

The Valletta Convention: Twenty Years After Benefits, Problems, Challenges

Edited by Victoria M. van der Haas and Peter A.C. Schut

EAC Occasional Paper No. 9

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Published by:

Europae Archaeologia Consilium (EAC), Association Internationale sans But Lucratif (AISBL), Siège social

Koning Albert II-laan 19 Avenue Roi Albert II 19

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www.e-a-c.org

In association with:

Aerial Archaeology Research Group

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ISBN 978-963-9911-49-9

Brought to publication by Archaeolingua, Hungary

Managing editor: Elizabeth Jerem

Copy editing by Victoria van der Haas

Layout and cover design by Gergely Hős

Printed by Aduprint Printing and Publishing Ltd, Hungary

Distribution by Archaeolingua, Hungary

Cover image:

Butrint, Albania (World Heritage) where Greek, Roman, Byzantium and Venetian monumental ruins bring together the Valletta principles for research, restoration, conservation, education and public information

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Foreword and acknowledgement

**Katalin Wollák, Vice-president of EAC
President of Europae Archaeologiae Consilium 2010-2013**

In recent years, as part of the process of renewing its overall strategy, the Europae Archaeologiae Consilium has examined different aspects of archaeological heritage management through its annual heritage management symposiums. The 12th EAC symposium in Ename, Belgium (2011), ('Heritage Reinvents Europe'), focussed on the social significance and diversity of cultural heritage and its role in different narratives. The 13th EAC symposium held in Paris in 2012 entitled 'Who Cares?' presented the different perspectives on public awareness, participation and protection in Europe's archaeology. The 14th EAC symposium was hosted in Albania in March 2013, and in the frame of this symposium the EAC investigated the extent to which the regulatory environment established in most EAC member states over the past 20 years based on the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage actually ensured the efficient protection and management of heritage, and whether the convention is still appropriate in current circumstances.

The relevant Council of Europe's Convention (ETS No. 143) adopted in 1992 in Valletta (Malta), ratified by 42 European countries established a body of new basic legal standards for Europe, aimed at creating firm cooperation between planning policies and heritage management, and the principles of integrated conservation "in order to ensure optimum conservation of archaeological heritage" as sources of scientific and documentary evidence.

In 2002 – three years after the establishment of the Consilium under the auspice of the Council of Europe – and coinciding with the 10-year anniversary of the Convention (ratified at that time by 27 countries), the EAC participated in the seminar organised by the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on the Cultural Heritage. As a result of this, the EAC was asked to assist the CoE in exploring how the provisions of the Valletta Convention have been interpreted in different countries. The EAC undertook a survey on the most important themes in order to establish the different approaches that had been taken to implementation of the convention in different countries, and the answers highlighted some major differences between approaches. The EAC presented the outcome of this work to different professional forums including the Council of Europe. This activity did not only help the EAC to better understand the various heritage management systems in member states but it also served as an excellent starting point for elaborating a new and more sustainable monitoring system of the Council of Europe's heritage related conventions.

We believe that the Valletta Convention remains the core management text for archaeological heritage management prevalent across most European countries. With the organisation of the 14th EAC symposium on the occasion of the 20-year anniversary of the convention, we intended to present its relevance to the present day. In addition to this we considered that it would be appropriate to explore some current concerns by looking at the impacts on heritage management of the political, economic, and social changes throughout Europe, and to identify both the benefits and advantages of the Valletta Convention, as well as any problems associated with its implementation and to establish an overview of the challenges resulting from a rapidly changing economic and political environment, and how the heritage sector might be able to help to address these challenges. In the symposium '*The Valletta Convention: Twenty Years After – Challenges for the future. 20th Anniversary of the Valletta Convention: Benefits, Problems, Challenges*'.

