



THE ALEXANDRIA
ARCHIVE INSTITUTE

Opening the past. Inspiring the future.

Annual Report

2016

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Who We Are

The Alexandria Archive Institute preserves and shares world heritage on the Web, free of charge. Through advocacy, education, research, and technology programs like Open Context, we pioneer ways to open up archaeology and related fields for all.

Mission: The AAI enhances scholarship through use of the Open Web. Our work aims to increase the breadth and depth of scholarship in archaeology and related fields, in order to improve understanding and see wider participation in discovery.

Vision: The AAI will lead the research community in developing accessible, reliable, comprehensive, and open access scholarly resources. We will transform these data into knowledge, making them valuable and relevant for students and scholars worldwide.

Values: We work to uphold the following values and principles:

- We support universal accessibility to scholarship.
- We are committed to the development of new research and educational tools to promote scholarship in the humanities and social sciences.
- We promote the development of authoritative scholarly resources that are reliable, comprehensive, and open.
- We strive to promote an open dialogue in developing standards in the collection, dissemination, and storage of research data.
- We are committed to fostering cooperation with organizations that share our vision.
- We acknowledge that the work we are doing is one element of a vast network of organizations and individuals with a common purpose. We strive to both learn from and enrich this complex ecosystem.

The AAI was established in 2001 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit in California (*EIN: 91-2146202*).

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2016: A Year of Celebration & Change

In 2016, we celebrated ten years of sharing open humanities content on the Web! At the end of its first decade, Open Context has published more than one million items, including



93,000 photos, maps, and field notebook entries from nearly 100 projects across the globe. An exponential increase in Open Context content over the past ten years reflects a much broader trend in increased attention to digital data access and preservation. “Why should I share my data?” has become “How can I share my data?” The continuing growth the digital humanities and open access educational content is truly something to celebrate.

However, the end of the year brought considerable uncertainty to key institutions, including issues of disinformation and widespread suspicion of science. As social scientists, we recognize the complexity and challenge of understanding the forces behind the events of 2016. And as historians, we recognize that though the past never really repeats itself, it offers lessons about the risks and opportunities of periods of change. Archaeology provides a lens to explore past cultures and alternative ways of organizing society. In studying the past, we expand our imagination to envision better futures.

The AAI helps provide important humanistic and historically-informed perspectives. We unite learning and excellence in technology with the exploration of culture and history through the archaeological past. Just as importantly, we work to imagine new institutional frameworks to support research and learning. Currently, the vast majority of our understanding about the human past is locked in the Ivory Tower behind expensive pay-walls. This hinders important breakthroughs and stifles

“Though the past never really repeats itself, it offers lessons about the risks and opportunities of periods of change.”

– Eric Kansa

progress. Indeed, much of this research is publicly funded, paid for with tax dollars, but has been privatized and made accessible only to a few. The AAI democratizes knowledge by opening-up access to databases, images, and other excavation discoveries – primary sources that are rarely shared and vulnerable to loss. Through our open-data publishing

program, Open Context, we work to break down those pay-wall barriers by pioneering ways to make heritage accessible to everyone.

We are so grateful for the continuing generous support that we receive from public agencies, private foundations, and individuals, which contribute to our continuing success.

The above is a modified version of the year-end post "2016 Perspectives: The Necessity of the Humanities" by Eric Kansa (<https://alexandriaarchive.org/2016/12/30/2016-perspectives/>, posted on December 30, 2016).

Key Developments & New Programs

Award for Outstanding Work in Digital Archaeology

In January 2016, the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) celebrated the AAI's data publishing platform, Open Context, by selecting it as the recipient of their 2016 Award for Outstanding Work in Digital Archaeology. The award recognizes "projects, groups, and individuals that deploy digital technology in innovative ways in the realms of excavation, research, teaching, publishing, or outreach" with a goal of "recognizing the value of digital scholarship and encouraging its practice."

Eric Kansa and Sarah Whitcher Kansa accepted the award on January 7, 2016, at the awards ceremony of the AIA conference in San Francisco (photo at right). This is the third year the AIA has honored pioneering work in digital archaeology. Past recipients include the Ancient World Online (2015) and Fasti Online (2014), and the 2017 award will be given to the Pleiades project. The AAI team is honored to stand among these leaders who all share a vision of open access and linked archaeological data.



