

# EAA Code and Principles: Opportunities and Challenges in Setting the Standards of Archaeological Work in Europe

Maria Mina

**Abstract** – This paper presents the process behind the recent update of the Code of Practice and Principles of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA). The exercise exposed the ethical dilemmas contested in current archaeological discourse in Europe and confirmed the responsibility of an international body to address, rather than suppress, contested issues in archaeology. The review of the EAA Code of Practice and Principles has revealed that it is not possible or even desirable to produce categorical ethical guidelines. It is argued that, despite the challenges in attaining a consensus across diverse archaeological traditions and agendas, the wide membership of the EAA can benefit from the fact that controversial issues are aired and that established archaeological practices in Europe are measured up against those debated in world archaeology.

**Key words** – archaeology; code of practice; politics; ethics; archaeological practice; European Association of Archaeologists; EAA

**Titel** – Die Kodizes und Prinzipien der EAA: Chancen und Herausforderungen bei der Festlegung von Standards für die archäologische Arbeit in Europa

**Zusammenfassung** – In diesem Beitrag wird der Prozess vorgestellt, der der jüngsten Aktualisierung des Verhaltenskodex und der Grundsätze der European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) zugrunde liegt. Dabei werden die ethischen Dilemmata, die im aktuellen archäologischen Diskurs in Europa umstritten sind, aufgezeigt und die Verantwortung eines internationalen Gremiums bekräftigt, umstrittene Themen in der Archäologie anzusprechen anstatt sie zu unterdrücken. Die Überprüfung des EAA Code of Practice and Principles hat gezeigt, dass es nicht möglich oder sogar wünschenswert ist, kategorische ethische Richtlinien zu erstellen. Es wird argumentiert, dass trotz der Herausforderungen bei der Erzielung eines Konsenses zwischen verschiedenen archäologischen Traditionen und Agenden die breite Mitgliedschaft der EAA von der Tatsache profitieren kann, dass kontroverse Themen angesprochen werden und dass etablierte archäologische Praktiken in Europa an denen gemessen werden, die in der weltweiten Archäologie diskutiert werden.

**Schlüsselwörter** – Archäologie; Verhaltenskodex; Politik; Ethik; archäologische Praxis; European Association of Archaeologists; EAA

*“...commitment to accountability reformulates and refocuses the obligations archaeologists have toward living peoples – a radical shift from the ethic of antiquarianism of 200 years ago. This includes working for social justice, with the recognition that preservation of the past carries responsibilities to work with living peoples to sustain a viable future – with all of the personal and professional obligations this entails.”*

(McGILL, COLWELL-CHANTHAPHONH & HOLLOWELL, 2012, p. 187)

## Introduction

As a starting point, it is necessary to outline the geographical, disciplinary and professional scope of the EAA in order to establish how the decisions of the Association impact its members, who broadly speaking are either archaeologists researching and working in Europe, or are active in the field of European Archaeology and heritage. According to the ‘Aims and History of the European Association of Archaeologists’, the Association has had over 12,000 registered members from 120 countries worldwide working in prehistoric,

classical, medieval, and post-medieval/pre-modern archaeology (AIMS AND HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS, n.d.). Recent surveys show that most members are based in the United Kingdom, and whereas the majority of participants are situated in Europe, we should note that the EAA has never been restricted to the political boundaries of the European Union or to the continent of Europe (HUEGLIN & FERNÁNDEZ-GÖTZ, 2017, 2-3, Fig. 2). Therefore, although participants of the EAA are not restricted to Europe, the Association’s membership, epistemological and professional scope is clearly Eurocentric. ‘Europe’ and ‘European’ is mentioned in the EAA Statutes under Article II, ‘Aims’ (points 1, 2, 4, 5) (EAA STATUTES, n.d.), according to which the aims of the Association include:

- the promotion of the development of archaeological research and the exchange of archaeological information in Europe,
- the promotion of the management and interpretation of the European archaeological heritage,
- the promotion of the interests of professional archaeologists in Europe,
- the promotion of archaeology to the public, and raising awareness of archaeology in Europe.

Under Statutes, Article III 'Activities and Functions', point 4 (EAA STATUES, n.d.), the EAA may function "as a monitoring and advisory body on issues relating to European and global archaeology". Moreover, the EAA participates in the Council of Europe and joined the European Heritage Alliance 3.3 in 2017. The EAA also aims at promoting "professional and ethical standards of archaeological work through its Statutes and Codes" (AIMS AND HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS, n.d.). Judging from the membership, aims and scope of the EAA, it becomes apparent that the issues conferred in the following discussion reflect mainly on the current state of European archaeology and impact on archaeological work carried out in Europe and in the field of European archaeology.

### Archaeology and the illusion of apoliticism

*"What is the difference between medical doctors and archaeologists? Archaeologists' 'misdiagnosis' will not kill anyone; their subjects are already dead."*

The days when archaeologists considered themselves members of an inner circle whose work was safely limited to the distant past are long gone; the naïveté of earlier times has given way to a newly-found sense of awareness (not always welcome) which has gradually permeated all levels of the discipline. The realisation that archaeological work impacts on people's lives in the present and the future has resulted in archaeologists' vigilance over their motives and the wider impact of their actions. The economic, technological, and social developments in the modern era have also compelled archaeologists to consider what place ethics should hold in archaeological practice and what is the imprint of their work on society. It became understood, therefore, that scientific practice is instilled with political and ethical theory, and that the drafting of archaeological codes needed to consider not only objects, but also people (MCGILL, 2014, 2461–2462). The recognition of the ethical element in archaeological codes of practice, however, does not imply that there is a single rule against which the morality of archaeologists' actions can be judged across different contexts. Morality is undoubtedly a variable construct which differs in relation to the historical and cultural sensibilities which is why archaeological ethics constitute an ongoing project which requires concessions both on the part of the archaeologists and the public (ZIMMERMAN,

2012). The arbitrary nature of archaeological ethics, however, in no way should be used by international bodies or professional organisations as an excuse to renounce the need for guidelines of good practice which would require archaeologists to adopt a reflexive attitude inside and outside their discipline.

