

Destruction and Conservation of Cultural Property



Edited by Robert Layton, Peter G. Stone & Julian Thomas

ONE
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ARCHAEOLOGY

41

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DESTRUCTION AND CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

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DESTRUCTION AND CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

Edited by

Robert Layton, Peter G. Stone
and Julian Thomas



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Foreword

One World Archaeology is dedicated to exploring new themes, theories and applications in archaeology from around the world. The series of edited volumes began with contributions that were either part of the inaugural meeting of the World Archaeological Congress in Southampton, UK in 1986 or were commissioned specifically immediately after the meeting – frequently from participants who were inspired to make their own contributions. Since then WAC has held three further major international Congresses in Barquisimeto, Venezuela (1990), New Delhi, India (1994), and Cape Town, South Africa (1999) and a series of more specialized ‘inter-congresses’ focussing on *Archaeological ethics and the treatment of the dead* (Vermillion, USA, 1989), *Urban origins in Africa* (Mombasa, Kenya, 1993), and *The destruction and restoration of cultural heritage* (Brač, Croatia, 1998). In each case these meetings have attracted a wealth of original and often inspiring work from many countries.

The result has been a set of richly varied volumes that are at the cutting edge of (frequently multi-disciplinary) new work, and which provide a breadth of perspective that charts the many and varied directions that contemporary archaeology is taking.

As series editors we should like to thank all editors and contributors for their hard work in producing these books. We should also like to express our thanks to Peter Ucko, inspiration behind both the World Archaeological Congress and the One World Archaeology series. Without him none of this would have happened.

Martin Hall, Cape Town, South Africa
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June 2000

1 *Introduction: the destruction and conservation of cultural property*

ROBERT LAYTON AND JULIAN THOMAS

DESTRUCTION OR CONSERVATION?

Why are historic artefacts and monuments sometimes deliberately destroyed, and under what conditions are they carefully preserved? To the archaeologist, artefacts and monuments are chiefly significant as a kind of archive, evidence of past human activity. Preservation allows the archive to be consulted whenever new questions about the past are generated. This is only one way of understanding the material traces of the past, however, and one which is deeply embedded in those conditions of Western modernity that gave birth to the archaeological discipline.

The modern era in the West has seen rapid social, economic and technical change (Berman 1982: 29). Intellectually, the period has been characterized by attempts to understand reality as a unified whole, but at the same time society and culture have become increasingly fragmented. Religion and tradition have lost much of their binding force, with the consequence that social order has been maintained through the enforcement of learned codes of morality (Bauman 1993: 6). These, however, have been based upon a contradiction. The legal and ethical codes of the West appeal to universal reason, suggesting modes of moral conduct which apply to all human beings, and yet they simultaneously divide people on grounds of nationality or ethnicity. Moral universalism and objective rationality have been promoted by nation-states, the distinctive political entities of modernity, which have nonetheless acted in support of their own interests in a highly parochial manner (*ibid.*: 14). This conflict at the heart of modern societies has played itself out in a variety of ways. Olsen's chapter in this volume, for instance, points to the role of 'scientific internationalism' in maintaining the intellectual hegemony of the Western powers (also see Olsen 1991: 213). The acquisition of knowledge is presented as the prerogative of all humankind, yet in most cases the powerful nations are the subjects of knowledge, while the rest of the world is rendered as object. Cleere (this volume, Chapter 2) calls universality and cultural heritage 'the uneasy bedfellows'. Not all societies use the remains of the past as a means of substantiating their identities, or securing their claims to territory. As Pedro Funari shows (Chapter 7), in Brazil the national culture aspires to modernity, and the architectural traces of

the past are often wilfully destroyed to enable more up-to-the-minute buildings to be constructed. Identity is grounded not in the memory of the past, but in the modernist drive toward the future. Archaeology carries little weight, since it documents the past existence of native peoples and blacks, who are often still seen in negative terms. Even worse, the antiquities of poor countries are looted and illegally exported to satisfy the desire of the rich to own a portion of the 'universal' human heritage (see chapters by Mbunwe-Samba, and Tubb and Brodie).

The notion of a society founded upon disinterested rationality was codified during the Enlightenment, that is, from the end of the seventeenth century. Different points of view could be brought into reasoned debate with one another, and a definitive resolution could be arrived at (Gray 1995: 150). For this reason, the Enlightenment conception of history was one in which the progressive freeing of human reason was gradually leading toward a more perfect state of affairs amongst people. Since reason was singular and universal, it was possible to imagine a single universal (and progressive) historical narrative (*ibid.*: 165). This linear vision of history culminated with the emancipation of the rational individual, freed from the shackles of religion and tradition (Carroll 1993: 121). Yet again, this universalism was compromised by the particularity of the kind of individual that was being promoted as the modern political subject: a male, white, heterosexual gentile. The Enlightenment envisaged a political community of active participants, yet this was only to be realized through a series of exclusions. This is graphically demonstrated in the case of the American Declaration of Independence, a document heavily influenced by Enlightenment views, proclaiming universal freedom yet signed by a group of men the majority of whom were slave-owners.

Beverly Butler's and Mark Johnson's chapters in this volume explore the problems raised by universalism and linear views of history. Johnson (Chapter 6) looks at two contemporary viewings of monuments in Hue, the ancient capital of Vietnam. One emphasizes natural processes of decay and deterioration, the other destruction during war. Butler (Chapter 5) relates how the archaeological investigation and rebuilding of Alexandria are presented as a rediscovery of origins, a recovery of a lost past. The role of the past is to provide a precedent for contemporary developments. In practice, however, there is no universal narrative and different interests draw on different epochs to create their own past. The Egyptian state emphasizes the Ptolemaic period, the tourist industry promotes the Pharaonic era, while the fundamentalists imagine Egypt as exclusively Islamic, and would have the monuments of other religions destroyed.

On 6 December 1992 the Babri Masjid, a 450-year-old mosque in the north Indian town of Ayodhya, was destroyed by Hindu fundamentalists. The fundamentalists claim that the mosque stood on the foundations of a Hindu temple marking the birthplace of the legendary Hindu hero-king Rama. The mosque was built by Babur, the first Mughal emperor, in AD 1528–9 and became an object of dispute between groups of Hindus and Muslims during the nineteenth century. This dispute reached a climax in 1949, when Hindu images were placed within the building. The Indian government ordered the mosque to be locked and it remained unused until its destruction forty-two years later.

Archaeology has been closely involved in the Ayodhya debate. In 1975, B.B. Lal, recently retired from the post of Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), began research on the archaeology of sites named in the Ramayana epic. He conducted two seasons of excavations at Ayodhya. Excavations close to the Babri mosque revealed a massive brick wall, house floors, rubble collapse and the wells associated with the archaeological Northern Black Polished Ware culture. His excavations showed that habitation continued after the Northern Black Polished Ware period into historic times. After the Gupta empire [AD 320–467], however, Ayodhya was deserted. It was not reoccupied until at least the eleventh century (Lal 1976–7, 1981; see also Lal, this volume and Ratnagar 1993). In October 1988, Professor Lal presented a paper at a conference organized by the Indian Council of Historical Research. On this occasion he provided previously unannounced details of his findings at Ayodhya. He reported, in particular, that he had uncovered ‘a series of brick-built bases that evidently carried pillars thereon’ adjacent to the mosque (see Lal in this volume, Chapter 9). Lal surmised that carved black stone pillars incorporated into the Babri mosque might originally have stood on these bases. Proponents of the argument that Babur had destroyed a Hindu temple seized on Lal’s report as evidence in support of their case: the pillar-bases appeared to continue under the mosque and the motifs carved on the black stone pillars were identified as Hindu.

During September and October 1990 Mr L.K. Advani, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led a procession through several states, campaigning for the demolition of the mosque and its replacement with a temple. On 30 October 1990 *Kar sevaks* (Hindu volunteers) broke through a police cordon and assaulted the mosque. Violence broke out in several parts of India, with deaths from stabbing and arson. On 6 December 1992 the *Kar sevaks* attacked the mosque again, and this time demolished it completely. The number who died in the ensuing riots is difficult to determine, but contemporary newspaper reports put the figure at around 1000 (see Rao and Reddy in this volume, Chapter 11).

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFERENCE

Nandini Rao proposed that a session on the role of archaeology in the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya should be included in the programme of the third World Archaeological Congress, due to meet in New Delhi in 1994. WAC is dedicated to exploring the politics of archaeology and Nandini’s proposal was entirely appropriate. Unfortunately, the second anniversary of the mosque’s destruction would take place during the Congress. Furthermore, key members of the local organizing committee had argued in favour of the prior existence of a temple. Rao (1995) records that at the WAC Inter-Congress held in Mombasa in 1993, ‘the destruction of the mosque was noted, and an attempt to condemn the destruction was thwarted by the Indian representatives’. The local organizing committee of WAC-3 therefore had two reasons for opposing Rao’s proposal, one acceptable to WAC (avoidance of potentially violent demonstrations), one unacceptable (limitation of free speech).

Nandini Rao wrote to Peter Ucko and Jack Golson in 1994 complaining that 'WAC, which stands for the breaking of hegemonic domination in archaeology and a more critically self-conscious and reflexive undertaking of academics, had been taken over by people known to be involved in the [ab]use of archaeology for political ends and in the chauvinistic and selective re-writing of the past' (Rao 1994). Many members of the WAC Executive who met in Delhi at the start of the conference were unfortunately unaware of what had happened in Mombasa. The organizers' demand for a ban, while contravening WAC's principles, appeared justified in order to forestall unrest or even violence against people arriving for the conference or even members of the Indian public. S.P. Gupta, one of the local organizers, told the executive that the government minister sponsoring the Congress had asked for the veto. The executive agreed to a ban 'because it recognized that there was a risk of adverse practical consequences within the Indian community which were beyond the executive's control if the issue of Ram Janma Bhumi-Babri [Masjid] were discussed at the time of the anniversary of recent events.' The executive stated it was responding to requests from the Indian Organizing Committee and the Minister of Human Resource Development (HRD).

Indian archaeologists and historians who had bravely spoken out against the argument that the mosque had replaced a temple were understandably dismayed that WAC should have capitulated to the local organizing committee. Local media reported that, when Professor Irfan Habib attempted to approach the podium at a pre-conference meeting of the WAC Council to clarify the situation, he was pushed to the floor by Prakash Charan Prasad, Director of Archaeology for the Government of Bihar, who had participated in the demolition of the Babri mosque (*New Age [India]*, 11–14 December 1994). The Minister of Human Resource Development denied he had asked for a ban when speaking to reporters after he opened the conference. On 4 December the All India Students' Association demonstrated outside the building where the Congress was taking place in protest at the ban.

Western academics were also disturbed that WAC had forsaken its principles. Lord Renfrew and Rhys Jones circulated a motion reasserting WAC's key commitments to further free and untrammelled discussion of all issues relating to cultural heritage, and condemning any destruction of archaeological or cultural monuments on sectarian or ethnic grounds.

The demonstrations across India that marked the second anniversary of the Babri mosque's destruction were in fact peaceful. It was, ironically, the Congress itself that came close to violence during the closing plenary session, which was accurately reported in the *Indian Express* of 12 December 1994:

Tempers ran high at the Plenary Session of the World Archaeological Congress on Sunday afternoon over the passing of [an Indian-sponsored] resolution explicitly condemning destruction of the historical structures. The reference obviously was to the Babri Masjid demolition As more than 200 shell-shocked foreign delegates looked on, the supporters of the two groups climbed onto the dais in the auditorium. For over 30 minutes the air was filled with vociferous slogans as they tried to snatch the microphone from each other

The first paragraph of the resolution held that: 'Born in the fight against apartheid, the WAC-3 reiterates its uncompromising opposition to the infusion of racial, religious or national chauvinistic claim into archaeology and condemns without reservation all fraudulent manipulation of evidence and destruction of or damage to historical structures in order to further such claim or in consequence thereof.' As the resolution was read out, the auditorium broke into applause. For a few moments even the pro-RSS [Hindu Nationalist] delegates started clapping – apparently not making much out of the long-winded phrases. But it didn't take them long to separate the message from the medium and from that point, they were unstoppable A crucial resolution which could not be taken up at all was moved by the eminent archaeologist, Lord Renfrew of Cambridge University, seconded by Professor Rhys Jones.

The council of WAC afterwards dissociated itself from the Plenary Session (minutes of council meeting 11 December 1994). It also agreed to set up a forum where the Ayodhya issue could be freely debated, and the proceedings published (see *WAC News* 5 (1): 1997). Peter Stone, Julian Thomas, Nandini Rao and Robert Layton undertook to organize the conference. We decided Ayodhya should be put in a broader context, hoping to learn what circumstances put cultural properties at greatest risk of destruction, and what circumstances might improve their chances of conservation.

At first, the organizers had no success in finding an organization willing to host the conference. But in 1996 Peter Stone, WAC CEO, met Dino Milinović, Secretary General of the Croatian Commission for UNESCO, and they discussed the possibility of holding the conference in Croatia. Given the recent war in former Yugoslavia, and the destruction of cultural property that had taken place, Croatia seemed an obvious place although, with the memory of war and destruction so fresh, it might also be the wrong place. At Dino Milinović's suggestion, Peter Stone and Robert Layton flew to Croatia in April 1997 and met with the Croatian Minister for Culture. Milinović was present, and outlined WAC's scope and aims at the start of the meeting. Stone and Layton described the background to the conference, and stressed the need for any organization hosting a WAC meeting to agree to adhere to WAC's statutes, allowing free and full discussion of any issue, and the need to let participants of any national or ethnic affiliation attend. The minister agreed to accept these conditions. He promised to provide funding for the conference through the Croatian Archaeological Society, who would be designated the conference's local organizer. The Croatian Archaeological Society also undertook to adhere to WAC's statutes.

The Croatian Government's generous support enabled WAC to use the bulk of conference fees to assist participants from the Third World to attend. The Inter-Congress took place on the island of Brač from 3–7 May 1998. The government and the society adhered to their commitment, despite the inclusion of two papers critical of the conduct of Croats in the recent war, one of which is included in this volume (Barakat *et al.*). Four papers were given at the conference in defence of the prior existence of a temple on the site of the mosque at Ayodhya (one is included

here, by B.B. Lal); and three against (Sharma's is included in this volume). Rao and Reddy's chapter explains the political background to the mosque's destruction and examines its reporting in the Indian press.

We especially thank Professor Ante Rendić-Miočević, President of the Croatian Archaeological Society, who organized the funding of the conference, Dino Milinović, who made enormous efforts to ensure all participants were admitted to Croatia despite problems in obtaining visas in their home countries, Robin Evans, Director of the British Council in Croatia, who provided further financial support for the conference, and Branko Kirigin of Split Archaeological Museum, the local conference organizer.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF AYODHYA

The *Ramayana* probably dates to the first millennium BC (Keay 2000: 4, 44). Rama's capital was Ayodhya. The account of his rule in the *Ramayana* became the ideal that many historic leaders have aimed to realize. Ayodhya itself became the ideal capital, and was reproduced in many subsequently Aryanized state systems, such as the pre-Bangkok capital of Thailand ('Ayuthia') and the senior sultanate of central Java (Jogjakarta, derived from Javanese rendering of Ayodhya) (ibid.: 46–7). Lal's excavations demonstrated that Ayodhya was first occupied during the Painted Grey Ware period of north Indian pre-history, which spans the period from about 700 to 400 BC (Habib 1998: 20–1). The geographical distribution of the painted grey ware corresponds approximately to the distribution of sites mentioned in the earlier, but culturally related *Mahabharata* epic (ibid.: 42).

The timing of Ayodhya's reoccupation is significant for the debate concerning the former existence of a temple marking Rama's birthplace. Lal dated the reoccupation to the eleventh century. The initial Islamic conquests in India were achieved under Turkish leadership, from the year 1206. These leaders became known as the Delhi Sultans, and they destroyed many Hindu temple complexes (Keay 2000: 213, 241). Babur (Zahir-ud-din Muhammad) was the first of the Mughal emperors of India (289), defeating the Delhi Sultanate in 1525.

In 1838 a British surveyor, Montgomery Martin, expressed the view that the pillars in the mosque had been taken from a Hindu temple. The carvings on the pillars are, it is argued, securely dated to the eleventh century and the brick pillar-bases must therefore date from the same period. If the pillars date from the eleventh century, they cannot be Buddhist or Jain (as some critics have claimed), but must be Hindu (Ramachandran n.d., part 2: 17). The mosque is built of brick and lime. Several large pieces of stone incorporated in the walls of the mosque must, it is argued, therefore have come from the temple.

During the campaign to destroy the mosque and (re)build a temple, a group of Indian archaeologists claimed to have discovered further evidence for the temple (Sharma *et al.* 1992). A 'hoard' of about twelve pieces of stone sculptures was reportedly found in a large pit about 8.8 metres from the mosque. About 9 metres south-east of the mosque four layers of floor were uncovered. The lowest was

made of brick. A brick wall of about sixteen courses was also revealed. The wall had been disturbed by two pits, both sealed by floor 3 (see plates on pp. 3, 4 and 12 of Sharma *et al.* 1992). These finds were cited as evidence for a 'pre-Islamic' building which had suffered massive destruction (Sharma *et al.* 1992: 13). It has also been claimed that further stone objects were found during destruction of the mosque. Some were reportedly sealed within the walls while others were said to have been discovered 220 metres south-west of the mosque. Of the first group, the most significant was a stone plaque carrying an inscription recording the construction of a temple dedicated to Rama (see Lal, this volume).

The archaeological argument against the temple can be summarized as follows. According to S.P. Gupta, quoted in Ramachandran (Ramachandran n.d., part 2), pieces of Islamic medieval glazed ware with a white base and blue floral paintings were found in Lal's excavation around the pillar-bases. These date from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. They are the only artefacts available to date the pillar-bases, and the obvious inference is that the pillar-bases date from the same period, in other words, the period of the Delhi Sultanate. There is only stylistic and not archaeological evidence to support the claim that the pillar-bases date from the eleventh century (Mandal 1993: 20, 26–7). In fact, if the brick structures excavated by Lal are the foundations for pillars, they must be intrusive in, and therefore later than, the Delhi Sultanate archaeological layers in which they were found.

The brick pillar-bases excavated by Lal are not constructed of whole bricks but of broken bricks (brickbats). Mandal (1993) argues that they are not aligned and may be fragments of walls of rooms from different archaeological horizons (Lal, this volume, criticizes Mandal's interpretation). There are no photographs of the excavation of the pit that was reported to contain a hoard of stone sculptures. The second plate in Y.D. Sharma *et al.* (1992) shows a group of workmen wielding hoes, standing around a pile of six or seven sculpted fragments, partially sitting in a circular hole, but free of any soil or debris. Sharma *et al.* illustrate twelve pieces they report were found in the pit. Mandal agrees with R.S. Sharma that they are 'a curious assortment ... typical of various places, and of periods ranging from the seventh to the sixteenth century AD' (see Sharma's chapter, this volume). If the stone objects really are fragments of a large stone temple destroyed to build the mosque, why is all the evidence confined to one pit (Mandal 1993: 47)? About 340 square metres of the area around the mosque site have been excavated. No stone objects were found in association with the brick floor or walls published by Sharma *et al.* (1992); indeed the excavated evidence strongly suggests the structures that existed previous to the mosque were of brick, not stone (Mandal 1993: 48). No sculptures were found during Lal's excavations. The further stone objects said to have been discovered during destruction of the mosque were not found under controlled archaeological conditions: 'The area was crowded with a frenzied mob adamant on breaking every single brick of the structure' (*ibid.*: 50). Mandal also comments it seems odd that, if Babur really destroyed a temple to Rama, he should have placed a statue of Rama and the inscription intact, sealed in the walls of his mosque.

Documentary evidence for the existence of a temple standing on Rama's birth-place comes in part from the Skanda Purana, which refers to the existence of a

shrine at the birthplace of Rama. The Skanda Purana may date from the seventh to fourteenth centuries AD (Grover and Grover 1998). A number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European writers record the traditional association of Rama with buildings ranging from a fortress to a shrine at Ayodhya (see below). The oldest reported account of the destruction of a temple marking Rama's birthplace in order to construct the mosque was the *Sahifa-I-Chihil Nasaih Bahadur Shahi*, said to have been written in Persian in the early eighteenth century (Grover and Grover 1998). The original manuscript has not been traced, but it was copied by Mirza Jan in 1856. The Muslim Prime Minister of the Province of Awadh also mentioned this document while discussing riots with Major General Outram in 1855, saying the original book was in the Awadh royal archives. In 1921, an English author, Mrs Beveridge, translated Babur's autobiography from Turkish into English. In an appendix, she stated that Babur had destroyed an ancient temple marking the birthplace of Rama in order to build his mosque (Sharma *et al.* 1994: 58).

The documentary arguments against the prior existence of a temple point to an inscription on the wall of the Babri mosque. This recorded the mosque was built in AH 935 (AD 1528–9). It states, 'This descending place of the angels was built by the fortunate noble Mir Baqi In accordance with the wishes of the ruler of the world, Babur' (Sharma *et al.* 1994: 57). Babur's memoirs record that Mir Baqi was at that time governor of Awadh (Ayodhya). There is no reference in Mir Baqi's inscription to the destruction of a temple.

The Indian author Tulsidas composed his *Ramcharitmanas* in praise of Rama in 1575–6, within fifty or so years of the construction of the Babri mosque. He does not mention the destruction of a temple at the birthplace of Rama, although it would have occurred within his own lifetime (Sharma *et al.* 1994: 58). Abul Fazl, in his *A'in-I-Akbari*, completed in AD 1598, included Ayodhya among the important places of pilgrimage in India. He described it as the residence of Rama, but did not mention a temple associated with his birthplace.

William Finch visited Ayodhya some time during the years 1608 to 1611. He described ruins identified as Rama's castle and houses. Finch wrote: 'In these ruins remayne certaine Bramenes, who record the names of all such Indians as wash themselves in the river running thereby; which custome, they say, hath continued foure lackes of yeers (which is three hundred ninetic four thousand and five hundred yeeres before the world's creation)' (Finch 1968: 176, quoted in Sharma *et al.* 1994: 59–60). Finch describes a cave two miles from Ayodhya, where it is said Rama's ashes were buried, but he did not mention Rama's birthplace, nor a temple-site.

Joseph Tieffenthaler (1710–85) was the first to suggest the Babri mosque stood near a site associated with Rama's birthplace. His account was translated from the French by Johann Barnoulli in 1788. Tieffenthaler stated that Aurangzeb, last of the six Mughal emperors, 'got demolished the fortress called Ramcot, and erected on the same place a Mahometan temple'. He describes the twelve columns of black stone 'which now bear the interior arcades of the mosque It is related that these columns, or rather the debris of these columns were brought from Lanka (called Ceylon by the Europeans) by Hanumann, king of the monkeys' (Barnoulli 1788,

quoted in Sharma *et al.* 1994: 61). Aurangzeb died in 1707 (Keay 2000: 329). Barnoulli described a mud platform, covered with lime, five inches high, five inches long and four inches wide, near the mosque, which the Hindus describe as the birthplace of Rama. The Hindus say ‘there was a house in which (Vishnu) took the form of Ram, and his three brothers are also said to be born. Subsequently Aurangzeb, or according to others, Babur, razed this place down, in order not to give the Gentiles (Hindus) occasion to practice their superstitions. However, they have continued to follow their superstitious practices in both places The two places are surrounded by a low wall’ (Sharma *et al.* 1994: 62). Twenty years later, in 1810, Francis Buchanan visited Ayodhya and recorded the tradition that it was a temple dedicated to Rama, not a house, that Aurengzebe destroyed.

Sharma *et al.* (1994) argue these successive records reveal the claim that Babur destroyed a temple to Rama took shape during the course of the eighteenth century. Later, Muslims seem to have taken up the legend, and ‘to claim with pride that at Ayodhya mosques had indeed been built after the destruction of temples on the sites of Hindu holy places’ (*ibid.*: 63). This led to a serious clash between Hindus and Muslims at Ayodhya in 1855. Mirza Jan wrote in 1855–6 under the shadow of that clash. He claims that forty years before (1816), he had read a tract by a Persian princess (the *Sahifa-I-Chihil Nasaih Bahadur Shahi*), describing the destruction of Hindu temples at Ayodhya and elsewhere, and quotes from it. But the work has not been located. Thus, in the opinion of Sharma *et al.*, the legend of the temple’s destruction only became common property in the mid-nineteenth century.

The archaeological debate identifies a number of crucial questions. What is the significance of the ‘pillar-bases’ excavated by Professor Lal? What is the origin of the pillars built into the wall of the mosque? Are the designs carved on them distinctively Hindu, or might they be Jain and Buddhist in origin? Do they form a unity, or are they heterogeneous in origin? Is the additional material allegedly found shortly before and during destruction of the mosque genuine, or was it brought from elsewhere? Is the Hindu inscription genuine? These questions are addressed in Lal’s and Sharma’s contributions to this volume.

THE POLITICS OF AYODHYA

The claim that a temple to Rama once stood on the site of Babur’s mosque does not explain why the temple was demolished by an angry mob. The political background to the temple’s destruction is outlined in Rao and Reddy’s contribution to this book. They locate the significance of the dispute at Ayodhya in Hindu nationalism; the campaign to destroy the mosque was part of the Hindu Nationalist Party’s rise to power. It contributed to the BJP’s eventual victory over the Congress Party-led government that had been in office at the time of the third World Archaeological Congress. Rao and Reddy trace the origins of modern Hindu nationalism to the struggle for independence against the British. Wijesuriya’s chapter makes a similar link between the revival of Sri Lankan Buddhism and the campaign for independence. The Hindu nationalist campaign was reinvigorated

during the 1980s and 90s, when the Congress Party's economic liberalization held out the promise of better jobs at higher salaries for some, but threatened to dismantle many of the earlier forms of social security.

Butler's contribution implicitly points to this phenomenon. While globalization is creating an integrated world economy, so that many more communities are becoming familiar with 'the experience of modern life' (Berman 1982: *passim*), this modernization need not always imply Westernization (Gray 1995: 168). In his chapter, Stewart draws a parallel between the Hindu Nationalist position on Ayodhya and the Greek Orthodox Church's opposition to state plans for the Roman Rotonda in Thessaloniki. Stewart argues that the church's campaign against conservation of the Rotonda as a secular monument was part of resistance to the absorption (and secularization) of Greece into the European Union. Stewart rightly argues the Ayodhya dispute should be interpreted foremost as Hindu nationalist opposition to the secularism of the Indian State. Muslims were challenged because the state would protect them. When the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gained independence in September 1991 and expressed the intention to call itself Macedonia, ultra-nationalists argued this was unacceptable to Greece. This single issue galvanized the electorate, just as the destruction of the Babri mosque polarized the Indian electorate.

Some Indian archaeologists, including Nandini Rao, argue that by entering the debate about the former existence of a temple at Ayodhya others had effectively accepted the argument that *if* there were once a temple, that *in itself* would justify destruction of the mosque. An Indian archaeologist unable to attend the Brač conference later wrote to one of us: 'The archaeological issue of the previous existence or nonexistence of a temple of any kind at Ayodhya is wholly irrelevant to the political one There are no pure "archaeological" arguments on either side. The right wing lobby wanted to prove the presence of a temple in order to provide a historical credibility to the political demand of the very same people for removing the mosque. The left wing, on the other hand, instead of pitching its argument on the basic nature of the Indian republic, its secular and democratic nature, cried itself hoarse in proving that there was no temple there. This shortsighted strategy is very dangerous Large numbers of people at the grass root level ... are genuinely, even now, ... pluralistic in their worldviews. They, in so many different ways, recognize and respect the heterogeneous cultural traditions and histories that this sub-continent has thrown up'.

Rao and Reddy show with chilling clarity the risk to archaeology of becoming caught up in communal violence, and the role of the press in encouraging that violence. Stewart (Chapter 14) describes how, at a crucial moment in the dispute over how the Rotonda of Thessaloniki should be used, Canon Tassias took the microphone and declared: 'They tell us that Thessaloniki is a multi-historical city. If they mean that many conquerors passed through here, then I agree. But the Orthodox character of the city was never altered'.

Some of the monuments described in the volume bear witness to the complexity of local cultural history. Edwards (Chapter 17) describes how Muslims demolished the Visigothic church of St Vincent and reused it in construction of the first

mosque. Córdoba Cathedral was in turn built around the later Moorish mosque. Was there ever an authentic, ‘culminating’ period in the history of Córdoba, Edwards asks, or had change been continuous? The Rotonda of Thessaloniki was built by the Emperor Galerius in the first decade of the fourth century AD. At some point between the late fourth century and the early sixth century the Rotonda was transformed into a Christian church. In 1591 the Rotonda was taken over by the Ottomans, who had conquered the city in 1430, and turned into a mosque. After the Ottoman period it was briefly reconverted into a church but in 1917 it was declared a national monument and turned into a museum.

Monuments which embody evidence of the complex ethnic and religious history of a region stand in the way of nationalist politicians and advocates of ethnic purity. Mbunwe-Samba (Chapter 3) describes how the dominant French-speaking politicians of Cameroon have deliberately looted, destroyed or allowed colonial monuments in the English-speaking part of the country to decay. Greek nationalists were unwilling to accept the mixed history of Thessaloniki – and that the recent ancestors of many inhabitants spoke a Slavic language. Hindu nationalists continue to deny the artistic and architectural contribution of Islam to Indian culture. When Serbians invaded north-west Croatia, they targeted Catholic churches and, in particular, the registers of births, marriages and deaths within, that recorded long-term Croatian residence (cf. Tanner 1997: 278). When Stone and Layton met with the Croatian Minister for Culture, the minister said that he had opposed the Croatian government’s decision physically to identify Croatian cultural sites at the beginning of the war: he had argued that this would render them potential targets. As it turned out, he had been proven correct. Sites identified by the Croatians as of cultural importance had been specifically targeted by opposing armies (see Šulc, this volume).

THE ETHNIC STATE AND FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The traces of the past may be used to construct narratives, establish connections with place and support contemporary identities, whether they are authenticated by archaeologists or not. It is arguable that the notion of a bounded, internally homogeneous ethnic group with sovereign control over a defined area of territory is no more than an image of the modern Western nation-state, anachronistically imposed upon the past (Jones 1996). Olsen (this volume, Chapter 4) suggests there are times when a ‘strategic essentialism’ can be of some benefit. For instance, in the case of many land claims made by native peoples, Western law codes demand that a community should be able to demonstrate the unbroken continuity of their existence and occupation of a given area since pre-colonial times (Clifford 1988). Arguably, this imposes the terms of modern Western epistemology upon the native community, and requires that they should accept the notion of the bounded ethnic-territorial group in order to secure access to their own land. The double bind here is that, if we accept this essentialism in support of the interests of a subaltern group, we strengthen the claim that the ethnic-territorial group is a

'natural' and universal political entity. The deliberate destruction of mosques, churches, museums, civil records, monuments and artefacts in the Balkans suppresses the evidence of a culturally diverse and hybrid past, in favour of a mythical 'golden age' of ethnic uniformity (Hall 1998).

The growing scepticism toward universal histories (see for example Lyotard 1984: xxiv) has resulted in a widespread acceptance that different communities and interest groups will each craft their own past, just as there are potentially many different interpretations of events that happen in the present. Particularly in the case of Native American and Native Australian communities, it is evident that the imposition of a scientifically sanctioned 'history of mankind' has effectively represented an aspect of colonialism, a suppression of non-Western knowledge. In this volume, a very diverse range of motivations are demonstrated for preserving or destroying monuments and artefacts, simply because different communities maintain very different relationships with their own pasts. We suggest that this indicates that any set of universal principles for the conservation of cultural property must be problematic, and that the very notion of a 'world heritage' defined on universal criteria is in some senses a troubling one. We advocate a celebration of the diversity of the human past(s), and the increasing empowerment of communities to investigate and elaborate their own pasts. However, we are mindful that any such relinquishment of the certainties of modernist rationalism carries with it the possible accusation of a retreat into a post-modern relativism (for example Yoffee and Sherratt 1993). We are also aware, moreover, that in practice the forging of multiple pasts has been connected with the resurgence of racism, fascism, sexism, religious fundamentalism and various other forms of intolerance. How is it possible to do away with the notion of a universal and readily accessible truth about the past, while still wishing to condemn those accounts of the past which are mendacious or calculated to generate hatred and violence?

To explain the breakdown of Yugoslavia into smaller nation-states during the 1990s, and the widespread destruction of cultural property that it unleashed, the very complex historical background must be outlined. The following, very summary history of Croatia is taken from Tanner (1997) and Guldescu (1964). Other histories begin from different starting points and interpret political coalitions from different perspectives (for example Denich 1994).

The medieval state of Croatia enjoyed a relatively brief period of independence. Croats settled in Dalmatia in the seventh century AD and during the eighth century three small Croatian states existed, one on the Dalmatian coast, one to the south, and one on Pannonian Plain, inland from Dalmatia and including the site of Croatia's modern capital Zagreb. In AD 800 the Franks under Charlemagne brought the Croats into the orbit of the Catholic Church. After defeating the Bulgars in 855, the Croatian leader Trpimir styled himself 'Duke of all the Croats', but full Croatian unity dates from the reign of Petar Krešimir around 1069. The last king of Croatia was, however, defeated by the Hungarians less than thirty years later, in 1097. When the city of Zadar capitulated in 1105, the independent Croatian kingdom came to an end. Croatia agreed to a union with Hungary, in which Croatia's political identity was protected by the *Sabor*, or Croatian assembly. The

Sabor was composed of bishops, members of the Hungarianized aristocracy and representatives of major cities. It saw its job as defending the rights of Croatia set down in the pact of union with Hungary. The *Sabor* continued to exist until the early twentieth century, and sustained a continuing Croatian identity. Bosnia achieved semi-independence from Croatia after 1180, reducing Croatia to its present arc-shape.

The medieval kingdom of Serbia was defeated by the Ottoman Turks at the battle of Kosovo in 1389 and the Ottomans went on to defeat Bosnia between 1451 and 1463. The Ottomans ruled Serbia for more than 500 years. Under the Ottomans Serbs were able to keep their orthodox Christianity, but Catholics in Bosnia were persecuted because they were seen as supporters of Western powers. 'Many Christians in Bosnia converted to Islam over the course of several generations. But others refused and emigrated from Bosnia to Croatia' (Tanner 1997: 30). The union of Croatia and Hungary ended with Ottoman defeat of a joint force in 1521. In 1527, Croatians elected the Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand as their king, in the hope of gaining continued protection from the Ottomans. The document of allegiance to the Habsburgs was sealed with the first known use of the Croatian chequerboard coat of arms (*ibid.*: 35).

The idea of appealing to fellow Slavs to unite against both the Habsburgs and the Ottomans developed as early as the sixteenth century, when it was promoted by Croatian clergy. Serbia regained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century and Serbian nationalists sought to extend Serbia to encompass the other southern Slavs still under Ottoman or Austrian domination (Denich 1994). Croatian support for unity with Serbia gained new impetus in the early twentieth century. To counter the threat of the partition of Croatia, if Austria lost its war in the Balkans in 1914, three Croatians established a 'Yugoslav Committee' to campaign for unity. The committee issued a manifesto declaring 'The Yugoslavs form a single nation, alike by their identity of language, by the unanswerable laws of geography and by their national consciousness' (Tanner 1997: 115). However, southern Slav unity suffered from a fatal asymmetry created by Serbia's emergence as the first state to regain independence. Serbs used the Yugoslav Committee's campaign as an excuse to amalgamate Croatia into a larger Serbia (Denich 1994: 372–3; Tanner 1997: 115). As one Croatian politician put it in 1928, 'Right up to 1918 we lived under the guidance of native Croatian officials. The four main internal departments of government were housed in Zagreb ... Now ... those government departments are in Belgrade' and every post is reserved for Serbs (Tanner 1997: 127). The Croatian leader Radić was shot and killed the same year by a radical Serb. In response, other radicals formed the Ustashe Croatian Revolutionary Organization. The Ustashe was exiled to Italy.

The Ustashe gained power by the worst possible means. In 1941 Germany declared war on Yugoslavia. Ustashe supporters rebelled against their officers and, with Nazi support, proclaimed Croatian independence. Thirty per cent of wartime Croatia's inhabitants were Serbs. The Ustashe tolerated Muslims, accepting them as Croatians, but there were mass killings of Serbs in dozens of towns and countless villages. Estimates of the number of Serbs killed range from 50 000 to 600 000

(Tanner 1997: 152). Tanner nonetheless insists the Ustashe lacked broad Croatian support; its members came from a limited area. Its atrocities alienated the church. Most intellectuals were Communists.

Hammel (1997) argues the post-Second World War Communist regime in Yugoslavia came closer to a long-term solution to southern Slav unity than any recent power in the region. It treated allegiance to the Communist Party as the key to success, attempting to create a universal 'church' and suppress ethnic chauvinism. The flaw in Tito's policy was 'the continuing penetration of the positions of power and control by Serbs, although probably to a lesser degree than under the [pre-war] Serbian monarchy' (ibid.: 6). As inter-ethnic conflict increased only raw power could hold Yugoslavia together, and that power was typically represented by Serb officials.

ORDER AND ANARCHY

There are several ways of analysing the breakdown of mutual trust. In his study of the evolution of co-operation Axelrod (1990) showed that for reciprocity to persist, people must not only have experience of each other as trustworthy partners in previous social exchanges, but must anticipate that they will remain dependent on one another indefinitely. If partners in mutual aid know they are participating for the last time, and will not depend on each other for further co-operation, they will have no incentive to give their time and resources to help others and will withdraw into selfishness (ibid.: 10–13). The breakdown of mutual trust can also be interpreted as the consequence of moving from a non-zero sum game to a zero sum game. If everyone's wellbeing can be enhanced by co-operation, they have a strong motive to work together (a non-zero sum game). If resources are perceived to be fixed, then conflict will break out in the scramble to secure the largest portion for oneself (see the classic anthropological application of this theory in Barth 1959, 1966). The trick performed by ethnic or nationalist extremists is to convince members of a multi-ethnic community that they can dispense with each other's help in the future and instead fight for the largest share of limited resources by claiming an inalienable, primordial entitlement.

After the Yugoslav Communist Party was disbanded in January 1990, nationalism came to the fore. Serbs recalled the wartime atrocities of the Ustashe, pointing to the fact that Tudjman, the Croatian leader, had revived the chequerboard Croatian flag last flown by the Ustashe. Croats countered by recalling massacres and forced relocations of Croats perpetuated by the wartime Serb Chetniks, and the killing of tens of thousands of anti-Communist refugees turned back at the Austrian border by the British Army (Denich 1994: 379; Tanner 1997: 160). As Denich writes: 'Conflicts over various issues in shifting localities were symbolically manipulated to polarize public opinion along the lines of resurgent ethnic identities'. Nationalists seized upon 'the random constellations that create opportunities for those who lurk off-stage with alternate scripts' (Denich 1994: 369).

People who grew up in post-war Yugoslavia to whom we spoke during or after

the conference, emphasized that they had always thought of themselves as Yugoslavs rather than Serbs or Croats. As Yugoslavian unity broke down, however, so many found it increasingly expedient, not only to secure a national identity, but to increase that nation's share of the limited area of land within former Yugoslavia's borders. Denich quotes a Croatian Serb: 'So long as Yugoslavia's federal structure was emphasized, we didn't raise questions about national [Serb or Croatian] consciousness and national institutions. We considered Yugoslavia to be our state But now that there are fewer and fewer Yugoslavs and more and more Croats, Slovenians, Serbs, Albanians and so on, we realized that we Serbs in Croatia need to return to our own national identity' (Denich 1994: 377).

It was in this context that the Serbs invading Croatia sought to eradicate cultural property signalling Croatian identity in the landscape (Šulc in this volume, Chapter 12) while, within a few months, Bosnian Croats were destroying Muslim property in the part of Bosnia-Herzegovina they hoped to (re)integrate into Croatia (see Tanner 1997: 285–94 and Barakat and Wilson, this volume). Yet ethnic conflict need not lead to the destruction of cultural property. Bender's chapter analyzes the complex and cross-cutting notions of historical identity in Northern Ireland that enabled Protestants and Catholics to unite in a successful campaign to prevent damage to the hillfort of Navan. Folorunso demonstrates how proper publicity attracted widespread interest in the excavation of an abandoned Nigerian town whose destruction occurred during an ethnic conflict that has all too poignant resonances with current ethnic rivalry in Nigeria. We particularly recommend Barakat and Wilson's description of how Bosnian Croats and Muslims were induced to return to co-operation during the reconstruction of Bosnia after the recent war.

CONSERVATION

Is there a danger that archaeological conservation commits the same fallacy as nationalists, although in a more muted form? The visit conference participants made to Diocletian's Palace provided an excellent example of a 'living monument' that is still inhabited. The houses and squares built within and along the Roman remains form the heart of the modern town of Split, where buildings of all periods have been allowed to co-exist (see Čače *et al.*, Chapter 18 on the complexity of Dalmatian archaeology). In his chapter, Edwards notes that the nineteenth-century restoration of the Muslim heritage at Córdoba removed some later additions. Was it at this point that conservation replaced organic growth, he asks? Wijesuriya asks whether the Buddhists who restored Sri Lankan stupas were vandals, or reinvigorating an ancient, continuing tradition. Wijesuriya points to a parallel debate in Victorian England between the Camden Society, whose policy was to demolish post-medieval accretions to churches and restore their original form, and Ruskin, who decried the inauthenticity of the restorations (cf. Emerick, Chapter 21).

In his contribution, Stewart argues that the Greek State's treatment of the Rotonda demonstrates the nationalist priority of Greece's Hellenic (ancient) roots over its Byzantine and Christian heritage, thereby provoking the church's

opposition. Lahiri examines the restoration of Indian monuments under Curzon. Confronted with cases where Buddhists and Hindus made use of the same shrines, Curzon's policy was to 'purify' use by returning it to its original, exclusively Buddhist pattern. This, as Lahiri writes, was an agenda that could view the pious Hindus as 'desecrators'. Emerick looks at how Curzon brought the methods he had developed in India back to Britain, 'freezing' ancient monuments in time.

Archaeology embodies the contradictions of modernity. As Bjørnar Olsen demonstrates in his chapter, archaeology aspires to the idealized objectivity of science, but from its earliest origins it has been implicated in the activities of nation-states. In documenting 'purified spatial identities' archaeology has often promoted the myth of a 'golden age' of ethnic purity which stands as the origin of the modern state. However, while this means of documenting the continuity of identity from the past into the present has been a powerful support in the forging of national communities, the past and its traces can also play a role in the identity politics of subordinate groups. In contemporary Britain the pre-historic monument of Stonehenge and its surrounding landscape are in the care of English Heritage and the National Trust, bodies whose very nomenclature suggest an imperative to celebrate the collective past of the nation. This imperative sometimes finds itself at odds with local government, the road-building lobby and local archaeological groups. Moreover, the site also plays an important role in the practices and origin-stories of Druids, Celtic nationalists, environmental campaigners and New Age travellers (Bender 1998: 112). Effectively, the site becomes a contested point at which a series of incommensurate visions of Britain (or England, or Albion) intersect. Of course, archaeologists have an active role to play in the debate over the future display and explanation of Stonehenge, but this brings with it the uncomfortable implication that in pronouncing on the structure and history of the site one is effectively discriminating between a series of identity-claims.

In this context, the extensive (and growing) literature on Holocaust denial may be instructive. In discussions of the 'truth' of history (see for example Evans 1997; McCullagh 1998) the issue of the German genocide of the Jews of Europe during the 1940s is sometimes deployed as a kind of 'trump card' against relativism (Finney 1998: 359). It is suggested that any dissent from the view that history is singular, and composed of a series of unambiguous facts that can be grasped in their entirety by the historian, actually aids the cause of Holocaust-deniers. Holocaust denial involves a series of arguments to the effect that the Shoah did not happen at all. They argue the relevant evidence has been fabricated, or its extent has been greatly exaggerated, so that as an event the Holocaust is of no more consequence than the atrocities perpetrated by all of the other great powers during the Second World War. It is widely recognized that the objective of these arguments is the rehabilitation of Nazism, rendering it a legitimate political position for the future. We take it as axiomatic that this is undesirable. But is the only alternative to Holocaust denial a staunch insistence that the evidence can only support a single global narrative about the past? This argument assumes that once one admits that there is not one past but many, all of which are legitimate, the account submitted by the Holocaust-deniers becomes one such valid past amongst others. By default, this

would award the deniers precisely the status that they desire, as 'the other side of the argument' (Finney 1998: 360; Lipstadt 1994).

Hans Kellner maintains there is extensive verbal testimony and material evidence that conclusively demolishes the case presented by the deniers. But it does not unequivocally tell us about *the* Holocaust, because no one witnessed such a thing (1997: 399). The Holocaust is an interpretive abstraction constructed by historians from the evidence (see White 1997). Its enormity is almost too great for it to be represented in its totality, and threatens to overwhelm the many experiences of suffering from which it has been composed. This is the sense in which there are many pasts, many different voices which cannot necessarily be made to conform to a single seamless pattern.

Similar reasoning can be applied to the destruction and conservation of archaeological remains. It is right and proper that we should recognize the different ways in which communities relate to the material traces of their own pasts. In some cases, this will mean accepting practices that are outrageous to post-Enlightenment scientific inquiry. For instance, we must recognize the right of Native Americans and Australians to rebury the remains of their ancestral dead, which have often been held in Western museums and universities for generations, and to dispose of religious and ceremonial artefacts as they see fit (for example, Hubert 1988). Similarly, the right of Australian Aboriginal communities to repaint rock art motifs is one that we should support. However, this does not commit us to an uncritical acceptance of anything and everything that is said about the past. On the contrary, respecting the right of all peoples to create a past for themselves does not preclude the critical evaluation of the use that is being made of archaeological evidence, and of the political values embedded in accounts of the past. This will particularly be the case where the past is being used as a means of promoting sectional interests, or inciting racial or religious hatred.

These issues are especially significant where a single artefact, structure or location is of importance to more than one living tradition, as in the cases of Stonehenge and Ayodhya. Archaeologists should enter into dialogue with other traditions of understanding the past. It may be that different national and indigenous communities have visions of the past which are entirely incommensurate; we suggest, however, that democracy thrives on conflict and antagonism (Mouffe 1996: 9). The objective of a democratic organization like the World Archaeological Congress should not necessarily be one of resolving all differences, arriving at a homogenized conception of world heritage and its value that can be agreed by all. Rather, it should bring different traditions into a productive exchange, in which each can be enriched without surrendering its identity. Western archaeologists should recognize they have much to learn from a dialogue with other traditions of understanding.

AUTHENTICITY

Can the authenticity of a contemporary identity be judged on the basis of the interpretation of archaeological evidence for the past? This is the vexed question that

Cornelius Holtorf addresses in his chapter (this volume, Chapter 22). Is the authenticity of a site or an artefact something that can be substantiated by the arcane skills of the expert? Does the past that the non-specialist population constructs for itself depend upon the pronouncements of archaeologists? Holtorf refers to Walter Benjamin's (1992) concept of the 'aura', which guarantees the identity of a thing (in the specific case of Benjamin's discussion, a work of art). The aura is a consequence of the contingent existence of a thing in time and space; it is composed of the web of relationships that radiate outward from an entity, rendering it meaningful and warranting its particularity. Benjamin argues that the specificity of a thing is linked to its physical and social history, but he also seems to suggest that the authenticity of artefacts is primarily a function of our own relationship to them. Putting this another way, we might say that what makes an artefact or monument authentic is the way in which people use it in order to establish a form of life (see Heidegger 1971). Benjamin's argument was that the contemplation of things was becoming lost in the modern world, gradually becoming replaced by spectacle, outrage and distraction. This raises the possibility that an 'inauthentic' monument might provide the ground for an 'authentic' mode of existence, while an 'authentic' pre-historic site might offer no such opportunity, if it were presented in a commodified, spectacular manner.

Questioning the notion of authenticity appears scandalous to an archaeology that, in Enlightenment fashion, privileges entities over relationships (see Strathern 1996). Yet it strikes a chord with Martin Hall's description of the kinds of appeal to the past that are substantiated through the materiality of District Six in Cape Town (this volume, Chapter 23). Here, 'cultural property' is less a matter of claiming the ownership of an object than of documenting a relationship with a place and with a particular past. The buildings of District Six were destroyed, but this destruction effected a production of memory, so that the ruined traces that survive are now poignant and charged. Nonetheless, the message that they convey is not unambiguous. The memories that they evoke are not a transparent record of the past, so much as personalized interpretations of experience. None of this, however, implies that the powerful relationships between people, places and artefacts that Hall describes are in any sense 'inauthentic'.

CONCLUSION

During its closing plenary session, the Brač conference passed the following motion almost unanimously:

The conference condemns the use of archaeology to promote ethnic, religious or political conflict and calls on archaeologists worldwide to respect the full complexity of their country's history in the conservation of all aspects of cultural heritage.

The only dissenting votes were from Western archaeologists who felt gender

should also have been mentioned in the motion. Speakers who had been in the thick of the debate subsequently described the conference as ‘extremely enlightening’ (K.M. Shrimali), ‘very hot but very interesting’ (Majeed Khan). The meeting was ‘very well organized’ (Sultan Barakat). Some other participants took a different view. Willy Kitchen argued that the WAC’s goal of dialogue between a full and frank exchange of views and debate between participants of all cultural backgrounds was partially frustrated in Brač by certain participants pursuing political agendas (Kitchen 1998). Michael Tierney asserted

one would have expected that the organizers of the Croatia conference would have been more careful not to provide another [sic] forum for the extreme right wing views witnessed in Delhi ... But because of confusion over how one should deal with right-wing extremists WAC found itself outmanoeuvred once more. ... The question must be raised as to whether one can attempt dialogue with those whose politics are based on the active suppression of dissent.

