

Adam Benkato

Against the Archival Groove? Rediscovered Voices from 1940s Libya

A re-discovered archive of vinyls contains voice records from the period just before independence, a period for which Libyan sources are lacking. Though the recordings were meant to be linguistic data, and they were made by an outside scholar, I am interested in finding ways to use this archive against its original (and unfulfilled) purpose in ways that contribute to Libyan history *and* memory. This contribution will begin exploring what it means to create an archive, reconstruct its context, repurpose its contents, and make its subjects hearable in a meaningful way.

Ala Younis

The Works Were Limited: Researching Baghdad and Her Architects

Heavily based on archives, found material, and the stories of its protagonists; Plan for Greater Baghdad was activated by a set of 35mm slides taken by architect Rifat Chadirji in 1982 of a Gymnasium in Baghdad that was designed by Le Corbusier and named after Saddam Hussein. The presentation came out male-dominant because of the research that looked into the written narratives and archives. So, I went back to reproduce the whole timeline in a female focus in 2018. My female protagonists were created from their own minimal or no presence in archives. The second version of the work thus becomes a critique of the making and use of archives that informed its first version. As it moves in symposiums, another question arose, how do historians treat research-informed artworks?

Alia Mosallam

Voyages of an Egyptian tune - from Estrangement at Home to Longing on the Fronts of WWI

Records indicate that between tens of thousands and up to 1.5 million Egyptian men between the age of 17-35 were drafted to the fronts of Sinai, Gaza, Jaffa, and Calais during WWI. This makes up to a third of the male population of that age at the time. Many left to never return, and lay buried in unmarked graves, without their respective burial rituals. But their voices continue to roam various archives echoing through the gramophone or trapped in police reports and image catalogues in British, French and Australian military archives. Voices out of place, whether it is on account of language or incentive for involvement in the war.

How, one hundred years later, can we trace the voices that have completely elapsed, lying buried under 100 years of silence, re-narrativizing and neglect? I have chosen to read one particular song that appears consistently through various archival sources: through the voice of Na'ima al-Masriyya, a pioneering artist in the record industry who sang in Assiut during the onset of the war (1913-1916); as a work-song sung by the Egyptian Labour Corps in Jaffa in 1917; overheard in 'native quarters' by workers returned from the war to their Upper Egyptian villages in 1918. The main line of inquiry then becomes, what can these mediated voices tell us about the war; what essence of these experiences do the echoes carry? And in tracing the song from city to city and archive to archive, what of the politics and geography of World War I do we unravel in our wake.

Ayham Dalal and Dima Dayoub

"Memory, Place, Heritage, Displacement": Reflections on Practices of Mapping Spatial Memory and Urban Heritage among Displaced Syrians from Homs

So far, millions of Syrians have been displaced. Some are still in their journey while others have already settled. Throughout these journeys, each one of them carried a story of a place and a city in which they lived. In Homs, for instance, more than 70% of the city has been destroyed, or completely transformed. Thus, a pre-2011 Homs only exists in the memories of those who witnessed it. How displaced Syrians from Homs perceive their city? In how much, the new places of settlement affect this perception? How these forms of spatial memory and knowledge can be mapped and disseminated? This presentation will discuss the work of the research initiative 'Memory, Place, Heritage, Displacement' funded by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung. It shares the experiences regarding different forms of documentation and experimentation (like collective mapping and video footage), and seeks to reflect on the ways in which architects and planners can engage with mapping spatial knowledge under precarious conditions, and how these can be communicated with the audience during turbulent times of war and social conflict.

Britta Lange

Archival Silences as Historical Sources

In my contribution, I want to present a sound file of Seoraj Singh, an Indian soldier in the British army after the First World War who was recorded by a German academic commission as a prisoner of war in the so called Halfmoon Camp in Wünsdorf near Berlin. He told a story about silence as a metaphor, and on his recording are silences as concrete pauses in his performance. I will reflect on these to dimensions of silence as well as their significance for historiography.

