

THE EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

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In the 1990s two new European institutions were established for the archaeological profession, the European Archaeological Association (EAA), which holds its 25th conference this year in Bern and the European Archaeological Council (EAC). Professionals involved in the protection, maintenance and management of the heritage have drafted the need for a more structured collaboration already on the first informal congresses of the EAA, which yielded the formation of a new independent organization, the Europæ Archaeologiae Consilium / Conseil Européen d'Archéologie.¹ The EAC was founded in November 1999 in Strasbourg under aegis of the Council of Europe (CoE) inviting from CoE countries members of state institutions legally trusted with the management of archaeological heritage. On the session a heritage management conference presented the possibilities and threats for the management of archaeological heritage of wetland habitats.

The EAC considers its mission the protect the archaeological heritage in Europe. Main objectives of the organization include:

- transfer of information, supporting collaboration between members and providing a forum to discuss heritage management questions;
- developing common goals, functioning as a supervisory and advisory body regarding archaeological heritage management questions;
- advancing the management, protection, scientific interpretation, publication, presentation, public indulgence and understanding of archaeological heritage;
- collaboration other similar organizations;
- contribution to the prosperity of European archaeology.

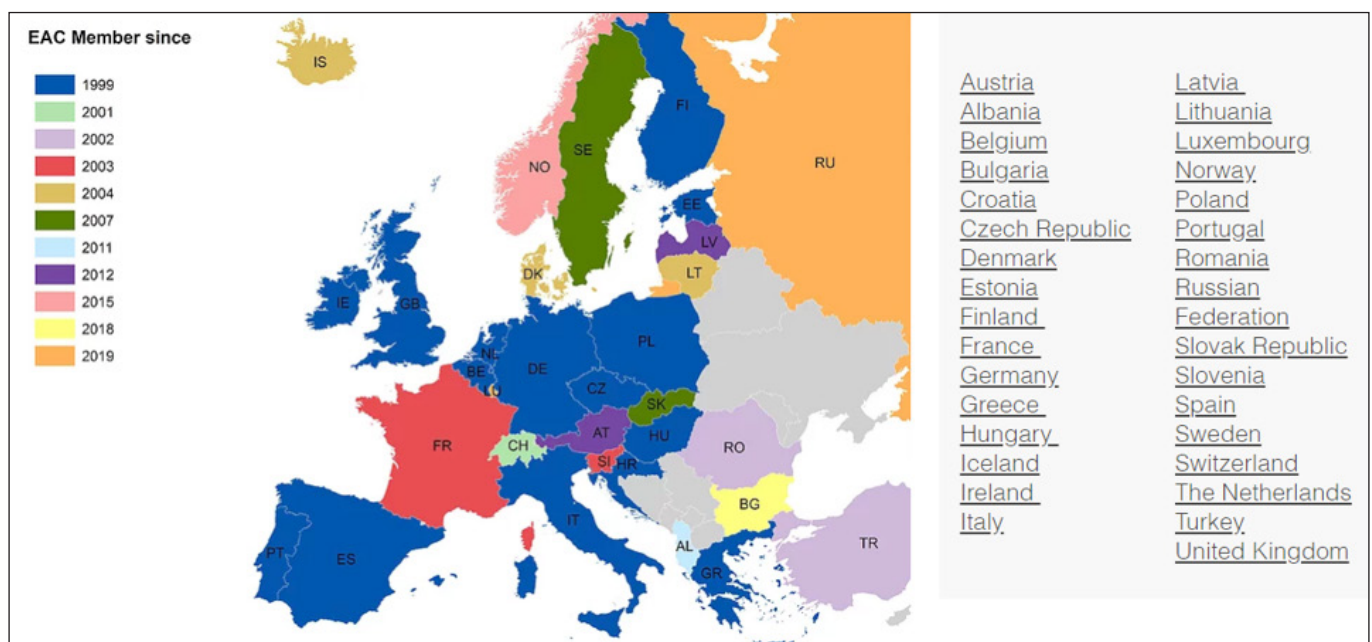


Fig. 1.: EAC member states

¹ The most recent summary on the history of the organization: Adrian Olivier – Katalin Wollák, Europæ Archaeologiae Consilium: Managing Europe's Archaeological Heritage. In: Michaela Aufleger und Petra Tutlies (Hrsg.), Das Ganze ist mehr als die Summe seiner Teile. Festschrift für Jürgen Kunow Materialien zur Bodendenkmalpflege im Rheinland 27, 2018, 61-68.