One may naturally ask "Archaeological codes for whom?", to paraphrase the question 'Archaeology for whom?' paused by Mexican archaeologists Panameño and Nalda (1978) over forty years ago, which nevertheless remains relevant to this day. When I was invited, as a member of the Executive Board of the EAA, to coordinate the working group that would revise the Association's Code of Practice and Principles, one unwavering belief guided me through the steps of the reviewing process: that these guidelines should not be restricted to the needs of the profession without taking into consideration the impact our work has on society. Such a precept entails that archaeologists need to be accountable for their actions not only to their peers, but also to the wider public, as these have ramifications on a social, economic, environmental, and ultimately political level. The second point that became apparent is that we were presented with the opportunity and the difficult task to align archaeological practice in Europe with contemporary society and ethical dilemmas that did not seem to resonate with earlier drafts of the EAA Codes of Practice and Principles.

In my mind two issues were at stake in the reviewing exercise: (a) to acknowledge the broader political implications of archaeologists' actions within and beyond our profession, and (b) to inject European archaeology with the values of social justice and with the current discourse in world archaeology through the introduction of post-colonial theory. Neither undertaking proved to be incontestable nor plain sailing as the parties involved were greatly diverse, including members of the working group, of the EAA Executive Board, of the EAA Communities, EAA Statutes Committee and of the organisation's wider membership who ultimately were called upon to vote and endorse the proposed documents.

At the time when reviewing sessions and negotiations operated more as battle fields, it was not easy, due to the heightened emotions, to discern the deeper causes that fuelled the clashes between different members and the groups they represented. However, as time has passed and the dust has settled, I can now say that the underlying sentiments that triggered the conflicts were deeply rooted in diverse political and ide-

ological standpoints over equity, the exercise of power within and outside the profession, and the role archaeology should play in contemporary society. Although the production of archaeological codes has generated criticism over their biased scope (e.g., SMITH & BURKE, 2003) and the potential impairment of the discourse (TARLOW, 2000), the preparatory process involves lively debates and productive contests that expose uneasy issues that archaeologists need to own up to (HAMILAKIS, 2007, 22). The contested dilemmas that emerged from the reviewing process of the EAA Code of Practice and Principles are going to be the focus of this paper in a European-specific context.

A recurring theme in discussions among members of the EAA is whether the Association has the authority to draft codes of archaeological practice, and if so whether they should be in any way politically informed. Among those who question the need for guidelines to regulate professional conduct and archaeological work, an acceptable compromise would be to draw up a document with a restricted scope, limited to 'safe' topics that do not enter the grey zones of ideological partiality. Anything that steps out of these bounds is defined as 'political' and the reasoning for a non-controversial document is founded on the argument that the EAA does not have the legislative power to draw up regulations that restrict members' actions. Furthermore, it has been argued that the EAA codes may contradict national legislation which could ultimately alienate the association's wider membership.

One point that emerges from this discussion is how we define the term 'political', a notion which according to some members of the EAA, is incompatible with codes of archaeological practice. Because the word 'politics' is a term laden with negative associations of trouble, upheaval or friction (HEYWOOD, 2019, 35), it is no surprise that the viewpoints expressed among certain members of the EAA are shaped by such preconceptions (although as I argue later, invoking the incompatibility of 'politics' with archaeological practice, can be interpreted as a latent or selective resistance to principles that contradict personal value systems). It can be agreed, however, that the term 'political' does not have a single definition. The main interpretations of the word 'political' include the notion of politics as the exercise of power by political parties and politicians, matters relevant to the public, and politics as the study of power (MODEBADZE, 2010, 41–43). Therefore, the definition according to which the term 'political' describes the actions that take place within a poli-

ty in direct connection to government contexts, is a limiting one as it overlooks the impact politics have on modern life (HEYWOOD, 2019, 37).

The definition adopted here prescribes politics as a form of power, which rather than being limited to the arena of the government or institutions, is exercised in all expressions of human life and at all levels of social interaction (HEYWOOD, 2019, 45). As Adrian Leftwich (2004) has postulated, "politics is at the heart of all collective social activity, formal and informal, public and private, in all human groups, institutions and societies." In this sense, we are all community members who make political choices and are affected by them, even when we do not participate in governmental politics (Leftwich, 1984, cited in MODEBADZE, 2010, 43). The definition of 'political', therefore, can refer to people's actions which can maintain or override the general rules that dominate their lives, suggesting that tension, cooperation, and conflict resolution form essential elements of politics. Moreover, according to a definition proposed by Heywood, political action refers to "the making, preserving, and amending of general social rules" as a way of bridging different meanings, which together with the diversity of viewpoints and the scarcity of resources and means, render politics an inexorable element of human existence (HEYWOOD, 2019, 34 f.).