(*Times* 12 June 1998)

All of this begs the question of how we should proceed in relation to those who deliberately misuse or misrepresent the past for political ends. We accept that all understandings of the past are politically situated, but suggest that the mendacious distortion of evidence, the promotion of inter-communal hatred, or the destruction of artefacts and monuments that are of significance to other communities represent an altogether more serious phenomenon. One response to this problem is simply to refuse to enter into debate with those who manipulate the past. However, this assumes that the definition of a ‘misuse’ of the past is always clear-cut, and that there are firm criteria for deciding whom we should choose to exclude from dialogue. Deborah Lipstadt’s policy of never entering into debate with Holocaust-deniers suggests that the wisdom of such an approach is not beyond question. Even in such an extreme case, where the political agenda of the deniers is so transparent, it is not clear that the benefits of denying them a public forum for rehearsing their views will always outweigh the opportunity to provide them with an equally public rebuttal. In the less clear-cut arena of the identity politics that cohere around pre-historic and historic sites and monuments it is open to question whether anyone is in a position to decide which viewpoints are too extreme to be included in dialogue.

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2 *The uneasy bedfellows: universality and cultural heritage*

HENRY CLEERE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes as its point of departure the basic criterion of ‘outstanding universal value’ prescribed at the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The World Heritage Committee has laid down six detailed criteria to assist the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), its professional adviser on cultural heritage, in evaluating this quality, the application of which has been refined and substantially modified since 1975. It goes on to lay stress on the implicit conflict between the perceptions and aspirations of European and certain Latin-American and Asian countries, which are well endowed with sites and monuments from acknowledged cultural traditions (classical antiquity, pre-Hispanic cultures of Latin America, Renaissance Europe, imperial China), and those whose cultures are predominantly non-monumental (sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania). It highlights aspects of human achievement that are only slowly beginning to be recognized as of universal significance, such as traditional landscapes, vernacular architecture and the industrial heritage.

THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, better known as the World Heritage Convention, was adopted by the seventeenth session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris on 16 November 1972. The first inscriptions on the World Heritage List were made at the meeting of the World Heritage Committee in 1978; since that time the number of World Heritage cultural sites and monuments has risen to 630, in 118 of the 160 states party to the Convention.

In its preamble the Convention, which is very characteristic of the spirit that reigned in the 1960s, recognizes that ‘parts of the ... heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole’ and calls upon ‘the international community as a whole to participate in

the protection of the ... heritage of outstanding value.' Article 1 defines the 'cultural heritage' under three categories:

Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements and structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view.

These definitions were very carefully drafted by those responsible for the Convention, since they are broadly worded and eschew the use of specific terms such as 'town', 'village', 'temple' or 'church'. As a result they can potentially apply to any form of non-movable human achievement.

The fundamental touchstone of 'outstanding universal value' is not defined in the text of the Convention, and so it was the task of the World Heritage Committee, which is composed of twenty-one of the states party to the Convention, to elaborate more detailed criteria in order to make the choice of selection practicable. In their present form, as set out in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO Document WHC-97/2, February 1997), a cultural property (to use the UNESCO term) should:

1. represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; or
2. exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts or town-planning and landscape design, or;
3. bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilization or cultural tradition which is living or which has disappeared, or;
4. be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history, or;
5. be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it had become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change, or;
6. be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion on the list only in exceptional circumstances and in conjunction with other criteria, cultural or natural).

These criteria are used by ICOMOS, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to the protection and conservation of cultural heritage, which is based in Paris, in the evaluation of all cultural nominations. These nominations are considered by the World Heritage Committee, which meets

annually in the first week of December and is responsible for decisions regarding the inscription or otherwise of nominated properties.

It should be stressed that nominations may only be made by central governments: state, regional or local governments or NGOs must submit nominations through their central administration. As part of a global strategy adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 1995, lists of sites and monuments deemed to be of exceptional significance and therefore worthy of consideration for inscription on the list have been prepared by NGOs such as ICOMOS, The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH), and the International Committee for the Documentation of the Modern Movement (DoCoMoMo), but these have no formal status, and are intended only as guidelines for the Committee and for the states party to the Convention.

It has been argued that the concept of 'universality' in relation to the cultural heritage is paradoxical, and logically applicable only to the earliest phases of human cultural evolution, and perhaps also to the global culture of the late twentieth century. Cultural evolution is by its very nature one of diversification. The cultural apparatus and achievements of *Homo erectus* and of the Lower Palaeolithic are generally relatively uniform across the continents, but by the Neolithic distinct and diverging cultural trajectories are clearly apparent, and this process has continued. The cultural value of the Romanesque Duomo of Modena (Italy) may not be recognizable as such to those whose cultural apogee is represented by the wooden Buddhist temple of Horyu-ji (Japan), while to indigenous societies in Australia or New Guinea both would be no more than piles of stones without aesthetic or spiritual significance. Similarly, the sacred nature of a grove in West Africa or a massive monolith such as Uluru can be appreciated by very few people from cultures that accord a special place to the Taj Mahal (India) or the Statue of Liberty (USA).

It is only with the social and economic explosion of the twentieth century that cultural forms have developed that have found acceptance in most parts of the globe, in the work of architects such as Walter Gropius or Frank Lloyd Wright. The Industrial Revolution has also made a contribution to universality, in the form of engineering and technological masterpieces of bridge design and construction or the spanning of continents by railways.

The concept of universality as used in the text of the Convention and its preamble is not easy to define. There appears to be an implicit assumption that there are values that transcend regional and chronological distinctions, a notion that is deeply rooted in the European cultural tradition, combining historical and aesthetic parameters that derive from classical philosophy. This approach is one that is at odds with anthropological and archaeological theory, which sees universality in human achievement and mastery of the natural environment in its multifarious forms. In these terms diversity in itself is a manifestation of universality and the wealth of that diversity should be given full and equal recognition. The two should go hand in hand, but the World Heritage Convention as it has been implemented until very recently has signally failed to realize this imperative.

THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST IN 2000

An analysis of the 630 sites and monuments inscribed on the World Heritage List under the cultural criteria quoted above shows that 55 per cent of them are situated in European countries. The figure rises to 60 per cent of those in Canada and the USA, which are considered by UNESCO to form a single cultural region with Europe, are added. (The nonsensical nature of this political division in cultural terms is demonstrated by the fact that the North American World Heritage sites include Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, Cahokia and Taos Pueblo in the USA and Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in Canada.) The Asian inscriptions, the bulk of which are represented by sixteen in both China and India, account for 14 per cent, and next come the Latin American/Caribbean region with 12 per cent and the Arab states with 11 per cent. Only 4 per cent are situated in Africa and a mere 1 per cent in Australia and Oceania, both vast regions of enormous cultural diversity and complexity. This imbalance is being perpetuated, and perhaps even accentuated, by the distribution of nominations in recent years: those from European countries have been consistently well over 60 per cent for the past three years, and the 2000 nominations saw no significant modification to that state of affairs.

The largest number of cultural inscriptions from any country is from Italy, with thirty-two to date; it should also be mentioned that the number of properties on the Italian 'tentative list' of properties which are likely to be nominated in the future is over fifty. Italian Culture Minister Walter Veltroni has on more than one occasion stated that 60 per cent of the world's cultural heritage is located in Italy, usually to explain and justify the poor conservation and management of many of the monuments. While this is an extreme statement, it is symptomatic of a Eurocentric perception of cultural heritage, which is reflected in the present composition of the World Heritage List. A study of the nine countries with the largest number of inscriptions is revealing, since seven of these are in Europe.

It will be evident that, for the World Heritage Committee, culture manifests itself principally in the form of archaeological sites and monuments from classical Greece and Rome, European architecture from the later Middle Ages to neo-classicism, and the art and architecture of the Indian sub-continent and imperial China. The pre-Hispanic cultures of Mesoamerica and the Andes also figure strongly, spread over a number of countries, but the European influence is strong in the World Heritage sites and monuments of the Americas, since there are a large number of Spanish and Portuguese colonial towns on the list. Early pre-history tends to be represented only by rock-art sites in Europe, Africa, and America, along with two in Australia (Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta).

In sharp contrast with these favoured regions, the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific region are sparsely represented. In the former case, the situation is even worse than the meagre 4 per cent quoted above might suggest. Cultural monuments of World Heritage quality have been recognized in only eight countries (Bénin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Sénégal, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe), while several of these, with ten others (Cameroun, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinée, Ivory Coast, Kenya,

Madagascar, Niger, Uganda and Zambia), contain World Heritage natural sites. It should be added that several of the cultural sites are not indigenous but early European colonial creations, including the infamous Ile de Gorée (Senegal), centre of the slave trade. In the Pacific region the rock-art of Kakadu (Australia) is seen to possess cultural significance in the 'European' sense. Uluru-Kata Tjuta, however, has only belatedly been recognized as providing precious evidence of a millennial form of land management. Even so, the principal reason for its inscription was its symbolic value for the Aboriginal people; the same holds good for the Tongariro range in New Zealand, sacred to the Maori.

From the foregoing one conclusion must inevitably be drawn. Although the definitions of cultural heritage in the World Heritage Convention are broadly drafted, suggesting that its authors saw this concept as being an all-embracing one, the process of compiling the World Heritage List has proceeded within a more restricted perception, deriving from largely European aesthetic notions relating to monumental cultures. Although most of the world's landscapes are to a considerable extent human artefacts, representing countless generations of human activity and creativity, these have for the most part been ignored, since they lack the monumental elements inseparable in the European mind from the traditional 'cultural heritage'. With rare exceptions, most of them inscribed in the past five years, the World Heritage List is skewed and unrepresentative of the totality – and hence the universality – of human cultural development and achievement.

This is to be observed in its most extreme form in sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific region; it is reproduced in microcosm, however, in the inscribed properties for virtually every European country. These place considerable emphasis on historic towns and town centres, places of worship and other monumental buildings and ensembles, yet for the most part ignore the traditional village settlements and historic landscapes that form the social and economic infrastructure for the conventional 'monuments', and which in many cases have preserved their historical content and integrity more effectively. There are no more than a handful of villages, such as Hollókő (Hungary) and Vlkolánek (Slovakia). Traditional organic landscapes (as distinct from the planned landscapes of eighteenth century England, France, or Italy) are equally rare – those around Hallstatt, in the Salzkammergut (Austria), the Cilento region in southern Italy and the Pyrénées–Mont Perdu region (France and Spain) are very recent additions. By contrast, the numbers of Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals and of historic towns (especially in Spain) are wholly disproportionate: they seem to be added to the list on wholly aesthetic grounds, often reinforced by political pressures.

GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

The first concern must be to concentrate on the non-monumental cultures. The inscription of the spectacular rice-terraces of the Cordillera of central Luzon (Philippines) in 1995 showed the way forward. This was one of the first nominations inspired by the identification and definition of categories of cultural

landscape approved by the Committee in 1992. These are defined as being ‘illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic, and cultural forces, both external and internal’ (UNESCO 1997: paragraph 36). Three categories were identified, the most relevant in this case being the second (*ibid.*: paragraph 39):

the organically evolved landscape. This results from an initial social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative and has developed its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment. Such landscapes reflect that process of evolution in their form and component features. They fall into two sub-categories:

- a relict (or fossil) landscape is one in which an evolutionary process came to an end at some time in the past, either abruptly or over a period. Its significant distinguishing features are, however, still visible in material form.
- a continuing landscape is one which retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress. At the same time it exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution over time.

The relevance of this category of cultural heritage to non-monumental cultures is obvious. The garden agriculture of New Guinea or the various forms of farming practised south of the Sahara (including their relict forms) can provide outstanding examples of this manifestation of human achievement. As with the Philippines rice-terraces, they are complete economic units, comprising human settlements as well as their fields and enclosures. These traditional settlements with their characteristic and highly individualized vernacular architecture should also be seen as having outstanding universal value, comparable with but distinct from that of the medieval towns of Europe.

Landscapes have also been created by other types of society. The impact of a hunter-gatherer community on a natural landscape is vividly demonstrated by that of Uluru-Kata Tjuta (Australia), where millennia of seasonal selective burning of vegetation have produced a controlled vegetative cover that ensures the survival of the inhabitants of one of the most environmentally hostile terrains in the world. Pastoralists practising seasonal transhumance also leave profound traces on a landscape, which to the untrained eye gives the appearance of being wholly natural. The Lapponian area of northern Sweden, where Saami reindeer herds have been brought every summer for many centuries, and the high Pyrénées between France and Spain – the upland pastures for herds of sheep from either side of the modern border between France and Spain – are excellent examples of this type of landscape that have both recently been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Industry, too, leaves profound traces of human achievement. Roman gold-mining in the Las Médulas area of north-western Spain (inscribed on the list in 1997) created what can be compared to a lunar landscape in less than two centuries.

There are comparable landscapes in many other regions, such as south-western England, the Harz Mountains of Germany and the sierras of central Mexico, which testify to human skill and endurance and certainly justify being designated as of 'outstanding universal significance'.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF WORLD HERITAGE LISTING

For developed countries in Europe and those Asian countries with long cultural histories such as China and India, inscription on the World Heritage List represents little more than international recognition of the wealth of cultural properties on their territories. At the present time there is a somewhat unseemly contest between China, France, Germany, India, Italy, and Spain to achieve the largest number of World Heritage inscriptions.

Inscription is significant in many developing countries, however, for other reasons. First, there is access to the World Heritage Fund, resulting from the subscriptions paid by states party to the Convention (in the form of 1 per cent of their UNESCO contributions). Some US\$ 3 million is available annually, to finance technical assistance and training projects. While this is notionally available to all member states, the level of funding is such that the policy of the Committee has been to confine such grants largely to Third World countries.

A more fundamental implication of World Heritage listing in such countries is to raise the public profile of the heritage generally. Awareness on the part of governments and citizens alike of the international esteem accorded to one or two sites or monuments has often been seen to result in greater consideration being given to other manifestations of the cultural heritage and a general rise in the level of protection and conservation afforded to them.

A recent phenomenon has been the development of bilateral aid projects between developed and developing countries resulting from World Heritage List inscription. An outstanding example is the aid now being provided to the ancient city of Luang Prabang (Laos) by France, and more specifically the town of Chinon.

For many years the World Heritage Committee has been conscious of the need to ensure that the qualities that justified initial inscription of properties on the list are maintained by those member states on whose territories they are located. Natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes and the impact of war have put a number of properties in jeopardy: Islamic Cairo (Egypt) and the pre-Hispanic site of Tierradentro (Colombia) come within the first category and Dubrovnik (Croatia) in the latter. Prompt action has been taken by means of the provision of emergency technical assistance, and in extreme cases sites have been put on the list of World Heritage in Danger, for which special provision is made.

Every year the Committee receives reports from various sources, including the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, on deterioration or damage to World Heritage properties or inappropriate intrusions. Expert missions are dispatched to prepare evaluations of the state of conservation and the Committee reacts vigorously, reserving the options of transfer to the 'List in Danger' or even

removal from the list entirely as sanctions. Examples of recent interventions by the Committee have been directed towards the poor management and conservation of the historic centre of Kathmandu (Nepal) and proposals for the construction of a chairlift at Machu Picchu (Peru). The potential of this form of international evaluation and condemnation of all kinds of activity that are inimical to the conservation and protection of the cultural heritage should not be underrated. It has achieved some notable successes, such as the abandonment of the ill-conceived plan to drive a motorway across the Gizeh plateau (Egypt), which would have had a disastrous impact on the setting of the Pyramids, or that for an aluminium smelting plant close to the classical site of Delphi (Greece).

Actions of this kind have always been purely reactive, initiated by local or professional reports to the Committee. The need has long been seen for a programme of systematic periodic reporting on the state of conservation of all the sites and monuments on the World Heritage List. However, certain countries have for a long time opposed the concept, which they have interpreted as usurping their rights as sovereign states, and this programme is only now being put into operation. Its effectiveness in the coming decades will be a crucial test for the Convention and its credibility.

CONCLUSION

The 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention is an effective mechanism for the protection of the best and most representative elements of the world's cultural heritage. It is encouraging that the World Heritage Committee and its advisory body, ICOMOS, are now by means of the global strategy of 1995 beginning to interpret the criterion of 'outstanding universal value' in a more holistic manner than hitherto. What has in the past been seen by some as a paradoxical situation, in which 'universality' appeared to be incompatible with the essential diversity of human culture, is beginning to be recognized as a misinterpretation due in some measure to the Eurocentric nature of earlier approaches to the Convention. If this new attitude is maintained and extended, as seems very probable, the World Heritage List will gradually assume its proper cultural and geographical dimensions, embracing the whole gamut of human achievement.

The introduction of a systematic programme of reporting on the state of conservation of World Heritage sites and monuments, coupled with continuation of the existing procedures for reactive reporting on those where proposed activities may threaten those values for which they were originally inscribed on the World Heritage List, should provide an effective means of conserving them for future generations.

3 *Should developing countries restore and conserve?*

PATRICK MBUNWE-SAMBA

INTRODUCTION

In many countries of the world responsible governments, conscious of the prime importance of their cultural heritage, have identified and designated archaeological sites, artefacts, material culture, material remains, art and architectural monuments as public property. These governments have created institutions such as English Heritage in Britain, the National Service of the US Department of the Interior and the Secretariat of Fine Arts in France, to manage their priceless treasures for humanity and preserve them for posterity. The need for preservation is so vital that UNESCO, one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, has to advise governments on how to restore and preserve national monuments. It has actually moved fast to save certain archaeological treasures in some countries from destruction and has assisted in locating and declaring some national monuments as World Heritage Sites, thus helping reluctant governments not to destroy their national patrimony.

These 'rescue operations' have been going on for centuries in very advanced economies, for decades in some developed societies and for a few years in some less-developed countries that have finally come to see the need to preserve and restore their national antiquities.

But in many Third World countries, it hasn't yet dawned on some governments that the restoration and preservation of their cultural property is important, let alone useful and/or financially beneficial. Faced with an array of monumental problems, some self-inflicted, some self-perpetuating and others imposed on them, some of these nations, particularly those with extremely poor leadership, have lived a life of foolhardiness and expediency. Being totally unable to feed their populations, with infrastructure and communications virtually non-existent, there is generalized poverty, and the countries are ravaged by hunger and disease. These societies are rife with corruption, war-mongering, tribalism, nepotism and inefficiency. To crown it all weak leaders, in order to continue to 'rule' for the benefit of their metropolitan masters, hold their own people hostage to preserve their personal power. Worse still, many NGOs and multi-lateral organizations scheme to

exact their pound of flesh. Instead of trying to see how we can begin to address all these issues and in particular our basic survival needs, they ask if we should divert our attention to what is termed 'leisure civilization', which is being perpetuated by an élite that has acquired Western tastes and value systems. This chapter, while looking at the two contrasting situations outlined above, will attempt to look critically at the conservation or restoration of cultural properties in ex-British Southern Cameroons which united with ex-French East Cameroun in 1961.¹ It will examine whether or not there were any national monuments in this part of the Republic, and if so what has happened to them. It will examine whether or not preservation is necessary now or in the future and if so what could best be done in those circumstances. And finally, the chapter decries those inhibiting attitudes derived from the dogmatic adherence to our obsolete colonial past that have shaped our colonial mentalities and which have rendered these old habits difficult to reconcile with a united force in a united country for our own good, whether anglophone or francophone in background.

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Cameroon has had a chequered history that is made more complicated by more than seventy-six years of changing colonial masters. A German territory from 1884–1918, it was divided into two parts after the defeat of Germany in the First World War. One part – a fifth of the territory and population – was administered by Britain, and the rest by France. In 1961 the two parts of Cameroon (the ex-British Southern Cameroons and the ex-French East Cameroun) reunited after more than forty years of separation. In a UN-sponsored plebiscite only ex-British Southern Cameroons voted to join ex-French East Cameroun in a Federal Union of equal partners. By this token, Cameroon was officially supposed to be a bilingual and a bicultural country; in practice it isn't so. Over the years there have been consistent attempts by the majority of ex-French East Cameroun not only to subjugate, annexe and colonize ex-British Southern Cameroons, but also systematically to wipe out the anglophone identity,² so that in fifty years we will all be French. Elsewhere in the world, the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the traditional society and of the three different periods of colonial history might have been very beneficial but in Cameroon the suppression of the minority by the majority has had the opposite effect.

THE SITUATION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY IN EX-BRITISH SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

As in every ex-colony one way in which the colonial power left its legacy was by the creation of museums and national parks and the designation of archaeological sites, antiquities and monuments as cultural property. That is why in 1962 and 1963 the West Cameroon Antiquities Commission and the West Cameroon Monuments Commission were created to take care of the antiquities and monuments

in ex-British Southern Cameroons; even though the West Cameroon Monuments and Antiquities Commissions were created by the West Cameroon Government, they were largely a legacy of colonial administration which had a museum culture of a type and philosophy we lacked (Mbunwe-Samba 1989). In fact these centres were created first for the appreciation of the colonial 'subjects' and only second for the maintenance and preservation of the cultural heritage of the colonial 'objects'. In 1958 Edwin and Shirley Ardener were employed by the colonial authorities to start work on the Buea archives and museum. What is important here, however, is that for whatever reasons these structures and/or institutions were created, at that point in time, our orientation was different and we had our own sets of priorities.

Before independence and Unification in 1961, Her Britannic Majesty had designated and was protecting the following monuments, parks and antiquities in West Cameroon, most of which were constructed during the period of German occupation.

Monuments

- 1 The Bismark Fountain in Buea, now abandoned and in ruins.
- 2 The District Officer's Residence in Victoria, perched on a coral reef on the Atlantic Coast.
- 3 The German Schloss in Buea, the Residence of German Governors built in the 1890s – a unique example of its kind in West Africa.
- 4 The Victoria Cemetery.
- 5 The District Officer's Residence in Mamfe.
- 6 The Mamfe Cemetery.
- 7 The German Fort in Bamenda. Built in the 1890s, it is unique and still being used by the Governor of the North West Province.

Parks

- 1 Kimbi River Game Reserve, with its vast lands, scenic beauty and an array of fauna and flora, now completely abandoned.
- 2 The Victoria Botanical Garden, with its spectacular variety of plant species, recently rescued by the British after it had been abandoned at Unification.
- 3 Lake Nyos, together with the many craters and volcanic lakes in this fantastic region. A rare species of frog has been found in one of the lakes, Lake Mawes in Oku.
- 4 Kilum Mountain Forest, recently restored and protected by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in which the toraco, the rarest bird in the world, was found.
- 5 Korup Forest, with its rare species of plants. A plant useful in the treatment of AIDS and cancer has been found in this forest.

Archaeological sites

- 1 The Shum Laka Site, where sporadic work is being carried on by mainly foreign researchers on what may be described as a 'hit-and-run' archaeological excavation.
- 2 The Sabga/Babanki Caves, not yet investigated or exploited.
- 3 Buea Archives and Museum, many of whose completely abandoned records and artefacts have been destroyed. A British charity which had come to the rescue of what is left, is being threatened with transfer to Yaounde.
- 4 Bamenda Archives and Museum, whose artefacts have been looted for display in Yaounde and never returned. Guillaume Mseke, a francophone governor, publicly burnt all the records in his Bamenda office.
- 5 Mount Cameroon. At 13 350 feet above sea level this is the highest mountain in West Africa.

It is sad to note that of all the seventeen items mentioned above, only numbers 2, 6 and 7 are being barely maintained, perhaps only because they are actually being used. The Schloss in Buea, which was the residence of German governors, is only now being restored by Germans. The Botanical Gardens in Victoria have been restored by the British and the Kilum Mountain Forest Project by WWF. Meanwhile the Bamenda and Buea Museums have long been neglected and in ruins. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that surreptitious attempts have been made since Unification to purposely abandon, loot and destroy everything that could represent an anglophone cultural heritage. A well-calculated policy has aimed at erasing the anglophone identity, a sort of cultural genocide to say the least. Surprisingly, this territory, which Britain dismissed as being of no economic value or potential, has now turned out to be the breadwinner of the Cameroun Republic. The territory now refines crude oil from its offshore oil wells, and it has vast plantations of bananas, rubber, tea and palms on which the entire country now depends for most of its foreign exchange earnings. The economic development of the Southern Cameroon has increased to a striking degree since it gained separate status in 1954. The Commissioner of the Southern Cameroons wrote that the Southern Cameroons could be called the Ceylon of West Africa. Writing about the main export crops he also said that 'the quality of some of the timber extracted from the Southern Cameroons forests is higher than anywhere else in West Africa' (Field 1961: 28). Its many and varied topographical features of scenic and scientific interest, lands rich in archaeological remains, immense fauna and flora and many other important economic resources would, if developed, have made this small nation an economic power and an example of a well-developed profitable tourist industry for national and international tourism.

If national parks, monuments and museums have been deliberately left to decay, what has happened to the roads, airports and telecommunication network has been worse. Since Unification all roads in ex-British Southern Cameroons have been abandoned and no road between the Southern Cameroons and Nigeria is maintained. Small tarred stretches connect those towns in ex-British Southern

Cameroons to towns in ex-French East Cameroun for easy evacuation of produce (for example, Bamenda to Bafoussam, Tiko to Douala). There are no airports in operation in anglophone Cameroon today; before Unification there were at least four. Telephone and other telecommunication facilities in one sector are not meant to work between any towns in the other. To show that there is a deliberate policy put in place, the road link between the two anglophone provinces, which were all-season roads before Unification in 1961, have been virtually abandoned and have so deteriorated that some parts of the famous Ring Road are untraceable today. Today, instead of travelling about 250 kilometres from Victoria to Bamenda, one has to do more than 400 kilometres, meandering all through francophone Cameroon because the road in anglophone Cameroon is hardly passable through Mamfe. Worse still, there are about thirty-three police and gendarmerie checkpoints between Victoria and Bamenda and the officers extort money from drivers and passengers on all sorts of pretexts. Prohibitive charges are imposed between English-speaking Cameroon and any other English-speaking country in the world. For example, if a telex, fax, telegram or phone message to France costs say 3000 francs, the same message will cost about 5000 francs to Britain and about 7000 francs to neighbouring Nigeria and 8000 francs to Zimbabwe. Living and travelling in anglophone Cameroon is, therefore, a terrible nightmare and it is hard to see how tourist development is feasible in this part of the country in the circumstances. Inasmuch as the political differences brought about by the anglophone/francophone divide inhibit the conservation and restoration of our cultural heritage, however, and despite the fact that we have different attitudes in these practices, it is still also true to say:

- 1 that the topography of Cameroon which is very heavily accented and therefore makes communication difficult, is another inhibiting factor;
- 2 that the humid climate of the tropics where Cameroon is located has a weathering effect on monuments and artefacts, meaning that they need extra resources for proper conservation; and
- 3 that the old argument that donor countries and organizations always have their own self-interest at heart should make us realize that their apparent concern for Cameroon is tied mainly to their own self-interest and anything else is only incidental to it.

For me, it is little better than a joke when the Government of the Republic of Cameroun creates ministries such as Information and Culture, Tourism, Environment and Forestry. How can anyone maintain a Ministry of Forestry when multi-national organizations are cutting down the forests with impunity, as if the world was coming to an end, only because they are in business with the authorities or because they give hefty kickbacks? All the public utterances by the Cameroon authorities on tourism, on forestry and on culture are meaningless because they are not matched by actions. The people concerned, besides pretending and playing roles, all seem to be gripped in inaction by a certain malevolent force which no one seems to understand and no one is doing anything about. Can't our cultural heritage

be our salvation tomorrow? The East African countries, especially Kenya, make as much money from tourism as Cameroun makes from oil. The potential for more and surprising tourist ventures here in Cameroun is immense, but left unexploited. It is unfortunate that the government has not been paying as much attention to this aspect of our life as one would have loved it to. Intellectuals who occupy important posts in this sector have not helped either: instead, they have misused the funds. And nothing seems to be going on at the designated national archive – the former presidential palace.

At what stage in our development efforts should we begin the conservation or preservation of our national monuments? How could this be done to obtain maximum benefits?

Debate is usually very tense and/or controversial or even contradictory whenever this topic is brought up among academics in some developing countries and this is especially true among anglophone Cameroonians.

Some people feel very strongly that if our cultural heritage is to be permanently preserved, people must be made aware of its importance and of the problems involved in its preservation. This can certainly be most successful when we begin with the young at basic education level, the young who are more receptive and open to new ideas than adults. They argue that creating awareness among young people quite early in their lives, beginning even from pre-school, will be an investment in changing their attitudes in the future. This group argues that for now our monuments have to be identified and protected and later, when people trained to appreciate these things are available and there is money, the restoration process can begin. This group thinks that poor excavation techniques may end up being more damaging to art and perhaps counter-productive to its preservation than if the objects or sites were left undisturbed underground or in protected places. It also thinks sheer poverty will lead curators and directors of museums and other officials to sell the objects at the slightest inducement. Since the means to care for these things are not available, since many archaeological sites are abandoned after excavation and since the care and expense in preservation or conservation are not commensurate with the immediate benefit to be derived from the preservation or restoration processes (less than 5 per cent of visitors to Cairo museums are Egyptians) it is better to identify and protect them for the time being. If they were hurriedly restored they would be exposed to the tropical climate and to unfavourable human threats such as theft. This group also thinks that were it feasible, developing countries should, for their national pride, keep full-size replicas or scale models but not keep the original remains until the resources exist to manage them. What is recommended for now, they think, is a policy to identify and compile a national register of lists of all declared monuments, sites and parks, with optimum efforts deployed mainly to protect them. They affirm that the struggle to achieve basic survival needs far surpasses for now the attempt to develop museums and monuments that are 'luxuries' and not urgent necessities. In the Southern Cameroons 75 per cent of the population are subsistence farmers living in poorly constructed villages, schools are very

poorly staffed and only about 40 per cent of children attend because parents can't afford the fees. The death rate is alarming because of inadequate diet and money cannot be found for expensive drugs. Corruption is endemic and institutionalized. This group concludes that any elaborate expenditure on the development of such esoteric institutions which are for the benefit of a small élite living in the cities or of their foreign counterparts is at this point in time absolutely obnoxious and foolhardily irresponsible (see Mbunwe-Samba 1989).

There is, however, another school of thought that believes in beginning now. While I was writing this chapter a friend said to me that if people in the Third World had to wait until everyone was viable, then we should not travel by air, nor should we use computers nor even enter into the information superhighway. This school of thought emphasizes the point that:

Modern African nations are not as poor as they would want the world to believe. If corruption was abolished and [the leaders] maintained just a reasonable army to ward off aggression and avoided prestige projects, there would be enough money to tackle the basic necessities and some to spare for the maintenance of our national cultural heritage and for the improvement of our surroundings.

(Mbunwe-Samba 1989: 312–13)

This group thinks that public education and outreach programmes which will create positive impressions about our cultural monuments and the need to preserve them should be directed at audiences ranging from pre-school to senior citizens. What archaeologists have learnt should be widely shared among other archaeologists, educators and public administrators. Archaeologists should unravel the mystery with which the subject is shrouded, and simplify things for the non-expert, because the usefulness of this subject will best be served by the collective efforts of both the expert and non-expert (see Folorunso, this volume). If the positive elements are tapped from the experiences of that small educated élite which has 'cultivated Western tastes and enjoyed Western value systems as part of their training' so that these can be used to supplement the experiences of the illiterate masses, this will intensify their education and thus empower them to begin to appreciate modern lifestyles. Now that our societies are inescapably evolving towards the general improvement of life for all, in the villages as well as in the towns, for us to remain static will be foolhardy and backward-looking.

The argument that the developing countries should be allowed to manage not only their own destiny but also their heritage has been supported by many African personalities and this campaign coincides with an international crusade to return items of monumental and archival heritage to their lands of origin. As Tayeb said: 'The former mother country restores to the new state not only its sovereignty but also its heritage'. This argument was echoed by M'Bow who declared that 'the vicissitudes of history ... robbed many people of a priceless portion of [their] inheritance in which their enduring identity finds its embodiment. [To] enable a

people to recover part of its memory and identity other lands should relinquish these irreplaceable cultural treasures to the countries where they were created' (quoted in Lowenthal 1990: 305, 308).

The two passages quoted above are from very well-meaning Africans – perhaps the situations in their own countries are different. If what happens in the Cameroun Republic in general and in the ex-British Southern Cameroons in particular is anything to go by, I would say that many things are easily said but there is a wide gap between what is said and what is done. Cameroonian authorities have perfected the art of saying one thing and doing quite the opposite without the least sense of remorse. Perhaps for now we do not need the return of these things because we cannot maintain them. I once said at a conference at Howard University, USA that, left to me, the West or East should keep those artefacts and antiquities they 'looted' from the developing world until we are ripe enough to maintain them. A gentleman from North Africa stood up on the floor of the conference and shouted me down saying 'sit down, you traitor'. I was only being honest in view of what is happening to anglophone cultural patrimony. Many African countries have suffered a lot from neglect of their past but few have suffered as much as Cameroon, and particularly anglophone Cameroon, since Unification. If our francophone masters have any moral conscience at all they should feel a mass guilt over the tragic fate of the anglophone culture and its national patrimony. The distinctive cultural characteristics of various groups would have been a sign of strength rather than a weakness.

Should monuments be conserved or restored or be allowed to be destroyed for whatever reasons?

Based on the background from which I write and on the foregoing arguments, this is a very difficult question indeed. But whatever the contradictions or controversies, monuments should never be deliberately destroyed or allowed to decay and rot, whatever the reasons. Any wanton destruction should be vigorously checked by government authorities which should come up with regulations, ordinances or decrees to protect the national heritage: once destroyed, these things are hardly replaceable. They are too precious to be lost no matter the kind of modern development in place, and if they are not identified early and protected there will be nothing in the future to restore and conserve or even reconstruct. Monuments, antiquities and parks have become prime symbols of the collective identity of a people whatever their level of development, therefore, their leaders must be conscious and sensitive enough to preserve them for generations to come.

Unfortunately, in Cameroun the authorities do not seem to be worried about devising a policy of restoration or conservation. Cameroun land policy, which declares that all unoccupied land, even if it is private land, belongs to the government, should have been put to good use for the benefit of the citizens, but it has not: the land-use practices are terrible. In ex-British Southern Cameroons, for example, nearly all the administrative and technical departments are led by francophone officers. They use this law to create confusion and encourage land cases between tribes

and villages so that inter-tribal wars on land problems are rampant, and by this they make money from both parties for themselves. At least eleven inter-tribal wars were fought on the issue during the year before I wrote this chapter.

How can a heritage tourism development strategy be encouraged and organized when villagers spend all their time preparing for war, when places and whole collections of antiquities are destroyed, as happened in Oku in March–April 1997, when the army bombed and burnt down vast treasures of antiquities and cultural heritage sites?

Is there hope therefore for Cameroon's past at present or in the future? In spite of the magnitude of problems discussed, the answer is yes, to a certain extent. Attempts have been made by the Cameroun government to maintain Waza and seven other parks in the north, Kribi beach in the south and Foumban Palace in the middle belt, all in francophone Cameroun. Just recently a huge statue was erected to honour the francophone hero Jean Atangana in the south province. This is an indication that at least all is not lost for the future and that someone somewhere has an idea of what could be done. Much more needs to be done, however, and with the appointment of a minister in charge of tourism and one for forestry, perhaps more is expected.

There are also some things that in spite of our poverty and lack of resources we can do for ourselves. We can, for example:

- Identify and compile a national register of all our sites, monuments, antiquities and parks and organize to physically protect and save them. At least we will know where they are and the number, type and extent existing in the country.
- Come up with coherent policy statements and laws to safeguard these places which should be declared national heritage or monuments.
- Include in our education curricula discussions on aesthetic appreciation of arts and crafts and the importance of leisure.
- Begin gradually to educate contemporary society to take up and appreciate responsibility for the preservation and the conservation of our cultural property as well as trying to advance their knowledge by information, exhibitions and participation.
- Reduce the exaggerated expenditure on the national army and on presidential defence so that such excess is used elsewhere.
- Deter unscrupulous people from stealing and selling antiquities.
- Use some of the colossal sums of money meant to build statues of heads of state and other heroes for the protection of existing monuments.
- Leave sites and monuments as they are, except where destruction is imminent, until such a time as resources exist to manage them.

There are also things that other people and organizations can help us to do. UNESCO is already doing a good job in assisting governments to promote the growth of museums worldwide and it has been instrumental in declaring some national monuments as World Heritage Sites. The World Archaeological Congress was born because of the strong stance it took on apartheid in South Africa and

this Inter-Congress on the destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque at Ayodhya fulfils the motion passed by the council of WAC at New Delhi that this matter be openly discussed. The examples mentioned above show how very useful some organizations, with expertise in this area, can be. It is not impossible for UNESCO, International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences, WAC and other like-minded organizations to draft a code of conduct for dealing with monuments and antiquities. These organizations can also come up with some guidelines which could enable the international community to develop a policy on the conservation and restoration of cultural property worldwide – a sort of World Heritage Convention to which nations, particularly those not aware of the destruction of their past through sheer ignorance, must adhere.

With a strong code of conduct in place, multi-national organizations will be bound to respect some norms and not behave as they do in Cameroun, particularly anglophone Cameroon, where timber companies wantonly destroy huge tracts of forests paying very little or nothing to the public treasury but a lot to bribe officials who make it easy for them to loot our national patrimony.

But there are other things that we cannot easily do at this point in time because of our level of development, interest and experience. Current approaches to the European-initiated conservation practices in vogue worldwide are very expensive and delicate ventures to undertake because of what Price describes as the problems of reversibility, maximum intervention and compatibility of materials (Price 1990: 283).

It is difficult for countries like Cameroun to return ruins, archaeological sites or monuments to their original state and/or appearance without the sophisticated know-how and materials this will need. Even if we were given technical aid in order to embark on rescuing our past, there is only so much that another organization or other nations can do. We need our own basic infrastructure, as well as interest and general awareness among the people for whom these things are meant.

If we must restore our cultural heritage, we must also know that it sometimes leads to reconstruction of the monuments. We should thus be ready for it and not deal with scientifically proven issues using Third World standards as many African nations are now doing with the concept of democracy.

We must also know, even if we succeed in the restoration process, that the question of maintenance is equally important.

Our conservation strategies must aim at conserving what remains in such a way that their existing condition is maintained, thereby reducing their rate of decay when they are visible because of excavation or just carelessly displayed. Restorers also have a great cultural responsibility to make sure that the results of future interpretations and exploitations of the monuments should not be conditioned by the additional information imposed on the object which make the results too different from the original structure.

Reconstructed remains are usually not in themselves complete and thus interpretation is useful only by specialists, but restoration or reconstruction must retain the essentials so that different interest groups can form their own image and thus assign their own values to these products.

In the final analysis the most effective measures at our level will rest now on identification and listing all sites, monuments and antiquities. Some definite attempts must be put in place to protect them before we can see to their conservation and restoration, and then reconstruct when the means are available. If we conserve, restore and reconstruct our monuments, we must use a scientific approach to achieve authenticity as is done elsewhere in the world. These are not easy tasks to achieve as they are suitable only for nations that have reached a certain level of economic development with a certain degree of political and intellectual maturity.

CONCLUSION

A friend who read this draft was terribly embarrassed and quipped thus, starting the following discussion with me:

Matt: Ei man, this is not archaeology, you are rather preaching politics!

M-S: Yes indeed! Politics and archaeology are not strange bedfellows. Archaeology is a subject for the expert and the non-expert. Both the common man and the expert enjoy the fruits of this subject so we should preach it and by so doing hopefully demystify its contents and make it available to everyone so that everyone should be involved and take full part in keeping it alive!!

Matt: Why preach this in Europe, you are preaching to the converted. Why not preach it here?

M-S: Yes I am preaching to the converted because I think they have a stake in this drama. I do so consciously because when I die and I come face to face with the Almighty God he could ask me, 'Patrick when you saw these things happening in your part of the country what did you do?' I will reply that when I saw there was a systematic and a deliberate policy and a sort of genocidal war against the cultural heritage of ex-British Southern Cameroons I told the story right here at the WAC Inter-Congress in Croatia. If this body too does not listen or do something about the situation, we will all suffer a sort of collective guilt over the tragic fate of Anglo-Saxon culture in this part of the world. After all if Ayodhya I was the deliberate destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque in India could not the deliberate destruction of ex-British Southern Cameroons Patrimony be termed Ayodhya II? Are the two situations not identical? This may be curiously politics but I think it is certainly archaeology as well.

NOTES

- 1 The appellations ex-British Southern Cameroons and ex-French East Cameroun are only used in this chapter for clarity of exposition.
- 2 In thirty-five years since Unification Cameroon has changed its name four times by presidential decree, on none of these occasions by any legitimate means. The continuing attempt to subjugate and colonize the ex-British Southern Cameroons is responsible for the trauma taking place in the sector today.

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4 *The end of history? Archaeology and the politics of identity in a globalized world*

BJØRNAR J. OLSEN

Notions such as globalization and cultural hybridity have become the buzzwords of much current debate in the social and human sciences. Their prominent position reflects the significant transformations that occurred in the global–local interface in the late twentieth century. Cultural and national borders have become increasingly blurred as jet transport, satellite communication and electronic information technology have ‘shrunk’ the world. Flows of people, information, cultures, commodities and capital bring about a more immediate and direct articulation of local and global spaces, and a disruption of place as a self-evident reference for cultural distinctiveness and belonging (Giddens 1990; Bhabha 1994; Eriksen 1994; Morley and Robins 1995; Waters 1995).

Simultaneously, and linked with these processes, we witness how the firm foundations of modernity are being challenged by the ‘ambiguity, uncertainty and depthlessness’ of post-modernism. It has become fashionable to associate this challenge with the end of certain taken-for-granted fundamentals: the end of grand narratives, the nation-state, authenticity and even of history itself (Fukuyama 1992). The enlightened visions of Kant, Hegel and Marx, of a universal reason and purpose in history (the realization of human freedom), the achievement of which was the goal towards which progress ran, have lost their credibility. The new uncertainty, ambiguity and inconsistency mark the end of modern life as a life-towards-a-project (Bauman: 1997: 48; Morley and Robins 1995: 203).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss these changing conditions – and the reactions they have provoked – in relation to the socio-political role of archaeological knowledge. Born and raised in the comfort of Western modernity, archaeology has internalized (and contributed to) the modernist faith in order and continuity. Its public legitimation is everywhere based on the taken-for-granted premise that the past constitutes a fundamental ground for collective identities in the present. In what way, then, do the new processes of dislocation, of hybridity and displacement, affect the socio-political agenda of archaeology, of museums and of present uses and consumptions of the past in general? Are the old slogans about identity and roots, which might give nations, ethnic groups and minorities ‘a history’, still an acceptable legitimation of the archaeological enterprise? Or is there a widening gap

between this identity project, which in many ways is an offspring of nationalism, and the new forms of social reality, identity and belonging which presently are being forged out of the global–local nexus?

ARCHAEOLOGY AND MODERNITY

Archaeology as a scientific discipline and a socio–political enterprise is inextricably linked to the modernist project. It unfolded in an epistemological and ontological space made possible by the modern episteme. The new conditions of possibility stimulated and dictated new ways of constructing and classifying knowledge, a rupture that radically changed our perception and evaluation of the world and the past (Foucault 1989; Olsen and Svestad 1994). Modernity also brought about changes that produced a new historical consciousness and sense of belonging. The erosion of fundamental ‘traditional’ cultural and social certainties, rooted in kinship systems, in local communities, in the doxa of tradition and religion, evoked a sense of loss, the feeling that something was slipping away and dying, and which therefore had to be restored or rescued. The unsettling qualities of the modern experience produced a nostalgic desire for a secure identity rooted in something fixed and stable; a nostalgia for lost communities, the warm and reassuring *Gemeinschaft* of the past. It produced a new sense of time–space belonging, linking the self to the memories attached to the *Vaterland*, the national or ethnic *Heimat* (Turner 1990; Eriksen 1993; Rowlands 1994).

To preserve the past became part of preserving the present, of preserving our own identity. Monuments and pre-historic remains transcended their own physical identity to embrace emotions and memories. They embodied collective experiences and stability, and constituted something immortal contrasting with the transitory and perishable identity of the individual. Transcending their own historical locations, the relics of the past created the link of memory between past and present. In transmitting the experiences and deeds of our forefathers to us, ‘they enable us to rise up to our Nordic ancestors, they enable us to re-live our forefathers’ lives and to wander among them. A burial mound, a single stone circle, a stone artefact or a metal ornament’ (Thomsen 1836: 28; my translation).

Modernity came to entail two seemingly conflicting philosophical positions. On the one hand, the Enlightenment stressed rationality, progress and the struggle against prejudice. On the other, Romanticism expressed a nostalgia for the past. Modernity seen as development, progress and change, is inextricably linked to modernity as nostalgia, identity and belonging. Both progress and longing for stability were an essential part of modernity, even if the latter may be seen as a consequence of the former. As a socio–political enterprise, archaeology became linked to both. The enlightened vision of this project, the belief in rationality and social and political progress, became a basic idea that has survived all phases of modernity to the present. It has been integrated in every political movement that grew out of modernism, such as liberalism and socialism. As Ernest Gellner has noted,

for the last two centuries it has been difficult for us to think about human affairs without the image ... of an all-embracing upward growth ... It seemed a natural conclusion from the pattern of Western history, which was generally treated as *the* history of humanity. Western history seems to have a certain continuity and a certain persistent upward swing – or at any rate, so it seemed, and so it came to be taught.

(Gellner 1964: 12)

Modernity therefore embodied a faith in the future: it was a project heading towards a goal. It entailed a vision of a new and comprehensive order, providing lasting, stable and predictable foundations for individual actions and choices (Bauman 1997: 47–50). The nation-state was the container for this modern order-building in Europe (and elsewhere) and its boundary provided the frame for proper identities. This national doctrine embodied a logic of enclosure and fortification, a desire for purity and the will to marginalize elements that compromised this clarity, such as Jews, gypsies and Saamis – in short the ‘Other within’ (Olsen 1986, 1997; Hall 1992b: 280; Morley and Robins 1995: 23,156). Citizenship in the unitary nation-state became the ‘natural’ and ideal way of being and belonging.

Archaeology and associated museum technologies have contributed significantly to this modernist and national ideal of purified spatial identities. By depicting order and mapped boundaries, they gave credit to the idea of nations, cultures and ethnicities as ‘individuated beings’, assumed to be bounded, continuously and easily distinguishable from other such entities (Jones 1997: 136; Macdonald 1997: 7). Since the cohesion of collective identities also involves the achievement of a certain continuity through time, by evoking a collective memory and the sense of a common past, archaeology and the museum attained a dual function in the modernist project of identity. By presenting and arranging the historical products of culture in a correct manner, they supplied meaning and identity to the individual and the society. The exhibitions provided evidence for how history had moved in one direction and showed technological development as an inevitable part of human history. They provided people with schemes and metaphors for comprehending the world, and visualized history as a coherent and logical totality. Past and present seemed inextricably linked to each other and to the future (Vestheim 1994: 111; cf. Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Paludan-Müller 1995; Olsen 1997).

A NEW DISORDER

After half a century of clear-cut geopolitical divisions, a new world ‘disorder’ has emerged, devoid of visible structures and of an obvious logic. This disorder is manifested in the break-up of the former Soviet Union and the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Eastern block; it is visible in the distrust of socialism, the forty or so civil wars presently being waged and in an international scene seemingly with no clear moral stances or evident political purposes and strategies (Bauman 1997: 51). Yet it may be that a more general and penetrating feature of this new ‘disorder’

is the way national and cultural frontiers are being blurred, and the very idea of the nation-state as the self-evident container for social and cultural life and identity is being questioned. The purification of space and identity associated with European nationalism, as conducted in Europe and elsewhere, has been challenged by the transnationalism and cultural hybridity inflicted by processes of globalization (Eriksen 1994; Friedland and Boden 1994; Morley and Robins 1995; Waters 1995).

The symptoms (and causes) of this fragmentation and dissolution are numerous: the transnational character of capitalist accumulation is becoming ever more evident. The apparatuses of discourse, technologies and institutions (print capitalism, education, mass media and so on) which were formerly confined and designed to produce (and invent) national cultures (Donald 1988: 32), no longer obey these boundaries for transmission. The new information and communication technologies transgress cultural and national frontiers and subvert territories. The compression of time and space brought about by the global technologies also creates the feeling of an 'abstract' space, a global image space – the heterotopia of the world bazaar or the global village (McLuhan 1964; Morley and Robins 1995). The same mass-produced messages reach out to every village of the world, making each of them a 'global' one. Satellite transmission means that an event happening in one part of the world can be 'watched together' by people in different parts of the globe, creating potentials for new and varied 'imagined communities' (Brah 1996: 195). Culture seems to have lost its 'natural' tie to place.

