

A yellow archive sheet from the Ingholt Archive showing a loculus relief with a female bust holding a child (© Palmyra Portrait Project, Ingholt Archive at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek and Rubina Raja).

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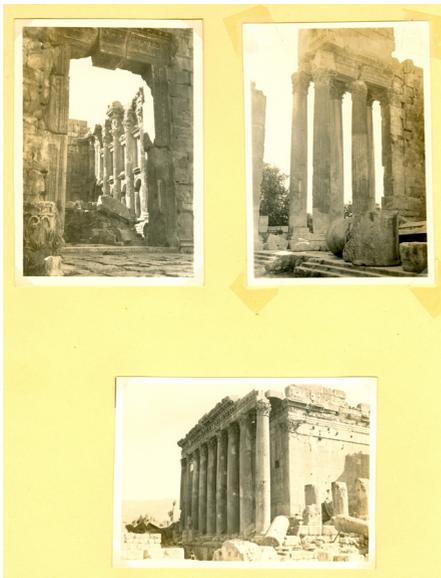
## Outline

Over the last century, archaeology has undergone an immense development, particularly in its best practices for the handling and management of data. The significant amounts of data generated by archaeological fieldwork, academic research on museum collections or object provenance form vast archives of physical material. These physical resources can often go untouched for years, if not generations despite holding critical information. Yet, past and present crises – the Syrian civil war or recent events in Afghanistan, for example – have alerted researchers to the fact that resources are often fragile and, in many cases, not accessible to all. Does digitisation offer solutions for preserving and sharing information?

Digital archives take shape dependent upon a variety of factors, such as the type of data they contain or the platform hosting the data. When contrasted with the issues in gaining access to physical archives (e.g. geographic location or institutional permission), the digital archive offers many opportunities and possibilities worth exploring. Is digitisation a democratisation of information, particularly when made open access? One might consider how, as scholars were denied access to physical resources due to the multiple global shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, digital archives allowed research to continue. On the other hand and despite the benefits of digitisation, scholars must also consider the affordances of digital archives and how the shift to a virtual environment changes the research dynamic. Furthermore, how do researchers address the ethical dilemmas of making resources openly available?

This two-day conference addresses how scholars use and share archival material in archaeology, particularly through digital archives. The array of papers not only showcases the depth of research on archaeological archives, but also offer reflections upon the relationship between archaeological practices and archival form. With a focus on archaeological sites in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, some of which are conflict zones, the conference offers a dialogue on best practices for the dissemination and synthezation of knowledge from digital

archives. Through a variety of case studies on archaeological sites and the digital resources associated with them, papers explore the versatility of digital archives and new research directions being taken due to their form and accessibility. Papers also consider the multitude of shapes digital information might take and bring forth problems with digital media. Finally, the conference projects forward and considers productive future avenues for archaeology in the digital age.



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Three views of Palmyra from the Ingholt Archive (© Palmyra Portrait Project, Ingholt Archive at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek and Rubina Raja).

Excerpt of Harald Ingholt's excavation diary 1 (1924): list of workers and their payment and a fingerprint that proves that they received the money (© Rubina Raja and the Palmyra Portrait Project, courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek).

## Programme

<b>DAY 1: 10 February 2022</b>	
<b>Session I: Power Dynamics in Archive Archaeology</b> Chair: Olympia Bobou	
12:00– 12:30	<b>Welcome and Introductory Remarks</b> Amy Miranda and Rubina Raja
12:30– 13:15	<b>Who Can Access the Past? Archives and Digital Colonialism in Post-Conflict Middle Eastern Contexts</b> Zena Kamash, Royal Holloway, University of London
13:15– 14:00	<b>“Unclassified”: Towards an Archaeological Counter-Archive</b> Jen Baird, Birkbeck, University of London
14:00– 14:15	<b>BREAK</b>
14:15– 15:00	<b>Collaborative Curation of Digital Archaeological Archives: Promise, Prospects, and Challenges</b> Anne Chen, Yale University
15:00– 15:45	<b>Making Archives Accessible: The Ingholt Archive as a Case Study in Approaching Digital Colonialism</b> Amy Miranda, Aarhus University Rubina Raja, Aarhus University
15:45– 16:00	<b>BREAK</b>

