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Re-framing Photographic Archives: archaeology and colonial Cyprus

Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert and Antigone Heraclidou
Scientific Consultant: Joanna Lewis

LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Re-framing Photographic Archives: Archaeology and Colonial Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically examines colonial-era photographic archives related to Cypriot archaeology maintained by museums and other collecting institutions in the UK and in Cyprus. It investigates how these archives can be decolonialised or re-framed. The institutions chosen as case studies are the British Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford University, and the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation. The examined archives were created in Cyprus by Western officials, explorers, and archaeologists: Falkland Warren, J.A.R. Munro, John Linton Myres, Luigi Palma di Cesnola, and Max and Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter. As a result, the photographs reflect the colonial attitudes of their creators and the power relations entrenched in archaeological work at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries in Cyprus. The paper explores colonial marks, examines the case study institutions' decolonisation strategies (if any), and suggests seven strategies for museums interested in re-framing colonial-era photographic archives.

Keywords: photographic archives, archaeology, decolonisation, Cyprus, re-framing

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1. Introduction

With a growing awareness of social justice, inclusivity, and ethical behaviour, and in the wake of the Black Lives Matter plus the Rhodes Must Fall movement and Fallism more generally,[4] discussions on what can broadly be termed 'decolonisation' in different areas of our lives, including history, the arts, and knowledge has intensified. As repositories of knowledge, museums and archives inevitably became part of this discussion. Even though decolonisation as a political process has been extensively addressed by academics, and decolonising practices have recently been identified as one of the main campaigns of the Museum Association in the UK (2021), decolonisation practices for photographic archives are rarely discussed.

Photographic archives are place- and space-specific; they are also created and maintained by individuals and institutions who inevitably make choices about what counts as knowledge and what belongs in a particular archive. In this process, certain stories and voices are collected and highlighted while others are omitted. Decolonising practices in photographic archives examine dominant and silenced narratives and expose inequalities that might influence the content, presentation, digitisation, dissemination, and metadata of these archives. They also create space for an indigenous perspective (O'Neal, 2017) that is essential in getting a more holistic picture of the past. We argue that colonial-era photographic archives across museums must be examined from a postcolonial perspective in order to identify gaps, actively search and include the (usually omitted or underrepresented) indigenous perspective, enrich metadata, and improve access.

Our main case study is Cyprus, a country that was under British rule from 1878 to 1960. In this period, the island saw an explosion of foreign explorers, excavators, and archaeologists who measured, recorded, and photographed archaeological sites, objects and, occasionally, local people. This history makes Cyprus a good case study for archaeological photographic archives. As in other colonial areas, early archaeology in Cyprus was dominated by male foreign protagonists who played an important role in documenting and promoting Cypriot archaeology, while simultaneously exporting antiquities to museums abroad. Photographs of archaeological sites and objects were sent to museums, collectors, and publishers to document expeditions and/or attract buyers. Eventually, some of these photographs formed the photographic archives of museums that collected Cypriot antiquities, many of them in the UK.[5]

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[4] Black Lives Matter is a decentralised political and social movement that seeks to highlight the racism, discrimination, and racial inequality experienced by black people. Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) is a movement that began with a protest action at the University of Cape Town on 9 March 2015 targeting the statue of Cecil Rhodes, one of the key architects of South Africa's segregation policy; RMF quickly spread to other campuses in South Africa, and then to Oxford University. The RMF student movements at the University of Cape Town and Oxford are referred to as the Fallist movements.

[5] Several photographic archives are dispersed throughout various museums and academic institutions in the UK (for example, the British Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Pitt River Museum, and the University of Oxford) and in Cyprus (for example, the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus, the University of

The purpose of our research was to critically examine colonial-era photographic archives related to Cypriot archaeology and investigate how they may be decolonialised or 're-framed'. The institutions chosen as case studies are the British Museum (UK); the Ashmolean Museum (UK); the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford University (UK); and the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation (Cyprus). The paper explores whether there are colonial marks in these photographic archives and examines whether decolonisation attempts have been made by the case study institutions. Finally, it proposes seven strategies for museums and other collecting institutions interested in re-framing their colonial-era photographic archives (see Appendix).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Decolonising Museums

A decades-old term, 'decolonisation' has now been adopted by various disciplines. The dissolution of empires, and especially the British Empire, unleashed a seemingly endless debate on the timing, process, and form of the decolonisation of colonies; the debate encompassed aspects such as independence, self-determination, metropole–periphery ideas, modernisation theories, what postcolonial formations could or should look like, and subsequently a critique of the failures of meaningful decolonisation (Holland, 1985).[6] More recently, the process of decolonisation (or lack thereof) received new impetus and focus, due to a series of actions and events that expanded the discussion beyond the territorial, political, and economic arenas. For the effects of colonialism, it is argued, are still felt in current political struggles and everyday life. Therefore, the notion of decolonisation and the challenges this process entails have entered several aspects of social, academic, artistic, and intellectual debates.

Particularly in the UK, museums are often the product of British colonialism. As such, they have a significant role to play in the decolonisation process by providing the space and conditions for a polyphonic interpretation of history and culture. It is imperative that decolonisation starts from within museums, especially those with colonial entanglements. Although discussions around decolonisation in museums started as early as the 1950s, they

Cyprus, and the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation). Apart from the UK and Cyprus, archives are also dispersed in countries like the USA (for example, the University of Pennsylvanian Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Sweden (for example, the Medelhavsmuseet).

[6] Holland (1985) points to the end of the First World War as the pivot at which the history of European decolonisation began, when modern colonialism attained its territorial zenith and conditions for mass nationalist responses were created. It was however in the aftermath of the Second World War that "the colonial order fell to pieces", when great regions like China and the Middle East escaped colonial domination and the colonial world was replaced by a world of nations (Darwin, 1988, p. 4). But even then, as Darwin (1988) points out, the Afro-Asian world was far from being liberated from external influences or economic dependence from the former colonial powers because Afro-Asian nationalism was too weak "to bring about the collapse of the colonial apparatus" (pp. 7–8).

only gained momentum in the USA in the late 1980s,[7] especially in archaeology and anthropology museums where indigenous stakeholders are involved (Boast, 2011; Kreps, 2011). Discussions in the UK intensified only in the last few years (Van Broekhoven, 2019). Since 2015, several major museums in the UK have organised meetings to discuss issues around decolonisation of museum practices.[8]

But what exactly does it mean to decolonise a museum and is this possible? Christina Kreps (2011) defines decolonisation of Western museums as:

> a process of acknowledging the historical, colonial contingencies under which collections were acquired; revealing Eurocentric ideology and biases in the Western museum concept, discourse and practice; acknowledging and including diverse voices and multiple perspectives; and transforming museums through sustained critical analysis and concrete actions. (p. 72)

Similarly, Van Broekhoven (2019), argues that the real work of decolonisation is to:

> turn the tables on the power balance, re-humanize, prioritize Indigenous and other knowledges that have been silenced and find ways to establish a new balance, one that starts from a more moral paradigm, that strives to find understanding and empathy and looks for an ethical framework of redress and repair. (p. 5)

In both definitions, emphasis is placed on (a) acknowledging an institution's colonial connections; (b) revealing injustices, biases, omissions, and poor decisions; (c) making an effort to include diverse voices and multiple perspectives; and (d) behaving ethically towards the museum's stakeholders. Self-reflection and research into an institution's own past is imperative when embarking upon a decolonisation process, as this is the only way to recognize and reorient the sources of power (Felix, 2019).

