

Connecting Archaeological Associations in Europe

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Abstract – There are numerous archaeological associations in Europe, with many different histories, functions and rationales. Some – such as the Hungarian Historical Society (Magyar Történelmi Társulat) and the Society of Antiquaries of London – are long-established and nationally-respected entities. Others have an international remit, or a particular period focus. Many – perhaps the majority – are concerned with archaeology in a specific region, county, city or other local area. There are also organisations concerned with the practice of archaeology, such as DGUF in Germany or ClfA in the UK. There is considerable duplication of effort, and not all archaeological organisations are communicating effectively with each other. This paper outlines some of the issues and proposes a project which will develop stronger connections between archaeological organisations across Europe.

Key words – archaeology; archaeological society; professional association; political advocacy; networks;

Titel – Archäologische Vereine, Gesellschaften und Arbeitsgemeinschaften europaweit vernetzen

Zusammenfassung – Über Europa hinweg gibt es viele archäologische Organisationen, mit unterschiedlichsten Geschichten, Funktionen, Aufgaben und Zielen. Einige von ihnen – wie beispielsweise die Society of Antiquaries in London oder die Ungarische Historische Gesellschaft (Magyar Történelmi Társulat) – sind seit dem 19. Jahrhundert etablierte und in ihren Ländern hoch renommierte Vereine. Andere Gesellschaften haben eine internationale Ausrichtung, oder z.B. eine bestimmte Periode der Urgeschichte im Fokus. Viele dieser Gesellschaften – vielleicht sogar die Mehrheit von ihnen – beschäftigen sich mit einem spezifischen Raum wie einem Staat, einer Region oder einer Stadt. Daneben gibt es Gesellschaften, die sich auch mit der Praxis der Archäologie beschäftigen, wie beispielsweise die DGUF in Deutschland oder ClfA in Großbritannien. Dabei kommt es unübersehbar zu Überschneidungen und auch Doppelungen im Aufwand, und nicht alle Gesellschaften kommunizieren wirksam miteinander. Dieser Beitrag skizziert einige dieser Themen und schlägt ein Projekt vor, das im Ergebnis eine bessere Vernetzung der archäologischen Gesellschaften in Europa erreichen könnte.

Schlüsselwörter – Archäologie; Verein; Gesellschaft; Arbeitsgemeinschaft; Berufsverband; politische Einflussnahme; Netzwerk;

Introduction

Archaeologists are generally sociable and form themselves into communities of shared interests. These communities may focus on research in particular territories or regions, on the archaeology of certain periods, or on particular types of archaeological practice. Some of these communities are long-established and internationally-esteemed learned societies, others are more recent and more informal. Many archaeologists are simultaneously members of more than one organisation. However work hitherto on the nature of archaeological 'society' has focussed very much on professional archaeologists, their employment and the world of archaeological work. This paper outlines a new approach which will attempt to discern the more subtle and multi-scalar connections between archaeological groups, communities and organisations.

In order to more completely describe the reasons for this project it is necessary to briefly review three recent developments in understanding archaeological practice. The first is a focus on 'professional associations', as developed through the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) which has a community for professional asso-

ciations. At EAA meetings in recent years it has become explicitly apparent that the 'professional characteristics' of organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (ClfA) in the UK and Germany is most useful for identifying the functions or services to which archaeologists pretty much everywhere need access.

However, the diversity of law and policy in national traditions across Europe means that the more prescriptive form of a professional association (such as ClfA) is less universal and may indeed be unworkable in many places – a subject the authors explored in a previous issue of this journal (BELFORD & WAIT, 2018). This was brought sharply into focus in discussions at EAA in Barcelona 2018. It was generally agreed that the nature of an archaeological organisation is less important to practitioners than having organisations that have structures and services in place to foster working together to achieve shared aims.

There is an obvious element of time depth to this review that would require a monograph to treat appropriately. Archaeological entities change or even emerge in response to external and internal events. A good example can be found in the history of the World Archaeological Congress, which

emerged in 1986 as a result of a schism in the International Union for Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences prompted by the response of funding bodies to apartheid in South Africa (UCKO, 1987). In the UK context the evolution of CifA provides another example. CifA began as the 'Institute for Field Archaeologists' which was itself the result of work initially led by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). The CBA had been established in the 1940s, but its remit too has changed: as well as spawning what became CifA, it also played a role in the establishment of the pressure group 'Rescue' which campaigned for public awareness of the loss of archaeology in urban development. All of these bodies had changing relations with one another, different academic goals, mobilisation against the 'erosion of history', and attempts to build some corporate identity. It is important to be aware of this time-depth to better understand the trajectories and prospects for the future.

