new systems at MOLA (e.g., a reporting tool for harassment and abuse, which was repeatedly advocated for by the Network and ultimately came into being through the efforts of MOLA’s EDI working group on which NEDS members and allies sit). Importantly, the distributed structure of the Network has been a success; e.g., Campbell, in her role as lead, was able to take a step back from some organisational duties in 2023, as staff were empowered to plan socials and fundraisers themselves. Many in NEDS (but not necessarily MOLA more widely) describe trusting and supportive relationships with their direct line managers, which helps them to navigate difficult issues at MOLA – and arguably the presence of NEDS itself is responsible for encouraging their managers’ emerging commitment to matters of equality.

However, tensions and longstanding complexities affect the present and future of the group. Some of these are characteristic of staff support networks in general (e.g. differing demands between networks and management structures), whilst others manifest from the highly problematic – ‘less progressive’ and ‘less inclusive’ – dynamics of UK archaeology (Cultural Associates Oxford 2023). With respect to the latter, it has been incredibly difficult for field team members to engage meaningfully with NEDS due to the restrictive and relentless nature of commercial excavation and the fact that most such engagement has to take place unpaid, outside of working hours (at MOLA, nearly 100% of field team members’ time must be ‘chargeable’ to commercial projects). Exclusion is further compounded in developer-funded work, as revealed by an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project led by Network

members (Demicoli and Campbell 2023): many staff come from international backgrounds but are made to feel instrumentalised and as though their expertise is irrelevant. According to one MOLA employee, ‘...all the knowledge that you acquire before you come to the UK is pretty much useless when you arrive here, because they don’t care at all.’ Another described themselves as like ‘tools – isolated, disrespected and lost’.

As Volpe notes, ‘Especially in a multi-ethnic city, where diversity of origin and culture are the common characteristics of every employee, this should be seen as an enrichment for the organisation and the employees themselves’ (Figure 4). But sectoral and company policies, procedures and managerial habits in archaeology often de-value localised or unique knowledge, and strive for generic approaches that then inevitably maintain the status quo. The resulting atmosphere, perhaps unsurprisingly, leads to situations where, as observed by Abadie, NEDS participants become noticeably less present in activities that involve exposure



*Figure 4. NEDS members and allies on a guided nature hike with Wild in the City psychotherapists and nature guides in September 2023. Funded by AHRC as part of the Together We Flourish project (Demicoli and Campbell 2023). Photo credit: Shantol Campbell.*

to the larger organisation (opting to stay in the more protected spaces of the Network rather than make themselves vulnerable within wider MOLA). When these Network contributors do make themselves more visible, the consequences are mixed – from ridicule (as shown by Volpe’s experience quoted at the start of this section) to ongoing requests for NEDS to contribute precious time and energy to generic EDI initiatives without reciprocal investment in (or restitution for) the Network itself.

The role of senior management – as well as specific operational departments like HR – in enabling initiatives like NEDS is well discussed in the existing scholarship (Miller 2023). However there is a difference between enabling staff networks and wholeheartedly supporting them. At MOLA, Network members report feeling that senior leaders’ support did not always translate into direct action (i.e., that the organisation was ‘a place that *should* be inclusive’), often placing the burden on Network members to bring the conversation to senior leadership. When these conversations did happen members felt confronted by a lack of awareness of the everyday challenges experienced by staff, and by naïve perceptions that ethnicity-oriented inequity did not exist at MOLA. For example, initiatives to challenge this, such as Abadie and NEDS colleagues’ efforts to launch #mynameis (REM, n.d.), wherein staff add phonetic spellings of their names to email signatures (and elsewhere) to foreground people’s unique identities, received little backing from management. Moreover, in discussions with leaders, Campbell noted her concern that they did not recognise their responsibility as individuals with the power to make structural, policy and organisational change towards inclusivity. The nature of leadership in developer-funded archaeological organisations like MOLA fuels this predicament, grounded in inflexible pyramidal structures topped by white British cis male figureheads (as evidenced in Aitchison, German and Rocks-MacQueen 2021). Such structures sit in opposition to the constitution of NEDS; they do not in any way reflect the workforce of the organisation; and they are arguably directly tied to the unsustainable economic models that riddle the sector.

In contrast to the reductive and homogenising style of UK corporate archaeology, NEDS has been dedicated to a nuanced approach that privileges lived experience, individual perspectives, and shared ownership. In reflecting on lessons learned, Campbell suggests that it is likely impossible to transplant NEDS’s traits effectively into other organisations who may be seeking to establish similar networks. As she notes, ‘Another organisation may be run by those from the global majority, so the drivers and goals would look completely different to an organisation with a predominately white workforce’. However, certain ways of working assumed by NEDS have been central to its successes. Most basically, the Network has been staff-led (not management led), and it survives only because of broad staff engagement (Figure 5). Such staff engagement has been facilitated via a specific method applied in the early days of NEDS: Campbell hosted confidential discussions with individual Network members who were motivated to join because of specific needs or experiences and who were willing to speak (on condition of anonymity) about those experiences. As she puts it,

*‘It was a way to build community in its early stages. I thought it may help to provide some anonymised thoughts about the experiences and ways staff felt about their workplace. This would take the burden of any one individual being picked out for expressing their experiences, but also help me to shape and drive the Network based on staff wants and needs’.*



*Figure 5. NEDS members and Allies after a self-guided exploration of the various exhibitions at Museum of London in November 2021. Photo credit: Museum of London steward.*

While the discussions were not widely reported, they were used in the MOLA EDI working group to flag racial injustices to other staff and leaders, and in NEDS to contemplate means to address such injustices. At the same time, Abadie was interacting with Race Equality Matters (REM) – a ‘network of networks’ which aims to support groups promoting inclusive change from a race perspective. Approaches recommended by REM were integrated into NEDS activities, and Abadie was able to share and compare experiences with other businesses. This combination of (1) adapting in response to learnings from initiatives, like REM, outside archaeology, (2) foregrounding (whilst respecting the privacy of) real-life experiences, and (3) distributed staff-led engagement, is something we hope to see carry on in NEDS. At the same time, we caution that without significant values-led change to leadership styles and structures, the Network will become unsustainable due to the expectations placed on a very small number of members and allies.

It is also worth noting, by way of conclusion, the challenges of reflecting on NEDS in the context of this chapter. Beyond the difficulties of writing during our off-hours, some of us are in the early stages of our careers or in junior roles, which means that in critiquing the archaeological status quo here we are putting ourselves in an even more vulnerable position. The nature of NEDS itself is meant to be a safe space, so revealing aspects of its constitution seems uncomfortable and potentially threatening to that space. We also identify with different demographics of NEDS – members/allies – with very different experiences: navigating such differences to ensure meaningful representation of each other’s perspectives (let alone those of the Network as a whole) is tricky. Many of these challenges echo and amplify the underlying drivers of inequity and injustice overall. We hope, then, that our efforts here to negotiate the challenges – and to speak candidly, critically, but always with passion and enthusiasm about our experiences – make new racially-just futures seem possible for other archaeologists.

## Acknowledgements

The perspectives presented in this chapter are our own, however NEDS depended upon the support and contributions of very many people, both inside and outside of MOLA. We are especially indebted to Simona Arabadzhieva for her important work as previous co-lead of the Network, as well as Marvin Demicoli who co-led NEDS's first grant-funded project, *Together We Flourish*. We thank Kate Faccia, Katrina Foxton, Cat Gibbs, and Fée Uhssi for leading on different events and fundraisers, and inspiring the group with new ideas and opportunities. Finally, we must recognise Sadie Watson: her unconditional support for the Network, alongside her mentorship, allyship, kindness and empathy, have made a profound difference to each of us.

## Bibliography

- Aitchison, K., German, P. and Rocks-Macqueen, D. 2021. *Profiling the Profession 2020*. London: Landward Research. Online: <https://profilingtheprofession.org.uk/>. [Accessed 30 September 2024].
- Black Trowel Collective, Berihuete-Azorín, M., Blackmore, C., Borck, L., Flexner, J.L., Frieman, C.J., Herrmann, C.A. and Kiddey, R. 2024. 'Archaeology in 2022: Counter-myths for hopeful futures'. *American Anthropologist* 126(1), 135–148. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13940>.
- Brunache, P., Dadzie, B.E., Goodlett, K., Hampden, L., Khreisheh, A., Ngonadi, C.V., Parikh, D. and Plummer Sires, J. 2021. 'Contemporary archaeology and anti-racism: A manifesto from the European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists'. *European Journal of Archaeology* 24, 294–298. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/ea.2021.21>.
- Business in the Community. 2020. 'Steps to start and run an employee network', *Business in the Community*. Online: <https://www.bitc.org.uk/fact-sheet/steps-to-start-and-run-an-employee-network/>. [Accessed 10 January 2024].
- Campbell, S. 2022. 'MOLA's Network for Ethnically Diverse staff in the context of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity', *MOLA*. Online: <https://www.mola.org.uk/discoveries/news/molas-network-ethnically-diverse-staff-context-unesco-universal-declaration>. [Accessed 10 January 2024].
- Campbell, S. 2023. 'What is the conversation for the Network for Ethnically Diverse staff?', *MOLA*. Online: <https://www.mola.org.uk/discoveries/news/what-conversation-network-ethnically-diverse-staff>. [Accessed 10 January 2024].
- CifA n.d. 'Our strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion', *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*. Online: <https://www.archaeologists.net/practices/equality/strategy>. [Accessed 10 January 2024].
- Cultural Associates Oxford. 2023. 'Qualitative inequalities research for the archaeology sector', *CifA*. Online: <https://www.archaeologists.net/projects/qualitative-inequalities-research-archaeology-sector>. [Accessed 14 January 2024].
- Demicoli, M. and Campbell, S. 2023. 'Together we flourish', *Museum of London Archaeology*. MOLA/AHRC Impact Acceleration Account Grant. Online: <https://www.mola.org.uk/get-involved/iaa-grants/networking-grants/together-we-flourish>. [Accessed 14 January 2024].
- Dennissen, M., Benschop, Y. and van den Brink, M. 2019. 'Diversity networks: Networking for equality?' *British Journal of Management* 30(4), 966–980. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12321>.