People too, become detached from their 'original' places. To a certain extent this has 'always' happened, not the least during recent centuries of conquest, migrations and slave trade. However, this process has accelerated rapidly during the last decades. Europe, which for so long dealt with its colonial others at arm's length, has to realize that global interdependence now works both ways. Driven by poverty, famines, civil war and political unrest, and pulled by the urge for a cheap labour force in the West, Europe's 'Other' has left home and created pockets of different cultural forms on new places – almost everywhere (Hall 1992a: 306). These recent migrations are creating new displacements, new diasporas. Today, up to 10 per cent of the population in the small fishing towns along the Arctic coast of Norway are Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka; it is possible to live an almost Pakistani way of life at the east end of Oslo. London and New York have for a long time been the greatest West Indian cities of the world. The number and size of various Arab, African and East Asian communities in Europe are growing. Networks of diasporas create spaces in between. Cultures, identities and people are no longer tied to place (Hall 1992a; Eriksen 1994; Brah 1996: 178–9).

People of today have also lost some of their faith in time as a linear movement towards a better destination. This too distinguishes the present situation from the one that archaeology was born into. The nineteenth century was an age heavily affected by a faith in progress and hopes for the future, and by the confidence that industrial and technological development could liberate humanity from misery and privation. Today the *Zeitgeist* has changed, revealing a future that is undecidable and uncontrollable. We witness how technological development speeds up to an ever

increasing extent, how individual (and individualizing) forces of production replace the huge factory halls, and how virtual reality replaces experienced reality. However, technological progress has not yielded the promised increase in economic and social security for the majority of the world's population. The faith in new technology as a means to solve global ecological and social problems is decreasing. The optimism of the myth of salvation has deeply eroded (Melucci 1997: 61). As Zygmunt Bauman has noted:

the dominant sentiment is the feeling of uncertainty – about the future shape of the world, about the right way of living in it, and about the criteria by which to judge the rights and wrongs of one's way of living.

(Bauman 1997: 50)

As he remarks, uncertainty is not exactly a newcomer in the modern world; what is new however is that it is no longer seen as a mere temporary nuisance, but as a permanent and irreducible social condition (*ibid.*).

At the same time we witness the collapse of the great rationalistic theories which subjugated societies and socio-political development to an historical logic. The grand projects of historical explanation, like Marxism, are gradually replaced by particularistic and relativistic projects. The grand narratives are increasingly replaced by small and fragmented stories. The collapse in the modernist belief in progress as well as the demise of grand narratives, have made some people talk about the end of history (Fukuyama 1992). History has 'ended' in the sense that it can no longer be conceived of as a great rationalistic project directed towards an ultimate destination or subjected to any other form of totalizing logic. This conclusion contains the recognition of history itself as a historical construction, more precisely as a product of modernism and the ruptures of Western thought emerging at the threshold to the nineteenth century (Foucault 1989). In this sense, the end of history merges with the termination of modernism and the dawn of a post-modern society.

THE 'RETURN' OF HISTORY

What are the responses and consequences of the new uncertainty brought about by globalization and post-modernity in terms of identity, belonging and the politics of the past? In what way are new identities being forged out of the present global-local nexus, and in what way are older foundations of identity undermined? Not surprisingly, the outcome seems to be mixed, entailing quite contradictory responses cast along what seems to be a deep social divide. For most people globalization and multi-culturalism are not experienced in the abstract simulacrum of the global village, but through their locations as collectives and subjects in local and global hierarchies. Thus, on the one hand, and particularly in academia and among intellectuals, we witness the increasing celebration of hybrid and cosmopolitan identities. Border crossing, 'translation' and 'hybridity' are here regarded

more and more as the normal state of affairs, and cultural hybridity and the diaspora experience have had a tremendous impact on art, music, literature and the current academic discourse (as illustrated by the accelerating popularity of Cultural Studies). The present diversity is seen as a vital source for developing new and anti-racist political agendas.

On the other hand, we can identify a completely opposite reaction in many parts of the world: cultural and religious fundamentalism, neo-nationalism and the increasing ethnification of the political discourse, in short what Friedman has referred to as the 'Balkanisation and tribalisation experienced at the bottom of the system' (Friedman 1997: 85). In the wake of this we see the proliferation of myths of origins and authenticity, and how the past is increasingly being used as a foundation for 'histories of revenge'. The latter reaction, and the way the past is being used in 'defence' of existing or invented identities, may remind us that what we are facing is as much the 'return' of history as the end of it. The resurgence of ethnic nationalism in Europe and elsewhere has given hundreds of historians a full-time occupation in writing glorious histories for their peoples. As noted by Eriksen (1993: 44), 'It is never too late to have a happy childhood'.

A nostalgic return to the past for confirmation, or fixing identities in history, is certainly not a consequence of globalization and post-modernity. Periods of seemingly rapid change, urban development and the desertion of the countryside, have provoked similar responses worldwide during the last two centuries. The restlessness of the modern experience has made us haunted by what Bryan Turner has called a pervasive nostalgia for past times (1990, quoted after Hall 1992c: 16). This is rather innocent in its own respect. However, what is involved in some present attempts 'to reconstruct purified identities, to restore coherence, "closure" and Tradition, in the face of hybridity and diversity' (Hall 1992a: 311), entails much more worrying aspects of xenophobia and neo-nationalism.

According to a public opinion poll published in 1995, 25 per cent of Norwegian voters are hostile to immigrants. Many people feel that the foreigners represent a threat to our identity and cultural distinctiveness, and fear that the 'authentic' Norwegian will disappear. We can also witness how those extreme groups who most vociferously claim 'Norway for Norwegians', in a similar fashion to the former Norwegian Nazi Party ('National Unification'), use archaeological symbols from the Bronze Age and the Viking Age in their propaganda (Nordenborg Myhre 1994). Presumably representing a time when Norway was free of foreign influence, these symbols are thought to be powerful weapons against 'the others'.

Elsewhere we find more serious reactions. While Western Europe strives for an increasingly tighter integration and a new super-national identity, ethnic divisions and conflicts characterize the situation in the former socialist block of Eastern Europe. In these conflicts, history is mobilized as a basis for 'just resentment' (Werbart 1996). When Serbian leaders claim historical legitimacy for not giving up Kosovo, their principal argument is that Kosovo is the 'cradle of Serbian culture'. On 28 June 1989, a million Serbs flocked to the battlefield at Gazimestan, Kosovo, to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the battle against the Turks in 1389. As part of the same celebration the bones of Tsar Lazar, the Serbian hero from the battle, were

reburied in Kosovo together with symbols of the Serbian royal house. Earlier the same year Lazar's bones were displayed throughout Yugoslavia in a travelling exhibit, which took them to places that would later be claimed as Serb lands after war broke out in 1991 (Silber and Little 1995: 71–2). Milosevic, who addressed the million-strong crowd at the battlefield, stated in his speech that 'Kosovo heroism does not allow us to forget that at one time we were brave and dignified and one of the few who went into battle undefeated. Six centuries later, again we are in battles and quarrels' (ibid.: 72).

As Julia Kristeva has remarked, cults of origin easily slip into 'hate reactions' (Kristeva 1992). History becomes a just witness, which provides moral legitimation for political action today, and is even considered worth dying (or killing) for. Ancient acts of tyranny and humiliation, which took place hundreds or thousands of years ago, are being mobilized as foundations for 'histories of revenge' that legitimize hate, violence and ethnic cleansing in the present. One example of this process is the case of Ayodhya, where the destruction of the mosque fuelled the hate that culminated in large-scale bloodshed all over India in the spring of 1993 (Mandal 1993; Rao 1995). In Transylvania, the Romanian authorities have used archaeological excavation to 'disprove' that the Hungarian minority has any 'historical right' to this area. That is, they arrived later than the Romanians, and therefore have no proper civil and human rights.

One sometimes gets the impression that certain areas, cultures and countries are infected with 'too much' history, as the novelist V.S. Naipaul once remarked about India. It is obvious that if this history is going to be used as a kind of political guidebook for present actions and attitudes, almost everyone may claim that they have been subject to historical injustice and have something to revenge (Eriksen 1996: 92–3). Unfortunately, this is precisely what is happening in various parts of the world today. Fuelled by political ideas of ethnic purity and religious orthodoxy, such readings of the past have recently had a depressingly powerful revival. And we have to ask why archaeological and historical knowledge are so 'successfully' appropriated for such misuse.

THE PAST AS SAMENESS

As archaeologists we strive to gain knowledge and understanding of foreign cultures – of otherness – in a distant past. It feels quite paradoxical that this knowledge has been such a successful means for stimulating nationalism, for essentialist identity politics stressing sameness and repetition, and even to serve the growing hostility towards strangers. Those people who lived in Europe and elsewhere 10 000, 5000 or even 'just' 1000 years ago, were fundamentally different from ourselves. The Vikings had a completely different perception of right and wrong, of life and death, and of what it meant to be a human being than their Norwegian, Swedish and Danish descendants. They were in many respects far more foreign to present Norwegians than any modern Tamil, Pakistani or Vietnamese. Thus it remains a paradox that present-day Scandinavians use the Vikings to express their

uniqueness and identity, and their difference to these approaching cultures. When this takes place, it is not only a consequence of the fact that political extremists are bending and distorting archaeological and historical data for their questionable purposes. It is also a result of a deep-rooted conception of history and culture within our modern way of thinking: the idea of cultures whose history unfolds in a coherent linear narrative. This conception of knowledge, commonly represented in museums and archaeological and historical presentations, depicts our relationship to the past as one of continuity. History is written and presented as an 'endless repetition of the same' (Foucault 1989), and the past is populated by forefathers and close relatives:

It is in this way that the relics of prehistory strengthen our links with the Fatherland. We enter through them into a more lived empathy with hills and valleys, fields and pastures. For it is through the burial mounds that rise on their surfaces and through the antiquities which they have protected safely in their womb, down through the centuries, that the land can constantly remind us of the fact that our forefathers, a free and independent people, have dwelt from time immemorial in this country, that they command us to look to our heritage, to resist foreign domination over a soil that shields our forefathers' bones and in which our most sacred and venerable memories are rooted.

(Worsaae 1843: 116)

Many statements about archaeology's socio-political role still seem to be based on this nineteenth-century paradigm of continuity. The social 'need' for archaeological knowledge continues to be written within a framework of identity and roots. Cultural-historical knowledge is 'everywhere' praised as a means of resisting processes of fragmentation and disruption in the present; to give 'people' (back) their identity. This strongly Eurocentric and nationalist mode of valorizing the past predominates throughout the world today, even among people long deprived by, or at odds with, Europeanization (Lowenthal 1990: 302; cf. Rowlands 1994: 135).

This itself is obviously linked to present structures of power and hegemony. It is not hard to understand that suppressed ethnic minorities and indigenous groups appeal to bonds of common cultural experience and past-present continuity in their struggle against centuries of exploitation, dispossession and marginality. Framed from the vantage point of a dominated subject position, such a 'strategic essentialism' may even seem imperative (Brah 1996: 127). For example, concerning rights to land, any chance to win through a court of law depends upon the ability to document continuity in the use of a particular area (Jones 1997: 142).

It clearly is important to distinguish these 'subaltern' voices from those that go into the constitution of structures of dominance and repression. At the same time, there are related problems involved in all essentialist notions of identity, founded on a past-present continuity, and they are not resolved by being compartmentalized. Moreover, essentialism is hardly a means for indigenous groups (such as Saami, Inuits and others), formerly excluded from the ranks of historical peoples,

to reinscribe themselves in history. It is rarely discussed how the present quest for authenticity and past-in-the-present rhetoric threatens to reinforce a reactionary museum image so long forced upon them by outside scholars and politicians (as someone embedded in the past, belonging to another time). It attributes to them an unchanging essence, freezing them forever as always-the-same 'traditional societies'. This prison-house of tradition and authenticity easily renders any change as contamination and loss of identity.

CONCLUSION: THE PAST AS DIFFERENCE

The national and racial discourses of the nineteenth century established a self-evident and 'natural' tie between identity, history and territory. The various versions of the 'Blood and Land' doctrine created the potential for the persistent botanical metaphors of rooting and uprooting which down to the present have dominated the rhetorics of most identity politics: 'the soil determines the plant, the nation the individual, an uprooted plant dies, an individual without a country withers' (Todorov 1994: 230). But in what way does the plant world, or a tree, constitute a proper metaphor for the human world? In his book *Landscape and Memory*, Simon Schama recalls a situation in a Cambridge common room where he witnessed the Jewish Marxist historian Isaac Deutscher being pestered about his origin, his roots. 'Trees have roots', Deutscher shot back scornfully, 'Jews have legs' (Schama 1996: 29). Such denials, frequently uttered by intellectual cosmopolitans, exiles and migrants, are not without their own problematics (cf. Solli 1996; Friedman 1997). However, they draw a necessary attention to the diaspora experience and the increasing disarticulation of fixed cultural spaces as frameworks for present identities. And they challenge us to reconsider the persistent idea that the meaning and social value of the past is to create national or ethnic identity, to create roots. This metaphor seems rather misplaced in a world more affected by the *routes* of migrating peoples (Clifford 1997).

Thus it is tempting to join Deleuze and Guattari in their impatient rejection of the root metaphor: 'We're tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots and radicles. They've made us suffer too much. All of arborescent culture is founded on them, from biology to linguistics' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 15). Processes of globalization have once and for all made it impossible to pretend that cultures exist apart, and that creolization should be regarded as an exceptional case. Cultural-historical knowledge founded on this conception of the world as an archipelago of detached and 'clean' islands of cultures has passed its sell-by date (Appadurai 1988; Eriksen 1994). Identities are changing, overlapping and multiple; within us are multiple and contradictory identities pulling in different directions. This hybrid experience should help us stop treating identity as a 'thing', as something eternally fixed and given, and make us understand the contested, negotiable and constructed character of identities: in short, to help draw our attention to *identitization* as an ongoing process of self-making and dialogue (Hall 1992a; Gilroy 1997; Melucci 1997).

The present-day situation in Europe may prove a decisive trial for this opportunity. Recent migrations have contested the (false) image of Europe as white and Christian, and have created diasporic spaces in between, so that we are increasingly living with the Other. When we discover our own culture as one among several cultures, we may, as Paul Ricoeur once noted, acknowledge the end of a cultural monopoly and realize the possibility 'that there are just *Others*, that we ourselves are an "other" among Others' (Ricoeur 1965: 278). This experience is threatening and unsettling to European ideas of purity, boundedness and hegemony, and to the notion of identity as a timeless continuity of an organic unity. We are reminded precisely how threatening it is by the frequent reports from Scandinavia, Germany, France and elsewhere of racist attacks on immigrants, the burnt-out houses of political refugees and increasing support for anti-immigrant political parties.

At the same time the new situation offers a unique potential for progressive and anti-racist political agendas, a possibility for negotiating difference and otherness, and for deconstructing essentialist notions of ethnic or racial purity. Archaeology, as the study of otherness *par excellence*, has a great deal to offer to such a progressive programme. It can contribute further to the 'anthropologization' of Europe, to help us discover our own otherness and exoticism, and to see Others (our own culture and identity included) 'not as ontologically given but as historically constituted' (Said 1989: 225). One necessary step in meeting this challenge is to attempt the difficult task of giving history back its own 'historicity', and to disconnect archaeology from its romanticist and narcissist roots. It is this nineteenth-century desire for origin, to construct the past as linear narratives of continuity and repetition, which currently serve as the fundament for essentialist identity projects and associated histories of revenge. Existentialist queries of identity ('who we are?'), can hardly be answered by the past. The archaeological past with its stratigraphy of ruptures and discontinuities tells us much more about our non-identity, our current otherness. Moreover, this past tells us about the hybridity of cultures: how all cultures are hotchpotches, *mélanges*, the result of borrowings and mixtures that have occurred since the beginning of time. In the present-day context of dislocation and diaspora; when the presence of the Other inside the citadel of Europe provokes racism, when the past is increasingly being mobilized in support of nationalistic and neo-Nazi movements, this seems a highly valuable and timely knowledge. The contrasts and differences that 'our own' history reveals in its untamed and unsheltered versions may remind us that cultural difference is an essential part of being human.

The post-processual loss of innocence made archaeologists realize that there was no epistemological security to truth claims about the past, no neutral vantage point from which such claims could be evaluated or get their confirmation. The insecurity and ambiguity which 'post-modernism' has inflicted on the firm epistemological foundations of the modernist project parallels the ontological insecurity of being and identity felt in a contemporary world of globalization and fragmentation. In a similar vein, as archaeologists for the last twenty years have struggled to develop alternative discourses and epistemologies to dislocate their practices from constraining empiricist philosophies, we are now faced with the challenge of discussing new socio-political agendas that go beyond narrow histories

of identity. To start thinking that against the 'absolutism of the pure' (Rushdie 1982), the well-proven solution of returning to an ethnic and/or national primordialism, 'there is an another, more difficult option: the theorisation of creolisation, *métissage*, *mestisaje* and hybridity' (Gilroy 1993: 2).

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5 *Return to Alexandria: conflict and contradiction in discourses of origins and heritage revivalism*

BEVERLEY BUTLER

Alexandria, which is our birthplace, has mapped out this circle for all Western language: to write was to return, to come back to the beginning to grasp again the first instance; it is to witness anew the dawn. Hence, the mythical function of literature to this day, hence its relation to the ancient: hence, the privilege it has granted to analogy, to similarity, to all the marvels of identity. Hence, above all, a structure of repetition which indicated its very existence.

(Foucault quoted in Errera 1997: 138)

[To] suffer from a sickness ... It is to have a compulsive repetitive and nostalgic idea of the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement.

(Derrida 1996: 91)

In autumn 1989 the first stone of the New Alexandrina or Bibliotheca Alexandrina was laid. The project – which is a joint venture between the Egyptian government and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – aims to recreate the ancient Mouseion (Museum/Library) on what are believed to be the ruins of its original site along the Corniche at Alexandria, Egypt. The ceremony made front-page news in Europe. One observer commented that ‘it seems as if the West is regaining something fundamental to its heritage or, even more, to its very beginnings’. Turning her attention to the possible reactions of Alexandrians to the new project she mused that, ‘in Alexandria, this lonely stone sitting in the middle of an empty plot by the sea has the power to annoy. It is also an object of pride’, and concluded ‘to be an inhabitant of a legendary city whose glorious past has disappeared is something that can be both brandished like a flag and merely suffered’ (Errera 1997:129).

The New Alexandrina forms one point in a wider landscape of revivalism currently bringing change to the contemporary city. The common theme of this ‘renaissance’ is a return to the origins of Alexandria’s ancient cultural heritage. In addition to the New Alexandrina project, underwater excavations are returning objects from the depths of the Mediterranean to a city previously noted for its lack of ancient material culture. Special attention has been focused on excavations directed by French teams at Fort Qait Bay, where Pharos, the lighthouse which was

one of the wonders of the ancient world, once stood, and the 'Cleopatra '96' project taking place at the royal palace site in the Eastern harbour of Alexandria (Empereur, Goddio 1998). Collectively these revival projects move deeper into the mythologies of Alexandria, encouraging its portrayal as Alexander the Great's 'Greek city' or the 'New Athens'; the meeting point of East and West and the melting pot of cosmopolitan culture; the site of Hellenistic colonial creativity and intellectual inquiry, and thus an extension of the Greek landscape, distinct from the rest of Egypt. This characterization thus echoes an ancient Alexandrian separatism expressed in the phrase *Alexandria ad Aegyptum*: Alexandria by not in Egypt (see Brown and Taieb 1996: 7).

My interest in this drama of excavation and revelation is in its capacity to expose the conflicts and contradictions between 'Western' and local purchases on Alexandria's ancient past and on contemporary revivalism. My intention in this chapter is to combine a critique of heritage theory/museology with ethnographic work undertaken in Alexandria in order to develop these points of contestation, tension and ambivalence, recasting the scene of revivalism as an antagonistic field with not one but many competing accounts. The context is marked not only by the presence of dominant Western discourses of revivalism, but also by attempts to ignore, reject, transform and 'Egyptianize' dominant discourses and to supply other 'hidden', local and national meanings. What emerges is a sense of the way in which the force of 'cultural revivalism' has become embroiled in tensions between, for example, the old neo-Romantic imagination and new agendas of development; religion and secularism; and competing forms of renaissance and revivalism operating both within Egypt and in the wider global arena.

This return of ancient heritage has also become a potentially provocative act, occurring as it does at a time when conflict in modern Egypt has become most prominently polarized in terms of 'terrorist' attacks (carried out by radical Islamic groups)¹ on tourists, turning sites of cultural heritage into arenas of violent conflict and death. Internal struggles between the Egyptian state and Islamicist groups are estimated to have claimed over 1000 lives in the period 1990–97: the expression of struggle in terms of 'terrorist' attacks culminating in what has been described as 'The single most tragic episode of violence in the 1990s', the Luxor Massacre in which fifty-eight tourists and four Egyptian police were murdered at the key tourist site of Hatshepsut's Temple, Upper Egypt (Jankowski 2000: 188–9). This escalation in terror and violence has rendered current cultural heritage revivalism in Egypt increasingly problematic.

ALEXANDRIA IN THE WESTERN IMAGINATION: CATCHING UP WITH THE GREEKS

The Museum of Alexandria in Egypt was essentially like those of today ... and was, in fact, the first real museum. It was perhaps more than two thousand years before western civilization again had comparable institutions. Perhaps only in the last hundred years or so are we really catching up with the ancient Greeks.

(Burcaw [1921] 1997: 25–6)

Mournings of loss imagine a time of undivided origin and empower projects for its recovery.

(Prakash 1996: 63)

In traditional Western characterizations Alexandria is cast as a redemptive formula, a 'resource' or a wellspring of ancient inspiration. To return to Alexandria, whether symbolically or actually, is to attempt to effect a renewal or revival of contemporary Western culture. The ancient Alexandria – the prototypical 'universal' archive, and the New Alexandria project's ancient ancestor – has occupied a central position in this mythologizing. Built by Ptolemy Soter in the third century BC, the ancient institution is best understood as a composite: a temple of the Muses, a 'universal' library, a philosophical academy and a planetarium (Burcaw 1997: 25–6). The ancient Alexandria brought together texts, learned men and artefacts in an attempt to fuse 'Greek' heritage with aspirations of acquiring 'universal' knowledge (ibid.). In modern times it has been described both as an 'enigma' (El-Abbadi 1990: 15) and the 'ultimate in Greek narcissism' (Gore 1976: 169). These labels are indicative not only of the intensity of Western attachments but also the lack of detailed knowledge of the institution (El-Abbadi 1990: iv). Its subsequent destruction² left not only an empty site but a 'gap' in the history of the West, allowing the institution to re-emerge as an object of the imagination, a mirror for the retrospective gaze of writers intent on projecting a desired or imagined ancient ancestor (cf. Parsons 1952 and for a critical survey Canfora 1989).

Significantly, this powerful narration of Alexandria as the place of 'universal' origin and as a site of nostalgia and loss has seized the imagination of many of those engaged in the museum and heritage culture. Historical attachment to the old paradigm has been critically reviewed in recent times by museum commentators as an adherence to 'old' museology (cf. Vergo 1989), and compared unfavourably with a 'new' museology which has placed a stress on alternative Foucaultian genealogies of rupture and discontinuity (for example, Crimp [1993] 1997; Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Bennett 1994). Current theory also makes explicit its particular aversions to discourse of origins (Sherman 1994: 124). For the moment, however, I want to briefly describe this older paradigm and its associations with the museum project in historical terms. My intention is to pull out the complicities of the museum and heritage culture in the powerful and potent narrative of belonging and exclusion which characterize the Western purchase on Alexandria; in particular, the ethnocentrism and essentialism which mark this discourse.

The claim to ancestry is, initially, an etymological link, between *Mouseion* and *museum*, purposefully nurtured in the West during the nodal points of museum formation: the European Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century age of 'public' museums (see for example Wittlin 1970: 171). This afforded a means by which the legend of the ancient Alexandrian Mouseion could be attached to museum genealogies, thus providing museologists with what has been described as a standard of 'perfection' (Bazin 1967: 5–6), a 'blueprint' (Diaz 1998: 439) and as an 'ancient quarry from which were extracted the ideas which were to eventually lay a conceptual foundation for the creation of the modern museum' (ibid.).

Perhaps the most resonant attraction is that of the assertion of a superior 'Greek' origin. The Alexandrian moment in museum history is understood by historians as climactic (Diaz 1998: 439). The institution is credited with fusing together the etymological associations of the museum with the Greek temple/spaces of the Muses and of the philosophical academies of Plato and Aristotle and further translating these into the culture of Alexandrian Hellenism (*ibid.*). This culture thus furnishes the museum with additional associations; with Greek democracy, cosmopolitanism and colonialism.

The characterization of Greece as the birthplace of democracy, for example, is a key feature to be transported to Alexandria, and has proved particularly effective in positioning the museum as an essential feature of civilized, democratic life (*cf.* Duncan 1995). The Alexandrian moment is further understood as a consolidation of the Western trajectory, a time in which the Western origin is privileged over non-Western and pre-Alexandrian cultures of collecting and their associated sacred spaces (see Bazin 1967; Diaz 1998). This moment further aligns what authors present as a 'universal history' to a Western genealogy, thus promoting the idea of ancient Alexandria as an exclusively or essentially Western heritage and the museum as an exclusively or essentially Western phenomenon.

This alignment of Alexandria and the museum with the Western roots/routes (*cf.* Gilroy 1993; Clifford 1997) of culture is further endorsed by the 'old' museologists' empathetic identification with the age of Alexander and of Alexandrian Hellenism. Both ages are characterized as times of traumatic change and rupture, and as synonymous with the movement of Greece outside Greece. The museologist Bazin, for example, refers to the 'psychological disorientation' felt in times of upheaval (Bazin 1967: 6–7). He argues that this provokes a unique cultural response which is expressed in terms of simultaneous introvert/extrovert tendencies. He further argues that in the ancient world the Alexandrian Mouseion was created to fulfil these twin contradictory needs in Hellenistic society (*ibid.*). He details the introversions in terms of the turn to nostalgia and introspection which underpinned the urge to return to origins and to archive the 'Greek' heritage. The extrovert tendencies are detailed, by way of contrast as the co-existent urges to map, measure, define and extend the known world: the ancient Alexandria made this project possible – not just to study the earth, but, with the planetarium, the heavens too.

For many authors the Alexandrian institution's legendary library is advanced as the model for the universal, encyclopaedic collection in the modern museum. It is important to stress here that the possession of a library within a museum institution is highly prized by traditional authors who decry the 'modern split between text and images, libraries and galleries' (Kittler 1996: 73).

The crucial element overlaying the entire thesis of this ancient beginning is that of the colonial imagination. It is here that Alexander the Great is pressed into the service of the old museologies as the hero of ancient museum formation. Thus Alexander's journey to Alexandria, and on into Asia, provides the museum with a narrative of forward motion and progress towards enlightenment/Enlightenment (Bazin 1967: 5). This movement is seen as synonymous with the movement from city-state to empire; from cyclical to linear time; and from the time of myth to the time of history, and society's entry into literacy (*ibid.*; Diaz 1998: 439). Alignment with this context

thus essentializes these features and further establishes the old museological tenet that the development of the museum is measurable on an evolutionary scale of complexity; consequently a society's possession of a museum is seen as an indicator of a minimum standard of civilization. The Alexandrina paradigm is further cited as a key feature – perhaps *the* key feature – of Western genealogical attempts to fix notions of 'heritage' within a container model of culture (cf. Lowenthal 1985: 67).

Turning to the notions of colonialism and cosmopolitanism, if we look first at the celebratory mythologies of Alexander the Great as hero-liberator, we see that this has provided the museum culture with the narrative of a charismatic leader civilizing 'barbarian' cultures and conquering old empires (including Egypt, 'liberated' from occupation by Persian forces) (cf. Wood 1997: 237). Not only does this affirm the concept of history as synonymous with a Western advance but it also provides the blueprint for the ultimate collector, acquiring territories as objects. Perhaps the real potency here is that Alexander's colonialism has been described in terms of a 'benevolent colonialism' (ibid.). Recent studies have shown how 'Alexander's deeds' have had a resonance with the key Western nation-builders and museum-founders in France, Germany and Britain. For example, Napoleon was explicit in his own emulation of Alexander's campaigns which he used to justify, in particular, his own Egyptian adventure (ibid.: 74). German interests in the Alexander mythologies have been further explored in links with German fascist culture, while the appeal for British historians of Alexander's Greek adventures were used as a model for the colonization of India, strategically exploiting the notion of a 'benevolent colonialism' (ibid.).

This urge to invent an acceptable face for the modern colonial project is afforded more credibility by association with cosmopolitanism. Ancient Alexandria is traditionally characterized as a 'microcosm of the world', as a 'melting pot' and as the unproblematic meeting place of East and West (see Ferguson 1973: 25–6). This in turn furnishes traditional histories with a vision of Alexandrian society as a successful model of inter-cultural harmony. In similar fashion, the Alexandria Mouseion is idealized by historians/museologists as a 'dynamic institution that fused diverse cultural currents' (Diaz 1998: 439). Themes of fusion, harmonization and unity are borrowed from Alexander the Great's early empire rhetoric, in which he positioned himself as the 'reconciler of the world' (Ferguson 1973: 7) and from the Ptolemies who centred these themes in their cultural and political policies. Significantly, Thompson identifies in the Ptolemies' policy of decorating Alexandria with objects taken from other contexts – within Egypt and outside – the exhibitionary and display functions of the modern museum (Thompson 1998: 17). This paradigm of cosmopolitanism is often assumed to be synonymous with a 'liberal' agenda thus supplying modern Western culture, and more specifically the museum culture, with what most people would consider to be a desired moral-ethical disposition. This in turn has provided a means by which the West's privileged position as the legitimator and authenticator of culture has been established and perpetuated. Moreover, while veiling the modern museum project in an ancient, idealized cosmopolitanism, the complicities of the old museology included more oppressive reiteration and legitimation of Enlightenment, Romantic and nineteenth-century ideas of Western superiority and cultural difference (Prakash 1996).

Ultimately, the key part of the potency and seductions of the Alexandrian paradigm is its potential to conflate ancient and modern worlds. For example, traditional museum historians used mythologies of ancient Alexandria as a means of projecting the modern museum back in time, and to subsequently represent this as a 'forward movement'. By this means museologists were able not only to distance the museum from the modern context (in particular its violence and ethnocentrism) but also to provide a method by which they could claim that the endorsement of the modern museum's colonial project came from within the museum's own 'history'. The attributes claimed by association with the Alexandrina thus further invest the museum/heritage culture not only with the power to distance but also to assert redemptive qualities. The device that underpins this traditional characterization and facilitates the seductive myth of a return to Alexandria is a motif of loss and recovery. Thus the Alexandrian paradigm offers first a mythology of a museological Golden Age, and second, with its destruction, an equally emotive mythology of the traumatic detachment from an idealized ancestor culture to a 'dark age' (Bazin 1967: 5–6).

This motif of loss is a powerful means for any contemporary culture to declare a rebirth/revival which is capable of reaching back over the heads of the current culture to a more glorious time: the time of origin and idealized roots. As a model it offers a narrative uncontaminated by the previous or present 'regime' and a corrective to current 'difficulties' which feature as 'aberrations'. Once again, in Western genealogies this is understood to be a key force behind the European Renaissance and Enlightenment projects, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' revival of the Alexandrian paradigm by the self-appointed 'New Greeks' when it was seen as a means of 'catching up with the [ancient] Greeks' (Bazin 1967: 25–6). This bringing together of the modern museum project with the legend of the Mouseion/Library by the unreconstructed end of the museum profession has also provided a model by which to assert the key old museological tenets as 'essential' qualities.

Now it can be argued that contemporary revivalism has destabilized the traditional Western thesis of a 'return to Alexandria' as being predicated on a pre-excavation poetics of nostalgia and loss. Moreover, the recent 'repatriation' of objects from Alexandria's ancient past to the modern city, while disturbing the old characterization, has also opened it up to reformulation and redevelopment as a means of enacting the renewal and redemption of contemporary Egyptian, rather than Western culture. The current revival context in modern-day Alexandria is indicative of the fact that, despite intellectual rejection of the Alexandrian paradigm by many academics, ancient Alexandria continues to exert a mythology powerful enough to fuel successive attempts at revivalism, and to provide a means of reformulating many of the old museological characterizations in new national and global configurations.

THE CONTEMPORARY EGYPTIAN RETURN TO ALEXANDRIA

The Ancient Library of Alexandria and its associated Museum gave birth to a new intellectual dynamic ... On the eve of the third millennium and under the

patronage of President Hosni Mubarak, the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt are seeking, in co-operation with UNESCO ... to re-instate its universal legacy in modern terms.

(GOAL 1990: 99)

[D]ay and night they are working here, on a project almost Pharaonic in its proportions. Designed to awaken the city from its long slumber and carry it triumphantly into the new millennium. The [New Alexandrina] ... now under construction aspires to become a Wonder of the Modern World. The building itself is as visionary and megalithic as a cylindrical pyramid.

(Mitchell 1998: 107–8)

At the time this chapter was written, preparations were in hand for the New Alexandrina's millennial opening ceremony. The new building has been described as being constructed in a 'resolutely modern style of architecture' (UNESCO 1990). Its designers (in what appears to be an emulation of Ptolemaic cultural policy) have fused together a number of 'Egyptian' cultural influences while attempting to give the building an overall sense of 'universal culture' (www.bibalex.gov.eg). The building itself is made up of a series of 'objects', circles and pyramids. The architects liken the main body of the building to an Egyptian sun/moon disc while the exterior walls are decorated with the 'script of every language' and 'ridged' to evoke a sense of the 'layers of time' (ibid.). Egyptian roots and universals meet and are projected forward into modernity via the symbolism of the roof structure of the library which is designed to look like a microchip (ibid.). The building's futuristic façade admits the visitor into an interior which attempts to replicate, in modern form, the key components of the ancient institution. Where once was the temple of the Muses are now a science museum, a calligraphy museum and a display of archaeological finds relating to the site, supplemented with a planetarium, restoration and conservation laboratories, and – a substantial part of the building – a vast library of both 'real' and digital texts. The centrepiece of the institution is a 'Hall of Fame', also known as 'the Ptolemaic Space', in which busts of the scholars of the ancient Mouseion/Library are displayed (ibid.). Thus the New Alexandrina is explicit in affirming its links with its ancient ancestors.

The rhetoric of the New Alexandrina has been strategic in affirming old links while new political directions are drawn out. A key moment in the formation of this project was the Aswan Meeting of February 1990, the official launch of the project, which embedded the institution within UNESCO's strategies for scientific and cultural development. The project is described in official statements made at this meeting as 'an indispensable tool for development' with its stated aims to

restore to Alexandria a crucial means of conducting research into Mediterranean culture and science ... Alexandria was predestined for this role: in ancient times a meeting place of civilisations, it is today at the cross-roads between the West and the Middle East.

(GOAL 1990: 53)

Official statements also stress Egypt's, and separately Alexandria's, roles as cradles of universal culture, attaching this to Egypt's contemporary status as one of the 'Western friendly' countries in the Middle East (Jankowski 2000). Among those reclaiming the dream of the ancient Alexandria are the Egyptian Government (President Hosni Mubarak and the First Lady Suzanna Mubarak have been active in aligning themselves with the project) and UNESCO with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (*ibid.*). Many Egyptian intellectuals (among whom are the initiators of the project) have also supported the scheme, illustrating the way in which both liberal and national aspirations have aligned themselves with these revivalist projects.

To develop these themes I want to move now to the content of interviews which I conducted in Egypt with supporters and critics of the scheme. What follows is an attempt to chart the development of the New Alexandria project and its associated revivalism. An important trope to consider is the movement or translation of the project through a number of different contexts. The key trajectory to emerge is the initiation of the Alexandria project from within the realm of Alexandrian intellectuals (the project was originally formulated by a group of academics from Alexandria University), the subsequent securing of a partnership between UNESCO and the Egyptian government and continuous narrations and rearticulations of revivalism as it was being shaped, contested and translated via a series of institutions (governmental and NGOs), groups and individuals at local, national, international levels.

In the section that follows I centre a selection of these voices. A particular feature of the discourse is that interviewees were keen to place current revivalism within an analysis of an alternative set of potent and powerful narratives of belonging and exclusion which have formed around attempts to construct Egyptian national identities and are, in turn, inextricably linked with efforts to revive or reject Egypt's ancient pasts. Interviews picked up both on internal conflicts and tensions in Egypt, in particular between secularism and religion, and on aspirations of marrying revivalism with the country's movement towards a democracy and attempts to, as one informant described it, 'eliminate fanaticism'. Before moving to the interviews themselves I want to outline the key trajectories of these and associated debates.

Attempts to construct national identities, as Gershoni has shown, have oscillated between 'two competing imagined national communities': on the one hand, a territorial Egypt based on a distinctive historical heritage of the Nile Valley and on the other hand, a supra-Egyptian Islamic heritage community based on Egypt's Arabic language and Islamic heritage (Gershoni 1992: 8). The first of these 'imagined communities' was a key concern of Egyptian intellectuals before and during the British occupation of Egypt. Occupation was achieved by means of the violent bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 that secured continued British influence in Egypt up until the 1950s. This discourse, a form of anti-colonial resistance, has been characterized as the 'reawakening of [national] memory' and was marked by attempts to repossess links with Egypt's ancient cultural pasts (Hassan 1998: 204). Appeals were made to 'eternal Egypt', and to the 'return of the Egyptian soul', a process understood in this context as an Egyptian national rebirth and 'renaissance' which further sought to unite Egyptian Copts and Muslims (*ibid.*: 205–6). This

vision of Egyptian intellectuals was predominantly ‘grounded in Pharaonic history’ but did also include a ‘widely debated’ call for a return to the Hellenistic past (ibid.: 211). For example, Taha Hussein’s *The Future of Culture in Egypt* ([1936] 1954) proposed an identity for Egypt rooted in its Mediterranean world; the book helped to prepare the ground for the current generation of intellectuals to stand firm in support of Alexandrian revivalism.

However, the shifts which characterized the post-1952 Nasser and Sadat eras have been referred to as a time of a dramatic ‘refashioning of political identity’ premised on a ‘denial of memory’ (Hassan 1998: 207). As a result of this shift, ‘The political discourse that centred on Pharaonic Egypt was replaced with a discourse that placed Egypt within the folds of Arab nationalism’ (Hassan 1998: 208). These competing forms of attachment and belonging have ultimately contributed towards the sense of ambivalence that currently marks the relationship between Egypt’s modern, predominantly Arab-Muslim contemporary culture and the country’s ancient pasts; in particular, its monumental heritage. Both models have failed to sustain a popular empathetic identification. Thus, illustrative of a divergence between popular sentiments and those of the intellectual élites:

Egypt’s effective past is materially that of its Islamic heritage and the more recent European inlay. The Pharaonic past is a political card. It can arouse passionate responses among certain intellectuals, but it has not effectively become an integral or a predominant element of the materiality of Egyptian life.

(Hassan 1998: 212)

Other critics have drawn out continued ethnic-religious tension and conflict between Egypt’s Coptic community (currently a minority group comprising 10 per cent of the population) which are generally assumed to be the ‘direct descendants of the Pharaonic Egyptians’ (Kaplan 1996: 112) and Egypt’s majority Muslim population (as one informant described it, ‘most of us Egyptians have a sense that we arrived with the “Arab invasion” of 646 AD’). In these debates the project of repossessing Alexandria has also remained problematic, with the city continuing to be regarded as distinct from the rest of Egypt and more typically characterized as an abandoned, declining, colonial backdrop and a place of self-exile for dissident Egyptian intellectuals, most famously the Nobel prizewinning writer Naguib Mafouz (Kararah 1997). Underpinning the interviews undertaken with Alexandria’s cultural élite is the anxiety that Egypt is experiencing a turn to exclusionary pasts which bring violence and conflict. Many informants speak of a polarization of position; as Hassan has it:

A fundamental split exists between modernists, who seek to legitimate Egyptian nationalism by reference to the glory of ancient Egypt within a European context and Islamicists, who revoke nationalism in favour of a transnational religious ideology legitimised by reference to historical times of Islam’s golden-age.

(Hassan 1998: 202)

It is in this context that intellectuals involved in contemporary revivalism have made their own intellectual return to the 'Alexandrian paradigm', currently a site of resistance, as a means to reformulate ideas on 'difference' and 'cosmopolitanism' and thus to acknowledge the various Egyptian pasts and not to privilege certain of these to the exclusion of others. Current revivalism is significant in that it signals a new phase of intellectual engagement with Egypt's ancient pasts, this time centring around Alexandria as a site for the articulation of local and national aspirations and as a means to re-inscribe Egypt's place in the global arena.

THE MEETING POINT OF NORTH AND SOUTH

The first informants featured are those who support, sometimes critically, the revival projects. Among them is the New Alexandrina's project manager Professor Moshen Zahran, formerly a professor of Engineering at Alexandria University. Zahran's account of the New Alexandrina was the most explicit replication of celebratory mythologies of the institution which followed the romantic, nostalgic trajectories of the traditional/old museological genre and were underpinned by the motif of loss and recovery. Zahran referred to the 'monumental effects of the Alexandrina on the world ... Its roots and roads are the beginnings of civilization and the beginnings of contacts between nations in the north and south ... The Mediterranean will have its rebirth and the Alexandrina will be its nodal point'. He pitched his own role as that of a mighty (if not lone) figure between two worlds: north and south, which he identified not only as synonymous with the project's joint authors UNESCO and the Egyptian government, but also with the two contrasting geographical and intellectual landscapes. UNESCO he referenced as an external landscape in Paris (where UNESCO's headquarters is located) and very much synonymous with the dominant Western purchase on Alexandria. By way of contrast, he made it clear that apart from an 'educated minority' in Alexandria there was 'little education about Alexandria's Golden Age'. Many critics have previously commented on this sense of detachment or estrangement between the New Alexandrina and its local context; the incongruous nature of the institution's architecture was assumed to mirror a co-existent popular detachment and ambivalence. These observations, in turn, suggest the existence of corresponding difficulties embedding this project in modern Alexandria, a city which has a very different character to that of its ancient ancestor. Alexandria, home to 4 million people (with 2 million more in Alexandria's rapidly growing 'over-spill' suburbs), has a vital role nationally which is second only to Egypt's capital Cairo. It is also the country's first seaport, its first domestic summer resort, and its second largest industrial centre with 40 per cent of all Egyptian industry located here. No longer the place of European cosmopolitan communities, contemporary Alexandria has been described as, 'a monoglot city, one race, one creed, and fundamentally Islamic' (Awad 1996: 56).

As the perfect publicist Zahran was quick to combine the 'universal' and the local by recasting this lack of a popular Egyptian interest as part of the key challenge of the new institution to 'educate the Egyptian people in their glorious past'. Shying

away from questions regarding the specific strategies of access and education, Zahran preferred to legitimate his claim that the institution would soon embed itself in contemporary Alexandria by quoting Winston Churchill's dictum that 'We shape buildings and afterwards they shape us'. His narrative was one of unrelenting optimism in which he was capable of quickly conflating ancient and modern ('Western?') worlds by adding: 'No less than ancient Pharos, the Alexandrina will be a beacon of light illuminating Egypt's way forward into the twenty-first century.'

Dubbed 'Mr Metaphor' by one of his critics, it soon emerged that the New Alexandria's official neo-romanticism was in fact surrounded by more trenchant criticisms, the fiercest also coming from Alexandrian intellectuals, including doubts cast on what was described by one informant as 'the philosophic credibility of resurrecting that ancient mighty myth'. Many interviewed believed that any modern revival 'was bound to disappoint'. There were also frustrations voiced over the lack of consultation with local 'experts' involved in the spheres of museums, heritage and archaeology. The lack of authentication of the project's claim to be built on the ruins of the ancient institution was also a matter for discussion which gave rise to the sense of the New Alexandrina as a 'parody' or mimicry of its own origins. The New Alexandrina's modern translation of the ancient legendary library has been responsible for creating a further line of criticism. For some, the space (a combination of real and digital texts) represents an inappropriate recreation of an élitist temple of culture; as one critic commented 'This is an unfortunate prioritization in a country where much of the population is illiterate'. Other concerns were raised over the censorship of texts in the library: censorship is currently a sensitive issue in Egypt as there has recently been an increase in the banning of books deemed 'blasphemous', a phenomenon taken seriously by the country's universities (see Hafez 2000).

This capacity to transform the New Alexandrina into a moral and ethical space was further exacerbated by the planners' response to a lack of car-parking facilities at the site. As another informant comments: 'To find out a solution "outsiders" were brought in at high fees – I think they were either European or perhaps American consultants. They advised that the building next-door should be knocked down to make space. Well, the building next door happens to be a maternity and children's hospital: it's outrageous! Where will these people go? And does anyone really care?' Other critics believed Egypt's First Lady Suzanna Mubarak to be the author of this unpopular decision, a claim which has been repeated in the press (*Economist*, 8 April 2000: 33). This controversy heightened the general sense of the Alexandrina as, to quote the same informant, a 'top-down' project.

While other negative references were made to the involvement of 'outsiders' or foreign consultants in the New Alexandrina project, the dominant association of ownership of the project to emerge was with the Egyptian Presidency: this time in the person of Hosni Mubarak. One critic saw this as one in a long line of monumental projects, thus commenting that 'Cheops built the pyramids, Nasser built the Aswan High Dam and Mubarak built the New Alexandrina'. Further associations linked Mubarak's possession (appropriation?) of the project with a culture of Caireen-based bureaucrats and with the might of a military autocracy.

For Hossam Mahdy, an Egyptian architect and also a UNESCO consultant on underwater archaeology and tourist development, the symbolism of the project took on a different emphasis: he explored the New Alexandrina's significance in terms of a more subtle understanding of how the ancient Alexandrina had been indigenized or Egyptianized in its modern form. For him:

It shows Egypt coming to peace with all parts of history and trying to associate ourselves with the modern world – and a democratic world at that. We have had to fish something out of the past to do this. It is also a political statement on who destroyed the ancient library. Many people accuse us – well the Arabs [of having caused this destruction]. By rebuilding, we distance ourselves from this negative idea and show what Egypt is capable of doing.

(pers. comm.)

This old museological motif of reaching back into the distant past for a 'useful' history is resonant here. He further adds that:

It shows that Egypt is experiencing a time of increased prosperity and peace and that the government is becoming more confident and more pragmatic about the projects it creates. It is a sign too that the government sees international collaboration as a means to welcome multi-culturalism back to Egypt ... [a feature] which was eliminated by Nasser and not encouraged by Sadat. Before it [multi-culturalism] threatened Egypt's sovereignty: now we have the self-confidence to welcome it back.

UNDERWATER PROJECTS: REPOSSESSION AND INDIGENIZATION

This note of 'self-confidence' and what might be termed the 'Egyptianization' of revival projects re-emerged in interviews with those involved in the underwater archaeology projects. For example, these themes dominated Ibrahim Darwish's narrative of the 'birth' of the first Egyptian Underwater Archaeology Department (housed initially at the former American Embassy in downtown Alexandria and currently located at the soon-to-be opened Maritime Museum near Alexandria's San Stefano suburbs) of which he is currently director. Darwish was keen to situate this in a longer history of archaeology in Egypt, which he characterized in terms of a pre-1950s archaeology 'controlled by foreigners [French and British and other Europeans] living in Egypt', followed by the 1960s when 'the force of nationalism isolated us from the rest of the world and the war with Israel transformed the harbour into a military zone and therefore it remained closed to us'. He saw the return of foreign archaeologists in the 1970s and 1980s, a consequence of Sadat's 'open door policy', as the start of attempts to create an all-Egyptian underwater archaeology service. The specific moment came with the arrival of the French excavations at Qait Bay/Pharos (directed by Jean-Yves Empereur), at which time Darwish was the only trained diver working for the Supreme Council

of Antiquities (Egypt's chief cultural agency). The dramatic discoveries at Empereur's site and in the Eastern harbour increased the need for Egyptian divers, and eventually led to the decision to create Darwish's department.

This phase of development is, however, narrated by Darwish as a time of tension – at times creative, at others highly conflictual – between those whom he describes as 'my people' (the Egyptian archaeologists) and the 'foreign missions'. Darwish explained that his key concern was to 'learn scientific methods from foreigners but also to control them'. The latter struggle for control and autonomy combined such seemingly disparate elements as on the one hand, an increase in attempts to commit foreign missions to legal contracts, such as those prohibiting the removal of objects and those concerning rights over scientific/academic publications, and on the other decisions to carve out autonomy by designing the department's own T-shirts with their own logo.

THE COSMOPOLITAN AS INTELLECTUAL RESISTANCE

The support by Egyptian cultural élites for current revivalisms is indicative of some of the aspirations associated with these projects. It is further indicative of what can be usefully described as an 'Alexandrianization' of revivalism which operates at an intellectual level a key feature of which are contemporary reworkings of Alexandria's cosmopolitan imagination. A significant voice among the Alexandria intelligentsia is that of Ahmed Abdel Fattah, director of the Greco-Roman Museum. Fattah began his interview with me by commenting that 'to understand an Egyptian's feelings towards ancient cosmopolitan Alexandria you have to also understand the city's modern cosmopolitan heritage'. Like other interviewees, he emphasized that 'these two periods are bound up together: Alexander's Greek city and Mohammed Ali's revival of Alexandria: they are often regarded as twin golden-ages'. The latter, modern revival of Alexandria (which is understood to dominate the city between the 1860s–1960s) he detailed as synonymous with the presence of private money, Europeans and the development of 'a civic tradition'. These, he said, combined to give the city a 'distinctive European feature' and an identity separate from the rest of Egypt. He emphasized that this cosmopolitan culture was also that which produced the Greco-Roman Museum, built in 1892 with private money and administered by Alexandria's Athenaeum Society (as the name suggests, dominated by the city's Greek community).