<b>Session II: Best Practices in Archives and Excavations</b> <b>Chair: Julia Steding</b>	
16:00– 16:45	<b>Digitising Knossos Using the Sir Arthur Evans Archive</b> John Pouncett, School of Archaeology, University of Oxford Andrew Shapland, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford
16:4– 17:30	<b>Shaping Corinth’s Archaeological Archive: Towards and Inclusive and Interactive Heritage</b> Ioulia Tzonou, American School of Classical Studies at Athens
17:00	<b>END OF DAY 1</b>



## Programme (cont.)

DAY 2: 11 February 2022	
<b>Session III: Potentials and Pitfalls of Archive Archaeology</b> Chair: Amy Miranda	
9:00– 9:45	<b>Finding the Potential in Problems: The Digitalisation of Archives</b> Rhiannon Garth-Jones, Aarhus University
9:45– 10:30	<b>Entries: Object Description and Translation over Time</b> Anne Haslund Hansen, National Museum of Denmark
10:30– 10:45	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>Session IV: Practical Considerations in Sharing Data</b> Chair: Jen Baird	
10:45– 11:30	<b>Digitising the Archaeological Finds and the Photographic Archive of the German Excavation Campaigns in Samarra (1911-13) at the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin: Between Practical Constraints and Scholarly Endeavour</b> Miriam Kühn, Museum of Islamic Art
11:30– 12:15	<b>The History and Implications of ACOR's Archival Digitization</b> Pearce Paul Creasman, The American Center of Research (ACOR) Ryder Kouba, The American Center of Research (ACOR)
12:15– 13:00	<b>BREAK</b>

<b>Session V: Outcomes of Archive Archaeology</b> <b>Chair: Rubina Raja</b>	
13:45– 13:45	<b>Dealing with Digitized Archives of Illicit Antiquities: Academic Research, Dissemination and Impact</b> Christos Tsirogiannis, Aarhus University
13:45– 14:30	<b>Provenance Studies, Archives and Digitization: The Potential of Archives in Recontextualizing Archaeological Objects: The Case of South Italian Pottery</b> Vinnie Nørskov, Museum of Antiquities, Aarhus University Marie H�el�ene van de Ven, Museum of Antiquities, Aarhus University
14:30– 14:45	<b>BREAK</b>
14:45– 15:30	<b>New Light on the Southwest Necropolis in Palmyra: The Excavation Diaries of Harald Ingholt</b> Rubina Raja, Aarhus University Julia Steding, Aarhus University
15:30– 16:00	<b>End Discussion and Concluding Remarks</b>
16:00	<b>END OF CONFERENCE</b>

# Abstracts

## Who Can Access the Past? Archives and Digital Colonialism in Post-Conflict Middle Eastern Contexts

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As a response to recent conflicts and the concomitant cultural heritage destruction in the Middle East, numerous digital archiving projects have been generated either as part of wider reconstruction schemes or as standalone projects. This paper will look in detail at a selection of these archives and projects, for example Iconem's World Heritage Database, the Institut Français du Proche Orient's photographic archive, the 'Monuments of Mosul in Danger' project and the Russian-funded 'Palmyra 3D' project, which includes a GIS called variously 'Palmyra GIS' and 'Palmyra in Time and Space' that contains architectural plans and archival as well as recent photographs. Taking a spin on the more familiar question of 'who owns the past?', this paper asks: who can access the past, specifically through digital archives? Are making available and making accessible the same things? What specific things do we need to do to make archives accessible to those who might most benefit from them? In what ways, if at all, can digital archives facilitate post-conflict healing and reparation? Or do (some) digital archives repeat colonial forms of knowledge production and control that make them damaging tools of digital colonialism?

## **“Unclassified”: Towards an Archaeological Counter-Archive**

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The long shadows cast by archives are often unacknowledged in contemporary reckonings with archaeological legacy data. In the age of pandemic and big data, many institutions which hold archaeological archives are leaning harder than ever into the digital turn: in some cases, this serves to reinforce existing power dynamics. This presentation questions whether it might be possible, through a counter-archive, to throw a little light into those shadows or begin to invert those dynamics. Using the example of a new oral history project (conducted in collaboration with my Syrian colleague Adnan Almohamad) which examines the relationship between local communities and the site of Dura-Europos on the Syrian Euphrates, I consider whether it might be possible, through interventions in the digital archive, to write people who have been excluded from archaeological histories back into the narrative.

