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THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETIES IN PRESERVING CULTURAL MEMORIALS

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Contents

[1. Introduction](#)

[2. Heritage, Nationalism, and the Beginnings of Archaeological Societies](#)

[3. Archaeological Organizations at the Global Level](#)

[4. Recent Changes and Current Objectives](#)

[Related Chapters](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

Summary

This paper examines the role of archaeological societies in preserving cultural memorials. The phenomenon of archaeological societies has its roots in the antiquarianism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but dates primarily from the beginning of the nineteenth century. There are many different types of archaeological societies, with different aims that can be broad as well as very narrow, and they operate at different levels, nationally and internationally. Their development over two centuries is examined in relation to their aims in dealing with material remains from the past. These can be summarized under four headings, three of which can be seen as traditional concerns of archaeological societies, although they have reappeared in different forms: research, public education, and political activity. The fourth, professionalism, has been born in the last quarter-century, although some of its aspects have a longer history.

1. Introduction



Human fascination with the past has a long history that can be traced back into antiquity. The roots of "archaeological" thought are indeed very old, although archaeology became an academic discipline in the modern sense only gradually, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Concerns about the way in which material remains of the past are dealt with have an equally long history. In fact, it can be said that the roots of modern day archaeological "heritage" or "resource" management are as ancient as those of the academic discipline.

Although we know about this history largely because the remains of the past were a concern of emperors, kings, or popes, we also have the evidence from the writings of classical philosophers and historians. In the Middle Ages, and especially during the Renaissance, such learned men and collectors were part of networks that encompassed all of Europe and soon

extended into the New World and Asia. China, of course, had its own independent tradition of antiquarianism with equally ancient roots. But it was not until the eighteenth century that the existing antiquarianism in Europe led to the first organizational structures, and many archaeological societies were formed, especially by the nineteenth century.

Although the history of organization in archaeology is a quite interesting subject in itself, it is not the primary purpose of this paper to discuss it in too much detail. In the previous century, and especially in the last two or three decades, archaeology and its position in society have changed rather drastically, and this has also affected organizational structures and institutions, though perhaps not as much as one might wish. Some of these changes will be examined here, especially current trends and developments that may point the way to new roles, created by the challenges put to archaeological organizations by contemporary society in relation to their role in preserving cultural memorials.

A modern definition of cultural resources, proposed by W. Lipe is: "All cultural materials, including cultural landscapes, that have survived from the past, are potentially cultural resources that is, have some potential value or use in the present or future."

The idea of seeing the material remains of the past as a *resource* (for society as a whole as well as for research by archaeologists) became widespread in the last quarter century. This was especially true in the English speaking part of the world (despite there being similar, relatively neutral terms in other languages such as the Italian term *beni culturali* these are not necessarily attached to the same idea). It is seen as an effective way to put archaeological remains as cultural resources at the same level as other scarce and in this case also fragile and non-renewable resources in the modern day world. It is also a way to use a more value-free concept than "heritage," although it has been argued that such a view creates a utilitarian view of the past and is linked to a positivist theoretical framework.

2. Heritage, Nationalism, and the Beginnings of Archaeological Societies



The use of archaeological heritage for nationalistic and ideological purposes has become a popular subject of study in recent years, which in part is due to its clear abuse in many cases that are now well documented. The use of the past in, say, early nineteenth century Denmark, in the newly founded Greek state in the same period, or in the current formation process of the European Union differs significantly, of course, from the role of archaeology under the Third Reich. However, while studying the past in itself need not necessarily be politically motivated, dealing with remains of the past and wanting to take care of them is always a political activity, and in most countries the beginnings of this activity are intimately connected with politics and nationalism. In fact, even the word "heritage" carries the meaning of "that what is inherited from ones ancestor" and is thus intimately connected to the political and cultural history of groups or nations. This is true for many languages, for example the French concept of *patrimoine* or the German *Kulturerbe*. In fact, both the Latin terms of *patrimonium* and *monumentum* refer to *moneo*, "to cause to think," and this is also found in Germanic languages, for example Scandinavian (*fornminnen*) or German (*Denkmal*) and indeed in the concept of "cultural memorial" (see, [Archaeology](#)).