More recently, the Museums Association (2021) of the UK issued "Supporting Decolonisation in Museums"—guidance that aimed to empower museum professionals to address British colonialism, act, and lead change. There's enhanced emphasis on the practical work museums should undertake: "decolonizing involves creatively reimagining the way museums work, who they work with and what they value [and] begins with respect and care for all" (2021, pp. 4–5). The guide covers all areas of practice, including collaboration, collections, and workforce. It sets out ten basic decolonising principles and provides case studies of best practices to

[7] Especially with the passing of the National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAIA) in 1989 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 by Congress (Kreps, 2011).
[8] For example, the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2015, the British Museum in 2018, the Tate in 2018, the Wellcome Collection in 2018 (Van Broekhoven, 2019), and subsequently many others. In 2018, an international conference with the title "Decolonizing the Museum in Practice" took place at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford (Van Broekhoven, 2019).

facilitate museums in navigating this process. These ten principles are: (a) challenge neutrality; (b) acknowledge power and privilege; (c) build relationships; (d) value all forms of knowledge and expertise equally; (e) be brave; (f) be accountable; (g) do the work; (h) take care; (i) be creative; and (j) aim for justice. Additionally, the Museum Association launched the Decolonisation Confidence and Skills Programme to support people who work in and with museums to advance their decolonising practices through a series of modules and events. Finally, it formed the Decolonisation Collective, a group of museum professionals who are interested in learning about decolonisation and its importance for all areas of museum practice.

While decolonisation is evidently a 'hot' issue for UK museums, this is not the case for Cypriot museums. No formal discussions in the form of policy documents, conferences/ seminars, or educational workshops are in the works. Although some Cypriot museums were established during colonial rule or they contain colonial archives, the lack of interest may be due to the general assumption that decolonisation practices are only relevant to Western museums that own cultural artefacts of the colonised.

2.2. Re-framing Photographic Archives

Photographic Archives and Archival Activism

Despite growing urgency to define decolonising approaches in museums, discussions on how museum photographic archives can be decolonised and used in different ways are scarce. Often, the emphasis seems to be on the 'front end' functions of a museum (such as exhibition, interpretation, public engagement, and education) rather than the 'back end' (such as collections and archives). When collections are mentioned, the discussion tends to occur in the context of repatriation—cases that attract a lot of attention in the media but are not part of the everyday functions of museums. Photographic archives in museums work quietly and usually play a supportive role in the museum ecosystem and are therefore not seen as a priority in the decolonisation process.

However, photographic archives play a crucial role in constructing knowledge; they are also misleadingly considered a source of unbiased and evidential information about the past. Hamilakis and Ifantidis (2015) point out that photography and professional archaeology were born at about the same time, and they are bound together in their pursuit of accuracy, information, and detailed representation. In archaeology, photography is used along with maps, measurements, and drawings to measure, classify, record, and illustrate knowledge produced during fieldwork. Colonial attitudes and beliefs have shaped fieldwork and its documentation. But photography is a highly selective tool; it is also connected to issues of power and it has never been innocent or value-free (Tagg, 1999). It is therefore essential to start questioning the transparency and neutrality of photographic archives.

Decolonising practices ask us to acknowledge that museum collections are the result of particular choices—what becomes known as the official history is only a partial version of history and there are more histories that are worth being told (Museums Association, 2021). The same argument can be made for archives.

Bennett (2020, n. p.), one of the few researchers who talks about how photographic archives can be decolonised argues:

> Archives can be decolonised if archive professionals and researchers work together to uncover evidence of colonialism and take steps to remedy it. Where colonialism has separated archives, they should be unified, at least digitally. Researchers have the responsibility to inform the archives that they are working with when they find corresponding material elsewhere. Archives should be shared with the communities to whom they are most relevant, especially when those communities do not have the funds or means to access the archive in its current state.

As already mentioned, archives—much like museums themselves—are neither impartial nor neutral (Findlay, 2016). Consequently, initiatives have been undertaken to challenge discrimination, to fill collection gaps, and to empower heritage institutions to re-interpret their collections (Flinn, 2011). Flinn (2011) describes this process as 'archival activism', referring to the practices of GLAM institutions (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) and community-led projects (Flinn, 2011; Iacovino, 2015). Archival activism encourages acquiring collections that represent the whole of society, updating catalogues, bringing hidden stories to the forefront, reviewing collections' descriptions/metadata, and working with the communities. Sometimes, to enrich collections, museum professionals need to search for archives outside their institutions; archives that were not considered important in the past, were created by marginalised people, or were difficult to find.

Re-framing vs Decolonising Archives

While decolonising museums is generally considered a positive and ethical process, its implementation is often critiqued. This is especially true when it comes to large, national museums whose establishment, power structures, and functions are based on colonialism. For example, Boast (2011) maintains that museums are inherently spaces of power imbalance, "an asymmetric space where the periphery comes to win some small, momentary, and strategic advantage, but where the center ultimately gains" (p. 66). What Boast argues is that it is not possible to decolonise an institution whose basic functions—such as collecting and documenting—are saturated with colonial biases or one that maintains the status of the authoritative gatekeeper. Effectively, the anatomy of the museum is "persistently neocolonial" (Boast, 2011, p. 56).

Furthermore, some see the involvement of indigenous peoples in collaboration and consultation projects with museums as another way of exploiting the emotional and intellectual labour of minorities with little (if any) compensation. Kassim (2017, n.p.), who was asked to co-curate the exhibition #ThePastIsNow at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, argues:

> Too often people of colour are rolled in to provide natural resources – our bodies and our 'decolonial' thoughts – which are exploited, and then discarded. The human cost, the emotional labour, are seen as worthy sacrifices in the name of the exhibition which can be celebrated as a successful attempt by the museum at 'inclusion' and 'decolonisation', as a marker that it – and, indeed Britain – is dealing with its past.

While this criticism is valid and should be taken into consideration, the good intentions of museum staff involved in decolonising efforts are not in doubt. However, what is questioned, is whether museums and their collections, which are a direct or indirect result of colonialisation, can be truly decolonised. What we are recommending is that, if decolonisation is not possible, museums could turn their attention to 're-framing' their collections, that is, shifting the focus elsewhere, or re-centring their focus.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of our project was to critically examine colonial-era photographic archives related to archaeology in Cyprus and to make suggestions as to how these archives can be re-framed. The research questions we explored were:

a) Are there colonisation marks in the photographs? What kind of representations do the archives include? How are people—foreign archaeologists and locals—represented in the selected archives? Is anything omitted or underrepresented?
b) Have there been decolonisation or re-framing attempts made by our case study institutions? If yes, what did they entail?