Edna Bonhomme

Decolonizing Medicine and Science in Egypt and Tunisia

Since the nineteenth century, medicine and science have been perceived as a monolithic tool for domination, inextricably linked to Europe's imperial expansion into the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. This colonial discourse has been linked to the globalizing power of biomedicine and scientific institutions. Everyone has the ability to define disease, record their history, and implant their memory, but not everyone has the ability to democratically dictate which artefacts get preserved or where they reside. To that end, nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonialism resulted in medical and scientific materials from North Africa residing in European archives, institutes and museums, thus hardening racial boundaries and imbricating coercive medical and scientific archives. What are the alternative modes of narrating medicine and science and how does North Africa get integrated into the global perspective of knowledge and power? To what extent do tangible objects get privileged within archival and museum practices? This paper will use an anti-colonial methodology to re-narrate the lives of several medical/scientific items from Egypt and Tunisia that currently reside in European institutes. More specifically, it will investigate the production and circulation of science, highlight the dynamism of "traditional" medicine, and the syncretism of knowledge traditions. The paper will articulate the conditions of possibility of non-elite Egyptians and Tunisians functioning as mediators of medical and scientific thought which will subsequently offer novel possibilities for formulating new archives for medicine and science.

Gilles Aubry

Performing across the Material Sound Archive

Departing from the Agadir earthquake of 1960, the film « Salam Godzilla » (2018, in progress) questions the authority of technologies of material inscription such as seismography and phonography in the making of local histories. The presentation focuses on performative strategies used in the film together with local artists in order to counter such an authority, raising new questions about the archive and possibly allowing for less-heard voices to emerge.

Hannah El Sisi

**Can the *Mu'taqal/a* Speak in the Shadow of the *Mu'taqal*?
Excavating political prisoners' voices in Sisi's Egypt**

Writing the history of the post-colonial *Mu'taqal* perhaps recalls the Egyptian historian Ibrahim Abdoh's parable "History without Documents". Reflecting my own research experience between colonial and private archives, conducting oral history interviews and 'collecting' fiction, autobiography and art in an attempt to reconstruct political prisoners' experiences between 1954-92, this talk will explore the different sources available for writing such a history, the difficulty in accessing others as well as a brief discussion of the epistemological, formal and practical concerns that arise from working with each.

Jasmina Metwaly

Archiving as an Arsenal

858 is an initiative to make public all the footage shot and collected in Egypt between the years 2011 and 2013. It is an initiative open to the public with footage that hasn't been seen before, some of it was on youtube, but mostly in an edited form. On launching, the archive has 858 hours of raw indexed and time-stamped video material in its original length presenting thousands of histories of revolt, along with photographs and documents collected in that period.

During the workshop Jasmina Metwaly will discuss the premise of the project and speak about the archive as an ongoing politically challenged attempt at sharing histories. 858 is an ongoing project open to interventions, interactions, countering.

Joseph Kai

Comics Remix: Old Material, New Stories

Dealing with ready-made visuals and reusing published material in order to create new content is closely related to our practice of visual storytelling at Samandal Comics. We publishing under Creative Commons licence in order to open up possibilities of creating alternative content and give durability to older and contemporary material/creations. This approach challenges the creative moment on many levels but equally opens new horizons to both visual storytelling publishing and reading experiences.

Kaya Behkalam

The Augmented Archive Project - Media Archaeology of the Egyptian Revolution

The Augmented Archive project is an app for iOS and Android Smartphones, that displays videos in public space, at the very site they were recorded. The first project with the app is a video walk through different times and sites of Cairo. Users can walk through the streets of Egypt's capital and see—in moving images—how a place has changed over the last few years. The project is an attempt to re-inscribe past events into the urban fabric and to access archival footage differently. Unlike other archives, the Augmented Archive requires you to walk in order to watch. It juxtaposes past and present times topographically, forcing you to engage with the past through your own bodily presence and engagement, proximity and presence.

The project has been conceived and developed by Kaya Behkalam, a visual artist, filmmaker, and academic, living in Berlin and Cairo. In the conference and during the workshop “Out of the Archives: Accessing, Exploring, and Connecting Fragmented Histories”, Behkalam will discuss the theory and practice of working with archival video material topographically, specifically in relation to the Egyptian Revolution of January 25.