It is not surprising, therefore, that the first attempt to create a society for the preservation of national antiquities, by English antiquarians in 1572, failed when James I would not grant it a charter because its aim was judged to be political. Following the birth of Academies of

Science in many European countries in the seventeenth century, the world's first archaeological society, the Society of Antiquaries of London, was formally constituted in 1718 and chartered in 1754. In the UK as well as in many other European countries, the period in which the oldest archaeological societies were founded is the first half of the nineteenth century. By the end of that century, there were similar societies in most countries in Europe and in other parts of the world. The German *Verein für Nassauische Altertumskunde und Geschichtsforschung* was founded in 1812, for example, and *Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskrift Selskab* was formed in Denmark in 1825.

The aims of these early societies were very similar and had to do with the preservation of archaeological and other cultural property and the prevention of its destruction, as well as the investigation of such remains and the founding of museums with educational purposes. They came into existence as a direct consequence of the political restructuring of post-Napoleonic Europe, the formation of nation states and the need to develop, or in the case of long-established countries such as France, Spain, Portugal, and Great Britain to (re) define a "national identity" (see *History of Archaeology*). The past is an essential component in that process, and it is significant that the concept of "national antiquities" was invented in this period. The term *antiquités nationales* was used in the title of a collection of five volumes, published in 1790 by the French antiquarian A-L. Millin and was soon applied widely all over early nineteenth century Europe.

The national heritage rapidly became one of the foundations of the nation as a political and a demographic entity and was often quite consciously used to create and foster national awareness and pride. The concern over these national antiquities was a driving force behind the foundation of archaeological societies, as is evident from their original aims, statutes, and the role that they played. At national but also at regional level, collections were assembled and exhibited, often replacing the curiosity cabinets of princes and kings (see, [The Role of Museums](#)). Sometimes archaeological societies also played a part in other aspects of creating an infrastructure for the study of the national past. This includes setting up libraries, creating local and regional archives, and the establishment of archaeology as an academic discipline, which occurred in the same period (around the turn of the century). In 1818, C. Reuvers in the Netherlands was appointed as the world's first university professor of archaeology with an explicit teaching commitment for "national," prehistoric archaeology; and in 1819 C. Thomsen in Denmark designed the national museum around the stone-bronze-iron succession.

In other parts of the world developments occurred somewhat later although, for example, in India the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded by 1784, and an American Antiquarian Society was founded in Massachusetts in 1812. In Mexico, Simon Bolivar himself was apparently involved with creating legislation to protect archaeological remains in the 1820s. In Japan, archaeological organizations were founded during the Meiji period in the late nineteenth century, and the first legislation to protect "national treasures" was introduced around the same time. Nevertheless, the developing science of archaeology was normally practiced if not by European scholars in a colonial framework then at least from a "Western" perspective, although in a country like Japan the nationalist movement led to independent development. In the United States, substantial work was done on American archaeology from about the mid-nineteenth century onwards. But it was classical archaeology, embodied in the Archaeological Institute of America ("AIA," founded in 1879), that remained far more important in the discipline as a whole until well after World War II. The Society of American Archaeology (SAA) was only founded in 1934 and the Mexican Society of Anthropology,

which also covered archaeology, in 1937. In most Latin American countries some kind of archaeological organization was established by the mid-twentieth century.

3. Archaeological Organizations at the Global Level



Although it can be concluded from the above that the roots of archaeological societies are intimately connected with the sociopolitical role of archaeology and concerns about "national" heritage, its establishment as an academic discipline soon led to organization at the international level as well. Archaeology as the study of human history could not be limited to national boundaries, however politically relevant these may have been, and it is not surprising that the need for an international forum for discussion and exchange of information rapidly led to an organizational framework. The initiative for this was taken by Italian and French scholars and led to the formation of the *Congrès International d'Anthropologie et d'Archéologie Préhistoriques* (CIAAP), which convened for the first time in Switzerland in 1866 and served as the international forum until the first World War. The effects of the war, as well as other factors, caused a break, which was only resolved in 1931 by the creation of the International Union of Pre- and Protohistoric Sciences (IUPPS). The IUPPS, often better known under its French acronym of UISPP, *Union Internationale des Sciences préhistoriques et protohistoriques* survived the Second World War and the Cold War, and since 1955 has been linked to UNESCO through the International Council of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies.