Extending the discussion to the nature of academic disciplines, one might ask, 'is archaeology political?' The answer is yes, as archaeology is an anthropocentric discipline whose practice, together with the decisions of the professionals and the involved stakeholders, have an impact on the wider society and well-being of its members. Archaeology is also political because it is of relevance to a wide audience, including government officials, educators, developers, indigenous communities, local communities, and the general public, with spiritual, economic, political and social effects (MCGILL, 2014, 2465). In that sense, archaeology, itself a 19th century product emerging in the colonial centres of political and economic power, is political and as such archaeological practice defines power-knowledge relations at both micro- and macro-political levels (CURTONI, 2014, 394). Moreover, archaeology is political because it provides the discussion, the interpretations, information about places and objects in time and space which in turn categorise people, their landscapes, and stories in a modern knowledge perspective (CURTONI, 2014, 394). It can be argued, therefore, that archaeological practice is inherently political, reflecting the complex interrelationships between interest groups and archaeologists within sociopolitical contexts (CURTONI, 2014, 400).

It follows from the above that archaeological codes are inevitably political since they inform professionals' decisions which subsequently affect members of the wider community and their way of life (*politeia*). Professional codes and principles, therefore, are value laden and as such they are political since archaeologists are forced to make choices between a range of conducts often relating to conflicting interests (ZIMMERMAN, 2012, 103). Indeed, everything we do as archaeologists is political, and acknowledging the political dimension of archaeology allows us to recognise the power imbalances inside and outside the discipline, how our work benefits or negatively affects parts of society, what interests are being promoted and which groups are disadvantaged (HAMILAKIS, 2007, 24). The initiative of the Colorado Coal Field War project illustrates well the political scope of archaeology as it engages with the ideological discourse over the event of the Ludlow militia massacre in reaction to the miners' strike of 1913-1914, which to this day carries powerful weight in contemporary struggles between the unions of Capital and Labour (SAITTA, 2008, 268). The project aims through scholarship to reveal and disseminate the struggles of working-class people and the history of labour, while making archaeology relevant to the working people on an emotional and intellectual level, against the traditional narratives of frontier conquest, and national progress (SAITTA, 2008, 277).

To refute the argument that it is possible and advantageous to shelter archaeology from the messy business of politics, or that codes regulating our profession should remain apolitical to avoid a clash of interests, I would argue that such a choice is unattainable: archaeology is inherently political, and it is futile to think we can divorce it from political action. What we can do instead is benefit from acknowledging that our personal ideologies and the policies made by academic and professional institutions, within which archaeologists operate, are political. By doing this we can start thinking how our actions impact our peers and humanity in general and in what way we can make informed decisions that can remedy imbalances caused by uneducated archaeological practices. The imprint that archaeology has on multiple levels (such as economic, societal, ideological) necessitates the application of guidelines which promote good practices and render archaeologists accountable for their actions that result from the authority they hold inside and beyond the profession.

As a coordinator of the working group, there was no doubt in my mind that a superficial re-

touch of the earlier version of the EAA Code of Practice and Principles would not justify the whole endeavour; instead, the members of the working group seized the opportunity to align the former documents with the debates contested currently within the academic discipline, the profession, and contemporary society. Moreover, a politically informed Code of Practice and Principles was required in order to acknowledge the real conflicting interests among professionals, institutions, involved stakeholders and the wider society (see HAMILAKIS, 2007, 24-25). If members of the EAA felt too offended or challenged to adhere to the revised Association's Code of Practice and Principles, then I would argue that it is their (the members') responsibility to ask themselves which part of the guidelines causes them discomfort and why, and that in itself is an advantage.

### European archaeology as world archaeology?

Acknowledging the political component that is integral to archaeological practice presupposes that European archaeology needs to become exposed to the ideological and ethical debates that hold a key position in world archaeology over the last decades. Does this mean that European or Europe-focused archaeologists have been sheltered from the polemic over rights of ownership, the management of cultural heritage, the handling of human remains or the consideration of environmental challenges? Yes and no: no, in the sense that archaeologists working in Europe have not been in the line of fire concerning some of the heated debates raised by indigenous communities in other parts of the world and for that reason they have seldom found themselves in a position to make ethical decisions; and yes, because, recent concerns raised about the case of Sámi (OJALA, 2023) or Roma (NORDIN, FERNSTÅL & HYLTÉN-CAVALLIUS, 2021) archaeology, have awakened European archaeologists to similar tribulations which are in fact too close to home. Nevertheless, many archaeologists working in a European context are not readily open to accept archaeology's colonial origins and evolutionary foundations. For this reason, archaeological work is viewed as a detached practice which is limited to the distant past and carries little weight in the present. This unawareness is, I believe, what lies beneath the resistance some members of the EAA to accept codes which are seen as intrusive, interfering with perceptions that for a long time are taken as given (e.g., ownership of the past), or to question

established attitudes that for a long time have remained unchallenged (e.g., abuse of power).

The second challenge of transporting European archaeology to the era of world archaeology through the introduction of post-colonial discourse relates to the applicability of indigenous perspectives on the cultural heritages without risking discriminating against other social groups, such as immigrant populations (HOLTORF, 2009). On the other hand, it could be argued that although the European context of archaeological practice has its own idiosyncrasies, if indigenous perspectives are considered openly together with the claims of other social groups, then the discourse of world archaeology can be transferable and adjusted appropriately in its given cultural context.

### **Revisiting the EAA Code and Principles**

Let us now turn to the revision process of the EAA Code of Practice and Principles and how the issues raised above subsequently informed the final documents.

