

TEA

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Editorial

Dear EAA members, dear European Archaeologists, of course you would expect *The European Archaeologist* to be as European as possible. However, this issue of TEA is so European that it surprises even me. The **Debate** section in particular sees poignant statements that reveal a deep concern with Europe and its archaeology. Martin Rundkvist bluntly states: 'The thinking habits of North-western and Eastern European archaeologists are very different'. Is this true, despite the fact that the EAA for almost twenty years provides a forum for exchanging new data and communicating existing paradigms, and that also a number of conferences have debated 'Archaeologies East – Archaeologies West'? Rundkvist claims that much of archaeology in Eastern Europe is following the essentialist paradigm many 'Westerners' have abandoned due to the critical post-processual or generally theoretical debates. Is there a new East-West split in archaeological thought?

The **Conference Report** on a meeting in Russia that brought together young archaeologists from Eastern Europe may add fuel to the fire. It claims the unity of the former Soviet states, now loosely connected in the 'Commonwealth of Independent States' (CIS), and the author Vlasta E. Rodinkova expresses the wish that such a conference should 'form a common scientific and partly *ideological* field' for young CIS archaeologists. Obviously there is more than *one* European archaeology, and we should be aware of different traditions and trends, beyond the Western critical approaches.

Also Felipe Criado-Boado in his **Debate** paper emphasises this way of critical thinking. He reminds us that the critical debates that we, i.e. Western archaeology, intensified in the last two or three decades enable us to be more self-aware and reflexive than traditional archaeology was: archaeology 'has never had the ability to be so transparent, or to be so un-naïve' as it has today, he says. And he reminds us that archaeology has started to play new, non-nationalist roles: 'from the 1990s onwards it became part of a project for a new Europe conceived as a hyper-nation. At the same time, it was part of a cultural critique to open the way for emancipatory demands, including the construction of a post-nationalist Europe'. However, Criado-Boado sees a pressing need to reconsider the construction of Europe and archaeology's role due to the heavy crisis, which is not only a financial crisis.

Another conference, one dealing with two very particular types of monuments, is also able to reveal different attitudes towards 'Europe'. While Sardinian *Nuraghi* and Scottish *Brochs* are juxtaposed in Brian Smith's **Conference Report**, it becomes clear that we can compare different European regions and histories without writing a 'Europeanist' history that deems apparently similar phenomena such as Metal Age stone buildings as an example of 'European' 'unity in diversity.' Rather, the conference obviously is an example how to write histories of Europe (rather than European history) through diversity.

However, even the concept of diversity is not an easy solution. Would we include the Ottoman Empire as a component of 'Medieval Europe', or would we consider the Balkans to be beyond 'Europe'? These are questions posed and discussed during a session at this year's EAA meeting in Helsinki – see the **Session Report** by Søren Sindbæk and Sam Nixon.

Other topics that re-emerge every now and then are metal-detecting and how to turn it into a somehow useful practice as well as the engagement with voluntary and hobbyist uses of heritage (Suzie Thomas' conference report), publishing in archaeology (**Report** by Emese Sarkadi Nagy, **Debate** paper by C. Stephen Briggs, and **Session Report** by Robin Skeates and Estella Weiss-Krejci). And this issue contains a remarkable number of Session Reports and Announcements concerned with our heritage under water (s. Riikka Alvik and Elena Pranckenaite; Björn Nilsson; SPLASHCOS conference announcement).

Finally, let me remind you that the 2013 EAA Meeting will take place from 4 – 8 September in Pilsen. The deadline for session proposals is 15 November! The Deadline for articles and announcements for the TEA 39 summer issue is 15 April 2013. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Alexander Gramsch

Conference Report

Gardening Time. Reflections on Memory, Monuments and History in Sardinia and Scotland

Brian Smith, Shetland Museum and Archives, UK (brian@shetland-archives.org.uk)

A second annual conference on the Iron Age (conceived in the broadest terms) was held in Magdalene College, Cambridge between 21 and 23 September 2012, linking two regions – Sardinia and Scotland – and a theme – monuments and memory. A report on the first conference can be found in TEA no. 36. Here Brian Smith reports from the Northern Isles on this year's event.

Simon Stoddart, organizer of the recent conference at Magdalene College about Scottish brochs and Sardinian nuraghi, met me at the door. He said: 'There won't be any hyperdiffusionism!' I didn't need the assurance, because Joseph Anderson showed in 1874 that there was no connection between the striking structures, respectively from the Iron and Bronze Ages of their homelands. Few have argued since that they were relatives. It is not strictly true, as Euan MacKie averred at one point during the weekend, that there is no *resemblance* between nuraghi and brochs; but the societies where they flourished (we learned) could not have been more different and separate.