In many countries there were tensions between local learned societies and national bodies with questions of autonomy, representation, 'amateurs' versus 'professionals', 'private property' and the 'common good', contrasting with the internationalisation of the prehistoric discipline as a means to consolidate a 'republic of letters' against nationalist agendas, at least since the 1830s (KAESER, 2002). A more current manifestation of some of these issues may be seen in the links between thematic association and international frameworks – for example through UNESCO and the Council of Europe – in relation to the redefinition of outreach and heritage issues. Awareness of these issues is important now, but will be of paramount importance in any efforts growing out of the present work.

The second element is the recognition of the enduring value of the pioneering research by Aitchison into the meta-data of archaeology in Europe. This began with work on 'Profiling the Profession' in the UK in 1997-98, 2002-03 and 2007-08 (AITCHISON, 1999; AITCHISON & EDWARDS, 2003; AITCHISON & EDWARDS, 2008), and led to the Discovering the Archaeologists of Europe Project. This ran in two phases, the first in 2006-08 and the second in 2012-14 (AITCHISON ET AL., 2014), and efforts are ongoing to undertake a third iteration (R. Karl, pers. comm.). This long-running series of research projects provide an extremely rich and valuable insight into the numbers and characteristics of archaeologists in Europe – how many there are, how and where they are employed, make-up by age, sex, educational qualifications, levels of pay and much more. Archaeological organisations were implicitly present in all this

research – indeed the project was facilitated by 21 partner organisations – but they were not the focus. Moreover although the study looked at 21 countries across Europe it was not universal – some EU countries (such as France and Sweden) did not participate; some non-EU countries (such as Norway) were included. If the first important realisation in Barcelona was that the nature of organisations was less important than what they do, the second was that no-one knows who all the archaeological organisations in Europe are. In this context the term 'archaeological organisations' does not refer to state heritage agencies or commercial companies, but explicitly organisations – charitable or state-hosted – that represent the interests of archaeologists and archaeology. These range from consciously international bodies such as EAA to a local history and archaeology club. For present purposes what brings all these organisations together is their self-identification with archaeology and not an a priori 'mission' in the minds of the project proponents.

The third element is the recognition of the increasing importance of political advocacy as an important service that archaeological organisations should provide to their members and to the wider heritage sector of the economy. It is this advocacy aspect which is perhaps the most important and so is worth elaborating in more detail.

The value of advocacy

Archaeology does not exist in a vacuum, it is a public endeavour which exists in the public realm. It is governed and influenced by political decision-making, but has not always been able to vocalise its concerns. One positive and successful example, with which both authors have been much involved for some years, is that of CifA in the UK, which has worked diligently to vocalise the concerns of professional archaeologists to the UK government. This has been built up over the years by consistently responding to proposals for new legislation, amendments to existing legislation, and new governmental policies. Similarly, since 2009 DGUF in Germany has been setting 'election benchmarks' which ask politicians to make statements which link the popularity of archaeology with the demands of practical politics. The DGUF approach has more recently been adopted by the EAA, which has identified five topics for a benchmarking process in the 2019 elections to the European parliament. These are:

- Protecting Historic Landscapes in Planning Processes;
- Integrating Cultural Heritage in EU Common Agricultural Policy;
- Preventing Illegal Trade in Antiques;
- Facilitating Transnational Mobility;
- Open Licensing for Images of Cultural Heritage from Public and Non-profit Institutions.

A number of questions have been developed under each theme, enabling archaeologists to identify where they can best influence their MEPs. Such work is of course never-ending and so by its very nature inconclusive, but with time the profile of archaeologists is raised and the benefit of their work to the wider public is recognised.

It is this advocacy – to politicians in particular but also to wider society – that is such a critical aspect of the work of non-governmental, non-commercial archaeological organisations. Not knowing about all of the archaeological organisations in Europe creates a problem that affects the three considerations set out above. First it is a waste of time and energy to ‘reinvent the wheel’ – work that is being considered by one organisation may well have already been undertaken by another. Therefore there is a value in connecting the archaeological organisations of Europe and enabling better networks to develop. This has the added benefit of opening up discussions amongst much wider groups of people, beyond those who are interested in their professional association. Many of these non-professional organisations contain or engage with non-archaeologists, as well as archaeologists who may not necessarily be interested in contributing to their professional association. Second, because of this much wider reach into public life, these organisations have the potential to interest lots of people in the issues that face archaeologists.

From this emerges the third point. If a goal is to benefit the whole archaeology sector in Europe, and improving the management of archaeology and heritage sites, then gaining influence with governmental departments and agencies is a necessary intermediate objective. And in order to do that, then archaeology and heritage need to develop a more unified ‘voice’ and set of coherent messages to relay to politicians and government agencies. We offer this in full knowledge that this may be viewed as leading towards the establishment of a dogma – this has demonstrably occurred in many times and places in the past. This is not our intention and is not considered either imminent or immediate, but the warning of the potential dangers is noted. This not only manifests itself as a ‘hard’ ad-

vocacy such as formal lobbying of parliaments or formal responses to consultations – although such work is vitally important. There is also a very beneficial ‘soft’ advocacy that comes through the sort of work that many of these organisations do – public lectures, contributions to fieldwork, campaigning and so on. Such work reaches a broader audience of people who may be teachers, doctors, lawyers, architects and a whole host of other things; if they understand the things that matter to archaeologists then they can change the perceptions of their colleagues, friends and families.