To answer these questions, we used a mixed method approach. Research was undertaken at the physical photographic archives of selected case study institutions. In these institutions, we examined the photographic archives related to colonial Cyprus and archaeology, their digitisation practices, metadata, and so on. Emphasis was given to the contents of each archive, its history, materiality, accessibility, and uses. In terms of representation, special attention was given to what records describe as 'natives'—local workers and other Cypriots who facilitated the archaeological process.

The research included semi-structured, in-depth interviews with curators/archivists,[9] on-site and online observation, photo documentation, as well as photo-elicitation. The latter—which we incorporated into our interviews—is the practice of using a photograph to talk about a subject (Harper, 2002). Most photographic material in the archives under examination take the form of negatives, albums, glass plates, prints, and lantern slides. These material expressions of photography are essential when studying the meaning of a photograph (Edwards, 2009). Furthermore, the history of archives is interwoven with the histories of institutions and the people who care for them. For this reason, photo documentation was used to record the material existence of the archives, where they are stored, and to identify the people who care for them.

Finally, we organised a half-day workshop titled "Photography, archaeology and archives". It was part of the symposium "Glitch and Photography III: metamorphosis and new ecologies" organised by Gothenburg University and the Hasselblad Foundation in 2023 in Gothenburg, Sweden. The participants, who were mainly international academics and artists interested in photography, examined the photographs of our first three case studies and discussed the colonial marks evident in the photographs. To facilitate group work and presentations, the photographs were printed in a postcard format and distributed to different working groups. The workshop worked as a triangulation method—it helped us ensure that our interpretations of the images were not purely subjective.

3.2. Case Studies

To limit the scope of this research, we focused on photographic archives in the UK and in Cyprus. The four case studies we examined are: (a) the British Museum, UK; (b) the Ashmolean Museum, UK; (c) the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford University, UK; and (d) the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, Cyprus. These institutions were selected because they host important Cypriot archaeological collections, own colonial-era photographic archives from Cyprus, and graciously granted us permission to access and research their physical archives.[10] For us, accessing the physical archives—and not just the digital files—was crucial. It allowed us to examine the materiality of photography and identify relevant photographic archives. The

[9] The methodology of the project received the approval of the Cyprus Bioethics Committee. The interviewees completed and signed a consent form that described the project and what was expected of them. We collected no private or sensitive data during the research and secured permission from the copyright holders to reproduce any images.

[10] Initially, we considered two more case studies—the photographic archives of the Cyprus Museum at the Department of Antiquities Cyprus and that of the Pitt Rivers Museum. The staff of the Cyprus Museum were very helpful in answering our questions about the history and holdings of the archive, as well as giving us access to already published material, but we were unable to secure permission to visit and examine the physical archives. Similarly, we were not given physical access to the photographic archive of the Pitt Rivers Museum. Since one of the main aims of the research is to understand the interplay between physical and digital archives, to see what is being shown and what is not, and investigate the different forms of photographic materiality, we decided to drop these two case studies.

photographic material we investigated was created in Cyprus by Western officials, explorers, and archaeologists: Falkland Warren, J.A.R. Munro, John Linton Myres, Luigi Palma di Cesnola, and Max and Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter. However, most of these archives are now maintained by institutions outside Cyprus as these archaeologists transferred their photographs (and often findings) abroad. We do not claim that the selected cases studies are representative of all colonial-era photographic archives related to Cyprus, but taken together, they represent photographic collections that had different uses and aims, and as such, they become productive sites for considering colonialism and its effect on photographic archives.

The British Museum

The British Museum has one of the largest and most important collection of artefacts from Cyprus. We visited Dr Thomas Kiely, Curator of the Department of Greece and Rome, at his office at the British Museum to view and discuss the Cyprus-related photographic material. Waiting for us was a large hardcover volume with white pages entitled “Miscellaneous Photographs Vol. 2”. Apart from this volume, we also found two large loose photographs in envelopes—one of Falkland Warren with archaeological finds (Tamassos, 1885) and one of a group of local workers by local photographer J.P. Foscolo.

The numbered pages of the book—180 in total—include black and white photographs of excavations, monuments, as well as artefacts (pottery, busts, and statues—single or arranged in groups—in a neutral background and in various sizes) dating from the mid-19th to early 20th century. There are numerous photographs of archaeological sites and objects, but very few showing people. According to Keily:

> Looking again at this volume, it is a 'scrapbook' drawn together from numerous sources, and many images are of museum displays or objects from other museums that would have been of interest to the curators, in addition to items offered for sale. However, many images of items offered for sale are filed within the letterbooks. It's a very complex 'archive', if indeed it is an archive. (Personal correspondence, 16 December 2023)

At the British Museum, we focused on the book of photographs and more specifically on the photographs by Falkland Warren. Warren was posted to Cyprus in 1878 until his retirement in 1889. Even though he did not gain any experience in practical fieldwork, he knew how to find experienced local workers and hire directors who oversaw the excavations (Buchholz, 2001). In 1885, he acquired a large collection of artefacts through licensed excavations that were directed by Max Ohnefalsch-Richter (see Case Study 4 for photographic material by Ohnefalsch-Richter) at Tamassos. The set of seven photographs at the British Museum show the objects from this excavation. Interestingly, the excavations at Tamassos resulted in a high-profile legal case and scandal regarding how excavation licences were issued and by whom.

Given (2001) discusses in detail the Watkins vs Warren (1885–1886) case and demonstrates the close relationship between archaeology, colonial rule, and financial gain.

The Ashmolean

Established in 1682, the Ashmolean is considered Britain's first public museum and the world's first university museum. The Cypriot antiquities collection is one of the largest and most significant outside Cyprus. It has some 6,700 registered objects that date mainly from 2000–300BC and come from British excavations on the island (Ashmolean Museum/Cyprus Collection, n.d.).

In early 2023, we met with Dr Anja Ulbrich, A.G. Leventis Curator of the Cypriot Collection, to examine the archival material related to John Arthur Ruskin Munro and his trips to Cyprus (J.A.R. Munro, 1864–1944). This is the main archive related to Cyprus and it is managed by the curator. Munro was a student at the British School at Athens in 1898 when Ernest A. Gardner requested permission for excavation at Polis Chrysochous and left Munro in charge (Smith, 2012). After this excavation, Munro moved on to Salamis. The archive includes photographs from the 1889/1890 Cyprus Exploration Fund (CEF) at Salamis. The digitised archive contains 120 photographs, mostly from Salamis and Famagusta and the surrounding area. We examined two archival boxes with original prints and glass negatives. Apart from the photographs, we had the opportunity to examine two handwritten diaries, one of which containing 48 loose cyanotypes inserted in various pages.[11]

The Institute of Archaeology at Oxford University

In 2023, we visited Senior Curator Dr Katharina Ulmschneider and curator Dr Janice Kinory at the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford University to talk about their photographic archive. The Institute of Archaeology is responsible for an online repository of photographs called the Historic Environment Image Resource, or HEIR. Created in 2014 by Sally Crawford and Katharina Ulmschneider and curated under the direction of Janice Kinory, HEIR's mission is:

> to rescue neglected and endangered photographic archives, unlock their research potential, and make them available to the public. HEIR contains digitised historic photographic images from all over the world dating from the late nineteenth century onwards. HEIR's core images come from lantern slide and glass plate negatives held in college, library, museum, and departmental collections within the University of Oxford. (HEIR, n.d.)