These goals currently are supported by 32 member states, irrespective whether archaeological heritage management functions independently or in an integrated organization or on a national or regional basis in the given member state. In the last 20 years membership doubled, in 2019 Luxembourg and Russia joined the organization. Since countries operating in a provincial system (e.g. Spain, Switzerland, Germany and Great Britain) delegate members for every responsible institution, presently the EAC is comprised of more than a hundred members. (Fig. 1.)

The most important means in realizing its goals are the annual heritage management conferences, which discuss questions of archaeological heritage management from traditional and 21st century perspectives. The topics from the last five years are: When Valletta meets Faro. The reality of European archaeology in the 21st century (2015), Digital Archaeological Heritage (2016), Dare to Choose: Making Choices in Archaeological Heritage Management (2017), Development-led archaeology in Europe – Meeting the needs of archaeologists, developers and the public (2018), Archaeological sites and monuments in the care of the state – sharing our experiences (2019). It is an accented goal of the organization to acquaint members with the exemplary good practices in heritage management of certain states, thus publication of its conferences has been a cornerstone since its formation. Up to 2015 eleven volumes have been published, with the collaboration of Archaeolingua since 2010. (Fig. 2.)

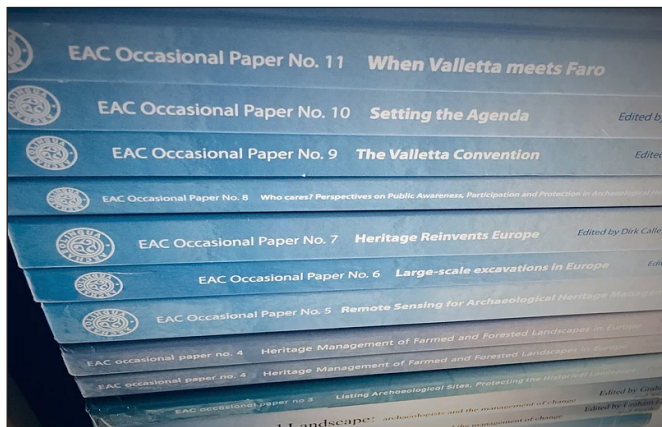


Fig. 2.: EAC volumes

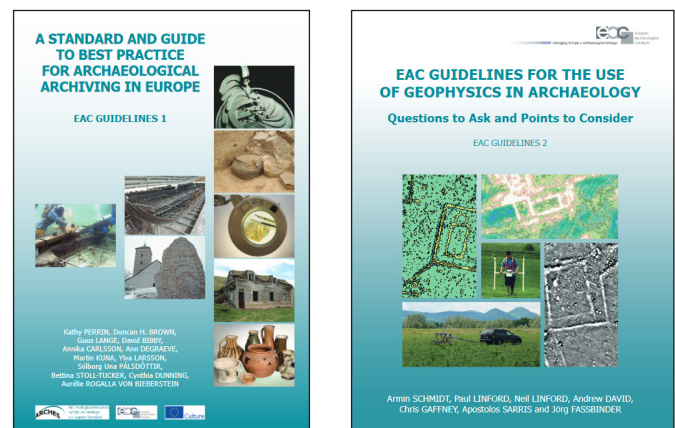


Fig. 3.: The two guidelines

Since 2016 presentations held at the conferences are directly accessible in digital format as a result of a collaboration agreement between EAC and [Internet Archaeology](#) (Internet archaeology issues 43, 49 and 51). The publications can thus reach a much broader audience. Extended abstracts provide continuation for the printed series EAC Occasional Papers (digital volumes in pdf format may be downloaded from the website). The line of publications are complemented by two guideline books, providing assistance with archiving archaeological findmaterial and documentation as well as archaeological application of remote-sensing. (Fig. 3.)

In the last 15 years the EAC has been informing its members on applications, subsidies, programmes, conferences, EU and CoE events related to heritage management. The quarterly '[European affairs update](#)' as well as brief presentations on the heritage management systems of states hosting board meetings and conferences are all available on the EAC website.

The organization actively collaborates with the European Archaeological Association and the European Heritage Heads Forum, a network uniting the leaders of European heritage management institutes since 2006. The EAC maintains an observer status in the Steering Committee of the European Council (CDCPP) involved in culture, cultural heritage and landscape and following their request it is involved in the continuation of the 'European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century' of the CoE and has defined key goals of European [archaeological heritage management](#) in an articulate manner (in less, than a thousand words).