## **Collaborative Curation of Digital Archaeological Archives: Promise, Prospects, and Challenges**

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It's no secret that many western GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) institutions established in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries gained archaeologically-related collections as a direct result of colonialist power dynamics. Such histories have had obvious enduring impacts on physical and intellectual access to collection holdings, as well as on collection interpretation and documentation. Progressively-minded institutions are now seeking to mitigate those effects, many taking the step in the last decade to create and make available digital surrogates of collection holdings in an effort to curb important barriers associated with travel to physical collections (international visas, costs, etc.). While this is an admirable and foundational first step, the ability to visit physical collections is not the only barrier to access, nor the only past injustice in need of correction. Who gets to make the decisions about how an object, building, or document is searchable and/or discoverable in the digital realm, especially when the initial physical collection history is tied to problematic repercussions of colonialism? How do we ensure that information of significance to populations in different parts of the world, who speak different languages, and who may bring different interpretive lenses to analysis, are able to find digital GLAM content and meaningfully contribute to the shaping of knowledge related to it? The free, inherently multi-lingual, and editorially collaborative Wikidata digital ecosystem holds much promise in this regard. This talk will introduce the Yale Digital Dura-Europos Archive (YDEA)'s work in the Wikidata environment, and will highlight ways that projects and institutions can harness the platform to increase the native-language discovery of collections and invite more diverse voices and perspectives into the process of knowledge creation and documentation regarding archaeological content.

## **Making Archives Accessible: The Ingholt Archive as a Case Study in Approaching Digital Colonialism**

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As Danish archaeologist Harald Ingholt gathered hundreds of images of Palmyrene funerary sculpture, he likely was not intending that his personal research resource would one day become a proper archive housed in a major international museum. With its physical location in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, the Ingholt Archive was a resource with access limitations (e.g. geography or institutional permission); however, the recent digitization of the archive and its online publication as open data is a first step in democratizing the material. Considering recent attention given to digital colonialism, the question remains what more can be done to make archives truly accessible. This paper will use the Ingholt Archive as a case study – from the history of its development through the present-day interventions of researchers – to open a discussion of how archaeologists can tackle digital colonialism. Digital archives as open data have certain benefits, for example, allowing anyone with internet to access the material. Yet, barriers such as awareness, language, or internet connection continue to restrict access. As archaeologists remain committed in the effort to decolonize their practices we must reflect upon for whom is our research and to whom the data truly belongs.

## Digitising Knossos using the Sir Arthur Evans Archive

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Sir Arthur Evans (1851-1941) bequeathed his archaeological archive to the Ashmolean Museum, where he was Keeper between 1884 and 1908. During the period of his Keepership he initiated excavations at the site of Knossos on Crete which began in 1900 and continued until 1931. The resulting excavation archive includes over 10,000 items about Knossos, including excavation notebooks, photographs, sketches of objects and architectural drawings. It is the primary resource for understanding Evans's excavations of the Palace and surrounding buildings and tombs, and has long been used by scholars for this purpose. Although Evans published preliminary reports and a number of volumes about his discoveries, notably *The Palace of Minos at Knossos* (1921-35), his excavations have not been published to modern standards. Subsequent publications about the architecture and particular deposits at Knossos have drawn on the Evans Archive, bringing them together with the finds which remained on Crete, in order to move towards a final publication of some of his discoveries. This paper will consider how and whether current work on digitising the archive can continue this publication process.

The Palace of Knossos has become one of the most important archaeological sites in Greece, attracting the second most visitors after the Acropolis in Athens. Interpretation of the site in most cases still relies on the discoveries of Evans and his excavation team, particularly since he was responsible for restoring and reconstructing parts of the archaeological site. Some of the plans and fresco drawings from the Evans Archive were digitised in 2004 and are available on the Digital Bodleian website, but these are not currently integrated into the visitor experience of the site. This paper will describe a collaborative project between the School of Archaeology and Ashmolean Museum to create an interactive model of the palace with ArcGIS. This will draw extensively on the archive in order to bring together plans, photographs and excavation records from particular areas of the palace, focussing on the famous Throne Room. We aim to make this available in the context of an exhibition at the Ashmolean and online, so that visitors can access the Evans Archive from anywhere in the world, and particularly as a complement to a visit to Knossos. In this way we hope to address questions about the legacy of Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos.