The rupture in Fattah's narrative came with the 1952 Revolution in which Egypt gained independence. This was described as a 'very great moment for Egypt'; he further describes the revolution's hero Nasser as 'an important figure who gave us a sense of national feeling and an important dream of "Egypt for Egyptians"'. Mostafa El-Abbadi, Professor of Greco-Roman History and Archaeology at Alexandria University, the key individual behind attempts to revive the Alexandrina and author of the UNESCO-supported history of the Alexandrian library (1990) recasts the Nasser period as a 'breach with normal developments'; the liberations included what he termed as 'advances in social justice ... we [the

Egyptians] had until that moment been second class citizens in our own country'. However, the revolution was followed by a period which another critical supporter of revivalism, Mohammed Awad, an architect and preservationist of Alexandria's nineteenth- and twentieth-century heritage, describes as a time of 'much distorting and hiding of history'. He outlines the subsequent 'search for non-European identities which was undertaken to suit Nasser's ideology of Arab nationalism', emphasizing that while 'Nasser's political use of the Pharaonic past was ambivalent and pragmatic, in such an autocracy there was no space to feature the Greco-Roman and ancient cosmopolitan past which was associated with Mediterranean influences and with the "foreigners" Egypt had just exiled'.

Fattah's narrative drew out the particular effects of this shift on the nation's museum culture as one of 'mixed fortunes'. On the positive side he identified the creation of the first antiquities organization controlled by Egyptians rather than by foreigners; for example, the Greco-Roman Museum was then headed by the first of a succession of Egyptian directors who were, as Fattah emphasized, 'as great as the Europeans'. Negative features included the fact that the museum's nationalization marked the beginning of a time of 'decline', when 'bureaucracy was profiled over creativity'.

Many of the intellectuals I interviewed described this post-independence period as a time in which both Alexandria's ancient past and its modern cosmopolitan heritage suffered neglect. The Golden Age/Dark Age motifs have resonance here. Some were of the opinion that this was purposeful and that Nasser took a personal dislike to Alexandria: a consequence, it was argued, of an assassination attempt made upon him while giving a speech in the city in 1954. Continuing this theme, the same critics felt it was significant that Nasser's 1956 speech, in which he announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal, took place in a public square in Alexandria synonymous with Egypt's colonial past, to quote Awad: 'this is the place where cosmopolitanism began with the Europeans and where ironically it ended with Nasser'. The space was itself subsequently nationalized and recast as Tahrir or Liberation Square.

Many more critics still cast doubt on any deliberate 'policy of hammering away at Alexandria' and are keen to challenge the notion of an 'abandoned Alexandria' by emphasizing that as the majority of 'foreigners' left, the city was repopulated in particular by Arab-Muslim people migrating from Upper Egypt and the Delta areas. Rather than abandonment, this influx of people was described as putting 'pressure on the city' and as Awad comments, 'in this period cosmopolitan culture was replaced with a mono-ethnic Arab-Muslim population'.

Interesting attachments and affinities also emerge between the Egyptian cultural élites and the pre-independence colonial cosmopolitan culture. Adel Abu Zahra, Professor of Human Sciences at Alexandria University and founder of the Friends of the Environment Association, was keen to argue that despite these dramatic changes to the city, what he described as Alexandria's 'liberal spirit' survived. This view was shared by others, who further defined what might be called Alexandria's 'intellectual heritage' which connected the spirit of cosmopolitanism with that of tolerance, pluralism and of hybridization. For example, El-Abaddi asserted that 'The Greco-Roman past has been a line of resistance historically for Egyptians'. For Abu

Zahra this spirit appeared to be an intellectual resource which was capable of resisting both what he termed as Nasser's 'naive nationalism' and 'the current demands of religious extremists who wish to turn Egypt into an exclusively Islamic society'. The latter he sees as a significant force in contemporary Egypt and he referenced this to extremists' calls to destroy Egypt's 'pagan' heritage (the physical remains of Egypt's ancient pasts) and to the terrorist attack on tourists in Luxor in 1997. Abu Zahra emphasized that 'in this climate we need cosmopolitanism more than ever'.

There were, however, references made to a more complex and perhaps more optimistic contemporary embrace of Alexandria's Greco-Roman as well as its ancient and modern cosmopolitan pasts by both intellectuals and the Egyptian government: again a strategic attempt to reach back in time and revive an effective history. Fattah expressed this commitment to revivalism in terms of both his own and the Egyptian nation's process of maturation: 'Nasser was both mine and Egypt's teenage; Sadat when we became a man and Mubarak is our Wisdom'. He further linked Mubarak's 'pledge to preserve ancient culture' with the 'country's progress towards democracy': again an echo of an old museological agenda.

In other interviews the concept of democracy was problematized, for example, one critic referred to democracy as 'a stick used by the West to beat countries who are not doing what they would like'. Others explored more subtle interconnections, for example, Awad commented, 'I think that democracy for Egypt means an entente with recent history and I see a correspondence between the acknowledgement of a plurality of ancient pasts – and of Egypt's commitment to carve out its future roles in the "global arena"'. The intellectuals' commitment to extend solidarity to the marginalized subject was recast further by Hossam Mahdy who felt a certain parallel between the suppression of 'the Greco-Roman aspect of our culture' and the current silencing of 'the political voice of Islam': both of which he felt 'affected cultural dialogue'. Mahdy thus translated Alexandria's cosmopolitan liberal, pluralist ethic into a new context: the need to recognize popular Islam's voice (Egypt's 'most prevalent heritage') rather than 'pushing it aside and provoking terrorism'.

TOURISM AS NEO-COLONIAL IMAGINATION

Among the other aspects of western domination in various developing countries (such as multinationals, media and satellite dishes), tourism and tourists stand out. Tourists are the most explicit and tangible representatives of the rich and comfortable, 'have' societies, clustered together in luxurious ghettos, challenging all moral, religious and social values of the 'want' society'.

(Aziz 1995: 94)

Despite the presence of what might be described as an emergent force of critical optimism gathering around contemporary revivalism, this was undercut by anxieties expressed by informants identifying the presence of neo-colonial forces in current revivalism, in particular in the force of tourism.

As previously stated, not only is the force of revivalism synonymous with the revival of the Alexandria's 'Western' heritage and with the import of international agencies – for example, UNESCO in the case of the New Alexandrina and European archaeological teams' in terms of the underwater excavations – it is increasingly driven by incentives to attract tourism. A growing 'academic' literature on tourism, and on recent violent conflicts involving tourists and terrorists, has highlighted how the motivations and the effects of tourism replicate that of colonialism. Here, the 'colonial gaze', which previously consumed, among other things, cultural difference and the cultural heritage, has been reaffirmed in late modernity by the 'tourist gaze'. The search for 'authenticity' repeats a major tenet of traditional paradigms and is a major theme of critical tourism studies (Aziz 1995).

Nawal El Saadawi, an Egyptian author, doctor and founder member of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association, explores these themes with specific reference to the Egyptian experience of tourism. She profiles the potential exploitative traits and violence of tourism by connecting this to neo-colonialism on the part of United Nations organizations and closely associated 'development' agencies – here she makes references to GATT, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – while extending her critique to include analogies with 'Western' academic discourse. 'Both post-modernists and tourists consume the "other" or use the "other" as a tool of consumption. To them everything (including the subaltern) becomes a commodity to be used materially, culturally or intellectually' (Saadawi 1997: 56). Highlighting the fact that archaeology in Egypt has historically been a particularly 'foreign' venture, Saadawi assigns specific criticism to Egyptologists: 'Egyptology is an example of cultural genocide or terrorism, in which a whole nation and its civilisation and philosophy are violently reduced to a few stones or ruins ... Egyptian history is reduced to what is called Egyptology, to stones and ruins looked at by tourists.' (ibid.: 168–9).

Another critical voice is that of Aziz, who stresses the complexities of the internal violences informing conflict between tourists and terrorists. Aziz states that 'Tourists are used as a tool to attack the government', thus turning the focus of conflict to the polarization of the Egyptian state and Islamicists (Aziz 1995: 91). The former is characterized by its opponents as a pseudo-Westernized, corrupt yet powerful élite, pursuing agendas of secularism and assumed to be linked to – if not controlled by – 'Western' spheres of power and influence. From the other side, the Islamicist cause is aligned to what has been described as a 'politics of exclusion': a context of increased poverty, a discontented underclass and a popular (and for a minority a fundamentalist) return to Islam (ibid.: 31). Similarly, interviewees were keen to break down what was described as the 'demonization' and 'homogenization' of Islam in the Western press: in particular, in the figure of the 'Islamic terrorist'. They differentiated between 'social Islam' which was understood not only as Egypt's dominant and popular source of religious devotion (referred to as a 'positive and improving' force), but also as a key provider of civil society in the contemporary Egyptian context. In this context the mosque becomes a potent symbol of freedom, while tourist landscapes are synonymous with symbols of the West, and with corrupt state power (ibid.: 30). 'Social Islam' was, however, contrasted by others with expressions of 'fanaticism' which many saw as a 'foreign' imposition and, for some,

synonymous with what was termed as a highly conservative, imported 'Saudi Islam'. This context and the recent escalation of violence in Egypt have rendered Alexandria's anticipated role as an international tourist destination more problematic.

THE 'LAS VEGASIZATION' OF ALEXANDRIA: URBAN REVIVALISM

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a series of projects has emerged on the scene which seek to reinvent Alexandria, currently a site of domestic tourism, as an international tourist destination. Plans are going ahead to create an underwater museum at Qait Bay, in which visitors will move through perspex tunnels to 'walk' among the ruins of Pharos. On a similar theme, but with more theatrical content (and evoking a more critical response), the French fashion designer Pierre Cardin has plans to reconstruct Pharos as a floating laser-light show in the Eastern harbour. Meanwhile, a redevelopment of the city centre over the last two years has included the erection of a series of sculptures and mosaics which feature 'Greco-Roman' motifs, echoing the wider motif of a return to problematic origins.

To some extent, the renovations are seen as a means of exploiting the spirit of revivalism, harnessing it to the aim of bringing improvements to less salubrious part of the city; a repeated comment among intellectuals was that revivalism was having a 'positive psychological affect on many Alexandrians, particularly in terms of civic pride'. However, many of those I interviewed raised fears about the possibly negative aspects of tourist development and to what one critic, Hala Halim, a writer and journalist for the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* (The Pyramids), referred to as 'a sad Las Vegasization of Alexandria'. The word 'cosmetic' was used by several people to describe the nature of these changes which were focused almost exclusively upon the Corniche area.

However, this 'Las Vegasization' enabled me to explore a popular engagement with the city and its revivalism. Initially my vox pop interviews investigated reactions to cultural revivalism and attachments to ancient pasts: these largely illustrated a lack of any popular purchase, making explicit the notion that the effective past was indeed that of an Islamic heritage. Nevertheless, the redevelopments allowed me to pick up on subjects which elicited more local, common interests of Alexandrian people. I undertook fieldwork at sites which included Qait Bay (the site of Pharos and Empereur's excavations), Chatby beaches next to New Alexandrina, the New Alexandrina building site, and various coffee shops. (My interviews here were less structured and I was assisted by Ahmed Omer of the Egyptian Underwater Archaeology Department when required).

Many of those I interviewed at these locations subverted the notions of revivalism as the return of a dominant Western narrative and tourism as a new colonizing force. They did this by pulling out alternative, often contradictory meanings. The cleaning up of the Corniche area (in particular improvements in refuse collection from surrounding streets and central Alexandria) provided a powerful metaphor which many understood as indicative of a more general cleaning up of corruption in the city. Anecdotes were repeated to me which positioned Alexandria's governor

as the single force behind change: he was projected as the new hero championing the battles of the ordinary people against corrupt officials and others. Some of the younger people I interviewed hoped that tourism would bring not only jobs and money but contact with a world associated with, among others, Madonna, MacDonald's, the Spice Girls and Leonardo di Caprio. Older people were more keen to emphasize the aspiration that the redevelopments would encourage fellow Alexandrians to 'look after and respect the city', one informant making a wish that it would make Alexandria into a 'decent place for children to grow up in'.

I want to leave Alexandria here as the key players on the scene of revivalism anticipate more of the changes wrought by the current return to ancient origins; it gives a sense of both a circular quality – the 'rootedness' – of the narrative of Alexandria's revivalism but also makes explicit the particular contradictions, tensions and ambivalences, as well as the divergences, to be found in the contemporary context.

RECASTING THE ALEXANDRIAN PARADIGM

'You will be back', he said. 'And Alexandria will still be here. It is always here. And do you know why it is always here? Because it has stories. As long as it has stories it lives'.

(Kennedy 1998: 55)

It seems fair to argue that when the West began to construct the myth of a return to Alexandria, few if any would have believed that the New Alexandria and associated archaeological revivalism would be influenced – let alone principally authored – by the Egyptian state and Egyptian cultural élites themselves. Similarly, the proponents of the New Museology – arguing that the West in post-modernity's never-ending return had in fact done with Alexandria, and squeezed the city dry of all metaphor – failed to envision the subtleties or complexities of the rise of heritage and revivalism in post-colonial Egypt (or in ex-colonial/post-colonial contexts anywhere, perhaps).

As this chapter suggests, however, the myth has gained an increasing multivocality. As well as serving to support, for example, a Golden Age myth of the 'universal', encyclopaedic archive, the contemporary return to Alexandria is also effective in serving other aspirations. For some, the new encounter between East and West provokes a wider consideration of hybrid heritages which resist incorporation into exclusive genealogies, be they privileged Western 'universal' narratives or those of religion or of narrow nationalism. For others, it has afforded an articulation of an intellectual spirit of solidarity, capable of making bridges between the exclusion of the Hellenistic heritage from Egyptian national identities and a contemporary 'politics of exclusion' which both silences the Muslim political voice and is yet to fully acknowledge a popular Islamic heritage as part of 'cultural dialogue'. For others still, the myth of a Golden Age is expressed more simply as a vision of a cleaner, safer city – and what may perhaps be one common if not a 'universal' aspiration worth standing by – that of creating a 'decent place for children to grow up in'.

The implications for museology of what I hope is a radically recast Alexandrian paradigm is that it makes explicit that cultural exports – including the ‘commodity of heritage’ – have always met with a degree of resistance and contestation. What has changed in our contemporary context is the need for a critical museology and heritage culture to both centre and particularize this context as part of our attempts to create a more relevant and responsible north–south museological dialogue.

NOTES

- 1 Kennedy describes the increase in attacks: ‘The terrorist cells (known collectively as *al-Gaamat Islamaya* – ‘the Islamic Groups’) kicked off in 1994 by announcing that all visitors to Egypt ran the risk of grievous bodily harm as part of their struggle with the “corrupt” regime of President Hosni Mubarak’ (Kennedy 1998: v).
- 2 The historian Gore illustrates how a series of destructive acts (with either human or natural causes) has been reduced to a formula often based on the religious affiliations and prejudices of past historians and commentators, namely: ‘The Christians say the Romans destroyed it (in 47 BC), and the Moslems say the Christians destroyed it (in 391 AD). And some historians say that the Moslems destroyed whatever was left of it when they seized Alexandria in 646 AD’ (Gore 1976: 169). In these attempts to apportion blame, one account is often lifted to assert negative stereotypes: in Western historiography this has typically been the anti-Muslim thesis (Ahmed 1992: 94). Thus the destruction of the ancient Alexandria is described by Ahmed as one of the first in a series of ‘major encounters between Islam and the West’ (ibid.).

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6 *Renovating Hue (Vietnam): authenticating destruction, reconstructing authenticity*

MARK JOHNSON

INTRODUCTION: THEORIZING DESTRUCTION

At the former Vietnamese imperial city of Hue, recently listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, a site interpreter told me the following story. A group of Vietnam veterans were visiting Hue for the first time since they had left it at the end of the American war in Vietnam. All of the former soldiers had been involved in the American counter-attack following the Tet Offensive in 1968. She described the profound and moving affect the monuments had on them. As they walked around the site, they all kept repeating to her: 'Did we do this?' 'What did we do?' At the end of their tour, one of the Americans took off his cap, took out his wallet and put some money in it before passing it around to his companions, each of whom also put money in the cap. They then handed the tour guide the money and asked her to give the money to the director of the Hue monuments and conservation centre: their contribution towards the work of conservation and renovation.

This story provides the germ of an idea developed in this chapter, that is, to explore the relationship between discourses of destruction and the work of reconstruction and conservation. The chapter takes as its starting point the position that landscapes, sites and monuments are always emergent and processual, whose meaning(s) and significance are continually being remade through various material and discursive practices (Bender 1993, 1998). It thus begins by looking at contemporary viewings and traversings of the Hue monuments. One view of them, exemplified by the story of the reaction of the Vietnam veterans, is of a former war zone, a terrain of violence, of winners and losers, loss and gain, mapped out in terms of zones of responsibility and the apportionment of blame for who destroyed what and where. In this view, it is part of a larger landscape of war tourism: the demilitarized zone (DMZ), Ho Chi Minh trail and so on. Another view of the Hue monuments, however, is of an 'ancient' landscape, in which the particular events of recent history are effaced by the materialization of a more distant past, and in which acts of violence and deliberate destruction (as well as neglect and abandonment) are rendered indistinguishable from 'natural' processes of decay and deterioration. The latter images are found both in travellers' tales and tourist brochures, part of a larger

landscape of lost worlds and recovered ruins. This view figures in the accounts of site interpreters, in their explicit attempts to redirect the tourist gaze away from a view of the monuments as simply another war memorial.

There are a number of different possible interpretations of these competing if, at times, complementary productions of destruction. On one hand, the view of Hue as a former war zone, and the mapping out of responsibility for destruction, might be seen as an act of restoration and renovation, a reassertion of agency and meaning into a landscape which has, at least in popular Western images and imaginings, come to represent the collapse of meaning and morality. On the other hand, the refiguring of violent destruction as natural processes of decay and deterioration might be seen as an act of enforced cultural amnesia. That is to say, the particular histories of violent conflict and political pogroms which followed the Tet Offensive do not sit well with the official rehabilitation of Hue as a symbol of national unity and integrity. Indeed, the effective effacement of recent history in official narratives and the materializations of the more distant past are all the more striking in Hue, given the continual recycling of images of war in Vietnam more generally.

The dehistoricizing of site destruction and recreation of the timeless present past is, however, also written into the everyday work and practice of conservation and renovation itself, which are codified in various documents produced by official bodies such as the Hue-UNESCO working party. Here a distinction is drawn between natural processes of decay and deterioration, which are seen as intrinsic features of the site, and those which are seen as extrinsic and intrusive, and which link narratives of war and destruction to the spectre of devastation which tourism is seen to represent. What emerges is, I suggest, a static view of history in which the meaning and significance, or 'authenticity', of the site is continually confined to a particular point in time, and in which the different narratives of destruction are symbolic means for containing and managing a potentially unmanageable and unwieldy past.

The aim of this chapter is not, however, to produce a complete account of all the different images and narratives of destruction, only a few of which I outline below. Nor is it simply about adding another dimension, narratives of destruction, to the growing literature which suggests that landscapes are multiply authored, significantly meaningful and politically contested domains. Rather, the chapter is intended to consider and explore the theoretical implications of the proposition that destruction is an intrinsic part of all reworkings of the present past. To put it otherwise, this chapter argues not only that destruction is a construction, but also to show that destruction is part of every construction. If we recognize this fact, we can be more aware of its ethical implications.

While it may appear counter-intuitive, destruction during construction is familiar in archaeological practice. When archaeologists carry out excavations, they are involved in a process of site destruction. While certain objects and materials will be selected for conservation and preservation, most of what an archaeologist uncovers ends up in fact on the spoil heap. The question of destruction centres not just on the destruction (or not) of individual objects, however, but around the particular context or sets of relationships which the archaeologist encounters at a particular

point in time and space. These sets of material relations are destroyed in the process of excavation. It is for this reason that archaeologists place such great emphasis on recording the entire excavation process as systematically as possible and through a variety of means.

That destruction is an implicit part of much archaeological practice is well understood in archaeology, but its wider implications remain under-theorized. In particular, what has not been recognized is the way in which destruction forms part of every construction, both material and discursive. On the one hand, material destruction appears deceptively self-evident: either something is destroyed or it is not. Yet as the variety of discourses surrounding the World Heritage Site at Hue documented below suggests, it is far from being a simple matter. On the other hand, if it is difficult to think about how discourse differentially frames material destruction, then it is perhaps even more difficult to get to grips with the idea that destruction is an implicit part of every discursive construction. As others have argued (Barthes [1968] 1979: 142–5; Butler 1990, 1993), discourse is destructive to the extent that it always works through a process of condensation, elision and abjection. Or as Gayatri Spivak suggests: ‘We cannot but narrate [but] when a narrative is constructed, something is left out. When an end is defined, other ends are rejected, and one might not know what those ends are’ (1990: 18–19, cited in Weedon 1997). Like digging, it requires a certain selectivity and involves an ongoing process of avowal and disavowal: some words and subjects are chosen, while others are discarded on the spoil heap of history. Moreover, while, as in archaeology, one may quickly rush to retrieve a word carelessly whispered, the original speech act is unrecoverable: the context has now changed, it cannot be reconstructed, only reworked in the unfolding present.

Though the analogy between digging and discursive representation does not extend indefinitely and while there are qualitative differences between them, the analogy does help to highlight the often destructive discriminations which are as much a part of our spoken and written reworkings of the past as they are of any other discursive or material construction. Indeed, I am not suggesting any necessary or radical separation between the material and discursive. Material reworkings of the past are in part an effect of prior discursive formations. What, when and where one excavates is framed by conventions of archaeological knowledge. Similarly, discourse takes place within, and is framed by sets of material relations (Miller 1987).

ON LOCATION(S): RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This chapter is part of a larger study entitled ‘Selling the past, buying the future’, which, as the name suggests, is concerned with processes of cultural commodification and imaginings of past and future. In particular I am interested in the recent rehabilitation of Hue, Vietnam both as an emerging tourist centre and as a ‘national’ and ‘world’ heritage site, one part of an overall process initiated by the policy of renovation (*doi moi*). The research, however, is as much about the way in

which the construction of place figures in and/or becomes the focus for the imaginings of past and futures, as it is a piece of research about the imaginings of a past and future in this one particular place. As the materials on which I draw in this chapter demonstrate, Hue is not one, but many: it exists in and through a variety of material and discursive practices which extend beyond this particular locale (Olwig and Hastrup 1997; Dawson and Rapport 1998).

The source material on which I draw includes official Hue-UNESCO working documents on tourist management and conservation, news clippings, Internet sites and discussion groups, together with ethnographic data collected during a preliminary visit to Hue in July 1997.¹ As far as Vietnam is concerned I am a novice researcher. Like Hue itself, this chapter is very much a work-in-progress. My previous research concerned ethno-nationalism, the making of gender/sexualities and cultural transformation in the southern Philippines (Johnson 1997). Though a social anthropologist with a broad interest in material culture, consumption and processes of identity (including ethnicity and gender), I also have an interest as well as some training in archaeology, with a focus on south-east Asian archaeology in particular. Part of the reason for choosing to focus on Vietnam, and Hue in particular, was the desire to combine an interest in archaeology with an interest in contemporary processes of identity.

As with many people, the images of Vietnam with which I am most familiar are dominated by 'the war'. Growing up as the child of missionary parents in the Philippines, I can vaguely recall images of war on *Time* magazine covers, overhearing reports on *Voice of America* to which my father listened and adult conversations about the war. With the exception of my uncle's stories about his tour of duty in Vietnam, however, these were all distant events for me. Much closer to home and more real was the war going on around us at the time in the southern Philippines during the early 1970s. Despite, or more precisely because of, both my own experience of war in the southern Philippines and the lingering preoccupation of the American war in Vietnam, I started my research in Vietnam with the intention of getting away from war narratives. I knew of course that the war was still important in Vietnam itself, if only as a form of touristic production (Kennedy and Williams n.d.). However, I was more interested in the changes that were taking place as a result of the new economic policies (*doi moi*) and the opening up of Vietnam to the wider international community, and in particular whether or not and in what ways discourses of culture, tradition and so on were being invoked and figured. I had thus already identified, if for different reasons and perhaps with different effect, with those narratives of place which were not solely or primarily on war and its remembrances.

ROMANCING HUE: VISIONS AND VERSIONS OF A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

My first trip to the former capital of Vietnam, Hue, was via the present-day capital, Hanoi. The striking thing about Hanoi, other than the very visible process of

market transformation, was how very difficult it is to get away from images of war and strident nationalist struggle and militarism at least in official public spaces frequented by tourists (including myself). These were not limited to the war museum or the Ho Chi Minh Museum that sits near to the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. The national museum of Vietnam presents a linear view of the development of the Vietnamese people from the Stone Age to the present day, largely organized around the theme of the struggle for national liberation. My evening meals, taken in a side-street restaurant, were often accompanied by various movies and programmes about the American war. The English language newspapers featured at least two stories relating to the war. The first was Vietnam's ongoing claims against US spraying of Agent Orange, while the second was of presentations to war widows and mothers whose sons had died during the American war. Even the water puppet show contained direct and indirect allusions to nationalist struggle and conflict.

Having said that, 'the war' was not a preoccupation of the few acquaintances I was able to make during my short stay in Hanoi – one a young tour guide, the other a university lecturer in psychology whose wife ran the restaurant where I took most of my meals. The topic of interest for them was much more about work and economic opportunities (or the lack thereof). If they thought about the American war at all, it was as something over and done with and which only foreign tourists came to find out about and relive, not as something which was of great concern to them.

The important point, so far as this chapter is concerned, was the contrast that I observed between public presentations and constructions of place in Hanoi and Hue. Having been subjected to repeated narratives of the war in Hanoi, I had anticipated a similar thing in Hue and was surprised, not to say relieved, to find otherwise. In Hue, as in Hanoi, one of the first things I did was to arrange for an English-speaking tour guide to accompany me on a first look around the Hue monuments complex. My tour guides – both of whom were official site interpreters from the Hue Monuments Conservation Centre (HMCC) – set out the itinerary for the day which included a look around the imperial city in the morning, and a tour of two of the emperors' mausoleums in the afternoon.

At each site I was taken along what was obviously a well-rehearsed route, led to particular vantage points and given a set, generally well-polished description of the place. Unlike Hanoi, where the tourist gaze was repeatedly directed towards war and the 'national struggle for liberation', neither in my tour guides' account, nor in the way in which the view of the sites was orchestrated, was the emphasis on war or conflict. The landscape recounted for me as we walked around the imperial city and tombs was a landscape which they saw as speaking of the lives of former emperors, mandarins and concubines, of palace intrigues and lavish feasts, of cultivated arts and the poetic harmony of a place organized according to the principles of feng shui and modelled on the forbidden city in Beijing. Where conflict was recounted, it was the conflict with the French, including conflicting interpretations of the emperors – who like the monuments themselves were also being rehabilitated as part of the process of renovation – their relationships with, and responses to, colonization.

In so far as I went to Vietnam to find something other than war, its memorialization and commodification, I had obviously come to the right place. This I could see, though it was a vision for which I, like other tourists and visitors had clearly already prepared and already in part traversed. When I told my acquaintances in Hanoi that I was going to Hue, they talked at length about Hue's beauty and charm, of a place of culture and tradition and the romance of the Perfume River (though they claimed that Hanoi was the cultural heart of the Vietnamese). The travel guides I read prior to my arrival spoke similarly of the charm and romance of Hue, and said it was not just the geographic centre and former political capital of Vietnam, but also its cultural and spiritual heart. Like the site interpreters who took me around the site, they recounted the chronology of emperors with snippets and snapshots about their loves and lives. They also highlighted the aesthetic beauty of the site, in which the highly ordered bureaucracy of a Confucian state was mirrored in the architecture and layout of the city.

It is the latter which is the particular focus of UNESCO's vision of Hue. In the introduction to a report produced by the Hue–UNESCO working party and the Vietnamese National Commission, Hue is described as being 'permeated by a unique and fascinating beauty in complete harmony with its environment' (1995: 2). Rivers, sea, mountains and other topographic features of Hue are seen to form an integral part of the overall cultural landscape together with the historical structures and archaeological features. Hence the World Heritage Site consists not only of the remains of the imperial city, citadels, tombs and temple complexes, but is also seen to include the entire length of the Perfume River, which is the central axis around which the site is organized. It is this 'interplay of natural and man-made features' which is said to be the 'unique' characteristic of Hue.

In other accounts this romantic vision tends towards what might be seen as a totalizing portrait of people and place. One Internet site, 'Hue Net' (<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/2579/>), compares Hue with other 'ancient capitals in SE Asia' and points to its representativeness as an 'Oriental city'. The authors note how all the monuments are 'in sublime harmony with nature', a harmony which is seen to be mirrored in the courteous, mild and quiet people of Hue. 'Both life and landscape here are poetical, bringing self-confidence and worriensness to everybody'.

There are, nevertheless, other views/viewings of Hue, among them a landscape of war and the American war in particular. With the thirtieth anniversary of the Tet Offensive of January 1968 recently passed, there has in fact been a spate of articles written about/revisiting Hue. One recent example, drawn from the Internet, is titled 'Tet-a-Tet on war: new world, lingering memories since the pivotal battle of Vietnam' (Ian Stewart, Associated Press, www.virtuallynw.com/stories/1998/Jan/30/s340128.asp).² The article evocatively sets the scene with its opening sentence: 'Strolling past the bullet-scarred walls of Hue's ancient Imperial Citadel, the decorated Viet Cong war hero journeys 30 years into the past'. The article goes on to recount some of the major events and images of the Tet Offensive, interspersed with snippets of conversations with former combatants and glimpses of Hue's landscape.

This ancient walled city remains haunted by the legacy of Tet. In block after city block, Viet Cong massacred minor government functionaries, Buddhists, missionaries and even foreign doctors. While the Offensive in most cities lasted days, the battle for Hue went on for more than three weeks. By the end, much of the city lay in ruins ...

Khanh, the 68-year-old Viet Cong veteran, is proud of what he accomplished in Hue but shyly turns away questions about the bloodshed. An impish man with boundless energy, he strides from the 200-year-old flag tower to the Citadel's Dong Ba gate, a key entrance to the heart of the walled city and the majestic imperial palace.

Dropping his hands in front, the former Viet Cong commando mimics firing a machine gun across a narrow canal. Thirty years ago, US Marines were holed up inside the houses and shops that line the channel ...

Much has happened since the Tet Offensive ... Hue's Citadel is undergoing extensive restoration to remove bullets from US helicopter gunships, rebuild walls smashed away by mortar fire and erect new roofs collapsed in the fighting.

Vietnam Internet Magazine (<http://www.wonderfulalmonds.com>), dedicated to all things related to US veterans of the Vietnam war, hosted a special 'Tet Anniversary Issue' with various reflections on Tet by former GIs. In these, as in other accounts, Hue is simply another battleground, part of the 'common fabric of the Vietnamese landscape' (<http://www.en.com/users/kramsey/default.html>), against which various personal experiences of the horrors and heroics of war are played out and recounted.³ This generalized view of the Vietnam landscape is continually being reconstituted in the GI tours: Vietnam as a place reduced to a series of staging points and enemy encounters.

In these tours, as in the accounts of Hue and Tet, the specificity of a particular place and landscape derives from two things. It is given, on one hand, by the named individuals who participated in or lost their lives during the Offensive and subsequent siege. On the other hand, it is given by the significance attributed to the battles fought in the location: Hue's significance deriving from its key position in the Tet Offensive, a battle which is often regarded as having turned the tide of American opinion against the war. Sometimes these two evocations of place are brought together as in the following memorial published on the Internet to fallen comrades who died in July 1970 in the mountains west of Hue, called Hill 805 (<http://www.vietvet.org/hill805.htm>):

Delta Company, 2\501st, 101st.

This gallery is dedicated to these Delta Raiders who were
Killed in Action in the Republic of Vietnam

David Robert Beyl 7/18/70

Paul Gerald Guimond 7/14/70

James Thomas Hembree 7/14/70

William E. Jones 7/14/70

John Lay Keister 7/14/70
 Jay Allen Muncey 7/28/70
 Terry Allan Palm 7/14/70
 William David Rollason 7/18/70
 Gary Lee Schneider 7/15/70
 Keith Edward Utter 7/14/70
 Wilfred Wesley Warner 7/23/70
 They are not forgotten

These different visions and viewings of Hue, the ancient city and battleground, are obviously not mutually exclusive. In many contemporary journalistic accounts, as in travel writing and tour guides, the two sit side by side. The following traveller's tale (again published on the Internet) is a good example, where the romance of Hue is juxtaposed with Hue the former war zone (<http://photo.net/webtravel/vietnam/pmellersh/huetxt.htm>):

Hue is coined as the 'romantic city'; 'You will fall in love with the girls in Hue' I was told. Hue is a fantastic place with a large part of the city walled off from the outside. It reminded me somewhat of how Angkor Watt was built, but on a smaller scale. There was a lot of intense farming going on inside the walled city. Canals crisscrossed the area, providing many bridges and places to fish. This also gave the place a very rural feel to it, like a walled countryside.

Old wartime relics behind barbed wire and the city walls point defiantly towards what used to be the American side of the river. Hue was bitterly fought over in the "American war". Battle fields, massacre sites and embassies have become tourist attractions. In my mind these are the least interesting parts of Vietnam, yet tourists pay good money to go and look at empty fields in the nearby DMZ zone.

Though both images of Hue appear in the above account, as in other narratives, one view is usually privileged over the others. In this case it is the idea of ancient worlds which dominates the field of vision: part of a wider south-east Asian rural idyll in which peasant farmers work against the backdrop of monumental ruins. This tranquil idyll is only despoiled by intrusive reminders of a war which are seen as not belonging in the picture, not properly the object of the tourist gaze. In this respect, it shares more in common with the view of Hue with which I was presented by the tour guides and site interpreters, than with the view of Hue which emerges in the accounts of former soldiers.

These are just a few of the possible viewings of Hue. In the next section, I focus in more detail on the narratives of destruction, explicit and implicit, within each, in order to show the ways in which different constructions of destruction figure in the competing, though at times complementary viewings of Hue. On the one hand, destruction is foregrounded in a narrative that condenses and appropriates all evidence of material deformation as the effect of recent conflict. On the other hand, while acts of destruction by human agents are not denied, their historical specificity

is elided in narratives which seek to contain both the politically charged and personal traumas of the recent war and the continued assertion of another's agency and subjectivity over the landscape.

NARRATIVES OF DESTRUCTION: RESTORATION, REDEMPTION AND CULTURAL AMNESIA

I began this chapter with the story recounted by the site interpreter of the former American GIs who, despite the best attempt of the tour guides to direct their gaze otherwise, saw in the architectural remains not evidence of a balanced and harmonious landscape, but the battle scars of war. That is to say, what moved them was not the monuments themselves, but the desolation which they were seen to convey. As in the article 'Tet-a-Tet on war' cited above, crumbling mortar and collapsing roofs are all appropriated as acts of deliberate destruction. There is no discrimination between damage to the monuments caused by typhoons, neglect and decay or of other previous wars and conflicts (of which there were a number).

While the journalist unhesitatingly attributes the destruction directly to US helicopter gunships, the former GIs ask: 'What did we do?' and 'Did we do this?' These questions, I would suggest, are as much a rhetorical assertion of agency – 'we are responsible for the condition of these monuments' – as a recognition of the fact there were other parties in the conflict. Thus the questions signal at least the possibility of demarcating zones of responsibility and of apportioning blame. That the US and the South Vietnamese Nationalist army were not entirely responsible for the destruction caused as a result of the war is acknowledged by other journalists' accounts:

For the Citadel, history climaxed during the Tet Offensive of February 1968, when US Marines and their South Vietnamese allies threw back attacking communist troops. Four weeks of fighting left dozens of the elegant, elaborately decorated buildings in ruins. ... The palace grounds were spared the worst of the fighting because US and South Vietnamese troops were forbidden to use heavy artillery or air raids there. Still, bullets and mortar fire tore holes in walls, roofs collapsed and some buildings burned down.

(Richard Herzfelder, Associated Press, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, 9 January 1997, <http://www.seattle-pi.com/pi/getaways/010997/dest09.html>)

The foregrounding of destruction and the dividing up of the landscape into zones of responsibility stands in direct contrast with the narratives of site interpreters and tour guides at the Hue monuments. This is not to say, as might be expected, that they place all the responsibility for destruction on the US. On the contrary, their narratives are framed in such a way that war is not a primary referent point. On my first walk around the imperial city with the tour guide, I was surprised (despite having read about the site previously) by just how much of it was in ruins. My initial reaction, much like that of the former GIs, was to question the tour

guide about the causes of destruction, and in particular, who did what and when? Who were the responsible parties?

I had initially anticipated that the 'blame' would have been placed squarely on the French and the Americans, both of whom were parties to previous conflicts in which parts of the site were destroyed. However, the response I got was a very non-committal one about various natural disasters, for example floods, typhoons and 'wars'. When I tried to press the point, to pin down more precisely what wars, and who was in the main responsible, I received brief, sometimes impatient, answers to the effect that yes, the French, yes the Americans, yes the Vietnamese (north and south). They were all fighting here. All had a hand in the destruction of the site. Most was said about the original French assault on the citadel and imperial city in 1885, and the subsequent fire in 1947 which razed most of the Forbidden Purple City to the ground. Very little, by contrast, was said about the destruction caused by the conflict during the Tet Offensive.

My general impression was simply that individuals were on the whole rather weary and tired of discussing the recent war. I suggest two possible reasons why this might be. One is the sense of personal loss that they experienced during the war. This was certainly the explanation which one of the more senior members of the Hue Monuments Conservation Centre gave me. Over dinner one night, I told him about the contrast I had observed between Hue and Hanoi and asked him why it was that people did not speak about the war in Hue. He told me he thought it was simply because it brought back too many painful memories for people which they wanted to forget. He went on to tell me how during the time of the Tet Offensive his younger brother, then only a very small child, had been shot by a stray bullet outside their house. His sister had been holding and feeding his brother, while he had been playing just a few yards from them. He said he didn't know who had shot him, and didn't want to know.

One could suggest that this purposeful forgetting born out of the trauma of war is at work in the representation of destruction with respect to the Hue monuments. That is to say, it is conceivably much easier to talk about the ongoing effects of tropical climate on timber than about painful memories of war. There remain, however, some important questions about the larger political context which may not encourage certain kinds of memories – one needs only recall that Duong Thu Huong's *Novel without a Name* (Duong 1995), a critical and agonistic account of the war, was officially censored in Vietnam. A travel writer whom I met while I was in Hue suggested that one of the reasons the war may not be played up and discussed to the same extent it was, for instance, in Hanoi, was because of the massacre of civilians by the North Vietnamese army (NVA) which is said to have occurred following the general uprising. Certainly this lingering controversy makes the public presentation of nationalist struggle for liberation more difficult, particularly at a site which is meant to represent and sum up, '2000 years of Vietnamese history' (Nguyen, cited in Herzfelder, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, 9 January 1997, <http://www.seattle-pi.com/pi/getaways/010997/dest09.html>).

The Hue massacre continues to be a focal point for those among the Vietnamese Diaspora who are highly critical of the current regime. Two articles about the Tet

Offensive, for instance, are featured on the home page of Viet Quoc: an organization of mainly diasporic Vietnamese who see themselves as a kind of exiled democratic resistance. Entitled 'The silent tears in Hue City', the lead article on the Tet Offensive describes how each year people silently commemorate the victims of the 1968 massacre. They suggest the local authorities don't forbid these private commemorations because they are mingled with other rituals that are part of Tet celebrations (<http://www.vietquoc.com/tet68rev.htm>). Their call is for a public investigation into the massacre, for public acknowledgment of it and for amends to be made. 'Animosity should not be handed down to younger generations, but our descendants must be taught the truth. War crimes must not be forgotten, and history is not written by one-sided writers.'

While it is easy to suggest that this political minefield is one of the primary reasons why individuals find it so difficult to publicly speak of the war it is important to think about the other factors which engender this cultural amnesia. I suggest in particular that the reluctance of individuals to talk about the war may be precisely because it is seen to grant too much agency to others over the meaning and significance of the site. To return to the story of the former GIs, their question: 'Did we do this?' is a reinscription of themselves into the landscape. Similarly, their gift is as much about ensuring their ongoing presence in the site as it is an act of atonement. While accepting the gift, the refusal to engage in and entertain their narratives of site destruction might be one way of refusing or at least limiting their claims over the site, and its history: their presence in the present.

Thus far I have outlined two contrasting views of the Hue monuments and in particular of the different ways in which destruction and deterioration have been framed. It is important to reiterate that both are selective views and versions, reworkings of processes of site destruction in terms of particular narrative strategies and experiences. Moreover, both are implicated by political questions. In the final part of the chapter, I want to look in more detail at the way in which a particular view of destruction and thus of reconstruction is codified within UNESCO consultative documents as a way of fixing the meaning and significance of the site against an unwieldy and unruly history. I suggest it is as much the way in which a kind of ahistorical aesthetic is institutionalized in conservation practices and the conferral of world heritage status, as it is the contemporary post-war politics of Vietnam, which has led to a process whereby the destruction brought about in the recent conflict has been filtered out of the retailing and representation of the site.

AUTHENTICATING DESTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTING AUTHENTICITY

The following paragraph is taken from the guidelines for the long-term safeguarding of the World Heritage Site, recommended by the Hue–UNESCO working group at its eighth session, August 1995. Entitled 'Maintaining historical authenticity of the monuments', the guidelines state:

In spite of past damage to a number of buildings by both human and natural causes, the Hue World Heritage Site is characterized by the large number of original buildings still remaining. The environment surrounding the palaces, pagodas and tombs, despite several impacts has not been too severely degraded nor altered by modern development. Hue is not only historically correct, it is original. It is extremely important to maintain this original and historically correct character of Hue and not to dilute it with reconstructions of buildings which have now disappeared or by renovations which do not preserve the original features. Authenticity applies to materials and techniques, functions and use, as well as to form and design.

The key terms in the above paragraph are 'original', 'authentic' and 'historically correct', with emphasis placed on the fact that despite several impacts (of war and modern development) the authenticity of Hue monuments have, thus far, not been too altered, deformed, diluted or destroyed. In this static view of history, the meaning of the site is condensed and confined to a particular point in time and space. Though the guidelines elsewhere suggest that 'the disappearance of [a] building is in itself part of the history of the site'; the emphasis is on the recovery and preservation of the 'original'.

The paragraph more subtly encodes different readings of human and natural causes of damage to the original. In particular, human acts of destruction are excluded as somehow extrinsic to the site. Natural causes of damage are, by contrast, read as an intrinsic feature of the landscape within which the site is located. This process of filtration can again be seen in the different ways in which site damage is narrated in official discourse. In 1981, in the same speech in which Hue was described as a 'masterpiece of urban poetry', the then Director General of UNESCO included a short account of the causes of destruction to 'one of the supreme expressions of Vietnamese creativity'. First among these was what was described as 'one of the cruellest wars in history'. Listed second were various natural causes of destruction (25 November 1981, Hanoi, Appendix 1, UNESCO International Campaign).

By 1995, the emphasis had completely changed. In the most recent Hue–UNESCO working party documents, the need for conservation and reconstruction is laid out in the section entitled 'Factors of deterioration' (section 2.2 of the 1995 progress report on the UNESCO International Campaign). Already one can see in the replacement of the term destruction with deterioration, a particular reordering of things. This is borne out in the list that follows: it begins with 'general natural factors', which includes a lengthy discussion of the tropical monsoon climate, the high humidity and exposure to large amounts of 'solar radiation'. A note is made of the propensity to serious flooding 'analogous to those registered in the historical chronicles, given the high annual rainfall and proximity of the Perfume River' (1995: 15). Finally a note is made of how prone Hue is to tropical storms.⁴

From this general description of 'natural factors', the report goes on to 'specific natural factors', again listing humidity, rain, rising damp and condensation. Next on the list is 'vegetation'. The report states, 'High humidity ... combined with 30

years of neglect has resulted in considerable damage to buildings in the Hue complex by unwanted vegetation. This includes trees and larger plants whose roots damage foundations, water plants choking canals and drainage, as well as cultivated plants by farmers' (1995: 16). Fungus is also listed, followed by a short paragraph discussing insect infestations, such as white ants, and the need to determine the different ways in which various insect species affect different building materials.

Finally, after two and a half pages' discussion of various natural causes of deterioration, point 2.2.6 lists 'war damage', stating: 'Extensive damage to the city of Hue and the surrounding area encompassing the Citadel, the Imperial City and the Royal Tombs was caused by fighting during the past 100 years.'

The document goes on to list what are described as the 'three major disastrous incidents which caused the majority of the destruction'. The first is the mutiny of the bastion of Mang Ca in 1885, between French troops and the Nguyen court. The second is the fire in January 1947, which burned almost the entire central section of the imperial city (including the Forbidden Purple City) and the third is the 1968 Tet Offensive.

All of this serves to reinforce the point made earlier about the way in which the particular history of destruction is being reconfigured at the Hue monuments. However, I suggest that the foregrounding of the tropical climate is not simply a way of covering over acknowledged 'disastrous effects of war', but rather, fundamentally about the way in which distinction is drawn between the natural and the human. The enumeration of all the various conditions which affect the monuments, from humidity to wood ants, further situates the site within the natural landscape. It is the particular balance and harmony between the built environment and the natural landscape which is seen as a defining feature of the site's aesthetic and one of the things which is seen to make it worthy of listing as a World Heritage Site. Hence, while the effects of the natural environment are outlined at great length, they are not in any fundamental sense seen as damaging or threatening the meaning or significance of the site: they are if anything further evidence of the natural locatedness of the site. Natural processes of decay and deterioration are, in other words, as much symbolically as they are physically containable.

By contrast, effects of human action which do not correspond to the aesthetic of the site become gradually reduced to a footnote, written out of the picture. Obviously war represents the complete antithesis to the balanced order that the site is supposed to represent: the rubble of war, literally and figuratively, matter out of place (Douglas 1966). It is not just war, however, which in this schema is considered out of category. What is interesting is the way in which present-day social practices, namely tourists and tourism, are similarly placed in relation to the site and monuments.

A presentation by a UNESCO consultant for the Hue Monuments and Conservation Centre (Peters 1995) begins by locating Hue within the larger landscape of the 'ancient' civilizations of Asia whose traditions span thousands of years. While praising the increasing emphasis on archaeology and conservation that grows out of a 'strong emphasis on national pride and identity', she criticizes the impact of tourism. While recognizing that tourism is one of the reasons for the

growth of archaeology, she suggests it is for all the wrong reasons and with potentially devastating consequences. The pressure created by tourism means that often monuments are restored inaccurately without meticulous research. Moreover, 'in addition to sloppy and inappropriate restoration, the pressures of tourism bring additional, and perhaps even more serious dangers – the tourists themselves!'

The metaphors used for describing the negative impact of tourists frequently draw analogies with the destruction brought by war. This can again be seen in some of the recent reportage on Hue, with titles such as 'Hue faces new onslaught', and in presentations in UNESCO workshops, such as that given by a former adviser to the Ford Foundation in Vietnam, now vice-president of a tourist company, Nam Enterprises, who states:

At that time [when he was with the Ford Foundation] Viet Nam was at war. No one needs to explain the threat war poses to irreplaceable cultural monuments. Now, 20 odd years later, although Viet Nam enjoys the peace its people deserve, its needs in the area of cultural preservation are arguably even more pressing.

(Benoit 1995)

Drawing an analogy between war and tourism works, I suggest, because both are seen as an encroachment of the well ordered and harmonious landscape by the chaotic and disordered: the unpredictability both of human action, but also as importantly of human readings and imagination, which potentially threaten the meaning and significance of the site. In this, as in other presentations made as part of various Hue–UNESCO working party workshops, change is located not as an intrinsic part of the cultural landscape, but as something which is extrinsic, externally imposed, and which is seen as potentially ungovernable.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION(S): ON NARRATIVE SPOIL HEAPS

This chapter has been concerned with the way in which various narratives of destruction form an integral part of the meaning and significance of sites and landscapes. It has shown both how competing narratives of destruction enframe different visions of the Hue monuments, and how these different narratives figure strategically in personal and political projects. Not all of these competing narratives are equally valued or validated. While Hue is not one but many, what this chapter has demonstrated is how certain narratives (of destruction as of (re)construction) come to be privileged over others: in this case through a nexus of material and discursive relations linking local, state and transnational institutions, such as UNESCO. Indeed, given both the recent history of conflict in the region and the rapid pace of social and economic transformation taking place in Vietnam, it is perhaps not too much to suggest that it is in the interests both of the international

community as it is the state to recreate Hue as a monument to the orderliness and harmony of Vietnam.

