

Current Trends in Archaeological Heritage Preservation: National and International Perspectives

Proceedings of the international conference,
Iași, Romania, November 6–10, 2013

Edited by

Sergiu Musteață
Ștefan Caliniuc



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword (by Sergiu MUSTEAȚĂ) / 9

Michal BUREŠ, *Archaeological heritage management in Czech Republic — between centralism and liberalism* / 11

Sergiu MUSTEAȚĂ, *Preserving archaeological remains in situ: from the legal to the practical issues. The Romanian case* / 15

Hans-Ulrich VOß, Sergiu MUSTEAȚĂ, Alexandru POPA, *Forward-Looking for Conservation. Case Study: Landscape Archaeology in the Cubolta River Valley, Republic of Moldova — the Project “Cultural Relations of the Sântana de Mureş Culture between the Rivers Prut and Dniester”* / 21

Asmita BASU, *Sustainable Development — a Challenge for Archaeological Site Management in the Coastal Areas of West Bengal in Eastern India* / 27

Fariz KHALILLI, Shola BAYRAMOVA, *Research and Conservation of Public Buildings in the Medieval Aghsu Town* / 33

Giacomo Maria TABITA, *Italian Civil Protection and Archaeological Heritage: Italian Experiences* / 37

Ștefan CALINIUC, *Destruction of archaeological heritage sites by natural risk phenomena in north-eastern Romania. Problems and solutions* / 41

Davide DELFINO, Luiz OOSTERBEEK, Nelson ALMEIDA, *Yes, we can! Scientific Research and Public Archaeology between the Public and Private Sectors in Central Portugal* / 45

Durga BASU, *Public Archaeology, its Scope and Limitation in Regional Aspects in India* / 55

Alexey O. PRONIN, *The International Exhibition Project “The Terra-Cotta Army: Arms and Armour in Chinese Destiny”. Experiences, Results and Perspectives of an Archaeological Mobile Exhibition* / 59

Livia ȘTEFAN, Dragoș GHEORGHIU, *E-Cultural Tourism for Highlighting the “Invisible” Communities — Elaboration of Cultural Routes Using Augmented Reality for Mobile Devices (MAR)* / 63

Andrea CHIRICESCU, Alexandru POPA, Mihai CHIRICESCU, *The Archaeology Steps into the Smartphone Era! An Application for Mobile Devices, for Signalling, Tracking and Informing on Archaeological Sites from South-east Transylvania — a joint public-private research project* / 67

Elena M^a PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, M^a Esther CHÁVEZ ÁLVAREZ, M^a Dolores CÁMALICH MASSIEU, Dimas Martín SOCAS, *Archaeological Heritage Management in the Canary Islands (Spain) and Its Relationship with Tourism* / 73

Andrey BORODOVSKIY, *Monitoring and Integrating the Archaeological Heritage from the Altai Mountains into the Tourism Infrastructure* / 77

Piotr KOŁODZIEJCZYK, *Polish Archaeological and Scientific Achievements in the Research and Protection of World Cultural Heritage as a Marketing Product? Examples of Promotional Activities* / 81

Marta LORENZON, *Arica and Parinacota: A Successful Example of Integration between Cultural Tourism and Heritage Preservation* / 91

Irina GUSACH, *A New Direction of Archaeological Tourism in the South of Russia (On the Example of the "Tanais" Archaeological Reserve Museum)* / 97

Projit KUMAR PALIT, *Cultural Tourism in Tripura, Northeastern India, with Special Reference to Bangladesh: an Archaeological Study* / 99

Alexandru POPA, *Multidisciplinary Researches and the Question of Archiving the Analysed Samples and their Results. Case Study: the Roman Camps from South-east Transylvania* / 105

Monica BÎRĂ, *Seeing the Past through the Eyes of Media — Archaeology and Archaeologists as Depicted by the Romanian Online Press* / 111

Suzie THOMAS, *Multiple-Role Actors in the Movement of Cultural Property: Metal-Detector Users* / 117

Henrique A. MOURÃO, *The Incompatibility between the UNESCO Underwater Heritage Convention and Brazilian Legislation* / 125

Sergey TIKHONOV, *The Preservation and Use of the Archaeological Heritage in West Siberia (Russia)* / 129

In memoriam Willem JH Willems (1950–2014)

Foreword

Archaeological heritage helps to define the age and origins of a culture, the history and traditions of a nation, a country or a certain ethno-cultural space in relation to other states or cultural spaces. Today, the archaeological goods are treated as an asset of all humanity, which needs to be treated accordingly. The preservation of archaeological sites is strongly linked to the study, safeguarding and evaluation of unearthed archaeological deposits. At the same time, this field is faced with the need to salvage or restore sites. As cultural heritage, archaeological goods, are very attractive for collectors, and become subjects of illicit activities, such as illegal excavations and trade. Hence, for preserving archaeological heritage we need an efficient management with frame of activities focused on preserving, research, conservation and restoration of the cultural resources for future generations.

European and international conventions play an important role in the process of archaeological heritage preservation, but one of the most important acts is the revised European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage. Two decades after the Valletta Convention (Malta, 1992) it was time to do a large evaluation of its implementation. All countries have a rich past, but they have different systems of the cultural heritage preservation, from the regional autonomy to the federal control.

In the context of the changes occurring during the last decades, archaeological heritage is exposed to enormous risks. Damage of archaeological heritage has a lasting impact and the destruction of sites is an irreplaceable loss. Illegal removal of archaeological pieces from their cultural and chronological contexts causes damages to their value and cultural layers. One of the causes of the spread of illegal archaeology is the lack of a coherent legal framework and a strict control of state institutions. However, the diversity and the difficulty of archaeological heritage protection issues are much higher. Therefore, to protect the archaeological heritage we need effective management, which would come with a set of proposals for rescue, research, preserve and restore these cultural resources.