Hungary is one of the founding members of the organization, the country is represented by a delegate of the institution tasked with but not exclusively heritage management, Katalin Wollák who held the position of chairman, vice-chairman and is presently an honorary member of the organization, Réka Virágos who was assistant and later member of the organization, and Eszter Kreiter who is presently the representative of Hungary.

The host of the anniversary session was the National Monuments Service, a heritage protection organization appertaining to the ministry responsible for the Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht collaborating with the Office of Public Works (OPW) charged with managing and operating two world heritage sites (Brú na Bóinne – New Grange and Skellig Michael) and further 780 significant state owned monuments and archaeological sites. The invitation of the EAC and the topic of the conference 'Archaeological sites and monuments in the care of the state – sharing our experiences' was suggested by Irish colleagues out of consideration that in 2019 the Irish heritage protection celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Church Act of 1869 which assigned the first monuments of national significance to the care of the state. The conference venue was the Castle of Dublin, erected atop a Viking settlement in the 13th century. (Fig. 4.) The fire of 1684 gravely damaged large part of teh building, only one of its original four towers survived, the so-called Record Tower which today houses the archives. (Fig. 5.)

The castle was reconstructed in the Georgian era. The castle was the official center of English administration of Ireland until 1922. Since 1937 prime minister's of Ireland are inaugurated here. The castle is operated by the OPW, which recieves approximately 6.5 million visitors annually in the 77 sites it operates. We were granted a visit to the tower currently under monumental reconstruction, to the conserved remains of the walls of the Medieval castle and the preserved defensive features of the Viking settlement excavated below.

On the first day of the conference workgroup meetings took place in the Costum House, a building constructed in 1791, presently housing the heritage management institute. In the morning, members of the new workgroups gathered and in the afternoon, the EAC board held their session. (Fig. 6.)

Alongside [workgroups](#) that have been operating effectively for years, in 2015 the EAC adopted the so-called Amersfoort Agenda (EAC Amersfoort Agenda – Setting the agenda for the future of archaeological heritage management in Europe) which laid down the following three operational guidelines for upcoming years:

1. The spirit of the Faro Convention: embedding archaeology in society
2. Dare to choose
3. Managing the sources of European history



Figure 4 – The Castle of Dublin ([image source](#))



Figure 5 – The Record-Tower ([image source](#))



Figure 6 – The Custom House in Dublin

In Autumn 2016 a [separate workgroup](#) was established for developing the second point of the agenda, which forwarded a questionnaire to members and completed a [summary](#) based on their replies. Based on expectations raised it formulated the following proposals, according to which EAC members deem important the following:

- Guidance on significance and priorities
- Developing national research framework
- Making the case for development-led archaeology
- Managing finds/archives

In accordance with hereinabove, the director of the EAC addressed a call to all members to contribute to the work of the newly established three workgroups established for these tasks. Statutory meetings were held on the day preceding the conference.

The leader of the workgroup tasked with significance, Thor Hjaltalín presented the goal of the joint work through Icelandic examples: based on the analysis of good practices and compiling case studies, creating guidelines (criteria) to provide guidance on articulation of significance of heritage assets to ensure that the values of each site are clearly articulated. This will assist in clear decision-making when change management is required.

Research frameworks were mentioned already on the panel discussion of the 2018 EAA conference. Firstly, the Dutch leader of the workgroup, Inge van der Jagt presented the issues, referring to differences between research strategy / framework / agenda. A feasible goal of the workgroup can be the development of simple guidance to introduce the concept of research frameworks, within investment-led archaeology, explaining how they can be used and providing some basic thoughts on how to set them up.

The workgroup of preventive archaeology was led by Barney Sloane, who summarized the evaluation of the previous questionnaire and who was elected EAC director in Dublin. This workgroup is aimed at providing a toolkit for archaeological heritage managers to help them articulate the wide range of benefits and enormous public value arising from a system of development-led archaeology (whether public or privately funded), and to demonstrate the potential of proportionality and transparency.

The EAC Working Group for Archaeological Archives, led by Agnieszka Oniszczyk from Poland continued tending the finished guidelines. The workgroup created a questionnaire in the topic of conserving and decluttering finds and documents and plan to carry out future work based on its results. The workgroup has already conducted a questionnaire concentrating specifically on making.

