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SESSION TITLE:

UNTOLD STORIES: WOMEN AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN AFRICA

THEME: Historiography, methods and theory

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ABSTRACT

In the last thirty years, research devoted to women in archaeology has increased considerably, confirming the previously unrecognized role they played in the development of the discipline. However, these studies have mostly focused on renowned and successful female archaeologists from Western Europe, North America and Australia. Little attention has been given to the more conventional and sometimes less visible professional trajectories of women working as museum curators, conservators, educators, illustrators, photographers, or to those who pursued their interest in archaeology as collectors or on the side of their male relatives. As a consequence, women involved in archaeology in Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and South America have remained largely unknown.

This session addresses the various modes by which women have engaged with archaeological practice and knowledge production in Africa, from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. With the aim of contributing to both social and intellectual history of science, as well as to colonial studies, we invite papers that explore any of the following topics:

- intellectual biographies of professional and amateur female archaeologists in the political, cultural, social and economic contexts of the places where they lived and worked in Africa;
- the contribution of women to the development of archaeological theory and practice in the same geographical area, and to fostering pluri- and interdisciplinary collaborations in the field;
- women's participation in creating archaeological collections and museums, as well as in the management, protection and conservation of archaeological heritage in Africa;
- and analyses of women's interpretations of archaeological records and the particularities of their research.

We also welcome papers discussing the inclusion of women in the profession in Africa and the different factors that influenced this complex process (e.g., political and colonial ideologies, socio-economic, personal); the role of social and academic networks in women's disciplinary integration and the dissemination of their work; and the relationship between the personal and professional lives of female archaeologists.

KEYWORDS: Africa; history of archaeology; colonial science; women; archaeology; archaeological heritage; museum; collection; disciplinary integration; academic network.