- Dennissen, M., Benschop, Y. and van den Brink, M. 2020. 'Rethinking diversity management: An intersectional analysis of diversity networks'. *Organization Studies* 41(2), 219–240. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618800103>.
- Flewellen, A.O., Dunnavant, J.P., Odewale, A., Jones, A., Wolde-Michael, T., Crossland, Z. and Franklin, M. 2021. "'The future of archaeology is antiracist": Archaeology in the time of Black Lives Matter'. *American Antiquity* 86, 224–243. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.18>.
- Franklin, M., Dunnavant, J.P., Flewellen, A.O. and Odewale, A. 2020. 'The future is now: Archaeology and the eradication of anti-Blackness'. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 24, 753–766. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-020-00577-1>.
- Gonzalez, T. 2018. 'Perceptions versus reality: A comparative analysis of gender equity trends within academia and CRM in California'. *California Archaeology* 10(2), 211–229. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1947461X.2018.1535815>.
- Gremmen, I. and Benschop, Y.W.M. 2024. 'Micro-political strategies in negotiating the role of women's networks in organizations'. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 43(2), 283–299. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-11-2022-0326>.
- Hutchings, R.M. 2021. 'Whistlin' Dixie? Comments on the Association for Washington Archaeology's Statement on Racism, Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion'. *Journal of Northwest Anthropology* 55, 189–201.
- Miller, J. 2023. 'Five actions for HR to engage other leaders on EDI'. Online: <https://www.cipd.org/uk/views-and-insights/thought-leadership/cipd-voice/engage-leaders-edi/>. [Accessed 20 December 2024].
- Minkoff, M.F., Brock, T.P., and Reeves, M.B. 2022. 'Aiming for anti-racism: Policies and practices of a publicly engaged archaeology department', in V.C. Westmont (ed.) *Critical public archaeology: Confronting social challenges in the 21st Century*. New York: Berghahn Books, 25–44.
- Montgomery, L.M. and Fryer, T.C. 2023. 'The future of archaeology is (still) community collaboration'. *Antiquity* 97(394), 795–809. doi: <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2023.98>.
- REM (Race Equality Matters) n.d. '#MyNameIs: Ensuring the correct pronunciation of people's names'. Online: <https://www.raceequalitymatters.com/my-name-is/>. [Accessed 4 February 2024].
- Rivera Prince, J.A., Blackwood, E.M., Brough, J.A., Landázuri, H.A., Leclerc, E.L., Barnes, M., Douglass, K., Gutiérrez, M.A., Herr, S., Maasch, K.A. and Sandweiss, D.H. 2022. 'An intersectional approach to equity, inequity, and archaeology: A pathway through community'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 10, 382–396. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2022.26>.
- Shah, A. 2024. *Barriers and enablers to board diversity in the heritage sector*. Report for Historic England. London: Getting on Board. Online: <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/services-skills/barriers-enablers-board-diversity-heritage-sector/>. [Accessed 4 October 2024].
- Slotman, M. 2022. 'Affinity networks as diversity instruments. Three sociological dilemmas'. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 38(3), 101217. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2022.101217>.
- UKRI (UK Research and Innovation). 2023. *Eligible independent research organisations and Catapult centres*. Online: <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-research-and-innovation-funding/eligible-independent-research-organisations/>. [Accessed 10 January 2024].

SECTION 5.  
Commentary and Conclusion

## Chapter 20.

# Strategies and Tactics for Addressing Interpersonal Abuses of Power in Archaeology: A Commentary on *Documenting Activism, Creating Change: Archaeology and the Legacy of #MeToo*

Barbara L. Voss<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

*Documenting Activism, Creating Change: Archaeology and the Legacy of #MeToo* documents digital activism campaigns that, during the past decade and a half, generated ‘powerful change and collective action in archaeology and heritage practice’ (Cobb and Hawkins, Chapter 1). This book is particularly timely: we are on the cusp of the apparent disintegration of social media and the simultaneous rise of large language model artificial intelligence and hyperrealistic deepfake media, both of which increasingly appear more human than humans themselves. Given current rapid changes to the technological landscape, my commentary focuses less on specific digital media platforms, and more on what the chapters of this book reveal about the general struggles and triumphs in organising collectively for social and political change.

Following Fitzpatrick’s (Chapter 2) call for activists to acknowledge ‘that they actually *do* have influence and power over the field’, I begin this commentary by acknowledging my current privileges and my professional history as shaping my vantage point on this important book. Next, I have organised my reflections on this book into two major sections. ‘Strategies’ focuses on big-picture objectives that guide the struggle for an archaeology free of interpersonal abuses of power. ‘Tactics’ outlines what the chapters in this book reveal about how to be effective in moving towards those objectives.

Because of this book’s emphasis on the legacy of #MeToo, I focus primarily on anti-harassment activism in this commentary. In this context, ‘harassment’ refers to a wide range of discriminatory and illegal practices related to the actual or perceived identity of the person(s) targeted by the behaviour, including sexual coercions and sexual assaults that occur in educational and workplace environments. Harassment includes both physical and nonphysical behaviour, and can be direct or indirect. I also use the phrase ‘other interpersonal abuses of power’ as an inclusive term to refer to bullying, intimidation, implicit and explicit bias and discrimination.

---

<sup>1</sup> Barbara L. Voss (✉) Department of Anthropology, 450 Jane Stanford Way, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-2034.

**Position/Location/Moment**

I am a survivor of harassment and sexual assault in archaeology. I spent the formative years of my career working in one of the most marginalised positions in archaeology: a ‘shovel bum’ who moved from project to project in cultural resource management. Paradoxically, today I occupy one of the most privileged positions in the discipline: full professor with tenure at a major research university. Compounding this privilege, I am white, middle class and middle-aged. I am also queer and gender nonconforming, and a person with disabilities and chronic illness. Theories of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991), precarity (Butler 2004, 2009), trauma (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2018; National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project and National Sexual Violence Resource Center 2017; Tello 2018) and structural violence (Galtung 1969) all help me make sense of my simultaneous experiences of privilege and vulnerability in my work as an archaeologist. I do my best to bring these sensibilities to my activism, research and pedagogy.

My vantage point on this book about digital activism is also informed by my location. I write this commentary from the heart of Silicon Valley, at my home office desk in a faculty housing complex that sits on the site of Facebook’s second headquarters (the first, in downtown Palo Alto, is just 4km north). A vacant building next door to the housing complex recently housed the now-bankrupt Silicon Valley Bank, which specialised in financial services for venture capital funds and tech startups. My daily morning walk often takes me past the engineering headquarters of Tesla, the electric vehicle company whose CEO and largest stockholder is Elon Musk, who in 2022 successfully manoeuvred a hostile takeover of Twitter, now renamed X. On campus my department office and research laboratory are just a few minutes’ stroll from the Computer Science Department, where Larry Page and Sergey Brin studied together before dropping out of graduate school to found a search engine called Google (now part of Alphabet). And my primary research site – the location of the former Market Street Chinatown in downtown San Jose – is just a few blocks from the headquarters of Zoom, Adobe and a host of other digital platforms featured in this book.

There are many paradoxes involved in practising and teaching archaeology in future-oriented Silicon Valley, not to mention being a middle-class educator living in the midst of one of the world’s greatest concentrations of wealth. Particularly relevant to this volume, my location provides daily reminders that cyberspaces and digital platforms are created and sustained through the transformation of physical places and the dislocation of people and communities. I am thus keenly aware that digital activism is embedded in and contributes to social and economic inequalities and environmental damages resulting from digital capitalism.

