Challenges: Arrivals, Departures, Destruction, Debate

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If the world had not faced the challenge of the Covid-19 virus, this issue of *Archaeologies* would have been celebrating and reflecting upon the ninth World Archaeological Congress, due to be held in Prague, Czech Republic. Instead we must await that deferred pleasure in 2021. But meantime we have a cause for celebration in the appointment of a new Editor for the journal, and a cause for valediction as we say goodbye and thank you to an outgoing Editor.

Goodbye and Gratitude

After several years working on the journal, we say a sad goodbye to Jan Turek as co-Editor. Jan is a prehistorian based in the Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, and he stands down especially to concentrate on preparations for WAC-9 for which he is Organising Secretary. He also has an article in this issue of *Archaeologies*.

John Carman (continuing co-Editor) writes:

I am very sorry to see Jan leave the journal, although he well deserves a break from it to focus on other responsibilities, not least WAC-9. As a colleague and friend he has taught me a lot and provided inestimable support as I grappled on first appointment with the complexities of balancing journal editorship with other academic duties: I hope I can maintain the same level of skill and offer the same amount of support to Jan's replacement on the team; I shall certainly try! I am very pleased indeed that Jan has agreed to remain with us as a member of the Editorial Board, to which he will be a valuable addition, and as reviewer, and I look forward to continue working with him in those roles.

Jan Turek, outgoing co-Editor, writes:

Dear readers, it has been exciting 8 years of my life being co-editor of *Archaeologies*. Working for the journal became part of my everyday life, wherever I was. Writing editorials while living and excavating in the Sudanese desert or recently editing from the Bohemian Forrest mountain cottage while hiding with my family from the Covid-19 pandemic.

When I started my work after the Dead Sea WAC-7 in 2013 the world had just recovered from the financial crisis and the future seemed bright. Soon after that Islamic State (Daesh) started terrorizing the Middle East, destroying people's lives and heritage. *Archaeologies* focussed on the dramatic issues of the Aleppo and Palmyra destruction and helped to mediate the discussion of archaeologists worldwide on the painful subject of iconoclasm and world heritage protection. Then Donald Trump came into the White house and world politics got even more complicated. UNESCO started crumbling, being toothless in the protection of world heritage. Even during this uneasy time *Archaeologies* managed to publish papers emphasizing archaeology as part of social justice and human rights.

Most recently the invisible enemy of the Coronavirus pandemic affected the lives of all of us and yet again we had to say good bye to the old world and face the challenges of a new way of communication and social contact. But as many times before in history, humankind found the new paths even our global community will settle in the new social and climatic environment.

It was an honour to work with our authors and reviewers and mainly to work for you, our readers. I am happy to leave *Archaeologies* as a journal in good shape and with growing global impact. I wish John and Kathy all the best in continuing to work for the journal and the global reader community. As a goodbye toast, please find my Beer piece in this volume. Cheers!

WAC-9 was postponed to 2021 and I will be looking forward to welcome you all in Prague to celebrate the opportunity to meet again within our global archaeological community.

So instead of saying good bye, I say see you soon!

Yours Sincerely

Jan Turek

Meet the New Co-editor

Professor Kathryn Weedman Arthur is Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, USA.

She writes of herself:

I am excited to become part of the *Archaeologies* team. As co-editor, I hope to rely on my life and work experiences that have taught me the importance of learning through listening and opening one's heart to diverse ways of perceiving the past and the present. I began my academic career as an ethnoarchaeologist focused on stone tool technology in southern Ethiopia and co-founded and co-edited the journal *Ethnoarchaeology*. My early publications reflected the perspectives of many of my contemporaries in that I observed practices and behaviours within living communities to test Western archaeological theories and academic approaches. I was deeply unsatisfied with this approach and decided to join the growing agendas of community archaeologists and shift my future research to focus on heritage issues of importance to the Ethiopian communities I worked with. Upon reflection, it was really my experience of working closely with people in the Gamo highlands of Ethiopia that served as my primary re-ed-

ucation. They encouraged me to listen and position myself as a cultural apprentice rather than as an expert. Gamo elders taught me “bit by bit” conveying knowledge to me through experiential learning and story-telling that was appropriate for my stage in life. In doing so, I learned that by universalizing experiences and other ways of being in the world, we lose the context and realities in which practices and technologies actually exist, and we lose the capacity to learn and grow our knowledge of the world. I was taught how Gamo leatherworkers weave “Lucy” (*Australopithicus afarensis*) and her deep history into their historical narratives as their ancestor who was the first person adorned with clothing made from wild animal hides. Many Gamo elders also educated me about the importance of caves and subsequently gave me and my team permission to seclude ourselves (enter), birth (excavate), and foster the growth and education (analyze) of the beings (artifacts) recovered from these wombs in the earth (caves). Gamo elders’ knowledge of these caves led to the delivery of a 4500 year-old skeleton, Bayira (first, senior, oldest), who provided the first ancient complete African genetic sequence. More importantly though the study bolstered evidence for the living community’s long-term habitation of the Gamo highlands and is celebrated with songs dedicated to Bayira. I believe that the future of archaeology depends on our ability to ensure an ethical practice—one that it is relevant to the diverse array of those whose hearts and minds are entangled with the hallowed grounds through which we narrate history.