As suggested in the introduction, however, this chapter is not simply meant to extend an understanding of the multiply constituted and politically charged nature of landscapes and monuments by focusing on the constructions of destruction. Rather, the intention has been to further pursue the theoretical implications of the proposition with which I started, that destruction is part of every (re)construction (material and discursive) to the extent that it valorizes certain relations, while consigning others to the spoil heap of history. Extending the archaeological analogy, it is the rubble of war that is selected, among others, by US Vietnam veterans as being the meaningfully significant context or sets of relations to be recorded, plotted and planned. Other contexts and relations, are, as it were, part of a despoiled history, to be recovered or retrieved only as an afterthought and after effect of the excavation of the war. By contrast, in those narratives which privilege the more distant past and which locate destruction in natural processes of decay and deterioration, it is the rubble of war and the rumble of tourist which become the spoil heap: that which is purposefully excluded from the meaning potential of the site.

In conclusion, I wish to address two responses or objections that have been voiced to the proposition that destruction is an implicit part of every (re)construction. On the one hand, it has been suggested that such a proposal simply relativizes destruction. Given the recent events in the former Yugoslavia and the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya, it might be suggested that such a relativizing view of destruction inadvertently legitimates acts of violence and destruction. It has, on the other hand, been suggested that such a proposition, while theoretically sustainable, has serious potential legal consequences for minority groups who are challenging racist histories and laying claims to contested sites and spaces. Specifically, lawyers defending the status quo are bound to seize on the idea of destruction being implicit in every construction to argue that minority claims to disputed histories amount to the destruction of someone else's cultural property and heritage.

It is important to be clear that this chapter is not advocating a relativistic view of destruction if by that one means that all acts of destruction and (re)construction are viewed as of a piece. While the chapter insists that all constructions (including constructions of destruction) be interrogated in terms of that which is silenced, suppressed and/or physically vandalized or violated, the aim of such excavations is to bring forms of destruction (material or discursive) into the open in order to foster a genuinely critical dialogue and bring moral judgements to bear. In so doing, however, it challenges the easy complacency both of so-called 'objective' claims to the past and of those who see the past as implicated by politics. Specifically, it requires that all claims to places, sites and histories – including the claims of the marginal and dispossessed which grow out of the recognition of prior and ongoing forms of social exclusion – be cognizant of, and made to account for, the elisions and abjections which too often goes unacknowledged in our (re)constructions and representations.

Indeed, in as much as this chapter is itself a particular excavation, it too is implicated in processes of exclusion, elision and condensation (Clifford and Marcus

1986). That is to say, I have obviously selected certain narratives in order to uncover and exemplify one set of relations, potentially confining others to my own narrative spoil heap. It is these discrepant narratives and histories that I now wish to partially recover. Alongside the viewings of Hue as a landscape of war, must be put the narratives of others, veterans in particular, who suggest that the return to Vietnam is not simply about the narcissistic revisiting and recapitulation of self – or, as it also sometimes described, about ‘closure’ – but of the possibility of revisioning and reviewing Vietnam from a new perspective.

An article from the *Jacksonville Daily News* entitled ‘Vietnam return wipes away negative feelings’, is an account of a former GI’s trip (with other vets) to Vietnam. The account is framed by the discussions that the veteran had with travelling companions in Hong Kong on their way to Vietnam.

Someone asked, ‘When people found out you were going back to Vietnam, did they start using terms like “healing” and “closure”? Our discussion was best summed up by my new friend Tim, who said, ‘I lived in Australia for two years. I plan to go back there some day too. Not for healing or closure, but because I liked living there’.

(<http://www.jacksonvilledailynews.com/stories/101397/mpohusjq.html>)

The author describes visiting a number of war sites and combat zones. He narrates how at the combat base near to the spot where his plane was shot down he said the rosary for, and subsequently experienced the presence of, his co-pilot who was killed in the crash. However, this is not the only focus of his narrative gaze. He describes attending Mass at the cathedral in the ‘old capital city’ of Hue, talks about Buddhism, comments on the bureaucracy and censorship of the state and muses on the social changes taking place in Vietnam as a result of the opening up of the market. He goes on to suggest that despite the extraordinary military presence and censorship, ‘the ordinary people seem to be happy and enjoy quite a bit of personal freedom. I wish our city streets were as safe and friendly as those in Hanoi, Da Nang, Hue and Ho Chi Minh City’. The piece ends by restating his view of Vietnam as a beautiful country, shackled with an ‘outmoded’ economic and political system. He then rhetorically asks: ‘What is there for us to do?’ In addition to supporting churches in Vietnam and communicating a concern for human rights, he suggests: ‘Try to throw off old perceptions, pre-conceived ideas and develop an understanding of this potentially powerful country and its people.’

I have highlighted this piece because, while it still informed by a form of paternalistic orientalism and the desire to reinscribe the self on to another’s landscape (and thus claim part of it as one’s own), it is also challenges any simplified version of return and revisitation. The landscape described by the vet is one that is not only haunted by the ghosts of war, but is also, at the same time, peopled by individuals who, like the vet himself, live in a complex and changing world.

Similarly, it is possible to find, even within the confines of those institutions within which the static view of Hue as a masterpiece of Vietnamese aesthetic is codified, alternative pasts, presents and futures articulated. There was a general

recognition among the tour guides I spoke to that the past was being reconstituted in the present as part of a wider process of 'renovation'. They frequently commented on the various revisionist histories and rehabilitations of the Nguyen emperors from exemplars of feudalism to forerunners of the Vietnamese state. Images of the past were seen as potentially negotiable and therefore as a critical (as well as economic) resource which could be drawn upon in the present. Whatever the kings had or had not done in the past, tour guides told me, they were a boon now. As one tour guide told me 'No kings, no money'. Tour guides, moreover, frequently likened the process of finding employment and currying favours with business directors (not least of all in the Hue monuments and conservation centre itself) in present-day Vietnam to the former 'feudal' system in which individuals solicited help from mandarins and court eunuchs, who themselves vied for favours from the emperors. One tour guide compared the six months' training which former royal concubines had to undergo before being allowed into the emperor's presence with the training regime which potential guides had to undergo before being allowed to accompany site visitors and tourists.

Thus, while tour guides, as much as UNESCO consultants and senior management and technicians in the Hue monuments and conservation centre, are implicated in the reordering and renovation of an apparently static and unhistorical 'ancient' landscape which confines some histories to the spoil heap, this does not completely exhaust the meaning and significance of the site and its past(s) for them. Moreover, the above examples suggest not only an implicit recognition by tour guides of the power relations which structure the touristic experience, but also a critical awareness of the whole business of learning the culture of the new court.

In conclusion, this chapter has been concerned both with an investigation of narratives of destruction at a world heritage site in Vietnam, and more generally with the processes of destruction (implicit and explicit) within all representation. This includes, as I have demonstrated above, representations of others' reconstructions of their pasts and places. I have suggested that interrogating narratives of destruction crucially illuminates destructive constructions, that is to say the elisions, condensations and abjections involved in all our reworkings of the present past. It does not remove the necessity of the politics of positionality (Ronayne n.d.), but enables a more thoroughly grounded critique by focusing attention not just on the question of who and what is included in our constructions, but just as importantly, on the question of who and what are excluded from our constructions and/or confined to the spoil heap.

NOTES

- 1 This chapter was originally written in the spring of 1998. I have given the Web address of all sites referenced in it. However, a number of the addresses are no longer recognized or lead to different pages.
- 2 This Web address now leads to the front page of an online Spokane-based newspaper.
- 3 The address for Vietnam Internet Magazine is no longer recognized. However, another network that regularly features a special 'Tet Anniversary' issue (from a distinctly sympathetic American perspective) is the online version of the magazine *Vietnam* (<http://www.thehistorynet.com/Vietnam>).

- 4 My critique of narratives which emphasize 'natural factors of deterioration' is not in any way meant to play down the very real difficulties which conservators face in maintaining the monuments.

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7 *Destruction and conservation of cultural property in Brazil: academic and practical challenges*

PEDRO PAULO A. FUNARI

This chapter deals with the Brazilian experience in the field of destruction and conservation of archaeological heritage. Before discussing any particular experience, it will be helpful to explore the different meanings attached to the concept of 'cultural property' or 'heritage'. Romance languages use terms originating in the Latin *patrimonium* to refer to 'property inherited from one's father or ancestor, heritage, inheritance', as was the case in Middle English. German uses *Denkmalpflege*, 'the care of monuments', while the English language adopted 'heritage', originally restricted to 'that which has been or may be inherited', but through the same process of generalization which affected the Romance 'patrimony' it too was to be used as a general reference to monuments inherited from past generations. In all of these expressions, there is always a reference to remembrance: *moneo* (Latin, 'to cause or make to think', in both *patrimonium* and *monumentum*), *Denkmal* (German, *denken* 'to think'), and to the forefathers, implicit in 'inheritance'. Side by side with these rather subjective and affectionate terms, which link people to their real or supposed ancestors, there is also a more economic or legal definition, 'cultural property', or 'cultural assets', as is usual in Romance languages (Italian, *beni culturali*), implying a less passionate and personal link between monument and society, so much so that it is treated as a 'property'. As the definition of 'property' is a political one, 'cultural property is always a political matter, not a theoretical one', as Carandini (1979: 234) puts it.

The questions which were raised by the organizers of the session on 'Restoration or conservation?' at the Brač WAC Inter-Congress bear direct relation to this dichotomy which opposes an emotive 'heritage' to a more distant 'cultural property'. Indeed, what happens when contemporary uses of monuments apparently conflict with their historical value? Is there a case for allowing monuments to decay rather than be preserved? Can planned destruction ever be justified? If so, who has the right to decide? These are all questions which are inextricably linked to the tensions between 'heritage' and 'cultural property'. To put it in other words, everybody can claim that a monument is part of 'our heritage', as is the case of proud Brazilians who claim that a colonial city is a 'World Cultural Heritage', but only scholars or officials refer to 'cultural property'. The right to decide is thus an

essential aspect of the whole debate about the destruction or conservation of monuments and it is only understandable through a study of the context of heritage perception in a particular society. The aim of this chapter is to discuss how Brazilian society has been dealing with heritage, and what might be the role of the academic community in this debate.

Joachim Hermann (1989: 36) has suggested that 'an awareness of history is closely connected with archaeological and architectural monuments, and that such monuments constitute important landmarks in the transmission of historical knowledge, understanding and awareness'. There is no identity without memory: as the lyrics of a Catalan song put it, 'those who lose their origins, lose their identity too' (Ballart 1997: 43). Historical monuments and archaeological remains are powerful carriers of messages and, by their own nature as material culture, they are actively used by social actors to produce meaning, particularly in materializing concepts like national identity and ethnic difference. We should, however, strive to see these artefacts as culturally constructed and culturally contested rather than as possessing inherent and ahistorical meanings, and this should inspire us to think about them, instead of simply admiring them (Potter n.d.). An anthropological approach to one's own cultural heritage contributes to unmasking the manipulation of the past (Haas 1996). The Brazilian experience is in this respect crystal-clear: the official fabrication of the past, including through the means of heritage management, is constantly reinterpreted by ordinary people. As Antônio Augusto Arantes (1990: 4) puts it: 'Officially preserved Brazilian heritage shapes a distant and foreign country, only accessible in one way, were it not for the fact that [particular] social groups re-elaborate it symbolically'. These social groups are those which are excluded from power and thus from heritage preservation.

There has traditionally been a lack of interest on the part of archaeologists in interacting with society at large – as is the case elsewhere in Latin America, as Gnecco notes (1995: 19) – and heritage in particular has been left to 'writers, architects and artists, the true discoverers of cultural heritage in Brazil, not historians or archaeologists' (Munari 1995). In Brazil, as in the rest of Latin America, the preservation of colonial church buildings could be considered as the oldest form of heritage management (García 1995: 42). It is arguable that the importance of the Catholic Church in the colonization of the Iberian New World explains the strategic choices involved in preserving these buildings, be they temples built over the remains of native structures, or churches in hills dominating the urban landscape, as was usually the case in Brazil. However, even church buildings have not been particularly well preserved in Brazil, with notable exceptions, and this is a result of the fact that in the last 100 years or so the country's élite has been preoccupied with a rush for so-called progress, so much so that the Republican flag carries the slogan 'Order and Progress'. Since the proclamation of the Republic in 1889, Brazil has been mesmerized by modernity and any modern building is considered better than an old one. There were several reasons for transferring the capital from Rio de Janeiro to a newly constructed city, Brasília, in 1960, but whatever the economic, social or geopolitical arguments, it was only made possible by a state of mind prone to constant movement towards modernity. The most appropriate image of Brazilian

society would not be the historical buildings in Rio de Janeiro, but a thoroughly modern city, and even the most humble rural dwellers in the backlands would overlook their own local material heritage in favour of a city without a past (Funari forthcoming).

Perhaps the clearest example of this struggle against material remembrance is the huge megalopolis of São Paulo City, whose growth has been unparalleled elsewhere. Even though it was founded in 1554, São Paulo was a small town up until the late nineteenth century, and in the last 100 years it has grown to become the largest city in the southern hemisphere. In the process, old remains suffered constant ideological and physical degradations, new buildings being constructed in order to create a completely new city. The most historical buildings are the cathedral and a modernist park planned by the renowned Niemeyer, both inaugurated in 1954 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the city's foundation. The main public buildings, like the Governor's Palace or the State Assembly building, are also quite recent, and the most important avenue, Paulista Avenue, founded at the end of the nineteenth century as a bastion of élite mansions, was completely remodelled as late as the 1970s. Even in colonial towns, some of them well known abroad (as is the case with Ouro Preto, which has been declared a World Heritage Monument), modernity is always present, as ordinary inhabitants of the town are keen to modernize it. Guiomar de Grammont (1998: 3) uses strong words to describe this situation:

The gulf between the public authorities and the people is the same as that between civil society and the past, due to the lack of information, even though the inhabitants of colonial towns depend on tourism [for] their own survival. Who are the strongest enemies of the preservation of these colonial towns? First and foremost the town administration itself, unaffected by the social problems and ignorant of cultural issues in general, but sometimes the inhabitants too, unaware of the importance of the monuments, contribute to the deformation of the urban setting. New windows, parabolic antennae, garages, roofs, and whole houses are enough to transform a colonial town into a modern one, a mere shadow of an old colonial town, as is the case with so many of them.

It is easy to understand why people should be interested in having access to modern facilities but, as foreigners are the first to note when they visit these colonial towns, if medieval buildings in Europe can be completely refurbished without damaging the buildings themselves, there should be no problem in doing the same in a Third World context. Another common menace to the historical heritage of these colonial towns is theft, as thieves are very active in the protected artistic heritage scattered around more than 500 church buildings and local museums (Rocha 1997; cf. the Czech case in Calabresi 1998). A more prosaic problem is the deterioration of monuments as a consequence of a lack of basic maintenance and shelter, even inside buildings (Lira 1997; Sebastião 1998). These three menaces to the preservation of cultural properties, apparently unrelated, reveal common

underlying causes: the alienation of the population, the divorce of people from the authorities, and the distance that separates common concerns from the official ethos of the élite and their policies. There has been a 'heritage policy which preserved the Big-Houses, Baroque Churches, Military Forts, the Town Council Houses and Jails as the reference to the building of our historical and cultural identity and it has relegated to oblivion the slave-quarters, the slums and the workers' cabins' (Fernandes 1993: 275).

For ordinary people, there is therefore a sense of alienation, for it seems as if their own culture were not at all relevant or worthy of attention. Traditionally, there were two kinds of houses in Brazil. The élite lived in houses of two or more storeys, called *sobrados*; all other forms of dwellings are known by derogatory terms. *Casa* (house), carries the same connotation as in Latin, 'any simple or poorly built house, a hut'. The opposition *sobrado/casa* recreates the Latin opposition *domus/casa*. *Mocambos* (from Kimbundu, *mukambu*, 'ridge'), is used to refer to ordinary poor dwellings. Other current terms include *senzalas* (collective slave-quarters) and *favelas* (slums or shanties) (Reis Filho 1978: 28). A society founded on slave labour inherits a division between two groups: the people in power with their material culture and their splendour, whose memory and monuments are worthy of reverence and preservation, and the subalterns, whose squalid remains are treated with disdain and disregard. As the eminent sociologist Octavio Ianni (1988: 83) emphasized, what is considered heritage is in fact the architecture, music, paintings, and everything else associated with élite families and with the upper crust in general. The cathedral, used by the 'good people', is to be preserved, while the St Benedict's Church, used by the 'poor people', the so-called 'native blacks' (*pretos da terra*), is unprotected and left to decay. The monuments considered as heritage by the official institutions, according to another leading anthropologist, Eunice Durham (1984: 33) are those related to the 'history of the ruling classes, the monuments preserved are those associated with the deeds and cultural production of these ruling classes. The history of the ruled is seldom preserved'.

We must agree with Byrne (1991: 275) when he contends that it is usual for a dominant group to use its power to push its own heritage to the fore, minimizing or even denying the significance of subordinate groups as it crafts a national identity in its own image. The degree of disconnection between the upper and lower echelons of society is, however, not usually so accentuated as it is in Brazil. In this context, it is not surprising that ordinary people do not pay much attention to protecting cultural property that is perceived as foreign, and unrelated to themselves. There is a saying in Brazilian Portuguese that explains a great deal about this sense of alienation: 'they are white, so they must solve problems among themselves'. It is interesting to note that white people use this adage as well, to refer to the authorities in general. The same sense of alienation affects heritage; colonial buildings, for instance, are considered as 'their problem, not ours'. We could say that the search for a modern life, irrespective of the destruction of cultural property, could well be interpreted as a kind of struggle, not only for better living conditions, but against the material remembrance of secular suffering by subaltern people.

Archaeological heritage, *sensu stricto*, should not be affected by this lack of interest

in preserving elite material culture, for archaeology produces evidence of the lives of natives, slaves and ordinary people in general (cf. Trigger 1998: 16). However, there are several factors inhibiting an active engagement on the part of ordinary people in archaeological heritage protection. First and foremost, there is a lack of information and formal education concerning the subject. Natives, Africans and poor people are seldom mentioned in history syllabi, and the few references to them are often pejorative, as they are portrayed as a lazy and backward mass of serfs who have always been unable to achieve civilization. Indians were considered as fierce enemies, rightfully decimated over the centuries. In a famous debate at the start of the twentieth century, Von Ihering, director of the Paulista Museum in São Paulo, proposed the extermination of the Kaingang Indians who, according to him, were hindering the development of the country (Schwarcz 1989: 59). Even though he was challenged by other intellectuals, mainly from the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, his stance was and still is very symptomatic of the low esteem in which native peoples are held, even within academia. In this respect it is instructive to point out that native material found eighty years ago in the west of São Paulo State is only now being exhibited in the area, thanks to an innovative and critical museological project by the University of São Paulo (Cruz 1997): better late than never!

Blacks, for their part, were considered menacing barbarians. As a most renowned Brazilian historian, Evaldo Cabral de Mello recently put it (Leite 1996): 'It is not possible to deny what [the seventeenth-century maroon] Palmares was: it was a Black republic, it was destroyed and I prefer, let me say frankly, that it was so. For a simple reason. If Palmares were to have survived, we would have in Brazil a Bantustan, an independent and impractical state'. So a leading historian still feels menaced by blacks and mimics Cato's words: *delenda* Palmares! To be in a position to profess such ideas *ex cathedra* says much about the adoption of prejudices which, in one way or another, are absorbed by ordinary people (Funari 1996a: 150 *passim*).

Last, but not least, there is a lack of communication between the academic world, particularly the archaeological community, and other people. Archaeologists should work with the community, not against it (Rússio 1984: 60), giving people a better understanding of the past and of the world around them, in order to enlighten them (Hudson 1994: 55). To achieve this, long-term research should lead not to quick-fix entertainment (Durrans 1992: 13), but to an integration of processes, such as rescuing historic buildings and excavating archaeological sites, and products, such as the publicizing of scientific work through different media (Merriman 1996: 382). A good example of this is the fate of a particularly important archaeological site in Brazil: the seventeenth-century maroon enclave known as Palmares. Since the 1970s, people suspected that the famous settlement of runaway slaves, who survived by fighting against the slavocracy for almost the whole of the seventeenth century, was located in the backlands of the north-eastern state of Alagoas, at the Serra da Barriga or Potbelly Hill. Black rights activists found surface remains at the hill and were able, after an unprecedented campaign, to force the authorities to declare the area a National Heritage site in 1985. However, as a result of a complete lack of interest on the part of an archaeological establishment which is

controlled by a group of conservative practitioners (Funari 1995b: 238–45), the site was left to the discretion of the local authorities. The consequence was the use of bulldozers to level an important part of the site, enabling the authorities to promote festivals and, naturally, to cajole people into supporting their election to local offices.

In the early 1990s, when archaeological fieldwork began at the hill, one of the main aims was to work with local communities and with black activists in order that the people could understand the site and its importance and could thus oppose the use of the archaeological area for mere entertainment. The empowerment of those who are traditionally excluded from decision making (Jones 1993: 203) would only be possible through a massive scientific and media promotion of the archaeological work. In the period 1992–8, the archaeologists in charge of the site, Charles E. Orser, Jr (1992, 1993, 1994, 1996), and the author (Funari 1991, 1994a, 1995a, c, 1996a, b, c, e, f; Orser and Funari 1992) have published three books entirely or partially concerned with Palmares, and eleven papers in scholarly journals (four abroad and seven in Brazil). In addition, two more papers have been published by a PhD student, Scott Allen (1998, 2000), and another one by Michael Rowlands (1999). Furthermore, several newspaper and magazine articles, both in Brazil and elsewhere, have been published or broadcast on the site. It is probable that this is not enough to radically change the subjective attitude of ordinary Brazilians towards the humble evidence coming from the maroon, as the overall context in Brazil could not be completely altered by an isolated scholarly activity. In any case many more people are now aware of the existence of the site and of its possible significance.

Indeed, fifteen years ago, in the last phase of military rule, Olympio Serra (1984: 108) offered a strong interpretation of Palmares as a possible model for a non-authoritarian society: 'There should be an opportunity to recreate the experience of a pluralist society, as was the Palmares Republic. And if you look at this most attracting phase of Brazilian history, you will see that at Palmares there were not only blacks, but also Indians, Jews, in other words, all the people discriminated by the colonial society, all those who were different'.

Some years later, the fieldwork at the Hill produced archaeological evidence that now substantiates this humanist approach. Palmares owed its growth, survival and final destruction to the role it played in coastal and inland trade. Mercantile interests and those of Palmares were opposed to the nobility and plantation slave owners, which were able to triumph in the end as a result of the strength of pre-capitalist groups in both Portugal and in the colony (Rowlands, 1999). The crushing of a tendency towards pluralism in the early history of Brazil explains the persistence of racist and upper-class discourse, as mentioned above. The archaeological work involved in rescuing the material culture of the maroon, as well as its preservation as cultural property, thus plays a significant role in fostering a critical awareness inside and outside of the academic world.

Restoration or conservation? In the case of Brazil, the right to decide has always been in the hands of the élite, whose priorities have been at once narrow-minded and ineffective. High-style monuments, protected officially by law, are by and large left in the hands of free-market agents, while the illegal trade in antiquities is largely

tolerated. In the late 1990s Christie's sold an Aleijadinho masterpiece sculpture (Blanco 1998a, b). Such reports are common in the press, but this seems of little consequence (examples may be found in Leal 1998; Verzignasse 1998; Werneck 1998). Upper-class archaeologists do not bother to hide their ties to the antique shops and elite exhibitions (Lima 1995). Ordinary people feel alienated both from the elite heritage and from humble archaeological evidence, as they are continuously taught to despise Indians, Blacks, people of mixed race, poor people: in other words, themselves and their ancestors. In this context, the scholarly tasks confronting archaeologists and heritage officials in the country are particularly complex and contradictory. We must struggle for the preservation of both high style and humble cultural property, for the democratization of information and education in general. Above all, we must pledge to work for the empowerment of ordinary people, for their right to knowledge, for our right both as scholars and citizens to work with the people in their own interests. As scholars first and foremost, we should foster the search for critical knowledge about our common heritage. And this is no mean task.

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8 *From museum to mantelpiece: the antiquities trade in the United Kingdom*

KATHRYN WALKER TUBB AND NEIL BRODIE

INTRODUCTION

The 'museum' and 'mantelpiece' of the title are not intended to be precise and self-explanatory terms but rather to be alliterative and catchy, alluding to the destinies of collectable antiquities, available for purchase and which, rightly or wrongly, have already undergone the process of commodification. It may be helpful to give the reader an insight into the authors' rather nebulous weighting of meaning behind the two terms. First, such concepts as a public, systematic, classified collection situated in a centre dedicated to guardianship, conservation, scholarship and accessibility are comprised in 'museum'. 'Mantelpiece', on the other hand, has been used to denote the individual and the casual, the quirky and impulsive, the isolated artefact gathering dust in uncategorized splendour. Clearly, such distinctions have been somewhat arbitrarily made and are artificial to a degree. Perhaps the following selection of quotes may illuminate this prefatory apologia however.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

In March 1990, the arts correspondent, Geraldine Norman wrote: 'Jerome Eisenberg has brought the supermarket approach to selling antiquities to London', and went on 'The price range of Eisenberg antiquities is from £50 to £1m. He claims to have over 2000 objects priced under £500. They include ancient terracottas, scarabs, glass and south Italian pottery'. This article appeared in the Weekend Collecting section of the *Independent* and was entitled 'Antiquities off the shelf' (1990a).

In September 1993, again under Collecting, but this time in the *Daily Telegraph*, Madeleine Marsh 'gives a guide to antiquities on the cheap'. In her article entitled 'How to hunt out treasure' she states that 'One of the more remarkable things about collecting ancient objects is how cheap they can be at the lower end of the market – within the reach of the pocket-money collector'. Richard Lobel, the

proprietor of Coincraft, is quoted as saying of small antiquities that 'You can put them on display, they make fascinating conversation pieces, and burglars wouldn't know what they were, so the chances of their being stolen are minimal'. The article goes on to say that 'Goods on sale range in value from £5 to £3000 and include pots, amulets, daggers, axe-heads, glass and ancient coins – what Mr Lobel describes as "everyday antiquities"'. Pains are taken to point out that 'At the British Museum shop, a reproduction necklace based on an Egyptian design will cost you £49.95' whereas 'At Coincraft ... you can buy a string of beads that are 5000 years old for £17.95'.

In July 1995 in the Weekend Shopping section of the *Independent*, John Windsor, under the banner headline 'From the dawn of time, a bargain' reports that 'Antiquities are plentiful and cheap'. This article is based in large part on the wares on offer from Chris Martin, 'Britain's biggest mail-order antiquities dealer'. Mr Martin is said to provide other dealers with Roman terracotta oil lamps by the thousand. Such lamps in turn are sold via newspaper advertisements and TV shopping channels. The article continues 'Mr Martin retails Palestinian and Phoenician cloak pins from 1500 BC to 1000 BC for £15 and Persian dress brooches (8th–5th centuries BC) for £11. Roman glass? He charges £50 for a simple bottle. For £32.50: a perspex stand with a Greek or Roman egg-shaped lead slingshot, a Greek bronze arrowhead (8th–3rd century BC) and a Roman iron arrowhead (3rd–2nd century BC). Dagger and spear blades? He retails by the dozen Phoenician and Hittite specimens (2400–800 BC) for £30–£40 each to multi-national companies who present them to distinguished guests as paper knives'.

In November 1996, in the Homes and Gardens section of the *Guardian Weekend*, Chris Martin is again featured under the headline 'Sale of the centuries'. Fiona Murphy sums up the gist of her article as follows: 'Roman glass vases for £45, Mesopotamian jugs for £35. Who needs a fake when the original is yours for the same price?' The talk is of a 'vast number of domestic items to be had at no great cost' which appeals to 'the contemporary taste for the rough-hewn and the simple'. A former marketing executive is said to have persuaded Chris Martin 'to put an element of glamour into his business'. Nowhere is this more evident than in his Winter 1996/97 catalogue. Attractive colour photographs of his wares are interspersed with black and white shots of a female nude, artfully cropped so as not to be too revealing, depicting here a scattering of silver pennies over an abdomen or there a pair of crossed bronze blades pressed flat against breasts and chest. The occasional literary quote appears as a caption. This is just one of a series of alluringly illustrated and attractive catalogues. Chris Martin has also advertised his company, Ancient Art, in such publications as the Heritage Shop Catalogue which is 'the buyer's guide for museums, galleries, historic houses and visitor attractions' (1996, inside back cover).

Television has delivered the same message overtly as items on such programmes as *This Morning* (Finnigan and Madeley 1996) and *The Antiques Show* (Stock 1997). In a feature in the latter on collecting antiquities entitled 'Museum Piece', Francine Stock, the presenter, begins 'Antiques three or four hundred years old are rare enough; ones from ancient civilizations you'd expect to find only in a museum.'

But if you really think your home wouldn't be complete without a one thousand five hundred year old Roman oil lamp or an Egyptian statue on your mantelpiece then it could be yours thanks to a thriving if controversial trade in antiquities' (authors' italics). She adds: 'With just a phone call and a credit card, a chunk of the ancient world could be yours for as little as a tenner'.

Chris Martin of Ancient Art explains: 'We've been in the business for about twenty-five years in coins and antiquities and seeing how the reproduction catalogues were selling reproductions of ancient objects for basically the same price as we could provide the originals and *we would like to promote the idea that people can own a piece of ancient history*' (authors' italics). In observing preparation for the new issue of the catalogue she remarks 'And just like any Next Directory or Habitat catalogue, presentation is laid on thick', naming two well-known mail order catalogues for clothes and home furnishings. Ms Stock sets the scene for the next dealership to be visited with 'If buying through mail order isn't quite your style then there are alternatives, but you have to know where to look. Behind discreet brass plaques in Mayfair *you can spend thousands bringing ancient history to your living room, something for the mantelpiece to impress the neighbours perhaps*' (authors' italics).

Television also displays artefacts in general as part of the stage settings in dramas, light entertainment, interviews and commercials. The example of a diver casually swimming past an amphora and breaking it with a pick-axe for no apparent reason was used in 1996 by Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society in an advertisement for mortgages.

In June 1997 Desiderata, a division of the Corsellis–Montford Group plc, was advertising for antiquities dealers to join its 'premier antiquities and collectables information service' on the Internet (*Minerva*, May/June 1997). Websites exhibiting artefacts for sale in infinite variety are easily accessed. Even such sensitive material as human remains is not exempt. In October 1995, what was claimed to be a mummified Egyptian princess's hand, together with its certificate of authenticity, was being hawked around touting for bids for this treasure. The lucky buyer would then 'walk away with a piece of history' (Rudd).

What does the above reflect of current market trends as they have been developing over the past ten years? Clearly, the impulse would seem to be striving to generate new consumers in a particular, reasonably specialized and relatively small segment of the art market: the trade in antiquities. Perhaps a sufficiently high proportion of today's consumer-oriented population can now not only satisfy its needs but also its desires. What was once the exotic, the rare and the appealing in the emporia and department stores in the earlier twentieth century has become mundane; too available to be satisfying for the individual and too commonplace to provoke envy and reflect the erudition, taste and uniqueness of the possessor. Perhaps mass production coupled with the boom years of the 1980s has led to satiety with such products and is leading to the desire for something scarcer. Perhaps deriving an almost spiritual sense of satisfaction from mass-produced articles is being deemed inadequate. And yet the belief that fulfilment can still be derived from the marketplace persists. What better solution than to identify another category of

goods endowed with a numinous aura by virtue of its age and rarity? This sanctification of the past has been previously discussed by such authors as David Lowenthal (1996) and Russell Belk (1995). Noted and famous collectors have been fêted, lauded and esteemed as saviours, benefactors and donors of precious objects, their collections often entering the public domain. And Belk observes that: 'We generally regard museum collections as normal and accept that they legitimize objects that are acceptable for individuals to collect: if it's good enough for the Met, no further questions need be asked' (ibid.: 147). Emulation of these hallowed individuals is presented as being achievable and at bargain rates. The humdrum and mediocre are both, at one and the same time, elevated to a higher plane and diminished by the price and apparent abundance. The desire for a sense of connectedness with the past is easily recognizable and exploitable, although a propensity for fetishizing artefactual remains, particularly those from a basic low level craft tradition, mystifies many both inter- and intra-culturally. Marketing ploys are merely taking advantage of a pre-disposition toward seizing bargains imbued with the added fillip of rarity value and an almost mystical character. There is no need to engage in collecting even in a modest way; simple acquisition will suffice. The siting of this information in the hobby pages and its shift to the shopping pages of the newspapers attests to this. A single piece to decorate the mantelpiece is sufficiently gratifying.

The discussion thus far is missing crucially important facts that should be obvious to all but which remain obscure even to some within the heritage professions. The exclusive reference to antiquities as *commodities* is jarring. To those accustomed to valuing such material for the assistance it gives in the interpretation of the past such a narrow focus is desperately skewed with disastrous consequences for the archaeological heritage. Context is the *sine qua non* for the archaeologist, the essence of archaeology; information retrieval the goal consequent upon context. Artefacts divested of contextual information are pitifully dispossessed, impoverished of meaning and, as such, are an anathema. At the first Courtauld Debate on the subject of the antiquities trade and its contribution to the study of the art of the past (20 November 1997), Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn gave an impassioned address in which he illustrated the importance of context using Philip II of Macedon's tomb as an example. Similarly, the examples of an Anglo-Saxon bed-burial excavated in Cambridgeshire and an Assyrian tassel from Nimrud in Iraq have been used (Tubb 1995: 258–9). This message remains unheard and is easily dismissed – a vital lie for antiquities dealers and collectors acting as a group whose 'capacity to keep information out of frame can fall prey to a collusion that buys social coziness at the expense of important truths ... warping social reality to suppress unpleasant information' (Goleman 1997: 224). James Ede, an eminent dealer in ancient art, in the heat of the debate referred to above, denounced context, misrepresenting it as simply position in the soil, '2 cm or 4 cm' under the ground. Given preservation of context, archaeologists are less concerned about the eventual disposition of a given object (Renfrew 1995: xviii).

Implicit in these marketing strategies is the question of supply. No distinction has been made between reproduceable goods and goods derived from a finite

resource. Although dealers and collectors argue strongly for a free market in art and antiques generally, including antiquities, the movement of such material is the subject of substantial legal controls. The difficulty of supply exposes the inherent danger of this tactic of broadening the market. The consequence of increased demand has been increased looting of archaeological sites. Archaeologists are witnessing massive destruction of the archaeological record. Areas formerly relatively free from such depredation because of their peripheral position to the accepted major civilizations and whose artefactual remains were by and large not identified as high art are now sustaining severe and irreparable loss. One case which serves well to illustrate this point is that of the biblical settlement of Zoar, whose despoliation has, unusually, been documented and reported (Politis 1994). Another example from Jordan concerns the large multi-period site of Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, ancient Zarethan. Seasonal excavation of this site has been proceeding under licence for the past fifteen years, either annually or every other year, by the British Museum under the direction of Jonathan Tubb. During one of the fallow years, an unexpected visit revealed that the site guard, employed to protect the site year round, was pot-holing part of a 3000 year old cemetery. Only part of this area had been being excavated and clearly, the guard thought his marauding would go undetected since he was taking pains to back-fill the holes and, by the time the excavators were to return the following year, vegetation would have obscured his activities. The damage sustained by the site would only have been detected if formal excavation of the cemetery were to have been extended. Fortunately, the adventitious visit by the excavators put a stop to the destruction (J. Tubb, pers. comm.).

But not everybody agrees that the majority of antiquities new to the market are looted. It has sometimes been claimed that they are in fact chance finds, the result of construction projects or agricultural operations (Ortiz 1997: 22). While it is no doubt true that many antiquities do come to light during the course of such activities it must be emphasized that they are not chance finds, but that they are more probably recovered from archaeological sites damaged or destroyed during the course of development. Archaeological fieldwork has shown that true chance finds are difficult to come by. During the past twenty years or so large tracts of land in the Mediterranean area in particular have been field-walked by archaeological teams intent on mapping out presently surviving surface indications of ancient sites. Many of these surveys have been published and the results are available for all to see (for instance Runnels *et al.* 1995; Cavanagh *et al.* 1996). Very few, if any, intact antiquities have been found. The published material consists largely of pieces of broken pottery and small architectural fragments. The idea that there are large quantities of antiquities lying about waiting to be found is a myth.

There can be little doubt that the majority of antiquities without demonstrable provenance which are now flooding the market have been looted from archaeological sites of one form or another. They are illicit and it is foolish to pretend otherwise. In 1990, Norman observed that '80 per cent of all antiquities coming on to the market have been illegally excavated and smuggled from their country of origin' (1990b). Peter Watson reports on results of research in this area by David Gill and Christopher Chippindale. Their research has found that 'Up to 90 per cent of the

antiquities that appear on the London auction market are unprovenanced – many of which may have been illegally excavated and smuggled out of their countries of origin' (1997). The sale and collection of these unprovenanced artefacts are the ultimate causes of the looting, and it follows that anything that deters unethical collecting must certainly help to diminish the destruction, and conserve the information-rich contexts.

WHAT DO THE DEALERS THINK?

O'Keefe (1997: 103) has suggested that a short-term increase in the supply of licit antiquities of known provenance might go some way towards discouraging the trade in those that are illicit. He also discusses some of the associated problems. But what do the dealers themselves think? A common suggestion is that museum storerooms contain large collections of duplicate or surplus artefacts, and that if these were properly documented and released on to the legitimate market then the volume of the trade in illicit material would decrease accordingly (Eisenberg 1995: 220; Ede 1996: 56). From an archaeological perspective, however, there are several objections to this suggestion.

In the first place, it is not at all clear that there is any necessary inverse correlation between the respective volumes of the trades in licit and illicit antiquities. This is certainly not the case in other sectors of the economy where the black market is more rather than less active for stolen or copied items of leading brand names – as the total volume of the market increases so too does the volume of the black market. This has been shown to be true of the antiquities markets in Peru and the United States (O'Keefe 1997: 66–7) and the onus really is on members of the trade to demonstrate otherwise.

Second, without prior investigation it is premature to assume that the number of objects in museums is great. One of the authors (Brodie) has worked in the storerooms of several regional museums in the Mediterranean area and has seen large quantities of fragmentary sherd material and broken pieces of carved masonry but very few complete antiquities which would be considered collectable. The collectable objects are usually on display. Perhaps the situation is different in the large national museums – perhaps the material available in the storerooms of American and British museums is more marketable. It is difficult to say. The argument that much of this material is without value to the archaeologist as it has no recorded context is specious (Ede 1996: 56). While it is true that without a properly recorded excavation context much information is lost, location alone is sometimes of great interest. The distribution map is a fundamental tool of archaeological analysis.

It has in the past been argued by archaeologists that the duplicate objects presently stored behind the scenes in museums would not be of interest to collectors or dealers who want one-offs, the unique pieces. The small utilitarian objects which were produced in large quantities in antiquity would be of less interest to the trade as they do not command a high price. But the force of this argument has been diminished over the past few years by the attempts of some dealers to market these

antiquities, to place them on the mantelpiece, as described earlier. Yet these artefacts, which might never find a place in a museum display case, are often of great interest to the archaeologist precisely because they were produced (and survive) in large numbers – they are ideal for typological analysis and provide the backbone of relative chronologies. Thus although the monetary value of a single object is probably very small, its scholarly value might be quite high when its context is known.

Finally, the idea that archaeological material may be subject to a single process of examination and documentation is archaic. In archaeology, as in any academic discipline, the context of enquiry is kaleidoscopic. It changes constantly as different or novel attributes of the material under study come into view. Sometimes this is because of the development of new scientific techniques; more often it is simply because new questions are asked. The constant search for novel interpretations is a fundamental feature of scholarly endeavour. As O'Keefe (1997: 73) has pointed out the material collected during the course of an excavation constitutes an archive that can be returned to again and again. If it is broken up and sold off without record then the possibility of any further advance in understanding disappears along with it.

Dealers also maintain that a system of due compensation should be put in place to reward farmers who turn in antiquities they have found on their land, and that these antiquities might then be offered up for resale on the legitimate market (Ede 1995: 213; 1996: 56). Doubts have already been expressed about the true status of 'chance' finds, but nevertheless they will continue to turn up as small sites are accidentally or deliberately disturbed. But any system of compensation will only work to protect archaeological sites if the rewards offered can match the prices fetched in the open market – not a viable proposition when the market is inflating and expanding. If a state-sponsored scheme of compensation offered prices to match those of dealers or collectors then it would encourage farmers to seek out antiquities actively and destroy archaeological sites in the process. It might also bankrupt the state. If the state did not match prices available privately then objects would still be sold on the black market. A sensible compensation scheme will only work in the presence of a well-regulated and modest market.

AN ETHICAL TRADE?

Up to now the focus of this discussion has been on the trade in illicit antiquities, those which have in the first instance been illegally acquired. Yet it remains the case that there is a sizeable trade in licit antiquities, antiquities which have been legally removed from their country of origin at some time in the past and which will not now be returned. It would not be practical, nor in many cases desirable, for this to happen. These objects will remain in circulation. It is also possible to foresee a time when the spiralling cost of long-term storage and conservation will cause artefacts from properly controlled archaeological excavations to come on to the market. Thus there is, and will continue to be, a legitimate trade. Whether archaeologists like it or not, they must come to terms with this fact and try to establish a constructive dialogue with dealers.

Increasingly archaeologists are choosing not to collaborate with dealers or collectors so as not to add a gloss of legitimacy to their activities. Some have gone further and taken great pains to document the damage inflicted by unethical collecting. But if a legitimate trade in antiquities is inevitable then the challenge is to encourage not only a legitimate trade but also an ethical one. There has been a move recently in archaeological circles towards developing the concept of the 'Good Collector' (McIntosh *et al.* 1995; O'Keefe 1997: 95). The Good Collector recognizes that the aesthetic qualities of an artefact are not such as to merit the destruction of the cultural and historical information embodied in its context. He or she actively opposes the trade in illicit antiquities, does not 'turn a blind eye' to questionable provenances, and encourages scholarly study of the collection and its use for educational purposes. Archaeologists might be persuaded to co-operate with Good Collectors and, by extension one would assume, 'Good Dealers'. But what would a Good Dealer look like?

Reputable antiquities dealers do have a professional body with its own code of ethics. The International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art (IADAA) was formed in 1993 and membership is dependent upon observation of a code of ethics which, among other things, forbids members to deal in stolen or looted antiquities (Ede 1995: 214). Is a member of IADAA to be considered a Good Dealer then? There is a certain convergence of interests with those of archaeologists but the critical Article 12.2 of the code is weaker than might appear on first reading. The text reads as follows:

The members of IADAA undertake not to purchase or sell objects until they have established to the best of their ability that such objects were not stolen from excavations, architectural monuments, public institutions or private property.

It should be noticed at once that the sale of chance finds is not vetoed, although doubts have already been expressed about the true status of such finds. The IADAA code entertains no such doubts. But ultimately the article stands or falls by the interpretation given to the term 'best of their ability'. How good is their best and to what extent are they able?

There is a certain willingness expressed to investigate the provenance of an artefact but, by and large, dealers seem more inclined to accept that an antiquity is not looted unless there is positive evidence to the contrary. James Ede, for instance, has insisted that the principle of guilty until proven innocent is not acceptable (1995: 211; 1996: 55). Yet when it is the authenticity of a piece that is in question rather than its provenance it becomes a principle dealers are much happier with. The archaeologist Ricardo Elia for instance has been taken to task for daring to suggest that 'art dealers ... assume that everything is genuine'. 'How brazen a statement,' replied Eisenberg (1997: 20), shocked by the suggestion that dealers should assume that everything is innocently genuine rather than guiltily fake. Dealers are strenuous in their efforts to establish authenticity (Eisenberg 1995: 216): there is big money at stake. It is not a question of principle, it is a judgement of value. Quite

simply, the authenticity of a piece is of more interest to a collector than its provenance – a piece with no provenance might command a lower price than one with, but an inauthentic piece is valueless. Thus a dealer might understandably be exercised to establish the authenticity of a piece, but not its good provenance. The ‘best’ of their ability seems, then, as far as provenance is concerned at any rate, to be less than it could be.

But in any case, the ability of dealers to investigate provenance is hopelessly compromised by the code of anonymity which is adhered to and defended by dealers and collectors alike, keeping secret the identities of buyers and sellers. This frustrates at the outset any attempt to reconstruct a chain of ownership aimed at establishing the original provenance of a piece. Several reasons have been proposed to justify this policy of non-disclosure. The most convincing is that it keeps collections away from the attention of potential thieves. Some are less convincing, such as Ede’s (1996: 55) example of the owner who was unwilling to have his name published because he wanted to hide from his wife the fact that he was selling off the family heirlooms! More cynically, it has been suggested that non-disclosure of a vendor’s identity protects a dubious source and guarantees full employment for forgers, grave robbers, smugglers and other crooks (Elsen 1992: 129).

The recent example of the Salisbury Hoard is a case in point (Stead 1998). This is an Iron Age hoard of bronze objects, part of which was purchased in 1989 by the British Museum from the antiquities dealer Lord McAlpine for the sum of £55 000. The hoard was subsequently shown by museum staff to have been illegally excavated by two people using metal detectors. The British Museum returned the hoard voluntarily to the landowner (an ethical but not legally necessary action) and the finders were tried, pleaded guilty to theft, and sentenced. The British Museum was £55 000 out of pocket. McAlpine would not reimburse the Museum as he himself had bought the hoard in good faith from another dealer, and indeed he maintained that the hoard had passed through the hands of several anonymous dealers and as a result its initial provenance could not be ascertained. Thus the end result was that the original excavators were convicted of a crime from which a series of anonymous dealers did quite nicely, and in doing the right thing the British Museum lost £55 000 out of an ever-decreasing acquisitions budget. While such a code of *omertá* continues to obscure the identities of those who buy and sell dealers are simply not able to investigate provenance in a manner that is effective. Article 12.2 of the IADAA code is rendered meaningless. An ethical trade needs to be a transparent trade with the identities of transacting parties made public.

THE SITUATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IS DEPLORABLE

The trade in illicit antiquities is an international problem with pragmatic and ethical dimensions. Some countries profess to an ethical stance that is beyond reproach while in practice their implementation of policy is hampered or obstructed by limited resources. The ethics of other countries are less clearly

defined when they adopt a pragmatic approach governed by the ideology of the market. The poor record of many 'source' nations in protecting their archaeology has often been used by proponents of the trade to justify their own activities. They argue that they are conserving artefacts which would otherwise deteriorate or be lost if not removed from their country of origin (Chesterman 1991: 538; Ede 1995: 214; Eisenberg 1995: 220). It simply will not do, however, to point the finger at deficiencies in the museums, governments or civil services of source countries while at the same time glossing over the inequitable role played by the governments and citizens of the wealthier 'market' nations. Such a diversionary tactic comes perilously close to an accusation of contributory negligence. In this chapter the focus is on the situation in the United Kingdom which is, sad to say, deplorable. The UK is one of the major centres of the present-day trade in antiquities, and in particular of the trade in illicit antiquities. It is not against the law to deal openly in antiquities that may in the first instance have been obtained illegally, often through looting. The British government has also consistently refused to sign or ratify major international conventions designed to obstruct or curtail the free flow of stolen and looted cultural material.

An antiquity without provenance holds within it the threat of recovery. At any time it might be identified as stolen and claimed back by its original owner. Its monetary value is in consequence less than that of its legitimate cousin with an impeccable provenance. The majority of unprovenanced antiquities of course have not been stolen from established collections, they have been looted, and will not be immediately identifiable. But without a provenance it is impossible to distinguish between the potentially identifiable and the unidentifiable, and the threat of recovery discourages their purchase. In the United Kingdom at the present time, however, collectors can enjoy possession of their unprovenanced antiquities confident in the knowledge that any attempt at recovery will most likely fail as, due to a combination of historical circumstance and government intransigence, the available legislation is relatively ineffectual. There is therefore no real deterrence.

The British government has failed to ratify the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which would allow other states party to the convention to sue for the return of stolen or illegally exported antiquities. It has given many reasons for this failure, among which the cost of establishing a national register and a belief in self-regulation figure prominently (Palmer 1995: 15); as a result any action for recovery must proceed through a British court. However, in Britain the police are not able to act when theft is merely assumed, as is the case with most unprovenanced antiquities when there is no proof of illegal excavation or cross-border transit. The police can only act to recover material known to be stolen, that is to say when its prior ownership or location is recorded and open to demonstration (Ellis 1995: 223). But the effectiveness of the police is limited further by poor communication. They can act only if they are in receipt of good information, and although the information seems sometimes to be available, it does not always end up in their hands. Channels of communication between the police and concerned authorities of source states are not well established.

The efforts of the British police are further obstructed by the presence of a loophole in international law. This allows good title to a stolen or looted antiquity to be acquired by means of a 'good faith' purchase in a third country, such as Switzerland, where that country's law has the effect of giving good title to a buyer, thus making its subsequent sale in Britain legal and taking it outside the limits of police competence (Ellis 1995: 223). The loophole has been closed by the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects. The convention is specifically designed to circumvent issues of ownership. It allows a state party to the Convention or a citizen thereof to request the return of archaeological objects which have in the first instance been illegally excavated or exported, and which are by definition of the Convention stolen, despite their role in any subsequent transactions. Sadly the Department of National Heritage announced in 1995 that the British government would not sign the UNIDROIT Convention, although the reasons for this decision were not forthcoming. As a result there is no simple recourse under British law for the recovery of objects illegally removed from their country of origin when good title has been obtained through purchase in a third country. The 'international loophole' remains open.