The IUPPS is a large organization that meets at an international congress every five years. It has a number of special committees that run specific projects (usually on classification and inventarisation) and a large number of scientific commissions (currently 32, although some are defunct) on chronological, methodological, and other aspects of archaeology. It is affiliated with associations working in specific parts of the world (such as the Panafrican Congress of Prehistory and Related Studies and the American SAA) or specific material (such as the International Council for Archaeozoology). During the decades after the war, in the mid-twentieth century, the IUPPS was the central archaeological organization at global level and its impact on collaboration and exchange in research considerable. Its position has changed, however, in the last quarter century or so, due to several developments.

An important reason why the IUPPS was able to survive in the turbulent history of the twentieth century is its strict adherence to "academic freedom" and its commitment to the study of archaeology: to research. It is quite evident that the cooperation of the archaeological establishment from all over the world, but especially from both sides of the iron curtain, could not have taken place in any other context. It had to be based on a concept of "pure research," divorced from ideology and nationalism. This is of course the classic stance of archaeology "in its ivory tower" that is now often criticized. At the same time, it provided a way for fruitful development of the discipline and it kept international channels of communication open, even though the nature of that communication was limited by the circumstances under which it took place.

From the 1960s onwards, the world started to change in many ways. The process of decolonization was rapidly completed, and in many new countries archaeology came to fulfil the same role as it had in Europe a century before, contributing to national awareness. At the same time, the process of establishing archaeology in university departments around the world was more or less completed in the last decades of the twentieth century. In addition, the New

Archaeology emerging from the United States led to critical reflection and the development of archaeological theory that has fundamentally changed the discipline: a process that was already described in the early 1970s as archaeology's "loss of innocence" by the British archaeologist David Clarke.

At the same time, the environmental movement started that would result in the green debate and the recognition that the world's natural and cultural resources are in danger (see, [*Preservation Laws and Policies*](#)). This became the basis for the birth of archaeological resource management in the modern sense, the program for which was first laid out by Lipe in 1974. In 1965, as a result of the adoption of the Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites in Venice the year before, ICOMOS was created. It is a non-governmental organization affiliated to UNESCO and dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites. One of its central aims is "to establish international standards for the preservation, restoration, and management of the cultural environment." Currently the organization has about 16 Scientific Committees on various subjects and National Committees in almost 100 countries, although archaeology is not well represented in these and the emphasis is on buildings. In 1985, this led to the creation of the International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM), which produced an important standard in the form of the "Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage," adopted in 1990 and also known as the Lausanne Charter. As associate membership of such scientific committees is not limited to members of ICOMOS and frequently includes other experts, ICAHM is in fact also an archaeological society.

The year 1985 saw another development in archaeological organization at the global level, with a dispute over South African participation in the eleventh IUPPS Conference that was to be held in England in 1986. The conflict proved to be insoluble. Under its guiding principles outlined above, the IUPPS could not accept banning anyone from participating. On the other side, there were equally strong feelings about the political and moral issues involved, especially because the meeting was intended to increase participation from Third World countries. The outcome of the affair was that in 1986 the first World Archaeological Conference (WAC) was held in England and that the eleventh IUPPS conference was moved to Germany in the following year.

The schism has left us with two organizations at the global level. The essential difference between the two is not about Third World participation, although "Western" domination is less in WAC and the IUPPS is certainly not as Eurocentric as it used to be. As C. Renfrew argued in his inaugural address to the new European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) in 1994, the EAA was needed precisely because the archaeological affairs of Europe could no longer be assumed to be the main issue in a truly global international organization such as the IUPPS. The difference between the two global organizations is primarily that IUPPS is about *studying* the past and the pursuit of knowledge, while WAC is foremost concerned with *dealing with* the past in present-day society. The IUPPS continues to be an organization devoted almost exclusively to academic archaeological research, and it is not surprising that issues of heritage management, for example, are only marginally discussed at its meetings. The WAC, on the other hand, has developed into a forum for discussion about the theory and practice of archaeology in relation to ideological issues, nationalism, ethics, etc, and has a particular concern for the position of indigenous groups in relation to heritage.