## Shaping Corinth's Archaeological Archive: Towards and Inclusive and Interactive Heritage

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The American School of Classical Studies-Corinth Excavations has been actively involved in excavations and research at Ancient Corinth-Greece for the last 125 years, since 1896. The site has been continuously occupied for 8 millennia, ever since the Early Neolithic period. Archaeologists have generated a vast archive recording the activities of past inhabitants that includes over 1,100 excavation notebooks, tens of thousands of artefacts, coins, and drawings, and hundreds of thousands of images. Since 2007, when the digitization effort of this archive was initiated, a rich resource was added including over half a million records that are increasing rapidly. The digitization and thus easy use of the archive generated problems and questions. Researchers had now access to the archive while being away from Corinth. Lacunae, mistakes and issues of rights of access to materials were brought to the fore. At the same time that the archive was made widely accessible to academics, there has been a considerable interest from laypersons to learn and interact with it. Questions to address are: how can we accomplish the digitization of the archive in a timely manner? How can we correct problems and accommodate disparate legacy data generated by a multitude of scholars and dating back decades to our current data structures? Can we make the archive user-friendly to people other than academics creating multimedia tools for teaching archaeology locally and globally, embracing local community collaborations as well as global interactions?

## Finding the Potential in Problems: The Digitalisation of Archives

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The digitalisation of archives promises a significant opportunity to address multiple long-standing concerns of archaeological archives by opening up new sources of information for researchers, increasing and improving public access, and changing the conversation around ownership and repatriation. Some technologies, such as 3D digitisation and archaeological data management systems, could be revolutionary, although the digitisation of archives comes with ethical, practical, and theoretical issues of its own, many of which are also long-standing concerns of archaeology and archival practice. However, considering the problems of digitisation and the ways it cannot solve those concerns – and, indeed, might replicate or reinforce them – can shed new light on the problems themselves. Thus, even the problems of digitalisation hold potential, as I will discuss.

This paper considers these issues through the lens of the Sāmarrā' collections, the archives of one of the most important sites of Islamic archaeology and art history. The first excavations of this site were carried out by archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld in 1911 and 1912-13; his 1,161 finds and their documentation were later split up and distributed to, among others, the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin, the Louvre in Paris, the V&A in London, and the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, DC. Many of the archives containing Herzfeld's material have recently been, or are currently being, digitised. Two digitalising opportunities, their problems, and what that can tell us, with reference to the archives of Sāmarrā', will be presented.

## **Entries: Object Description and Translation over Time**

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Archaeology embraces many ways of dealing with material remains. One of these is the catalogue entry and similar tags, which are often characterized by being brief, hierarchical and relational. Based on the archival material of the Collection of Classical and Near Eastern Antiquities, I will explore various modes of describing and documenting artefacts, and how we may deal with these (past) pluralities and ensure that they can remain a part of the object's biography and even facilitate new research.

## **Digitising the Archaeological Finds and the Photographic Archive of the German Excavation Campaigns in Samarra (1911–13) at the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin: Between Practical Constraints and Scholarly Endeavour**

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Samarra (today: Iraq) is an outstanding site of Islamic art history and archaeology: from here, between 836 and 883, one of the largest Islamic empires was ruled, with a geographical span from North Africa to western Central Asia. Within a very short time, the monumental city was founded, built and abandoned again.

Between 1911 and 1912/13, the first systematic excavations of an Islamic site took place here in two excavation campaigns. They were conducted under the direction of Friedrich Sarre (1865-1945), head of the Islamic department of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (Berlin), and his colleague, the archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld (1879-1948).

A large part of the archaeological finds ended up in the Berlin museum. They cover the entire spectrum of forms and materials that played a role in private and caliphal households. Other finds are now amongst others in museum collections in Istanbul, Cairo and London.

The Yousef Jameel Digitisation Project (2012-17) documented and recorded approximately 900 of the archaeological finds from Samarra (approx. 95% of the material in Berlin) in the museum database Museum+ with metadata, object descriptions and digital photographs. The aim of the project was to make the museum collection accessible to a broad, interested public: since 2017, the objects have been accessible via the online portal of the State Museums in Berlin (smb-digital).

Building on this project, a second digitisation project was started in 2021, dedicated to the photographic documentation of the two German excavation campaigns in 1911 and 1912/13 in Samarra. For this, approx. 1,330 glass plate or film negatives and approx. 170 slides in various formats were digitised. These digitised items are also recorded in the museum database Museum+ and will be

available via the online portal of the State Museums in Berlin from February/March 2022. By linking them to the already digitised archaeological finds, this project closes one significant gap in the documentation of the excavation.

