

HOW THE COPY CONSTITUTES THE ORIGINAL

Gavin Lucas was with us this week, talking about archaeological fieldwork. He described to us how archaeologists use *mimetic machines* for copying the past into the present.

This is how I would put it –

At the heart of our archaeological interests is the archive – we collect, codify, make and manage inventories. It is a documentary effort. And more than an interest in preserving or conserving what may be lost or dispersed.

The archive is a machine.

People, interests, devices, algorithms, inscriptions, and what is left of the past – what is worked on. A machinic assemblage. And the archive shapes its raw material – what is left of the past. The archaeologist cuts a straight edge into the sedimented past, strips it away layer by layer, so that it might be recorded as section and plan. The copy thus constitutes the original.

Just as we remember the event as the snapshot we made of it.

Here are some more detailed comments about mimesis and what I call the *eidetic* component of archaeology/performance – [Link]