Lamia Moghnie

May Ziade at Asfourieh: Retracing Marginalised Stories Through Fiction

In this talk, I think through the process of narrating and reading the archive by focusing on the patient records of the Lebanon hospital for Mental and Nervous Disorders- known as Asfouriyeh hospital (1901-1982). As a psychologist and anthropologist, I have been taught to produce narratives around patients that vary significantly in frame, affect and representation. As I look into the records of Asfouriyeh hospital, the archived patient records produce stories of psychiatric disciplinary practices, leaving traces behind of the forgotten lives, journeys and incarceration of these patients. Recently, there has been a growing interest to re-construct the story of May Ziade's stay at the Asfouriyeh hospital in the late 1930s. A Lebanese-Palestinian journalist, novelist and poet and a key figure in the Nahda Arab literary scene, May Ziade was said to have written profusely during her stay at Asfouriyeh, but no records of her writing is yet to be found. Through the novels of Darina al Joundi (2017), Waseeni Al A'raj (2018) and the graphic novel of Pascale Ghazaly, I look at the process of fictionalizing absent or contained archives as a practice of re-imagining and re-inserting characters in historical narration.

Noor Nieftagodien

The History Workshop and Community Histories: Experiences in Public History and Archives

The presentation draws on a process of critical reflection by the History Workshop (based at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg) of its community history work undertaken since the early 2000s. During this time our university-based research unit has been involved in several public history projects, of different scales and varying outcomes, in black townships such as Alexandra, Evaton, Orlando and Dobsonville (the latter two being suburbs of Soweto). Our work in Alexandra since 2003, which will be the main focus of the presentation, involved two phases of research and produced a book, a documentary, an archive and exhibitions. The primary aim of this intervention is to examine the evolving character of this public history, the collaboration with communities and the shifting foci of historical production. In broad terms, the earlier period witnessed a pre-occupation with a version liberation history in which the ruling ANC loomed large. More recently, there has been a growing interest in the histories of local/community, of individuals and families and of quotidian experiences. This shift has occurred in a context of decreasing state support for public history, one important consequence of which has been that communities and university researchers have to rely much more on their own resources. Finally, these public history projects have produced considerable resources (interviews, photographs, documents, research papers, etc.) but struggle to create community-based archives. The archival process is affected by a decline in the state archives and the challenges faced by independent archives. Here the presentation will consider a few archival initiatives arising from our collaboration with communities and efforts by the broader archive-research community to save and reconstitute archives in South Africa.

Can We Hear the Subaltern? Peasants and Workers in Ottoman Archives

“The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with ‘woman’ as a pious item. Representation has not withered away.”

-- G. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

The Ottoman Empire produced copious documentation of its administrative efforts, and in the 1970s scholars discovered these archives as a source of social history. In the Empire’s former Arab provinces, historians produced seminal works on social groups whose members had been overlooked by earlier scholars. This early archival turn focused specifically on the court records generated by the Ottoman judicial administration, since the local population in provinces like Egypt and Syria frequented the courts assiduously to settle their daily transactions. Combining the functions of a notary public with jurisdiction over different kinds of litigation, the judges and their Arabic-speaking assistants heard cases involving craftspeople, women, slaves, peasants, and other subaltern or marginalized population groups. The documents often encapsulate the voices of these subalterns: guild members objecting to the injustice of their headman, a concubine accusing her master of having sold her illegally when she was pregnant, cultivators protesting the rapacity of a tax collector. Yet we cannot take these fragments as disembodied voices from the past or fetishize the historian’s role in excavating and redeeming silences from the margins. All archives are the product of specific power relations, and, as such, set the terms on which subalterns may speak.

Rasha Chatta

From Contested Archives to Fiction: Figuring the Historical in Algerian Graphic Narratives

The case of Algeria has achieved an iconic status in social and anti-colonial literature, as well as in political and revolutionary thought. However, the actual archives of the colonial period have been difficult to access on both sides of the Mediterranean, often leading to disputed and competitive narratives. This presentation revisits the corpus of autofictional graphic narratives written and illustrated by descendants of Pieds-Noirs, Harkis, and Algerian pro-Independence immigrants in France whose work aims at questioning and contesting silenced past narratives, while offering visual treatment of individual memories embedded in larger historical events.

