

WAC@30 – Give the past a future. Some comments from Europe

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The following is the text of a short speech given by the first author at WAC-8 in Kyoto, Japan on Mon 29 August, 2016. Prof. Koji Mizoguchi invited representatives from various international archaeological associations to address the World Archaeology Congress on the future of archaeology as part of a celebration of the World Archaeology Congress' 30th anniversary. It was written jointly with EAA President Felipe Criado-Boada and can be watched here: <https://youtu.be/lkHHXrGqeGI>.

I am honoured to speak today on behalf of the president and the rest of the Executive Board of the EAA who are unable to attend WAC this year due to the coincident scheduling of our own annual meeting.

Archaeology has a long history in Europe, but it is a history of national traditions, endeavours and insights. A pan-European vision of European archaeology was left to the few and the extraordinary—Oscar Montelius, Gordon Childe, and their ilk. The European Association of Archaeologists was only founded in 1994. So, we are actually nearly 10 years too young to be commenting on the last 30 years!

Nevertheless, I hope that these thoughts drawn from the EAA's past, present and goals for the future are helpful.

The impulse to found the EAA sprang from the same hopeful and forward thinking cultural moment out of which the European Union was birthed. Our founding principles reflect that spirit of unity and optimism:

- To promote the development of archaeological research and the exchange of archaeological information in Europe.
- To promote the management and interpretation of European archaeological heritage.
- To promote proper ethical and scientific standards for archaeological work.
- To promote the interests of professional archaeologists in Europe.
- To promote cooperation with other organisations with similar aims.

Since then, the EAA has developed in leaps and bounds, drawing in archaeologists—both professional and academic—and heritage professionals from across Europe, as well as bringing in colleagues from neighbouring regions and, like myself, those who live and work further abroad but who study Europe's past. We have about 2200 members from 50 different countries.

Since 1999 we have had a consultative status with the Council of Europe, giving us a platform from which to advocate for policies supporting the protection of cultural heritage and promotion of archaeology and heritage in EU member countries.

For 22 years we have aimed to be a society which both promotes and represents archaeology, archaeologists and heritage professionals within our own expansive and expanding definition of Europe. Moreover we actively involve ourselves with those social and political problems that affect Archaeology just as they affect the wider world. In less than a year, for instance, we have had to react with public statements and actions to terrorist attacks in France, the UK's Brexit referendum and, recently, the leadership crisis in Turkey.

At this point we would particularly like to acknowledge and celebrate our many Turkish members, who hosted our annual conference in Istanbul in 2014 and who are currently working within a difficult and at times hostile political situation.

Among our successes as a society we count: our high ranked journal, our widely read newsletter, our newly launched monograph series, our increasing membership and attendance at conferences, our formal links with national/international archaeological societies and heritage organisations, and our successful efforts to improve European heritage policy.

As we look to the future, however, and as has been noted in the abstract for this plenary session, the position of archaeology and the significance of protecting cultural heritage seem less sure than in previous years.

Despite the widespread public appreciation and cultural prestige of ancient remains in Europe, it is undeniable that a considerable segment of the population feels a certain aversion to heritage management, particularly when this is identified most strongly with bureaucratic structures that exist to prevent things from happening. This situation differs from country to country; but a priori conservatism has caused, albeit indirectly, a public disaffection towards Heritage and Archaeology. The Great Recession of 2008 and its after effects have only exacerbated these problems. In addition, the Recession had a dramatic effect on employment and prospects of the commercial activity and professional archaeology/heritage which are, frankly, some of the weakest links in the archaeological system.

Moreover, the changing political and social contexts in modern Europe look very different to the Europe of the early and mid 1990s—with optimism about the European project replaced by cynicism, and a spirit of unification confronted with reborn and politically empowered ethno-nationalist movements in many countries. The British referendum to leave the EU has shaken our sense of unity and archaeologists are only one community trying to suss out the consequences and the best path forward.

And yet, we are not willing to relinquish our ideals or adjust them downwards in some sort of pessimistic pragmatism. As our new president argued recently, instead of yielding to these negative pressures, we hope to position the EAA as a bulwark against them, espousing new ambitions for archaeology, promoting activism within the archaeological and heritage communities, working towards a closer integration of archaeologists and heritage professionals, and working to increase the value and profile of archaeological and cultural heritage and the necessity of protecting it.

In looking to the future of the EAA, both on the short and the long term, we are attempting to plan for an even more inclusive and empowered archaeology and heritage sector in Europe. We aspire to become more representative, expanding our organisational remit to a greater proportion of the European archaeological community and making more liberal use of democratising technologies like twitter, open repositories and other digital platforms to better represent our community and engage with individuals among it. In particular, we are aware that the younger generation of archaeologists and heritage professionals are among the most precariously employed and in need of institutional support. We are currently building the framework of what we hope will be a vibrant and supportive student network within the EAA, and we look forward to planning our future with the future of the current student and very early career generation in mind.