In this talk, I would like to focus on two aspects of these two digitisation projects: Firstly, I would like to discuss the practical constraints and limitations from the digitiser's perspective. Crucial points were the time and financial frame as well as the aim of these projects, which among other things led to pragmatic considerations between e.g. the depth of the scientific recording and the easy accessibility or comprehensibility for the broad and interested public. Furthermore, the integration into a larger institutional framework entails risks in addition to advantages, such as lengthy internal coordination processes or restrictions in the infrastructure.

Secondly, I would like to talk about the potential of digitising archaeological archives for scholars and the public based on the two aforementioned projects. Thus, in a next step, the Museum für Islamische Kunst plans to index and digitise the written records to close the final gap of documentation of the German excavation campaigns in Samarra. It is without discussion that excavation archives play a key role in provenance research, in order to investigate the circumstances under which objects were acquired. The digital accessibility of all documents, objects, letters and photographs alike, serves to increase a much needed and mandatory transparency in these questions.

Despite all the practical challenges, digitisation projects form the cornerstone of daily museum work and are a substantial gain for all sides, be it the museum collections, academia or the public.

## The History and Implications of ACOR's Archival Digitization

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Founded in 1968, the American Center of Research (formerly the American Center of Oriental Research) is dedicated to advancing knowledge of Jordan and the interconnected region. ACOR's center in Amman holds an extensive library and growing archive, which includes more than 100,000 images of archaeological sites, historic places, and modern life from across the Middle East. With content created spanning the past century, the archives provide a glimpse of the region that has changed considerably and, thus, can serve as an important resource for those studying the recent and historic past. With support of the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and others, since 2000 ACOR has endeavored to make its archives searchable and, since 2016, digitized and freely available online. With some 40,000 images and other media now accessible and searchable, the archive has seen increased use among remote researchers during the covid-19 pandemic. This paper introduces ACOR's efforts to assemble, care for, and provide access to its archive, with an emphasis on digitization. The paper also discusses the implications of making such a potentially potent resource freely and widely available.

## **Dealing with Digitized Archives of Illicit Antiquities: Academic Research, Dissemination and Impact**

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This paper will review the discoveries, from 1995 onwards, of the dozen most important archives of illicit antiquities in the hands of notorious dealers, traffickers and looters. Their contents, flouting the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the illicit traffic of antiquities, and the way they have been shaped for academic and other research following their digitization, will be summarized and discussed. I then turn to issues of access and publication, alongside the value of these archives and possibilities for future research. The paper will conclude with the various impacts of these archives on academia and society.

## **Provenance Studies, Archives and Digitization: The Potential of Archives in Recontextualizing Archaeological Objects: The Case of South Italian Pottery**

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The importance of digitalizing archives from antiquities dealers, museums and archives in general has proven very important for provenance studies. However, very few archives have been digitalized and there is no coordination or international cooperation aiming at this. The digitization of museum collections is very diverse, in some cases difficult to access, and the quality of information concerning collecting history is often very weak if at all included. A number of studies researching provenance and find contexts for South Italian pottery have been carried out but the data behind stay with the individual scholar and is not made open access.

This paper presents a discussion on the current situation of the digitization of archives relevant to the study of South Italian archaeology, with a focus on ceramics. Such databases, both accessible and closed, will be discussed and their potential in research will be evaluated. An example thereof are well-known and established archives like the Beazley archive and the Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum Online that allow scholars to access images, traditional vase descriptions, classifications and, to a limited extent, information on provenance. Moreover, this paper will evaluate prospective projects such as the digitalization of the Trendall archive and recent active developments such as the FEMINICON project, specifically designed to study the iconography of Apulian red-figured vases. Besides archives of Apulian material, the paper will discuss GIS/satellite/aerial photography databases in Italy and their possible role in studies on clandestine looting and the recontextualisation of illicit archaeological objects.

## **New Light on the Southwest Necropolis in Palmyra: The Excavation Diaries of Harald Ingholt**

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Harald Ingholt (1896–1985), a Danish archaeologist, conducted fieldwork in Palmyra and focused much of his work on the city’s southwest necropolis. The diaries give unique insight into daily life on an excavation in the early twentieth century in the Near East. Focusing on the hypogea, he excavated or investigated approximately 80 of them during the fieldwork campaigns in 1924, 1925, and 1928. In his excavation diaries, he noted information on the tombs’ layout, interior decoration, and state of preservation, as well as the inscriptions. Ingholt also described the find of some smaller objects, both from the graves and found or offered to him in different contexts, such as the banqueting tesserae.

