Surrounded by members of the jury and representatives of the Prize's partner institutions, the winner of the 2nd Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize: archaeologist Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof. This prize was awarded to her on June 15th, 2018 in the library of the scholar Joseph Déchelette who died in 1914, attached to the eponymous Museum in Roanne (Loire, France).
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On Friday June 15th, the day of the launch of the French National Archaeology Days 2018, the 2nd Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize was awarded to laureate Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof, doctor of Leiden University (Netherlands).
• The award ceremony took place in the library of the Joseph-Déchelette Museum, Roanne's municipal museum. This is the same library where Joseph Déchelette – a scholar born in Roanne in 1862 and one of the founders of European Archaeology who died prematurely at front during the Great War in 1914 – worked.

• The prize, created in 2016 and awarded every two years, aims to highlight the work of young archaeologists by supporting them at the critical moment in the career of any researcher following the defence of their doctoral thesis. Following a call for applications launched in autumn 2017, the jury met on 25th of April, to decide between 36 candidates from ten countries.

• The jury unanimously decided to award the Prize to Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof, doctor of Leiden University, with the following assessment: Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof's thesis, defended in 2017 at Leiden University (Netherlands) and already published, renews the study of the Early Iron Age (9th - 7th centuries BC) by proposing an original analysis of the funeral rituals of the elite which appeared at this period over a vast portion of European territory (the so-called "hallstattian" domain and its margins). Conducted from a resolutely European perspective, this research shows that the emergence of the elite is based on regular inter-regional relations. With the support of the prize, Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof proposes to broaden her survey in a multidisciplinary approach in order to clarify the nature of the links between the members of this aristocracy, which gives a new vitality to the regions concerned by sustainably orienting their socio-economic development.

• The winner received a cheque for €10,000 from the Joseph-Déchelette association, founder of the prize, and several of its partners: the Ministry of Culture associated with Bibracte and the Römisch-germanisches Zentralmuseum (Mainz). Other partners of the prize (complete list below) will reward the laureate with research stays in their premises.

• Alongside the winner of the prize, the jury of the prize wished to distinguish two candidates by awarding them a special mention:
  > Through an approach that is at the same time technological, typological and analytical, which makes it original, Joëlle Rolland's doctoral research, prepared at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, renews our understanding of the glass ornaments characteristic of the second Iron Age (3rd - 1st centuries BC) in the Celtic area.
  > The doctoral research of Gadea Cabanillas de la Torre, prepared at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the Universitat Autónoma de Madrid, offers a particularly convincing new analytical grid of the artistic expression of protohistoric societies.
The laureate

Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof is a 31-year-old Dutch-American scholar who recently obtained her doctorate from the Faculty of Archaeology at Leiden University, with a thesis on the burials of the elite of the early Iron Age in the Netherlands. Her fascination with this subject began during an internship at Leiden’s National Museum of Antiquities in 2009, when she was asked to organise the new showcase for the furniture of the famous aristocratic burial of Oss. She was completely captivated by this exceptional archaeological ensemble, which marked the beginning of her career as a specialist in the first Iron Age.

In addition to having devoted her master's thesis, and then her doctorate, to the burials of the elite of the early Iron Age in the Low Countries (her doctorate having already been published in the PALMA series of the National Museum of Antiquities), Sasja also initiated, co-organised and published an international seminar during her PhD on connections and interactions on a large scale during the Early Iron Age (Hallstatt C period). Both this seminar and her doctoral thesis demonstrated the value of a European perspective on these tombs if one wants to understand the large-scale contacts that existed among the elite members of that time, which was decisive for the construction of European societies.
This era indeed saw an unprecedented emergence of elites, who were buried with weapons, tableware and decorated wagons which had cosmological significance – Joseph Déchelette was one of the first to describe and catalogue such objects in his Manual of Archaeology. These "princely tombs" are found mainly in the so-called Hallstatt culture of Central Europe (named after a site in the Austrian Alps), but graves with the same objects are also found in peripheral regions, with a particular concentration in the Netherlands and Belgium, indicating direct contacts over hundreds of kilometres. The nature of these long-distance contacts, within a society that did not have writing, is an issue that fascinates Sasja. After having studied in detail the burials of the elites of the territory of today's Netherlands and Belgium, she continues her research on this period by examining how these tombs relate to those found in France, Germany and Austria, as well as to others further afield. She has begun to examine Frankfurt-Stadtwald's exceptionally rich burial grounds and is enthusiastic about exploring further European burial ensembles, which is made possible by the award of the Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize.

www.vanderVaart-Verschoof.com

A prize of €10,000

The prize is worth €10,000, divided as follows: the Joseph Déchelette association for 4,000 €, the Ministry of Culture and Communication (in association with Bibracte) for 4,000 € and the Römisch-germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM, Mainz) for 2,000 €.