Perhaps because of my location in Silicon Valley, I had not previously considered myself to be a digital activist. Do fish in the ocean know that water is wet? Yet, reflecting on the past 20 years or so, I cannot think of an activist movement or campaign that I have been part of that did not include a substantial digital component. I’ve certainly contributed my own stories to hashtag activism campaigns, such as #MeToo and #IllGoWithYou. (I ultimately deleted my original posts because of the online harassment they sparked, which is symptomatic of the hazards of digital activism as well.) In 2016 and 2020, I also co-organised two short-lived ‘born digital’ networks of archaeologists and allies aimed at boosting participation in United States

electoral politics.<sup>2</sup> In 2021 I also developed a social media campaign involving blog posts, tweets and other social media posts to support the publication of two open-access articles about harassment in archaeology (Voss 2021a, 2021b).

After nearly two decades of active participation and activism in digital spaces, in this moment I have pulled significantly back from social media and other public platforms. It started with my disgust with Elon Musk's hostile takeover and rebranding of Twitter. Increasingly, I came to accept that, in the words of comedian Pete Davidson, 'My doctor says the internet isn't good for me' (Diva and Davidson 2023). I am not alone. In recent years, the risks of social media and other aspects of 'screen time' have become glaringly apparent: implicit and explicit algorithmic bias; political censorship; mental health risks; declining attention spans; privacy violations; appropriation of intellectual property; digital 'persuasion' technologies; and trolls, predators, hate speech, clickbait and deepfakes. In fact, as I was making the final editorial adjustments to this commentary, the US Surgeon General announced a plan to place health warning labels on social media platforms. Current and future digital activists need to account for these hazards even as we seek to leverage the power and reach of digital platforms.

## Strategies

### *Intersectionality and Inclusiveness*

Building an equitable and just archaeology requires deliberate and continual commitment to intersectionality and inclusiveness. As Mary, Pasquini and Vandeveld (Chapter 11) write of their work with the *Paye ta Truelle* project, 'the issues we face in archaeology are not specific to our discipline but are systemic' and cannot be separated 'from anti-racist struggles and from those for the rights of LGBTQIA+ and disabled people'. The contributions to this book provide several examples of intersectionality and inclusiveness in action. The Archaeology Branch of the Prospect Union in the United Kingdom has an open membership policy: you do not need to be represented by the union in your employment in order to join the union and receive the benefits of being part of organised labour (Bryan *et al.*, Chapter 17; Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18). The Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff at the Museum of London Archaeology highlights the intersections between gender, race, ethnicity and national origin (Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19).

The contributions in this book also document the compounding impact of marginalisation in increased vulnerability to harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power. Bryan *et al.* (Chapter 17) describe the membership of the Prospect Union Archaeology Branch as 'young, female, harassed', and further highlight the burden of precarity carried by early career archaeologists who are often working on short-term contracts. They note that in archaeology in the United Kingdom, most of those in the junior ranks are women under 40, and those in senior ranks are men over 40. As Pedro (Chapter 3) illustrates, even people of the same age and rank may be treated quite differently because of their perceived or actual gender.

---

<sup>2</sup> Archaeologists Against Trump, a nonpartisan Facebook group, was started on 19 July 2016 and continued through the November election. On 7 January 2017 the group voted to change its mission and focus and was renamed Archaeologists for a Progressive Future; at that time I transferred ownership of the group to a volunteer action council. Dump Trump, a nonpartisan affinity group founded on 8 August 2020, was a private network of people who came together to take positive action aimed at preventing then-President Donald Trump's re-election. The group operated primarily through Google Groups and Zoom meetings and disbanded after the November 2020 election.

Similarly, Campbell *et al.* (Chapter 19) observe that archaeologists of colour and ethnically diverse staff are clustered in lower ranks, while senior management and human resources staff are primarily white. Thus, agism, racism and gender inequality compound the power differentials already inherent in hierarchically organised workplaces.

In the spirit of furthering inclusivity, I want to raise a concern here that the dominant discourse in anti-harassment activism, including in this book, tends to universalise the ‘senior man perpetrator/junior woman target’ dyad. Without doubt, women archaeologists are disproportionately affected by harassment compared to men (although the highest rates of harassment are reported by archaeologists of colour, ethnic minority archaeologists, nonbinary archaeologists, LGBTQIA+ archaeologists and archaeologists with disabilities). It is a mistake to conflate a statistical tendency with a cultural norm. In survey after survey, significant numbers of men archaeologists – as many as 46% in one major peer reviewed study (Meyers *et al.* 2018) – report having experienced harassment in the course of their archaeological training and careers (Voss 2021a, 448; 2021b, Table 1).

Similarly, both quantitative and qualitative research on harassment in archaeology show that people of all genders commit acts of harassment. Harassment in archaeology is a learned behaviour, often through group experiences in field, lab and classroom settings (Coto Sarmiento *et al.* 2020; Heath-Stout 2019; Leighton 2020; Meyers *et al.* 2018; Radde 2018). As Hassett mentions in relation to TrowelBlazers’ work to recover forgotten and occluded histories of women in the earth-moving sciences, ‘not all women were being celebrated and ... some who were perhaps we shouldn’t be celebrating. Some of them are pretty terrible, in terms of their wider social beliefs or activity’ (Hassett *et al.*, Chapter 15). To be precise, Hassett and colleagues do not describe what actions were committed by these ‘pretty terrible’ women. But this awareness – that women can be perpetrators as well as targets, and perhaps at times are both – is essential to forging a more inclusive anti-harassment movement in archaeology.

There is substantial research about why men who have survived harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power are less likely to report or publicly acknowledge their experiences. One oft-cited reason is that men are rarely represented as survivors in research, media, and programming about harassment and sexual assault. Another is that men are rarely recognised as potential complainants when policies and support services are being developed (Bailey 2018; Balonon-Rosen and Adams 2018; Levitt 2022; National Sexual Violence Resource Center n.d.). Thus, there is a vicious cycle: the lack of representation and recognition continues to reinforce the man-perpetrator/woman-target stereotype, further deterring men survivors from coming forward and participating in anti-harassment activism.

To fulfill Cobb and Hawkins’s (Chapter 1) powerful vision of an archaeology that is trans-inclusive, intersectional and anti-universalising, we need to expand our approach to anti-harassment activism to challenge all interpersonal abuses of power, regardless of the identity of the target. I challenge the activist projects and campaigns recounted in this volume to consider how they can reframe their efforts to welcome and represent all survivors.

### ***Bodies with Emotions***

The second strategy that runs throughout this volume is the importance of centring archaeologists' bodies and emotional well-being. The abnegation of the body and emotions is central to many Western traditions that privilege so-called objectivity and rational thought over subjective, embodied knowledge and experience. It is thus a powerful paradigm-shifting strategy to turn our attention to the 'many instances where bodies are changing, and bleeding, or leaking fluids in all sorts of ways, and normalising those kinds of conversations around bodies' (Cobb in Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18; see also Pedro, Chapter 3).

Discussions of bodily needs in archaeological workplaces and training sites are thus paradigm changing. In my career experience, these conversations were unspeakable until very recently. The new discourses that are emerging are an incredible example of the power of representational activism. Advocating for adequate and gender-inclusive toilet facilities is a theme throughout the volume: being able to relieve oneself in appropriate and private ways is central to human dignity, as Pedro (Chapter 3) poignantly illustrates. The Seeing Red initiative further aims to raise 'awareness and improving sanitary and hygiene practices in the construction sector' (Humphreys *et al.*, Chapter 14), expanding from an initial focus on menstruation to include pregnancy, breastfeeding and menopause (see also Cobb, Chapter 7 and Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18). Similarly, union advocacy for gender neutral toilets at Wessex archaeology challenges trans-exclusion in archaeological workplaces (Bryan *et al.*, Chapter 17).

Many of the contributions to this volume reflect an understanding that the bodies of women and trans/non-binary archaeologists are neglected by design in many archaeological educational settings and workplaces. I completely agree. Simultaneously it would be valuable to take a step back and ask whether these settings are designed for *any* bodies, including those of cisgendered men. In my early career, I spent years as an archaeological monitor on construction sites where I was often the only non-man present. I witnessed many men struggle with the same bodily concerns that I did: lack of bathroom privacy, lack of clean water for hand washing, workloads that strained their physical capacity, inability to manage medical needs, discrimination against those with disabilities and disregard for caregiving demands. As Schlanker reminds us, 'men and non-binary people also experience this and they need to be included too' (Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18).

Emotions – 'conscious mental reactions (such as anger or fear) . . . typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body' (American Psychological Association no date) – are also strategically important because harassment, assault, bullying, intimidation and discrimination are all behaviours undertaken with the intent of causing emotional harm. Several chapters note that harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power are facilitated by social norms around the experience and display of emotion. For example, research conducted in Serbia found that targets of harassment and assault reported 'a distinct lack of trust in established institutions and fear no one would believe them ... a socially-induced sense of shame in which they would be blamed instead', and felt that 'talking about it [harassment] to be a shameful process that unjustly humiliates the victim and their family' (Balaban, Milosavljević and Ignjatović, Chapter 5). This is not, of course, limited to Serbia:

social shame and humiliation are primary emotional tools used by perpetrators to manipulate their targets.