The UNIDROIT Convention also makes provision for a good faith purchaser to receive compensation when required to return looted antiquities, so long as it can be shown convincingly that due diligence was exercised at the time of purchase. It has been pointed out that convincing demonstration of due diligence would require clear proof that any relevant publication such as that of Gill and Chippindale (1993) had been consulted (Prott 1995: 64). Further studies in a similar vein will become invaluable if and when the British government accedes to UNIDROIT.

The United Kingdom is required to adhere to European Union legislation. The Council Directive 93/7 on the Return of Cultural Objects Unlawfully Removed from the Territory of a Member State was implemented in 1994 as the Return of Cultural Objects Regulations. The Directive provides a means for states to recover cultural objects of designated importance ('national treasures') which have been exported unlawfully from their territory to that of another member state. Like the UNESCO Convention, however, the Directive fails to close the international loophole in property laws and makes no provision for private individuals to reclaim objects. Palmer (1995: 16) has expressed doubts about the likely effectiveness of the Directive on account of its elaborate machinery and discouraging bureaucracy, and to date it has not been invoked.

Dealers and collectors have to be exceedingly foolish or excessively greedy to fall foul of British law. Tokeley-Parry for instance was convicted of two charges of handling stolen goods because although he claimed to have passed stolen Egyptian antiquities through the 'international loophole', by buying them in Switzerland and Germany, the investigating authorities were able to establish that he had in fact smuggled them directly to Britain.

The reluctance of successive British governments to accede to the UNESCO and UNIDROIT conventions, or at least adhere to their principles, is a serious enough matter in itself but there is evidence to suggest that it is actively

undermining the efforts of other states. The United States for instance has now enacted a series of bilateral agreements with other states party to the UNESCO Convention in an attempt to curtail the destruction of certain specified classes of cultural material. Several of these agreements are with Latin American countries. While they have acted to lessen the flow northwards of antiquities, there is evidence to suggest that it has been rerouted through the salesrooms of Britain (Yemma 1997: A28), so much so that the London market is said to be glutted with smuggled pre-Columbian antiquities, with 60 per cent of sales revenue coming from Americans (Windsor 1997).

The role of the United Kingdom as a conduit in this unfortunate trade is facilitated further by the diaphanous nature of British export controls. British customs will not enforce foreign export restrictions and will not stop the import into Britain of artefacts exported illegally from their country of origin as this would in effect burden the British taxpayer with the cost of enforcing the export laws of other countries. It is not an offence to import illegally exported artefacts (Ellis 1995: 222). Before the police can act artefacts must be shown to be stolen (*ibid.*), as already discussed. There are export controls however, even for material that has been in the country for only a short period of time, although their scope is so limited that the use of the word 'control' is hardly warranted.

A European licence is required for the export of antiquities to destinations outside the European Union as the EU Council Regulation 3911/92 on the Export of Cultural Goods is directly applicable to the United Kingdom. The British government has diluted the effect of this regulation however by excluding from licensing requirements any objects which possess no special features of form, size, material, decoration, inscription or iconography and which are not in especially fine condition – most archaeological material in fact. The government took this decision to ward off large numbers of licence applications that it could not provide the resources to support (Morrison 1995: 208). This seems to imply that the underlying rationale of the Regulation to restrict or register the flow of antiquities through or out of Europe was not recognized or, more likely, was unpalatable.

The guiding principles of British export licensing seem to be avoidance of cost to the taxpayer and of loss to the economy. There is little recognition of the problems engendered by the trade or there might be good ethical reasons to regulate it more closely. The legislation and the method of its administration combine to provide what is in effect an 'open door' regime for the trade in illicit antiquities. From an archaeological point of view it is a disaster, as there is no system in place which could provide a means even to monitor and record the movement of antiquities through Britain and in so doing constitute an information archive.

This discussion has returned again and again to the theme of lost information. Whether low-cost objects emerge from a looted site, or treasures to bid high for, the information loss is the same, and the British legal system contains no credible deterrent. An opportunity to recover some of the lost information at points of transit fails to materialize because of the frailty of the export licensing system. Another chance to trace the movement of antiquities is at most only dimly perceived

through the almost impenetrable opacity in which the trade operates. The situation in the United Kingdom, as was stated at the outset, is deplorable.

CONCLUSION

The appeal of artefacts is strong for many and varied reasons but a hyped-up demand for personal ownership must be balanced by effective communication of the resultant destruction. Prospective purchasers need incontrovertible, graphic exposition of the damage caused to sites by looting. Delivery of this message must be sufficiently clear to persuade the buyer and collector to reject illicit material. Disclosure of provenance should become the norm and, even then, such provenance should be viewed with healthy scepticism. The concept of guardianship of the archaeological heritage for future generations needs to be inculcated and fostered. There is a clear need for education as well.

Archaeologists, conservators, museum curators and other heritage professionals should develop a unified approach in these areas and it is encouraging to note that there have been recent moves to adopt a recognized ethical stance when confronted with unprovenanced archaeological material. In May 1995 the Standing Conference on Portable Antiquities was established on the initiative of the Council for British Archaeology to provide a forum for British archaeologists and museum and other heritage professionals. This conference has been quoted frequently by government ministers who are pleased to recognize it as speaking for all those responsible for the historic and archaeological heritage (Renfrew 1997). In 1997 this conference unanimously passed a resolution calling upon the government of the United Kingdom to adopt and ratify the UNESCO and UNIDROIT conventions. In 1998, the British Academy, a professional association of academics, also passed a resolution urging the British government to adhere to the spirit of these conventions, whether as a signatory or not. The British Academy has advised that written certificates of authenticity or valuation should not be provided by academics for antiquities of doubtful provenance. These are small steps perhaps, but steps nevertheless, and in the right direction.

We must remember that utilization of artefacts as research tools need not, perhaps even should not, preclude their veneration. Scientific objectivity essential in the academic realm need not eclipse or invalidate an appreciation of consummate craftsmanship, exquisite beauty or the imprint of an ancestral thumb in the interior of that most humble of objects, the ceramic lamp. It is also obvious that the arguments put forward here must be reiterated time and time again in the hope that voracious consumption of this non-renewable resource – our own unique history – can be controlled so as to avoid its expunction. The need to put an end to the widespread looting of archaeological sites is now of great urgency. The destruction has reached unprecedented levels – another two decades in Latin America and there will not be much left to destroy (Melikian 1997: 9).

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NOTE

After this chapter was submitted for publication (in 1999) the UK Government's Culture, Media and Sport Committee conducted an extensive investigation into issues of the illicit trade and restitution, which was published in three volumes entitled *Cultural Property: Return and Illicit Trade* (July 2000) HC 371 – I, II, III. London: The Stationery Office (available online at <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/cms/home.htm>). Additionally, in May 2000, a Ministerial Advisory Panel on Illicit Trade was appointed which published its report in December 2000 (available online at <http://www.culture.gov.uk/heritage/index.html>). Among other things, the report recommended that the UK trade should accede to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and that its system of export control should be reviewed. In March 2001, the UK Government announced its intention to sign the UNESCO Convention. The chapter also makes no account of the explosion in internet trading which has occurred over the past few years, as predicted by the authors, which is pushing the marketing of antiquities to its very limit.

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9 *A note on the excavations at Ayodhya with reference to the Mandir-Masjid issue*

B.B. LAL

THE 'WHY' OF THE AYODHYA EXCAVATIONS

There exists a great divergence of opinion regarding the historicity of the two Indian epics, namely the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. According to some, everything mentioned in these texts is true to the very letter, while others regard them as mere figments of the imagination. Such confusion seems to prevail because there are no inscriptions contemporary with the events mentioned in these epics, which could indisputably authenticate their historicity. The earliest inscriptions available in India date back to the third or fourth century BC (leaving aside the inscriptions of the Indus Civilization, which, unfortunately, still remain undeciphered). On the other hand, the events narrated in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, if these had a basis in historical reality, are unlikely to have been later than the time of the Buddha, that is the sixth or fifth centuries BC, since the history of India after the Buddha is so well known that it is difficult to accommodate the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* events thereafter.

Since no evidence of a contemporary inscription is available to establish the historicity of these two epics, the only way in which an archaeologist can tackle the issue is to excavate and explore the sites associated with the respective texts. And the great advantage in approaching the problem in such a manner is that *all the sites mentioned in these epics bear the same names even today*. This is mainly because these sites have remained under almost continuous occupation ever since they were first settled; hence the authenticity of their names. Thus, for example, there is only one Hastinapura, one Mathura and one Ayodhya.

With this background, way back in the early 1950s, I began excavations at Hastinapura and other sites associated with the Mahabharata story and discovered a common material culture (called in archaeological parlance the Painted Grey Ware Culture) in the lower levels thereof. The settlement at Hastinapura, the key site in the story, dated to a period from about 1100–800 BC. Not only were the sites interlocked with one and the same material culture but very significant archaeological evidence also turned up fully corroborating the literary statement which runs as follows: '*Gangayapahr te tasmin nagare nagasahvaye, Tyaktva Nichakshur-nagaram*

Kausambyam sa nivatsyat (When the city of Hastinapura is carried away by the Ganga, Nichakshu will abandon it and go to Kausambi)'.

Excavations at Hastinapura have brought to light evidence of a massive destruction of the Painted Grey Ware settlement on account of a flood in the nearby Ganga. Not only were large-scale erosional scars duly identified on the riverside face of the mound but even a part of the washed-away material was recovered from the bore holes made in the river-bed from as much as 15 metres below the surface. Further excavations at Kausambi have brought to light material from its lowest levels which represents a continuum from Hastinapura.

The results of the explorations at Hastinapura and other sites associated with the Mahabharata story were published in the mid-1950s (Lal 1954–5). Archaeologists and historians all over the world have since accepted that there did exist a kernel of truth at the base of the epic, though no doubt archaeology cannot provide evidence of Lord Krishna having spilled the butter-pot!

The question then arose about the historicity of the *Ramayana*, and the same methodology was applied in this case as well. Five sites associated with the story were excavated: Ayodhya, the capital of the Kosala kingdom; Srngaverapura, where Rama, Lakshmana and Sita were ferried across the Ganga by the Nishada chieftain Guha; Bharadvaja Asrama, where they sojourned for a while to pay their homage to the sage; Chitrakuta, where they stayed for quite some time before proceeding further south, and Nandigrama, from where Bharata looked after the kingdom in the absence of Rama. The work commenced in 1975 and continued up to 1986, a period of twelve years. A full report on the Srngaverapura tank came out in 1993; it is a great pity, however, that the Survey has since withdrawn the entire staff and logistical support needed for the completion of the second volume on Srngaverapura itself, covering the remaining data from that site, and also for the other reports on the other sites. For the past number of years I have been writing letter after letter to the successive directors general and even to the government minister in charge (in 1995), but so far it has been a cry in the wilderness. Let me hope that one day these reports will see the light of the day.

The summary of the archaeological evidence from these sites, very briefly, is as follows. All the sites have yielded the lowest common denominator in the form of the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) culture, dating back to about the seventh century BC. More importantly, a site like Bharadvaja Asrama, which is just a flat piece of land and not a mound as all the other sites are, has also yielded the same kind of material in its earliest levels as did Ayodhya. Further, the occurrence of the NBPW potsherds in a stray manner, often mixed up with the river-sand, and the finding of post-holes and clay lumps with reed impressions, showed that the site was only casually inhabited with wattle-and-daub huts, as might be expected in the case of an *asrama*. These discoveries were briefly published in *Antiquity* (Lal 1981), and have been well received. The Babri Masjid [mosque] protagonists are, however, hell-bent on rejecting the historicity of the *Ramayana*. Their motivation is not far to seek: if they succeed in controverting the very historicity of Rama it would be much easier for them to argue that as there was no Rama there could not have been a Janma-Bhumi (birthplace), much less a temple there. And lo and behold, they

complain that 'Ayodhya diggings did not confirm the traditional notions of chronology of the so-called "sacred" texts or even of the "epic" story. It provided a rude shock insofar as the Rama saga centering around Ayodhya of the Tretayuga was not shown to be hundreds of thousands of years old.' What a demand!

As stated in the opening paragraph, it is next to impossible to get any contemporary inscription to authenticate the historicity of these epics. Thus, one has to depend on the kind of archaeological evidence such as discussed above. In sum, it is evident that these epics did have a basis in historical reality, were originally sung as ballads and later on, when the art of writing became common, were reduced to a textual format. In this process, a lot of interpolation took place and poetic imagination had its play. For example, the *Mahabharata*, which consists of nearly 100 000 verses now, was at one time known as the *Bharata* comprising 24 000 verses and at a still earlier stage had only 8000 verses and was called the *Jaya*.

A paper nearly sixty pages in length entitled 'Historicity of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*: What has archaeology to say in the matter?' was presented at an International Conference on 'New Archaeology and India', organized by the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) in October 1988. This paper contained many more details and a fuller analysis of the data than the *Antiquity* paper; however, it is most unfortunate that the ICHR authorities of the time saw to it that this paper never saw the light of the day. The reason? The insertion in it of a paragraph as follows: 'In the Janma-Bhumi area, the uppermost levels of a trench that lay immediately to the south of the Babri Masjid brought to light a series of brick-built bases which evidently carried pillars thereon. In the construction of the Babri Masjid a few stone pillars had been used, which may have come from the preceding structure.' This information had to be added since around that time questions had begun to be asked about the discovery of these pillar-bases. To begin with the Babri-Masjid historians even stated that the evidence about the pillar-bases was fraudulent, but finally reconciled themselves to its authenticity once they knew that these bases were discovered as far back as the field season of 1975-6 and that the relevant photo-negatives were there in the archives of the Archaeological Survey of India. Since the subject of the pillar-bases had become very 'hot' and since the ICHR refused to publish the paper, another organization got hold of it and published it in its journal, *The Manthana*, as it found the pillar-base evidence supportive of its theory about the existence of a Hindu temple at the site prior to the construction of the Babri Masjid. The Babri Masjid historians have expressed their indignation that 'there is no convincing reason forthcoming for the forum chosen by Professor Lal to publicize his afterthought'. The fact of the matter is that I never sent the paper for publication in *The Manthana*; it was hijacked, for reasons just stated, and the then ICHR authorities must carry the blame for all that happened. Had they published the paper, no one else would have dared to run away with it. (More will be said about the significance of these pillar-bases below.)

EXCAVATIONS ADJACENT TO THE MANDIR-MASJID [MOSQUE] COMPLEX AND A DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

From the previous paragraphs it is clear that the excavations at Ayodhya were a part of a much larger project known as the 'Archaeology of the Ramayana sites'. The primary objective was to ascertain the antiquity of this site and compare it with that of the other sites associated with the Ramayana story. Thus it was decided to excavate as many spots as possible to ensure that the lowest levels, if these existed at only some places and not at others, were not missed. Fourteen different areas were chosen for the operations, including Hanuman Garhi, Kaushilya Ghat and Sugriva Tila, and the Janma-Bhumi area was just one of them.

In this last-named area there existed the Mandir-Masjid [mosque] complex. Here a trench was laid out on the southern side of the complex, at a distance of about 4 metres from the boundary wall. Like all other trenches at Ayodhya, this too revealed that the earliest occupation was that of the early stage of the NBPW, dating back to about the seventh century BC. Thereafter the occupation continued through the various stages of the NBPW and the Sunga periods right up to the late Kushan times. For whatever reason, the spot was abandoned, though the remains of the Gupta period were duly encountered in a neighbouring area known as Kaushilya Ghat.

In the first occupation that followed this desertion of the trench under discussion, parallel rows of pillar-bases (foundations), made of brick-bats or of brick-bats with a few stones, were found (Plate 9.1). These bases were mostly squarish in shape, although some examples of circular ones also existed. These rows of pillar-bases ran in an east-west direction. While some pillars fell well within the excavated trench, a few lay underneath its edge towards the boundary wall of the Mandir-Masjid complex. Associated with these pillar-bases there were four floors made of lime mixed with brick-powder.

Here it may not be out of place to mention that an over-enthusiastic Babri Masjid archaeologist, in his effort to deny the entire pillar evidence, has stated that these were not pillar-bases but walls. The most amusing part, however, is that he just draws white lines inter-connecting the pillar-bases on the photographs concerned and thereby wants us to believe that these are walls. What a mockery of archaeology! Yet another Babri Masjid archaeologist, while conceding that these are pillar-bases all right, has suggested that the structure concerned was no more than a mere cowshed. No doubt for a person coming from a rural background the cowshed idea is a very natural one, but the archaeologist conveniently overlooked the fact that this structural complex had as many as four successive floors made of lime, something unheard of in the case of cowsheds.

No coin or inscription was found in any of the levels associated with these pillar-bases. Thus one has to fall back upon evidence from other material to ascertain their chronological horizon. Associated with the earlier of these floors there were a few fragments of sculptures and pottery which may be assigned to about the twelfth century AD. Thus, with its four successive floor-levels, the pillared complex as a



Plate 9.1 Pillar foundations encountered a little below the surface in the trench adjacent to the Babri Masjid. Courtesy of Archaeological Survey of India

whole may be dated from the twelfth century AD to about the end of the fifteenth century.

The fact that the pillar-bases extended into the edge of the trench towards the Mandir-Masjid complex indicated the possibility of there having been more such rows of pillars in that direction. How many? Only further excavation could have revealed that. That this pillar-base-cum-lime-floor complex did extend very much beyond the confines of the excavated trench discussed above has since been amply established.

On 10 February 1991, while delivering a lecture at Vijayawada on ‘The *Ramayana*: An Archaeological Appraisal’ to the distinguished scholars assembled for

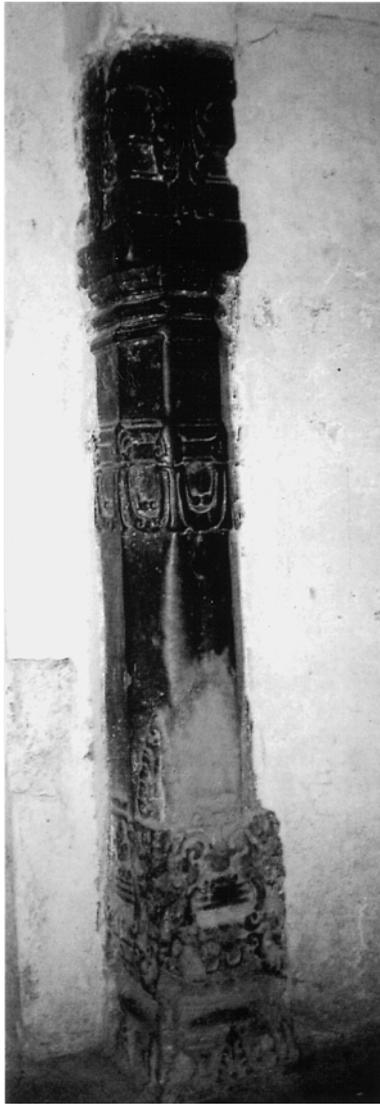


Plate 9.2 One of the fourteen pillars of the destroyed Hindu temple, which had subsequently been affixed to the piers of the Babri Masjid. Courtesy of Archaeological Survey of India

the Annual Conference of the Museums Association of India, I was asked about the inter-relationship between the pillar-bases encountered in the trench excavated by me and the stone pillars incorporated in the Babri Masjid (Plate 9.2) and further whether there was any temple underneath the Masjid. I replied, as any archaeologist would have: 'If you do want to know the reality, the only way is to dig underneath the mosque'. The following is the relevant extract from *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, dated 11 February 1991, which carried the story.

Some of the pillar-bases, Prof. Lal said, lay under the edge of the trench on the side of the Babri Masjid and it was likely that there may exist more such bases in that direction. It was also probable that the stone pillars incorporated in the mosque and the pillar-bases found in the excavation hardly half-a-metre below the surface may belong to a structure that existed at the site prior to the construction of the mosque.

In order to verify this and to obtain a clear picture of the preceding structure, it would be necessary to carry out further excavations in the area including that underneath the mosque.

Prof. Lal said it was essentially a political issue rather than an archaeological one and added that the sooner it was settled amicably the better would it be for the country.

As seen, this statement of mine appeared in the newspapers on 11 February 1991. The very next day 'twenty eminent historians' issued a statement casting serious aspersions on my innocuous suggestion. One really wonders at the secret mechanism devised by these historians to prepare and sign the statement in a single day when they are physically located variously at Kurukshetra, Delhi and Patna. Is there someone in this august world body [WAC] who would dare probe into this secret (unethical) technique? Anyway, the relevant part of their statement read as follows (*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 13 February 1991):

In a joint statement, these historians deplored as unfortunate that professionals should tend to lose proper sense of India's past 'under the impetus of the current Hindutva campaign' [a campaign to change India from a secular state to a Hindu one]. The statement referred to the observation made by Mr Lal in his lecture two days ago at Vijayawada on 'The Ramayana, the archaeological appraisal'.

They added that Mr Lal by arguing fresh excavations at the site of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya would be fulfilling the demand of those who wanted the Babri Masjid to be demolished to construct the temple at that site. They felt that Mr Lal's suggestion was 'highly disquieting' and added that the pillars found in the structure of the Masjid ranged from the ninth to the fourteenth century and 'seem to have been brought from various structures outside the Masjid to decorate it.'

What a fantastic idea: to decorate it!

To the foregoing I issued a rejoinder which appeared in the *Statesman*, New Delhi, dated 18 February 1991. The relevant part is extracted below:

Further excavation within the floor area of the Babri Masjid without in any way harming the structure is necessary to know what actually preceded the mosque at Ayodhya, according to former Archaeological Survey of India Director General, Mr B.B. Lal, reports UNI.

If both the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [a Hindu organization campaigning for

the demolition of the mosque] and the All-India Babri Masjid Action Committee had honest intentions to know what actually preceded the mosque, they should not shy away from further excavations, the noted archaeologist said in a lengthy rebuttal to the comments made by some historians in regard to his lecture at Vijayawada recently.

‘Why should the contending parties shy away from further excavation, unless they are afraid of facing the truth?’ he asked.

As may be seen from the foregoing, I had never ‘pleaded’ for ‘relocating’ the mosque, as is alleged even today by some Babri Masjid historians. Unfortunately, my suggestion to carry out excavation of only a part of the floor without in any way damaging the mosque fell on deaf ears. The tension between the two contending parties continued to develop.

Curiously, events take their own course. On 6 December 1992, the Babri Masjid was demolished by some *Kar sevaks* [Hindu activists] who had assembled in thousands at the site. A regrettable event in itself, the demolition incidentally brought to light a great deal of archaeological material from within the thick walls of the Babri structure.

Having not seen the material myself, I have no personal knowledge of the actual number of these objects and of the various categories involved. However, from the published reports it seems that these comprised about 200 specimens and included, besides sculptured panels and images, architectural components which must have once constituted the parts of a temple, and, above all, three inscriptions on stone.

Of the above-mentioned three inscriptions, the largest one (Plate 9.3) inscribed on a slab 1.10 × 0.56 metres and consisting of twenty engraved lines, has been published in the *Puratattva* by Professor Ajaya Mitra Shastri (1992–3) of Nagpur University, a distinguished historian and a specialist in epigraphy and numismatics. The relevant part of his paper reads as follows:

The inscription is composed in high-flown Sanskrit verse, except for a small portion in prose, and is engraved in the chaste and classical Nagari script of the eleventh–twelfth century AD. It has yet to be fully deciphered, but the portions which have been fully deciphered and read are of great historical significance for our purpose here. It was evidently put up on the wall of the temple, the construction of which is recorded in the text inscribed on it. Line 15 of this inscription, for example, clearly tells us that a beautiful temple of Vishnu-Hari, built with heaps of stone (*silā-sam hati-grahais*) and beautified with a golden spire (*hiran ya-kalasa-srisundaram*) unparalleled by any other temple built by earlier kings (*purvvair-apy-akritam kritam nripatibhir*) was constructed. This wonderful temple (*aty-adbhutam*) was built in the temple-city (*vibudhalayni*) of Ayodhya situated in the Saketamandala (district, line 17) showing that Ayodhya and Saketa were closely connected, Saketa being the district of which Ayodhya was a part. Line 19 describes god Vishnu as destroying king Bali (apparently in the Vamana manifestation) and the ten-headed personage (Dasanana i.e. Ravana).



Plate 9.3 Recovered from the in-fillings of the walls of the Babri Masjid, this inscription gives details of the Hindu temple which stood at the site prior to the construction of the Masjid. Courtesy of Archaeological Survey of India

The inscription speaks for itself and no further comments are necessary.

It has been contended by the Babri Masjid historians that these images, architectural parts and the inscribed slabs were brought by the *Kar sevaks* from somewhere else and surreptitiously placed there. This suggestion does not, however, hold good, since there are photographs to contradict this: for example, the two photographs published on page 33 of *India Today* on 31 December 1992. The *Kar sevaks* are seen carrying a huge stone slab bearing a very long sculpted frieze, after having picked it up from the debris. They were in the process of depositing the piece thus recovered nearby.

The above-mentioned historians, like the village schoolmaster of Oliver Goldsmith, who 'though vanquished would argue still', also allege that the inscription has been forged. Many eminent Indian epigraphists have, however, examined the inscribed slab and not one of them has even remotely thought that the inscription is forged.

In this context, it may not be out of place to mention that hundreds of examples are available of the destruction of temples and incorporation of their material in the mosques. In Delhi there is the example of the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque (near the Qutb Minar) which incorporated parts of a large number of temples that had been destroyed. Or at Ajmer, there is the well-known Adhai-din-kajhonpra, presenting a similar picture.

From the foregoing it is abundantly clear there did exist a twelfth-century temple at the site, which was destroyed and some of its parts incorporated within the body of the Babri Masjid. Some other parts, like the stone pillars, were placed alongside

the piers of the Masjid, to show them off as symbols of victory. Some other pieces, not used in either of the foregoing manners, were thrown away in a nearby depression, like the ones recovered by the Public Works Department of the Uttar Pradesh government in June 1992 in the course of the levelling of the adjacent area.

Had my suggestion to carry out trial excavation underneath the floor of the mosque without in any way damaging the structure itself been implemented, it would have averted the disaster. But who cares for sane advice?

While, as already stated earlier, the destruction of the mosque was a regrettable event, the outcry to reconstruct it is no less regrettable. Let me ask a simple question: what is it that we want to reconstruct and why? If the reconstruction is to assuage the hurt feelings of the Muslim community, this is just not the forum to debate the issue. This is a problem for the government of India to resolve and it is being dealt with. The matter is before a court of justice and the political parties concerned have agreed to abide by the decision of the court. Nothing can be more unwise for this body than to meddle with the internal affairs of a sovereign state.

However, we do come into the picture when we take up the archaeological importance of an ancient building. It is well known that the mosque had no architectural pretensions whatsoever. It must have been for this very reason that no Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, right from the days of Sir John Marshall, ever thought of including it in the list of 'protected monuments'. And if in spite of the foregoing we are enthusiastic about the reconstruction of the mosque, how do we go about it? The mosque has been completely erased; thus it will have to be built *de novo*. According to archaeological principles, we ought to reconstruct the mosque exactly as it was and not just any mosque. Can we achieve that? The answer is a big 'no'. In the first place, I am not aware if any detailed plans exist, sections and elevations which might help us in reconstructing the mosque exactly as it was. Second, do we have the right mortar and bricks as were used in the original mosque? The answer again is 'no'. Finally, if we are faithful to history, we have to put all the inscriptions, sculptures and other parts of the temple back into the walls of the envisaged mosque and refix all the sculptured pillars to their piers. If we do not do that we would not only be distorting history but also doing great injustice to the soul of the great Mughal who wanted to remind the vanquished of the event by putting up those pillars from the destroyed Hindu temple against the piers of the mosque. Let us think twice before taking a plunge.

NOTE

Explanatory comments in square brackets have been added by the editors.

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10 *The Ayodhya issue*

RAM SHARAN SHARMA

This chapter examines the validity of the view that a temple marking the birthplace of Rama was built in the eleventh century and existed at the Baburi [Babri] Masjid [mosque] site in Ayodhya, until it was demolished in the sixteenth century to erect the Masjid in its place. It examines several types of evidence: textual, architectural and archaeological, historical and epigraphic.

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

Those who believe in the historicity of Rama fix his date around 1800 BC, on the basis of the Puranic family tree. But we do not find even a modest settlement at Ayodhya until 500 BC, as is true of the whole mid-Ganga plain. Because of this difficulty some scholars locate the original Ayodhya in Afghanistan and Rajasthan, and others look for it in Balia and Munger districts.

If we follow the history of Hindu belief, the present Ayodhya seems to have emerged as a place of religious pilgrimage in late medieval times. Chapter 85 of the *Visnu Smṛti* lists as many as fifty-two places of pilgrimage (*tirthas*) including towns, lakes, rivers and mountains. It does not include Ayodhya in this list. It is significant that this text, which is attributed to about AD 300, contains the earliest list of *tirthas*. At present we have no documented temple of Rama in any part of Uttar Pradesh until the sixteenth century, whereas we have a large number of *tirthas* or places of pilgrimage whose merits are extolled in the Puranic *tirtha* sections from the sixth century onwards. Bhatta Laksmidhara, the Gahadavala minister who wrote *Tirthavivekanakanda* as a part of his book *Kṛtyakalpataṛu* in the twelfth century and was evidently well acquainted with eastern Uttar Pradesh, surveys the well-known brahmanical *tirthas* of his time, but he mentions neither Ayodhya nor the birthplace of Rama. Hans Bakker particularly notes the absence of such references (Bakker 1986: 45). According to Hindu belief many *tirthas* are far more important than Ayodhya in northern India; Prayag and Banaras are good examples. Only in late medieval or early modern times did Ayodhya come to be regarded as one of the seven important places of pilgrimage. Tulsidas, who wrote the *Ramacharitamānas* in

1574 at Avadhपुरi [Ayodhya], does not mention it as a place of pilgrimage. In one verse (*chaupai*) he states that he began composing the manuscript at Avadhपुरi, which could have been easily changed into *Avadh-tirtha* without doing any damage to the metrical arrangement. He clearly specifies the place and the time when he wrote his famous *Ramacharitamānas*:

*navmi bhaumvar madhumasa, Avadhपुरi yah charit prakasa jehi din Ramajanam sruti
gavanhi tiratha sakal tahn chali avanhi.*

(Balakanda)

The verses quoted above show that he commenced his manuscript on Tuesday, the ninth day of the second half of Chaitra. He adds that whoever sings the story of the birth of Rama on that day obtains the merit accruing from his visit to all places of pilgrimage automatically, but he does not declare Avadhपुरi a place of pilgrimage. He stresses the importance of the day when he started the book but not that of the place where he wrote. In Tulsidas, Ayodhya appears neither as a place with a temple of Rama nor as an important place of pilgrimage for the Hindus. On the other hand Prayag is called *tirth-raj*, that is, the king of all the places of pilgrimage.

Tulsidas' *Ramacharitamānas* undoubtedly popularized the cult of Rama all over northern India. Tulsidas emphasizes the virtues of remembering Rama and repeating his name, but nowhere in the *Ramacharitamānas* does he speak of the worship of the idol of Rama; had a temple of Rama existed in Ayodhya it could not have escaped his notice. In fact Tulsidas clearly talks of temples on two occasions: he speaks of the presence of a temple of Girija or Parvati in Mithila and mentions a temple of Svayamprabha near Mahendra mountain. He also mentions a temple, most probably of Rama, in Vibhisana's house in Lanka. He talks of many temples on the bank of the Sarayu. It is therefore highly significant that he does not refer to any temple of Rama in Ayodhya, let alone the *Ramajanmabhumi* temple. No writer, whatever the period to which he belongs, is bound to notice or reflect in his writings all that exists or happens in his time, but the context in which he writes is extremely important. Tulsidas, who was so devoted to Rama and who started writing his *magnum opus* at Ayodhya, would certainly be expected to refer to the Rama temple, if it existed there, or to Ayodhya as a place of pilgrimage, if it really was so, on account of its association with Rama. The *Tirthaprakāśa* of the *Viramitrodaya*, written by Mitra Misra in AD 1615–45 (Chowkhamba 1917; Kane 1973) provides a list of fourteen *tirthas* in Ayodhya on the basis of the *Narasimha Purana*. These *tirthas* are: Gopratarā, Tilodakā, Cakratirtha, Agnitirtha, Brhaspatikunda, Brahmakunda, Visnupura Kotitirtha, Saptarsitirtha, Svargadvara, Sarayu–Gharghara Sangamatirtha, Balakhilyatirtha, Bilvatirtha, Galavatirtha, Ramatirtha and Jatakunda. Ramatirtha is the last but one in the serial order and is located in the Gomati, which may be a name of a part of the Sarayu River. Ramatirtha consists of bathing in the Gomati. The relevant verse reads thus:

*Gomatyam Ramatirthe tu yo narah snanam acaret, tatra Visnum pratisthapyā gandha-
puspadibhih kramat, aradhya siddhimapnoti sa nara natra samsayah.*

This Ramatirtha hence has nothing to do with the Rama temple alleged to have stood on the Baburi site. The Ramajanmabhumi tirtha or temple is therefore conspicuous by its absence in the *Viramitrodaya* list. It is clear that Hindu belief did not associate any particular place in Ayodhya with the birth of Rama until, at the earliest, the middle of the seventeenth century.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a Hindu organization, have campaigned for the demolition of the Baburi mosque and seek its replacement with a temple in honour of the Hindu god Rama. The VHP experts emphasize the longstanding Hindu belief in the birthplace of Rama at the very spot where the Baburi Masjid was erected. The only Sanskrit text that they cite in support of this claim is the *Skanda Purana*. They refer in particular to its Ayodhya Mahatmya, that is, to the merits of visiting Ayodhya. We have consulted the printed version of the *Skanda Purana* (Ksemaraja 1910) and two other versions found in manuscript in the Vrindavan Research Institute and the Bodleian Library, Oxford. These texts are full of internal contradictions, and interpolations continued to be made in the printed version of the *Skanda Purana* at least until the eighteenth century. The internal contents of this Purana including mention of the name of Vidyapati, who passed away in the middle of the fifteenth century, suggest that its core was not compiled earlier than the sixteenth century. The Ayodhya Mahatmya given in the printed version was compiled by several hands. For instance, the course of the description of the *tirthas* in general is suddenly interrupted by the start of the glorification of Ayodhya. Even in the case of Ayodhya, the virtues of visiting and bathing in the Sarayu are not given at one place, but two. The intervening contexts have nothing to do with the Sarayu. In the description of the *tirthas*, Vasistha replaces Agastya as the narrator, and then Agastya again resumes the narration.

The description of the Janmasthan [birthplace of Rama] in the last chapter of the Ayodhya Mahatmya (verses 18–25) is clearly a later addition. The *tirthas* where the pilgrims should take a bath, and the divinities who should be worshipped, are mentioned in detail in the *Skanda Purana*. This section of the Purana is quoted in the Tirthaprakasa of Mitra Misra's *Viramitrodaya* which, according to Kane, was compiled from 1615 to 1645. In the context of the *tirthas* located in Ayodhya (Ayodhyasthitatirthanam) the *Skanda Purana* mentions five *tirthas*, six goddesses and five gods, but it does not speak of the Janmasthan. The fact that the term Janmasthan occurs in the present printed version clearly shows that it was interpolated in the Purana in either the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

Despite this clear interpolation, and even if we accept the location of Rama's birthplace as described in the Ayodhya Mahatmya, it does not correspond to the Baburi Masjid. Both the Vrindavan and Bodleian versions of the Mahatmya mention the compass directions and distances of Rama's birthplace from some specific sites. According to verses 21–24, the birthplace lies 500 *dhanus* (910 metres) westward of Laumasa and 1009 *dhanus* (1835 metres) eastward of Vighnesvara. According to local Hindu belief Laumasa (the place of Lomasa) is identical with the present Rinmochan Ghat. On this basis the Rama Janmabhumi (Rama's birthplace) should be located in the vicinity of the Brahmakunda, close to the bed of the Sarayu. The accuracy of directions and distances in the Mahatmya can be

corroborated. According to the Mahatmya, Rinmochan Ghat (the place of Lomasa) also lies 700 *dhanus* (1274 metres) north-east of Brahmakunda. We have found both the direction and the distance to be correct. The Mahatmya adds that the Janmasthan lies north-east of Vighnesa. Local tradition associates Vighnesa with a pillar which lies south-west of Rinmochan. This again excludes the Baburi Masjid site and situates the birthplace somewhere between Rinmochan and Brahmakunda, once more on the bank of the Sarayu. Thus, according to the Hindu belief as articulated in the Ayodhya Mahatmya of the *Skanda Purana*, the birthplace of Rama cannot be located on the site where the Baburi Masjid stood. The VHP experts argue that the location of the Rama Janmabhumi is given on the basis of solar directions and cannot be determined through use of the compass, but even if we follow solar directions, the Janmabhumi of the *Skanda Purana* cannot be located on the Baburi site. The different versions of the Ayodhya Mahatmya were prepared towards the end of the eighteenth and probably the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Even as late as that the Janmasthan was not important enough to be mentioned once in the itinerary of pilgrimage given in the Mahatmya.

The compilers of the Ayodhya Mahatmya of the *Skanda Purana* consider the Svargadvaratirtha far more important than the Janmasthan. They identify it with the Gopratara *tirtha* and devote 100 verses to its description; on the other hand they give only eight verses to the Janmasthan. Svargadvara is believed to be the place where Rama left for heaven. The *Skanda Purana* mentions two Svargadvara *tirthas*. Whatever might be its real location, in Hindu belief it was far more meritorious to visit this place than any other sacred place in Ayodhya. This *tirtha* is first mentioned in a Gahadavala inscription of the eleventh century. As will be shown later, it speaks of the worship of Vasudeva at the confluence of the two rivers but not of any temple. It is clear no place in Ayodhya was associated with Rama's birth, either in the eleventh century or six centuries later. When the association was established, probably in the late eighteenth century, its location given in the various Mahatmyas does not tally with the site once occupied by the Baburi Masjid. It is, therefore, quite erroneous to hold that according to old Hindu belief the Rama Janmabhumi temple was situated at the same site where the Baburi Masjid stood.

ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The main archaeological argument for the existence of the temple at the site of the mosque is based on the presence of fourteen pillars in the Baburi Masjid. Since these pillars could be seen on the spot, common people who did not have much idea about such pillars were misled by continuous false propaganda. It is argued that these pillars once formed part of a temple, that they were *in situ* and that the mosque was erected over them. But this whole line of argument is quite mistaken.

Most of the pillars measure a little more than 1.7 metres each in height, and their diameter at the base varies from 18 centimetres to 25 centimetres; in one single case a base measures about 1 metre. Obviously such pillars cannot be load-bearing, for which at least a height of 2.1 metres is needed in medieval temples. In several cases

the span between two sets of pillars, which have been embedded in the walls of the mosque, measures 5 metres, which completely precludes the possibility of their being used as load-bearing pillars in their present position. Further, the pillars embedded in the mosque wall simply stand on the floor of the mosque and do not form part of its foundation. These pillars therefore cannot be a part of any temple hall. On the other hand, though reused, they form an integral part of the mosque in which they appear for purposes of decoration. According to competent art historians such as Krishna Deva, Devangana Desai, M.A. Dhaky and N.P. Joshi, the style of these pillars is very much akin to that of the Pala pillars [see below]. The pillars neither belong to one single structure nor to one particular date; however, their date may not be placed later than 1000 AD.

In addition to the fourteen pillars found in the mosque, two pillars of the same style are fixed upside down in a graveyard at a distance of more than a kilometre from the Masjid. Further, we have a door jamb lying near Sita Ki Rasoi in a complex known as the Janmasthan area that was adjacent to the Baburi Masjid. Finally, two pilaster pillars are also found in the Uttar Pradesh State Museum in Lucknow. The pillars and the door jamb have been examined by Professor F. Ahmad, a former director of the Geological Survey of India, and have been found to be made of black basalt stone, whose source is found in Mirzapur, in Uttar Pradesh, and in the Rajmahal area in Bihar.

It is noticeable that these pillars are similar to an inscribed pillar found at Pakor, in Birbhum district, and to another from Bangarh in Dinajpur district. They are also akin to a pillar from Rajmahal. The similarity between the mosque pillars and the above-mentioned three pillars, which are at present preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, is obvious (see Banerji 1981, Plates LXXXIX [b] and [c], and XC [d]).

The motifs depicted on the pillars make it almost impossible to determine whether the pillars belong to a Vaishnavite or even a Hindu religious structure. By the tenth century there was so much fusion in the elements of art cultivated by different sects that the sectarian elements are, in practice, almost indistinguishable. For example, the *salabhanjika* motif is found on the pillars. It originally represented Maya (mother of Gautama Buddha), but it was adopted by non-Buddhist schools, and continued as a common Indian motif until the twelfth century AD. The motif of pitchers full of water, called *purnakalasa* or *purnaghata*, is typical of both pre-Islamic and later art. Such pictures are even represented in a residency building constructed by the East India Company at Lucknow. Similarly, the lotus is depicted in a thirteenth century Muslim grave at Maner, near Patna. Further, tiny human figures bearing the load are found at the bottom of some pillars incorporated into the Baburi mosque, but they also appear in Jaina and Buddhist art. In fact, except for a *dvarapala* represented on one pillar, hardly any of the pillar representations from the Baburi mosque can be specifically designated as Vaishnavite. On the contrary, the pillars carry certain motifs peculiar to Buddhist art of the eastern school. These motifs comprise the use of the double lotus as well as the trefoil arch typical of certain pantheons in eastern India. Again, the representation of the *mudgara* (hammer) and that of the *danda* (staff) are specifically Buddhist. Although certain

motifs, including those of ornamented leaf designs which are found in early medieval art and architecture all over the world, appear on the pillars, the designs which appear to be specific point to an affinity with the Buddhist art and architecture prevalent in eastern India. Therefore, the pillars that appear as decorative pieces in the Baburi Masjid were evidently brought from some temples with Buddhist associations in eastern India. We have many instances of the transportation of building material. The case of Asokan sandstone pillars is well known. An inscription in the Cola Brihadisvara temple at Thanjavur shows that some pillars used in it were brought from a Nolamba temple in Karnataka. We know of several mosques that were decorated or constructed with material brought from considerable distances. Thus, the door frame of the early seventeenth-century Gujri Mohalla mosque in Patna City is made of Pala pillars of black basalt, though these are not found anywhere in its vicinity. Similarly, the pillars used in the Baburi Masjid, which are not load-bearing, were brought from outside to decorate it.

The VHP experts argue that B.B. Lal's excavations suggest the presence of a pillared structure adjacent to the Baburi Masjid and claim this structure was probably a part of the original temple. Though Lal published two reports on his Ayodhya diggings, the first in 1976–77 and the second in 1979–80, he first referred to the discovery of the pillared structure only in 1990, after the Ayodhya dispute had started (Lal 1990). The delay in publishing this discovery is rather intriguing, but a scholar keeps on growing all the time. The photographs of the alleged pillar-bases show the use of broken bricks that obviously belonged to earlier structures. They show no structural remains associated with the 'pillar-bases', either on the plan or on the section; thus the structure was either flimsy or an ordinary shed supported by pillars. There is nothing to show that these pillars had any religious association. In his report in *Indian Archaeology* Lal rightly commented that 'the entire late period is devoid of any special interest' (Lal 1976–7 [see also this volume, Chapter 21]). Since he changed his position in 1990, we wanted to clarify our ideas about the inferences drawn from these pillar-bases by examining the site notebook of the person who was in charge of Trench IV to which these bases are ascribed. Despite repeated requests this notebook was never made available to us. We also wanted to see the register of antiquities and have a look at the plans, drawings and photographs of the material connected with Lal's Ayodhya excavation but the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was kind enough to show us only a very limited part of all that we wanted to examine. The failure to make available the relevant material raises not only questions of ethics in using archaeological material, but also makes it doubtful whether Lal's new interpretation is really borne out by the actual record and material of his excavations.

The VHP rejoinder admits that Lal does not mention the pillar-bases in his reports submitted to the Archaeological Survey in 1976–7 and 1979–80 but adds that he 'does mention the floor made of lime and kankars'. However, it deliberately leaves out a significant sentence of that report. The sentence reads thus: 'several later medieval brick-and-kankar lime floors have been met with, but the entire late period was devoid of any special interest'. In the context of its use by the ASI, the 'later medieval period' indicated the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If

remains of a structure of the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries are found outside the Masjid area, how do they prove the presence of a temple that was supposedly built in the eleventh century and destroyed in the early sixteenth century?

It is argued that the Masjid pillars were a continuation of the pillar-bases discovered in Trench IV of the Ayodhya excavation in 1977; but the excavated pillar-bases are not in alignment with the pillars set in the mosque, and the floor on which the brick pillar-bases stand is substantially lower than the floor of the mosque. Further, how do we account for the considerable distance between the mosque and the site of Trench IV? There does not seem to be any possibility of the stone pillars being appropriated by the mosque builders from any Ayodhya temple. Despite the Buddhist affinities of designs on the pillars incorporated into the mosque, it is significant that no brahmanical idols have been reported from Ayodhya in the two important catalogues of Uttar Pradesh (Chandra 1970; Joshi 1972). These catalogues do not mention any brahmanical deity found in Ayodhya dating between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries. The Faizabad Museum, which was merged with the State Museum, Lucknow, had one Visnu image, but its date and provenance are not known. The American Institute of Indian Studies, Varanasi, has 96 000 photographs of stone sculptures, but there are none from Ayodhya. The paucity of early medieval brahmanical or Buddhist images in Faizabad and the districts around it cannot be attributed to Muslim destruction. South Bhagalpur, including Sultanganj, has a large Muslim population and also numerous early medieval idols. The same is true of Gaya and Bihar Sharif, as also of a good part of Bangladesh. Hence the propaganda about the indiscriminate destruction of idols and temples by Muslim rulers needs to be examined in depth.

The mere presence of pillar-bases does not, moreover, make out a case for the presence of a temple. No stone pillars, architraves or roof material of the supposed temple were found in the debris of the trench where the brick pillar-bases stood. The VHP experts argue that this brick pillar-base 'temple' was demolished in 1528-9 and was replaced by the Masjid. This seems a baseless inference. Glazed Islamic ware pottery has never been used in Hindu temples, but pieces of this pottery occur in the trenches above the floors associated with the brick pillar-base structure and immediately below the general floor of the Baburi Masjid. This shows that the brick pillar-structure had already fallen down and gone out of use around the thirteenth century, and the site was inhabited by Muslims who also lived in other parts of Ayodhya, where glazed ware has been discovered through the excavations conducted by A.K. Narain. Finds of Islamic glazed ware together with lime and kankar floors in the excavations conducted by both A.K. Narain and B.B. Lal make it clear that the Muslims lived in Ayodhya from the thirteenth century onwards and needed a mosque for offering prayers.

The VHP experts argue that the brick pillar-bases in the trench south of the Baburi Masjid, the black basalt pillars used in the four arches of the mosque and also found in the graveyard, together with the door jamb, are integral parts of the one and the same structure. But variations in the style and the diameter of these pillars and, more importantly, the total lack of stratigraphic association between them completely rule out this possibility. These pillar-bases, pillars and the door jamb are

stratigraphically unassociated and are found at different places and in completely unrelated contexts. In 1989 the VHP enthusiasts dug a trench, 2.1 metres by 2.1 metres by 2.4 metres, for the purpose of the *shilanyas* ceremony [consecration ceremony for the construction of the Rama temple] just in front of the Baburi Masjid. But no antiquity with any religious association was discovered in the trenches dug by Lal nor in the 1989 digging.

Finally, there is nothing to show that the pillar-bases existing at a distance of about 17 metres to the south of the Baburi Masjid structure are in alignment with the pillars used in the Baburi Masjid. In fact no importance can be attached to the structure postulated on the strength of the pillar-bases. It could be a small verandah, which may have been used either as an animal shed, or just for living purposes. Such structures are found in that area even now.

In the summer of 1992 the champions of the temple theory claimed to have made 'new archaeological discoveries' while constructing a *chabutara*. These are illustrated in a lavishly produced pamphlet called *Ramajanma Bhumi: Ayodhya* published by K.S. Lal. Chance finds are of value for historians even though a site may not have been dug on scientific archaeological lines. But here the case is entirely different; disappointed by the results of explorations undertaken by the Uttar Pradesh archaeological director, R.C. Singh, and excavations by Professors A.K. Narain and B.B. Lal, the VHP protagonists deliberately dug up the controversial site in desperation. Since archaeological excavation requires academic and scientific rigour they feared that these would not serve their purpose. But how can we rely on antiquities supposed to have been discovered from a hotly disputed site where the minimum scientific conditions for excavations were not observed and where neither the critics of the temple theory nor the archaeologists of the central government were asked to be present at the time of actual digging? How can we trust a photographic illustration of the debris in which stone pieces were neatly arranged on a wooden plank in a pit to be photographed? How do we know the stratigraphical relationship of these pieces with the brick-pillared structure exposed by Lal or black stone pillars used in the Baburi Masjid?

Even if we condone the unpardonable act of violating the canons of field archaeology and take cognizance of the stone antiquities illustrated in the VHP pamphlet, we come nowhere near the imaginary temple. The antiquities constitute a curious assortment of stone objects typical of various places, and of periods ranging from the seventh to the sixteenth century. Some of them show Mughul influence. The objects are made of light greyish or light brownish stone which is in sharp contrast to the black basalt stone used in the pillars embedded in the Baburi Masjid. Further, the designs found on these stone objects do not show any continuity in Ayodhya. Most of these objects cited as evidence by the VHP clearly appear to have been brought from outside.

