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Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

Conference Review: Archaeological Reconstructions and Tourism, Mistelbach (AT)

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EXARC and Urgeschichtemuseum MAMUZ Schloss Asparn/Zaya joined forces to organise an international conference from the 25th to 27th of September 2015, held in Mistelbach, near Vienna focusing on Archaeological Reconstructions and Tourism.

MAMUZ is the new name for the already existing museum, which comprises the initials of two museums: Mistelbach, Asparn and the word Museum.

The conference “Archaeological Reconstructions and Tourism” showed, how strategic cooperation between the two apparently opposed, but still closely related areas - archaeology and tourism- can develop into a scientifically, but also economically effective collaborative project. On the other hand, there is an ever-present danger of showing a constructed idealisation of a historical epoch, which could be transmitted to the public.



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The main theme of the conference was decided upon after establishing that archaeological reconstructions in open-air museums had recently gained attention from the public, and that cultural heritage was exploring new contexts, new roles in society, and sometimes potential commercial values.

The conference included two different elements- sessions with lectures and field-trips to exhibitions and open-air museums.

The opening was on Friday, the 25th of September 2015, and began with an afternoon guided tour of the Ötzi-Exhibition at the MAMUZ Museum in Mistelbach. This was conducted by Matthias Pacher, operative manager and creator of the exhibition itself, which presents a broad expert aspect. The guide explained the background and the concept of the exhibition, which is interactive and family-oriented. Mr. Pacher also announced the next exhibition, which included exclusive

presentations and information about Stonehenge.

After the guided tour, all of the participants joined at a common dinner in the "Gasthof zur Linde" restaurant, with the reception held by the Mayor of Mistelbach.

The castle Asparn itself, presents 40,000 years of the History of Mankind. The combination of exhibited finds and the archaeological open-air space offers its visitors a broad insight into the past. The exhibition occupies a space of an estimated 1.100 m² and contains several interactive stations, showing for example the oldest bone flute, made from an animal's leg-bone (ca. 21,000 years old), the oldest ever discovered grave of a woman-smith, and an impressive grave of a Hungarian horseman. In the open space, dwelling and working areas are also presented which include the work of a stone-cutter, a bronze caster and a carpenter. The buildings are enclosed in settlements, with fields and gardens. During historical festival days, visitors are invited to camp and celebrate with Celts or Huns.

On Saturday, the 26th of September 2015, a session with lectures was held at the MAMUZ Museum in Mistelbach. There were about 40 participants, including 15 members of EXARC

present.

After the welcome speech, given by representatives of MAMUZ and the EXARC board, the conference started with a key note by **Prof. Dr. Marxiano Melotti**, Università Unicusano Roma (IT), author of "*The Plastic Venuses, Archaeological Tourism In Post-Modern Society (2011)*". His lecture was entitled "Beyond Post-Modernity Tourism and Archaeology in the Coming Age", and highlighted some examples of the brand new role of cultural heritage in modern society and its new, sometimes controversial and unexpected meanings.

The next speakers were **Dr. Sabine Ladstätter**, from the Austrian Archaeological Institute and Excavation Director of Ephesos, who demonstrated her experience with the lecture "Ephesos – A bad practice model?", and **Dr. phil. Wolfgang David M.A.**, from the Kelten Römermuseum Manching (DE), with "Zielkonflikte bei der Valorisation archäologischer Denkmäler durch Sichtbarmachung oder Wiederaufbau".

The second set of lectures was opened by **Dr. Andreja Breznik**, from Narodni muzej Slovenije (SI), who showed results from her research about "The 'Originality' of Archaeological Parks". Following was **PD Ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Wolfgang Neubauer (AT)**, LBI for Archaeological Prospection and Virtual Archaeology, who gave an example of how an archaeological park contributed to the development of tourism in Lower Austria: "From 10 to 20.000 tourists in two decades – the Schwarzenbach Project".

This session was concluded by **Mag. Wolfgang Lobisser** from the Vienna Institute of Archaeological Science (AT), who shared his experience with the lecture "Updating the past in front of the visitors – MAMUZ: A 'new' Archaeological Open-Air Museum in Asparn in Lower Austria".