Schlanker *et al.* (Chapter 18) particularly highlight how gendered expectations about emotion legitimate some people having certain emotions and stigmatise others: ‘There are a number of studies that show how, societally, it is naturalised that men are “allowed” to get angry ... whereas women who raise their voices and show anger are dismissed as “emotional”’. Similarly, as Pedro (Chapter 3) illustrates, in some contexts, it is expected – sometimes demanded – that people perceived as women should always present a polite and pleasant affect, regardless of whatever emotions they are actually experiencing. These emotional expectations in the workplace are often referred to as ‘affective labor’ and the load of this work is differentially distributed on those who are subordinate and those who belong to traditionally marginalised categories, with great cost to their health and well-being (Hardt 1999).

The centrality of the body, emotion, and affective labour comes together in the preceding chapters most powerfully during discussions of ‘banter’. As defined in *Merriam-Webster*, banter is ‘good-natured and usually witty and animated joking’. Thus it becomes cover for ‘inappropriate or derogatory comments’ (Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12), ‘inappropriate commentary [and] sexist jargon’ (Stutz, Rudd and Berg, Chapter 13), and ‘obscenities (especially concerning women’s bodies)’ (Balaban *et al.*, Chapter 5), all of which ‘make the subject of the comments feel humiliated or uncomfortable’ (Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18).

One of the most important findings of recent research is that non-verbal harassment, such as banter, ‘can result in the same level of negative professional and psychological outcomes as ... instances of sexual coercion’ (National Academies of Sciences Engineering Medicine 2018). The RESPECT campaign detailed by Hawkins and Rees (Chapter 12) notes the ‘fear and humiliation’ that targets of verbal harassment often suffer. In this way, discriminatory banter creates an environment of ‘hostility, aggression, and intolerance toward difference’ (Radde 2018 246). Further, verbal harassment can be a grooming behaviour that increases the target’s vulnerability to physical abuse (Johnson *et al.* 2018).

The chapters in this book also bear witness to the emotional rewards and challenges of activism itself. As Cobb (Chapter 7) writes of the campaign #everyDIGsexism:

*The subjects in this book are painful and hard, and the people writing or talking about them (myself included) have poured hours and hours of their mostly unpaid time into them. To pretend this is not personal, emotive and passionate does it more than a disservice – it plays it down and it plays into the hands of the patriarchal systems that we all seek to challenge.*

Others write about the ‘risk of vicarious trauma’ (Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12) and the ways in which researching and working against interpersonal abuses of power ‘may feel like reliving both the respondents’ and one’s personal HABI [harassment, abuse, bullying, and intimidation] experiences’ (Coltofean and Gaydarska, Chapter 4).

Emotional care is thus strategically essential. As Mary *et al.* (Chapter 11) write, ‘The fight is still in its early stages, but our determination remains intact, our message is slowly getting through, and we are no longer alone. “Rebellions are built on hope”, and we have no shortage

of it'. Klembara (Chapter 10), discussing the Queer Archaeology project, similarly writes about balancing queer trauma with queer positivity: acknowledging those whose careers were damaged by homophobia and harassment and structural barriers, while still highlighting the positives of queer achievement in archaeology. Both individually and in activist groups and organisations, we would all do well to learn from the example of Mentoring Women in Archaeology Network (Humpheys *et al.* 2024), whose theme days ('We Rock Wednesday', 'FriYAY' and 'Selfcare Sunday') bring emotional wellness and human connection to the forefront of our activism against harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power.

### ***Structural Transformation***

The preceding chapters emphasise that harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power are fostered and perpetuated by pervasive power differences and patterned social norms. Johan Galtung's 1969 essay 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', has become foundational for discussions of structural violence and structural inequality: 'Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations... Violence is here defined as the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is' (Galtung 1969, 68).

In one way, harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power *are* direct violence: a perpetrator takes an action that damages their target, physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially, and economically. Yet the contributions to this volume consistently point to the structural factors – both within and outside of archaeology – that enable and perpetuate harassment (Table 1). As Balaban *et al.* (Chapter 5) write, 'it is critical that there are mechanisms against harassment that rely on structural rather than individual solutions' (see also Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13).

One of the most pernicious aspects of structural violence is that it entangles those who suffer with those who benefit. As Heffron *et al.* (Chapter 9) explain, 'So a lot of it is very internalised ... Sometimes, even when there is awareness, a survival mechanism kicks in. You put up with it because then it gets you something and then you can get a little bit ahead. It's quite unhealthy because it really pits people against each other and again, that is something that perpetuates and protects the system as well by creating conflicts of interest'. Thus, structural transformation of archaeology is not only necessary, but it also calls each one of us to examine our investments in the current *status quo* and how our decisions and conduct continue to perpetuate underlying structural inequalities.

### **Tactics**

#### ***'Zooming In' and 'Zooming Out'***

This volume's expansive approach to documenting digital activism in archaeology provides a model for how, in future campaigns and programs, activists can 'zoom in' on specific issues while still holding awareness of the complexity and interconnectedness of abuses of power. Some chapters, following the lead of #MeToo and #TimesUp, focus specifically on sexual harassment and sexual assault in archaeology; others widen their focus to include other types

of interpersonal abuses, such as bullying and intimidation; still others address institutional and structural forms of discrimination that result in identity-based exclusion or marginalisation in archaeology. This tension between ‘zooming out’ to address abuse and exclusion as a whole and ‘zooming in’ on specific aspects of abuses of power reflects the tactical calibrations that are necessary in any form of activism.

At times a focus on a particular form of abuse of power is tactically effective. As an example, both bullying and harassment are interpersonal abuses of power. However, in the United States they have different legal definitions and different remedies depending on context. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal for employers to allow anyone to be harassed or discriminated against based on a protected identity class, such as gender, sexuality, race, or national origin. In contrast, there is no federal law prohibiting workplace bullying. Yet several individual states have passed regional anti-bullying laws that cover workers within their borders. Additionally, workers’ compensation, which provides medical care and income for those who are injured due to work conditions, has been used as a legal remedy for targets of bullying who develop stress-related medical conditions. Even in states where bullying is not legally prohibited under statutory law, some individual workplaces have anti-bullying policies that may be enforceable under contract law.

The contrast between the legal standing of identity-based harassment and bullying in the United States illustrates why activist campaigns must account for the particularities of context. Sometimes it will be most effective to focus on a single issue (Balaban *et al.*, Chapter 5; Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19; Hassett *et al.*, Chapter 15; Heffron *et al.*, Chapter 9; Klembara, Chapter 10; Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13); at other times, it will be essential to build broader coalitions for change (Bryan *et al.*, Chapter 17; Coltofean and Gaydarska, Chapter 4; Mary *et al.*, Chapter 11; Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18; Tavera Medina, Chapter 8).

### ***Is the Medium the Message?***

When ChatGPT first launched its public demonstration on 30 November 2022, one of my close friends, a long-term Silicon Valley professional, told me that I would soon look back and realise that this was the day the world changed. She predicted that the deep learning, large language revolution in artificial intelligence would usher in an era of political, economic and social transformation far greater than that caused by any technological change during the prior three centuries. Whether or not she is right, there is no question that we are entering a new digital paradigm. In fact, while I was in the middle of drafting this paragraph, Google launched ‘AI Overview’ as its new top search result, which some have argued may result in the end of the web as we know it (e.g., Donath and Schneier 2024; Kafka 2024).

Marshall McLuhan’s (1967) often-repeated axiom ‘The medium is the message’ may have reached its outer limits: with artificial intelligence, content is increasingly dissociated from specific platforms. Nonetheless, by example, the chapters of this book provide greater awareness of the specific attributes that may support and amplify different kinds of activist campaigns.

*Representational Campaigns.*

The ‘digital commons’ created by social media in the 2010s and early 2020s opened new possibilities for raising awareness and amplifying representation of contested or minority perspectives. #MeToo and #TimesUp are exemplar campaigns, which produced a ‘landscape of discourse ... read by millions around the world ... inviting a level of international solidarity and organisation that has never been seen before’ (Fitzpatrick, Chapter 2). This book contains numerous examples of representational campaigns in archaeology: #everyDIGsexism, #PayetaTruelle, FLAMA, WILLKAS, RESPECT, TrowelBlazers, among others. With the current decline of mainstream social media platforms, the challenge is to find or even generate new low-cost venues for rapid dissemination of representational content. In the moment I’m writing this, there seems to be a renaissance of mass email platforms (e.g., Listserv and Google Groups), as well as hybrid messaging/social media apps, such as WhatsApp. By the time this commentary is published, there will likely be another shift.

*Collecting and Disseminating Testimony.*

The testimonies of survivors speak truth to power. Their words not only document the harm done but also elicit emotional responses that can motivate witnesses into action. Bearing witness to others’ testimonies also creates new social spaces for vulnerability and trust, which is especially important in mending the rips in the social fabric caused by harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power. This book itself is inspired by the power of #MeToo and similar campaigns in which survivors step forward, identify themselves publicly and testify to what happened to them and how it has affected them.