We also are building on the political endeavours of the last two decades. We see it as a key part of our mission to continue to actively promote the value of all aspects of archaeological research and the research of related disciplines and we hope to provide meaningful contributions and solutions to debates around the big issues facing humanity. In order to achieve these aims in the future, we have envisioned for ourselves an ambitious and vocal role within the future European 'project'. We are seeking a more central place (both figuratively and literally, within the offices of the EU) in the dialogue concerning European cultural and intellectual life and civil society as well as a more visible

and active position within European heritage policy formulation. Moreover, through greater public engagement, we believe that the EAA can increase its relevance to the European project; and we are confident that Archaeology, archaeologists, and the EAA itself can play a growing role within it.

Finally, and perhaps most relevant to this audience. A core element of our future planning lies in ever stronger collaboration with our peers within Europe and beyond. Archaeology and heritage are international disciplines and we see no way of ethically moving forward without wider collaboration and consultation. In the same way we are building on our existing ties to heritage organisations throughout Europe, we celebrate our developing relationships with international archaeology and heritage bodies as well as developing links to societies representing and promoting allied fields: anthropology, architecture, STS, etc.

To end on a personal observation, as an American with a European doctorate and research profile who is now based in Australia, I would like to observe that while we archaeologists of different nationalities may sometimes use different methodologies, and while our stakeholders and the impact and political implications of our work can be profoundly different, in both WAC and EAA I have always found a shared ideal to conduct our research and practice to the highest ethical standards and to use our knowledge of the past to make the present and future better. Thank you.

Editorial

Welcome to the 50th issue of TEA! This anniversary issue marks another step in the evolution of TEA, and the EAA more broadly. Have you visited our [new webpage](#)? EAA has a brand new website, integrated with the iMIS system. One advantage of this is that TEA content will now be available online as html pages, and debate articles will be available for members to add comments and discussion. This new format, the first of several upcoming changes, will make TEA easier to read online, particularly on mobile devices. And keep an eye out for TEA's new look, which will be more efficient and have a cleaner visual appearance. TEA will also continue to be available as a pdf document, archived on the website.

This issue contains reports from the 22nd Annual Meeting in Vilnius, including the [Minutes of the EAA Annual Membership Business Meeting](#) (AMBM). We emphasize that this is an important document. We ask that members read the minutes and contact the EAA executive board and administrator with any comments, questions or concerns. The EAA works for the membership, but we need to hear your voice! In addition to the Minutes of the AMBM, there is a proposal for an EAA working party on archaeology and the EU Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, and '[A Survey regarding The EAA Code of Practice for Fieldwork Training](#)' from the Committee on the Teaching and Training of Archaeologists (CTTA). This latter raises a series of questions, and some troubling compliance issues, and the committee asks that EAA members respond by contacting the committee chair Raimund Karl directly, or by sending a response to be published in TEA. And, we also would like to hear your opinions about the [EAA Strategic Development Plan](#).

During the next year, between Vilnius 2016 and Maastricht 2017, we are promoting a TEA debate theme on Open Access, data accessibility, and ownership of archaeological information. Our first essay is '[Open Access and the EJA: some preliminary thoughts](#)' by EJA Deputy Editor Catherine J. Frieman. We encourage you to read this, to comment on the EAA website, and to send us your opinions and essays on this topic.

Two EAA European Archaeological Heritage Prizes were awarded at Vilnius 2016: to [L'Unité d'archéologie de la ville de Saint-Denis](#) for exemplary achievements that unite archaeological heritage management and research with local community outreach, and to Dr. Caroline Sturdy Colls for her innovative contribution to the research on Nazi-German terror in camps and in massacres. Caroline Sturdy Colls contributed to this newsletter with '[Investigating Holocaust-Era Crimes](#)', an introduction to her stimulating research in our Research section. Nominations for the 2017 [European Heritage Prize](#) must be received by the EAA Secretariat at administrator@e-a-a.org before 1 June 2017.

Now is the time to propose a session for the 23th EAA Annual Meeting in Maastricht. Session submission for EAA 2017 Maastricht is [now open](#): the deadline is 30 November 2016.

This issue also includes reports from session and roundtables from the 22nd Annual Meeting in Vilnius, along with reports from other conferences and several announcements. Our next issue, Winter 2017, has a deadline of 15 January 2017. Send your opinions, research updates and conferences to us at tea@e-a-a.org.

Katharina Rebay-Salisbury and Roderick B. Salisbury

TEA

The European Archaeologist

The newsletter of EAA members for EAA members

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