The collection of images most relevant to our study comes from a single archive—that of John

[11] The cyanotype is a photographic printing process that produces blueprints using coated paper and light. In this case, they were the same images as the ones appearing in the prints.

Linton Myres (1869–1954), a British archaeologist, anthropologist, ancient historian, and geographer who spent most of his career at the University of Oxford (British Museum, n.d.).

Using the keywords 'Cyprus' and 'Myres' on HEIR returned a selection of 52 images, including archaeological sites, landscapes, people at excavations sites, and monuments. On location, we examined three boxes of lantern slides and two boxes of large glass negatives with the same images. The institute also owns a notebook by Myres with an index of photos where each photograph is numbered and labelled.[12]

The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation

The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation (BOCCF) was established in 1984, 10 years after the Turkish invasion. It was a time when it was urgent to fight for the repatriation of stolen items and to promote the cultural heritage of Cyprus, which was under threat (Personal interview with Dr Christodoulos Hadjichristodoulou, 18 July 2023). From the BOCCF's archive, two collections stood out: the Max and Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter photographic album titled "Studies in Cyprus" (1895) and the Luigi Palma di Cesnola archive (1860s/1870s). Both archives were bought in auctions, in 1992 and in 1998 respectively.

Luigi Palma di Cesnola was the Consul of the United States to Cyprus (from 1865 to 1876) and served simultaneously as the Consul for Russia. He bought land and conducted numerous excavations in Cyprus, which resulted in a substantial collection of antiquities that were offered for sale to various museums in the USA and in Europe.[13] The Cesnola photographic archive at the BOCCF contains loose photographs of arrangements of objects, very few showing people, and none of excavation sites. Max Hermann Ohnefalsch-Richter considered himself as one of the co-founders of the Cyprus Museum; in 1899, he published the first catalogue of the museum with John L. Myres (see Case Study 3) (Marangou and Malecos, 1994; Krpata, 2010). In 1894, he married Magda, also a photographer. The couple came to Cyprus in 1895 using Imperial funding to continue excavation work in Cyprus. Magda accompanied him in his travels across Cyprus and took photographs of objects, excavation sites, and ethnographic photographs of people and their spaces (Krpata, 2010). On their return to Germany, the couple prepared and presented the album to the Prince and Princess of Sachsen-Meiningen-Hildburghausen.

[12] According to the curators, it was not possible to match the notebook with the latent slides and this can be a future project.

[13] Most of Cesnola's collection was bought by the Metropolitan Museum of Art who offered him, along with $65,000, a position at the Met. Cesnola served as the Met's director from 1879 until his retirement (Balm, 2015; Marangou, 2000). His excavation activities in Cyprus were critiqued as unscientific and he was also involved in a controversial lawsuit in the USA related to some of his Cypriot finds.

4. Results

4.1. Marks of Colonisation

Our first research question was: "Are there colonisation marks in the photographs? What kind of representations do the archives include? How are people—foreign archaeologists and locals—represented in the selected archives? Is anything omitted or underrepresented?"

Who, Why, and What

When examining photographic representations in our four case studies, we first observed that photography was predominantly directed by Western explorers and archaeologists. As Balm (2015) argues:

> In the mid-to-later nineteenth century, a considerable quantity of influential documentary imaging in archaeology was produced by individuals simultaneously servicing as consular officials, and these dual roles, laminated together through the prestige of officialdom, conferred rights of access to observe, inspect and interpret. (p. 38)

Falkland Warren was a colonial officer (see Case Study 1) and Luigi Palma di Cesnola was a consul of the USA and then Russia (see Case Study 4). Both leveraged their position of power to access or cheaply buy land that contained antiquities, and to export objects for financial gain. Max and Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter (see Case Study 4) turned to archaeology as their livelihood after arriving in Cyprus. Finally, the most authoritative figures were those of academics: J.A.R. Munro was a classical scholar (see Case Study 2) and John Linton Myres, an archaeologist and anthropologist (see Case Study 3). What is included in the photographic frame unavoidably reflects the photographers' own priorities, understandings of the past, what was considered common practice in archaeology at the time, and of course, their intended uses.

Nowadays, we see colonial-era photographic archives as source of information for research and for understanding the past. However, the intentions of the photographers and the initial use of these photographs was not necessarily related to research. For example, many photographs were intended as 'sales catalogues' for prospective buyers. Indicatively, both Falkland Warren (Case Study 1) and Luigi Palma di Cesnola (Case Study 4) focused on photographs of neatly arranged objects that were then sent to museums and other prospective buyers.[14] The British Museum has such photographs in the album we examined (see Figures 1a and b). For example, the top photograph in Figure 1b is identified by Smith as

[14] Neither produced photographs of archaeological sites; perhaps because Cesnola was not careful with excavations or documentation, and Warren was not present at excavations at all.

“objects found in Necropolis I, Tomb 5, at Polis-Agios Demetrios, excavated in 1886 and offered for sale to the British Museum by Max Ohnefalsch-Richter” (2012, p. 31).

Figures 1a and b: Book with photographs at the British Museum and example of a page. Photograph by Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert, 2022.

On the other hand, the academics J.A.R. Munro (Case Study 2) and John Linton Myres (Case Study 3) focused on archaeological sites and individual objects to document, publish, and use images for teaching purposes. The Ashmolean’s archive of John Linton Myres’ work includes lantern slides used in the past for teaching and presentation purposes. Perhaps this explains why the main protagonists in the photographic archives of both J.A.R. Munro and John Linton Myres are either archaeological sites (see, for example, Figure 2) or individual or grouped artefacts.

Figure 2: J.A.R. Munro, 1891, “#125: Salamis, Sand Site, West Columns from the South; JHS 12, 1891, pl. 4”, photographic print, Archive of the Ashmolean Department of Antiquities. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Photographs of artefacts and empty archaeological sites tell us a lot about the discipline of archaeology with its emphasis on landscapes as 'neutral' sites of knowledge ready to be discovered and artefacts as valuable objects that have the potential to illuminate the past. When we look at publications of the time, these are the kinds of photographs that were most frequently published. Apart from portraits of archaeologists, the human element, and the archaeological process itself, are usually absent.

While these kinds of images define archaeology as a discipline, it is much easier to understand colonial attitudes in what was not photographed and not visible. What is usually missing in colonial-era archives is the indigenous perspective—the invisible manual labour, lunch breaks, payment day, the representations of key local figures who played an important role in Cypriot archaeology, etc. This indigenous perspective could provide a more comprehensive understanding of archaeological activities during colonial times. That said, both local and foreign archaeologists are sometimes captured in photographs. These images help identify colonial influences by highlighting the differences in representation between foreign archaeologists and local individuals.

