Old excavations, new data: the use of archives in current archaeological research projects

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Aim For thirty years now, the history of archaeology has been a growing field of investigation, constituting a set of studies based on rigorous historical methods and archival materials, organising a community and research programs (Schnapp et al. 2007). These empirical (i.e. archive-based) investigation strengthened the interest for the production, conservation, dissemination and re-use of the documents produced by past archaeologists (Merriman and Swain 1999, Moro Abadía 2013). In return, this aroused a new interest by the archaeologists themselves in the archive of the discipline, not only to get a better understanding of its history, but also to use the archival materials as a source of archaeological data. This renewed interest is parallel to the current concern about open science and (digital) data-reuse in archaeology (E. C. Kansa and S. W. Kansa 2013) but this session will focus on the former. Several recent research projects had given a crucial role in the study and re-use of ancient archaeological documentation. Examples include, investigations at the Abri Pataud prehistoric shelter (Nespoulet and Chiotti 2007) and about the skeleton found in the Regourdou 1 cave in Southern France (Maureille et al. 2015), at the Mas d’Azil cave (Ramis et al. 2015), at the rediscovered Moulin Quignon site in Northern France (Antoine et al. 2019), at Niah’s Cave in north Borneo, Malaysia (Barker et al. 2013).

This session will welcome papers presenting other case-studies of archaeological projects integrating an in-depth use of archive materials. Authors are invited to address issues such as: 1) the scientific use of archival information: how the data from past research are integrated in the current production of knowledge? 2) the organisation of research projects: who led the projects, and what division of labour between archaeologists, historians or archivists are at stake? 3) publication policy: to which audience (scientific, laypeople) and in which journals the results of projects combining new and old archaeological data are addressed? Furthermore, papers addressing more general methodological or theoretical issues about the use of old documentation in prehistoric archaeology are also encouraged.
Session organisation  Papers for this session have to be sent to the organizers through the conference website by the 30 March 2021. They will be distributed between the session’s participants: at the Meknes conference, each participant will be asked to present his paper and to briefly discuss another participant’s paper. The publication of the session is planned after the conference.

References


