

EAA Matters

Letter from the President

by Felipe Criado-Boado, EAA President (president@e-a-a.org)

This year the EAA celebrates its 25th year in existence. This occasion allows us to reflect on a very satisfactory achievement. Our founding Ljubljana meeting in 1994 had 150 attendees. This year 2018 we are 3300. The anniversary is also an occasion when we must reflect carefully on the history of the EAA, on its contribution to Archaeology and the contribution of Archaeology to our culture and our societies. We must also reflect on how we can develop and contribute in the near future, being aware of anything we do is “ancient to the future”, as stated the slogan of an important music ensemble that celebrates this year its 50 anniversary.

You are all aware, as I am, that many other organizations around are reaching similar milestone anniversaries. This simultaneity of anniversaries clearly demonstrates that many developing things formed within Europe at around the same time. It was a time of optimism when future planning and the rationale for formation of new projects and organisations seemed both logical and urgent. Many people relied on the idea of Europe, the project of a European Union, the post-Cold War world, the open market and its institutions, and harmonious economic and social development. We, as archaeologists, also relied on the development of Archaeology as a development-related activity and in its relationship with Cultural Heritage management to promote our social role and engagement.

But the future is not as expected. There are several grounds for saying this. A concrete example comes to mind: 25, 20, 15, 10 years ago, choosing a destination for our Annual Meeting did not involve risk. Today, with so many more members, we must be more careful in our review of the options. In fact, among EAA’s management innovations is now a compulsory risk assessment that accompanies the decision on future Annual Meeting locations.

It may seem trivial, but it reflects more uncertain politico-social circumstances around us. That bolster support for political options that are anti-liberal in terms of identity politics but linked ultimately to the spread of neo-liberal economic ideology and policies (to mention a definition that I recently co-authored together with Alfredo González-Ruibal and Pablo Alonso González), conceived by the wealthy and harmful to those who essentially support them; they are the losers of this history. The harm fuels the perfect circle of this political storm. The rise in many countries of different forms of reactionary populism in electoral politics, especially when not directly associated with the far right, is something that should concern us all.

In this context, Archaeology, we archaeologists, and EAA must act. In my view, there are two principle feasible things we can do:

(1) Archaeology and Heritage Studies are particularly well placed to define the dynamics and key relationships of the past, of cultural memory, tradition and identity. All these areas, familiar to us as archaeologists, are now informing the basic infrastructure of reactionary discourses and practices. In that field of game these are used to promote a growing and divisive form of historical revisionism that is not always easy to counter. In the near future we will have to pay more attention to all forms of manipulation of the past and the presentations of heritage that promote revisionist ideologies. This is a task that is not only logical for contemporary Archaeology, but is also logical (for instance) in DNA studies (that can so easily be manipulated to justify identities in a bio-medical will-to-know), and material studies (which can compare the discourses with its effects and material footprints).

(2) Archaeology and Heritage specialists can use their capacity to analyse and scrutinize the output of revisionist political opinion and understand the motivations behind it. It is far too easy to identify and dismiss the current increased profile as the work of extreme right voters. It is intellectually lazy

and self-indulgent. It does not explain or seek to understand why it is happening and how it affects society as a whole. If the public engagement of Archaeology is to mean something now and in the future, it must be reflected in our social commitment to socio-cultural understanding and dialog.

This is not a time for complaint, nostalgia or adhering to old and established formulas. It is a time for archaeology as a profession to consider what triggered the foundation of EAA and supported its steady development to its current position of strength in these past 25 years and to consider carefully what we as a professional and organization should will do in the next 25 years.

As president, and on behalf of the Executive Committee, I call on all EAA members everywhere to take advantage of the occasion of the 25th anniversary to make a reflection. The forthcoming Annual Meeting in Bern will be the perfect occasion to do this, with its motto of *thinking beyond borders and paradigms*. But the Annual Meeting it is not our only opportunity and mechanism for this important reflective task. We aim to create and use other methods and media, including of course *TEA*, to present and support our reflection and our proposed actions. The important point that remains is that every individual member and corporate member of the EAA must aim to contribute to this task.

THURSDAY, 21/9/95					
	ROOM 1	ROOM 2	ROOM 3	ROOM 4	ROOM 12
SESSIONS (9:00-11:30)	European Archaeology Outside Europe		Archaeology of Power I	New Approaches in Landscape Archaeology	Origins of European Neolithic
SESSIONS (12:00-14:30)	European Archaeology as Seen by a Non-European Archaeologist		Archaeology of Power II	Environmental Archaeology	Social Complexity in the European Neolithic
SESSIONS (16:00-18:30)	The Development of Metallurgy in European Prehistory		The Archaeology of Cult	Landscape Archaeology Through Europe: Problems, Methods and Techniques	Presenting Archaeology
FRIDAY, 22/9/95					
	ROOM 1	ROOM 2	ROOM 3	ROOM 4	ROOM 12
SESSIONS (10:00-12:30)	Rock Art as a Social Representation	Models of Organisation in Commercial Archaeology	Expanding the Boundaries of Historical Archaeology	Land and Sea: New Directions in Maritime Archaeology	
ROUND TABLES (13:00-14:30)	Endangered Sites: the Case of the Cba	The Role of Contract Archaeology	Teaching Archaeology: the SIGMA Project	Archaeological Parks as a Cultural Resource	
SESSIONS (16:00-18:30)	Rural Foundation and Patterns of the Iron Age Society	R.T.: Rescue Archaeology and the Production of Knowledge	Archaeological Identification of Ethnicity	Building Landscapes: Spatial Regularities in Material Culture	
SATURDAY, 23/9/95					
	ROOM 1	ROOM 2	ROOM 3	ROOM 4	ROOM 12
SESSIONS (10:00-12:30)	Contact Between Colonist and Natives During the First Millenium in the Mediterranean Basin	Urban Archaeology	The Archaeology of Wealth, Prestige and Value: Processes and Dynamics	Archaeology and the Changing of Rural Landscapes	
SESSIONS (13:00-15:30)	Archaeology and Tourism	Archaeology in Publics Works	Ethnoarchaeology from the European Perspective	The Archaeology of Wealth, Prestige and Value: Landscape and Material Culture	

Session plan of the 1st Annual Meeting of the EAA in Santiago de Compostela, September 1995 (Photo: Felipe Criado-Boado)

This was the program of the EAA AM in Santiago de Compostela in 1995. Four parallel sessions, 32 sessions altogether, about 550 attendees. Everything was already there. The basic spirit and soul of the EAA was established at that stage. It has continued to build on a synergetic interaction between the interpretation of archaeological record, the management of archaeological heritage and the politics of archaeological practice.

TEA

The European Archaeologist

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