Together with an extensive paper archive, the diaries are part of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek’s collection. In 2021 they were published, and scans have been made available online freely accessible to researchers and interested individuals. In this paper we introduce the diaries, the publication process, and our reflections on this process, and discuss the research potential these diaries hold. Only 13 of the 80 tombs were published by Ingholt. Therefore, we also present the information that we gain on the unpublished graves and reflect on how this knowledge enriches our understanding of the Palmyrene funerary sphere, especially in the southwest necropolis, based on a string of case studies.

## Venue

The conference will be held virtually (via Zoom).

Register: <https://events.au.dk/shaping-archaeological-archives/signup>  
Once registered, the Zoom link will be sent directly to your e-mail.

## Conference website

<https://projects.au.dk/archivearcheology/events/2021/shaping-archaeological-archives-best-practices-for-the-dissemination-of-knowledge-from-digital-resources/>

## Organizers



**Amy Miranda**  
Aarhus University

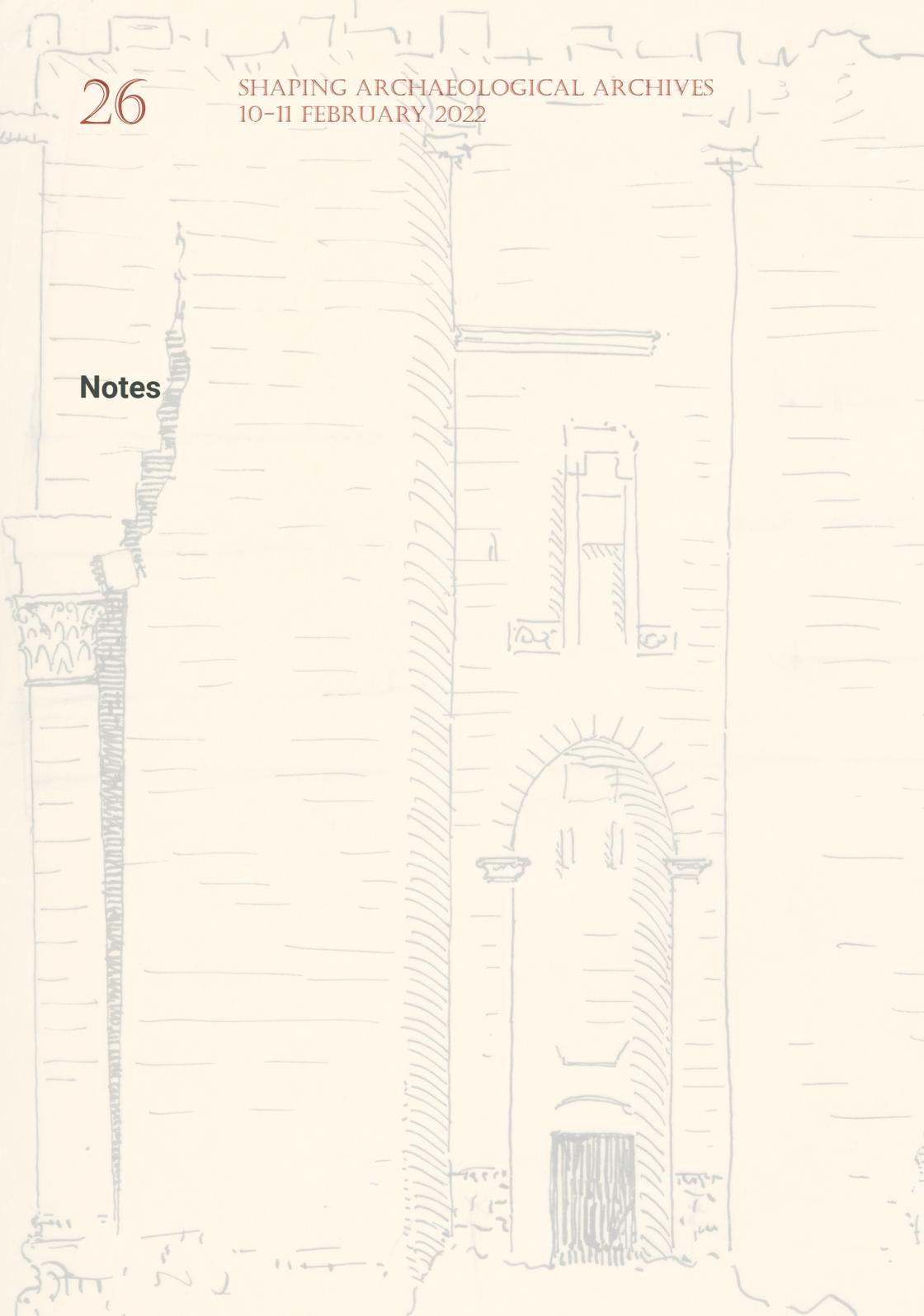
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Notes



