



Crumbling UNESCO and Aggregating Archaeology

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Genocide in Amazonia

It is hard to believe that even now in the 21st century the genocide of indigenous people may be possible anywhere in the World. But the shocking truth is that such atrocities are happening right now in Amazonia. Public prosecutors in Brazil have opened an investigation after reports that illegal gold miners in a remote area of the Amazon River have massacred over ten members of a yet-uncontacted indigenous tribe. This is already the fifth tribe recently entirely wiped out from the area! The killings took place this August along the River Jandiatuba in western Brazil. The gold miners were boasting about their “bravery” and showing off “war trophies” in the nearby town. Women and children were also among the dead. The territories of two other vulnerable uncontacted tribes—the Kawahiva and Piripkura—have also reportedly recently been invaded by hundreds of gold miners, ranchers and loggers.

The process of genocide of indigenous peoples in Brazil began with the Portuguese colonisation in 1500. This process, however, continues up to the present day. Over eighty indigenous tribes were destroyed between 1900 and 1957, and the overall indigenous population declined by over eighty per cent, from over one million to around two hundred thousand (Hinton 2002, 57). The 1988 Brazilian Constitution recognises indigenous peoples’ right to pursue their traditional ways of life and to the permanent and exclusive possession of their “traditional lands”, which are demarcated as Indigenous Territories (*Federal Constitution of Brazil: Chapter VII Article 231*). In fact Brazil’s indigenous people still face a number of external threats to their continued existence and cultural heritage (*United States Department of State: Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. 25 February 2009. Retrieved 24 March 2011*).

Two of the Jandiatuba murderers have been arrested, and we believe the Brazilian authorities should make their case exemplary and so substantially strengthen the legal protection of the rights of indigenous peoples of Amazonia.

Destruction of Canaanite Site in Gaza

Tel Es-Sakan in the Gaza strip, the largest Canaanite city between Palestine and Egypt, is currently being destroyed by the decision of Hamas local authorities. The earliest occupation level of this site dates back to the 4th Millennium BC. The tell site originally covered an area of 10 hectares. Palestinian archaeologist professor Mouin Sadeq excavated the site in cooperation with Pierre de Miroschedji after its accidental discovery in 1998. However, the excavations stopped in 2002 due to security concerns. Since then it is being gradually quarried away. Gaza's Hamas rulers are systematically destroying the site since they came to power a decade ago, flattening the site due to construction of a military base. This is not an act of iconoclasm: Hamas has not deliberately destroyed antiquities for ideological reasons. But with little open space in Gaza, a fast-growing population and an economy affected by Israeli and Egyptian blockades, Hamas officials say they have no choice but to develop the area, making archaeology a low priority. Junaid Sorosh-Wali, a UNESCO officer, inspected the damage at the site after the bulldozers left and described the situation as "disastrous for the archaeology and cultural heritage in Palestine". UNESCO had raised concerns with "the relevant authorities", but it is very unlikely that such a pressure would have any effect on Hamas.

UNESCO Crumbling

UNESCO weakened dramatically when on 12 October 2017 the USA notified UNESCO that it will again withdraw from the organisation on 31 December 2018 and will seek to establish a permanent observer mission beginning in 2019. The US Department of State cited "mounting arrears at UNESCO, the need for fundamental reform in the organisation, and continuing anti-Israel bias at UNESCO." The Israeli government announced their withdrawal on the same day as USA.

After 15 years of membership, the USA is leaving UNESCO for a second time in its history. The first US boycott (1984–2002) was mainly the result of Cold War and political rivalry with the Soviet Union and its satellites.

This time, it is the result of a series of politically misbalanced decisions and resolutions that we have already criticised in some previous volumes of *Archaeologies*. We condemn this unfortunate development. This should be a lesson to all states involved in UNESCO that this organisation is not an arena for political games and performances but a very important organ that was established for protection of World heritage regardless of national, racial or religious issues and particular political interests. This crumbling

of the original idea and purpose of UNESCO must stop. It is, after all, the only UNESCO we have.

First Indigenous Australian PhD

Fortunately, there is also some positive news such as the announcement that the Flinders University Senior Lecturer Christopher Wilson has become the first Indigenous Australian to graduate with a PhD in archaeology. Dr Wilson, a Ngarrindjeri man, has developed new archaeological evidence of Ngarrindjeri occupation in South Australia's Lower Murray region. He graduated at Flinders University at Bedford Park, Adelaide, on 20 September 2017.

Congratulation Chris!

We can only wish what Claire Smith said: "We hope that many more follow him".

Archaeologists of the World Unite!