On the following day the closed session (the General Assembly) of the organization received the account for the year 2018 by abdicating director, Leonard de Wit, the report of the treasurer, welcomed with pleasure the admission of Luxembourg and Russia, pronounced the representative of the Antiquities Authority of Israel associate member and proclaimed former EAC treasurer Friedrich Lüth (DAI – German Archaeological Institute, Germany) honorary member. Representatives from the heritage protection institutes of the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Germany (Saxony) were elected in stead of abdicating board members. Barney Sloane, research director of Historic England became the new director of EAC, with Ann Degraeve, archaeological director of the Brussels regional heritage institute as vice-director.

Irish cultural minister Josepha Madigan opened the jubilee conference. In her speech, she reflected on European heritage underpinning the sense of place of our nations and communities, reinforcing our identities across a shared continent. Minister Madigan spoke of the opportunities of strengthened National Monuments legislation which is expected to progress this year through the Oireachtas and of a new National Heritage Plan – Heritage Ireland 2030– being developed by her Department. Heritage Ireland 2030 will provide a framework for heritage including for the management, conservation and accessibility of our key heritage sites with renewed investment of €30 million for the care of national monuments

Following the opening the president of EAC presented the EAC Occasional Papers volume 14 thanking the work of editor Agnes Stefánsdóttir and publisher Erzsébet Jerem. (*Fig. 7.*)

The conference was aimed at presenting one of the traditional areas of heritage management, namely the old and new challenges in presenting archaeological monuments and sites to the broad public (complete programme is available [here](#)). One element of this agenda is the issue of threats and opportunities (the latter considered by governments as a significant economic potential) in the context of cultural tourism and the need for aligning economic and heritage interests.

Presenters were also called upon to answer questions, such as:

- When is direct state management of archaeological sites and monuments necessary and appropriate to provide public access to such sites and monuments?
- What are the various mechanisms that have been developed across Europe for state management (e.g. outright ownership, partnership with private owners) and what lessons can be drawn from these comparisons?
- At what governmental level (local, regional, national) does state management of archaeological sites and monuments take place in cases where they are being made accessible to the public and, where this occurs at multiple governmental levels, how do these relate to each other?
- Is the challenge set in the Valletta Convention of making archaeological sites and monuments accessible while protecting their archaeological and scientific character being met, and if so, how?
- How is a balance to be struck between making archaeological sites and monuments accessible to the public for educational reasons and for tourism reasons – is there in fact any conflict or, if there is, how is it resolved?
- Are there conflicts between what the public wants or expects from the experience of visiting archaeological sites and monuments and what archaeologists think the public should get?
- What is the appropriate balance between top-down (governmental driven) and bottom-up (community led) initiatives in regard to presenting archaeological sites and monuments to the public?
- How do archaeological heritage managers co-operate with other heritage managers [e.g. conservation architects and engineers) in managing sites and monuments and are there conflicts in terms of professional approaches and philosophies to be reconciled?]]

The Irish colleagues awaited the presentations from the representatives of the 19 countries with interest. They wished to assess the possibility of adopting the presented good examples, since in the current Irish practice approximately 1,000 individual monuments at 768 locations have been taken into ownership or guardianship by the state. These range from megalithic tombs of the neolithic period to medieval churches and castles, industrial mills and historic buildings of more recent times. One of the core functions of the National Monuments Service is to ensure the preservation of the monuments in its care for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. maintenance and operation is carried out by the OPW. To view a list of monuments in state care, click [here](#).

Michael MacDonagh, an Irish board member of the EAC was chairman of the first section, presenting the difficulties of conservating state-owned monuments and new possibilities of their presentation by experts from Denmark, Romania, Italy, Hungary, Scotland, Russia and Ireland. The Danish presentation on the 14 km long western section of the 19th century fortification system surrounding Copenhagen, currently located on the territories of multiple settlements and a recently developed heritage trail was a refreshing example. There are numerous built heritage elements to be found on the area which is also under nature

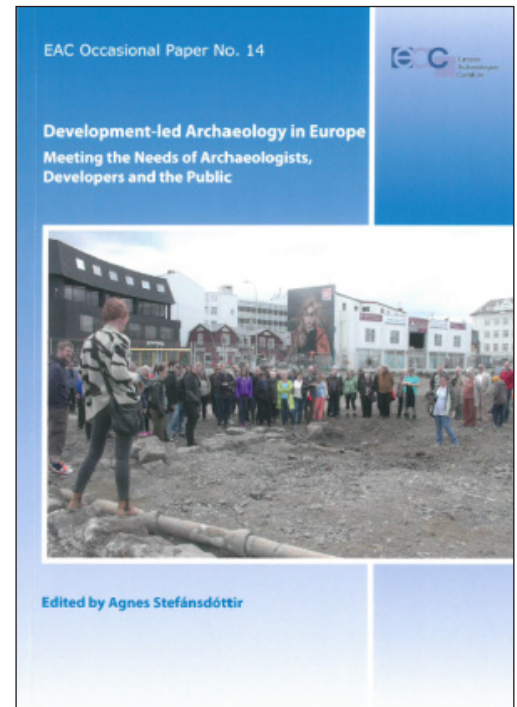


Fig. 7.: EAC Occasional Papers volume 14.