This division is not necessarily disadvantageous for archaeology. Due to developments briefly mentioned above, the position of archaeology has changed greatly in the past decades, and in

most parts of the world it has become a socially relevant discipline supported by increasingly effective legislation. It is questionable, therefore, if an organization such as the IUPPS can continue to *de facto* disengage itself from the necessary discussion about theory and ethics without becoming obsolete. On the other hand, its policy to keep open the lines of intellectual communication has proved to be an effective instrument for survival as well as scientific progress, and it has apparent attraction for the world's archaeological establishment and for a great variety of specialized fields within the profession. In addition, part of the gap that is left is filled by ICAHM. On the other hand WAC has produced highly relevant discussions and a number of publications that have contributed substantially to creating awareness of the various roles of archaeology in society. At the same time, it is in constant danger of being torn apart by political issues and it tends to focus very strongly on moral issues that have little appeal for large groups in the profession, including many leading figures. From a practical point of view, it is possible therefore to see both organizations as complementary rather than in competition and to consider the different interests of the discipline and the profession of archaeology to be well covered at the global level.

In addition to the IUPPS, WAC, and ICAHM, there are, of course, other archaeological bodies working at the global level. Leaving aside some major international organizations that cannot be considered "archaeological," although they certainly are involved with aspects of archaeology, there are various specializations that have organized themselves into more or less formal structures. They include ICUCH, the International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage (also an ICOMOS committee), the International Council for Archaeozoology, the Society of Archaeological Scientists, the Associazione Internazionale di Archeologia Classica, and many others. Some are clearly involved with the role of their subject matter in aspects of cultural resource management; others seem to be concerned solely with research in their particular field.

The same can be said of the innumerable associations, societies, conferences, special interest groups, etc. that operate in a specific geographical area of the world or at the national level and are concerned with a specific subject or chronological phase. There is no need to discuss these in the present context.

4. Recent Changes and Current Objectives



The changes following from the environmental movement that started in the 1960s have caused archaeological remains to be seen as non-renewable and fragile resources that need to be managed with care. This approach has not replaced the original motives for preserving the material remains of the past as (national) heritage but has considerably broadened them. It has led to international conventions and national legislation supplementing, replacing, or expanding existing Monuments Acts in the sense that an evaluation of archaeological (cultural) resources is required when development is planned. In the United States and Scandinavian countries this happened already in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the context of environmental legislation. The process took longer elsewhere; indeed, it still has to start in some parts of the world. In 1992 the basic principles were included in the revised "European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage," better known as the Malta Convention, which is now ratified by 18 countries and has become an important international standard (see, [Preservation Laws and Policies](#)). It is clear that archaeological organizations played an important role in bringing about these changes, for example in the United States, and internationally through the ICAHM charter. Direct state involvement, however, as a result

of increased political awareness that the national heritage was endangered by economic development was at least as important in this process. This state involvement can also be seen in the usually quite strong legislation that existed in countries behind the iron curtain until the beginning of the 1990s.

After in some cases disastrous decade of capitalist development in former communist countries as far as heritage management is concerned, modern legislation based on standards such as provided by the Malta Convention has gradually been put in place. The fall of the iron curtain has also had immediate consequences for archaeological organizations with the creation of the European Association of Archaeologists in 1994, which has as one of its primary aims the (re-) unification of archaeologists in Europe. Since 1999, there exists also the Europæ Archaeologiæ Consilium. The EAC (its Latin name was chosen to avoid problems with language!) is an association of heritage management organizations at the national or state level in European countries. It intends to work complementarily to the EAA, and to deal with the role and development of archaeological resource management in an increasingly unified Europe. The political changes of 1989 have also led to situations such as in former Yugoslavia, with deliberate massive destruction of cultural resources and, of course, had major political and economic consequences elsewhere in the world. One that is relevant in the present context is the increased emphasis on, awareness of or even the conscious (re-) creation of regional and/or ethnic group identities. This has greatly stimulated interest in the questions related to the role of the "heritage" and the control over that heritage.

