

EAC 25th Annual Meeting and Heritage Management Symposium

21-23 March 2024, Brussels, Belgium

CONCEPT NOTE

'Urban Archaeology and the Cities of Tomorrow'

Urban archaeology presents management and research challenges very different from those of rural locations or investigations associated with linear infrastructure. The sites are almost by definition historical as well as archaeological; there are often very complex logistical challenges in excavation; land costs are high and pressure to complete work quickly is common; it is frequently impossible to use aerial mapping or geophysics; and the potential of preservation of remains in situ can make a land development economically unviable. But the prizes to be won are marvellous, since despite basements and modern developments, deep stratigraphy within our towns and cities can protect extraordinarily well-preserved buildings, public spaces, religious sites, streets, cemeteries, gardens, and all the artefacts that go with them.

This symposium will examine how we might develop our approaches to urban archaeology to the benefit of all. The papers will explore the challenges of managing archaeological projects in the urban environment; but also the potential of urban archaeology to contribute to the 'Cities of Tomorrow'. We will examine how the rich archaeological heritage of our cities can influence their development in positive ways, and the role of heritage management in enabling the benefits of urban archaeology to be fully realised. In exploring these themes, it will present the work of three of EAC's working groups which are being published in time for the event.

Theme 1: What Matters

Significance is at the core of management of urban archaeological resource. Since urban centres are multi-dimensional (with complexity in time and space), frequently with very deep stratigraphy and with often high land values and thus significant constraints on management choices, establishing significance and linking that to strategies for change management is crucial. This session will look at questions of defining significance in an urban setting, the tools available for managing urban archaeology, and case studies of protection and display. The papers will not simply be descriptive but will demonstrate where making choices can influence positive outcomes, and help shape the urban landscapes of the future.

Theme 2: Asking the Right Question

How do we keep on top of all of what we know from urban archaeology? Archaeology, historical records, maps, plans and photographs form a huge resource for understanding towns and cities, but money and time are not limitless and key decisions need to be made to permit focus and prioritisation to get the best out of each investigation. Research frameworks can be a key tool in collating, focusing and revising the key questions, linking the research design for each investigation to the wider research opportunities identified from work undertaken before. The papers will present urban examples which show the potential of focused work and how it can advance research agendas, and thus support future heritage management decision-making.

Theme 3: Delivering the Goods

By definition, urban archaeology takes place in the busiest and most populated areas of any state. Large numbers of residents and workers are involuntary neighbours to new construction sites, but also coincidental witnesses to the discoveries that take place under their feet. The public benefits of archaeology lie at the core of Valletta and Faro and there are great opportunities to harness these benefits during urban archaeological investigation. But what are these and how can we capitalise upon them? How can we ensure these benefits create a positive legacy as our cities develop and change? The papers will offer examples where tangible benefits other than the enhancement of the knowledge of our past have been successfully delivered in an urban context.

THE EVENT

The [25th EAC Annual Meeting](#) will be held in Brussels, Belgium, 21-23 March 2024. The event is organised by Urban.Brussels and will be hosted at the Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels (KBR). The EAC 25th Annual Meeting and Heritage Management Symposium is organized within the framework of the [Belgian presidency](#) of the Council of the European Union during the first semester of 2024.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The symposium is dedicated to the theme '**Urban Archaeology and the Cities of Tomorrow**'. The EAC welcomes proposals which demonstrate a clear connection to one of the three themes outlined in the concept note, and which reflect the practice and theory of archaeological heritage management.

The scientific coordinators for the symposium are Dr Jeroen Bouwmeester (Senior Archaeologist, Cultural Heritage Agency, The Netherlands) and Dr Koen De Groote (Heritage Researcher in Archaeology, Flanders Heritage Agency, Belgium).

Each presentation will be 20 minutes maximum with additional time allowed for questions. The event is not hybrid, and we ask potential speakers to attend in person. The language of the symposium is English.

Proposals should be 300-400 words maximum, and should be submitted to the scientific coordinators [using this form](#), no later than **15 December 2023**. The scientific coordinators reserve the right to make a selection from the proposals submitted.

Each year, the EAC publishes the proceedings from its Heritage Symposium in two forms: a short version, published by Archaeolingua, available in hardcopy and as a digital download; and a full set of papers published digitally by Internet Archaeology. All speakers are invited to submit their papers for publication in these volumes after the symposium. Previous editions are available via the [EAC website](#).

Please contact Jenni Butterworth info@e-a-c.org with queries about the concept note and call for papers.