A few words are needed at this point to provide the historical background to the EAA Code of Practice and Principles. The documents were originally approved by the members of the Association at the Annual Business Meeting in Ravenna in September 1997. In September 2009 the amendments were approved at the Annual Business Meeting in Riva del Garda. Twelve years later, the EAA Executive Board decided it was time to update the Code of Practice and Principles given the significant changes that had taken place on an academic, professional, and societal level. Finally, both redrafted documents were approved at the EAA Annual Business Meeting which was held in Budapest in September 2022.

The first task of the process was to assemble a working group. The criteria according to which the members were invited by the EAA Executive Board to participate included the representation of diverse agendas, their proven record of expertise in different areas and their membership in the EAA. To ensure that different segments of the Association were represented, several EAA Communities were invited to delegate a representative in the working group. In April 2021 invitations were extended to the following EAA Communities:

- Archaeology and Gender in Europe,
- Climate Change and Heritage,
- Community on the Illicit Trade in Cultural Material,
- Early Career Archaeologists Community,

- Archaeological Legislation and Organization,
- Community on the Teaching and Training of Archaeologists,
- Public Archaeology,
- Community on Archaeology and Tourism.

Of the above Communities, only the following expressed an interest to participate in the revision task: Archaeology and Gender in Europe, Climate Change and Heritage, Community on the Illicit Trade in Cultural Material, and Early Career Archaeologists Community. This resulted in the formation of the working group that consisted of Maxime Brami (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz), Laura Coltofean-Arizancu (Independent Researcher), Mairi Davies (Historic Environment Scotland), Evelyne Godfrey (Independent Researcher), Cornelius Holtorf (Linnaeus University), Maria Mina (University of the Aegean), Marianne Mödlinger (University of Genoa), Katharina Rebay-Salisbury (University of Vienna) and Alessandro Vanzetti (Sapienza University of Rome). The members varied in terms of age, gender and area of expertise and brought to the project different sensibilities that also related to their cultural background, professional and academic tradition.

The next stage of the revision process required acquaintance with the current standards in the archaeological discipline and the profession as defined by other professional associations and international bodies across Europe and different continents. In addition, members of the working group were also encouraged to bring into the discussion topics and principles that related to their academic, professional background and experiences. It then became possible to identify a list of themes that were considered significant and were missing from the 2009 EAA Codes of Practice, and those became points of reference in the redrafting process. In addition, documents that had already been produced by EAA Communities (such as the Community on the Illicit Trade in Cultural Material), and focused on specific areas of archaeological practice, were consulted, and incorporated in the updated Code. Current discourse in archaeology (such as post-colonial theory, feminism, environmental humanities discourse [e.g. SHAW, 2016]) and activist campaigns (such as the 'Me too' movement, LGBT+ Rights, Black Lives Matter, and the environmental movement) also informed both documents. Furthermore, the themes that were introduced in the updated Code of Practice and Principles, correspond closely with recent annual Statements issued by the EAA, such as the 2020 Statement on Archaeo-

logy and Gender, the 2021 Kiel Statement on Archaeology and Climate Change, and the 2022 Budapest Statement on Nurturing the Cycle of Good Archaeological Practice (EAA STATEMENTS, n.d.).

After deciding on the themes that should be included in the updated Code of Practice and Principles, the working group proceeded with the revision of paragraphs that already formed part of the 2009 documents, and the drafting of new sections which aimed at addressing current epistemological and societal concerns. The newly revised and introduced sections are as follows.

Under the document EAA Code of Practice, the section 'Archaeologists in society' was re-worked and the new section 'Safe work environment, equality and inclusion' was added.

Under the EAA Principles the following sections were introduced:

- EAA principles for archaeological research,
- Ethical treatment of archaeological human remains,
- Ethical practice in expert evaluation of archaeological material,
- Publication of decontextualised archaeological artefacts,
- Indigenous heritage,
- Restitution and repatriation of contested heritage objects,
- EAA principles for archaeologists involved in teaching and training,
- EAA principles for the role of archaeologists in climate action.

One of the aims of the working group was also to expand the scope of the EAA Code of Practice and Principles by including the work carried out by museum and cultural heritage professionals. To illustrate the point in the Code of Practice, 1c. 'Archaeologists and the profession' (EAA CODE OF PRACTICE, n.d.), states that

*"i. Archaeologists conduct their activities in a variety of sectors, including (but not restricted to):*  
*- higher education and research, where they are typically involved in university-level teaching and training, doctoral and post-doctoral level research, and professional scientific research;*  
*- heritage management such as working for government cultural agencies, non-governmental bodies, not-for-profit membership organisations, and community associations;*  
*- museums and archives, where they may work as curators, conservators, scientists, or educators;*  
*- commercial contract archaeology, where they primarily carry out survey and field investigations in advance of development work, such as*

*construction and infrastructure projects, consultancy to organisations, groups and communities affected by or conducting archaeological work; - and avocational research."*

The aim of expanding the scope of the revised Code of Practice and clarifying the professional areas in which archaeologists conduct their activities was to capture the development of the discipline and the profession. Moreover, encompassing the sector of museums and cultural heritage management allowed us to raise the broader issue of accountability, to address the ways in which archaeological practice impacts stakeholders and the wider public, and what we can do to nurture social justice through the principles of equality and inclusiveness.