Representatives of major archaeological associations from across the world came together at the annual meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) in Maastricht in September to address the issue of 'making archaeology political again'. Bodies represented comprised the Society for American Archaeology, the Archaeological Institute of America, the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, the Society of Roman Archaeology, the Society of Medieval Archaeology, Europa Nostra, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, the American Cultural Resources Association, the Australian Archaeological Association and of course the World Archaeological Congress and the EAA. The theme of the meeting reflects one of the key concerns of this journal since its foundation and of course of our parent organisation, the World Archaeological Congress. No formal agreements were reached but the aim of closer collaboration between the archaeological communities of the world reflects Resolution 11 passed at WAC-8 (and included in our last issue: *Archaeologies* 13(2), 375–377) and the democratic and progressive agendas to which we subscribe.

Our one small qualm concerns the form that this meeting took: that of a closed 'President's lunch' which is perhaps less democratic than its aim. In response, we commend the purpose of the meeting and the commitment to international collaboration it represents, but would ask that as discussions and actions progress there is a wider consultation which involves not just those holding official roles in organisations but also the wider membership of the global archaeological community they represent.

This Issue

This issue offers six substantive papers on a wide range of topics, all of which concern different aspects of the politics of archaeology, some more directly, others perhaps more obliquely, but all are reflecting the inevitability of archaeology as a politicised field of activity in various ways. The papers each derive from the experience of different parts of the globe, covering every inhabited continent but one, reflecting WAC's and this journal's global reach and concern. Despite this wide geographical diversity, however, and the diversity of topic, each nonetheless has something to teach all of us wherever we are located and in whatever branch of archaeology we work.

We are especially pleased and proud to be publishing the text of the Peter Ucko Memorial Lecture given at WAC-8 in Kyoto last year by Professor Peter Schmidt. The paper addresses issues of direct concern to WAC and this journal by a consideration of what is required to decolonise archaeological practice, drawing especially upon his long experience of working with African colleagues and communities. The paper emphasises the need for long-term engagement with others and to develop what he calls 'archaeologies of listening' which privilege voices other than our own in the research and heritage management process. These are linked to the WAC Code of Practice and the wider aims of WAC as an organisation and our discipline as a global endeavour.

Nicolas Zorzin and Christian Gates St-Pierre write on the context of francophone archaeology within a predominately anglophone Canada and the adoption (or imposition) of a predominately anglophone system of heritage management. The paper offers insights of wide impact for us all. Issues concerning the role of archaeology and who should take responsibility for its conduct—a public sector with strong powers or private contractors acting as clients of commercial developers—are widely debated across the globe, including at meetings of WAC and the EAA where exponents of both schemes meet and (sometimes) clash. The experience of territories where one ideal is adhered to but a different practice is put in operation can enlighten us all as to our underlying assumptions about how the world works and should work.

Leila Papoli Yazdi and Arman Masoudi take us to a third area of the globe where archaeology is highly contested but in different ways. They consider how the creation of multiple and rival nation states in the Middle East to replace the former single imperial rule has impacted upon the uses made of archaeological sites and how this in turn is today increasingly challenged by trans- and counter-national groups which has further consequences for the archaeological resource, including its destruction. The

paper serves to emphasise what we all know about current threats to the remains of the past by placing it in the deeper historical context which we sometimes forget. It also points out that any use of the past has consequences for archaeology: there is no 'neutral' approach to the past even in efforts to preserve it.

We stay in the Middle East and the uses of sites with Fakrieh Darabseh, Abdelkader Ababneh and Furat Almuhasan's consideration of the tourism potential of the site of Umm El-Jimal in Jordan. The focus—reflecting themes in the papers of Zorzin and St-Pierre and Papoli and Masoudi—is especially upon the institutional context for touristic development and the manner in which the site is presented as a result of the interaction of the various players involved. The authors emphasise the paucity of resources available for development of the site—a problem common across many parts of the globe—but also emphasise the lack of cooperation between actors and involvement of the local community that can 'unlock' values so far unrecognised.

It is a leap of distance and period to Hyeong Woo Lee's consideration of Korean palaeolithic handaxes and yet the theme of 'politics' finds its place here too and a link to the broader aims of WAC as a contemporary force. In a previous issue (*Archaeologies* 12(3), 304–339) Hae Woon Park and Kaya Wee sought to distinguish Korean historical periodization from those imposed deriving from Western models. This paper takes a similar line by emphasising the difference of Korean stone tools from those elsewhere to challenge ideas about the trajectory of knowledge transmission in the deep past. Korea emerges as a land with its own deep past of local development which challenges the imposition of models of culture change derived from Western models.

Lastly, but not least, we travel to Europe where co-editor of this journal Jan Turek considers aspects of early war-making by a focus especially on objects that take on the shape of weapons but which are unserviceable as such. The role of archaeology in challenging common assumptions about the universality of violence and its origins in human DNA is increasingly important, and here Turek confirms the relatively late arrival of war on the human scene and the slow development of tools that are limited in use to hurting other humans. He goes on to emphasise the continuing role of weapon-like symbols of status in our own societies, raising questions about our own attitudes to conflict and power.

Reference

Hinton, A. L.

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