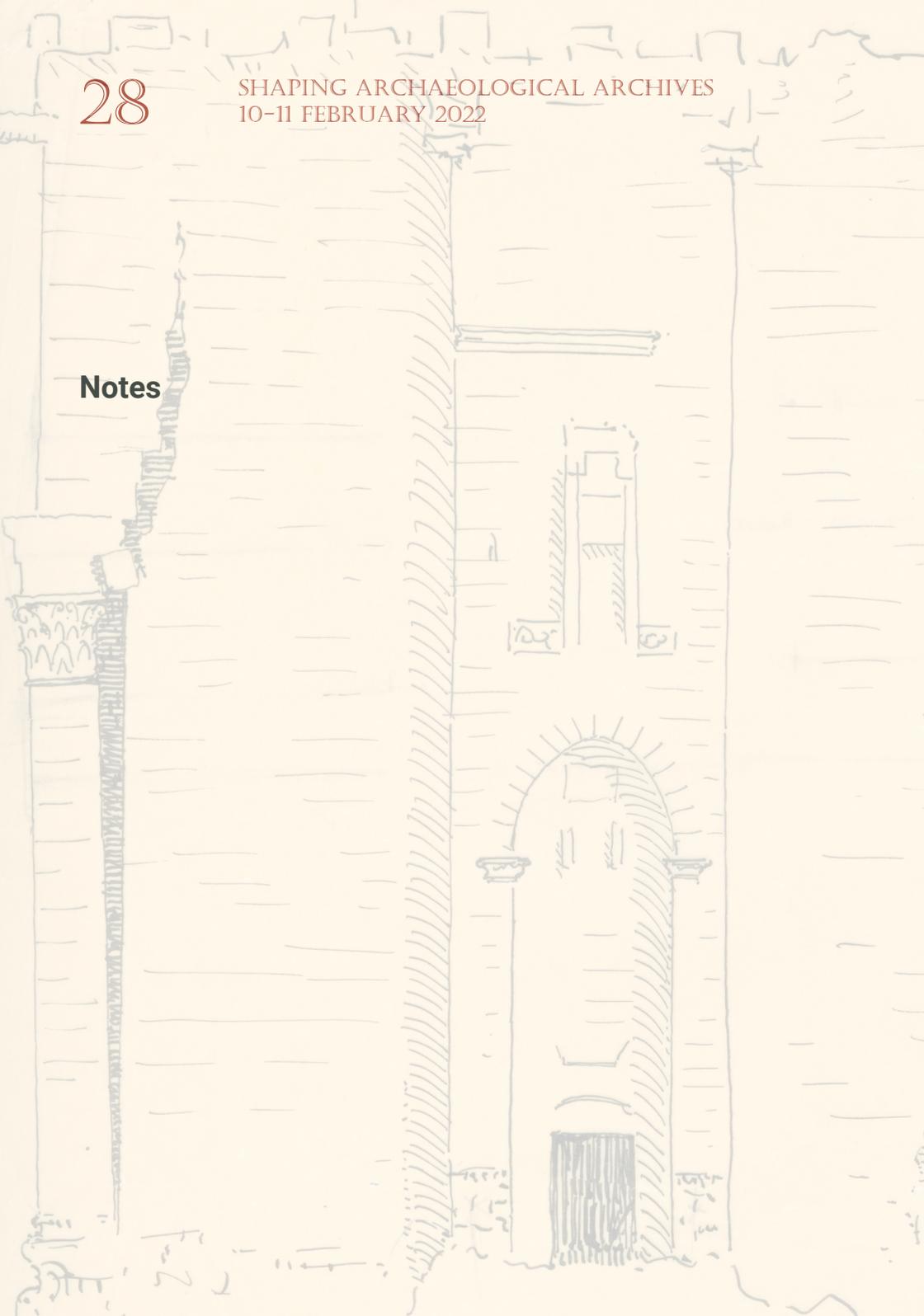


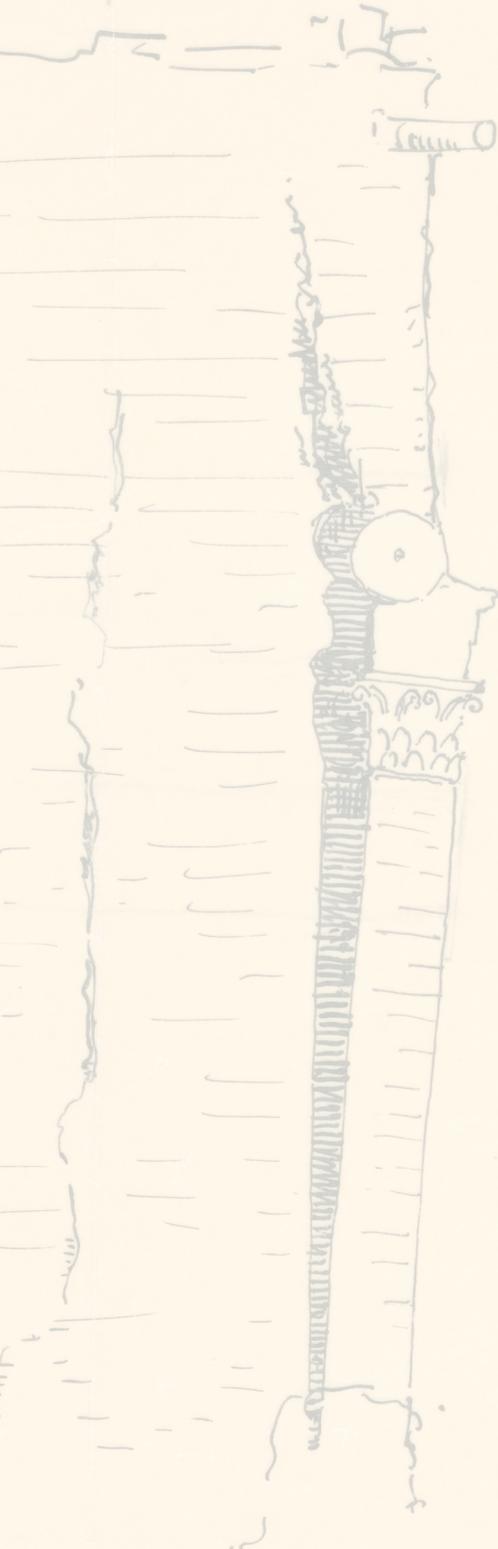
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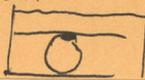
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Two unpublished tomb from the SD  
Heracles of Palmyra Syria



RES 7, 303-04



G. Michalowski Monumentum-Tunisi de Palmyra 1990, pp. 129-146: Temples Funéraires

Type 4: pp. 136-137 917-918, plan No 3 = Qasr el-Abjad

From Carlsberg. Photo K. Carlsberg

Handwritten Palmyrene script: 𐤒𐤍𐤏𐤓𐤏𐤓𐤏𐤓

𐤒𐤍𐤏𐤓

Qasr el-Abjad, Sept. 1978

Zech 3: 𐤏

4, 5

5, 2

Cl. Carlsberg. Ins. IV (1938) no. 4 + 42 (wohl identisch 21)

Etymology of 𐤒𐤍𐤏𐤓 & see 'Sketches in Honor of George C. Meloy, 1903-1974, 11  
p. 51, 3, text on p. 57: 𐤏𐤓𐤏𐤓𐤏𐤓, derived from 𐤏𐤓𐤏𐤓, etc.

**Shaping Archaeological Archives: Best Practices for the Dissemination of Knowledge from Digital Resources, 10-11 February 2022**

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**Book of Abstracts**  
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**Front cover:** PS 904. A brown archive sheet from the Ingholt Archive showing a relief with three standing figures (© Palmyra Portrait Project, Ingholt Archive at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek and Rubina Raja).

**Back cover:** Ingholt's notes on an inscription in Palmyra. From the Ingholt Archive (© Palmyra Portrait Project, Ingholt Archive at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek and Rubina Raja).