Another, very different, consequence is the ongoing and global process of liberalization of the market-economy. Combined with the "resource management" viewpoint and with legislation that makes it obligatory to take archaeological values into account in development projects, this leads to archaeology as a business enterprise. Commercial archaeology started – where else – in the USA in the 1970s and has now spread widely in many parts of the world. It has led to a whole new set of ethical and moral issues that archaeologists have to deal with. It has indeed led to the concept of the "archaeological profession," where formerly archaeologists were mainly identified in other ways, as curator, academic researcher, or civil servant. Unfortunately, the concept is sometimes used to define a professional archaeologist as someone working in the heritage industry as opposed to, for example, an academic archaeologist, while its actual purpose is to create an image for the profession as a whole.

These developments have, of course, had consequences, notably the creation of an entirely new kind of archaeological society, which can best be described as a professional association, that has rooted especially in the Anglo-Saxon parts of the world but seems to be spreading more widely in recent years. It was born from the perceived need to create standards of performance on the one hand and to define moral principles on the other. Depending on the social and legal context in countries where this type of organization now exists, it may have a role in defining the profession. In developing systems of quality control, it may embody aspects of a trade union and be involved with training and education.

The first of this new type of association was established in the United States in 1976 as the Society of Professional Archaeologists. It was intended to provide quality assurance as part of an overall program of establishing and promoting standards and ethics in archaeology, and it had a grievance procedure to deal with unethical conduct or substandard performance. Despite various successes, SOPA never succeeded, however, in having a substantial impact, and its membership remained limited primarily to archaeologists working in contract archaeology and heritage managers. In 1998, before it became dormant, membership was only about 650.

A similar development in the United Kingdom, in direct relation to the effects of Thatcherism on the practice of archaeology, has been more successful. The Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) started in 1979 and was formally created in 1982. It currently has about 1500 members and maintains a register of professionals that are required to abide by the IFA "Code of Conduct" and "Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology." Members are grouped into so-called "areas of competence" and divided into four categories or grades, determined by training and experience. Since 1996, the IFA also maintains a register of archaeological organizations that meet certain standards and meanwhile a substantial number of "guidelines" has been produced, covering various aspects of archaeological work.

There are similar organizations elsewhere, such as the Australian AIPA (Australian Institute of Professional Archaeologists) or, outside the Anglo-Saxon world in Europe, the Spanish APAE (*Asociación Profesional de Arqueólogos de España*) and the Dutch NVvA (*Nederlandse Vereniging van Archeologen*). They are all concerned with a code of conduct or ethics, standards of performance, a register, and a grievance procedure tailored to the needs in each national context. Recently, an initiative has been taken to bring the European organizations together in the context of the EAA, which itself is not an association of professional archaeologists, although it has developed a European "Code of Practice" and "Principles of Conduct for archaeologists involved in contract archaeological work." This may be an important initiative because of the increasing impact of the European Union and its legislation on economic development and the lifting of barriers for the circulation of goods and services. On the other hand, European countries retain cultural autonomy in some countries this even rests at the regional ("state") level such as the German *Länder* and the Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas* so there will remain a need for professional associations at the national level. In many countries, these have not even begun to be created yet, although it seems inevitable that this will happen in future years, either through new creations, the transformation of existing organizations or, as recently happened in the US, a merger between existing organizations.