Digging into the Secret Life of Data

With a Research and Development Grant from the Preservation and Access Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), we launched a three-year study aimed at improving the quality, research impact, and instructional uses of data collected by field archaeologists. The project name “The Secret Life of Data” highlights the primary concern of this work— that in the lifecycle of any given archaeological object, there are many actors and steps that are poorly understood and undocumented. Through a combination of ethnographic observations, interviews, and technology development, the project aims to find common points of information loss in the lifecycles of archaeological data in order to improve the quality of information collected during archaeological excavations across the globe. The project acronym “SLO-data” emphasizes our belief that quality, reusable research data cannot be “mass produced” but, instead, should result from thoughtful intellectual engagement with creating, describing, sharing and preserving data.

This work involves observations and interviews with creators, managers, and re-users of archaeological data at field projects sponsored by the Institute for Field Research in three

“How do actions in one part of the data lifecycle create challenges or facilitate work at another point in the lifecycle?”

– Ixchel Faniel

Speaking at the Critical Perspectives in Digital Archaeology conference, Harvard University, February 3, 2017

continents. Outcomes include exemplary open datasets, an expansion of Open Context’s data publishing services, and online educational modules. The project team includes researchers at Stanford University, OCLC Research,

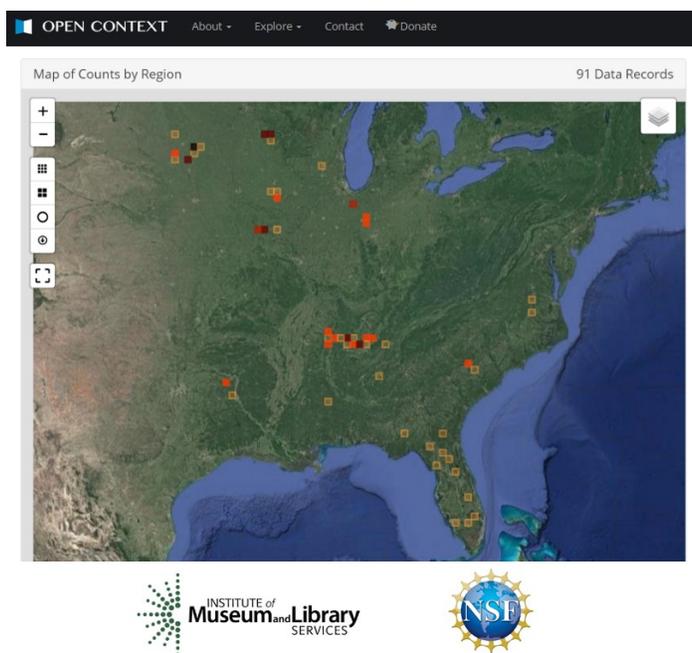
the University of Michigan, and the Institute for Field Research. The NEH’s support for this work demonstrates a strong commitment to making quality humanistic research more accessible to the public.

New Support for the Digital Index of North American Archaeology

The Digital Index of North American Archaeology documents the human presence on the North American landscape since the Pleistocene by aggregating archaeological and historical data from governmental authorities that manage heritage resources. In development since 2012 with support from the National Science Foundation, DINAA is hosted by the AAI (through Open Context) and developed by a multi-institutional team with

collaborators at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville) and the Indiana University (South Bend). New funding to the AAI from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is allowing us to expand DINAA's network of collaborating partners to include tribal archaeology professionals, library professionals, and museums, as represented by project partners at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley.

