Editorial

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This issue of WAC's "Archaeologies" offers elaborated papers originally delivered at the WAC-IC on "Archaeology in Conflict" held in Vienna in April 2010. All original presenters were invited to contribute. Concise versions of several papers were published in *Forum Archaeologiae* 55/VI/2010 (<http://farch.net/>) edited by Elisabeth Trinkl.

The WAC-IC in Vienna originated in the 6th WAC which was held in Ireland at the University College Dublin (UCD) in July 2008. It was attended by over 1,800 archaeologists from about 75 countries. In three academic sessions the issue of archaeology and war was discussed most controversially. One session was entitled "Archaeologists, War and Conflict: Ethics, Politics, Responsibility" and plead more or less for a boycott of the military by the scientific community. The second one, "Working with the Military: Not Evil, Just Necessary" did the opposite. The third one, "Archaeology in the Context of War" focused on legal and systematic issues. The hot topic even caused an Irish local anarchic movement to utter immediate threats against the conference and its participants and the UCD as host felt it was necessary to ensure protection. As a consequence thereof uniformed police personnel were present during part of the conference. This fact triggered even more discussion during the final plenary of the congress which by tradition is the closing forum of every WAC allowing its members and participants to discuss imminent issues and bring draft resolutions before the assembled audience to be either rejected or recommended to the WAC Executive for final approval. In the course of this plenary I suggested organizing a WAC-IC that would specifically deal with the issue of archaeology and war as well as the military, explore the status quo and collect data that would serve as a basis for further decision making. Several months later the WAC Executive made the choice to entrust me with this task and to host the meeting in Vienna.

Before the WAC-IC in Vienna was to take place another important event was already scheduled: the WAC-IC in Ramallah in August 2009. This conference rooted in the 5th WAC which was held in Washington in 2003. One of the experiences of this WAC had been that many archaeologists from various disadvantaged countries around the world were hindered

to attend a conference in the western part of the world due to political reasons and were denied visa. The WAC-IC in Ramallah was held in Palestine largely because Palestinian people have great difficulties obtaining visas to many countries including the USA or the EU Schengen Area (or practically all EU member countries as such). Since it is difficult for Palestinian archaeologists to interact with the international community, WAC decided to bring members of the international community to the Palestinian archaeologists. For this reason the WAC-IC was also put under the theme “Overcoming Structural Violence”, thereby giving the issue of archaeology in conflict a special nuance. The fact alone that WAC powered an IC in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, but also the point that representatives from the Israel Antiquities Authority were not explicitly and directly invited to this event by its organizers, triggered off harsh critique from Israeli officials as well as the media resulting in the false accusation that Israeli and Jewish archaeologist were intentionally excluded from this event and that the whole conference was an anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic undertaking.

The WAC-IC in Vienna was designed to finally overcome all these resentments. It was the intension to bring together people from all kinds of conflict zones as well as from all sectors actively involved: academia at large and university in particular, art, culture incl. museums, site preservation etc., tourism and economy in general, NGOs, the military, law enforcement, public service et al. For this reason I decided to broaden the organizational basis of the conference and to invite Blue Shield to power the event together with WAC. Also the venue within the so called “UNO-City”, the compound where the UN office building in Vienna is located, was chosen to stress the neutrality of the meeting. And the patronage of UNESCO was well as the Austrian UNESCO-Commission, for which we feel very grateful and honored, served the same purpose to guarantee a broad and neutral basis for discussions.

The WAC-IC in Vienna was co-organized by Friedrich Schipper (Vienna) and Magnus Bernhardsson (Williamstown) and planned to hold approximately 20 papers covering all aspects under discussion. In the end we received about 100 proposals. Since most of them were excellent, we accepted about 80 changing the nature of the conference completely; it was in the end a series of short presentations of 15 min each. One remarkable element was the rather high number of junior scholars presenting their work in progress including the “Next Generation Project” on Facebook. One of the highlights of the conference was our participation in the speech of the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, in the Austrian Parliament on the occasion of his state visit to Austria. Unfortunately, the WAC-IC in Vienna also came to suffer under the fact that several registered experts and in particular some junior scholars in the end were not able to travel to Austria, either due to

political (visa) or out of financial reasons. Nevertheless, the conference was very successful—in quality and also in quantity with the highest number of participants as well as papers delivered ever at a WAC-IC so far.

Meanwhile, the 7th WAC has taken place at the Dead Sea in Jordan. Again, the topic of archaeology and war came to play a prominent role. This time it formed one of the main themes of the conference—“Archaeology as a Target: Preservation and Heritage Identities in Times of Conflict” that I had the opportunity of co-organizing together with Zaki Aslan (ICCRROM). It embraced 6 diverse sessions loaded with a plenty of challenging presentations. Also, a keynote by Martin Wobst dealt with this issue. Hopefully, papers of this WAC will also be published soon. At the concluding plenary, archaeology in conflict was the content of several draft resolutions, some of them passed, some not. A more elaborate draft on principles of the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict was recommended to the WAC Executive for the development of a WAC accord on this crucial issue. Also, a new WAC-IC on “Archaeology in Conflict” is planned to take place in Beirut in 2014 and to focus on armed conflict and cultural heritage in urban areas thereby offering less academic papers but more field trips and discussions.

For sure, the difficult and challenging topic of archaeology and cultural heritage in armed conflict will keep the WAC community entangled the upcoming years. I hope that this issue of “Archaeologies” may contribute to a vital, balanced and fruitful debate allowing the members of the scientific community to deliver their genuine perspectives from most diverse standpoints.