After a comprehensive retrospective presentation, the speakers first demonstrated the different ways in which the Convention had been adapted and implemented. The papers touched upon the impacts of Valletta, and the changes of the last two decades. The symposium paid special attention to the question of how the (archaeological) heritage could react to past and present challenges, such as the integration of different heritage related institutions, significant changes in legal framework, the increased demand and expectation for better cooperation and communication towards the different stakeholders in the society and the protracted, direct and indirect impacts of the economic crises and the recession to archaeological heritage management. These issues then led seamlessly into the next subtheme: how to manage the problems resulting from the exponential rise in field archaeology which produced enormous quantities of archaeological material and data, but without proper, adequate societal exploitation. Other papers then examined the possible future developments, presenting the expectations of those countries which are considering signing the convention in the near future, as well as the more negative viewpoint of those countries who think the convention has grown too old, and who are looking at developing a broader approach by connecting the Valletta Convention to the Faro and Florence conventions. There were also presentation by representatives of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

The EAC also organised a Heritage Management Seminar '*In situ preservation: management and presentation*' in the frame of the Annual Meeting to reflect some management priorities of the host country. The Valletta Convention has resulted in changing approaches to physical interventions – moving away from excavation of archaeological remains towards conserving these remains in-situ. In the Butrint Theatre, our Albanian colleagues

provided a venue for the seminar which was extremely appropriate for presenting good examples of managing, monitoring and presentation of archaeological remains in situ. As we considered that this issue is closely related to the implementation and to the achievements of the Convention, four presentations from the seminar have been included in this volume, together with a few additional contributions from countries, which did not provide a presentation. Four papers presented at the symposium have not been added to this volume but the 21 remaining articles properly present the various perspectives.

I would like to express our gratitude to the Archaeological Service Agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports of Albania, especially to the director of the Agency Roland Olli and his staff and particularly to Albana Hakani for the warm and generous hosting of the whole annual meeting, and for organising such memorable site visits. Adrian Olivier, the former EAC president was not only the initiator of the symposium but he facilitated it with his expert assistance, with Paul Van Lindt he also prepared an on-line questionnaire (the preliminary results of which are presented in this volume. Our Dutch colleagues also played a significant role in the conference, with their inspiring, probably provoking prelude (Leonard de Wit) and concluding remarks (Willem Willems). Last but not least we'd like to thank all the authors for their contributions, and especially Peter Schut for the precise and thorough work of the scientific organising of the symposium and editing this volume, and Victoria van der Haas for the technical and linguistic editorial work, and our publishing house, Archaeolingua, for the continuous reliable labour on our behalf.

I am especially grateful for the challenge that under my three year presidential term we were able to publish five EAC volumes, although the preparation and the performance of this symposium took place during this period, this volume has actually been published under the presidency of Bernard Randoïn.

The symposium concluded by outlining the present challenges, especially the need to open up discussion about the accumulated values of heritage to achieve more effective conservation management, and to launch new initiatives to explore how to treat archaeological values as sources of knowledge about Europe's past. The EAC therefore decided to explore these opportunities in the frame of the 15th EAC Heritage Management Symposium in 2015.

Budapest, 7th November 2013

The Valletta Convention: Twenty years After – Challenges for the future.
20th Anniversary of the Valletta Convention: Benefits, Problems, Challenges.

The title of the 14th Heritage Management symposium that was held in Sarande, Albania (21st-23rd or March 2013) recalls an important turning point in archaeological heritage for many European countries. The Valletta treaty has become such an integrated part that the younger generation of archaeologists can hardly imagine what the pre-Valletta era was like. Not to mention the process that led up to this treaty. Therefore this publication will focus on the past as well as the present and future of the Valletta treaty. The contributions by Marc Gauthier and Adrian Olivier provide an interesting image of the background of the treaty. By better inextricably connecting planning and archaeology with one another, an important foundation has been laid. It is understandable that there are less desired effects within the system which vary in nature in the different countries and require different solutions. Indeed, each country within the framework of its own culture, traditions and laws, provides its own interpretation of the implementation of the convention.

