1st Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize

Friday, June 17, 2016

On Friday, June 17, 2016 the new Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize was awarded to the winner Eneko Hiriart. The prize refers to the internationally renowned archaeologist Joseph Déchelette (1862-1914), one of the founders of European protohistoric archaeology.

The Association Déchelette, founded in 2010 aims to keep the memory of this great scholar alive and promote this discipline. It has therefore teamed up with various partners to establish the Prix Joseph Déchelette with a view to promoting the PhD research of a young archaeologist. The prize is open to the wider European archaeological community. The award criteria include the values which were Joseph Déchelette’s trademark: open-mindedness, intellectual rigour, practicality and international experience.

After an international call for applications, the jury had to decide between 27 candidates from 8 countries.

The jury decided unanimously to award the 2016 prize to Eneko Hiriart, who recently completed his PhD at the University of Bordeaux Montaigne (laboratory Ausonius). Beyond the quality of the thesis of the winner, defended in 2014, the jury selected the ambitious, yet realistic nature of his proposed research project, which renews the understanding of the emergence of money in Iron Age Europe, developing a systemic approach that goes beyond the traditional approach of numismatics and helps nourish the reflections underway on the first urban forms in the Celtic world.

The winner received on Friday, June 17, an award of € 10,000. The award ceremony was held in the Joseph-Déchelette library, adjoining the Musée Joseph-Déchelette in the scholar’s hometown of Roanne (Central France). Present were the different authorities: Yves Nicolin, deputy mayor of Roanne; Benoît Kaplan, deputy director of archaeology at the French Ministry of Culture and Communication; Gilles Dechelette President of Joseph Déchelette association and many representatives of the archaeological community.

Contact for the press

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The winner

Eneko Hiriart is a young researcher of 32 years, currently undertaking a post-doctorate at the University of Aix-Marseille. Since childhood, his imagination has been travelling in space and time through the pages of the Iliad and the Odyssey and he has been passionate about Ancient History, Mesopotamia, Egypt and numismatics. Teenager, he participated in cultural excursions through local associations: "I was visiting heritage sites, castles, churches. In Rome, during a trip, I was fascinated by the St. Clement basilica whose remains drew me in to discover its fifteen centuries of history. " Eneko passed a license of History at the University of the Basque Country (Spain) and a Master in Archaeology at the University of Bordeaux-Montaigne (UBM) before preparing a PhD at UBM.

"My thesis on economic and monetary practices in Northern Spain and Aquitaine between the 5th and 1st c. BC seeks to understand how the arrival of the currency gradually revolutionized the economy and the society. My research fits into the continuation of those initiated by Joseph Déchelette who was the first to compare Iron Age sites at the European scale. In line with this scientific heritage, my attention is focused on an approach of the Celtic world as a whole", says Eneko Hiriart.

Un prix de 10 000 euros

The prize money is €10,000, brought by Association Déchelette, the RGZM and the French ministry of Culture and Communication. Additional benefits in kind to be used in the year following the award of the prize include:

- a one-month research residency provided by the RGZM
- a one-month research residency provided by Bibracte
- a one-month research residency at Musée Déchelette offered by Roanne City Council
- a one-month research residency provided by the Laténium, in partnership with Maison Borel
- a credit of € 5,000 funded by the French ministry for Culture and Bibracte to support the winner’s research and publications.

Who was Joseph Déchelette ?

Born in Roanne in 1862, Joseph Déchelette led scholarly archaeological research at the same time as being having a career as a leader in the textile industry. After early works in his home province of Forez, Central France, it is his research on the Roman ceramics and on the fortified settlements of the end of the Iron Age (from the excavations of the oppidum of Bibracte in Burgundy) which earned him wide recognition by the scientific community. The four published volumes of his unfinished “Manual of Prehistoric, Celtic and Gallo-Roman Archaeology” finally confirmed his European influence. Enlisted at his request in a combat unit when he was 52, he was killed at the front in WWI on 4 October 1914. His European recognition was expressed by numerous personal and official messages of condolences following his death. The German authorities themselves published an international release on the occasion, which is probably unique in the annals of the Great War.