The power of the testimonial is illustrated by many of the campaigns described in this book. For example, #utgrävningpågå, which collected and published anonymous testimonies in a Facebook group, shattered the false belief that the high level of participation of women in Swedish archaeology somehow insulated them from harassment (Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13); #everyDIGsexism invited those on Twitter to share ‘examples of #sexism you’ve experienced in #archaeology’ (Cobb, Chapter 7). The *Paye ta Truelle* collective, which began ‘with an online platform aiming at collecting anonymous testimonies on sexism and archaeology’, expanded into the art exhibition *Archéo-Sexisme*, as well as a series of free-access articles (Mary *et al.*, Chapter 11). TrowelBlazers recovers the occluded histories of women in the earth-moving sciences (Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12). These and other testimonial campaigns will continue to be necessary to raise awareness and motivate action against harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power.

*Building Networks and Mobilising Action.*

The contributions to this book indicate that building activist networks and fostering sustained engagement require different digital tools than representational or testimonial campaigns. As Coltofean and Gaydarska (Chapter 4) describe regarding their survey research, ‘To our surprise, it was the personalised invitation emails and Facebook messages ... that were most effective in generating answers’. Person-to-person contact is critical, whether through email lists, message groups, Zoom meetings or digital meeting platforms.

*Peer Support as Restorative Action and Capacity Building.*

Expanding on the social repair initiated through representation and testimony, the chapters in this book recount several examples of digital activism that foster peer support and a feeling of belonging among those who have been victimised by and marginalised in archaeology. This is critical in building the emotional capacity needed to challenge cultures of harassment, bullying, intimidation and other forms of discrimination. For example, the Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage Facebook group is described as ‘a safe space’ where ‘You can go on and say, “look, this is happening to me, am I being mad worrying over this, or over thinking it?”’ (Evans in Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18; see also Humphreys *et al.*, Chapter 14). The Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff similarly provides confidential meetings and closed team chats (Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19). The RESPECT campaign includes a series of closed Facebook groups to provide solidarity and support (Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12). Transparency, privacy and confidentiality are key features of any digital media used for this purpose.

*Leveraging Digital Representation into Offline Transformation.*

Many chapters in this book mention the challenge of effecting ‘real’ change through digital activism. One clear observation is that projects and campaigns that leverage multiple forms of media seem to be more effective in this regard. The most common approach seems to be combining social media with real-time gatherings, either in person (e.g., conference sessions) or online (e.g., Zoom meetings). These gatherings seem to be the environment where the awareness developed through representational and testimonial campaigns and the connections developed through networks and peer support are leveraged into concrete plans for action (e.g., Heffron *et al.*, Chapter 9; Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13). Expanding into print media also expands the reach of digital activism into classrooms and workplaces (Hassett *et al.*, Chapter 15; Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12).

***Anonymity and Confidentiality***

The accounts published here illustrate both the value and the peril of anonymous or confidential spaces: ‘anonymity ... can be liberating and allow a frank detailing of experiences of harassment, whilst others worry that anonymous accounts can undermine the credibility of activism that aims to expose harassment and discrimination’ (Cobb and Hawkins, Chapter 1). Additionally, the very mechanisms of anonymity that shield survivors can simultaneously create new channels for harassment: ‘the problem with online spaces and online discourse is that you still need to create some barriers because you want those to be safe spaces’ (Klembara, Chapter 10).

This tension plays out through several of the case studies in this book. Their accounts provide great points of reference for future digital activist campaigns. For example, the Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage network is a public forum, but it allows questions to be posted anonymously and uses strong moderation (Humphreys *et al.*, Chapter 14). Similarly, the RESPECT campaign uses ‘Facebook’s “secret” mode to protect (as far as is possible on such a platform) individuals’ identities and the nature of conversations’ (Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12). The Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff at the Museum of London Archaeology

guarded confidentiality through one-on-one phone calls and closed team chats, ‘one for allies, one for members’ (Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19).

In the end, the greatest power of anonymity may be in removing idiosyncratic and personality-related factors from discussions of harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power. In the #utgrävningpågår campaign, all identifiers were removed before testimonies were publicly posted. ‘The routine was not created to protect the abuser but aimed to keep focus on what had happened, the structures that facilitated and supported it, and not who *did it*’ (Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13). In this way, anonymity keeps the focus ‘on the structures and processes’ that need to be transformed to end harassment.

### **Surveys and Other Research Studies**

‘Change’, writes Pedro (Chapter 3), ‘is only possible when there is awareness, understanding, and compassion’. Surveys have been central to demonstrating that ‘archaeologists experience harassment and assault at epidemic rates, that this abusive behavior is primarily perpetrated by other archaeologists, and that perpetrators are rarely held accountable for their actions’ (Voss 2021b 245). At the time I wrote ‘Documenting Cultures of Harassment in Archaeology’, I was aware of 11 major quantitative surveys and 5 major qualitative studies about harassment in archaeology (Voss 2021b). The chapters in this book recount several more, each of which contributes valuable new information to the fight against harassment.

Surveys continue to be important, as Coto-Sarmiento *et al.* (Chapter 16) emphasise, not only to document the extent of harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation in archaeology, but also to ‘create new spaces for denunciation’. Recent surveys reported here provide added information about regions, sectors or topics that were previously understudied (e.g., Balaban *et al.*, Chapter 5; Cobb, Chapter 7; Coltofean and Gaydarska, Chapter 4; Coto-Sarmiento *et al.*, Chapter 16). Surveys also continue to debunk myths about harassment in archaeology (Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18).

Other contributing authors caution that surveys are sometimes mistaken as the objective, rather than as the means to an end: ‘it is essential not to get stuck in pointing towards the existence of HABI [harassment, assault, bullying, and intimidation] but rather to move towards developing preventive measures and reporting mechanisms’ (Coltofean and Gaydarska, Chapter 4). Representatives of the Archaeology Branch of Prospect Union particularly note that surveys are a way for organisations to look as if they are doing something about harassment, when in fact they are actually taking no meaningful actions. At this point, the union representatives ‘suggest an end to EDI [equity, diversity and inclusion] surveys, unless they have a clear purpose to provide a specific resolution in mind’ (Bryan *et al.*, Chapter 17), because action is the priority and goals identified from previous surveys have yet to be implemented.

One pathway forward is to reverse the direction of the investigation: instead of asking archaeologists about their experiences with harassment, surveys and related studies can be used to scrutinise how organisations foster environments that deter or promote interpersonal abuses of power. Bryan *et al.* (Chapter 17) point to equality impact assessments as a way of ‘mapping internal structures and acting on where there are unhelpful and potentially

damaging hierarchies’ (see also Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13). Coto-Sarmiento *et al.* (Chapter 16) call for research on the effectiveness of interventions for preventing harassment. One of the best current examples of such research is a suite of studies evaluating practices for reducing harassment in undergraduate field courses (Colaninno 2019; Colaninno *et al.* 2020, 2021; Lambert and Colaninno 2023). The findings are applicable to a wide range of contexts where archaeology is practised, from the classroom to the lab to the field site and the museum.

### ***Policies, Codes of Conduct and Complaints***

The role of policies in preventing harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power is hotly debated. In principle, policies should shape organisational cultures to deter abuses of power before they occur and address them once they do. Yet many authors contributing to this book are understandably pessimistic:

- ‘So it’s very easy for people to feel threatened that if they say the wrong thing, they will get retaliation by having their professional activities disrupted’ (Heffron in Heffron *et al.*, Chapter 9).
- ‘While there are protocols, their slow implementation and functioning increase the vulnerability of victims ... the treatment may be worse than the disease’ (Coto-Sarmiento *et al.*, Chapter 16).
- ‘The very few cases currently known in archaeology in which measures were taken after HABI reports were prolonged and traumatising for the survivors’ (Coltofean and Gaydarska, Chapter 4).
- ‘[P]olicies rarely respond effectively to what people actually need. ... In fact, much of our work as [union] reps is managing expectations of members’ (Bryan *et al.*, Chapter 17).

Even when policies are pursued, organisational inertia and roadblocks may keep them from being adopted or implemented (e.g., Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19; Coto-Sarmiento *et al.*, Chapter 16).

In techspeak, the ineffectiveness of policies and procedures is often ‘a feature, not a bug’ – what Ahmed (2021 41) describes as the ‘phenomenology of the institution’, which seeks to resist change in order to reproduce itself and the power structures that support it. Still, despite many discouraging accounts, some contributions to this book also point towards productive strategies for forming and mobilising anti-harassment policies. ‘Policies give you something to get to grips with to tackle the problem, because you can say, “you have this policy, but it isn’t being followed”’, (Evans, in Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18; see also Gaydarska and Coltofean, Chapter 6). There is consensus that any effective institutional approach needs to centre the well-being of the victim/survivor at its core, result in real consequences for perpetrators, and provide mechanisms through which the organisation can learn from each incident (Bryan *et al.*, Chapter 17).

Substantial research indicates that alongside institutional policies, codes of conduct are especially effective in reducing harassment and sexual assault. Codes of conduct establish organisational norms for personal responsibility and interpersonal respect. They can also convey that preventing and reporting harassment is ‘an honorable and courageous action’

(Johnson *et al.* 2018 7) that maintains the integrity of the organisation. Effective codes of conduct spell out, in advance, appropriate sanctions for perpetrators as well as restitution for survivors (Voss 2021a 456; see also Bradford *et al.* 2019; Clancy *et al.* 2014; Nelson *et al.* 2017; Collective Change 2019).