Representations of Foreign Archaeologists

Western archaeologists/explorers are usually portrayed posing next to their finds, alone at archaeological sites, overseeing work, or handling objects. The photographs of Falkland Warren from 1885 at the British Museum are a good example. The photographic archive of the British Museum includes seven photographs by Warren with text overlaid on the print: "Excavations at Tamassus Cyprus by Colonel Warren R. A. in 1885". These are unique in having the title, date, and the owner of the objects engraved on the photographs. Warren appears in three of the photographs as the obvious custodian of the objects (see, for example, Figure 3). The purpose of these highly staged photographs was to illustrate the finds and aid potential sales. The photographer's attempt to create a neutral background is implied by the black sheet hanging precariously from a string attached to an arch.

Another case of an archaeologist/explorer who produced photographs a form of 'sales catalogue' is Luigi Palma di Cesnola (Case Study 4). Out of dozens of photographs of neatly arranged objects, only eight show people, all posing with antiquities; one is of Cesnola himself, one is of his daughter, one is a group photo of his workers, and the rest are of individual workers with antiquities (see Manangou, 2000 for the complete set). In Figure 4, we see Cesnola posing in a similar manner as Falkland Warren, and with the familiar black background.

Figure 3 (left): Falkland Warren and finds from Phrangissa, 1885, "Excavations at Tamassus Cyprus by Colonel Warren R. A. in 1885", Photograph by E.A. Carletti. British Museum photographic archive. © British Museum.
Figure 4 (right): Luigi Palma di Cesnola Archive, c. 1860s/1870s, archive of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation. © Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation.

On rare occasions, photographs show foreign archaeologists along with local workers. A good example comes from the album of Max and Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter "Studies in Cyprus" (1895). In Figure 5, we see two groups of people at an excavation site. One group consists of two men and a woman on a horse, positioned on top of a hill, overlooking the second group, which consists of locals at work. The handwritten caption identifies the three people on the hill as Professor Furtwängler (left), Dr Ohnefalsch-Richter (right) and Ms Ohnefalsch-Richter (on the horse). The foreign archaeologists assume a higher (moral) ground, as "seeing men" (Pratt, 2008, p. 9), suggesting that they have a deeper knowledge and understanding of the value of antiquities, and like generals, can direct excavations as well as native people (Given, 2020; Keily, 2021). The relationship between foreign archaeologists and local workforce is an unequal one and visualised well in this photograph. The archaeologists, overseeing the workers' manual work, occupy a higher position both visually and metaphorically (for a more detailed analysis of this photograph, see Stylianou-Lambert, 2021).

Figure 5: The handwritten caption under the photograph reads: "On the ruins of the Eastern acropolis of Idalion

during the excavations carried out in 1894 for His Majesty the Emperor. On the hill, Professor Furtwängler, Dr and Mrs Ohnefalsch-Richter." From the original album "Studies in Cyprus", 1895, Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, photo by Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert.

Representations of Locals

Where local workers are included in the photographs, they are usually portrayed working together or in staged group arrangements. Both J.A.R. Munro's archive (Case Study 2) and John Linton Myres' archive (Case Study 3) include group portraits of workers (see Figures 6 and 7). We can see local people, men and women, of different ages, wearing traditional clothes, like alatzies and vrakes, as well as fezzes, scarves or straw hats on their heads, sometimes posing alongside a Western inspector/archaeologist, dressed in Western clothing. We can see that women workers were a considerable force in the excavations, carrying out heavy work and walking long distances in formidable conditions (Severis, 2008). It is worth mentioning that while images of workers exist in the archives, they seldom appear in publications of the time and if they do, they are not named.

Figure 6 (left): J.A.R. Munro, 1889/90, "#75. Group photo of local excavation team at Salamis", photographic print, archive of the Ashmolean Department of Antiquities. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.
Figure 7 (right): John Linton Myres, 1913, "Workers at Lambousa", archive of the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford. © Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford.

It is also noteworthy that some workers were very young. The image of a young boy holding fragments is particularly revealing (see Figure 8). Such photographs, portraying a local individual with archaeological findings, are quite rare. Typically, these kinds of portraits are reserved for archaeologists. However, unlike the photographs of archaeologists, the boy is not identified by name.

Finally, in our case study archives, locals sometimes appear in their everyday life in coffee shops or in their homes, with traditional clothing, thus satisfying an ethnographic gaze (see, for example, Figure 9). For example, both John Linton Myres and Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter were especially interested in ethnography, so photographs documenting village life, clothing, and customs, are often intermingled with archaeological images.

Figure 8 (left): J.A.R. Munro, 1889/90, "#34. Boy with Salamis-Toumba terracottas", photographic print, Archive of the Ashmolean Department of Antiquities. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.
Figure 9 (right): John Linton Myres, c. 1913, "Levkoniko Girls", archive of the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford. © Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford.

When it comes to visual representations of people, foreign archaeologists typically take the lead role, confidently posing for photographs. In contrast, locals are mainly depicted working in groups, posing for group photos, or appearing as 'measurement sticks'—small figures in a landscape used to indicate scale.

4.2. Re-framing Practices

The second research question we aimed to answer is: "Have there been decolonisation or re-framing attempts made by our case study institutions? If yes, what did they entail?" In this section we identify some notable attempts to re-frame photography adopted by the institutions we examined. Since the decolonisation movement is stronger and more explicit in the UK, we focus on our UK case studies. There were no reported decolonisation efforts made by the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation at the time of the interview.

Acknowledgements and Language

The University of Oxford has adopted a decolonisation strategy that influences both its academic departments and associated museums. As a result, the Ashmolean's website readily acknowledges its relationship with colonial power:

> Though the collection has evolved considerably, the founding principle remains; that knowledge of humanity across cultures and across times is important to society. A laudable intention, but the uncomfortable truth is that much of the collection was

> inevitably selected and obtained as a result of colonial power. (Ashmolean Museum/ History of the Ashmolean, n.d.)

However, there are no guidelines on how to decolonise photographic archives in any of the institutions we examined.

Furthermore, at the University of Oxford, words that are nowadays considered offensive have been removed from the public versions of the metadata of its archives. For example, in the case of the HEIR platform of the Institute of Archaeology the word "native" has been removed from the public version of the website. Archivist Janice Kinory explains:

> Native is the word we're encouraged not to use. So, we recaptioned the slides. What we've done, we've kept two copies. We have one in our archive that's accessible with a password. We have one on the public website, the same image but with a caption that's got words that might be offensive, removed. So, for instance, in fact I'm pretty sure that it's a Myres slide from Tripoli and it's 1897 and I believe the caption is "Negro-women selling couscous". Well, the word "negro" in 1897 was an ordinary word with no emotional baggage. It's got a lot of emotional baggage now, we've recaptioned the public view. (Personal interview, 15 February 2023)

HEIR staff decided to update the public photographic captions to a language that is politically correct and in accordance with the University of Oxford's guidelines. At the same time, they have kept the original terminology in the non-public database as it might provide valuable information for future researchers.