And Staying on...

... is Dr. John Carman

John is Senior Lecturer in Heritage Valuation in the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage of the University of Birmingham, UK, with particular interests in archaeological heritage management especially issues of value and ownership. He also—with his partner Patricia Carman—investigates historic battlefields as particular kinds of landscape. John has enjoyed the role of co-Editor of *Archaeologies* since 2016 and has occasionally published with the journal. He is keen to encourage junior scholars to publish with the journal as well as those from less well represented areas of the world. He regrets being thwarted from attending WAC-9 in 2020 by the outbreak of Covid-19 and is making plans for the revised dates in 2021, where he looks forward to meeting old friends and making new ones. He very much looks forward to working with Kathy in her new role.

Some Current Issues

The world has been deeply affected by the outbreak of Covid-19 which began in China in late 2019. In particular, it has meant the deferment of WAC-9 to 2021 and the cancellation of other meetings across the world; others yet have converted themselves to ‘virtual’ meetings conducted entirely online. It has been interesting to see occasional debates on the merits of virtual conferencing over the more conventional ‘live’ form. The arguments for virtual conferences are to do with lower costs of attendance, encouraging wider diversity in attendance, the ability to revisit presentations, while maintaining contact in discussion. The arguments against, apart from those of technological issues, focus less on the formal components of conferences—formal presentations, plenaries, etc.—and much more on the informal aspects: the opportunity to travel to interesting places, the chance to catch up with old friends and to meet new people in person, and to talk informally over drinks or food especially in the conference bar. It is likely the experience of coping with Covid-19 will add fuel to these debates on both sides of the argument.

In some countries, the impact of Covid-19 has been very severe on archaeology and heritage more broadly. As construction work in many countries stopped to prevent the spread, so did opportunities for archaeologists to investigate sites that became revealed. As all kinds of public facilities—including museums and heritage sites—were closed, so those who were employed in them have lost employment and income. In the UK (John’s home territory), planned lifting of restrictions on development projects—designed to encourage construction work and infrastructure development to offset the negative effects of the response to Covid-19 on the

economy—is likely to impact further on archaeology to its detriment since archaeology is so often held to be a frustration to building: we can expect an increase in construction projects but not the attendant rise in archaeological opportunity that up to now has been its accompaniment. The same may apply in other territories.

Meantime, in various parts of the world, Indigenous communities continue to be affected by the processes of destruction.

Amazon Basin

The wildfires that continue to ravage the Amazon rainforest affect not only the flora and fauna of the region and reduce biodiversity by its destructive effects, but also and especially the Indigenous and other communities to whom the rainforest is home. The fires are one more destructive oppression on these communities who have been regularly subject to violent invasions and dispossession, deliberate destruction of their habitat, and now also by the spread of Covid-19. WAC has issued a statement affirming support for the subaltern communities of the region and calling on the national governments of the region to recognise and act upon the human rights attaching to affected communities and to strive to halt the damaging fires. The WAC statement is available at <https://worldarch.org/blog/wac-statement-on-the-on-going-wildfires-and-the-destruction-of-the-indigenous-homelands-and-the-quilombola-communities-of-the-amazonian-basin/>.

Australia

The destruction by Rio Tinto Zinc of Juukan Gorge sites in the Pilbara, Western Australia, despite the pleas of the Indigenous Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura people to whom they have great cultural importance, and the presence of significant archaeological remains, has been widely condemned. The destruction was possible despite the existence of legislation designed to protect such places because permission to mine was longstanding and the letter of the law was followed. Rio Tinto has a longstanding commitment to good heritage practice grounded in law and relations with relevant bodies, including WAC. The destruction reveals the need for all those concerned with heritage to go beyond a reliance on mere compliance with rules and to constantly update and develop practice to ensure the highest standards of ethical behaviour. WAC has called upon Rio Tinto and other organisations to review heritage management frameworks regularly and especially to work with Indigenous communities and traditional owners to achieve this; to avoid damage to and actively preserve sites of significance; and to publish widely the results of heritage manage-

ment reports sponsored by them. The full text of the WAC statement can be seen at <https://worldarch.org/blog/statement-on-the-destruction-of-juukan-gorge-indigenous-site-of-western-australia/>.