Rim Naguib

Visualizing Counter-Nationalist Trajectories in the Age of Rising Nationalisms

In the early 1920s, an Egyptian socialist party, and an affiliated trade union federation, were founded in Alexandria by unlikely partners, who spanned various ethno-religious and socio-economic backgrounds. In this endeavor, the paths of a Jewish jeweler of an uncertain national origin, a Greek offspring of a sponge trader, a carpenter from a delta village, and a levantine tobacco roller—among others—intersected in the heyday of nationalist mobilizations in interwar Egypt. While campaigns for the complete Egyptianization of state and economy were raging among the effendiyya, British intelligence was waging war against Bolshevism in the colonies, and—coincidentally—the Egyptian elite was seeking to suppress the radicalization of 1919, by downplaying the importance of class as a source of socio-political identity and transnational solidarity, and—in the process—drawing sharp lines between nationals and "foreign residents", we find in the archives fragments of stories of individuals for whom national identification was of little relevance in their ideologies and life trajectories. These counter-nationalist paths appearing at a time of hegemonic ethno-religious nationalism are the subject of my graphic stories. The mostly failed attempts by the new national government to deport and denaturalize them tell lost stories that do not conform to hegemonic historical patterns.

In my attempt to depict graphically the stories of four interwar internationalists—Joseph Rosenthal, Sakellaris Yannakakis, Abdel Rahman Fadl and Fouad al Shamali—I have encountered a number of challenges. How do I paint the personalities of unique nonconforming people using the documents of the very power they resisted, that is the reports of the police and the state-affiliated press? How do I tell the story of counter-nationalist paths without falling into the hole of elite cosmopolitan fantasies, or without positing identities as mutually exclusive or dichotomous? Finally, how does their non-conformity with hegemonic historical processes better explain these processes rather than idealize these personalities as exceptions to global patterns?

Seda Altug

Politics of memory in Syria and Negotiating the Absences and Excesses in the Archives

This presentation will discuss about the ways in which social historians working with multiple archives (colonial, national, personal, written, oral, audio) deal with and make sense of the silences, contradictions as well as excesses in them. It will also inquire the limits and possibilities of reconstructing the past and making the subaltern speak through employing various archives. Examples will come from violent and controversial past events in Syria during World War I and the French colonial period.

Zeynep Turkyilmaz

The Historian's Craft?: Hide and Seek at the Ottoman and Turkish Republican Archives

Drawing on years of research at the Ottoman and Turkish Republican archives on subjects deemed politically undesirable, and peoples, who have been long invisible, I will primarily explore the challenges a historian face when researching at highly securitized archives. I argue that there is a double seek and hide at play at these archives for every researcher. First, excavating official silences and absences as well as tracing the secretive trails of subjectivities that excelled at hiding from the central authorities definitely needs developing certain skills as a historian. Second, as historian, positioning oneself vis-à-vis archivists and other researchers at the archives at a particular fashion so that the research on such politicized issues could be carried out, can become daunting and complex task, yet an indispensable part of the craft.

Yektan Turkyilmaz

The Armenian Genocide, Denialism and the Battle of Archives

This presentation will address the ways in which archives have been used and abused in the study of the Armenian genocide.

1965, the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide, was a watershed. That year, for the first time, the Soviet Union “allowed” Armenians to commemorate the genocide as an historic event. In the diasporas, too, Armenian groups mobilized in demonstrations both to commemorate the catastrophe and to demand its recognition as a genocide. The genocide paradigm drastically reframed and also homogenized how the catastrophe is remembered. Hence, the campaign for genocide entitlement on the one hand inevitably involved tailoring representations of the massacres and the historical background to match archetypical genocide criteria i.e., the Holocaust. On the other hand, it paved the way for the remaking of Turkish official denialist narratives. Thus, an obsession with historical *truth* became part of the equation and controversy for the rival camps of historical representation. Interestingly however, both camps share a similar fetishization of archival documentation; the search for the credible documents directed the researchers to (mostly) state archives and ignited the ongoing contestation and fight over their truthfulness and authenticity of sources, embracing the fantasy that recovered data from the archives will prove their own version of themselves as the true victims and rival groups as the perpetrators.

Drawing on the case of the Armenian Genocide Studies this presentation will discuss the conceptual, methodological and ethical complications of archival fetishism.