The contributions to this volume also point to inter-organisational links as a means for strengthening and enforcing anti-harassment policies. In Sweden one focus of activism is to convince the Swedish National Heritage Board to require 'equality work a prerequisite for gaining excavation permits in the future' (Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13). I will return to the tactical importance of inter-organisational links later in this section.

### ***Active Bystander Training and Whistle-blowing***

Active bystander training and whistle-blowing surface throughout this volume as means to both prevent and remedy harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power (e.g., Cobb, Chapter 7; Coltofean and Gaydarska, Chapter 4; Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12; Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18; Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13). Bystander intervention has been shown empirically to reduce the frequency, severity and impact of harassment, both by redirecting the harasser's attention away from the target and by shifting the target's experience 'from feelings of powerlessness and isolation to those of support and justification' (Lavery 2014; see also Bhalla 2018; Heath-Stout 2019). Furthermore, active bystander and whistle-blowing trainings increase disciplinary awareness about the definitions and warning signs of harassment, thus inviting all archaeologists into a culture of prevention and action, disrupting intergenerational patterns and creating 'workplace environments that will no longer be breeding grounds for inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment' (Stutz *et al.*, Chapter 13).

The most straightforward way to foster active bystander intervention and whistle-blowing is to incorporate trainings into mandatory health and safety briefings. As Schlanker *et al.* (Chapter 18) note, 'EDI itself is a health and safety matter. When we are talking about harassment on site, for example, that can get dangerous and that's a health and safety problem because it's about the welfare of your team. Harassment and bullying impact on people's mental health, and that is also health and safety!' Interpersonal safety can be written into project handbooks and mentioned during daily safety briefings. This not only informs and educates participants, but also sends a clear message that interpersonal abuses of power will not be tolerated.

Partnerships with non-archaeological organisations can be an especially effective way to make active bystander and whistle-blowing trainings routine. One example from this volume is the membership of CIFA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) in the whistle-blowing charity Protect, which enables 'all CIFA members to use whistleblowing services' (Cobb, Chapter 7). Another great resource is Right to Be (2024), which offers free and customised web-based bystander intervention and conflict de-escalation trainings to individuals and organisations.

### ***Sustainability***

Sustainability is perhaps the greatest challenge facing activist movements: 'the feeling of burnout is real; however, there is still more we would like to do' (Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12). How do we sustain the fight against seemingly intractable beliefs, attitudes and structures?

How do we transform institutions that are well-established, well-resourced and have ‘business-as-usual’ and inertia on their side?

The campaigns and projects documented in this volume provide an account of the actual labour involved. First, there is the incredible amount of time required: the ‘largely invisible and often unacknowledged voluntary work’ (Gaydarska and Coltofean, Chapter 6). The illusion of digital activism is that because it is direct, because it is free to users and because it is rapid, then it is somehow easy and low-cost. Yet well-resourced institutions and corporations employ fleets of digital content producers, social media managers and messaging specialists whose full-time (and highly paid) jobs consist of the very same work that digital activists do ‘for free, in their spare time, in a lunch break, on the bus, in the middle of the night whilst feeding a tiny baby ... this is the curse of social media activism’ (Cobb and Hawkins, Chapter 1; see also Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19). Klembara (Chapter 10) notes especially that moderation in online groups and forums is a constant challenge to sustainability ‘because none of us are getting paid for this’.

Then there is the emotional resilience needed to continuously fight ‘against your own erasure by the system that you are trying to change in your own voluntary time’ (Cobb, Chapter 7; see also Gaydarska and Coltofean, Chapter 6; Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12). Additionally, many of us come to this work because of our own experiences as targets and survivors of harassment and other forms of interpersonal abuses of power. These experiences are intertwined with our professional identities. Naming and examining our own histories of traumatisation, as well as bearing witness and providing support to others also targeted by harassment, is both rewarding and emotionally draining (Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12).

Finally, there is the rapid generational turnover in most archaeological organisations. As Klembara (Chapter 10) recounts, ‘every two years we have to hit a soft reset on everything because everybody gets busy’. Canonically, archaeologists emerge into the profession as students and progress through a number of stages – advanced training, entry-level positions, advancement to more senior specialist or leadership roles and eventually retirement. Each of these affords different opportunities and constraints on activist roles. However, more and more archaeologists are working on short-term contracts, moving from project to project and employer to employer, without the stability of a career ladder. This provides even less predictability in activists’ availability and capacity.

There is no one answer to the problem of sustainability in digital activism. My own sense is that the affordances of digital media have contributed to the problem: social media campaigns, online peer support groups and so on have a low bar of entry. They are easy to initiate without considering the energy, time and resources needed to sustain them. For those reading this volume who are in the initial stages of organising an activist campaign or organisation, the lesson from this book’s contributors is to pair spontaneity and creativity with thoughtful intention. As members of the *Paye ta Truelle* reflect:

*Working for social change takes time and requires careful planning to prevent exhaustion. Before we take any action, we always ask ourselves: is it really effective? We try to carry out actions as diverse as possible. ... At the same time, we support the creation of projects by other teams to ensure that the movement continues to progress even if Paye ta Truelle were to disappear. (Mary *et al.*, Chapter 11).*

It is thus critical to lend our support to movements and organisations that advocate for fairness in the workplace and support for caregivers. Much of the burn-out recounted in this volume began not with the activism itself but with the unrealistic demands of many archaeological jobs and the lack of support for caregiving and parenting. Unionisation of archaeologists and other forms of labour activism strive to address this root cause (Bryan *et al.*, Chapter 17; Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18). Additionally, for those of us in academia, at most universities, standards for hiring, tenure and promotion still rely on nineteenth-century standards for scholarly productivity, namely, peer-reviewed articles and books. This volume itself can be seen as a tactical move to bring digital content and unseen academic labour into a genre that is recognisable as an academic work product. While we take action from within and from without to reform the hierarchies of value in academia, volumes such as this remind us that we can also tactically deploy ‘old’ media in ways that further the objectives of digital media activism.

### ***Organisational Models***

The challenges of sustainability lead to the next tactical question: what kinds of organisational models have been and will be most effective in sustaining activism and a meaningful transformation of archaeology? The sheer number of organisations, initiatives, collectives and campaigns documented in each chapter is astounding. For my own reference, I started compiling a list as I read the manuscript of this volume, then realised that the list itself has testimonial value as a record of a particular activist landscape (Table 2, and reproduced in the front matter of this volume).

There are some clear organisational ‘types’ and others that defy classification. Each leverages certain strengths and constraints. For example, hashtag campaigns and testimonial projects can be ‘liberating. ... You can Tweet what you want, when you want. You can shout and rage at the structures and formal organisations of archaeology. ... But you are also working alone and tirelessly ... and may ... have limited legitimacy precisely because you are an independent voice’ (Cobb, Chapter 7).

On the other end of the spectrum, large organisations such as trade unions and professional associations have the capacity and legal standing to develop and implement policies, enforce contracts and channel resources towards specific priorities and initiatives. These same affordances also pose constraints, as organisational charters, governance by-laws and legal contracts require specific procedural measures that slow down or prohibit timely responses and meaningful change. Additionally, operational risk (liability) incentivises larger organisations towards inaction (e.g., Bryan *et al.*, Chapter 17; Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19; Cobb, Chapter 7; Klembara, Chapter 10; Schlanker *et al.*, Chapter 18).

Another organisational tactic is to highlight ‘the role of small groups in big issues’ (Gaydarska and Coltofean, Chapter 6). Voluntary collectives and campaigns such as RED MAP (Tavera Medina, Chapter 8), Seeing Red, RESPECT (Hawkins and Rees, Chapter 12), *Paye ta Truelle* (Mary *et al.*, Chapter 11) and Queer Archaeology (Klembara, Chapter 10) provide nimble and timely responses to emerging situations and specific issues. They are especially effective in social media contexts in fostering representation of otherwise silenced experiences and in catalysing important conversations. At the same time, stand-alone groups like this are inherently under-

resourced and typically rely on the dedication, volunteer labour and charisma of individual founders and leaders. Burnout and leadership vacuums are common end-points, so this organisational form may be best suited for short-term campaigns.

Another intermediate path is to establish a smaller task force or action committee within a larger organisation, such as the Archaeology and Gender in Europe Community of the European Association of Archaeologists (Gaydarska and Coltofean, Chapter 6), the Queer Archaeology Interest Group of the Society for American Archaeology (Klembara, Chapter 10), the Equality and Diversity Group within the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cobb, Chapter 7) and the Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff at the Museum of London Archaeology (Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19). The chapters in this book trace both the promise and the perils of this nested form of organisation. On the one hand, ‘to be affiliated with a large organisation provides legitimacy, funds, and support in a myriad of ways’ (Cobb, Chapter 7). On the other hand, nested organisations are often constrained by the policies and inertia of large institutions and the institution may co-opt or tokenise the activist agenda (e.g., Campbell *et al.*, Chapter 19; Coltofean and Gaydarska, Chapter 4; Klembara, Chapter 10).