Two pieces of *amalaka* (the fruit of the Emblematic Myrobalan) are considered parts of the spire of the Ayodhya temple, but their authenticity cannot be verified for lack of an exact location (*locus*). Stone *amlakas* are neither typical of the temples in the plains of eastern Uttar Pradesh nor of those found anywhere else. In Uttar Pradesh they appear only in the stone temples of the hilly areas in the north, or

south of the Ganga plains. Their presence at Ayodhya and attribution to the eleventh or twelfth centuries is therefore extremely puzzling. Stone cornices, which the VHP also claim to have discovered, always belong to stone temples and not to brick temples. There is no indication of any plinth or foundation trench that might suggest a stone temple at the disputed site.

Among the 'new archaeological discoveries' the VHP found a *dashvatara* panel, but we are not given any idea of its exact provenance. The so-called panel is intriguing because it contains the figure of a woman, which has no place in a ten-god incarnation panel (as associated with Rama). One of the figures is identified as Parasurama, and it is argued that this figure was preceded by that of Rama Dasarathi, which was later removed. According to the texts as well as actual representations of the ten-god panel, Rama always follows Parasurama and never precedes him (Banerjee 1985: 390–1, 419). Thus, even the VHP's unverifiable 'new archaeological discoveries' attributed to Ayodhya do not prove the presence of a temple at the Baburi site.

THE ERECTION OF THE BABURI MASJID

There is nothing to show that a Rama temple was demolished and a mosque raised in its place. The presence of glazed ware together with lime and kankar floors in the trench south of the mosque and elsewhere in Ayodhya shows that the Muslims appeared in the Baburi site area in the thirteenth century. The mosque did not appear suddenly in the sixteenth century without any rhyme or reason. Reference to its construction is not found in the *Baburnama* (Memoirs of Babur). It only occurs in an appendix inserted by Mrs Beveridge, who translated Babur's autobiography from Turkish into English in 1921. She refers to an inscription according to which a mosque was built by Mir Baqi at the command of Babur in AH 935 (corresponding to the period 15 September 1528–5 September 1529). The identity of Mir Baqi is not known from any source, and the inscription does not refer to any temple whatsoever. Therefore the conjecture that a Rama temple was demolished is absolutely without any foundation (see Sharma *et al.* 1991: 12–15).

Mrs Beveridge was concerned with the portion of Babur's memoirs that dealt with India. A.R. Khan has pointed out that there is a gap in the account between 2 April–18 September 1528, mostly corresponding to AH 934. He suggests that if the temple existed, it may have been destroyed and the mosque built during the period of this gap. But according to the inscription cited by Mrs Beveridge the mosque was built in AH 935 (15 September 1528–5 September 1529). The gap in the *Baburnama* only omits three days that fall within AH 935 (15–18 September 1528), the year of the reported construction of the mosque. It is incredible to suppose that the mosque was built during only three days. The crucial issue is, however, not the building of the mosque but the destruction of the supposed Rama temple. Here Mrs Beveridge quotes a passage from the *Faizabad Gazetteer* written by Nevill in the first decade of the twentieth century. Nevill states that an ancient temple was destroyed and the mosque built. Without any basis whatsoever, Mrs Beveridge

adds in brackets after 'an ancient temple', '(marking the birthplace of Rama)'. It is thus Mrs Beveridge who calls the 'ancient temple' a Rama temple, although there is not the slightest evidence to support her inference.

Babur mentions Awadh (Oudh) but not Ayodhya as such. On the other hand, he describes Gwalior, and he speaks in rapturous terms of the architecture of both its secular and religious buildings. These include a mosque built by Iltutmish but all the other structures are Hindu. Babur speaks admiringly of idol houses, that is temples, of Gwalior including Chanderi. It is an irony that a lover of Hindu art and architecture should be branded as a destroyer of a Rama temple which, in any case, did not exist. It is therefore very clear that the Baburi mosque was not built by demolishing a temple of Rama at Ayodhya.

EPIGRAPHIC DATA

A Gahadavala inscription is quoted to support the presence of a Visnu temple at Ayodhya in the eleventh century, but its text does not give any indication of such a temple. This inscription states that the Gahadavala king Candradityadeva bathed at the Svargadvara *tirtha* on the confluence of the Sarayu and Ghaghra in Ayodhya and then worshipped Vasudeva (Sircar 1983: 276–7, text lines 19–22). There is nothing whatsoever to show that he worshipped the god in a temple. It is well known that the devotees worship gods at the ghats of the holy rivers; even now they throng at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna at Pryaga, stay there for a month and worship different gods while bathing, but these gods are not located in any temple. Hence the mere mention of the worship of Vasudeva at the Svargadvara *tirtha* does not mean there was a temple there. It seems that according to Hindu belief the place came to be known as Svargadvara *tirtha* or crossing because Rama departed for heaven from the Sarayu–Ghaghra confluence. Therefore the eleventh century record only tells us of the place which was associated with the death of Rama. There is no mention of any particular spot associated with his birth.

After the demolition of the mosque on 6 December 1992, the supporters of the temple claim to have discovered in the debris of the mosque a stone inscription which in their view shows the earlier presence of a Ramajanmabhumi temple. We have a published photograph of the partial facsimile of the inscription, which is undated (Malaiya 1993). On the basis of this unedited inscription, which has not been fully deciphered, A. M. Shastri speaks of a 'magnificent temple' of Visnu-Hari at the Baburi site at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries. Visnu-Hari is considered identical with Rama (Shastri 1992–3: 35–9). But Sita Ram Roy, an archaeologist and an epigraphist who deciphered and published a Buddhist Sanskrit text of the tenth century, has carefully examined all the available letters in the partial facsimile and has concluded that these Nagari letters are no earlier than the seventeenth century AD (Roy 1996: 113–23). The stone inscription is attributed to the Gahadavala king Candradeva who ruled in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but a comparison of its letters with those of a Candradeva

inscription of AD 1098 shows that its letters are far more developed. Any palaeographer who examines these letters on the basis of Buhler and Ojha will support Roy's findings (see Buhler 1959, Table VI; Ojha 1975, Plate XXVI). Further, the name Visnu-Hari does not occur in the *Visnusahasranama* (the thousand names of Visnu), a text of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, and it cannot stand for Rama. More importantly, the term *mandira* used in the inscription (Shastri 1999: 98–105) is not traceable in any Sanskrit text in the sense of temple until the eighteenth century. It means dwelling place in earlier texts. Therefore the *English–Sanskrit Dictionary* of Anundoram Borooah (1877) translates temple not as *mandira* but as *devakula*, *devalaya*, *devayatana*, etc., found in Sanskrit texts and inscriptions. Moreover, the *Ramacharitamana*s of Tulsidas refers neither to Ayodhya nor to its temple. The *Skanda Purana* quoted by Mitra Misra in the *Tirthaprakasa* of the *Viramitrodaya* (seventeenth century) also does not refer to any Rama temple or birthplace. Why and how this seventeenth-century stone inscription, claimed to have been discovered by the VHP experts, was thrust and concealed in the brick wall of a sixteenth-century mosque will remain a mystery. As far as I know, inscription finds of this type have not been reported in *Epigraphia Indica* and similar publications.

CONCLUSION

We have examined almost all types of pro-temple argument. Clearly there is no basis for the view that a temple existed exactly on the site where the Baburi Masjid was constructed. When confronted with solid historical and archaeological evidence the champions of the demolition of the mosque and the erection of a temple in its place call the presence of the temple on the pre-Baburi site a matter of faith. But the history of Hindu belief in the *tirthas*, from the third to the seventeenth centuries, shows that throughout this long period they never considered the existence of any temple on the Baburi site. However, even if the advocates of the Baburi vandalism continue to stick to the temple theory the best course for an archaeologist would be to dig most of the site, provisionally excluding the area where a temporary Rama temple has been forcibly put up.

NOTE

Explanatory comments in square brackets have been added by the editors.

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11 *Ayodhya, the print media and communalism*

NANDINI RAO AND C. RAMMANOHAR REDDY

INTRODUCTION

It is now nearly ten years since the Babri Masjid [mosque] was destroyed in Ayodhya. Many arrests were made after its demolition, but no one has been convicted for the vandalism. No Hindu temple has appeared where the mosque stood for 450 years, nor has the promise made by the government in December 1992 to rebuild the mosque been fulfilled. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political organization which mobilized people from the late 1980s onwards for the construction of a Hindu temple at the site of the Babri Masjid, now heads a multi-party government in India. Construction of the temple is not on the agenda of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government. Political analysts feel this is because the party realizes that it was being viewed as a single-issue party and that to come to power it had for the present to set aside the temple demand. The new strategy finally paid off first in March 1998 and then in September 1999 when, in alliance with a number of other smaller parties, a BJP-led government assumed office in New Delhi.

Indian society has not, however, put the Ayodhya dispute behind it. The BJP has not forsaken its temple project; it has only said that it is not on the agenda of the NDA government. The organizations which allied with the BJP during its campaign (especially the Vishwa Hindu Parishad or VHP) remain keen on the construction of a huge temple in honour of the Hindu god, Rama. In April 1998, many newspapers reported that the VHP was running workshops in the northern state of Rajasthan where stone cutters were building pillars for the proposed temple at Ayodhya.

The campaign was not just about building a Hindu temple at the site of a mosque. Ayodhya was at the centre of the campaign, but the movement was about a new Hindu nationalism and assertiveness. It was about Hindutva, a movement towards building an essentially Hindu society in India where people of all faiths could live, but only by respecting the wishes of the majority community. It was about building India on essentially majoritarian (Hindu) lines.¹ It was about denying one of the core principles that had guided the nation-building project since

Independence in 1947, the concept of secularism, of the state being equidistant from all religions and of people of all faiths living as equal citizens.

The campaign sought to build a homogenous Hindu nation by denying the pluralistic traditions in Indian society, by negating the Other (essentially Muslims). It asserted the need to correct perceived 'historical wrongs': the invasion by and subsequent assimilation during medieval times of central Asians who were mainly Muslims, and an ostensible 'appeasement' at present of the Muslim minority in India and alleged 'discrimination' against Hindus in 'their own' country.

Although archaeologists and historians were dragged or jumped into the dispute, it was clearly about a lot more than whether or not an ancient Hindu temple had been pulled down in the sixteenth century to make way for the Babri Masjid. The campaign was a movement to redefine Indian society and the Indian state, an explosive issue which did finally explode and whose after-effects are still being felt in India.

In a country where two-fifths of the population cannot read, the print media in India wields an enormous amount of influence. A corollary to and perhaps a reason for India being one of the few countries in the South that has not gone under military rule has been the vibrancy of its press. Some researchers have even attributed the absence of large-scale famine-related deaths in India to the vigilance of the press (Dreze and Sen 1990). Yet the stature of the Indian press suffered in its coverage of the Ayodhya dispute. The print media has by and large become tendentious and provocative. It created stereotypes and in the process contributed to an aggravation of the Hindu-Muslim divide in India. In its writing on religious sectarianism (or 'communalism') the print media failed in its social responsibilities during the high point of the Ayodhya controversy.

In this chapter we ask, how did India's free and vibrant press look at the dispute and the larger issues thrown up by the Hindutva movement? We show how the English press in India has reported on the various stages of the Ayodhya conflict over the past decade. While the media in general and the 'new' media in particular (television and video) fanned religious passions in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the press was also guilty of abandoning its professed creed of objective reporting. The chapter argues that the biases and slants built up during the Ayodhya dispute have become so much a part of the writing on communalism that stereotypes have become ingrained in the media.

We argue that the recent Indian experience with the print media reporting on Ayodhya shows that the concept of an 'independent' press must be limited by the boundaries within which the media function. As society changes, the media too reflect these changes and in turn often contribute to them. The media therefore cannot entirely stand outside the society in which it functions. This is true not only of Indian reporting on the Ayodhya conflict but also of Western coverage of Palestine, the Gulf War and Iraq. The focus in this chapter is on the English press, though references are also made to other studies that have looked at writing in the non-English press (referred to in India as the 'language press').

THE INDIAN PRESS AND THE HINDU–MUSLIM DIVIDE BEFORE 1947

The beginning of the power of the press in India can be traced to the stirrings of the struggle against colonialism. A number of leaders of the independence movement had their own journals,² while the freedom struggle itself threw up innumerable newspapers and magazines, both in English and the Indian languages (Sarkar 1983). By detailed reporting of the freedom struggle the press in many cases appeared to have fought alongside the anti-colonialists (Kulke and Rothermund 1990: 290). While the newspapers, barring the British-owned English dailies, played an important role in the freedom struggle, sections did take sides as fissures developed in Hindu–Muslim relations. As communal passions grew, the press was slowly polarized with the Hindi press becoming anti-Muslim while the Urdu papers became anti-Hindu. The English dailies also took openly partisan positions. The press may have been by and large united when it came to the fight against colonialism but it was increasingly divided on Hindu–Muslim relations. For instance, as far back as 1909, an associate of one of the early leaders of the freedom movement, Lala Lajpat Rai, wrote in the publication *Punjabee*: ‘The consciousness must arise in the mind of each Hindu that he is a Hindu, and not merely an Indian’ (Sarkar 1983: 75). Over the years, Hindu and Muslim extremists were quick to use the press to whip up passions (Mazumdar 1993). The dubious role of even the so-called nationalist press had its own effect on Hindu–Muslim relations:

Many nationalist newspapers functioned as full time nationalist and part-time communal organs. For example, the *Tribune* of Lahore had the widely accepted reputation of being a nationalist organ. But it also ... openly adopted a Hindu, communal attitude on communal riots, etc. This was also true of the Leader of Allahabad and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta. Even the *Hindustan Times* was not willing to disown the Hindu Mahasabha [a Hindu organization which aggressively called for the religious conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism] in spite of its association with Mahatma Gandhi.

(Chandra 1979: 271)

There were no doubt voices that were raised against the communal divide. In 1913, Ayodhya figured indirectly in an Urdu daily the, *Al-Hilal*, which made no secret of its political objective but took a bold line in matters social and religious. ‘There were riots in Ajodhya [Ayodhya] in 1913, arising out of the usual dispute over cow slaughter, and the Maulana boldly told the Musslmans that their insistence on cow slaughter was far from conducive to communal peace’ (Natarajan 1955: 249). Even in the late 1890s, there were papers and weeklies that went to great lengths to argue that Indian society was a composite culture where Hindu and Muslim practices were often interchanged. For instance, as a movement began in the last decade of the nineteenth century in what was then the Bombay Presidency, to make a major public event of a festival honouring the Hindu god,

Ganesh, it simultaneously agitated against Hindus participating in a Muslim religious ceremony, Muharram. The reformist paper *Sudharak* appears to have entered the fray with a comment in 1898 that Muharram was much more of a national festival than Ganesh (Sarkar 1983: 60). Later Gandhi, increasingly ploughing a lonely furrow, used first the columns of *Young India* and then the *Harijan* to plead for tolerance and understanding between the people of the two religions. By and large, however, as relations between Hindus and Muslims deteriorated on the road to the creation of two separate nations, India and Pakistan, the press began taking partisan positions.

THE AYODHYA ISSUE

While all Indians know of the Ayodhya dispute, a brief description would help non-Indians understand both the issue and the impact it has had on Indian society. On 6 December 1992 a 450-year-old mosque, the Babri Masjid, in the north Indian town of Ayodhya was destroyed by thousands of hooligans who called themselves *Kar sevaks* (loosely translated as 'public servants'). They were people who had volunteered to build a temple to Rama at the site. They had been mobilized over the years by a number of Hindu religious, social and political organizations and were essentially urban, mainly middle/lower-middle class men between the ages of twenty and forty. They had come from all over the country and gathered in Ayodhya, ostensibly for a peaceful meeting to demand that the site be handed over to them for the construction of a Hindu temple. Instead they razed the mosque to the ground.

Babur, the first Mughal emperor, built the Babri Masjid in the sixteenth century and Muslims had offered prayers at the mosque up until 1949. From the nineteenth century onwards the mosque became the subject of a dispute between groups of Hindus and Muslims. These Hindus believed that their god/king, Rama, was born in Ayodhya and that Babar built the Babri Masjid after destroying an ancient temple that marked Rama's birth and had existed at the site from time immemorial. The Muslims claimed that no such temple ever existed there. Sporadic disputes over the next fifty years, coinciding with the independence movement, the British policy of divide and rule and the movement for the creation of Pakistan, ended with the mosque being locked in 1949 and the matter taken to the courts.³

The controversy lay there for the next four decades until, in 1986, the central government decided to remove the locks on the Babri Masjid.⁴ The removal of the locks was a sign that an issue that had been dormant for decades was now being reactivated. The decision had far-reaching consequences and was to cost thousands of lives. It set the stage for one political party, the BJP, and a number of openly Hindu fundamentalist organizations,⁵ to campaign for a dismantling or destruction of the Babri Masjid and the construction of a huge temple at what the Hindus called the Ram Janmabhoomi (the birth place of Rama) on the site of the Babri Masjid. More ominously, they said at that time that the demand for the Babri Masjid site

was only the first. Mosques in at least two other towns in north India which were centres of Hindu pilgrimage, Mathura and Varanasi, were to follow.

Archaeology has been dragged to the centre of the controversy. The BJP and other Hindu organizations have put forward evidence that the mosque was built on the ruins of a temple. Muslim organizations that tried to contest the BJP claim brought out their own evidence to show that there had been no temple at the site of the Babri Masjid. Many independent archaeologists and historians have argued that the issue was political and social and not one that could be settled with resort to archaeological claims.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA

The following headlines reporting communal deaths indicate the scale of violence that periodically visited cities and towns all over the country in the late 1980s and the early 1990s as the Ayodhya dispute reached a flashpoint.

On 9 November 1989 the first steps were taken to build a temple at or near the Babri Masjid.

Violence in Indore takes 20 lives (*The Hindu*, 15 October 1989)

20 dead in Bihar violence (*The Hindu*, 25 October 1989)

Army called out in riot-hit Bhagalpur (*The Hindu*, 26 October 1989)

Curfew in Shimoga (*The Hindu*, 12 November 1989)

During September and October 1990 the *Rath yatra* (chariot journey) led by Mr. L.K. Advani, a senior leader of the BJP, passed through several states with Ayodhya as its final destination. Violence broke out in a number of towns during the *yatra*. On 30 October 1990 *Kar sevaks* (Hindu volunteers) assaulted the Babri Masjid. A few broke through and climbed the domes of the mosque.

Stabbing, arson in Karnataka (*The Hindu*, 25 October 1990)

36 more killed in temple violence (*Times of India*, 1 November 1990)

68 killed as violence spreads – 7 burnt alive in Gujarat (*Independent*, 3 November 1990)

Religious frenzy overwhelms Gujarat (*Times of India*, 16 December 1990)

On 6 December 1992 *Kar sevaks* who had gathered at Ayodhya attacked the mosque and razed it.

Violence spreads nationwide: 230 die (*The Hindu*, 8 December 1992)

Toll rises to 950 as violence continues (*The Hindu*, 12 December 1992)

Widespread arson in Bombay, toll up (*The Hindu*, 11 January 1993)

Fear still stalks Bombay areas (*The Hindu*, 16 January 1993)

MOBILIZATION OF COMMUNALISM THROUGH THE MASS MEDIA

Recent research exploring how the different media have been used by fundamentalist organizations in the cause of communalism and how the media have themselves simultaneously fuelled the growth of communalism in India reveals that television, videos and the press were all harnessed by the forces of fundamentalism (Farmer 1996).

In the late 1980s, when still under government control, Indian television broadcast a dramatization of the two major Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (the former being the story of Rama). Running for years, these two serials were hugely popular and, as they were shown around the same time as the Hindutva movement was gaining strength, they deliberately or otherwise aided the mobilization of communalism. Cinema did not play the same role as TV but the role of videos must not be underestimated. The Hindu fundamentalist organizations were to use what was then a relatively new medium to propagate the majoritarian view of Indian society. It is generally agreed that the videos produced by the VHP were not only effective in the mobilization of communal forces, they were also vituperative in their portrayal of Muslim Indians and aggressive in their description of Hindu revivalism. Audio and video cassettes were freely used to spread the message of Hindutva, so too were pamphlets and brochures. All of these proved to be very effective instruments.⁶

Particular mention must be made of the virulence of the cassettes, subsequently banned but circulated clandestinely, which contained songs and exhortations by many leading members of the Hindutva movement. Manuel has provided a graphic description of how this inexpensive, easily transportable and uncontrollable medium was used to whip up communal frenzy in north India. In one tape, called *Jai Shri Ram* (Glory to Lord Rama), a speaker shouts:

Hindus, wake up! They've looted you and you stayed silent; they sacked your temples and you stayed silent. What reward did you get for your forbearance? Your mothers and daughters went on being raped, your temples destroyed.

(Manuel 1996: 132–3)

The 'they' referred to in all these cassettes are the Muslims of India.

Audio and video cassettes were the most vituperative and explosive, but the press too had a very important role to play in spreading the message of Hindutva. The message of Hindutva spread the fastest in the smaller towns and cities of north India. Here local Hindu priests paid large sums to become stringers/part-time reporters for Hindi newspapers 'for the clout that comes with being a stringer for Hindi newspapers, thus gaining access to their audiences' (Farmer 1996: 110; cf.

Gupta and Sharma 1996: 4). It is no wonder that in many respects the Hindi press was directly responsible for the communal conflagrations that accompanied the campaign for the temple to Rama.

With the forces of communalism determined to use the press to their advantage, how did the press face up to the challenge? Not very well, unfortunately. Though there were exceptions, by and large the press, directly or indirectly, very quickly and very easily espoused the Hindutva cause.

DEMONIZATION OF INDIAN MUSLIMS AND EULOGIZATION OF THE KAR SEVAKS

Since so much of the Hindu nationalism of the late 1980s and early 1990s was defined in terms of negating the Other (that is, the Muslims) it was necessary for the Hindutva movement to portray the Muslims as being aggressive, unpatriotic, pampered by the state and unconcerned about other Indians. The slogans of the Hindu fundamentalist organizations were more often than not abusive and provocative. Gupta and Sharma (1996: 6) give one example: ‘One VHP pamphlet states that the Muslim family planning motto is, “*Hum paanch, humare pacchis*” (We are five – [a Muslim man is legally permitted four wives] – and we have twenty-five children)’.

Claims concerning the so-called appeasement of Muslims were at the core of the Hindutva movement. The press seems to have either openly endorsed these views or avoided investigating the validity of such portrayals. The ‘language’ press was most guilty in this respect but the English publications too were caught up in such misinformation (Gupta and Sharma 1990, 1996; Muralidharan 1990). If indeed there had been an appeasement of Muslims by the state the Muslim minority should have been economically and socially better off. Few newspapers bothered to ask whether this was so. There were exceptions to this neglect of the duty of the press, mainly among *The Hindu* group of publications, but these were just that, exceptions.⁷ Far from being pampered, Muslim Indians were poorer, owned less land, had a lower educational status, suffered from higher morbidity and lower life expectancy, experienced higher unemployment and were grossly under-represented in the government jobs and the public sector. Other studies showed that rather than being universally polygamous, Muslims were less polygamous than the Hindus!

Muslims were demonized in the press. Thus one report said, ‘The Muslims of Faizabad are gearing themselves [up] ... They promise bloodshed if there is any move to demolish the Babri Masjid’ (*Indian Express*, Delhi, 16 October 1990. Cited in Gupta and Sharma 1996: 6). In actual fact, the Muslims of Faizabad, far from preparing for a battle, were cowering in fear of the expected onslaught from militant Hindus (Mitra 1990). It was also very common for abusive comment to find its way into the press. Here are extracts from one such article with the very provocative title ‘The Worm Turns’, which was published a few days before the 1990 assault on the Babri Masjid:

The post-independence Hindu has been a docile and quiet man. History has shown how foreign invaders came, saw, and conquered while the 'cowardly' Hindu stood by watching his property and land and even his self-respect reduced to ashes. The morale of the Hindu has been low and a defeatist attitude is part of his mental make-up. While Muslims were permitted to have four wives, the Hindu in whose holy books even the Pandavas did not practice monogamy, was permitted to have only one ... one can ask the Muslims, who have enjoyed the benefits that often have been refused the majority community: are you willing to back down for once, in the name of a greater goal, a united and equal India?

(Lata Jagtiani, *Independent*, 29 October 1990)

What is all the more incredible is that the editor of the daily which published this provocative article participated three days later in a discussion on the media's reporting of the Babri Masjid controversy where he gave a clean chit to the press!⁸

Research shows that the media in general seems to have acquiesced in portraying the Muslims as aggressive and instigating the riots. Thus, in October–November 1989, when a thousand people were killed in the eastern town of Bhagalpur, 900 of the victims being Muslim, it was found that:

During the entire period of the Bhagalpur riots, there was an established bias against Muslims in almost all the newspapers. The reports pointed to the Muslims as instigating the riots; claimed that Hindus were tolerant, while Muslims were aggressive; and spotted a fictitious Pakistani hand in the disturbances. In fact, the myth of equal losses by both communities could have been easily shattered by even a cursory visit to the camps. But none of the reporters of the leading national dailies made any attempt to do so.

(Gupta and Sharma 1996: 5)

An official report subsequently said: 'Hordes of Hindus, the number approaching thousands, attacked the localities and villages of Muslim inhabitants, but nobody was arrested while in the process of attacking an area' (ibid.: 5).

As the press demonized the Muslims it simultaneously eulogized the *Kar sevaks*, the Hindu volunteers who were ready to destroy the mosque and build a temple at Ayodhya. They were portrayed in the media as brave young men who were ready to die in the larger cause of Hindutva. On 30 October 1990, as the *Kar sevaks* made their first assault on the Babri Masjid, one news report spoke about the hopes and worries of the families that they had left behind. Here are excerpts from a front-page article in the *Independent* (a more detailed analysis of the press coverage of events on that day is provided later):

Forty-six-year-old Abhay Waghmare, a peon with a private sector soap manufacturing company, resigned his job when he failed to get leave to participate in the Vishwa Hindu Parishad-led *kar seva* at Ayodhya. He left the city along with some other *Kar sevaks* on October 22 ...

... 17-year-old Narendra Joshi, a commerce student ... has been a member of the RSS since his childhood. His chartered accountant father and school teacher mother did not try to stop him [from going as a *Kar sevak* to Ayodhya] but instead encouraged him to his bit [sic] 'in the service of Lord Ram.'

(*Independent*, 1 November 1990)

If the images here are of selfless young men willing to sacrifice their jobs and education to go to war and fight for their country, the actual assault on the Babri Masjid was described in a number of reports as if it were a military operation performed with courage and daring. The following are a handful of extracts from a report by one editor of a paper, that covered more than half a page:

It was 12.02 in the afternoon. It was the high noon of Hindu militancy ...

The hijacking of the bus marked the turning point in the assault on the shrine. Greatly emboldened by the dare-devilry, more *Kar sevaks* streamed onto the streets ...

The maniacal strength of the fanatics was incredible. Before they were turfed out of the complex by CRPF *jawans* [paramilitary personnel] they had succeeded in wreaking considerable damage. True, the main structure stood firm. But the fact is that they had reached their target and successfully commenced demolition. It was a great symbolic victory.

(*Sunday Observer*, 4–10 November 1990)

Such reports were far removed from the reality. Thousands of young men from all over the country, determined to break the laws of the land, who on their way to Ayodhya had shouted abusive slogans against their fellow citizens (Muslims), whipped up communal passions which often broke out into fratricidal violence, battled with the police and half-succeeded in destroying an ancient mosque.

31 OCTOBER 1990 – THE WORST DAY IN THE HISTORY OF THE INDIAN PRESS

There were three crucial days on the road to the destruction of the Babri Masjid. On 9 November 1989, the Ram *shilanyas* (consecration) for the construction of a new temple for Rama was performed at Ayodhya. On 30 October 1990, *Kar sevaks* mobilized by Hindu organizations assaulted and broke through the security cordon around the Babri Masjid before being removed from the mosque. Finally, of course, on 6 December 1992 the Babri Masjid was razed to the ground by the *Kar sevaks*. On 9 November 1989 not many Indians realized the import of the *puja* at Ayodhya. The press reported the event and commented on it in a manner that was to foretell what was to come in later years⁹. On 6 December 1992 most of the Indian press was – at least temporarily – shocked by the brutality of the *Kar sevaks* at

Ayodhya. Most of the news reports of 7 December reflected this horror. The editions of 31 October 1990 and the following days were different.

In a mood of celebration never before seen in the Indian press, sanity and reason prevailed in only a few papers. Dailies big and small, English and 'language' newspapers, seemed to have joined in the communal frenzy and even egged on the *Kar sevaks* who temporarily climbed on top of the mosque and tried to break the domes. News reports spoke glowingly of the courage of the vandals and editorials pontificated on the significance of the moment in the history of India. Gupta and Sharma give a number of instances where the press exaggerated the number of Hindus who were killed in the violence at Ayodhya. They have very appropriately termed 31 October 'the worst day in the history of the print media in India' (Gupta and Sharma 1996: 15).

The Hindi press was particularly guilty of whipping up hysteria, fabricating lies and printing biased stories on 31 October and in the following week, all to glorify the *Kar sevaks*. The falsehoods published by the press were so many and so serious that the Press Council of India – a quasi-judicial watchdog – investigated the reporting and issued its own report indicting the media:

There is little doubt that some influential sections of the Hindi press in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were guilty of gross responsibility and impropriety, offending the canons of journalistic ethics in promoting mass hysteria on the basis of rumours and speculation, through exaggeration and distortion, all of this proclaimed under screaming, banner headlines ...

They were guilty, in a few of instances, ... [of] fabricating casualty figures (adding '1' before '15' to make '115' deaths), incitement of violence and spreading disaffection among members of the armed forces and police, engendering communal hatred.

(Resolution of the Press Council of India, quoted in *Frontline* 1991: 16)

The examples of exaggeration intended to make martyrs of the *Kar sevaks*, cited in the Press Council report, are frightening. *Swatantra Bharat* of Varanasi had as its 2 November headline: 'Rivers of blood flow through Ayodhya: 168 dead.' The daily *Aaj* gave different numbers for the 'martyred' dead of Ayodhya in different editions: the Varanasi (100 *Kar sevaks* killed), the Kanpur (200 killed), the Ranchi (400–500 dead and injured) and the Bareilly edition (500 killed).

Some editors tried to compete with each other in exaggerating the number of 'martyred' *Kar sevaks*. *Jansatta* declared on the first day that five *Kar sevaks* had died. However, it later increased the number to forty. Reading this, the Navakal editor was outraged, as his paper had put the number at only twenty. He lost no time in bringing out a second edition which, within half an hour, revised the number killed to 100' (Gupta and Sharma 1996: 15). Perhaps the most horrifying aspect of the coverage of the assault on the Babri Masjid on 30 October 1990 was that a number of journalists sympathetic to the cause either actively supported it or prevented the

police from doing their jobs. As one journalist who was in Ayodhya that day subsequently wrote:

Rajnath Singh, the resident editor of *Swatantra Bharat*, Lucknow, was among the few journalists present inside the mosque when it was being damaged. After it was over, the editor emerged with unconcealed glee and ran all the way down the lane screaming, 'The masjid has been broken down (sic) completely!' A Lucknow-based reporter of *Amar Ujala* was trying to prevent the cops – when they finally got down to some action – from chasing the *Kar sevaks* away with their lathis.

(Ramaseshan 1990: 2703)

With the media playing such a role there seems little doubt, as the writer of the above piece described it, that 'The press was directly responsible for causing most of the communal riots that erupted in Uttar Pradesh after the masjid was attacked' (ibid.: 2701).

The national English press, including the *Times of India*, the *Independent* and the *Sunday Observer* joined in the exercise of glorifying the *Kar sevaks*, their assault on the Babri Masjid and the 'sufferings' they were subjected to. While the government insisted that fifteen *Kar sevaks* died under police fire as they tried to enter the mosque (and not 100, 200 or 500), the VHP eventually came out with a list of fifty-nine names of *Kar sevaks* who it said had either died in the police shooting or were missing. An investigation by one magazine, *Frontline*, found that only eleven of the people on this list had died during the frenzy at Ayodhya – the others had either died from other causes, were still alive or were non-existent (*Frontline*, 11–24 May 1991).

7 DECEMBER 1992 – SHOCK IN THE MEDIA

Compared with the reporting in the media of the consecration for the construction of the new temple, and the first attempt to destroy the Babri Masjid in 1990, the press on 7 December 1992 seemed to reflect the nation's shock and horror at the demolition of the Babri Masjid. There were, on the whole, no eulogies to the *Kar sevaks*, nor were there editorials applauding the so-called 'revenge of history'. One analysis of the coverage of the demolition in five papers published from Bombay does, however, bring out the subtle and not-so-subtle differences in reporting and comment (Monteiro *et al.* 1995). At one end of the spectrum, the *Times of India* gave direct reporting and active identification of the perpetrators of the criminal act of destroying a 450-year-old building that had also been a place of worship. There was also an editorial on the front page that called for peace and the healing of wounds in the country. But as the authors of the study point out, the *Indian Express* reflected its earlier Hindutva slant even in its reporting and comment on the demolition. The editorial in this paper even referred to 'an aberration of history' (meaning the construction of the mosque in the sixteenth century) and

talked about the site 'where once a temple stood'. At the other extreme the rabidly anti-Muslim Marathi paper, *Navakal* (the paper whose editor had increased the body count in 1990 while competing with other dailies for painting the 'martyrdom' of the *Kar sevaks*) actually exulted about the destruction. 'Intoxicated with devotion to Ram, and driven beyond restraint by insult, youth bring about a revolution in Ayodhya! Ramrajya proclaimed! Saffron flags flew over Babri and youth danced intoxicatedly! All three domes of Babri Masjid destroyed! Walls broken!' (quoted in Monteiro *et al.* 1995: 18).

The one national English daily that was unequivocal in both its reporting and comment on the destruction of the mosque was *The Hindu*. The banner headline was explicit: 'Outrage in Ayodhya: Babri Masjid Destroyed'. The sub-headings too were clear: 'Sharma [the President of India] deploras vandalism'. The news report about the destruction was distinctly different from *The Hindu's* reports from 31 October–2 November 1990 which, like that in many other dailies of those days, veered towards glorification of the *Kar sevaks*. This time the news report from Ayodhya was pared of opinion. It simply listed the developments of the day that culminated in the razing of the mosque. The editorial in *The Hindu* on that day was explicit in its condemnation of the destruction, more forthright than the *Times of India* and without the soft-peddalling tone of the *Indian Express*. Titled 'Unforgivable' it said:

It was religious fanaticism at its ugliest in Ayodhya yesterday, with the country's worst fears coming true in the nightmarish spectacle of the brutal destruction of the 450-year-old Babri Masjid by thousands of frenzied *Kar sevaks* ... Sunday was a dark day for India. *The Hindu* shares the nation's deep sense of anguish at this painful moment ...

All the secular political forces must rally to the defence of the country and pull it back from the brink. A first step would be to rebuild the destroyed Babri Masjid as a gesture towards the minority community and as a reaffirmation of an unwavering commitment to the vision of a democratic India, free of any kind of bigotry.

(*The Hindu*, 7 December 1992)

Though the newspapers of 6 December 1992 were largely free of any attempt to condone the vandalism of the *Kar sevaks*, it was not long before they quickly returned to the tendentious reporting that had been cultivated since the late 1980s. For instance, within ten days of the destruction of the Babri Masjid, a former editor of the *Times of India* was writing about the Muslims needing to learn a 'lesson' from the demolition of the mosque (Gupta and Sharma 1996: 10–11).

EDITORS JOIN IN THE SLANT

The editorial columns were used liberally. As one editor himself wrote at the time, 'over the past decade some influential and well-known editors and analysts have gone over openly to the ideological-political camp of Hindutva' (*Sunday Observer*, 18 December 1992). The following examples illustrate how senior journalists saw which way the wind was blowing. On 16 December 1990, the editor of the *Times of India*, the largest circulation English daily in India, wrote:

As communal strife spreads like a prairie fire, it leaves in its wake not just death and destruction but far more significantly, the charred hopes of the nation. ... To serve their ends the votaries of Hindutva pervert the very sense and larger purpose of Hinduism. Where quintessential Hinduism regards the other as a manifestation of the divine, the Hindutva zealots see the other as an implacable enemy ... The most abject tragedy today is that as the massacre of Muslims becomes routinised, that vast section of the political class which swears by the secular thrust of the constitution is unable to rise above its self-serving pursuits.

But within two weeks, on the last day of the same year, he was writing in an evocative fashion of the same movement:

The Rath Yatra did not reach its destination, Ayodhya, but what it achieved before it was stopped in its tracks and since has no parallel in our history as a free nation: it injected an unprecedented religious-political fervour in millions of Indians. In the past, masses of people have exposed themselves to the risk of injury and even death ... to redress economic or social injustice ... (or) to struggle against the suspension of democratic rights.

On this occasion, however the stakes were altogether different. What mattered now was neither economic advancement nor social justice ... but quite simply and quite ominously an emotionally potent idea: an idea of another, more homogenous, more self-confident India.

(*Times of India*, 31 December 1990).

The change in views could be quite remarkable. In 1990 M.V. Kamath, who had been the editor of the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, wrote:

It is absolutely immaterial whether the Babri mosque was built on a site where a temple once existed ... It is even more immaterial whether the site where the masjid exists is the exact birth place of Sri Ram. Even presuming that it is historically correct, that land is forever polluted. A temple built on blood is built on sand.

(*Independent*, 24 December 1990.)

In 1998 this same columnist wrote:

The masjid was a standing insult to Hinduism. It was deliberately built in Ayodhya at a time when Hinduism was in its periodic decline, to tell Hindus who was in power ... Demolition of the masjid was an act of self-respect on the part of the Hindus.

(Times of India, January 1998)

THE COMMUNAL DIVIDE AFTER 1992: ALIENATION AND STEREOTYPES

Events after 6 December 1992 have not closed the Hindu–Muslim divide in India. A feeling of alienation and betrayal has grown among Muslims. There has been a ‘ghettoization’ of Muslim districts, as the minorities seek to protect themselves from communal attacks. Muslims have grown even more insular, feeling that no political organization or movement is prepared to take up their cause. This has not only served to strengthen the majoritarian propaganda about Indian Muslims wanting to stand outside the mainstream; it has also been a ripe environment for sowing the seeds of terrorism.

After a communal explosion in Bombay in January 1993 hundreds, mostly Muslims, were murdered in an orgy of violence and communal frenzy. This fratricide was a fall-out from the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The aggressiveness of a few militant Hindu organizations created a surcharged atmosphere that only needed a spark to explode. There was a complete breakdown of civil society in Bombay as specific areas and communities were targeted in India’s commercial capital. While no one has ever been convicted for those horrendous crimes (though a judicial commission of enquiry came out with a comprehensive report in 1998), there is little doubt in any one’s mind that what happened in Bombay was an organized assault on one community.¹⁰

The press played a disgraceful role in January 1993. The mouthpieces of specific political parties seemed to actively egg on the marauding hooligans of Bombay and yet no mention was made of this abetment in the press. The riots might have been the handiwork of aliens from outer space for all the light that the leading newspapers of the period shed on the factors behind them. No sooner had the violence in Bombay subsided than a series of bomb explosions in March 1993 rocked the city and killed hundreds. It would appear that the bombs that ripped across many areas of Bombay were the work of a small group of Muslims in what they considered ‘retaliation’ for the communal frenzy of January 1993. Such a connection is denied by the government for it throws the spotlight on its abject failure to prevent, control and punish the perpetrators of the violence of January 1993. The failure of the state to punish those guilty of the demolition of the Babri Masjid on 6 December 1992, the criminals behind the communal riots that subsequently swept across India and the marauders of January 1993 in Bombay has strengthened the hands of the fundamentalists among the minority Muslims and hardened the aggressiveness of the

fundamentalist Hindu organizations. Unfortunately, the press continues to fail in its duty to report honestly, provide a perspective and avoid fanning religious sectarianism.

CONCLUSION

It would seem that the print media by and large failed to report on Ayodhya and the Hindutva movement without falsehood, without bias and without manipulation. In some cases journalists actively participated in the Ayodhya campaign, in others reporters and editors were tacit supporters. In its writing, the press often used imagery suggesting power, revenge and glory, which only served to aggravate communal tensions. In short, the print media gave up any pretence of 'objectivity' in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Perhaps there are no such things as 'facts' in pristine purity. The facts that the print media conveyed during the Ayodhya campaign were, however, couched in the terms used by the ascendant ideology, the frames of reference were those being propagated by the Hindutva movement and the message that they were selling was the Hindutva project. The English papers were no less guilty, even if they did not go to the extremes of the Hindi press.

Yet there were a number of honourable exceptions. There were certain publications and individual journalists who fought tirelessly to do their job of disseminating information and dissecting propaganda. Many publications opened their pages to debates by historians and archaeologists on the merits of the Ayodhya case. Their reporters dutifully followed up on the claims and counter-claims and at times even exposed the lies for what they were. But these were only exceptions. The print media and the journalists were on the whole caught up in the heightened communal fervour of the time.

If there was a single reason for this, it was that in the late 1980s and early 1990s Indian society was thrown into a ferment which has still not subsided. Journalists, who are as much members of society as anyone else, grasped the new hopes and fresh dreams that were on offer without fully realizing (though many certainly knew) that these were demons in disguise. In the late 1980s, the political order was in disarray. The Congress Party, which had headed the central government for all but three years since 1947, was in decline. In its place a number of contending parties were jockeying for power but none was powerful enough to replace the Congress. On the economic front liberalization had begun, threatening to dismantle many of the earlier forms of social security even as it held out the promise of better jobs at higher salaries. On the social front, too, the old order was breaking down. The oppressed were beginning to organize themselves on caste lines and they received constitutional support when, in 1990, the government of the day increased 'reservation' for members of the lower castes. This outraged the middle/upper-middle classes, most of whose members came from the higher castes. Journalists largely belonged to the same higher castes and upper classes and they fully participated in the backlash against 'reservation' (see Muralidharan 1990). Indeed, the renewed thrust given to Ayodhya in 1990 in the political arena has been interpreted

as an effort by interested parties to shift the agenda away from the 'reservation' issue.

There were other processes that made the situation ripe for a fanning of communal passions. Separatism in Punjab had not yet begun to die down. And it had emerged in Assam to the east while the conflagration in Muslim-majority Kashmir began in late 1990. The Indian state seemed to be weak, wavering and indecisive. This was the situation in which Hindutva pushed the Ayodhya message with its appeal of a 'proud' India, a 'renewed' India, and an 'assertive' India which would draw its strength from an imagined past when the country was 'pure, homogenous and powerful'. This message appealed very strongly to the middle/upper-middle classes. Since the journalists too came from these social and economic groups, is it any surprise that they jumped on the Hindutva bandwagon and abandoned their social responsibility?

There was nothing unique about the response of the Indian journalists. Media people everywhere, in developed and developing countries, are vulnerable to powerful images of the kind that Hindutva sold.

The continuing growth of the print media in India, in spite of the quick spread of official TV and the incipient explosion of satellite transmission, also facilitated the thrusting forward of communal propaganda by groups of journalists. As newspapers increased their circulation, they grew in size and published more editions. In the process, tight control on content was simply not feasible. It was always possible for individual journalists to write one provocative piece that would cause more damage than could be repaired by a dozen honest reports.

In the years since the Babri Masjid was destroyed, there has been no wildfire communal violence of the kind witnessed between 1989 and 1993. But this does not mean that communal passions or religious bigotry have vanished. They have only become institutionalized.

In the print media too, now competing hard with the immediacy and appeal of innumerable TV channels, a partisan perspective on Hindu-Muslim relations, on Muslims and on Hindus has become almost codified. The prospect of the press acting as an agent for social change – for the better – cannot therefore look more gloomy than at present. In that sense it is perhaps no longer important whether or not a Hindu temple is built at Ayodhya.

NOTES

- 1 In the early 1980s, a group of people in the village of Meenakshipuram in south India, who were on the lowest rungs of the Hindu caste hierarchy, tried to break free of caste oppression by converting to Islam. Hindu organizations used this event to mobilize the Hindutva movement. The incident was used to whip up fears of a second 'invasion' by Muslims that would end with mass conversion from Hinduism to Islam.
- 2 *Young India* and the *Harijan*, two weeklies that were edited by Gandhi, are the most famous examples. Others include the *Kesri* and the *Mahratha*, published in Marathi, which were edited by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an early nationalist.
- 3 The mosque was padlocked after idols of Rama and other gods in the Hindu pantheon were found one day inside the building. Hindus claimed that this was a miracle while Muslims believed that

there was no miracle and that the idols were placed inside the mosque by intruders who wanted to give credence to the Hindu claim.

- 4 The government of the time took this decision to appease Hindu fundamentalists, to 'balance' its appeasement of Muslim fundamentalists by denying Muslim divorcees the right to maintenance from their former husbands.
- 5 The two best-known organizations were the VHP and the Bajrang Dal. All of them were formally or informally associated with the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), an openly Hindu organization.
- 6 Urvashi Butalia, 'Manufacturing myths', *Sunday Observer*, 7 November 1990; 'Ayodhya tape whips up communalism', *Sunday Observer*, 9 December 1990; Rashme Sehgal, 'One-sided view of Ayodhya', *Independent*, 8 December 1990.
- 7 Asha Krishna Kumar, 'Canards on Muslims', *Frontline*, 12 October 1991; V. Sridhar, 'Fiction and fact', *Frontline*, 12 October 1991; Sudhanshu Ranade, 'The Muslim question parts I and II,' *The Hindu*, 3 and 4 January 1992; C. Rammanohar Reddy 'Economic status of Muslims: What appeasement?' *Deccan Herald*, 22 January 1992.
- 8 'Media asked right queries on Ram temple issue', *Independent*, 1 November 1990. To be fair to *Independent* it must be said that it did also publish a comment that argued forcefully against the Hindutva perspective.
- 9 There was one paper, *Indian Express*, which even then was strident. Writing before the horrors of late 1990, late 1992 and early 1993, Sukumar Muralidharan reported: 'The *Indian Express*' editorial tone was little short of ghoulish: "the shilanyas of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is an important announcement", it crowed. "The *Hindus*", it chortled, "will not put up with reverse discrimination any longer" (Muralidharan 1990: 42).
- 10 The Srikrishna Commission Report (August 1998), tabled in the Maharashtra state assembly, holds Mr Bal Thackeray, chief of the Shiv Sena (an openly communal Hindu organization and currently in power in Maharashtra state – of which Bombay is the capital) as directly responsible for the riots.

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12 *The protection of Croatia's cultural heritage during war 1991–95*

BRANKA ŠULC

As a cultural crossroads, the country of Croatia is marked by four distinct geographic and cultural entities: the Alps, the Adriatic, the Pannonian lowlands and the Balkans. Having existed as a cultural crossroads for centuries Croatia has been uniting and assimilating apparently widely diverse cultural phenomena and, at the same time, radiating creative individuality. The cultural and historical diversity and wealth of the cultural heritage in Croatia is of exceptional importance in spite of the devastation suffered in the recent war, especially because of the continuity of the numerous cultures in this region and their links with other Central European and Mediterranean cultural circles.

During five years of armed aggression from 1991 to the middle of 1995, to which over a third of Croatia's territory was exposed, enormous damage and losses were inflicted on the country.

Croatia has been robbed of a part of its history by the destruction of its cultural inventory. It does not seem to matter whether the monuments are inscribed on the World Heritage List, as are Dubrovnik, Šibenik Cathedral, the churches of Zadar or the arboretum in Trsteno. Other damaged or destroyed monuments have a high local value, such as the Gothic church in the village in Voinor, the Baroque castle of Eltz in Vukovar; or a number of monuments dating from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, from Mediterranean hamlets to the Baroque and nineteenth-century towns of inland Croatia. This mass destruction of monuments ranges from the complete flattening of certain areas to the bombardment of cemeteries and the use of phosphorus bombs to make the soil infertile. Churches are fundamental cultural markers in the landscape; their destruction erases the sign of communities based on religious custom and other traditions. In the art inventory, European treasures of the highest stylistic class as well as the art of common folk are gone forever. The devastation of churches has deprived Croatian land of its Western code of civilization (Čorak 1993).

Numerous military operations against Croatia were led by the JNA, the so-called People's Army, the federal army and the Republic of Serbia, which was later transformed into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). These military operations were in fact aimed at destroying cultural property and

conquering territory using a 'scorched earth' strategy. The result was to inflict serious damage or even complete destruction on affected towns, churches and traditional architecture, especially villages, archaeological sites, entire landscapes, libraries, archives and museums. The destruction of cultural property has prevented the integration of these cultural values into Western civilization where they belong, and caused the physical disintegration of cultural values.

MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

There have been more than 100 wars and armed conflicts in different parts of the world since the adoption of The Hague Convention. In many of these wars there have been serious losses of important cultural property and physical evidence of a nation's local, regional and international heritage. Although The Hague Convention was the first to provide an international definition of the protection of cultural objects in the event of armed conflict, there are numerous cases where it has not been applied. Work has therefore begun on amending and changing the Convention. In 1992 a special working group of experts was set up within UNESCO, its members drawn from countries that signed The Hague Convention. Since 1995 experts from the Croatian Ministry of Culture have been active in this group.