After agreeing on the sections that required reworking, and on the new sections that needed to be introduced, the tasks were initially assigned to each member of the working group with relevance to their area of expertise. The next stage entailed discussing the drafted sections within the working group and negotiating to reach an agreement on the final content. In between our joint meetings, the process of editing and settling conflicting issues took up most of the drafting period with a considerable time of editorial input on my part to ensure that progress was being made. A second and third phase of discussions and negotiations took place whereby members of the EAA Executive Board and the Statutes Committee commented on the drafted documents. Despite the constructive and insightful comments the working group received from both bodies, additional controversies surfaced which complicated the drafting process further.

During the stages described above, heated discussions exposed the widely diverse views held among archaeology professionals. Despite the consensus on several seemingly non-controversial issues (e.g., archaeologists' responsibility to preserve past material culture), the diverse backgrounds of the members of the working group accounted for the often-conflicting viewpoints. In the following paragraphs I do not intend to present an exhaustive account of the documents' content; instead, I have chosen to discuss three areas that were contested among members of the working group, the EAA Executive Board, the EAA Statutes Committee and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) as an affiliated organisation. The contested areas concerned the sections 'Safe work environment, equality and inclusion', 'Ethical treatment of human remains', and the rights of early career archaeologists through the definition of the term professionalism.

The section referring to conditions that ensured a safe work environment on the principles of equality and inclusion corresponded with the extended scope of the EAA Statutory Appeal Committee which was renamed the 'Appeal and Anti-Harassment Committee' to align with the newly introduced guidelines in the Code of Practice. The expanded duties of the Committee with the inclusion of the Anti-Harassment element, were in fact the result of earlier negotiations that took place between the 2020 EAA Gender Statement working group and the EAA Executive Board. The relevant section in the updated Code of Practice states the following principles (EAA CODE OF PRACTICE, n.d.).

*"1d. Safe work environment, equality and inclusion*

*The EAA is committed to achieving equality and maintaining diversity and inclusion in its Boards and Committees and encourages other archaeological institutions and organisations to proceed similarly.*

*The EAA promotes safe and empowering study and work environments and urges member and non-member archaeologists to report any discrimination, harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation that they suffer to their home institution or organisation and to the EAA's Statutory Appeal and Anti-Harassment Committee."*

*"The objective of this Code is also to ensure the equal treatment of all archaeologists, and especially those at early stages of their career. Early career archaeologists (ECAs), such as postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers, are professionals, in line with core principles of the European Charter for Researchers (Euraxess). Education and training requirements may not be used as a basis to disqualify ECAs from the right to publish or to have their contribution to science acknowledged."*

*"Guiding principles*

*i. In accordance with the above codes, directors of fieldwork, field schools, archaeological institutions and organisations are expected to adopt codes of conduct which adhere to the following principles.*

*ii. Guarantee equal opportunities.*

*iii. Prohibit all forms of harassment, assault, bullying, intimidation and discrimination. Such offensive behaviour includes racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, xenophobia, and discrimination on the basis of age, ability, religious or other cultural tradition, and gender identity.*

*iv. Denounce forms of harassment, victimisation and intimidation which are aimed at negatively impacting career advancement through stealing*

*or appropriation of data, analytical results, ideas, publications, and through blackmail, threats, defamation, or personal attacks in public settings.*

*v. Establish clear reporting and protection mechanisms for victims and witnesses of misconduct.*

*vi. The EAA encourages its members to carry out surveys on gender pay gaps and discrimination in various settings in their home countries and to report the results to the Archaeology and Gender in Europe (AGE) Community.*

*vii. Adopt measures against perpetrators within the available legal frameworks.*

*viii. Ensure equal access to education, fieldwork, training, research and work opportunities.*

*ix. Guarantee equal career prospects and transparency in career advancement.*

*x. Promote equal and transparent conditions of employment, pay and retirement in all archaeological fields and sectors.*

*xi. The EAA promotes the inclusion of diversity in archaeological research agendas, as well as in the curricula of primary education, secondary, and tertiary education, museum education and archaeological study programmes."*

Although the introduced values were not openly contested, they were nevertheless met with apprehension by certain members of the Executive Board and the Statutes Committee on the pretext that the EAA should not be acting as a 'police force' imposing the law, that it is not possible to prove reported cases of harassment or abuse, or that it complicates how the statutory rules of exclusion are applied. The alleged slippery grounds on which cases of harassment or abuse could be proven led to the suggestion by certain members of the Board and the Statutes Committee to place the section in question under EAA Principles which are not abiding to EAA members according to Statutes Article VIII.1, 'Rules of Exclusion' which states that "members may be removed from the Association, or their membership suspended for: (...) b. violation of the Association's Statutes and Codes" (EAA STATUTES, n.d.). Note that a member cannot be suspended for violation of the Association's Principles; this would mean that one way of avoiding the suspension of a member for harassment, abuse, unfair treatment etc., would be to place the new section under Principles. One could argue that this solution was well intended to shelter members of the EAA Board and of the Appeal and Anti-Harassment Committee from making painful decisions. On a personal level, I felt deeply disconcerted by the hesitation of certain members of the EAA bodies to tackle the well-known phenomena of harassment and

inequality in our profession (MEYERS, HORTON, BOUDREAU, CARMODY, WRIGHT & DEKLE, 2018; VOSS, 2021; COLTOFEAN-ARIZANCU ET AL., 2023), which is why in meetings representing the working group I argued against transferring the section '1d. Safe work environment, equality and inclusion' from the Code of Practice to the section of Principles, which is non-abiding to the members. A number of questions emerged in my mind from the above negotiation process which I would like to share with the readers. Who would benefit from not stating unequivocally that the EAA stands against actions of harassment and abuse? What is at stake by challenging established practices of misconduct in the profession? Who would find such principles conflicting with their value system? What would be the consequences of not acknowledging such phenomena in the professional sector and educational institutions through the guidelines of an international body?