The ineffectiveness of SOPA in the US has led to the creation of the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA) in 1998, which is not a membership organization in the normal sense. In fact, societies such as the AIA, the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), and especially the SAA already partially provide for some of the needs that professional associations take care of elsewhere. Together with SOPA, these three societies founded the RPA, which is focused solely on the promotion and maintenance of professional standards in archaeology and the registration of qualified archaeologists. It does not work by examination of qualifications and a classification of professionals such as in Australia and Europe or the "emphases" employed by SOPA in the past. Rather, it works by voluntary registration of archaeologists who agree to abide by the code of conduct and standards of research performance and provide evidence on their training and experience. It is designed to set basic guarantees for professionalism in archaeology and to ensure that legitimate complaints are heard. Apparently this new set-up is more successful and membership has already reached about 1300.

While an organization similar to the RPA may not be the preferred option at the national level elsewhere, it may well provide a feasible model if at some point an international approach to quality assurance were to be developed. In a way, the 1990 Lausanne Charter already anticipates such a development. It states in article 9 that "the archaeological heritage is the common heritage of all humanity. International cooperation is therefore essential in developing and maintaining standards in its management." The solution is sought in the

creation of international mechanisms for the exchange of experience and information, and, given the vast differences that exist in what is considered best practice or even what is proper and improper behavior for an archaeologist, this may indeed still be the best practical approach.

On the other hand, the EAA experience has shown that having European standards can be quite useful as a frame of reference when no such thing is available nationally. In addition, while we do have several international standards on how archaeological resources should be dealt with, we lack internationally accepted standards for archaeological work with the exception of the 1956 (and obviously in some respects outdated) UNESCO "Recommendation on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations." Also, apart from the principles formulated by WAC in its First Code of Ethics, which is very limited in scope, and the European Code of Practice, there is no global standard on what professional conduct entails. This may increasingly become a handicap, as for example when international organizations such as the World Bank adopt a cultural policy and take the cultural dimension into account in their decisions to finance developments. There are international standards that can be used as guidance on what should be demanded, but there is no international frame of reference for assessing the quality of resulting work nor for what to consider proper and improper conduct and performance for archaeologists involved in such work.

It would seem that the existing archaeological organizations could work together to develop such frameworks. In any case, a comparison of the various existing standards and codes shows there is probably enough common ground to work successfully on such an enterprise, although it would need a clear distinction between archaeological ethics and archaeological performance, which is sometimes confused. There are, however, many other priorities that are relevant for archaeological societies around the globe. These can be summarized under four headings, although all are to some degree interrelated.

4.1 Research

Evidently, any progress to be made in preserving cultural memorials from the past is dependent on advancing our understanding of that past and indeed this is - if not their sole purpose - an important goal of almost all types of archaeological societies. Governments and international bodies such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe provide legal, financial, and other frameworks, but it is through archaeological societies of all kinds that scholars are brought together for discussion and exchange of information that lies at the core of scientific progress.

It is desirable, however, that the forums provided by these societies at their meetings and through their committees or publications are used more frequently to further research into "the conservation and management of archaeological sites" (which in fact is the title of a journal that has appeared since 1996). This would involve not only research into the qualitative aspects of sites (valuation) and their quantification into technical and methodological improvements, but also into the development of a critical and self-reflexive theory.

The importance of this is becoming quite evident from recent discussion. Much of the work in archaeological resource management is being done from a practical point of view under daily constraints of time and money. It also is being done within an often unquestioned positivist framework in which it is assumed that, for example, there is some objective way in which to assess value, to make choices on what to preserve. There are very strong political and moral

dimensions to this, but at the same time it is also a matter of theoretical development. In fact, both the resentment that exists in broad circles to increasing politicization and the political activism within archaeology (on the world stage, i.e. the positions of the IUPPS and WAC) require the development of a reflexive archaeological theory embedded in sociological theory and epistemology. It especially would seem that archaeological societies working at both global and continental levels (such as the SAA and EAA) could be instrumental in generating the necessary discussions.