To date, DINAA has integrated and published archaeological site data from 15 states in Open Context, encompassing the rich chronological, cultural, and anthropological



metadata used by authorities and researchers alike. Researchers and the public can currently download nearly half a million site file records (with sensitive location, ownership, and other data redacted), free of charge and intellectual property restrictions. With new funding from the IMLS and renewed funding from the National Science Foundation, DINAA coverage will expand to eventually encompass an estimated 2-3 million archaeological sites. As we prepare additional state datasets for DINAA's expansion, we're also exploring ways to link DINAA with other key information sources on the Web. This

will help us tie DINAA data with rich information resources curated by museums, researchers, other digital repositories, and government sources. The example above illustrates cross-referencing between DINAA and the Federal Register, which provides information on regulatory processes that impact the practice of archaeology in the US. The map shows archaeological sites that are mentioned in the Federal Register, helping us understand current and changing governance of the archaeological past. Our team is working on adding many other linking relationships, such as with publications in JSTOR, the National Register of Historic Places, and the Canadian Archaeological Radiocarbon Database. For more about DINAA, check out the project website:

<http://ux.opencontext.org/archaeology-site-data/>

Outreach Work: Opening the Past, Inspiring the Future!

With support from the Leon Levy Foundation, in spring of 2016 we worked with the creative team at InGage Digital Media to produce two animated videos about Open Context and the AAI. The first video is a 60-second vignette that explains what Open Context is (*answer: an open access data publishing platform*) and who can use it (*answer: everybody!*). The video features Stan, a disgruntled researcher struggling under “publish or perish” pressures (at right). The Open Context team helps Stan publish his data and share it with the world, enabling creative reuses and giving Stan a sense of purpose (below). Since its launch in August 2016, the video has had over 800 views. Visit Open Context to view the video:



Visit [Open Context](https://opencontext.org/about/) to view the video:



The second video (below) is a 2-minute animated story set to music that tells the interwoven stories of a young girl and an archaeologist whose lives are changed by open cultural heritage. This video conveys the importance of breaking information out of the “ivory tower” and making it accessible to all so that everyone can be inspired by the past. This video also resulted in a tagline change for the AAI—

Opening the Past, Inspiring the Future! View the video on the AAI website:

<https://alexandriaarchive.org/>



Conferences, Workshops & Publications

Conferences & Workshops

1. Nov 2016: Presentation: Open Context Turns Ten: A Retrospective. American Schools of Oriental Research, San Antonio, TX
2. Jan 2016: Forum (panelist): Globalizing the Field: Preserving and Creating Access to Archaeological Collections (Joint AIA /SCS panel, organized by the National Endowment for the Humanities). Archaeological Institute of America, San Francisco, CA
3. Apr 2016: Invited Speaker. All Data Big and Small: Archaeology, Ethics, and Professionalism in the Age of the Web, Stanford University, Archaeology Center. (<https://classics.stanford.edu/events/all-data-big-and-small-archaeology-ethics-and-professionalism-age-web-eric-kansa>)
4. Aug 2016: Marketing Digital Archaeology: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Institute on Digital Archaeology Method and Practice. Michigan State University (<http://digitalarchaeology.msu.edu/year-2-schedule/#event-87>)

Program-Related Publications

Kansa, Eric C. 2016. "Click Here to Save the Past" In *Mobilizing the Past for a Digital Future: The Potential of Digital Archaeology*, edited by Erin Walcek Averett, Jody Michael Gordon, and Derek B. Counts, 443-472. Grand Forks, ND: The Digital Press at the University of North Dakota. (Open Access: http://dc.uwm.edu/arthist_mobilizingthepast/19/)

Buccellati Federico, and Eric Kansa. 2016. The value of energetic analysis in architecture as an example for data sharing. *Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage* 3(3): 91-97. (Open Access preprint: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6r04d778>)

Rabinowitz, A., Shaw, R., Buchanan, S., Golden, P. And Kansa, E. 2016. Making Sense Of The Ways We Make Sense Of The Past: The Periodo Project. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 59(2), pp.42-55.

