

Europae Archaeologiae Consilium (EAC) Annual Meeting 2018
19th Heritage management symposium
Development-led archaeology in Europe. Meeting the needs
of archaeologists, developers and the public. Sofia, Bulgaria,
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The Annual Meeting of EAC¹ took place in Sofia, in the hotel Arena di Serdica (www.arenadiserdica.com), located in the city centre and housing the remains of the Roman Amphitheatre of Ancient Serdica (III-IV c. AD). Thus the venue assured an ideal context for presentations and discussions on cultural heritage management (fig. 1).

The main theme of the symposium was 'Development-led archaeology in Europe' and sought to provide a crossing point between the main actors in the process of cultural heritage management: archaeologists, developers and the general public. The scientific programme was divided into 3 blocks with emphasis on each of these 3 aspects/components. There were eighteen presentations by contributors from 12 countries (Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Israel, Portugal, Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK).

The registration was accompanied with EAC publication exhibit where books and "EAC Occasional Papers" could be found (fig. 2). The last issue of the papers contains proceedings of the previous EAC conference in Athens (9-11 March 2017), entitled "Dare to Choose. Making Choices in Archaeological Heritage Management".

Before the sessions the EAC Members Meeting (consilium & general assembly) took place, led by the EAC President Leonard de Wit. The venue of the next meeting was specified to be in Dublin (Ireland) in 2019. Within the agenda, a new member of the EAC was welcomed – the National Institute of Archaeology and Museum (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) represented by its Director – Assoc. Prof. Dr Lyudmil Vagalinski (Department of Antiquity, NIAM-BAS)(fig. 3).

The first session was devoted to different case studies of archaeological practice: i.e. rescue (salvage) *vs* regular (research) excavations; state *vs* commercial archaeology; survey methods and efficiency; archaeological documentation; mechanisms of regulation and quality control; proportion of state and private agencies in the process of financing, licensing (excavation permits), delivery and quality control; archaeological tenders and market; legislation background and authorities' duties. In this general context interesting ex-

1 The author was an officially appointed representative of the Executive Board of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA).

amples of different national applications of the common Cultural Heritage conventions and decrees were demonstrated. The only country reporting **no** private/commercial participation in organizing and maintaining archaeological practice was Bulgaria, where under the Cultural Heritage Act (2009) all archaeological surveys and excavations must be conducted by professional archaeologists, listed in a special register, and granted a licence by a State Commission in which the leading role is played by the National Institute of Archaeology – BAS (L. Vagalinski). Interesting case-studies of large-scale surveys in association with transport and pipeline infrastructure projects were presented from Albania (R. Zoto, M. Meshini & I. Çela), and Bulgaria (N. Kecheva). Examples of archaeological practice and decision-making authorities' structure in countries that have adopted the 'polluter pays' principle were offered by Sweden (E. Skyllberg) and Finland (P. Halinen, M. Niukkanen, S-L. Seppälä & H. Taskinen). The market mechanism of tender and competition for archaeological projects often led to unbalanced development of different regions and compromises in favour of "profitable" rather than high quality and scientifically important projects. The impact of development-led (preventive) archaeology resulted in unavoidable interlinking of financial, scientific and relevance aspects of the archaeology. This requires careful decision-making, balancing between research and public benefits and sustainability, which was clearly articulated by contributors from the UK (B. Sloane) and Portugal (F. Neto, J. Marques). The session was followed by a discussion with the presenters and many interesting questions and spontaneous comments and issues appeared (fig. 4). Such animated discussions followed others sessions as well.

The second session approached the problem of cultural heritage management focusing on the developers. An example of a highly centralized but efficient and well-structured system came from Israel, where 95% of salvage archaeological projects are conducted by the Israeli Antiquities Authority (J. Seligman). With 30 000 archaeological sites on half of the country's territory and strict controls on quality of fieldwork and required publications, as well as the intention to excavate fully all archaeological remains, this system seems to be "maximalist" ... the sustainability of which will be proven in the future. Maximizing the benefits of archaeological work for society was the focus of two UK contributions. The first was by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, which produced a guide for clients based on ethical and technical standards and with consideration of cost control, managing risk and involvement of the community in the application for archaeological activity (K. Geary). The second emphasized client expectations in infrastructure projects with contractors-archaeologists (N. Holbrook). These expectations meet with skills, professionalism, expertise



Fig. 1. The Symposium poster
Обр. 1. Постер на симпозиума

and contract awareness of archaeologists together with client intentions of risk and costs control. The case studies from Estonia (A. Kivirüüt, U. Kadakas) and Hungary (M. Stibrányi, E. Kreiter) revealed heritage protection systems based on polluter pays principles, but with variations on the operational level: different proportions of state and private agencies in financing and monitoring of the archaeological projects. A challenging example of predictive modelling as part of development-led archaeology in The Netherlands was presented (H. Groenendijk). Good practice suggests that an efficient mediation by archaeologists between farmers and developers could stimulate the regional community to develop an expert target group and to contribute actively to the decision-making process in archaeological practice.

The third session involved public participation. The dissemination of archaeological research and knowledge is one of the crucial aspects of cultural heritage management. To find the best way of public engagement and outreach in archaeology, and to stimulate people to contribute to the decision-making about heritage investigation and protection is an ambition of many and various institutions, museums and private agencies in all civilized countries. Case-studies of different successful practices were shared: archaeo-hotspots in Holland (M. Verschuur); Scotland Archaeological Strategy, delivered via a range of projects bringing together archaeologists and the public (K. Owen, R. Jones); Czech example of hot archaeological news and stories in the most popular media – TV (Z. Šámal); Hungarian concept of communications archaeological heritage through adequate educational strategy – digitisation and mass-media culture nowadays and mega data management in the future (G. Virágos); Austrian example of “Archaeo Publica” – a charity aiming to promote public engagement in Austrian archaeology (S. Peter).

All topics presented at the EAC symposium provoked lively discussion in between the contributions and demonstrated huge potential of the problems to be explored in 2018 – the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The cosy ambiance of the venue stimulated open conversations and exchange of opinions during the breaks between sessions (fig. 5).

The post-symposium excursions were well attended by the participants despite the



Fig. 2. Registration and book display
Обр. 2. Регистрация и представяне на книги



Fig. 3. The National Institute of Archaeology with Museum – BAS (represented by the Director L. Vagalinski) is welcomed as a new member of EAC

Обр. 3. Момент от приемането за член на ЕАС на Националния археологически институт с музей – БАН, представляван от неговия директор Л. Вагалински



Fig. 4. Discussion with the contributors to the first session

Обр. 4. Дискусия с участниците в първата сесия



Fig. 5. Break period and informal conversations in the pleasant ambiance of Arena di Serdica

Обр. 5. Почивки и неформални разговори в предразполагащата обстановка на Арена ди Сердика

unexpectedly wintry weather in Sofia². The morning tour comprised sightseeing of Sofia on foot and included the landmarks of the city centre – the National Theatre, Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, St. Sophia Basilica, the Largo – with an emphasis on the various historical periods (Late Antique, Ottoman, early 20th century, Communist) that have left an imprint on the city's architecture. The afternoon tour led the guests to the remarkable Boyana Church (in UNESCO World Heritage List since 1979) offering impressive original Medieval frescos. The tour ended at the National History Museum with its rich collections and exhibitions from prehistory to modern times.

2 I am grateful to Dr M. Raycheva for providing me with details of the excursions.