His professional activity in the industry strongly influenced his scholarly research, contributing to the originality of his position in an academic world usually inward looking in its studies. In addition, his unique ability to synthesise allowed him to really invent Bronze Age and Iron Age archaeology. This fulfilled his conviction, unique in the academic world of his time, “that culture always walks in the footsteps of the economy and is only maintained at the cost of trade: hence he clung to the nature of the relationship between people rather than to their identity.” Thus he managed to remain outside “culturalist” interpretations of archaeological data, current at the time, that often lead to nationalist excesses.
• The jury

The jury of the prize, chaired by Anne-Marie Adam, professor emeritus of the university of Strasbourg and chair of the Scientific Council of Bibracte, included the following individuals:

- Prof. Dr. Philippe Barral, university of Franche-Comté, président of the Association française pour l’étude de l’âge du Fer (AFEAF)
- Mr. Gilles Déchelette, president of the Association Joseph Déchelette
- Dr. François Fichet de Clairfontaine, general inspector of architecture and cultural heritage, French ministry for Culture and Communication
- Prof. Dr. Marc-Antoine Kaeser, university of Neuchâtel (CH), Director of the Laténium, park and archaeological museum of the state of Neuchâtel
- Prof. Dr. Claude Mordant, professor emeritus of the university of Burgundy, president of the Association pour les Recherches sur l’âge du Bronze (APRAB)
- Dr. Camille Perez, director of the Musée Joseph Déchelette, Roanne
- Dr. Sandra Pere-Nogues, lecturer, university Jean-Jaurès – Toulouse 2
- Prof. Dr. Michel Reddé, directeur d’études, Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris
- Dr. Martin Schönfelder, researcher, Römisch-germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM), Mainz

• The ambition of the prize

Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize has the ambition to fill a gap, as prizes are very rare indeed in this scientific discipline. It is open to the wider European archaeological community and it has a view to promoting the PhD research of a young archaeologist. Applications were accepted from researchers who had their PhD thesis viva between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2015. The PhD research had to focus on European protohistory in the broadest sense, from a geographical or chronological perspective (Bronze and Iron Ages and the period of Romanisation). As theses could be written in any language, applicants had to provide a 25,000 character application in French or English including an abstract of their thesis as well as research perspectives for the year following the award of the prize, and a curriculum vitae including a list of their publications.

• The Association Joseph-Déchelette, initiator of the prize

The award was established on the initiative of Association Joseph-Déchelette which was founded in 2010 to maintain the memory of this great scientist and promote discipline he loved. Its first actions were to organize the Commemoration of the Centennial of the disappearance of Joseph Déchelette. An international conference held in 2014 in Roanne under the scientific direction of Sandra Pere-Nogues and a collective book, Joseph Déchelette, un Précurseur de l’Archéologie européenne [“Joseph Déchelette, a precursor to European Archaeology”] was published the same year. The institution of Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize is in the logical sequence of these founding actions of the Association.
• The partners of the Prize

For this first edition (the next being planned in 2018) *Association Joseph-Déchelette* had established partnerships with various French and European institutions:

- The French ministry for Culture and Communication / General Direction of Cultural Heritage
  € 4,000 in cash + a research credit of €5,000

- Roanne City Council / musée Joseph-Déchelette
  a research residency

- The *Römisch-germanisches Zentralmuseum* (RGZM), Mainz (Germany)
  € 2,000 in cash + a research residency

- The Society of Friends of the Musée Joseph Déchelette and Roanne Library (A2MR)

- Bibracte / Centre archéologique européen
  Prize secretary + a research residency

- the *laténium*, archaeological park and museum, Republic and Canton of Neuchâtel institution, Switzerland (in association with Maison Borel foundation)
  a research residency

- the Association pour les recherches sur l’âge du Bronze (APRAB)

- the Association française pour l’étude de l’âge du Fer (AFEAF)

- The *European Association of Archaeologists*
Archaeologist Eneko Hiriart, winner of the first Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize, which was presented to him on June 17, 2016 in the library of the scientist disappeared in 1914, adjacent to the museum Joseph Déchelette in Roanne (Loire, France). (Antoine Maillier, ©Bibracte 2016)
Archaeologist Eneko Hiriart, laureate of the first Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize, which was presented to him on June 17, 2016 in the library of the scientist disappeared in 1914, adjacent to the museum Joseph Déchelette in Roanne (Loire, France) with Mr. Yves Nicolin, Mayor of Roanne (on his left), Mr. Benoît Kaplan, Sous-Directeur de l’Archéologie at the French Ministry for Culture (behind the laureate), Dr. Katherine Gruel, Directrice de Recherches at CNRS and co-director of the laureate’s PhD (on his right) and Mrs. Monique Guillermim, Deputy Mayor of Roanne in charge of Culture (2nd on the right). (Antoine Maillier, ©Bibracte 2016)
Archaeologist Eneko Hiriart, laureate of the first Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize, receives the diploma from Mr. Gilles Déchelette, President of the Association Joseph-Déchelette, under the gaze of Dr. Allard Mees, researcher at the Roman-Germanic Museum in Mainz (Germany). The ceremony was held on June 17, 2016 in the library of the scientist disappeared in 1914, adjacent to the museum Joseph Déchelette in Roanne (France).

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