Some speakers dealt with the key conference theme – memory (and its cryptic title, 'Gardening Time') more than others. Often it seemed irrelevant. Paola Filippucci, in an impressive paper, warned that scholars are getting fed up with the concept, just as some of us are getting bored with 'identity'.

The conference comprised 37 papers. The Sardinian delegation, passionate about their monuments (there are 7,000 to 10,000 of them, an incidence which sounds impossible) was full of information about them. Nuraghi came on the scene in the 17th century before Christ,

and could be simple or (very) complex: 'instruments of widespread territorial control' in their original incarnation, and cult sites later. Nuraghi became icons. Their inhabitants, unlike the broch-builders, made models of them, and filled them with interesting artefacts; their modern successors commemorate them in masquerade, sometimes far from home.

A consensus emerged that brochs were duller. Tanja Romankiewicz, expounding recent work carried out with Ian Ralston, poured cold water on Alex Curle's notion of 1920, popular at the present day, that they were full of timber. (That was satisfying to those of us who are tired of seeing Historic Scotland's reconstructions of brochs as medieval castles, with drapes and cushions.) She argued that brochs were the focus of small-scale, self-sufficient communities, and involved 'construction by trial-and-error'.

Graeme Cavers described excavations in Caithness where broch foundations have been found to date from 400-200 BC, but where broch-development has turned out to be far more complex and 'plastic', indeed 'malleable', than expected. He hinted that the 'political geography' of Broch society should be rewritten. I have an impression that this Caithness work, so far largely unpublished (cf. *History Scotland* 12, 2012), will be very important.

The contents of the nuraghi were more impressive than those in brochs, too. Someone who championed the broch-artefacts received a cutting riposte that 'It doesn't matter how many words you throw at it [broch-pottery], it doesn't make it any richer!' The contrasts that emerged were fascinating, but (given the lack of prior contact between the participants) there were few attempts to discuss them. I got a clearer impression of *Nuraghi* society than I got of the corresponding broch one, not least from a luminous paper by Alessandro Usai, mainly because the Scots seem to have given up any attempt to explain what was going on in northern Scotland in the Iron Age, except in the most general terms. History with the politics left out ...



Photograph of some of the participants at the 'Gardening Time' conference.

The conference ranged far and wide in space and time, from Malta to the Hebrides. I didn't mind that, because 37 treatments of the enigmatic structures might have become wearisome. Hannah Malone spoke fluently about the Bonaria graveyard at Cagliari and its history during the 19th century; Megan Meredith-Lobay drew on the late Raphael Samuel's

Theatres of Memory (1996) to explore early Christian churches in Argyll. Niall Sharples built on his article in the *Journal of Iberian Studies*, 2006, to discuss alleged relationships between broch denizens and their (alleged) Neolithic ancestors. And there was a gurgling account of cauldrons found in lochs and pits in the south of Scotland and Wiltshire, by Jody Joy.

I am pleased to say that there was an absence of critical theory. One speaker announced that 'The Body' couldn't be omitted from a study of nuraghi, but mercifully didn't elaborate. A contributor from the floor, flying to the opposite extreme, speculated that the buildings themselves might have been 'agents', a direction which even Althusser did not take. The rest of the weekend was refreshingly concrete.

We heard touching tributes to recently deceased scholars: Anna DePalmas on Giovanni Lilliu (1914-2012) and Mark Pearce on David Ridgway (1938-2012). The account of Lilliu's career, in particular, gave rise to an interesting discussion about how Sardinians revere their ancient history, and how Scots are much more interested in their middle ages.

I wonder, looking back, if the juxtaposition of nuraghi and brochs worked. We learned much about each kind of structure, but there was next-to-no speculation about how one might help us to understand the other. Such an attempt would not have had anything to do with hyperdiffusionism! I found myself wondering, if an invitation to experts on Spanish motillas, a structure far more like brochs than nuraghi (Concepción Martín, et al., 'The Bronze Age of La Mancha', *Antiquity*, 67, 1993), might have led to more probing questions about how the different societies differed from or resembled each other.

Simon Stoddart and Isabelle Vella Gregory deserve praise for organizing a conference that was quirky and exciting. The next in the series is about frontiers, at Magdalene next year, from 20 to 22 September 2013.

The organizers of the conference would like to thank the ACE Foundation, the Fondazione Banco di Sardegna and the McDonald Institute Cambridge for their support. Details of the conference will be archived at http://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/iron_age/2012/, and details of the next conference on Frontiers in the Iron Age can be found at http://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/iron_age/2013/.

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