4.2 Public Education and Outreach

Many archaeological societies are involved in communicating the results of archaeological work and interpretations of the past to what on average seems to be a largely interested or at least curious audience. As with research, this has been one of the central aims of archaeological societies over the past two centuries. In fact, many of the oldest societies that still exist see this as an explicit task, while the growth of the academic discipline and the process of professionalization have led to many societies of more recent date that are not, or hardly, involved in any kind of public outreach. Also, while they still flourish at the local level, there seem to be very few major societies that still have a mixed membership of professional and amateur archaeologists, such as the American Institute of Archaeology. Nevertheless, amateur archaeology has an important role in the social nesting of archaeology at all levels and their contribution can be invaluable. The significance of having a powerful politician, a member of the Royal family, or a multimillionaire with a passion for archaeology is evident. But equally important are the myriads of small local societies all over the world, usually without any professional membership, that may serve as the "eyes and ears" of the professional world. Even more importantly, they contribute to a local community awareness of the past that is embedded in its environment and thereby influence the decisions being taken about it.

The need for good public relations is obvious in a field such as archaeology, which to a considerable extent depends on public support. But there are other aspects. There are rare occasions - an early example being the famous theft of the Gallehus gold horns from the Royal Collection in Copenhagen in 1802 that shook the Danish nation - when the general public gets truly alarmed and involved. In fact, while an inherent public interest in archaeology exists, this generally needs to be actively cultivated. There are big differences between countries in the amount of input in education and outreach through institutions such as state, regional, and local archaeology services and museums. But even where such an infrastructure exists, archaeological societies have a role to play. The role may be in supporting the effort or in providing critical discussion on such subjects as the way in which the past is being represented, the effects of increasing cultural tourism, or the (non-) involvement of the local population in archaeological work.

4.3 Political Action

Although early nineteenth century societies were very much part of the establishment and served its nationalist and other relevant goals, they have also always been politically active. Such activities include the cause of preservation and protection of the heritage and lobbying for legislation and funds, or by triggering if not organizing public resistance against government policies or decisions concerning the heritage. As discussed above, this is not an activity that all archaeological societies engage in nowadays, but it is an essential task for at least some so that the voice of the discipline is heard at all levels, nationally and

internationally. Many archaeologists are either directly in the service of the government or indirectly dependant on it as contractors, museum curators, university teachers etc., and there are vast differences between countries in the degree to which scepticism, criticism, or resistance are effective, or even tolerated.

In any case, even in the most liberal political climates where free speech is guaranteed, archaeological societies are indispensable as channels for political activity. This is an important reason why, for example, the SAA has its headquarters in Washington, DC, and why the EAA has obtained consultative status with the Council of Europe and will undoubtedly move to Brussels to be in the vicinity of the European Union when it creates an independent office. Although the aims of such political activity in the service of archaeology are sometimes quite evident and undisputed, it is also directly dependent on the development of a critical reflexive theory referred to above. This has become especially clear in recent years with debates on issues of cultural identity: in Europe, with the use of archaeology in relation to what has been described as European supra-nationalism, and in North America and Australia, with the role of archaeology in relation to indigenous populations.

International associations can be very useful in situations where internal pressure at the national level is difficult to organize or ineffective, or in support of a national effort, such as the involvement of EAA and WAC with the British Parliamentary Committee on the return of and illicit trade in cultural property. In various ways, they are also involved with the creation of charters and with the creation of treaties and conventions by international governmental organizations, although the latter is normally achieved by other means. Archaeological organizations seem to be mainly involved with the effort to get conventions ratified and implemented at the national level rather than as partners in the actual drafting process at the supranational level.

4.4 Promoting the Interests of the Profession

As outlined in section 3, the concept of archaeology as a profession is relatively new and has only recently led to organizations that are specifically designed to meet the need for quality assurance and to set standards for archaeologists' behavior. However, this does not mean that other archaeological societies are not involved in promoting the interests of the profession. Indeed, diverse subjects are being dealt with in varying degrees by archaeological societies in many countries as well as internationally. They include, among others, academic training and curriculum, health and safety measures at work, the often appalling wages paid for archaeological labor, permanent education and (international) training programs, gender issues, and career structures. Tools to do this are committees, meetings, resolutions, lobbying, legal action, fundraising, publications, and many others. A traditional one that is increasingly being used for new purposes is giving awards and prizes. An example of this is the first European Archaeological Heritage Prize that was awarded in 1999 to the Portuguese Minister of Culture. It was awarded for his personal involvement in saving the Paleolithic rock art in the Coa Valley by preventing the construction of a dam at a very considerable cost to the Portuguese State.