protection to ensure biodiversity. During development emphasis has been placed on presenting monuments of military history in a Modern manner, a fitting playground and bike lane has also been constructed. The heritage management authority successfully averted the claim from one of the nearby settlements to cut through the heritage trail.

The Romanian presentation featured the situation of eight world heritage sites (six sites including the Dacian fortifications were enlisted in the 1990s), with emphasis the six archaeological world heritage sites. Sites were examined from aspects of presentation, publicity and management, afterwards the results of the HERO project initiated in 2017 were presented. After hearing the inspiring practice of the autonomous province of Trentino the Hungarian duo, Dóra Hegyi and Zsófia Nádai held their presentation titled Medieval Castles and Historical Gardens of Hungary. The two colleagues of the Castle Headquarters Ltd. (Várkapitányság Zrt.) presented development possibilities underlying in individual sites of the in the Hungarian Castles and Palaces Programme (NKVP), including the contractable measure of reconstructing extant Medieval castle ruins, analysing the levels of answering visitor expectations, summing up positive elements of projects currently in progress. Collaboration between experts from the fields landscape architecture, monuments, archaeology and planning based on the archaeological research of historic gardens yielded the spectacular reconstructions at numerous sites. The Scottish speakers on one hand presentations examined the effects of high-grossing iconic movies and series (e.g. Game of Thrones) shot on sites of the Scottish Highland and the archipelago affecting the state of the sites. On the other hand they presented the rich archaeological qualities and vulnerability of the Holyrood Park in Edinburgh. The colleague of the Russian Academy of Sciences held a presentation on the archaeological research of the Medieval churches of Novgorod and elaborated the possibilities for presenting unearthed finds and monuments at the site and in museums. The last presentation of the day was a succinct summary by Irish colleagues on the difficulties in the research, restoration and management of the Skellig Michael world heritage site. The island of modest modern infrastructure was enlisted on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1996 and has been an important Irish monastic center for 600 years. The cloister there was constructed in 588 and several features, such as the stone huts of the monks and the approximately 600 stone steps carved into the rock are visible today. Although recent Star Wars episodes were shot on location, tourism is limited and tending heritage protection tasks requires considerable efforts.

After presentations two former EAC president, Adrian Olivier and Katalin Wollák presented not only the most important results of the 20 years, but also joint memories and the inherent values of this existing special heritage-community.

On the morning of the second day two Czech colleagues presented the developments of the VirtualArch project spanning eight states, realized with INTERREG financing. The project advocates application of innovative visualization techniques keeping in mind sustainable use and protection of invisible or lesser-known archaeological heritage. Participants were presented the newest results of the three-year project initiated in 2017. The following presentation was held in the topic of underwater archaeology. It featured the difficulties in national management of historic shipwrecks located in English territorial waters. The maintenance and conservation of 53 protected shipwrecks spanning from the Bronze Age to the WW1 era is one of the tasks of Historic England, the English heritage management institution. The presentation mustered a wide range of practical solutions – highlighting valuable contributions from voluntary divers in order to present a more elaborate picture to the general public on this unique heritage type. The Dutch colleagues began by presenting the system of trusts, that operate in the Netherlands in large numbers. Numerous such non-governmental organizations see to the conservation and maintenance of heritage elements, since taking monuments and archaeological sites in national care is not the common practice there. The Utrechts Landschap tends to similar tasks in its province, maintaining and operating nearly 300 sites of mostly natural and cultural significance, half of which is under protection. The previous head of the Dutch heritage agency, an archaeologist presented the advantages of the so-called triple helix system, in which government funding, assets and incomes of the trust and civic social contributions (donations, volunteers) ensure stable operation and long-term preservation of the natural, historic and archaeological heritage in their care.

The Turkish presentation called attention to the fact that 13 or their 18 world heritage sites are archaeological, which grants simultaneously a distinguished position among the rank of 167 countries currently possessing world heritage sites, but also raises considerable alarm from the expert community as not only the state of the sites is to be conserved due to increasing tourism, but it is oft necessary to protect the original structure of sites against unfounded development plans or reconstructive ideas by local authorities or the government. The presentation was supported by numerous examples, both positive and negative.

