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Our journal is completing the first decade of its existence and we are pleased by its growing international impact. In this volume, we bring a collection of papers addressing some socially important issues and their reflection in archaeology.

In the current days, some turbulent movements occurred in Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization. Such catastrophic news makes us very concerned.

The Crime in Mesopotamia

The huge stone statues of winged bulls with human heads at the gates of Assyrian palaces are among the most iconic symbols of ancient Mesopotamia. They were meant as protective spirits. They protected the land between Euphrates and Tigris almost for three millennia but now they were beaten by the evil spirit of ISIL (ISIS). The statues have guarded the gates of Nineveh near present-day Mosul since the palace was built in the 7th century BC. They stood during the glory and fall of the Assyrian empire and survived in their original location even when excavated in the 1840s and when many of its treasures were carried off to Britain and America. On Thursday, 26th of February 2015, they fell to men with a power drill and a mission to erase every trace of Iraq's pre-Islamic history. Shortly after the capture of Mosul in June 2014, ISIS started systematic and spectacular demolitions of the city's architectural and cultural heritage as a part of the ideological war against Iraq's integrity, historical memory and civilization. The civilian citizens of Mosul have several times peacefully opposed this vandalism and often successfully. The so-called Caliphate's policy is to destroy the large monuments in the most theatrical way and show off their crimes on social networks, while the smaller portable artefacts they hypocritically sell abroad, mainly to dealers and immoral collectors in Western Europe and America. The powerless feeling amongst the global archaeological community is devastating. To many of us, who believe in decolonizing principles, it raises a painful question: why are these monuments safer in museum collections in London, Paris or Berlin, where they

were shifted during the colonial time than in the land of their origin? But what can we expect from regimes like those represented by Pol-Pot's Khmer Rouge, Taliban or most recently the ISIS? These beasts do not value human lives of innocent civilians so how can we hope them to respect the heritage of ancient civilizations. We all need to stand firmly against such atrocities and eradicate the evil fanaticism.

The Contents

Much more pleasant duty is to introduce Claire Smith's paper: "Global divides and Cultural diversity: Challenges for the World Archaeological Congress". Professor Claire Smith (currently Head of the Department of Archaeology at Flinders University) was twice-elected President of the World Archaeological Congress (2003–2014). Her influence on the WAC structure, activity and world-wide impact was enormous. This is no surprise for those who know Claire personally. She was always enthusiastic, very determined and almost hyperactive. During presidency, she took truly global responsibility and spent most of the time travelling in many different places round the World, consulting and trying to understand various needs of different archaeological communities. Claire Smith has built global research capacity through establishing the *Archaeologists without Borders* and *Global Libraries Programs*. She was decisively supporting the establishment of *Archaeologies*, which is currently well impacted journal of world archaeology. Claire also initiated five new international book series. We remember her powerful commitment to WAC while organizing the last Dead Sea congress. She almost moved over to Jordan to make sure that the WAC-7 global meeting will be success. And it was, mainly thanks to Claire. Thanks to her determination was the WAC-7 organized in region that seemed politically and logistically difficult and many people did not believe that it is possible to organize such a large meeting in the Middle East. This was also the first archaeological congress fully streamed life on internet.

In 2003 has Claire, as the new WAC President, published her vision for the World Archaeological Congress in *Antiquity*. Now, 12 years later, we have the honour to publish her reflection of her time in office, as well as, her further vision for the WAC and whole global archaeological community. Currently, there are perhaps more challenges to the global archaeology than ever, so we welcome Claire's most recent view (Figure 1).

Further papers are also discussing socially important issues, such as Kathleen Sterling's article that describes how the Black feminist theory may be used to address the socio-political dimension of archaeological practice and possibilities of its application in the research of prehistoric periods. Sam Holley-Kline presents critiques of the locally-oriented archaeology and

Figure 1. Claire Smith, President of the World Archaeological Congress (2003–2014)

develops a case study based on the Mexican archaeological site of El Tajín. Paulette. F. Steeves argues that the first people to enter the Western Hemisphere and their descendants are indigenous to this part of the World and she argues that there is an abundant evidence for much earlier migrations even though it is ignored by colonially constructed histories. She is warning that the discussions diminishing an ancient Indigenous presence in the Western Hemisphere rupture contemporary people's connections to their ancestral past.

Let us hope 2015, the Japanese year of sheep (*hitsuji*) will bring us better news and peace.

Note

1. An International research initiative aimed to collect all available documentation of Mosul's architectural heritage was established by scholars who used to work in the region: "Monuments of Mosul in Danger" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/858813217464395/> or contact: mosulprotection@gmail.com.