In addition, there are several bonuses in kind in the form of research visits to European institutions: RGZM, Musée d'Archéologie nationale (Paris), Laténium (Switzerland), Bibracte, not to mention the library of the Déchelette Museum, which is exceptionally rich.

Who was Joseph Déchelette?

Born in Roanne in 1862, Joseph Déchelette conducted his scholarly archaeological research at the same time as his career as a leader in the textile industry. After his youth work in his native province of Forez, Central France, it was his research on Gallo-Roman ceramics and later on the fortified sites of the late Iron Age (from the excavations of the oppidum of Bibracte in Burgundy) that earned him recognition in the European scholarly world. The four volumes of his Manuel d'archéologie préhistorique, Celtique et gallo-romaine (Prehistoric, Celtic and Gallo-Roman Archaeology Manual), which remained unfinished, definitively established his European influence. Enlisted at his request in a combat unit when he was 52 years old, he fell at the front on October 4th, 1914.

His professional activity in the cotton industry significantly influenced his scholarly research, contributing to the originality of his outlook within an academic world usually more focused on its studies. In addition, his exceptional synthesizing ability enabled him to truly invent protohistoric archaeology. This was in response to his conviction, original in the academic world, "that culture always follows in the footsteps of economics and is only maintained at the price of exchanges: consequently, he focused on the nature of relations between men rather than on their identity" (S. Lewuillon). Thus he largely avoided the "culturalist" interpretations which used archaeological data to accredit nationalist drifts.
The jury

The jury, chaired by Anne-Marie Adam, Professor Emeritus of the University of Strasbourg and President of the Scientific Council of Bibracte, included the following individuals:

- Philippe Barral, president of the association, professor at the University of Franche-Comté, representing the French association for the study of the Iron Age (AFEAF)
- Gilles Déchelette, President of the Joseph Déchelette Association
- François Fichet de Clairfontaine, Inspector General of Architecture and Heritage, representing the Ministry of Culture and Communication
- Marc-Antoine Kaeser, Director of Laténium, Associate Professor at the University of Neuchâtel
- Catherine Louboutin, assistant to the director, responsible for scientific policy, representing the National Archaeology Museum
- Claude Mordant, president of the association, professor emeritus at the University of Burgundy, representing the association for Bronze Age research (APRAB)
- Nathalie Pierron, curator of the Joseph Déchelette Museum
- Sandra Pere-Nogues, lecturer at the University Jean-Jaurès - Toulouse 2
- Michel Reddé, Director of Studies at the Ecole pratique des Hautes Études, Paris
- Martin Schönfelder, researcher at the Römisch-germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM)

Purpose of the Prize

The Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize aims to fill a gap: such prizes are in fact very rare in this scientific discipline. The award criteria include the values that distinguished Joseph Déchelette: open-mindedness, European dimension of reflection, intellectual rigour and practical sense. It is intended to be widely open to the international archaeological community. It concerns young researchers who have defended their doctoral thesis for less than two years, on a subject concerning European Protohistory (Bronze and Iron age). In order not to place any restrictions on the language of thesis writing, candidates are requested to provide a summary in English or French, as well as work perspectives for the year following the award of the prize.

The Joseph-Déchelette association, initiator of the prize

The prize was created on the initiative of the Joseph-Déchelette association in order to keep the memory of this great scholar alive and promote the discipline he loved.

The Joseph-Déchelette association was founded in 2010 on the initiative of his great-grand-nephew Édouard Déchelette (*), in order to maintain the memory of this great scholar and promote his beloved discipline. Its first actions were to prepare the Commemoration of the Centenary of the death of Joseph Déchelette, in the form of an international symposium held in 2014 in Roanne under the scientific direction of Sandra Pere-Nogues, lecturer at the University Jean-Jaurès (Toulouse) and a collective work "Joseph Déchelette, a precursor of European Archaeology" published under the same scientific direction by Errance / Actes Sud.

The institution of the Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize is a logical continuation of these founding actions of the Joseph Déchelette association. The first winner was Eneko Hiriart, who received the award on 17 June 2016.
Partnerships

For this second edition of the prize, the Joseph-Déchelette association benefited from partnerships with various French and European institutions:

• le ministère de la Culture et de la Communication / direction générale des Patrimoines

• la ville de Roanne / musée Joseph-Déchelette

• le Römisch-germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM), Mayence, Allemagne

• Le musée d’Archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye

• le Laténium, parc et musée d’archéologie, institution de la République et Canton de Neuchâtel, Suisse
• l’association pour les recherches sur l’âge du Bronze (APRAB)

• l’association française pour l’étude de l’âge du Fer (AFEAF)

• The European Association of Archaeologists

• Bibracte / Centre archéologique européen