The head of the Icelandic heritage management organization analyzed the challenges of conserving 850 protected archaeological sites. Archaeological heritage includes heritage elements older than 100 years which are ensured *ex lege* protection. The conservation of buildings made of turf posed a particular problem. Natural forces as maritime erosion, earthquakes, volcano eruptions, floods and global warming require additional attention as threats. Furthermore development due to rise in tourism exert an increasing effect on protected sites. The presentation was concluded with the successes and failures of the heritage management organization.

The Estonian colleague began with presenting the qualities of the country. Half of the 6700 protected archaeological sites are burials, most of them located in woodland as 51% of the country is covered by forests. Through recently concluded development programmes the presentation gave examples on both successful and unsuccessful cases and means of balancing interests of development and heritage protection.

The ultimate section of the conference took place Friday afternoon, with Eszter Kreiter, Hungarian board member as chairman. The first point on the agenda was the Vučedol Cultural Museum, a topic both dear and well-known to Hungarian colleagues. Croatian colleagues presented lively the museum crafted on the iconic site of the five thousand year old Vučedol culture and the related museum education programme. The idea for realizing such a museum first arose in the 1980s, when the first systematic excavations began. Excavations ceased during the war and were resumed only in the 2000s. The museum fits the landscape perfectly by architectural standpoint. Grasping the archaeological significance of the area it provides numerous classes for school groups and attracts citizens of neighbouring countries dedicated to archaeology. Further development is planned, in the near future an archaeological park will be opened in the vicinity of the museum. The second presentation invited participants to explore Switzerland, demonstrating desirable examples of the operation of civic heritage protection societies. Integrated into the heritage protection frame their work effectively assists collaboration between museums, experts and the civil circle and considerably raises public awareness. Bulgarian colleagues presented the accomplishments of the last decade, including restoration and conservation works carried out on major archaeological sites and the positive impact of these heritage protection developments on tourism. They illustrated with diverse examples how 'genius loci' may be preserved and presented through effective collaboration between experts and stakeholders. Newly appointed director of the EAC brought examples from Brussels. Several constructed heritage elements and archaeological features have been conserved and presented to the general public. One such significant monument with which the participants were acquainted is the Franciscan cloister ruin at the archaeological site Bruxella 1238. As a closure of the section, participants took an imaginary visit to Germany. Several Roman ruins were conserved and opened for the general public on the area of Baden-Württemberg and speakers presented solutions in managing and maintaining these sites. Saturday brought about unpleasant March weather, typical to Ireland. At first the group took a trip to one of the most significant neolithic passage graves of Ireland, to Brú na Bóinne, which translates to quarters near the river Boyne and has been enlisted on the UNESCO World Heritage list since 1993.

Due to the exceptionally dry weather of the year 2018 the Irish heritage protection organization received [notice](#) of a new ditch encircled henge discovered via aerial archaeology, after which a series of systematic aerial surveys were [conducted](#) on the site last summer. On the approximately 800 hectare area 40 neolithic passage graves are located, the most well-known being Newgrange. The site is open to visitors through a visitor centre inaugurated in 1997, which is currently being renewed for 5 million euros. The entrance of this unique funerary monument was oriented so, that during the winter solstice the Sun directly illuminates the grave through the passage. (*Fig. 8.*) The ray of light passes along the passage all the way to the oppos-



Fig. 8.: Entrance of the Newgrange mound



Fig. 9: The passage of the Newgrange mound

ing chamber, illuminating even the minor details of the corbels of the vault. On this day this effect was reproduced with electric lights, yet the experience is nonetheless astounding. (Fig. 9.)

On the area of yet unexcavated tombs, the Irish colleagues perform further geophysics surveys to map heritage assets hiding underground in a more complete manner. Participants continued their excavation to Castle Trim, the most extensive Anglo-Norman fortification in the whole of Ireland, located also along the river Boyne. (Fig. 10.)

A curious fact is that in the castle located a mere 50 km from Dublin was the Mel Gibson movie *Braveheart* shot. Its construction began in 1176 and in three phases it lasted 50 years. The rooms in the donjons are still open to visitors. A beautiful scenery of the landscape with distant mountains and cities can be viewed from the castle rooftop.

The participants of the conference were acquainted with many exemplary cases, good practices. It is now possible to reflect on the morals of presentations and talks and eventually include complete the heritage protection routine of individual countries with additional practices.



Fig. 10.: Castle of Trim