The second contested topic was the 'Ethical treatment of archaeological human remains' (section 2.b) and especially points 8 and 9, as stated below.

*"8. The EAA acknowledges that from an anti-racist perspective, archaeologists should respect the fact that remains are of individual persons, and cannot be presented as typical or exceptional of whole national, cultural, geographical, or chronological groupings.*

*9. The EAA recommends, from a decolonisation and anti-racist perspective, that remains in museums should be displayed in a dignified way and should only occur in cases where the actual display of physical objects is considered necessary to convey understanding of the archaeological narrative. Actual human remains can be replaced with replicas (clearly labelled as such)."*

(EAA PRINCIPLES, n.d.)

The issue concerning the ethical treatment of human remains is currently contested in archaeology (NILSSON STUTZ, 2023, 1061; NILSSON STUTZ, PEYROTEO STJERNA & TARLOW, 2024). The approach to the handling of human remains is best described as a spectrum representing views which range from "objects of science" to "lived lives" and vary according to lab-based archaeologists, museum professionals and the public. The handling and preservation of human remains, therefore, can differ depending on the focus that is placed in different positions along the continuum (NILSSON STUTZ, 2023, 1061; TARLOW, 2024).

The two conflicting perspectives voiced in the discussions among members of the working group and between the working group and the

EAA Executive Board postulated on one hand that human remains constitute objects of study and as such should be considered for display when deemed necessary, and on the other hand it was argued from a post-colonial perspective that only replicas of skeletal remains should be displayed. This example clearly illustrates the split between the established tradition of European archaeology and the decolonisation discourse that prevails in world archaeology. The debate over the ethical treatment of human remains in museum collections is informed by the post-colonial discourse regarding repatriation, reburial and their sensitive handling considering the long history of biased Eurocentric traditions of research. These discussions hold a key position in North American, African and Australian anthropology, where the history of interaction between Western and First Nations are fundamental to modern perceptions (NILSSON STUTZ, 2024, 2, with references).

One could claim that European archaeology has its unique historical background and tradition and therefore should not be swayed by the sirens of global politics. Nevertheless, as I have already pointed out, the European tradition of displaying human remains is partly explained by the fact that we still have not widely acknowledged cases of 'domestic' discriminatory politics. Moreover, there is limited archaeological research on marginal population groups in Europe, such as the Sámi, Greenland's Inuits within the Danish realm, the Nenet reindeer herders of the Siberian Arctic, or the nomadic Enets in Russia at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, and the nomadic Roma. In support of the need to introduce the debates of world archaeology to European archaeology, I would argue that European archaeologists need to turn their attention to the archaeology of the under-studied population groups. Furthermore, European archaeologists are often active in regions where European colonial powers have paved the way of archaeological research, and to this day maintain privileged relations with state institutions.

Nevertheless, the introduction of indigenous perspectives in European archaeology brings its own problems that need to be considered. For example, museum professionals do not always need to make decisions about the display of 'eponymous' community members (TARLOW, 2024) or ancestors of indigenous populations as remains of lived lives. What happens in situations where the human remains are too distant in the past to be claimed as ancestral community figures? Can we apply the same rule across Europe to all cases of human remains as either lived lives or objects

of science, or should we adopt double standards? In fact, the issue of repatriation of indigenous human remains perpetuates another bias which in effect restricts the notion of 'lived lives' to those of indigenous origin, and does not address the moral questions of dealing with all human remains, including those from local (pre)historic contexts (NILSSON STUTZ ET AL., 2024, 3).

Despite the ethical dilemmas raised above, the introduction of the section on the ethical handling of human remains was deemed a necessary addition to the EAA Principles considering that it is a topic which holds central place in archaeological discourse. The subject is unquestionably a complex one with different facets depending on the context within which the discussion takes place. After heated debates among the working group and between the working group and the Executive Board, a compromise was reached: rather than imposing a single approach to the ethical treatment of human remains, we chose to initiate an open discussion which leaves space for professionals to think about the ethical treatment of human remains as a complex and mindful process (NILSSON STUTZ ET AL., 2024, 5-6). Thus, it was proposed that the display of human remains should occur *only* in cases where it is considered necessary to convey understanding of the archaeological narrative, and that human remains *can* (as opposed to 'should always') be replaced with replicas.

The third fiercely contested issue related to the equal rights of early career archaeologists. Under section 1.d. 'Safe work environment, equality and inclusion' it is stated that:

*"The objective of this Code is also to ensure the equal treatment of all archaeologists, and especially those at early stages of their career. Early career archaeologists (ECAs), such as postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers, are professionals, in line with core principles of the European Charter for Researchers (Euraxess). Education and training requirements may not be used as a basis to disqualify ECAs from the right to publish or to have their contribution to science acknowledged."*

(EAA CODE OF PRACTICE, n.d.)

In this case a problem of a different nature occurred, whereby the definition of professionalism according to a professional association other than the EAA (namely CIIfA) was promoted by one member of the working group to be endorsed in the updated Code of Practice. According to CIIfA's section on 'Professionalism and regulation', "a CIIfA professional can be any archaeologist or heritage professional in any capacity who: has demonstrated

their archaeological skills and competence by achieving CIIfA accreditation at Practitioner (PCIfA), Associate (ACIfA) or Member (MCIfA) level (...)" and on why accreditation is important, "Gaining CIIfA accreditation at Practitioner, Associate or Member level demonstrates that you are a professional archaeologist working in the public interest. In order to achieve accreditation, you will need to demonstrate that you have the relevant skills, competence and understanding and be able to provide evidence and references to support this." (PROFESSIONAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS, n.d.)