It is worth questioning the longer-term outcome of this project. Will it develop a coalition of ‘sectoral’ organisations (addressing issues like health and safety, pay, working conditions, operational constraints and profitability), or one of ‘professional organisations’ (setting standards of practice, developing methodologies for research and management), or a more ‘patrimonial-promotional’ coalition (focussing on the past in the present, values, understanding, conservation and education)? The answer is of course ‘yes’ to all of these, or any combination of them, but not immediately nor directly. Any of these may be valuable, but none are at present possible simply because the archaeological world is diverse and fragmented – this project we hope provides a means of bringing about closer connections between archaeologists. However the authors are also very conscious of the strength that the plurality of archaeological voices brings, and are mindful of the need to avoid creating a hierarchical orthodoxy of expression. These are ideological issues that will require some clarification. There may also be issues of impartiality or conflict of interest between groups to be addressed as part of the process of working together. The point is that developing further cohesion and cooperation between groups is difficult, and this difficulty leads to a need for a means to connect.

However, it is not possible to send unified, consistent messages to wider society unless the sector knows who all of its constituent voices are. Therefore, the first step is to know who represents individual archaeologists and then open a discussion and dialogue between them. From a fairly humble (but not simple) database we can achieve important aims, ultimately with the ambition of improving the wellbeing of archaeology and archaeologists.

Connecting archaeological organisations in Europe: first steps

Discussion during and after the Professional Associations in Archaeology Community session at the 2018 EAA meeting in Barcelona led to the development of the idea to connect archaeological organisations in Europe. The idea in Barcelona was to be realised in three steps:

1. to collect data by a questionnaire;
2. to import the data into a database and analyse these data and report about the results at the next EAA conference in Bern;
3. to invite further organizations to engage and enter themselves into the database which could be kept up to date by the organizations themselves, by something like a wiki (may be wikimedia).

For step 3., the project will need technical support and a modest level of funding. But the authors and their colleagues in this idea or project – Frank Siegmund and Diane Scherzler of DGUF – are committed to start step 1 by themselves, as a voluntary project, in order to demonstrate the potential value of the results to organisations such as EAA. If funding emerges later on for step 3., we will transfer our data/knowledge from 1. to this project.

Because there are so many associations over Europe, the completion of the project is likely some distance in the future. At its first stages, such a list won't be complete but could offer a worthy first general overview. The expectation is that by reaching stage 3 and being transformed into a wiki, some short further explanation in the paper could be useful, in the sense: After having it transformed into a wiki, where each association could take care of their own data, further associations whether regional, national or European in scope, that were not aware of or did not engage in the first stage would be eager to register themselves. At the end, the collection will be complete in the sense that it embeds all relevant societies.

The technical aspects of the project are being developed by colleagues in Germany. One of the project's working group has performed various polls for DGUF, for museums, and for other heritage organisations using SoSciSurvey (<https://www.sosicisurvey.de/>). This platform, which is based in Munich, is a powerful application which has the important advantages of being free for non-commercial research and relatively straightforward to use. It can be used in both German and English. It helps users to build a questionnaire, provides a platform to collect the data there, and

afterwards the results can be easily exported to Excel-files, to SPSS-files, and so on. Moreover, the site is secure; therefore, the project has a very suitable tool to make a start.

At the time of writing the project team are designing a simple landing page for the online platform. This page will include an introduction into the project, to be distributed widely as an invitation to participate in our survey. We are drafting the questionnaire building it as a simple MS-Word text. Some of this was inherent in work done by CPAA members before and after the Professional Associations in Archaeology conference session at the EAA meeting in Pilzen in 2013. The project is working to develop as wide as possible a distribution of the invitation (with the link to the questionnaire). Here, the support of the EAA could be very helpful – by sending out our invitation to all of its members and encouraging them to answer on behalf of their organisations and for further distribution.

By the time of the 25th EAA Annual Meeting in Bern the project hopes to at least have some preliminary data to present to the conference. The Bern meeting will also provide an opportunity to further refine the questionnaire (if necessary), and to promote the project more widely among European colleagues. Although this process has been described as 'step 2' above, this is really another never-ending process of data collection. However the team would hope to be able to secure funding to develop 'step 3' – the project wiki – during the course of 2019.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined a project to discover and ultimately better connect the archaeological organisations of Europe. Ultimately it would be an ambition to go beyond Europe. The two authors of this paper, and their German colleagues in the project, welcome comments and contributions from archaeologists and non-archaeologists alike. Further updates will be presented in this journal as the project progresses.

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