

*“The self-organisation of archaeologists in Europe:
Roles and needs, responsibilities and legitimacy”*
Report on Session 384 at the EAA annual meeting
5-8 September 2018 in Barcelona

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Abstract – The paper reports in brief on a session at the EAA 2018 annual meeting in Barcelona, which examined the different types of archaeological organisation across Europe, including archaeology authorities, NGOs, and professional and specialist associations. The aim was to outline objectives, roles and especially potentials of the various models, and to share experiences. The session led to reflection on the needs of archaeology's professional self-organization, and a debate on *“who actually does what?”*.

Key words – archaeology; state archaeology; learned society; NGO; professional association

Titel – „The self-organization of archaeologists in Europe: Roles and needs, responsibilities and legitimacy“ – Zur Sektion 384 auf der EAA-Jahrestagung, 5.-8. September 2018 in Barcelona

Zusammenfassung – Der Beitrag berichtet in starker Zusammenfassung von einer Sektion auf der Jahrestagung 2018 der EAA in Barcelona, die europaweit die unterschiedlichen Arten von archäologischen Organisationen beleuchtete, darunter staatliche Archäologie, NGOs, Berufsverbände und Fachgesellschaften. Beabsichtigt war, Ziele, Rollen und besondere Potenziale der verschiedenen Modelle abzustecken und Erfahrungen auszutauschen. Die Sektion führte zu einer Reflexion über Bedürfnisse an die Selbstorganisation des Berufsfeldes Archäologie und die Frage *“wer macht eigentlich was?”*.

Schlüsselwörter – Archäologie; Denkmalbehörde; Fachgesellschaft; NGO; Berufsverband

The session at the annual meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) was organised jointly by ClifA and DGUF board members; it proved to be very popular on the day – attendance was much higher than expected above and beyond the 21 presenters. The objective of the session was to obtain a pan-European overview of the self-organisation of archaeology, and to systematically examine the different roles and legitimations of the existing structures on the one hand, and to clarify what this meant for the requirements of archaeology on the other. The eleven talks were accompanied by lively debate on controversial issues, which helped to clarify the very different roles and positions of the various types of organisations, and options for action. The most consistent picture emerged from the talks given by functionaries of the professional associations, namely the large US professional association RPA (J. Altschul, T. Klein) and the European professional association ClifA and its regional group ClifA Germany (K. Geary, P. Hinton, M. Schauer, G. Wait). They emphasised their experiences to date, which showed that professional associations represented an effective way to agree on professional minimum standards in a self-determined way at the grassroots level which was legitimised by the community of skilled professionals as a supplement to state-sector structures, and to assert them effectively to create strong,

high-quality archaeology. For private-sector archaeology in particular, this led to more quality and fairer competition, but professional associations especially strengthened the standing and credibility of the action taken in the eyes of investors as well as society as a whole: *“The task of a professional association is also to protect society from bad archaeology,”* said Hinton. A positive effect on archaeology and society can also be achieved in a variety of different ways, however: in 2015, archaeologists in Italy founded the movement *“Mi Riconosci?”* (*“Do you recognise me?”*) to – quite deliberately without a constituted organisation – take action in a kind of citizens’ initiative against the swingeing cutbacks in state-sector archaeology which were gradually taking place in Italy in favour of increasing the amount of work undertaken by unpaid volunteers. According to the talk given by L. Bison, F. Tomei, M. Massimino, F. D. Utzeri and E. Lunardon, this issue had generated considerable resonance in the media and brought about a new public awareness of the problem, which would hopefully help to curb the practice of replacing paid work by voluntary work which had been used more and more in the past. K. Owen and R. Jones presented an initiative in Scotland where various players had successfully worked together under the umbrella of *Historic Environment Scotland*, i.e. state-sector archaeology, to draft and

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adopt a new national strategy for archaeology. I. Pastor Batalla from the *Associacio d'Arqueòlegs de Catalunya* pro-professional association reported on a similar approach from Catalonia which had not met with a great deal of success so far, where too many, too specialised groups had organised themselves into special interest groups and associations. In the past, their size had meant they had been unable to make an impact on their own, neither had they succeeded in reaching sufficient agreement on joint action – because of a lack of clarity in their roles, among other things. Even more diverse were the experiences and views presented on the activities of those representing the interests of archaeology on the European level. Drawing on vast experience, L. de Witt eloquently presented his thesis that the *Europae Archaeologiae Consillium* (EAC) – the umbrella organisation of the national archaeology bodies on the European level – was a particularly suitable body for exerting an influence on European politicians for the benefit of archaeology; he gave the creation of EYCH 2018, the *European Year of Cultural Heritage*, as a topical example of a success. State-sector archaeology could never assume the role of an NGO, however; there were many contexts in which it could not champion archaeology precisely because of the duties of loyalty it owed to its employers, the governments. The archaeologist and professional lobbyist K. Aitchison advanced the view that only professional, i.e. paid lobbying, could reliably produce an impact on the European level due to the size and complexity of the political landscape; the community of archaeologists should attempt to raise the funding necessary. The EAA board members S. Hüglin and H. Potrebica presented an opposing view, which emphasised the possibility of non-governmental organisations such as the EAA, for example, lobbying politicians. They listed the membership of the *European Heritage Alliance* 3.3., the active participation in EYCH 2018, and the EAA project of litmus tests for the European elections in May 2019 as examples of possible procedures which could be adopted. The President of the *World Archaeological Congress* (WAC), K. Mizoguchi, reminded the audience of the many pressing conflicts in the world; archaeology had to work out how it itself perceived its contemporary relevance and present this perception more forcefully to third parties. Umbrella organisations such as the WAC and the EAA could become positive examples of how a fruitful international collaboration was possible despite all the tensions. In the joint and comprehensive concluding debate, to which all participants made intensive contributions, the more successful and less

successful models and approaches were compared with each other. It became clear that a successful approach for archaeology was particularly possible where organisations operated with a clear self-image and a clear legitimisation which could be convincingly presented to third parties as well. Which of the possible roles – specialist association and NGO, citizens' initiative, professional association, trade union, employers' federation, coalition of state-sector functionaries or professional lobbyists – were effective in a particular case depended on the objective and the individual case. There was broad consensus that experience had shown that unclear legitimations and blurred roles were a hindrance for collaboration within archaeology itself as well as for effective communication at the political level and in society, too.

Several speakers in Barcelona submitted a paper for publication in *Archäologische Informationen*, others considered their talks to be more of a contribution to the discussion and „work in progress“ – they felt it was too early for a final scientific paper. The session nevertheless resulted in a tangible, joint outcome: after the meeting, several players came together under the aegis of the ClfA and DGUF and founded the initiative „Connecting the Archaeological Associations of Europe“ (ConAAE) whose aim, with the support of the EAA, is for all organisations engaged in archaeology in Europe to be collated on a public platform on which it is possible to search specifically for partners and expertise as and when needed, and which can help to form networks for particular activities.

* The text of this report is also available in German.

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Literature

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