Guatemala

The site of Mirador (meaning ‘lookout’ or ‘viewpoint’) in Guatemala, a large mountain-top pre-Columbian Maya settlement, faces the threat of being transformed into a tourist site including removal of the local Indigenous Maya population to nearby urban development where they can gain employment in the hospitality industry, abandoning their traditional role as sustainable managers of the abundant timber resources of the area. Opposition to the plans are mounted by the local Indigenous, by Guatemalan archaeologists and by others who are concerned that the plans to develop the site are in opposition to sustainable models of development which—far from requiring the removal of people from the vicinity of such sites to allow preservation—actively engage locals in plans to serve the interests of the site, of local economic development and their own way of life. We hope the counsels of these more enlightened views will prevail as a model to others.

USA

In January, President Donald Trump of the USA issued a twitter statement (subsequently withdrawn) threatening US military attacks on sites of cultural significance in Iran. The USA—as a State Party to the 1954 Hague Convention on Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict—is bound by international law to avoid undertaking such action and Trump’s threat if carried out would have put the USA in breach of that law. It would also have raised concerns about the human rights implications of such action. While Trump is recognised for his intemperate statements especially via twitter which very often result in their later abrogation, the fact that the head of state one of the world’s leading democracies and a country that was instrumental in the founding of bodies such as the United Nations and UNESCO, dedicated to maintaining peace and order and which lay down the standards for ethical behaviour in the international arena, can make such statements serves to indicate the fragility of the standards by which we try to live. The WAC statement on this is available at <https://worldarch.org/blog/wac-statement-on-us-president-mr-donald-trumps-twitter-statement-on-threatening-to-attack-irans-cultural-sites/>.

More recently, a dispute has arisen involving the University of California (UC), the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) and the Indigenous Archaeology Collective (IAC) over a policy decision of the University regarding repatriation to Indigenous communities of cultural objects. The SAA has challenged the UC policy as being too vague as to its coverage and the potential threat to scholarly investigation of the deep (especially pre-European) past of California. It also objects to the apparent exclusion of scholars—including archaeologists—from the decision-making process regarding objects considered for repatriation and thereby potential loss to scholarship. The IAC in response has challenged the SAA on ethical grounds in relation to the treatment of Indigenous peoples and has asked for the SAA challenge to UC to be withdrawn. This issue, of competing interests and competing ethical requirements, is one we have seen before and is indeed one of issues that led to the founding of WAC in 1986. While the commitment of the SAA to Indigenous rights and to the repatriation of material—indeed SAA members were instrumental in support for the NAGPRA legislation of 1990 whereby Indigenous communities were granted rights over material from burial contexts—the organisation also has a concern for the continuing ability of archaeologists to study the past. It is unlikely this issue will be resolved before this issue goes to press, and we are sure it will re-emerge periodically as we struggle with the complexities of behaving ethically towards all those with an interest in studying the material past. What this dispute does illustrate is the difficulties of doing so, difficulties that are not to be shirked or avoided but taken by us all as necessary components of our daily work.

In This Issue

We offer ten articles on different topics and from widely divergent areas of the globe. From North America come a study of social deprivation from the analysis of bones; and using archaeology as part of a community project. From China come a discussion of archaeology as politics; and a consideration of the outcomes of reconstructing an ancient temple. From Latin America come a study of Indigenous housing; and assessing the archaeological potential of coastal areas. From Western Asia comes a study of newly discovered petroglyphs and from South Asia comes a study of an early iron smelting site. From south western Europe comes a study of art of writing archaeology; and from central Europe a study of beer drinking. The articles range in focus from the findings from individual sites to discussions of archaeological practice to topics closely connected to the politics of the discipline. Topics address particular types of object—large and small—, the past societies they inform us of, and the communities in the

present with whom archaeologists engage and how we should do that, whether Indigenous or local or indeed ourselves as a distinct professional grouping. They are written by new entrants to the field, those early in their career, and those more senior and experienced. Collectively they represent what we aim to achieve in the journal: global coverage, a forum for all aspects of archaeological work and opportunities to publish by colleagues at all stages of their career. In the light of the last, you may note that it is not always the official lead author who is shown on our front cover: those named on the cover are, however, those named as corresponding author, and we think it fair that those who undertook the bulk of the work to see an article into print should be given some credit.

We commend the articles to you.

The Editors

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