Researching and Identifying Local Agents

One way to enrich metadata and acknowledge the contribution of locals is to identify, name, and create biographies of important local agents and excavators. This information can enrich object descriptions and museum records, but also feature in articles and exhibitions. For example, Thomas Kiely from the British Museum has been researching a local agent called Grigoris Antoniou who worked as a foreman in many archaeological expeditions at the turn of the 20th century and who also conducted expeditions himself (see, for example, Kiely 2019 and 2021). Kiely argues: "Gregori reminds us of the general neglect of knowledgeable local agents who helped the discipline to evolve in various ways and who certainly guided more 'professional' individuals in their search for antiquities" (Kiely, 2019, p. 47). Identifying local agents and naming them is a powerful tool towards re-framing photography. According to Cline: "By continuing to construct a comprehensible picture of the accomplishments of these workmen we can try to restore them now to their rightful place in the history of archaeology" (Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology Berkeley, 2021).

Additionally, researching the original photographic material, and not only the digitised photographs, can give us more information about what and who is depicted in photographs, and how. In fact, without intending to do so, our own research helped enrich the metadata of the Institute of Archaeology. Probably the most circulated and well-known picture from Myres' archive is the one from Amathus showing Myres along with four men posing behind a pile of pottery found during excavations. On HEIR's website in February 2023, the caption for this photograph read: "A group of men standing next to a pile of fruit. Description automatically generated with low confidence". While examining the original material we noticed that the lantern slide of this image had a handwritten caption written in Greek, which identified the people depicted (see Figure 10): "Demetri (cook), Grigori (foreman), [Myres], 'The Teacher' (government inspector), Argyro (water carrier)". This is the only instance in this archive where the names of the locals are written on the original slide. While the foreman is a Greek-Cypriot, as evident by the Christian name "Grigori", he wears the traditional Turkish fez, a very common practice among the members of the Christian community in Cyprus during those times. Having known about Kiely's research on Grigoris Antoniou, we could identify and name this local foreman. As soon as we noticed this caption, Janice Kinory, the archivist of the Institute of Archaeology, immediately updated the records of the archive (both online and offline) and since February 2023, the caption has been changed to include the names of the local workers.

Figure 10: Lantern Slide from the John Linton Myres archive. "Demetri (cook), Grigori (foreman), [Myres], 'The Teacher' (government inspector), Argyro (water carrier)". Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford. Photograph by Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert.

Digitisation and Accessibility

The only archive we examined that is fully available online is that of HEIR. According to Ulmschneider:

> Almost every department seemed to have a cellar full or some cupboard full of these lantern slides which weren't being used because they were old media. […] All these different subjects can talk to each other if we can get it online, if we can get it used by people and to actually help us reconstruct what this former world looked like. (Personal interview, 15 February 2023)

Unfortunately, apart from HEIR, the rest of the archives we examined are digitised but not made available online. Furthermore, accessing the material is either not possible or at the very least requires arranging a meeting with a curator.

When asked how museums can decolonise their photographic archives, Thomas Kiely (British Museum) mentioned that digitisation, online accessibility, and the ability to receive feedback from audiences all play a crucial role. Digitisation and online access can facilitate comparisons and parallel viewings of different sources, especially when it comes to photographic archives about Cypriot archaeology that are dispersed in different countries. They can also gather scattered, separated, mislabelled, or lost archives in one place and make them more accessible. Of course, digitisation and the creation of online platforms are time consuming and expensive tasks. While our interviewees seemed receptive to the idea of online availability of archives, they also noted the associated personnel and financial constraints.

Bring Hidden Stories to the Forefront

The British Museum has no guidelines on how to decolonise photographic archives, but some attempts are obvious in the exhibition space. As a curator, Kiely has inserted a glimpse of locals who worked at archaeological excavations in Room 72 of the British Museum—the A.G. Leventis Gallery dedicated to Ancient Cyprus. Next to display cases of antiquities, we see a quite large printed sepia photograph of a group of fragments of ancient statues arranged in three levels (see Figure 11). In the top half of the photograph, the upper bodies of four men appear, mirroring the ancient statues. The label printed on the left side of the photograph reads:

> Heads of statues of worshippers found at a shrine near ancient Tamassos in 1885. Colonel Falkland Warren, chief administrator of the British government on Cyprus, stands on the right. The Cypriot servants in the middle are a reminder of the role local people played in the discovery of ancient Cyprus. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 11: Falkland Warren (far right) and three other people behind fragments of statues from the Apollo-Reshef sanctuary of Phrangissa, photographed in Nicosia in 1885. Photograph by E.A. Carletti. A.G. Leventis Gallery of Ancient Cyprus, British Museum. Photograph of exhibition view by Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert, 2022.

Kiely decided to display this photograph in the gallery to highlight the contribution of the local workforce in the excavations. He explains:

> we often talk about the European archaeologists without showing interest in the people who actually made the excavations. In this case, Cypriots who were the servants, the drivers, the muleteers, it's an element that we don't talk about. We talk about the manipulation of the past, by the archaeologists… We forget about the native population. (Personal interview, 5 July 2022)

Showing local workers—even though they are unnamed—in the gallery space acknowledges their contribution in the excavation process. Exhibitions are an ideal space to bring hidden stories at the forefront and examine the contributions of local workers. A great example dealing with indigenous workers in archaeology is the virtual exhibition "Unsilencing the Archives: The Laborers of the Tell en-Nasbeh Excavations (1926–1935)" by the Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology in Berkeley, California (2021).[15]

[15] See also "The Archive of Unnamed Workers" by Stylianou-Lambert and Achilleos (2024) for an artistic institutional critique on the absence of local worker representation in photographic archives.

5. Conclusion

In our research, we examined the archives of four institutions that care for archaeology-related photographic archives produced during the colonial era in Cyprus: those at the British Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford University, and the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation. The photographic archives we examined were created by foreign, Western archaeologists/explorers who were in search of knowledge, power, or profit. Their photographic records reflect their own standpoints and attitudes towards locals and the land. As a result, apart from their creators' interests, the photographs under investigation reflect their colonial attitudes and the power relations inherent in archaeological work between the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, especially in the Middle East. However, the traces of what was in front of the camera have been captured on light-sensitive surfaces and can serve as our source material for a re-focusing or re-framing of photographic archives.