The endorsement of CIIfA's definition of professionalism on the grounds of accreditation would revoke the principle that early career archaeologists (such as postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers) are professionals, which in turn would counteract the call for equal treatment of all archaeologists including their right to publish or to have their scientific contribution acknowledged. When the discussion took place within the EAA Executive Board it was considered by certain members that because CIIfA is an affiliate organisation, a different definition of professionalism adopted in the revised EAA Code of Practice would reportedly interfere with the signed memorandum of understanding, although nowhere did the document imply that the adoption of the same understanding of professionalism is essential by the two organisations. Nevertheless, pressure directly from CIIfA and from certain members of the EAA Executive Board was placed on me as the coordinator of the working group to remove the core principles of the European Charter for Researchers (Euraxess) for the definition of professionalism. Ultimately CIIfA's request was refuted on the grounds that archaeologists in most European countries do not require accreditation to carry out their profession, that such an accreditation undermines the weight of academic education and training, that the exploitation of early career archaeologists needs to be addressed, that CIIfA (or any professional association for that matter) should not have a privileged say on matters of the EAA over other European associations, and that ultimately the EAA should maintain its sovereignty to best serve the interests of its wide membership. Eventually, it was possible to maintain the definition of professionalism according to the European Charter for Researchers (Euraxess), which recognises the equal rights of early career archaeologists.

This negotiation experience exposed certain phenomena which should prompt European archaeologists to ponder a number of questions. Why do certain professional organisations adopt expansionist tactics to influence policies on a Eu-

ropean level? Can different criteria of accreditation apply across a continent? Is it only professionalism that benefits from accreditation (see BUTT, 2024) or does the whole system authenticate organisations which themselves promote their own agendas and members? How can one bridge conflicting interests that result from complying to different bodies? Is it not a well-known fact in our profession that young or early career professionals are often exploited by colleagues in positions of authority? What is the responsibility of international bodies in combating abuse of power against archaeologists and in ensuring the fair treatment of early career professionals? Without wishing to provide my own answers to these contested questions, the inclusion of an unequivocal statement on the status of early career archaeologists (along with other vulnerable groups) in the revised EAA Code of Practice is a response in itself regarding the responsibility of an international body to state that practices of unfair treatment in the profession are not tolerated.

## Conclusion

Acknowledging that the same values are not necessarily shared across Europe, or that national legislation may be conflicting with the interests of the EAA, we distinguished between sections that formed part of the Code of Practice and are binding to the members, and those included in the Principles that are intended to be read as accompanying recommendations. It was not easy to prioritise what should be binding to EAA members and at times negotiations with members outside the working group informed the decision. Nevertheless, this necessary prioritisation allowed us some room to bridge the diverse agendas and policies across Europe.

Although for the greatest part members of the working group worked together amicably, there were times when fierce debates took place that occasionally strained relationships. As the coordinator of the working group, I needed to negotiate with the members of the working group, to take decisions based on majority opinions, while trying to reason with the member(s) who disagreed. I found that the best solution to keep the working group together was to resolve a situation by choosing the middle ground, when that was feasible. In retrospect, I would best describe the drafting of the Code of Practice and Principles as a balancing act, not only in maintaining an equal distance between conflicting interests,

but also in producing documents which would be widely accepted, but meaningful at the same time. Although I could see the value in taking a 'safe' approach, my intention from the start was to aim for a Code of Practice and accompanying Principles that would carry weight. Such a commitment meant that we could not shy away from controversial issues, that we needed to question past practices, and we should be honest about problems that to this day plague our discipline and profession.

From my personal experience, the drafting of archaeological codes, rather than stunting discourse, has served to highlight debates that are painful to deal with and we often chose to gloss over, either due to lack of knowledge or discomfort. The ultimate approval of the revised EAA Code of Practice and Principles, despite its flaws, succeeded in exposing issues that archaeologists in Europe are encouraged to contemplate in a changing world and that in itself can only benefit archaeological discourse. The review of the EAA Code of Practice and Principles is an ongoing practice which will be carried out by other working groups in the future, demonstrating that debating political and ethical issues in archaeology is and should be a process in a constant state of flux.

## References

Arendt, H. (2005). *The Promise of politics*. New York: Schocken Books.

Butt, A. (2024). Who gains value from professional accreditation? *Planning Theory & Practice*, 25(4), 599–602.

Professional archaeologists. (n.d.). *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*. <https://www.archaeologists.net/join/professional-archaeology> [20.12.2024].

Coltofean-Arizancu, L., Gaydarska, B., Plutniak, S., Mary, L., Hlad, M., Algrain, I., Pasquini, B., Vandevelde, S., Stamatakis, E., Janežič, P., Wouters, B., Sengeløv, A. (2023). Harassment, assault, bullying and intimidation (HABI) in archaeology: a Europe-wide survey. *Antiquity*, 97, 1-19.

Curtoni, R. (2014). Archaeology and politics. In C. Smith (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology* (pp. 394-401). New York: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0465-2\\_1030](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0465-2_1030).