Financial Information

Statement of accounts for the calendar year January 1 – December 31, 2016

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--|------------------|
| Assets | | Income | |
| Checking/Savings | | Grants | 182,781 |
| Checking | 42,486 | Individual donations | 25,000 |
| <i>Total Checking/Savings</i> | <i>42,486</i> | Data publishing fees | 4,901 |
| Accounts Receivable | | Total Income | \$212,682 |
| Pledges Receivable | 5,000 | Expenses | |
| <i>Total Accounts Receivable</i> | <i>5,000</i> | Program Service Accomplishments: | |
| Total Assets | \$47,171 | <i>Publish Educational Content</i> ¹ | 133,126 |
| Liabilities & Equity | | <i>Open Data Advocacy</i> ² | 88,751 |
| <i>Liabilities</i> | | Total Expenses | \$221,877 |
| Accounts Payable | 9,006 | Details: | |
| <i>Total Liabilities</i> | <i>0</i> | Salaries & related expenses | 122,593 |
| <i>Equity</i> | | Travel | 10,889 |
| Opening Balance | 4,855 | Conferences / Meetings | 10,960 |
| Unrestricted (retained earnings) | 35,202 | Telephone / Internet | 4,144 |
| Net income | (1,892) | Consultants | 60,488 |
| <i>Total Equity</i> | <i>38,165</i> | Other (printing, supplies, equipment, computer services, compliance) | 12,803 |
| Total Liabilities & Equity | \$47,171 | | |

¹**Publish Educational Content:** Manage Open Context, an open access data publishing platform for scholars, students, and the public to explore and use cultural heritage and field science data. Work with communities and individuals to add content, develop workflows, and address incentives around research data management.

²**Open Data Advocacy:** Promote open access to cultural heritage content. Work with researchers and other stakeholders to explore the impacts of open data on scholarship. Present research at professional society meetings and in publications.

People

Staff

- [Sarah Witcher Kansa](#), *Executive Director*
- [Eric Kansa](#), *Technology Director and Open Context Project Director*

Consultants

- Phoebe France, *Usability Specialist*
- Carter Wells, *Fundraising*
- Pamela Saunders, *Marketing*
- Kelsey Noack Myers, *DINAA*
- Stephen J. Yerka, *DINAA*
- Jennifer Jacobs, *DINAA*

Board of Directors

The AAI's Board of Directors consists of individuals who share our vision and have personal qualifications to lead the organization to success. Board members evaluate the AAI's performance in working toward its mission and enable progress towards growth. In 2016, we were honored to welcome two new individuals, Charles Duba and Brenda LeMay, to the AAI's Board of Directors.

- [Elizabeth Carter](#), Professor, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
- [Charles Duba](#), Professor of Physics & Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, DigiPen Institute of Technology, Redmond, WA
- [Eric Kansa](#), Technology Director and Open Context Project Director
- John G. Kutz, Director, Deloitte & Touche, LLP, San Francisco, CA
- Brenda Lemay, Senior Director, SUNEDISON, Portland, ME
- Richard H. Meadow, Senior Lecturer, Harvard University; Director of the Peabody Museum Zooarchaeology Laboratory; Director of Harappa Excavations, Pakistan
- Bryan J. Stone, Associate Director, Financial Services Industry at World Economic Forum
- John P. Witcher, Professor of Ophthalmology, University of California, San Francisco, CA

Honorary Board Members

In 2009, the AAI formed an Honorary Board of Directors to recognize individuals who have provided enabling support and services to our organization.

- [Martha S. Joukowsky](#), Director, Brown University excavations in the Great Temple at Petra; Professor Emerita, Center for Old World Archaeology and Art & Department of Anthropology, Brown University
- [Jason M. Schultz](#), Professor, New York University School of Law

Open Context Editorial Board

The Editorial Board for Open Context was established in mid-2010 and currently comprises the fourteen members listed below. The Editorial Board assists the Executive Editor in developing editorial policies and procedures, in soliciting datasets to be considered for publication in Open Context, and in recommending reviewers for projects that request peer review. The Editorial Board also assists with the annual review of the editorial policies and the performance of the editorial staff. The Editorial Board continues to grow to reflect the depth and breadth of the published content and to address the technical, ethical, cultural, and legal complexities of data publication.