In terms of representation, photographic material tends to present archaeological sites as sites of knowledge, and objects as evidence of finds. In the few cases locals appear in the photographs, they tend to be working in groups or posing for group portraits. Considered a mindless workforce, they almost always remain unnamed: the 'hands' of archaeology. On the other hand, Western excavators are photographed alone, overseeing work, giving the appearance of being the 'mind' and 'eyes' of archaeology. Recent studies in the Middle East confirm these findings by indicating that indigenous people are more often than not absent or misrepresented in archaeology-related photographic archives (Emmott, 2022; Riggs, 2019; Quirke, 2010). And when they are caught by the photographic lens, their names are not mentioned in publications. Emmott (2022) gives as an example the excavations undertaken in the British mandate of Palestine between 1928 and 1935; she highlights that while many Palestinians worked on archaeological sites, their names were not recorded; in contrast, Western archaeologists were celebrated. Similarly, Riggs (2019) notes that, during the excavations for Tutankhamun's treasures, named Western archaeologists performed for the camera, while the indigenous Egyptian workers remained unnamed, unseen, or were used as props.

The UK institutions we examined adopt some decolonisation or re-framing practices that were analysed in the previous section. After considering these practices and the current literature on decolonisation, museums, and archives, we suggest the following seven strategies for reframing photographic archives in museums and other collecting institutions:

a) Acknowledge that a photographic archive is a product of its time
b) Review and update terminology
c) Research and enrich photographic archives
d) Digitise and widen access

e) Work with communities
f) Reveal hidden stories
g) Work with artists

To expand on these strategies and facilitate wider distribution, a policy brief has been put together, which is available on the Hellenic Observatory's website and included here as an Appendix. We hope the policy brief will serve as a valuable tool for institutions aiming to reflect on and reframe their colonial-era photographic archives.

To conclude, since the archives under examination were created by specific people in a specific colonial setting, it is impossible to go back in time and change what is being represented and how. As Riggs (2019) notes, “absence is in the nature of archive” (p. 164). We are also wary to suggest that an archaeological—or any other type of colonial-era—archive can be completely decolonised. However, steps can be taken to reframe colonial-era photographic material to acknowledge and reveal omissions and include a broader spectrum of voices. In other words, we can collectively aim to curate more sensitively, deepen the context, and problematise collections. Some of the institutions we examined are already making moves towards re-framing their archival material. Much more is possible and desirable.

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Seven strategies for reframing photographic archives:

Archaeology, colonialism, and museums

Policy Brief

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THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

2024

HELLENIC OBSERVATORY
European Institute
Research at LSE

POLICY BRIEF

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Seven strategies for reframing photographic archives: Archaeology, colonialism, and museums

In the past few decades, museum professionals have increasingly sought to decolonise museums by acknowledging their institutions' colonial heritage and addressing imbalances of power and knowledge. Decolonising museums generally entails: (a) acknowledging the institution's colonial connections; (b) revealing the resulting injustices, biases, omissions, and poor decisions; (c) including diverse voices and multiple perspectives; and (d) behaving ethically towards the museum's stakeholders (Kreps, 2011; Van Broekhoven, 2019). As urgent as the task to define decolonising approaches in museums has become, it has yet to stimulate enough discussion on how to decolonise museum photographic archives.

This policy document offers seven strategies or recommendations for museums to decolonise or 'reframe' their colonial, archaeological photographic archives. These recommendations emerged from "Decolonizing archaeology related photographic archives", a 2022–2023 research project that investigated Cypriot photographic archives in archaeological museums in Cyprus and the UK (Hellenic Observatory, 2022). Our work with photographic archives in the context of this project led us to eschew the word 'decolonisation' in the title of the present document. Instead, we chose 'reframing', for two reasons. First, when it comes to current archaeological archives across museums and other collecting institutions, it is impossible to go back and change what was photographed or what was collected. These choices were often made by people in a specific colonial setting. Second, it is unwise to assume that an archaeological—or any other type of colonial-era—archive can be completely decolonised.

However, there are things that can be done to reframe colonial-era photographic material to acknowledge and reveal omissions and discuss diverse voices. In other words, to curate more sensitively, deepen the context, and problematise collections. We identified the following seven strategies for reframing photographic archives in museums and other collecting institutions:

(1) Acknowledge that a photographic archive is a product of its time
(2) Review and update terminology
(3) Research and enrich photographic archives
(4) Digitise and widen access
(5) Work with communities
(6) Reveal hidden stories
(7) Work with artists

The following sections give a brief overview of these strategies, with examples. While the recommendations are intended for colonial-era archaeological museums, they are also applicable to other types of museums, for example, science, history, and ethnographic museums.

1
Acknowledge that a photographic archive is a product of its time

As a product of its time, an archive contains inherent power imbalances and omissions. The first step is an internal, institutional understanding and acknowledgment of how archives are formed and the current role of archivists and museum professionals. Museum staff need to acknowledge that photographic archives are the result of a complex set of conditions and practices, and do not necessarily represent an objective documentation of the past. For example, photographic representations of archaeology (and their material manifestations) are influenced by what was considered important enough to capture, the discipline of archaeology, the possibilities of the photographic medium at the time, the standpoint of the photographer, and the broader sociopolitical environment. The content and condition of an archive also depends on the archiving practices of generations of professionals who, over the years, have sorted, categorised, and added information in relation to these archives.

The second step is for museums to then publicly acknowledge the power imbalances and omissions found in their archives; they can do this on their websites, at exhibitions, in publications, presentations, etc. This step equips audiences with a better understanding and awareness of the context in which these archives were first created.

2
Review and update terminology

The words we use when we write stories or refer to collections and archives matter. While museums still claim that they present objective and neutral stories, the words used for descriptions (such as “we” and “they”, “our” and “their”, and “here” and “there”) often make assumptions and draw dividing lines (Zeefuik and Modest, 2018). Bennett (2020) stresses that researchers and archivists must write responsibly and correct the errors of the past, giving the example of the use of ‘negro’ in records produced as late as 2007. Even the most recently popularised acronym—BAME[1]—carries entrenched colonial views by suggesting that all those who are not white British could fit into a particular category, thus failing to distinguish between varied cultural experiences and understandings (Museums Association, 2021). Words and norms around language are constantly in transition and this can cause confusion, discomfort, and distress; nevertheless, museum culture must keep up with the times. As society changes, language changes with it (Modest and Lelijveld, 2018).

Some museums have started publicly acknowledging problematic terminology by including disclaimers on their websites. For example, the Medelhavet Museum in Sweden has an online collection database that displays a disclaimer as soon as you enter its website (Medelhavet Museum, 2020).[2] Others have reviewed and updated photograph descriptions to avoid perpetuating misconceptions and colonial attitudes. For example, at Oxford University’s Institute of Archaeology, the word ‘native’ has been removed from their publicly available online repository (University of Oxford, n.d.). However, the original terminology is kept in the private, institutional repository as historic information that might be valuable for research purposes.

1 BAME is an acronym for ‘Black, Asian, and minority ethnic’.

2 The disclaimer states: “Users of the database are warned that some records may include language or terminology dating from the 19th and 20th centuries which depicted people in ways that are obsolete and/or offensive. We are conscious that the inclusion of such terminology is problematic. As an institution, we have chosen to include this historical information in our database because it is part of the documentation for the object, photograph, or archival item”.