In practice the activist organisations and campaigns recounted in this volume frequently shifted among these organisational models. Some began as a task force or conference session within a larger institution and then broke off to become stand-alone organisations. Others began independently and then partnered with or were voluntarily incorporated into a major institution. Taken together, the contributions to this book suggest that the best approach may be to develop a nimble and responsive network of activists and allies who can mobilise different organisational forms based on the needs of the moment. Some of the campaigns with most impact leveraged multiple organisational strategies:

- Coltofean and Gaydarska (Chapter 4) initiated an independent survey about harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation in Central-East and South-East Europe and forged alliances with the Archaeology of Gender in Europe community (a subgroup of the European Association of Archaeologists) and with *Paye ta Truelle*, an independent collective; they then partnered with a major journal, *Antiquity*, to publish their results.
- The Seeing Red campaign emerged as an offshoot of the Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage social media group, and partnered with the British Archaeological Jobs and Resources (BAJR) to publish its menstrual hygiene guide (Humphreys *et al.*, Chapter 14; Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage 2020).
- The RESPECT campaign published digital assets on BAJR and partnered with CIfA and BAJR to undertake specific initiatives; it also allied with *Paye ta Truelle* to bring the *Archéo-Sexisme* exhibition to the United Kingdom.
- Members of cyberfeminist organisations FLAMA and WILLKAS formed the Gender Commission of the Professional College of Archaeologists in Peru with the ‘main objective... to collect reports of gender violence, thereby serving as a bridge to the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations’ (Tavera Medina, Chapter 8).

Moving beyond collaboration on particular campaigns, the formation of IDEAH (Inclusion, Diversity and Equality in Archaeology and Heritage) signals a sustained approach to networked activism. IDEAH is a voluntary ‘group of groups’ that fosters networking and collaboration among individuals, campaigns, projects, collectives, groups and organisations (Bryan *et al.*,

Chapter 17). Currently limited to the United Kingdom, IDEAHS provides a potential strategy for nurturing and sustaining the robust activist ecosystem that will be necessary for sustained structural change in archaeology.

## Conclusion

In their introduction, Cobb and Hawkins (Chapter 1) wrote that the groups, campaigns and projects described in the chapters of this book represent the ‘transformation of anger and opposition into constitutive force’. The power of the brave and fiercely creative work represented in this collection of essays, articles and conversations is palpable.

The digital activism documented in this book is a form of healing as well as a force for change. The representational politics involved in hashtag campaigns as well as in projects such as RESPECT and TrowelBlazers break long-standing silences and shift shame and blame from the targets of harassment to the perpetrators. Peer networks of support similarly subvert hierarchies and break the stranglehold of isolation and exclusion, generating feelings of belonging and purpose. Political advocacy and labour negotiations generate new policies and contracts that can be leveraged to curb abuses of power by universities and employers.

Although harassment and related interpersonal abuses of power in archaeology are ‘ultimately immense, longstanding problems’ (Fitzpatrick, Chapter 2), they are not intractable. Harassment and other abuses of power are learned intergenerationally (Colaninno *et al.* 2020; Heath-Stout 2019; Leighton 2020). Thus, they can be changed. In the course of my career, I have seen profound transformations in both the structure and the practice of archaeology, some from within (e.g., the emergence of gender archaeology) and others from without (e.g., the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act). I believe sustained activism in archaeology against harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power is another transformative force. The successes and lessons contained in this volume should provide hope and direction for all of us who are continuing the struggle to build a more equitable, just and inclusive archaeology.

*Table 1. Structural Barriers to Eliminating Harassment and Other Interpersonal Abuses of Power in Archaeology.*

<b>External/Societal</b>	<b>Internal to Archaeology</b>
Political formations of domination – colonialism, nationalism, fascism, totalitarianism and their legacies	Subordination of local archaeologists to foreign archaeologists with greater access to capital; suppression of political content in archaeology, pedagogy and research
Laws and policies that systematically disenfranchise women, non-binary, transgender and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) individuals and ethnic minorities, along with the legacies of past laws and policies	Barriers to entry for archaeologists from historically and currently disenfranchised groups; lack of representation of those same groups in leadership roles; concentration of resources and status among members of historically privileged groups
Advanced capitalism and class structures; the gig economy	Increased use of contracting and short-term appointments in archaeological workplaces, increasing precarity and vulnerability for entry-level and contract archaeologists
Structural inequality in higher education (private vs public universities, research universities vs teaching colleges)	Differential access to prestige and resources (time, money, permits, training, facilities) among archaeologists and archaeology students
Social norms, policies and laws that disproportionately burden women with unpaid care responsibilities for home and family	Career training and job responsibilities that are structured in ways that fail to account for archaeologists' responsibilities as caregivers
Gendered divisions of labour in workplaces	Gendered divisions of labour in field and laboratory training and labour
Normalisation of non-consensual sexual attention and assumed sexual availability of younger women, BIPOC persons and other subordinates	In archaeological education, training and workplaces, normalisation of senior archaeologists harassing junior archaeologists and quid pro quo demands
Beliefs and attitudes that ascribe blame, shame, stigma and scandal to individuals targeted by harassment	Stigmatising the victim rather than the perpetrator; suppressing complaint; viewing complaint or resistance to harassment as disloyal or problematic behaviour
Beliefs and attitudes that minimise or negate the impact of harassment and other interpersonal abuses of power on targeted individuals or groups	Labelling verbal harassment as banter; discounting consent as the standard for physical touch and sexual interactions; treating complaints of harassment and sexual assault with less seriousness than other policy violations or crimes

*Table 2. Organisations, Groups, Social Media Communities and Hashtags Mentioned in This Book*

#DiggingWhileDepressed  
#EveryDIGSexism  
#MeTooArchaeology  
#TimesUpArchaeology  
#utgrävningpågår  
91 Stories of Archaeology  
AGE (Archaeology and Gender in Europe community of the European Association of Archaeologists)  
Archaeologists in the Andes  
Archéo-Sexisme  
ArkeoGazte  
Arqueólogas feministas  
Association Archéo-Éthique  
BANE (British Association of Near Eastern Archaeology)  
BAJR (British Archaeological Jobs and Resources)  
Beyond Notability  
Black Trowel Collective  
BWA (British Women Archaeologists)  
CEPA student union  
Chantier-Éthique  
Cifa (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists)  
CII-IAUB (Equality and Intersectionality Commission of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Barcelona)  
CRAS (Centro Revolucionario de Arqueología Social)  
DAN (Disabled Archaeologists Network)  
Diggers' Forum  
EAA (European Association of Archaeologists)  
EAF (Enabled Archaeology Foundation)  
Early Career Professional  
ESBAA (European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists)  
Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers  
Finding Ceremony  
FLAMA (Collective of Feminist Archaeologists)  
Gender Commission of the Professional College of Archaeologists of Peru  
HABI (Harassment, Assault, Bullying and Intimidation)  
Heritage Group, Archaeology Branch of Prospect Union  
ICAC Equality Committee (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology)

IDEAH (Inclusion, Diversity and Equality in Archaeology and Heritage)  
Indigenous Archaeology Collective  
IPHES (Catalan Institute of Human Paleoecology and Social Evolution)  
Museum Detox  
Museum Senses  
MWAH (Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage)  
NEDS (Network for Ethnically Diverse Staff at the Museum of London Archaeology)  
Neurodiversity in Archaeology Network  
Paye ta Truelle collective  
Prospect Union  
Protect  
Queer Archaeology  
Queer Archaeology Interest Group (Society for American Archaeology)  
Raising Horizons  
RED MAP (Network of Women in Peruvian Archaeology)  
REM (Race Equality Matters)  
RESPECT Campaign  
RESPECT LGBT+ in Archaeology and Heritage  
RWAH (Respect Women in Archaeology and Heritage)  
Save Sheffield Archaeology  
Seeing Red Campaign  
SAA (Society of American Archaeologists)  
Society of Black Archaeologists  
The Collective Change  
The Fieldwork Initiative  
TrowelBlazers  
TUC (Trade Union Congress)  
UNISON  
WILLKAS (Peruvian Network of Feminist, Dissident and Decolonial Archaeology)