After lunch, a shuttle brought the participants to Asparn. The guided tour of the museum was conducted by **Wolfgang Lobisser**. The participants were later taken on a guided tour through the permanent collection exhibited in the castle. This second conference day was concluded with a buffet in the workshop rooms, during which participants had an opportunity for open discussion.

On Sunday, the 27th of September 2015, another session with lectures was held at the MAMUZ Museum in Mistelbach. The first lecture was given by **Mag. Matthias Pacher**, MAMUZ Museumszentrum Betriebs, who spoke about the archaeological open-air site of the museum of prehistory Urgeschichtsmuseum MAMUZ in Asparn/Zaya and its role in cultural tourism development.

The next speaker was **Tiberiu Fratila Felmer**, from Romania, who spoke about "Villa Wellmer, Hardships of beginnings: then and now", followed by **Helga Rösel-Mautendorfer** and **Jutta**

Leskovar (AT), from the Freilichtmuseum von Mittenkirchen, with a lecture on "Living History und das Publikum in Mittenkirchen, Oberösterreich".

After the first set of lectures, there was a poster session in which posters were presented by by **Mojca Vomer-Gojkovič** and **Nataša Kolar** from Pokrajinski muzej Ptuj - Ormož (SI).

The second set of lectures was opened by **Davide Delpiano (IT)**, from Università di Ferrara, with his lecture about "The potential of open-air sites: a diversified approach in Emilia, Italy". Following was **Mgr. Petr Kubin (CZ)**, from the regional museum in Mikulov who presented "Archaeological park Pavlov - presentation of the paleolithic era below the Palava hills". This session was concluded by **Dr. Markus Wachter (AT)** from the Archäologischer Park Carnuntum, with the lecture titled "Im Aufwind - der archäologische Park Carnuntum als regionaler Wachstumsmotor".


After lunch, a shuttle brought the participants to the archaeological park Carnuntum. The guided tour of the museum was conducted by Markus Wachter. It was a very impressive and excellently explained walking tour through the ancient Roman site. After the tour, the conference was concluded.


EXARC-Meeting

As a member of EXARC, AEAS-GAES from Switzerland was also present at the meeting in Austria. The thirteen attendants mostly discussed the question of how authentic re-enacted historical events must or should be, especially those that tend to inform and educate the visitors. The level of authenticity and originality is not always the greatest priority; it is more often the case that touristic "visibility" is considered to be more important. But how much is cultural mediation allowed to detach from scientific legitimisation? How do we resist this process? From an archaeological point of view, will this encourage or hinder the process? Here are some observations from the participants:

- Archaeological reconstructions and historical images make it possible to connect tourism and emotional messages in a globalized, post-modern society.
- Worldwide, archaeology/history becomes more and more commercialized in all of the life spheres, turning into events without any historical content.
- In the era of ever-growing inventive tourism, knowledge has to be transmitted in shorter visiting times.
- On archaeological sites, the necessary avoidance of bigger interventions can hinder the effective transmission of knowledge.
- Transparent joining of authenticity and event/commerce should be given priority instead of bad compromises.

- Authentic reconstructions demand the best, expert approach possible, as well as a procedure that is open to experience, science and experimental archaeology.
- Scientifically correct reconstructions, audio-visual media and adventurous offers can turn into places of education and make it easier to transfer historically accurate knowledge.
- Projects with an impact on the public can make archaeology famous and develop tourism and local economy, while making new investments in science and research possible.
- Only protective, scientifically and pedagogically legitimate work, based upon authenticity and non-altered originality, makes it possible to have scientific success and positive marketing in the long term.
- Standards for successful tourism: authenticity (scientifically based), innovative exhibition design, a variety of activities (workshops, festivals, re-enactment), regionally based, attractive/engaging transfer of scientific knowledge, a strong independence, great customer service, experienced guides, marketing for target-groups.
- Planning with specific goals requires a common, regional and long term collaborative work that includes monument protection, local protection, tourism and politics.

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