3
Research and enrich photographic archives

Photographic archives are not static repositories. On the contrary, they change over time—they travel, separate and reunite, become digitised or enriched with text and new material, integrate with other archives, etc. One of the responsibilities of archivists is exploring the potential to fill collection gaps. This can be done through researching and adding information in the descriptions of the photographs; connecting with other archives outside the institution; or through acquiring and integrating alternative photographic archives. One straightforward, but quite challenging task, is to identify, name, and create biographies of the people presented in the photographs. In the Cyprus-related archaeological archives we examined, only foreign excavators were named in the photographs. More research is required to identify, name, and create biographies of the Cypriot agents and excavators who made a significant contribution to the excavations. Such information can enrich object descriptions, museum records, and photographic metadata, as well as related articles and exhibitions.[3] Naming individuals—especially those who have been in the margins of history for centuries—suggests an acknowledgment of their place in history.

However, identifying and naming might not suffice. Photographic archives in collecting institutions reflect the standpoints of certain individuals and disciplinary practices of the time, so museums need to consciously and actively collect—where possible—*alternative* photographic material created by locals, the press of the time, or tourists. Riggs (2019) calls these "expanded archives", because they hold the potential to reveal alternative narratives, fill in gaps, and provide a more holistic understanding of the past.

Another approach is to encourage the use of archives to develop counternarratives and grassroots critiques on archaeological practices—especially when local perspectives are involved. A good example of this approach is "Egypt's Dispersed Heritage", a project addressing the colonial history of Egyptian archaeology collections (Abd el-Gawad and Stevenson, 2021). While run by the UCL Institute of Archaeology, it involves Egyptian researchers and artists who address an Egyptian audience as they attempt to encourage critical readings from a local perspective.

3 See, for example, the work of Thomas Kiely, the A.G. Leventis Curator for Ancient Cyprus at the British Museum about Grigoris Antoniou—a local excavator (Kiely, 2021)

4
Digitise and widen access

Digitisation offers new ways to archive and facilitates comparisons and parallel viewings of different sources. It can also help bring together scattered, separated, or even mislabelled, segregated, or lost archives and make them more accessible. Indeed, technology has been essential in facilitating communities and institutions to collect, circulate, and make available images and resources that matter to them and do justice to a community's past (Iacovino, 2015; Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2022). However, digitisation without re-examination can reproduce existing biases and inequalities.

Some of the processes Bennett (2020) suggests for decolonising archives include: reunifying—at least digitally—those archives that have been separated or disrupted by colonialism; sharing the archives with the communities to whom they are most relevant and therefore making the archives accessible to them; working with those communities to redefine and repurpose materials; and removing colonial language from metadata.

A good example on how digitisation might help archivists and researchers revisit archives is Northeastern University's Early Caribbean Digital Archive (ECDA). The ECDA has looked in various places to find and digitise early Caribbean colonial material—both textual and visual. The aim is to foreground indigenous narratives of survival and resistance in the Caribbean. The ECDA uses digitisation as a tool and a means to overcome monolithic narratives, with the institution stating: "a digital archive offers new affordances that invite researchers to disrupt, review, question and revise the colonial regime" (Northeastern University, n.d.). In other words, digitisation offers an alternative way of reading and interpreting an archive. A digital archive also offers new possibilities for re-archiving, such as 'remix and reassembly', a practice that facilitates the surfacing of parallel stories to the central and usually linear one found in printed texts.

5
Work with communities

Collaboration is also essential in any reframing effort. Collaborative research teams consisting of local and non-local researchers, or of researchers coming from both the coloniser and colonised backgrounds can be most effective. According to Namazi, the process of decolonisation requires “a direct dialogical interaction with those excluded from society; it has to be materialised through their values, their ethos and collective knowledge” (2020, p. 25). This is fundamental if the collaborative process is to challenge entrenched values and principles and have an impact beyond a simple review or revision of the dominant narrative. A good example of collaboration with communities is “Negotiating History: Photography in Sámi culture” (Lien and Nielssen, 2018), a collaborative research project funded by the Norwegian Research Council and administered by the Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies at the University of Bergen. Its research team includes both Sámi and Norwegian scholars. The project studies the role and position of Sámi photographs in the past and present by: mapping and analysing photographs from the Sámi area kept in multiple and dispersed archives, museums, and other institutions in Norway; exploring new uses of historical photographs; and studying the recirculation of historical photographs within Sámi contemporary art (Lien and Nielssen, 2018).

6
Reveal hidden stories

Despite their inherent one-sidedness, photographic archives tend to contain visual traces of the unnamed and unacknowledged people engaged in archaeological excavations. These visual traces can be used to uncover suppressed or hidden narratives and to discuss the contributions of local men, women, and children in archaeology. This can be done with virtual or physical exhibitions that include photographic material.

A successful example of such an attempt is “Unsilencing the Archives: The Laborers of the Tell en-Nasbeh Excavations (1926-1935)”, the 2021 virtual exhibition by the Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology in Berkeley. The exhibition presented its photographic, film, and documentary archives of the Tell en-Nasbeh excavations. It paid tribute to the local men, women, and children who did the hard work for the foreign excavators at very low wages, without ever being credited or even being informed about the aims or findings of the digs (Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology, 2021). The exhibition used unpublished photographic material to shed light on the value and significance of the local labour force used in the excavations and, in fact, names the people who were the “hidden hands” of orientalist foreign excavators in mandate-era Palestine (Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology, 2021). The circumstances in which archaeological excavations took place in Cyprus during colonial times are strikingly similar to those in Palestine, as observed in the photographic archives we examined.

7
Work with artists

Artistic practices can play a role in revealing and highlighting omitted stories, as well as conducting institutional critique and archival activism. *Re*framing requires one to view and understand archives differently, to read them against the grain. Art provides room for such an undertaking and this has been the topic of a few recent conferences and seminars. For example, in a 2022 Association for Art History annual conference session, researchers discussed how contemporary artists examine the processes of remembering, forgetting, and memorialising through archival material: “From Fiona Tan to Dayanita Singh, Goshka Macuga, Rosângela Rennó, Walid Raad, Thomas Ruff, and many more, numerous contemporary artists investigate archives as a means of rethinking the past in the present” (Association for Art History, 2022).

Another recent example of the use of art practices in the interpretation and reframing of photographic archives is “In the sea of the setting sun-Contemporary Photographic Practices and the Archive”, an exhibition at the State Gallery of Contemporary Art-SPEL in Nicosia, Cyprus. The exhibition presented 17 Cypriot artists whose work engages with contemporary photographic practices focusing especially on the research and use of the photographic archive. According to Dr Elena Stylianou, curator of the exhibition, the works:

> negotiate the tensions between romanticized understandings of the archive as a dusty place where one can retrieve treasures of the past and connect with history, and the archive as a metaphor or concept directly linked to the construction of interdisciplinary knowledge, systems of political imagination, power structures, the formation of national consciousness, and patterns of exclusion. (International Association of Photography and Theory, 2022)

Artistic work could, therefore, take advantage of its inherently extended freedom of movement and expression (compared to academic research) to function as a form of institutional critique or archival activism that illuminates gaps and omissions.

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