The arrival of commercial archaeology is completely new to some countries. The impact of this is noticeable on many fronts. Changes within the profession, especially the introduction of policy archaeologists and advisors has changed the image. A side effect is that we can also see a development towards a broader education of archaeologists. Now, in a time of economic recession, it is time to evaluate the process and make changes where needed. What works and where is room for improvement? More transparency and more responsible choices that are understandable to the 'outside world' are urgently needed. As a consequence of changing political and economic circumstances in various countries, archaeology is under pressure. Due to economic situation, the preservation in situ of largely unknown archaeological values has become inevitable. This development has serious social consequences for colleagues that have become unemployed whereby knowledge and experience is disappearing. The foundation for the 14th Heritage Management Symposium was shaped by an outline written by Adrian Oliver with four main themes:

- The inspiration and implementation of Valletta;
- Issues to improve the professional performance and to achieve greater acceptance;
- Changing circumstances;
- Future Developments

These subjects re-occur in many of the presented contributions. Due to the nature of the articles, this grouping is not adhered to since several articles discuss these various aspects.

That the Valletta archaeology has penetrated all facets of archaeology is further emphasized by the contributions of the symposium's preceding seminar: "In situ preservation: Management and Presentation" organized by Hans Mestdagh and Rolland Olli which seamlessly connected to the symposium. For this reason their contributions have been incorporated in this publication.

After several preliminary contributions, a few articles follow in which reaching a wider public is more or less a central theme. This theme requires a new approach. The archaeology of today consists of more than legislation, planning, excavation and scientific publication. Without an audience the rationale of archaeology in its current form is limited and investment in the support of the public is a prerequisite for the continuation of archaeology in all its facets. We owe it to the public to devote part of our time to public education public and above all to involve them in the archaeological process. The way in which the Butrint Foundation stimulates research in combination with training and the use of incentives for tourist opening of imposing ruins has many similarities with practices used in other countries. The contributions pertaining to the responsible reconstructions, education and tourism are inextricably connected. Education and cultural and historical awareness of the society is at the basis of a much-needed social support and a sense of identity of the inhabitants.

A few articles focus on a specific situation in some of the countries, in particular how the Valletta Convention has been shaped in differing fields. Also through to the contributions from colleagues that did not contribute an article but did contribute at the symposium by sharing their vision we are provided with an impression of the situation in various European countries. Their experiences, challenges and underlying motives provide a special impression of the large variety within the European range with one communal starting point: The Valletta Convention. Investments in archaeological heritage are, despite the economic crisis, considered of great value. The contributions regarding the necessity of monitoring of sites and at the end of the archaeological chain that of archiving, illustrate the broad scope of the Valletta archaeology.

In the final articles emphasis is placed on the sometimes adverse consequences of the implementation of certain aspects of the Valletta convention. It is of the utmost importance that solutions are provided. These contributions shape a prelude for the 15th Heritage Management Symposium “Setting the agenda: Giving new meaning to the European archaeological heritage” that will take place in Amersfoort in 2014. Three themes will be central:

- Managing the sources of European history
- Dare to choose
- The spirit of the Faro Convention: embedding archaeology in society

Hopefully the elaboration of these themes will act as an inspiration for the next couple of years.

Finally, the amicable collaboration with Roland Olli and Albana Hakani was extremely stimulating within the organizing of the symposium. Also the Albanian hospitality and the visit to Butrint were an unforgettable experience for the participants. Adrian Oliver, Réka Virágos and Leonard de Wit were always prepared to contribute to the organization of the symposium. Bernard Randoïn and Séan Kirwan took care of the English translation of Marc Gauthier’s article and Marie-Jeanne Ghenne translated all abstracts to French. Victoria van der Haas played a crucial role as co-editor, she made the articles gain in strength. Last but not least I wish to thank all the authors for their time and effort in sharing their knowledge and providing expertise to the symposium and this publication. Their contributions speak for themselves. It has been a pleasure working with all of you.