*Aims and History of the European Association of Archaeologists*. (n.d.). [https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Aims\\_and\\_History.aspx](https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Aims_and_History.aspx) [20.12.2024].

*EAA Code of Practice.* (n.d.). [https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About\\_EAA/Codes/EAA/About/Codes.aspx?hkey=7e8d4e64-4282-4728-bd6f-5eb1484db9c7](https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About_EAA/Codes/EAA/About/Codes.aspx?hkey=7e8d4e64-4282-4728-bd6f-5eb1484db9c7) [20.12.2024].

*EAA Principles.* (n.d.). [https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About\\_EAA/Codes/EAA/About/Codes.aspx?hkey=7e8d4e64-4282-4728-bd6f-5eb1484db9c7](https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About_EAA/Codes/EAA/About/Codes.aspx?hkey=7e8d4e64-4282-4728-bd6f-5eb1484db9c7) [20.12.2024].

*EAA Statements.* (n.d.). <https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Statements.aspx> [20.12.2024].

*EAA Statutes.* (n.d.). <https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA/About/Statutes.aspx> [20.12.2024].

Heywood, A. (2013). *Politics* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Holtorf, C. (2009). A European perspective on indigenous and immigrant archaeologies. *World Archaeology*, 41(4), 672-681.

Hueglin, S. & Fernández-Götz, M. (2017). EAA and CfA – From concurrency to cooperation in times of Brexit. *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 8, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17567505.2017.1358322>.

Leftwich, A. (1984). *What is politics? The Activity and its Study*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

McGill, D., Colwell-Chanthaphonh, C. & Hollowell, J. (2012). Archaeological ethics. In R. Chadwick (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics* (2nd ed.), Vol. 1. (pp. 179-188). San Diego: Academic Press.

Meyers, M., Horton, E., Boudreaux, T., Carmody, S., Wright, A. & Dekle, V. (2018). The Context and consequences of sexual harassment in Southeastern Archaeology. *Advances in Archaeological Practice*, 6, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1017/aap.2018.23>.

Modebadze, V. (2010). The term politics reconsidered in the light of recent theoretical developments. *IBSU Scientific Journal (IBSUSJ)*, 4(1), 39-44.

Nilsson Stutz, L. (2023). Between objects of science and lived lives: the legal liminality of old human remains in museums and research. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 29, 1061-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2023.2234350>.

Nilsson Stutz, L., Peyroteo Stjerna R. & Tarlow, S. (2024). Ethical entanglements: human remains, museums and ethics in a European perspective. *Antiquity*. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2024.177>.

Nordin, J. M., Fernstål, L., & Hyltén-Cavallius, C. (2021). Living on the margin: an archaeology of a Swedish Roma camp. *World Archaeology*, 53(3), 517-530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.2021.1999852>.

Ojala C.-G. (2023). Archaeology, politics, and Sámi heritage. In A. Howkins & P. Roberts (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Polar Regions* (pp. 106-128). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Panameno, R., & Nalda, E. (1978). Arqueología, Para Quién? *Nueva Antropología*, 12, 111-124.

Shaw, J. (2016) Archaeology, climate change and environmental ethics: diachronic perspectives on human: non-human:environment worldviews, activism and care. *World Archaeology*, 48(4), 449-465. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.2016.1326754>.

Smith, C. & Burke, H. (2003). In the spirit of the code. In L. J. Zimmerman, K. D. Vitelli & J. Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*. (pp. 177-197). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Tarlow, S. (2000). Decoding ethics. *Public Archaeology*, 1, 245-259.

Tarlow, S. (2024). The names of the dead: identity, privacy and the ethics of anonymity in exhibiting the dead body. *Public Archaeology*, 22, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14655187.2023.2268384>.

Vandeveld, S. & Pasquini, B. (2019). A need for ethics in archaeology? / Un besoin d'éthique en archéologie?, *Canadian Journal of Bioethics / Revue Canadienne de Bioéthique*, 2(3), 1-8.

Voss, B. (2021). Documenting cultures of harassment in Archaeology: A review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative research studies. *American Antiquity*, 86, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.118>.

Zimmerman, L. J. (2012). On archaeological ethics and letting go. In G. Scarre & R. Cunningham (eds), *Appropriating the Past: Philosophical Perspectives on the Practice of Archaeology* (pp. 98-118). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### About the author

Maria Mina is Assistant Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology in the Department of Mediterranean Studies: Archaeology, Linguistics, International Relations of the University of the Aegean. She studied archaeology at the University of Southampton, and completed her doctoral studies at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. She has taught at the Hellenic Open University, the University of Cyprus and the University of the Aegean, she has worked as a researcher in the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus and she has participated in field projects in Greece and in Cyprus. Maria Mina has organised two international conferences entitled 'Four Decades of Hiatus in Archaeological Research in Cyprus:

*Maria Mina*

Towards Restoring the Balance' (2016) and 'Em-bodied Identities in the Prehistoric Eastern Mediterranean: Convergence of Theory and Practice' (2012). Her research interests focus on the Neolithic and Bronze Age period of the Aegean and Cyprus, on anthropomorphic figurines, gender archaeology, social complexity and island archaeology. Since 2019 Maria Mina has been serving as a member of the Executive Board of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) and in the period 2021-2022 she coordinated the work group responsible for the revision of the EAA Code of Practice and Principles.

*Prof. Dr. Maria Mina*

*Department of Mediterranean Studies: Archaeology,  
Linguistics, International Relations  
University of the Aegean  
Rhodes, Greece  
m.mina@aegean.gr*

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9954-016X>