Some of these concerns are not new, but others have never been dealt with before in a systematic way and are still being neglected in many countries, and the same is true for other aspects mentioned above. However, with the explicit or implicit recognition of the cultural dimension in political and economic decisions, the position of the archaeological discipline has changed profoundly, and the interpretation and management of the past in present day

society has become a socially relevant activity. This does not imply that any particular archaeological society should necessarily be involved with the various consequences of this development. It does mean, however, that nationally as well as internationally, there should be and - inevitably there shall be - societies dealing with those consequences and discussing the moral, political, scientific, and professional issues involved. All of these are essential for their role in the preservation of archaeological resources.

Related Chapters



Related Links will be activated soon!

Glossary



AIA: Archaeological Institute of America.

AIPA: Australian Institute of Professional Archaeologists.

Antiquarianism: The scholarly study of objects and sites from the past from a historic viewpoint, preceding the birth of archaeology as a modern academic discipline.

APAE: Asociación Profesional de Arqueólogos de España (Spanish Association of Professional Archaeologists).

CIAAP: Congrès International d'Anthropologie et d'Archéologie Préhistoriques (International Congress of Anthropology and Prehistoric Archaeology).

Code of Archaeological Ethics: A definition of moral principles that are considered to be shared ideals or goals to strive for by all archaeologists. Codes of archaeological ethics are intended as beacons for behavior and are thus not eternal and universal values.

Code of Archaeological Practice: A set of basic standards defining what are considered approved practice and professional conduct and what is not. Codes of archaeological practice are essential elements in quality assurance or certification and need systematic periodic review.

Cultural Resources: All cultural materials, including cultural landscapes, that have survived from the past, having some potential value or use in the present or future.

EAA: European Association of Archaeologists.

EAC: Europæ Archæologiæ Consilium (European Archaeological Council).

ICAHM: International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management.

ICOMOS: The International Council on Monuments and Sites.

ICUCH: International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

IFA: Institute of Field Archaeologists.

IUPPS: International Union of Pre- and Protohistoric Sciences (= UISPP, Union Internationale des Sciences préhistoriques et protohistoriques).

NVvA: Nederlandse Vereniging van Archeologen (Dutch Association of Professional Archaeologists).

Professional Archaeologist: Usually, this is any person working in archaeology and holding an academic degree in an archaeological or closely related field, although various other definitions exist.

RPA: Register of Professional Archaeologists.

SAA: Society for American Archaeology.

SHA: Society for Historical Archaeology.

SOPA: Society of Professional Archaeologists.

WAC: World Archaeological Congress.

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UISPP: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/7152/>, WAC: <http://www.wac.uct.ac.za/>, EAA: <http://www.e-a-a.org/>, SAA: <http://www.saa.org/>, IFA: <http://www.archaeologists.net/>, RPA: <http://www.rpanet.org/> .]

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Biographical Sketch

Willem J. H. Willems is director general for archaeology at the State Inspectorate for Archaeology of The Netherlands, and Professor of Roman Archaeology at the University of Leiden. He was born in 1950 and studied anthropology at the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA from 1972 to 1977. He worked as a research scholar at the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research and obtained his Ph.D. cum laude from the University of Amsterdam on a dissertation entitled "Romans and Batavians." His work in Roman archaeology includes numerous articles and several monographs. Since 1981, his work has mainly been in archaeological heritage management, as provincial archaeologist and later as deputy director of the Dutch State Archaeological Service, ROB (*Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek*). From 1989 to 1999 he was the director of the ROB and state archaeologist of the Netherlands. He also has published extensively on various aspects of archaeological heritage management. He participated in the Council of Europe committee that drafted the Malta Convention and was the founding President of the Europ Archologi Consilium. Currently he serves as President of the EAA, the European Association of Archaeologists. His present work includes a national committee charged with maintaining a system of quality assurance in heritage management in The Netherlands and the creation of a state inspectorate.