Under the aegis of the Iași Institute of Archaeology of the Romanian Academy — Iași branch, the project entitled *Current trends in the archaeological heritage preservation: the national and the international perspectives* was launched in 2011 with the financial support of the Romanian National Council of Scientific Research (CNCS), with the intent purpose of analysing the archaeological-heritage preservation policies of Romania and their interplay with the European and international counterparts.

Several activities have been carried out as part of the project activities, including the development of a website (www.archaeoheritage.ro) that, besides outlining the project's goals and objectives, serves as a platform for monitoring the Romanian mass-media reflecting the topics and cases of the archaeological heritage. The first component concerns the political deliberations carried out by the Romanian Parliament, the transcripts of which were selected and published on the website. The second area concerns the online Romanian mass-media outlets (categorised according to the territorial-administrative structure of the country) that address topics related to the project. Brought together as such, the collected information facilitates the execution of a frame analysis, modestly developed in Romania. For comparing the Romanian archaeological heritage policies with those of other countries, we decided to select and post on the website similar information from the Republic of Moldova. Furthermore, the web page includes a database of laws governing the protection of archaeological heritage in Romania, conventions, recommendations, resolutions and other European and international acts. The 'Library' section of the website lists recent publications in the field, a bibliography, and a list of online resources. This component is developed throughout the project and provides access to all those interested in the project.

Another achievement of the project is the organisation of the international conference *Current trends in archaeological heritage preservation: National and International Perspectives*, which took place in Iași between the 6th and the 10th of November 2013. The event was organized by the Iași Institute of Archaeology in partnership with the European Association of Archaeologists, the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, the "Moldova" National Museum Complex from Iași, and the National Museum of Romanian History from Bucharest. The conference was attended by over 50 experts in the protection and management of archaeological heritage from Germany,

Netherlands, Australia, USA, UK, Czech Republic, India, Azerbaijan, Portugal, Russia, Poland, Spain, Brazil, Romania and Moldova.

The conference's goal was to share the experience and to discuss actual situation on the field of archaeological heritage preservation in various countries. The notifications of the conference were focused in a plenary session, four workshops, an evaluation session, and a study visits to five heritage sites from Iași and Neamț counties.

This volume gathers most of the papers presented at the conference, and its publication is meant to disseminate to an audience as wide as possible the latest work of those working in the field and to promote the latest trends in the protection and management of the archaeological heritage.

The conference was opened by Academician Bogdan C. Simionescu, President of the Iași branch of the Romanian Academy, Dr Alexander Rubel, Director of the Iași Institute of Archaeology, and Dr Lucrețiu Bîrliba, the Dean of the Faculty of History from the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași. During the plenary session, were presented four communications. Willem JH Willems informed about the latest developments of archaeological resource management. Claire Smith talked about the symbolic employment of heritage in wars. Douglas C. Comer made a comparative analysis of tourism and economic development of the cultural sites of local and global perspectives. Based on a European survey, Adrian Oliver made a presentation on the changes and future opportunities of the Valetta Convention.

In the first workshop, "Legal framework and management of the archaeological heritage", were presented six communications on normative systems, management of archaeological heritage, and experiences of Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Italy, Moldova, and Romania.

Today, access to information is a current topic of concern for all states, and access to archaeological heritage information makes no exception. In the second workshop, entitled "Access to the information and public archaeology", were presented seven communications focused particularly on public archaeology and access to information in the United Kingdom, Portugal, Russia, Azerbaijan, Poland, and Romania.

Capitalisation of the archaeological heritage is nowadays is a current topic in public discussions. Therefore, the relationship between cultural sites, protection activities and economical valorisation were the most requested topics of the conference. As such, the twelve papers presented in the third workshop entitled "Cultural tourism and archaeological heritage preservation" provoked heated discussions. In this context, the participants of the conference had the opportunity to discuss case studies from Spain, Russia, Poland, Chile, and Romania.

Another current topic is related to the illicit traffic of antiquities, a phenomenon severely affecting not only Romania, but other European countries as well. The fourth workshop in the conference agenda, "Use and abuse the legislation: looting and trading antiquities", tackled this topic in four case studies from the United Kingdom, Brazil, Russia, and Moldova.

We emphasize that this conference was attended by representatives of the most important international organizations in the field of the protection of cultural heritage, such as Willem JH Willems and Douglas C. Comer, Vice-Presidents of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Claire Smith, President of the World Archaeological Congress (WAC), Friedrich Lüth, President of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), Adrian Oliver, former President of the European Archaeological Council (EAC), alongside archaeologists from the German Institute of Archaeology (DAI), etc. This allowed us to have a real exchange of experiences and discussion of current trends in the protection of archaeological heritage. The participants mentioned both in presentations and discussions about the importance of the conference and the need of a multidisciplinary approach to cultural heritage and protection measures. All participants expressed an interest to our conference and proposed to continue this experience in future.

We thank CNCS-UEFISCDI, and the partners (the European Association of Archaeologists, the "Moldova" National Museum Complex, the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, and the National Museum of Romanian History), who made the organisation of the conference possible. Acknowledgements are entitled to all those who contributed to the implementation of the project *Current trends in the protection of the archaeological heritage: national and international perspectives* and the publication of this volume.

Dr Sergiu Musteață
Project director