- [Sarah Whitcher Kansa](#) (Executive Editor), The Alexandria Archive Institute
- [Levent Atici](#), Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- [Harrison Eiteljorg, II](#), Center for the Study of Architecture, Bryn Mawr College
- [Catherine P. Foster](#), MicroCommons and U.S. Department of State
- [Eric Kansa](#), Technology Director; Open Context Project Director
- [Morag Kersel](#), DePaul University
- [Benjamin Porter](#), University of California, Berkeley
- [Yorke Rowan](#), University of Chicago
- [Alexia Smith](#), University of Connecticut
- Sannie Kenton Osborn, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (retired)
- [Joshua Wells](#), Indiana University, South Bend
- [Sebastian Heath](#), American Numismatic Society and Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University
- [Lori Jahnke](#), Medical Heritage Library, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania
- Stephen Yerka, University of Tennessee

Current Support

We are grateful to the following organizations who, in addition to our Board of Directors and individual donors, sustain the AAI's programs and activities through financial contributions and services:

- [National Endowment for the Humanities](#)
- [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#)
- [National Science Foundation](#)
- [Leon Levy Foundation](#)
- [German Archaeological Institute](#) (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut)
- Google Grants
- [California Digital Library](#)



History of Projects & Funding

The majority of AAI's support comes from government grants and private foundations. In addition to grant funding for the projects listed below, we rely on many individuals for enabling financial and in-kind contributions.

| Year | Amount | Granting Organization | Project Title |
|-------------|---------------|---|---|
| 2016 | \$249,920 | Institute of Museum and Library Services | National Leadership Grant for Libraries for the project <i>Building a Gazetteer of Anthropocene North America</i> (start: 7/1/16) |
| 2015 | \$299,112 | National Endowment for the Humanities | Research & Development Grant: <i>Beyond Management: Data Curation as Scholarship in Archaeology</i> (start: 1/1/2016) |
| 2014 | \$30,000 | The J.M. Kaplan Fund | Support for the project <i>Conservation Data Management to Promote Good Practice</i> |
| 2014 | \$35,000 | German Archaeological Institute / Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies | Faculty Fellowship (Eric Kansa): <i>Best practices and workflows for publishing Classical archaeology data</i> |
| 2012 | \$261,056 | National Endowment for the Humanities | Digital Humanities Implementation Grant: <i>Applying Linked Open Data: Refining a Model of Data Sharing as Publication</i> |
| 2012 | \$33,000 | Encyclopedia of Life | Computable Data Challenge Grant: <i>Exploring the Biogeography of Early Domestic Animals using Linked Open Data</i> |
| 2012 | \$120,000 | National Science Foundation | Archaeology Program Grant: <i>The Digital Index of North American Archaeology</i> |
| 2012 | \$90,000 | American Council for Learned Societies | Digital Innovation Fellowship: <i>Developing a Data Journal for Archaeology</i> |
| 2011 | \$49,707 | National Endowment for the Humanities | Digital Humanities Start-up Grant: <i>Gazetteer of the Ancient Near East</i> |
| 2011 | \$108,000 | Alfred P. Sloan Foundation | Scholarly Communication Grant: <i>Toward Data Sharing as Publication: Establishing Editorial Policies and Workflows around Scientific Data Dissemination</i> |
| 2010 | \$35,000 | Google | Digital Humanities Award: <i>Google Ancient Places (GAP) project</i> |
| | \$50,000 | National Endowment for the Humanities | Digital Humanities Start-up Grant: <i>The Open Modern Art Collection of Iraq: Web tools for Documenting, Sharing and Enriching Iraqi Artistic Expressions</i> |
| 2008 | \$250,609 | National Endowment for the Humanities / Institute for Museum and Library Services | Preservation & Access Grant: <i>Enhancing Humanities Research Productivity in a Collaborative Data Sharing Environment</i> |

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2007 | \$75,400 | National Endowment for the Humanities | Digital Humanities Fellowship for <i>Accessing and Presenting Open-Source Cultural Heritage Collections</i> |
| 2006 | \$250,000 | William and Flora Hewlett Foundation | Open Educational Resources Program Grant: <i>Open Context & open data advocacy</i> |
| 2004 | \$375,000 | William and Flora Hewlett Foundation | Open Educational Resources Program Grant: <i>Open Context & open data advocacy</i> |
| 2003 | \$125,000 | William and Flora Hewlett Foundation | Presidential Discretionary Fund Grant to <i>demonstrate an open access data sharing platform for archaeology</i> |