## Bibliography

- Ahmed, S. 2021. *Complaint!* Durham (NC): Duke University Press.
- American Psychological Association. n.d. *Emotions*. Online: <https://www.apa.org/topics/emotions#:~:text=Emotions%20are%20conscious%20mental%20reactions,Adapted%20from%20Merriam%2DWebster>. [Accessed 3 June 2024].
- Bailey, R. 2018. 'Many men are sexually harassed in the workplace – so why aren't they speaking out?' *The Conversation*, 13 March 2018. Online: <https://theconversation.com/many-men-are-sexually-harassed-in-the-workplace-so-why-arent-they-speaking-out-93081>. [Accessed 3 June 2024].
- Balonen-Rosen, P. and Adams, K. 2018. 'One in 7 men say they've been sexually harassed at work', *Marketplace*, 9 March 2018. Online: <https://www.marketplace.org/2018/03/09/we-asked-if-you-d-been-sexually-harassed-work-one-7-men-said-yes/>. [Accessed 3 June 2024].
- Bhalla, N. 2018. 'A beginner's guide for addressing sexual harassment in academia', *Edge for Scholars*. Online: <https://edgeforscholars.org/a-protocol-for-addressing-sexual-harassment-and-assault/>. [Accessed 8 October 2024].
- Bradford, D., Payne, C.L.R. and Crema, E. 2019. 'How can we make fieldwork safer?' [Poster presented at Faculty Staff Misconduct Conference, Madison (WI), 30 June – 2 July 2019]. Online: <https://twitter.com/anthroqveer/status/1145801611077410822>. [Accessed 30 January 2020].
- Butler, J. 2004. *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. London: Verso.
- Butler, J. 2009. *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* London: Verso.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2018. *Six guiding principles to a trauma-informed approach*. [Poster by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S.), Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response]. Online: <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/56843>. [Accessed 8 October 2024].
- Clancy, K.B.H., Nelson, R.G., Rutherford, J.N. and Hinde, K. 2014. 'Survey of academic field experiences (SAFE): Trainees report harassment and assault'. *PLOS One* 9(7), e102172. doi: [doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172).
- Colaninno, C.E. 2019. 'The need for discipline-based education research in archaeology'. *Journal of Archaeological Education* 3, 1–24.
- Colaninno, C.E., Beahm, E.L., Drexler, C.G., Lambert S.P. and Sturdevant, C.H. 2021. 'The field school syllabus: Examining the intersection of best practices and practices that support student safety and inclusivity'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 9(4), 366–378. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2021.32>.
- Colaninno, C.E., Lambert, S.P., Beahm, E.L. and Drexler, C.G. 2020. 'Creating and supporting a harassment- and assault-free field school'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 8(2), 111–122. doi: [dx.doi.org/10.1017/aap.2020.8](https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2020.8).
- Collective Change, The. 2019. '#MeToo in archaeology'. *SAA Archaeological Record* 19(4), 12–15.
- Coto Sarmiento, M., Delgado Anés, L., López Martínez, L., Martín Alonso, J., Pastor Pérez, A., Ruiz, A. and Yubero, M. 2020. *Informe sobre acoso sexual en arqueología (España)*. Barcelona, Granada and Madrid: Zenodo. doi: [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3662763](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3662763).
- Crenshaw, K. 1991. 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color'. *Stanford Law Review* 43(6), 1241–1299. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>. [Accessed 8 October 2024].

- Diva, M. (director) and Davidson, P. (principal actor). 2023. 'I'm Just Pete' aired 14 October 2023, Saturday Night Live. YouTube. Online: <https://youtu.be/O-UfkZKKGc0?si=SBQ9HrpRgAIQf-SX>. [Accessed 8 October 2024].
- Donath, J. and Schneier, B. 2024. Atlantic, 'It's the end of the web as we know it', *The Atlantic*, 22 April 2024. Online: <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/04/generative-ai-search-llmo/678154/>. [Accessed 8 October 2024]
- Galtung, J. 1969. 'Violence, peace, and peace research'. *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3), 167–191.
- Hardt, M. 1999. 'Affective labor'. *Boundary 2* 26(2), 89–100.
- Heath-Stout, L.E. 2019. Diversity, identity and oppression in the production of archaeological knowledge. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University.
- Johnson, P.A., Widnall, S.E. and Benya, F.F. (eds) 2018. *Sexual harassment of women: Climate, culture, and consequences in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine. A Consensus Study Report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Kafka, P. 2024. 'Will Google's AI answers mean the end of the web?' *Business Insider*, 20 May 2024. Online: <https://www.businessinsider.com/google-ai-answers-search-advertising-end-of-web-2024-5>. [Accessed 3 June 2024].
- Lambert, S.P. and Colaninno, C.E. 2023. 'Bending the trajectory of field school teaching and learning through active and advocacy archaeology'. *Humans* 3, 10–23.
- Lavery, M. 2014. 'On sexual harassment and fieldwork: being an ally', *GradHacker: Inside Higher Ed*, 21 August 2014. Online: <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/sexual-harassment-and-fieldwork-being-ally>. [Accessed 9 January 2020].
- Leighton, M. 2020. 'Myths of meritocracy, friendship, and fun work: Class and gender in North American academic communities'. *American Anthropologist* 122(3), 444–458.
- Levitt, H. 2022. 'When men are victims of workplace sexual harassment, the normal assumptions don't always apply', *Financial Post*, 25 February 2022. Online: <https://financialpost.com/fp-work/when-men-are-the-victims-of-workplace-sexual-harassment-the-normal-assumptions-dont-always-apply>. [Accessed 3 March 2024].
- McLuhan, M. 1967. *The medium is the message: An inventory of effects*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Mentoring Women in Archaeology and Heritage. 2020. *Seeing Red: Period and Menstrual Hygiene Equality Guide*. Online: [https://www.bajr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Seeing\\_Red\\_Guide\\_FinalV1.pdf](https://www.bajr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Seeing_Red_Guide_FinalV1.pdf). [Accessed 16 December 2024].
- Meyers, M.S., Horton, E.T., Boudreaux, E.A., Carmody, S.B., Wright, A.P. and Dekle, V.G. 2018. 'The context and consequences of sexual harassment in Southeastern archaeology'. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 6(4), 275–287. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2018.23>.
- National Academies of Sciences Engineering Medicine. 2018. 'Sexual harassment of women: Climate, culture, and consequences in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine'. *Consensus Study Report Highlights*, June 2018. Online: <https://www.nap.edu/resource/24994/Sexual%20Harassment%20of%20Women%20ReportHighlights.pdf>. [Accessed 27 January 2020].
- National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project and National Sexual Violence Resource Center. 2017. *Building cultures of care: A guide for sexual assault services programs*. Online: <https://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications-guides/building-cultures-care-guide-sexual-assault-services-programs>. [Accessed 21 September 2020].
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center. n.d. *Reaching and engaging male survivors of sexual violence*. Online: <https://www.nsvrc.org/working-male-survivors-sexual-violence/Reaching>. [Accessed 3 June 2024].

- Nelson, R.G., Rutherford, J.N., Hinde, K. and Clancy, K.B.H. 2017. 'Signaling safety: Characterizing fieldwork experiences and their implications for career trajectories'. *American Anthropologist* 119(4), 710–722. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.12929>.
- Radde, H.D. 2018. 'Sexual harassment among California archaeologists: Results of the gender equity and sexual harassment survey'. *California Archaeology* 10(2), 231–255. doi: [doi.org/10.1080/1947461X.2018.1535816](https://doi.org/10.1080/1947461X.2018.1535816).
- Right to be. 2024. *Right to be*. Online: <https://righttobe.org/>. [Accessed 16 December 2024].
- Tello, M. 2018. 'Trauma-informed care: What it is, and why it's important', *Harvard Health Blog, Harvard Medical School*. Online: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/trauma-informed-care-what-it-is-and-why-its-important-2018101613562>. [Accessed 8 September 2020].
- Voss, B.L. 2021a. 'Disrupting cultures of harassment in archaeology: Social-environmental and trauma-informed approaches to disciplinary transformation'. *American Antiquity* 86(3), 447–464. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2021.19>.
- Voss, B.L. 2021b. 'Documenting cultures of harassment in archaeology: A review and analysis of qualitative and quantitative research studies'. *American Antiquity* 82(2), 244–260. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.118>.

A powerful wave of feminist, intersectional, anti-harassment, anti-discrimination activism has swept through archaeology and heritage since at least 2010, and unlike any other time in archaeology's short history, much of this has taken place online. In some places this has created a space to have open conversations that previously only existed in whisper networks, meaning that sexism, misogyny and harassment can no longer be ignored or dismissed. This has forced our sector to listen, and organisations have had to confront hard truths and, in some instances, begin to make changes to their practice. As this volume shows, the picture is not necessarily consistent or global, but nonetheless the ubiquity of social media has brought activism around gendered inequalities and violence against women and minorities to the fore in archaeological practice around the world.

Yet the activism that has unfolded over the last fifteen years has almost always occurred in temporary, transient spaces – through social media, conference sessions, symposia and protests. This means there have been few permanent spaces where this important work and its impacts have been documented. This volume transforms that picture, bringing together the insights of 43 different archaeologists to provide a permanent record of this work, sharing good practice and highlighting positive changes. In doing so, it both captures a moment in time, documents positive changes, and provides a resource to enable practitioners to continue to advocate for transformation in their own context.

*Hannah Cobb* is a Professor of Archaeology and Pedagogy at the University of Manchester and the University's Academic Lead for Academic Development.

*Kayt Hawkins* is a Senior Archaeologist and Ceramics Specialist at Archaeology South-East, UCL Institute of Archaeology.