In accordance with international conventions, the Republic of Croatia had, in a timely fashion, sought the assistance of UNESCO and other international bodies providing legal protection for cultural monuments. The republic submitted reports to appropriate bodies concerning the protection of its cultural heritage in line with the provisions of The Hague Convention and other relevant international conventions that Croatia had also recently joined. Since October 1991, it has been party to multi-lateral agreements between states such as the Convention on Measures to Ban and Prevent the Unlawful Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Assets and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage. The fact that the Republic of Croatia is subject to international law has not been interrupted, especially since the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia in 1990, a section of which deals with international relations as well as the signing and ratification of international agreements.

In August 1991 the Minister of Culture notified the relevant international organizations, first of all UNESCO, of the numerous violations of international conventions and recommendations. Croatia asked for help from expert UNESCO teams in order to observe the situation in Croatia and take measures for the urgent protection of cultural heritage in light of the anticipated conflict. The introductory article of The Hague Convention (ratified by former Yugoslavia in 1956) speaks of the protection, safekeeping and respect of cultural heritage; the parties to the treaty bind themselves to respect cultural heritage on their own territories, to refrain from use of that treasure, and to protect cultural sites and their immediate environs if they are endangered as a result of armed conflict. They also pledge to prohibit and prevent acts of theft, pillage or the unjust usurpation of cultural treasure, no matter

what forms it may take, as well as any act of vandalism directed against cultural treasure, and to refrain from any repressive measure against cultural heritage.

When armed conflict is not international, but breaks out within the territory of one of the signatories to the treaty (as has been the case in the war in Croatia), every party involved in the conflict is bound to adhere at least to those articles of The Hague Convention which refer to the respect of cultural heritage. From the very start of the war in Croatia the institutions for the protection of cultural monuments, museums, libraries and archives undertook all possible measures in order to prevent devastation, pillage and illicit export of stolen objects, while implementing the provisions of relevant international conventions. Putting planned measures for the protection of cultural heritage into effect was hindered by the specific circumstances of an undeclared and sudden war. The initiative and self-reliance of museum and archive staff was nevertheless successful in protecting and saving many of the cultural treasures entrusted to them. This was achieved in spite of the shortage of experts and insufficient funds. Their work had to be carried out urgently and often in the most difficult circumstances of bombardment.

During this period, Croatia was covered by a network of commissioners, who encouraged and assisted in the protection of particularly delicate parts of architectural monuments and the buildings housing museums and galleries. Special attention was paid to documentation, accompanied by the prompt recording of damages already done. Photographic and filmed evidence was gathered with the assistance of the daily papers, Croatian television, the staff of the museums in areas threatened by war and by numerous amateurs. The Museum Documentation Centre has also registered evidence on the destruction of museums and galleries since the beginning of the war. The Centre co-ordinates the Croatian museums network, and the protection of the movable cultural heritage in the museum sector in the event of armed conflict. It collates evidence on the destruction of other cultural heritage registered by the State Administration for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage. The Museum Documentation Centre also gives proof of persistent disregard for The Hague and other international conventions, and contempt for cultural heritage on the part of the aggressor.

The protection of cultural heritage has been specifically directed by the regulations and laws passed during the war by the government of Croatia and by the instructions and recommendations of the Ministry of Culture; they have together organized the protection of Croatia's cultural heritage. Systematic activities were undertaken to safeguard the buildings and institutions accommodating valuable historic treasures or collections. Due to the imminent danger of war, the most important museum treasures were selected, packed and evacuated to safer storage places. All museums and galleries were closed to the public at the beginning of the conflict, permanent displays were dismantled and possessions were safely stored or evacuated from the museums or towns. Museums and galleries were categorized and their material classified in order to make a selection for evacuation. Inventory books were stored in safe places; shelters ensuring adequate storage conditions were chosen and prepared. Movable cultural property was packed and evacuated from churches, museums and other places. The situation of cultural heritage in the

field was constantly surveyed, damage continuously recorded and documented and reports on war damage have been made. Conservators, restorers, museum experts, special units of the Croatian army and police, local authorities and enterprises all took part in this exercise.

The Conservation Institute, museums and archives made microfilms of the original inventory books and documentation which were, as a rule, stored at three different locations. The Museum Documentation Centre in Zagreb has created new databases, based on the reports of the museums and galleries of Croatia, to keep detailed central records of all activities and problems experienced by museums since July 1991. These databases record war damage to the museums and galleries. They index museum, gallery and church collections on the occupied territories, including microfilm of the inventory books. Exhibitions opened in time of war in the country and abroad are catalogued, as are reports by museums and galleries in Croatia on the measures taken for protection of their possessions, evacuation and the problems encountered in protection.

Together with the Institute for Restoration of Croatia, the Croatian State Archive, the National and University Library and others relevant institutions, in September 1991 the Museum Documentation Centre in Zagreb published the *Handbook on the Basics of the Protection of Museums, Archive and Library Holdings*. It contains practical instructions on the techniques of protecting architectural objects, the preventive protection of cultural treasures, standards for packing and transportation, the climatic conditions in storage shelters, and so on.

The implementation of all planned measures for the protection of the cultural heritage was somewhat difficult because we were faced with an unexpected and undeclared war. As the aggression against Croatia continued unabated, the Conservation Service began an organized evacuation of cultural treasures from the areas worst hit. Most evacuated objects came from churches and monasteries, many damaged or destroyed, followed by museum collections and, to a lesser extent, private collections. The transportation of these objects was mostly carried out under highly hazardous conditions, exposed to the risk of interception, looting or annihilation. Since the aggressor did not even spare ambulances, no respect for The Hague Convention emblem could be expected. Such convoys were therefore never announced or marked; transport was mostly made in secret and in some cases rerouted via neighbouring Hungary for safety reasons.

Buildings and premises for safe storage of evacuated objects were agreed with local authorities after consulting conservation experts. More than 6000 packages containing individual objects or groups of objects were evacuated. Technical measures such as installing wooden structures, panelling and sandbags were taken to protect immovable treasures. Other measures were also taken to protect individual sculptures, groups of sculptures in open spaces and public statues in towns. Priority was given to important architectural decoration and weak structural spots. These measures proved to be highly useful.

Transportable or highly valuable objects such as dishes, paintings and statues were evacuated from churches; the fixed inventory of items such as altars and organs had to be left behind, although efforts were made to protect them *in situ*. In

the continued aggression against Croatia many cultural monuments were destroyed or damaged in spite of the fact that most of them were marked by the sign of The Hague Convention and thus technically protected. In the case of the military action in Croatia a standard pattern of a painted shield, the official emblem of The Hague Convention, was displayed on many hundreds of monuments and institutions protected under national laws. The Serbian aggressor brutally attacked the historic city centre of Dubrovnik, entered on the World Heritage List and the list of World Heritage in Danger, in spite of UNESCO flags flown on the ancient walls of the city.

The objects that were evacuated from museums and churches are now being treated in restoration workshops in Croatia. With its pre-war level of art restoration expertise, Croatia would have needed over a century to renew all of its damaged and neglected paintings and sculptures, altars and other artefacts. A number of new workshops have therefore been opened in recent years. The most important are located in Ludbreg and Dubrovnik, while Osijek is also preparing such a facility. Recently, Zagreb's Academy of Fine Arts introduced a course on art restoration. The voluntary assistance offered by art restorers from other countries, especially from Germany (Bavaria), Austria, Hungary, Italy, France and Britain, has been accepted. At the beginning of the war in Croatia in 1991, the Bavarians transported the necessary equipment and supplies to Ludbreg, a town north of Zagreb. The municipality had accepted artwork evacuated from Pakrac and Lipik, and it used the Batthyany Palace to house them. Several years ago, the Bavarians became involved in the programme to renovate the Palace precisely because of the need to protect artwork evacuated from war-torn regions. Similarly, an exchange of art restorers between Bavaria and the Croatian Restoration Service was established. The Bavarian experts not only financially assisted this project, they also helped in the complete equipping of the restoration workshop in Ludbreg. The Bavarian experts are also willing to use their influence in the renewal of Eastern Slavonia's cultural heritage. Unfortunately, in spite of all efforts to increase the amount of restoration in a satisfactory manner, the situation is still very unfavorable. The imbalance between the number of artworks and monuments that need restoration and the number of professionals able to work on them will remain, as will other financial and logistical needs.

WAR DAMAGE

In spite of all preventive measures in the war waged against Croatia from the spring of 1991, the country's cultural heritage sustained almost immeasurable losses and heavy material damage. The war encompassed entire regions, while the fiercest fighting took place in eastern and central Croatia and in northern and southern Dalmatia.

In particular, deliberate destruction of cultural property in the former Yugoslavia has been on a horrendous scale. Expert assessments indicated that the

cultural damage and loss in the first seven months of the Yugoslav/Serb fighting in Croatia was of a different order of magnitude from that of the devastating 1979 Montenegro earthquake, and greater than in the four years of the Yugoslav campaign of the Second World War.

(Boylan 1994: 117–8)

During the aggression against Croatia the relevant cultural institutions were systematically collecting and publishing data on damage caused. Although the data are still not final, war damage has been assessed on 2271 protected cultural monuments, with the cost of the damage to these monuments being estimated at DM 407 million. Damage to movable monuments still cannot be assessed. Not even an approximation is possible, since over 3000 evacuated works of art are still in store-rooms, while many of them have been destroyed or plundered, thus rendering the assessment procedure considerably more difficult. The largest number – 683 damaged cultural monuments – are located in the area of Dubrovnik and Neretva County. Most are situated in Dubrovnik itself. In the territory of Osijek and Baranja County 356 have been affected, mostly in the city of Osijek. The 1537 damaged civilian buildings are mostly located within historic towns. Religious buildings, churches and monasteries, come second numerically. Recent analysis and previously recorded information about museums and galleries leads us to conclude that of the 204 museums, galleries and museum collections in Croatia, sixty-six of them suffered damage or were destroyed. At the same time forty-five museums and collections suffered damage to their holdings. These figures are not final because the war damage is still being assessed and the recording of war damage to the evacuated holdings has just begun.

The entire buildings and possessions of 481 Roman Catholic churches, several synagogues and several Orthodox churches were badly damaged or completely destroyed. Valuable inventories were looted from over 100 churches. The fate of many private and ecclesiastical collections also remains uncertain. The most drastic example of the destruction of cultural monuments, art objects and artefacts took place in Vukovar. After the occupation of the devastated city by the Yugoslav Army and paramilitary Serbian forces, the enemy removed portable cultural property from their shelters and museums in Vukovar to the museums and archives in Serbia.

Damage to protected and precious natural resources (such as the Trsteno arboretum and coastal woodlands, the Plitvice Lakes and the Kopački Moor Nature Reserve) has not only degraded these exceptional landscapes but also seriously endangered the ecological system.

ASSESSMENT OF WAR DAMAGE

The task of assessing war damage and ascertaining losses among the portable property from museums, churches, private collections and so on is a very extensive project. It has been organized at the government level and directed by the Ministry

of Culture's Administration for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, according to instructions on the implementation of the Law on Ascertaining War Damage in Croatia, which was passed in June 1993. This project encompasses both movable and fixed cultural heritage. Standardized forms and databases are being used in the processing of the data assembled on the destroyed, missing or stolen objects. In the case of the most valuable cultural monuments the file is provided with photographic proof of their condition before and after the war. The administration for the protection of cultural heritage in the Ministry of Culture developed the methodology for gathering information on the stolen, confiscated or missing objects of cultural heritage in the territories directly affected by war and issued guidelines on the subject.

Besides the articles of the Constitution and the legislation on the protection of cultural heritage and the assessment of war damage, the most comprehensive legislation by the Republic of Croatia on the protection of cultural property has been the Resolution on the Restoration of Croatian Cultural Heritage. This resolution was passed by the plenary session of the Croatian Parliament in 1992. It expresses adherence to the obligations of the international conventions on the protection of cultural heritage as a part of the international commitments of the Republic of Croatia. Much attention has been devoted to the collaboration between the Croatian Ministry of Culture with Customs officials and with the national office of Interpol. The extent of the pillage of cultural property led the international community to strengthen legislation concerning the protection of cultural property in times of armed conflict through the legislative regulation of this issue.

In order to inform professional circles, the Museum Documentation Centre continued to co-ordinate a few pilot projects dealing with the search for missing works of art from the Vukovar and Drniš museums through co-operation with the Art Loss Register in London. In 1995, co-operation began in the Getty Art History Information Programme's international project, The Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage through an International Documentation Standard, a programme that searches for stolen works of art. The archive set up to document war damage to museums has provided completely new experience concerning the protection of museum holdings in wartime conditions.

FACT-FINDING MISSIONS IN CROATIA

The very first international gathering of European and Croatian experts on the protection and restoration of the cultural heritage in Croatia destroyed in the war was held in Zagreb during 1991, the first year of the war in Croatia. The meeting arose from the initiative of the ARCH Foundation from Lugano, and was held under the auspices of the Croatian Ministry of Culture. It defined, among other things, five types of war damage relating to Croatian museums and galleries: damaged collections, collections evacuated by force or plundered museums in Croatia, collections made under wartime conditions, collections in the occupied territories of Croatia and the general threat from total damage in the future. It was then that

the initiative was put forward to send the first mission of Austrian museum experts to Croatia in order to study the damage to cultural monuments and museums. It was also decided to undertake emergency protection measures and to promote international awareness of the issue of protecting museums during armed conflict. That mission took place during January 1992 and was the first of a long line of international professional missions undertaken during and after the war in Croatia.

The project 'Vukovar – The restoration of cultural heritage' was initiated to provide a comprehensive study and accurate presentation of the problems pertaining to the implementation of The Hague Convention during the war in Croatia, with particular reference to the loss of movable cultural property from Vukovar's museums, churches and private collections. UNESCO has supported the project from 1995 to the present. The Museum Documentation Centre, Zagreb, in association with the Croatian Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO, organized a series of meetings on the subject with Dr Patrick Boylan, ICOM vice-president, on changing and amending The Hague Convention. The recommendations proposed by the Council of Europe in the report on the fact-finding mission (published in the seventh information report of the Council of Europe of 15 May 1995), provide the groundwork for effecting the return of Croatian cultural heritage requisitioned by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from Vukovar to the Republic of Croatia.

The experience drawn from these missions, especially that acquired by ICOM in Croatia at the end of 1993, might serve as a possible model for similar ICOM missions in other countries affected by armed conflict. This mission gave the impetus for a more intensive professional involvement of the museum community in solving a number of professional problems. It is precisely for this reason that UNESCO, ICOM and Council of Europe missions form the basis for a more effective internationalization of the problem, especially after the recent founding of the International Committee of Blue Shields.

The expert team of the European Community Monitoring Mission based in Zagreb also provided invaluable information about the state of cultural heritage during the war and especially so during the occupation of part of Croatia. This team holds a mandate from the Council of Europe to look into the state of the monuments in areas that were inaccessible to Croatian institutions until the summer of 1995. Better protection has been achieved for the cultural heritage of the region of eastern Croatia since it was reintegrated into the Republic in January 1998.

Recently, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have signed an Agreement on the Normalization of Relations, which also provides that the contracting parties shall conclude an agreement on cultural co-operation, including the maintenance and restoration of cultural heritage. The Croatian government will submit a formal request to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the return to their country of origin of all movable cultural property taken from Croatia during the war. At the same time, the Croatian government will require a complete register of the cultural heritage removed or stolen from Croatia, cultural property that is now located in Serbia and Montenegro.

Without such a register it would be extremely difficult to start any investigation into the circulation of missing works of art in the illegal market or to apply for the assistance of UNESCO or Interpol. Croatia's Ministry of Culture has therefore asked UNESCO's Secretariat of the Inter-governmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation to assist the relevant Croatian institutions in securing the return to Croatia of cultural objects removed or stolen during the war. Croatia has been a member of this Committee in the capacity of an observer since 1996.

In this respect the 1993 European Union Directive on the restitution of cultural property transferred illicitly from the territory of a member state represents a very significant advance. The new international treaty on stolen cultural property, developed by the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) and signed by eighty countries in June 1995 (among them Croatia), is a further step in the same direction. To a large extent it follows similar principles to the new EU Directive.

It is important to differentiate between the removal and larceny of cultural property from the museums, churches, libraries, and so on, where the aggressor exercised a programme of total devastation and removal of cultural heritage from Croatia as an essential part of their war plans.

In addition to the questions of adequacy and the implementation of the international rules on cultural property protection in armed conflict, the extent of the destruction and appropriation of cultural objects in recent armed conflicts gives rise to the question of the prosecution of those responsible.

(Seršić 1996: 38)

At the fourth ministerial conference organized by the Council of Europe in Helsinki, May 1996, European ministers responsible for cultural heritage launched an appeal to the member states of the Council of Europe and the contracting parties to the European Cultural Convention, particularly those of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, the European Union and UNESCO. They were asked to support full application of the principles of integrated cultural heritage conservation in rebuilding the territories ravaged by the war, with a view to safeguarding the historic memory, identity and environment of the people concerned. The ministers appealed to member states and contracting parties to take account of the cultural heritage as an expression of cultural diversity on which the process of peaceful normalization must be based. They offered the full support of European nations and international organizations in the work of revising and updating the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954).

Numerous open questions concerning the transfer of ownership following the break-up of Yugoslavia and the illicit trade carried out under cover of the recent war have been discussed in many expert debates. Contributions have been made by experts in international law in the context of international conventions, and by working groups from a Croatian government committee.

The problem of restitution, as well as of the illegal trade in cultural property during the war in Croatia, has been intensely scrutinized by numerous expert organizations and presented at several international meetings organized by UNESCO, ICOM, the Council of Europe, the ARCH Foundation and others. Experience drawn from the recent war in Croatia, particularly in implementing conventions concerning the protection of cultural heritage, should be used in amending conventions and in providing speedier and more efficient professional support to the rest of the world's cultural heritage in similar situations.

CONCLUSION

The tragic war has shown the need to take a new approach to the protection, restoration and preservation of cultural heritage in Croatia. This is one of the fundamental guidelines of the cultural policy of the Croatian Ministry of Culture in the preservation of cultural assets: 'The reconstruction of the heritage is an input of the present into the past: a necessary intervention conditioned by a violent interruption of historic continuity' (Maroevič 1996: 5). We need to believe that the new approach to the world's endangered heritage will indeed be more efficient than the one used in the case of the war in Croatia.

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13 *Challenges and dilemmas facing the reconstruction of war-damaged cultural heritage: the case study of Počitelj, Bosnia-Herzegovina*

SULTAN BARAKAT, CRAIG WILSON, VJEKOSLAVA SANKOVIČ SIMČIĆ AND MARIJA KOJAKOVIĆ

INTRODUCTION

The conflict in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s brought to international attention the tragedy of intolerance and annihilation in civil war. The absolute form of aggression saw the targeting and destruction of symbols of religious and cultural identity, despite their protection under The Hague Convention of 1954 and the Blue Shield programme.

The bombardment suffered by the walled city of Dubrovnik resulted in universal condemnation and subsequent programmes of repair and reconstruction, aided by its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage City. In Mostar the bitter divisions between Croats and Muslims saw ten months of intense fighting which left the city ruined, with its infrastructure in collapse. Between 1994 and 1996 the European Union spent over \$200 million undertaking its physical reconstruction. Among these vital demands for funding, resources had to be found to sympathetically reconstruct the Stari Grad and Stari Most bridge, recognizing the inherent cultural significance of this area and reintegrating it into the functioning matrix of the city.

This investment in physical reconstruction and socio-religious revitalization is required throughout the former Yugoslavia beyond the cities, where there exists an exceptional diversity of cultural and architectural heritage encompassing both east and west, both Ottoman and Christian. Endangered and damaged through military aggression during the war and compounded by neglect before and since, abandonment and continued acts of destruction and looting emphasize the importance of prompt action.

Annex 8 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, signed in December 1995, defines the Agreement on the Commission to Preserve National Monuments, which demands the protection and preservation of all elements of cultural heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the success of the Agreement is intrinsic to any reconstruction programme, the challenges presented are on such a vast scale as to be beyond the sole means of governments and domestic non-governmental organizations.

POČITELJ: BACKGROUND TO THE REVITALIZATION STUDY

In 1996 the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit at the University of York undertook the key study of 'The Revitalization of Počitelj', sponsored by the World Monument Fund and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, following successful nomination for the WMF's World Monument Watch 100 Most Endangered Sites 1996 programme. The study brought to international attention a severely damaged historic settlement with outstanding architectural features and assessed its potential for culturally-based physical and social reconstruction. This culminated in Počitelj being placed on the list of priorities of the Bosnian Federation Government for the 1998 Donors Conference which convened in Brussels.

The project has addressed the inherent issues of the political and social context and undertaken a detailed survey of the settlement, including damage assessment and potential reuse of existing fabric. It has located and assessed the condition of the infrastructure and services, and developed contacts with the displaced community, representatives of the local authority in Čapljina and co-ordinators of the Dayton Peace Agreement in Mostar.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF POČITELJ

The value of Počitelj as a revitalization study is based on its distinctive historical background as a settlement that developed through its strategic location and recognition as an important mercantile centre. These were responsible for the Oriental characteristics of its architecture, layout and delineation of urban hierarchy. With the earliest records of settlement dating from 1383, evidence of existence since Roman times is open to further analysis.

The dramatic settlement owes its unique topography to its situation on a bend in the River Neretva, reaching high up into the amphitheatre-like hillside. Developed as a defensive Croat stronghold, Počitelj became a frontier of Islam following the Ottoman conquest in 1471, guarding the river-crossing and travel route between Dubrovnik and Split and the hinterland of Bosnia. Ottoman rule fractured the population. The many who converted to Islam reaped a privileged existence while those that did not were held in serfdom and bondage. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the important monumental and public buildings of Islamic society were constructed, most notably the mosque, the *mekteb* (elementary religious school), the *medresa* (secondary theological school), the *imaret* (charitable public kitchen), the *hamam* (bathhouse) and the *khan* (inn).

The clear delineation of quarters in the *casaba*, the typical form of Islamic settlement, was formed with the *Čaršija* (business area) containing the main public buildings, most notably the elegant mosque, to the fore, and the residential quarter extending up the hillside behind. The fortress, dominant to the north, was built in stages between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. The fortifications wind in a crescent to meet the Sahat-Cula clock tower to the south, thus enclosing the

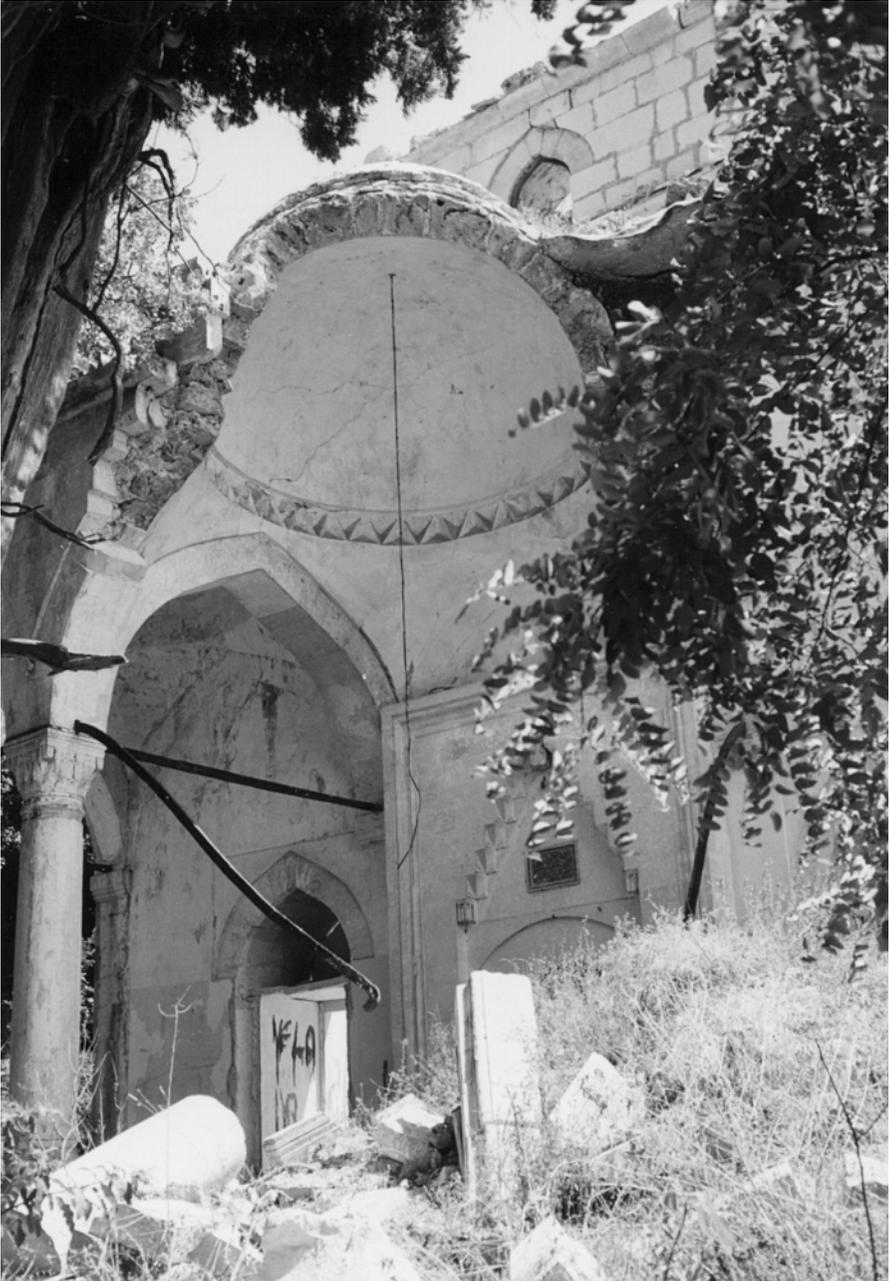


Plate 13.1 The mosque at Počitelj; partially collapsed portico with debris in foreground



Plate 13.2 The mosque at Počitelj: remains of the drum, with collapsed cupola

settlement. Of modest scale, the rubble stone houses of Počitelj were constructed mostly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, expressing both Mediterranean and Oriental characteristics and details.

The gradual but incessant depopulation that followed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1873 ensured the survival of Počitelj's unique urban and architectural agglomeration, largely in its original arrangement and layout. After a century of decline, Počitelj was revived with its architectural features restored and economy developed through the widespread influx of tourism.

THE EFFECTS OF THE BOSNIAN WAR

In the Bosnian conflict of the 1990s, Počitelj avoided the worst damages of open warfare only to be subsequently depopulated and ransacked by militia who erected symbols of Christianity, attacking and partially destroying the buildings of Islam. With the departure of its former permanent residents (mostly Muslim, with Serb and Croat minorities within the historic area) the population of Počitelj is now made up of Bosnian Croats displaced from Kakanj in Central Bosnia. These refugees have lived in impoverished conditions in the looted dwellings or under temporary shelter, physically isolated from Čapljina and dependent on aid. The settlement is in social and economic collapse.

Of its historic buildings, the mosque suffered the most severe damage resulting in serious structural stress. The collapse of the minaret and dome has placed the building in danger of further deterioration and substantial collapse (Plates 13.1 and 13.2).

Elsewhere, the Gavran Kapetan's House, formerly the colony of artists, was extensively damaged and the wooden structure of the main building partially collapsed. The disused Hamam has become extensively overgrown with structurally damaging vegetation. Containing some of the oldest intact fabric in Počitelj, neglect of the rubble masonry fortress has resulted in fresh loss of material threatening the integrity of this historic monument.

Of the formerly inhabited properties, virtually all have been ransacked and looted, suffering fire damage as well as the destruction of fabric and loss of services. Greatest loss has been to the wooden divanhanas with their rotted timbers, as they have partially collapsed. Use of existing fabric as building material elsewhere has left only limited provision for the most basic shelter. Since the war, neglect, exposure of fabric and extensive vegetation growth have contributed to Počitelj's worsening condition.

Many of the displaced persons from Kakanj and former inhabitants of Počitelj are at present located in temporary accommodation elsewhere in Bosnia and beyond. Despite their desire to return to their former homes once security can be guaranteed, full repopulation by the original inhabitants is unlikely. This will cause a change in the demographic structure throughout the region. The need to settle displaced persons, however, opens the way to create tolerant settlements where reintegration of communities of mixed religious backgrounds may be achieved, acting as catalysts for peaceful co-existence.

DILEMMAS OF PEACE BUILDING THROUGH COMMITMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The methodology for the successful revitalization of settlements, symbolized by Počitelj, requires physical and social reconstruction to be empathetic and demonstrative of the peace-building process between the various religious communities living in close proximity to each other, both within the settlement and beyond throughout the region.

The complexity of reconstruction projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina requires a strengthened structure and force to stabilize the Dayton Agreement. Furthermore, complete local and national government support and co-operation with redeveloped channels of communication and representation are necessary. Ensuring the commitment of the displaced former inhabitants and current community is integral to realizing the project's key objectives.

To successfully implement a strategy of reconstruction requires identification and interpretation of the dilemmas to be faced. These are set out under the next ten sub-headings.

Humanitarian needs versus protection of cultural heritage

Although often viewed as polarized agendas, linking humanitarian needs with the protection of cultural heritage can become an asset in the reconstruction process,

creating joint stimuli which utilize domestic resources, expertise and knowledge of the environment.

Focusing on cultural heritage when there are food shortages or major population displacement will create tension and anger within the communities, losing their support and hindering long-term objectives. However, the local community can become a resource in the rebuilding of historic Počitelj, creating training opportunities, stimulating the economy and allowing for the development of skills, domestic co-ordination and inter-dependency.

Moral dilemmas – do no harm!

The sheer scale of damage and pressure on resources in Bosnia-Herzegovina emphasizes the need to create a programme based on prioritized issues of cultural significance, viability and secondary impact. Reconstructing a house recreates a home; rebuilding a mosque or a church, however, for example in Mostar, is to rebuild a community, repairing the psychological as well as the physical damage. Post-war cultural reconstruction is, however, rarely feasible as a neutral programme, free from manipulation and religious division. Co-operation with domestic authorities and businesses, giving a level of legitimacy to their position, is often necessary in order to secure the objectives.

Archaeology has become a key issue in this process. In Počitelj, there is an agenda to undertake excavation to define the Christian origins of the settlement and thus prevent full reconstruction of the mosque and return of the Muslim population. The belief that the mosque was built on the site of a church was an important factor in its destruction.

Where to start and when?

The strategy of reconstruction requires assessment of whether it is feasible to implement any initiatives during conflict and tension or whether to await a peaceful conclusion. To remain inactive during ongoing tension may result in a small problem being exacerbated, although this approach avoids the possibility of secondary reconstruction where a cease-fire proves to be temporary.

Preliminary actions feasible during conflict include recording, salvage of valuable material, stabilization and emergency repair. Furthermore, early interventions may create opportunities for peace through stimulating viable alternatives to the existing situation with employment opportunities, thus helping socio-economic recovery and limiting the extent and sphere of damage.

It is essential to formulate a project and conduct personnel risk management analysis before entering the field, where actors have to operate in substantial periods of static conflict, of a no-war, no-peace situation (negative peace).

Rapid needs assessment versus accurate surveys

Rapid needs assessment, undertaken at the preliminary survey of Počitelj, permits a prompt understanding of the logistical requirements and allows the mobilization

of all available applicable resources. This provides for a wider scope of analysis, both geographically and categorically, delivering a viable record of the overall condition of the area, from which to forecast demands on resources and plan staged interventions.

Although it is essential to carry out a comprehensive and accurate measured survey of the structure to implement full reconstruction, one must first ascertain its viability in the current environment and assess whether or not the expertise, equipment and legal protection is accessible and enforceable.

Consolidation and repair versus restoration and reconstruction

With limited resources and equipment, consolidation and repair of damaged fabric is more feasible at the initial stages of reconstruction, allowing for reversible interventions and swift return to functional activity. Implementing a prompt rebuild programme may result in misuse of valuable resources and inappropriate damaging interventions.

Rebuilding presents the ideal scenario; however, to achieve this places greater reliance on external and domestic material, labour and technological resources and the general military and political climate. Of course, where feasible, it provides a greater guarantee of complete reconstruction, whereas implementation of a consolidation programme, as observed in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, may result in the project losing its prioritized status, hindering support for further works.

Maintaining standards versus a speedy response

To carry out a rapid reconstruction, with insufficient or inaccurate collation of data regarding damage assessment, building techniques, material source and usage threatens the fabric with unsympathetic and irreversible interventions through insufficient supervision and planning. To locate all available data, existing records, local experts and skilled labour (taking into account population displacement in Bosnia-Herzegovina) takes time.

Can one justify any delay of intervention when the function of the property is, for example, a school or a hospital, a church or a mosque? With such buildings their function takes priority over aesthetic argument regarding integrity of fabric. Pressure for reconstruction presents challenges to professional reputations based on the standards that are set for any work to be undertaken.

Relocation versus repair and reconstruction on site

More specialist aspects of the reconstruction process may require fabric removal for repair, crossing international borders, utilizing donor agencies and raising awareness of the endangered heritage. However, site removal raises issues regarding legal status and the potential for further damage, most notably to fractured masonry during the removal process, in transit or indeed the potential for theft.

What are the on-site conditions? In Počitelj, with the probable presence of

minefields and booby-traps, issues regarding safety, accessibility and space utilization for ancillary properties are paramount. Once secured, on-site reconstruction, with a more dynamic and compact decision and implementation strategy, is of exceptional visual and symbolic value in the healing process of the community, giving education in the methods of reconstruction and renewing bonds between the community and their heritage.

Participation versus top-down decision making

For external actors it is always desirable to retain a level of neutrality and independence where there is a danger of being manipulated or compromised. However, operating independently of domestic support raises the possibility of inaccurate analysis, unsympathetic representation and alienation from the community. Positive participation may provide for peace-building by external liaison, thus alleviating localized tension through joint vested involvement and commitment to the reconstruction process and supporting local initiatives, organizations, agencies and companies.

Although the integrated approach carries with it bureaucracy, political obstinacy, agenda hijacking and stagnation, it provides the appropriate framework to transfer co-ordination to the local level. Nevertheless, using a framework based around top-down decision making certainly allows for swifter implementation of initiatives and clarifies the structure of organization and its responsibilities.

Special organization versus existing organizations

In regional conflict, local authorities and representatives can suddenly be required to adopt national status with neither the infrastructure or resource capability to do so. To operate separately, setting up an independent body to undertake logistical and planning activities, may lead to duplicate organizations competing for official recognition, diluting resources and causing confusion among other agencies and donors. Although pre-war domestic organizations do not necessarily possess experience of post-conflict operations, they are invariably familiar with the environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with knowledge of established construction practices, techniques and traditions, and have the know-how to co-ordinate labour forces and locate materials and equipment, if available.

Bearing in mind possible political manipulation, there are long-term benefits in supporting revival of the existing organizations. This encourages them to increase their capacity to meet their challenges, introducing, where feasible, external specialist support to assess logistical requirements, activate resource utilization and implement programmes of reconstruction.

Public versus private investment

The scale of the damage suffered during the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina places reconstruction beyond the resources of solely public bodies, thus requiring partnerships with the private sector. The limitations of the public authorities, struggling to

reactivate vital infrastructure, have highlighted increased private sector commercial activity, allied to privatization of many state properties, as a potential option in rescuing endangered heritage, stimulating the economy and alleviating pressure on public resources. In some cases this provides the only feasible option. It also, however, raises issues of integrity through unsuitable reconstruction, conversions and changes of use and corruption. Although implementing public-sponsored reconstruction provides greater background support, and the potential for a more sympathetic, less exploitative programme, the rigid institutional structure would challenge its cost-effectiveness over the more efficient privatized operators.

Following the assessment of the dilemmas and estimation of the potential risks and benefits, there is a need to ascertain clearly the level and nature of external involvement and define the remit for implementation. The options raise moral and logistical challenges, focusing on both the social and physical stages of reconstruction. The value of analysis is to realize an optimum level of intervention that balances the needs of both communities to end their transient status, and yet provides practical and feasible methods for the revitalization team in the existing state of political uncertainty and economic disability.

CHALLENGES FACED IN REVITALIZATION: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It should first be recognized and accepted that to attempt to return Počitelj to its pre-war state is both unrealistic and undesirable in the current political and social environment. However, the concept of the reconstruction project should involve regaining the intrinsic facets of this period, thus providing the foundation for the settlement to be revived and to evolve with a sense of continuity.

The stagnation in implementing that part of the Dayton Peace Agreement regarding the return of the displaced community emphasizes the need to define the conditions for their repopulation and provide for extended settlement by the existing occupants, seeking their co-operation and indeed involvement in the recreation of permanent community life in Počitelj.

For those who return, the infrastructure must be in place to implement an integrated economic recovery programme with the provision of guidelines and expert advice and assistance regarding the reconstruction of damaged properties through combined commitment from both the external support organizations and the two communities.

What action should be undertaken? Matrix analysis

To assess the options for intervention within the framework outlined above, a matrix analysis of the situation was undertaken. Nine alternative solutions were identified (see Figure 13.1). It is clear that accepting the existing situation provides a level of permanence to the current community without alleviating the condition of the displaced community of Počitelj (option 1). Arguably the most practical, this would compromise the impartiality of the Revitalization Team, contravene

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|---|--|---|
| 7. Restore neutral, social and economic and physical infrastructure i.e. focus on catering, industry and artists' colony. | 8. Start a rebuilding fund and allow it to grow. Help people to rebuild their lives ready to return. | 9. Rebuild Muslim settlement with ownership rights and security of residents to return.
<i>Extreme idealistic scenario</i> |
| 4. Help the current Croat occupants out. Start further back in the chain of events. | 5. Accommodate both communities in existing settlement using dry properties.
<i>Bring together all possible options</i> | 6. Work with the original population at their current place of displacement. |
| 1. Work with only the current Croat occupants. Or do nothing.
<i>Extreme realistic scenario</i> | 2. Secure and protect ruins of historic monuments but do nothing else. | 3. Restore the infrastructure and secure the historic monuments. |

Figure 13.1 Počitelj: matrix analysis of options for action

the Dayton Agreement, limit funds and prevent any sympathetic reconstruction. To stabilize the monuments without restoration or restore infrastructure and secure monuments (options 2 and 3) represents essential action without involving the humanitarian agenda, limiting further decay and paving the way for a phased reconstruction programme.

Engaging in shuttle diplomacy with the authorities in Kakanj may realize the safe return of the currently occupying Bosnian-Croat community (option 4), while working with the displaced community of Počitelj would alleviate their plight and where necessary provide more permanent accommodation (option 6). Combining both options to provide an exchange of communities and establishment of safe settlements could act as a catalyst for other displaced communities in the region.

The ongoing political situation and the social and physical effects of the bitter war limit the retrieval of the pre-war environment (option 9). Recreation of the neutral elements of the infrastructure, avoiding the symbolic Ottoman architecture, would provide social and economic impetus supplied through the revival of facilities (option 7). Alternatively, by negating physical intervention, the focus could be on securing finance for strategic planning of the work through a rebuilding fund to raise international awareness and support (option 8).

To accept the long-term and indeed permanent residence of the current refugees and create two communities in the settlement provides a compromise that may be unacceptable to both in theory yet present the option most feasible to realize settled co-existence (option 5). The need physically to reconstruct the settlement and reactivate the agricultural land, thus relieving aid dependency, would achieve

common objectives thus breaking down the divisions between the pre- and post-war communities.

The aim of the project for the revitalization of Počitelj may thus be assessed in four stages:

- 1 Return the displaced community and support the existing community
- 2 Secure and consolidate damaged historic fabric
- 3 Upgrade and repair physical infrastructures
- 4 Implement revitalization programme to secure long-term economic viability of Počitelj.

Requirements for implementation

To validate any plan requires the commitment of three players, namely the displaced community, the occupying Bosnian-Croat community and the local authority based in Čapljina. For the displaced residents and property owners, there are the potential economic benefits of investing in the community and gaining shares based on the ascertained value of their property through the formation of a land trust. Furthermore, this provides them with the option to delay return without losing ownership. The current community is virtually without any legal recourse. To give them approved accommodation would realize legal status until their situation can be resolved.

The local authority is faced with pressure from the federation government, Dayton Agreement representatives and the current community to reactivate the settlement's infrastructure including schools, water and electricity, agriculture and irrigation. The revitalization team can propose logistical support in exchange for project approval and assurances of security for the returning displaced community. Furthermore, the team could propose a joint archaeological dig, using independent specialists, undertaken concurrently to the project work.

Joint initiatives should be activated, placing the impetus to rebuild on the communities with necessary expert support and security provided. To return the displaced population without alleviating the current economic condition is only a partial solution. The self-sustainability that comes from an active economy is required to realize the revitalization of the social community.

The Waterline Project was put forward as the best solution to these objectives. The project provides a flexible framework of phased intervention to secure and repair the monuments, reconstruct and upgrade the infrastructure, stimulate economic growth and rehabilitate the damaged properties. The project is to be achieved with the formation of The Počitelj Land Trust, operating as an NGO, and co-ordinated with the returning owners. Leased accommodation will be provided for the existing post-war occupants. The terms of the project are set out in the following section.

THE WATERLINE PROJECT: A PROPOSAL FOR RECONSTRUCTION

To ensure that the integrity of the settlement is not compromised, the Trust shall control and oversee all reconstruction work, providing conservation guidelines, planning advice and logistical support. The need to secure the endangered derelict houses, protect the interests of the existing community and provide stability for Počitelj's economic and social future will be achieved with the purchase and reconstruction by the Trust of properties located above the current water supply level, known as the 'dry' area. Minimizing interference with the process of returning Počitelj's displaced community, the reconstructed 'dry' properties shall then be leased to the current community from the Trust which shall, after a period of time, convert to a housing co-operative. The physical reconstruction shall be integrated with both communities playing an active role in the process of planning, management and manual labour.

Strategy for action

The revitalization team shall select external and local experts and contributors to implement and manage the required stages of the Waterline Project.

DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES AND TRUST BUILDING

The team shall obtain sanction for the project from the Commune of Čapljina and the Bosnian Federation Government, who shall be requested to finance the reconstruction of the infrastructure and services as a prerequisite. Agreement shall be reached with both communities for implementation and commitment to participation, identifying properties and their owners.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AND CONSOLIDATION OF MONUMENTS

Stabilization and structural support of the mosque shall be prioritized with the other monuments assessed and necessary consolidation measures undertaken. To prevent looting, damaged fabric shall be located, recorded and secured with ongoing monitoring of condition.

FORM THE POČITELJ LAND TRUST

To be formed as an NGO, with a project manager and a team consisting of legal advisers, reconstruction specialists and conservators, the Trust shall oversee the rebuilding of the damaged and derelict houses, ensuring that all interventions adhere to conservation guidelines. The Trust shall operate as fundraiser, representative for the reconstruction and as co-ordinator of repopulation.

IMPLEMENT 'THE WATERLINE PROJECT' RECONSTRUCTION

Between five and ten 'dry' properties (properties located above the current water supply level) shall be purchased and reconstructed, activating employment initiatives with members of the current community, who will occupy the properties at low rate lease tenure. Un-let restored 'dry' properties will initially accommodate the reconstruction workforce, with rental for tourism in the longer term financing maintenance. Properties of returnees shall be prioritized for reconstruction.

IMPLEMENT THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE MONUMENTS

Undertaken concurrently with 'dry' property reconstruction, monument recording and reconstruction shall provide training for conservators, architects and tourists, and symbolize community bonding and peace building.

CLOSURE OF THE PROJECT

At completion of remit the Trust shall be handed over to a local team to continue reconstruction in Počitelj and provide their expertise to assist other settlements in the region.

CONCLUSION

The Waterline Project provides an opportunity to address the social and cultural needs of the community by halting further degradation to the historic fabric, revitalizing a larger area of the inhabited settlement than existed at its pre-war level and thus arresting the process of gradual decline and depopulation. Based around the balance of needs, it brings together the viable elements of matrix analysis, stimulating the economic and physical process of reconstruction with the objective of peace building.

The concept of compromise and commitment to successful revitalization proposed by the project is intended to provide a model for reconstruction of similar damaged and destroyed settlements in the region. While each one is unique, the process may stimulate the needed impetus to bring back life to such shattered communities. Its inherent value is in presenting a usable framework that neutralizes polarized agendas and embraces commonality between communities that can be adapted throughout the many exceptional but disparate historic settlements in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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14 *Immanent or eminent domain? The contest over Thessaloniki's Rotonda*

CHARLES STEWART

INTRODUCTION

The Rotonda, a Roman building located in the centre of Greece's second largest city, Thessaloniki, has recently been the site of a bitter contest between the Bishopric of Thessaloniki and the Ninth Ephoria (Superintendence) of Byzantine Antiquities. In early 1995 the Ministry of Culture ruled that the Rotonda could be used for religious services three times per year. The church rejected this decision as a violation of the freedom to worship and took its case to the Greek Supreme Court¹ (*Symvoúlio Epikrateías*) in early 1995. At the time of writing the Supreme Court still has not returned a verdict.

This chapter is concerned with events that began to take place in and around the Rotonda beginning in December 1994. During three months of this period I was resident in Thessaloniki (January–April 1995) and I witnessed some of the events at first hand. In addition, I followed the unfolding story in the press, and spoke with numerous people who were closely involved. A year later (April 1996) I spent a few days in Thessaloniki during which I interviewed key representatives of the church, the Archaeological Service and the Union of Citizens of Thessaloniki.

The conflict over the Rotonda points to an attempt to renegotiate the boundaries between church and state. Must the church submit to state ruling; or is the state bound by the sacred canons of the church? This contest may serve to remind us that the separation of church from state has been a fraught and uneven process in European history (Kantorowicz 1957). The average resident of Thessaloniki probably does not contemplate these larger issues about church and state, or they might be entertained briefly and then deemed irrelevant. At the local level, use of the Rotonda is an emotive issue that cuts right to the marrow of Greek identity. Greece is a nation-state where people are ideally both citizens of the state and members of the Orthodox Church. In the Rotonda controversy Greek citizens are, as it were, being asked to pit one half of their identity against the other.

The clash over the Rotonda may be compared with the case of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya (van der Veer 1994) which was torn down by Hindu extremists who claimed it stood on the birthplace of the god Ram, and was therefore rightfully the

site of a Hindu temple. At first glance, the Indian case appears to be quite different: two religious groups contested the control of a monument, while in Thessaloniki the state religion, Greek Orthodoxy, is challenging the jurisdiction of the state. In the view of the South Asianist anthropologist Peter van der Veer (1994: 162), however, the Ayodhya case, while it does clearly involve aggression between Hindus and Muslims, should be interpreted foremost as a Hindu nationalist opposition to the secularism of the state.² This has involved aggression against Muslims as part of a challenge to see if the state would defend them.

The clashes over Stonehenge in Britain during the 1980s provide another parallel to the events in Thessaloniki. Here, various social and religious groups disputed the authority of the state to limit their access to the monument when previously they had enjoyed free access. The so-called 'free festivallers' maintained their civil right to celebrate the summer solstice at Stonehenge but were impeded from doing so by police cordons. A slightly different problem arises in relation to the Druids who, since the early part of the twentieth century, have conducted services at Stonehenge and claim it as a holy site for their religion (Chippindale 1990). For them, access to the monument was a matter of freedom to worship and express a spiritual relationship to the monument. This religious attitude differs fundamentally from English Heritage's manifestly material and economic conception of the site. English Heritage, a quango (quasi non-governmental organization) which 'owns' the Stonehenge site 'for the nation', seeks to control access to the monument both to protect it and to profit from it by charging admission (Bender 1998: 116 ff).

The question of the relationship between material culture and spiritual identity arises acutely in the Rotonda case. Clearly an element of the Orthodox population in Thessaloniki feels a spiritual connection to the monument and this puts them at odds with state plans. Even the Supreme Court seems unwilling finally to decide whether the laws of the Greek state supersede the Canon Law of the church. Is the Greek state ultimately secular or Orthodox Christian? This is the problem everyone is addressing, wittingly or unwittingly, in attempting to forge a distinction between a monument (*mnimeío*) and a church.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Rotonda of Thessaloniki is a large circular structure built by the Emperor Galerius in the first decade of the fourth century AD. It stands just north of a triumphal arch over the Via Egnatia that is today called the *kamára* ('vault, arch'). Originally the Rotonda and the *kamára* formed part of a larger complex of buildings including a hippodrome, an octagonal building and several palaces built by Galerius.

The Rotonda, as it is called in Greek (spelt with an 'o'), is one of the largest, covered, round Roman buildings still standing today and it is an extremely important and valuable historical monument on architectural grounds alone. The Pantheon in Rome and Diocletian's mausoleum in Split are comparable buildings. In 1962 the Greek government declared it a 'historical conservation monument and an

archaeological space'. In 1986 UNESCO included it in its catalogue of international heritage monuments.

We do not know the original use of the Rotonda. Some have suggested that it was intended as a mausoleum for Galerius who moved his administrative seat to Thessaloniki during his reign (305–11). Galerius died far away from Thessaloniki, however, and his remains were not interred in the Rotonda. Another possibility is that it was a religious shrine dedicated to the *Kábeiroi*, or to Jupiter/J Zeus, and used as a royal temple, a possibility supported by the existence of a colonnade linking it to the palace.

One thing is certain, the Rotonda was not originally a church. Galerius, like his predecessor Diocletian, actively persecuted Christians, although after a serious illness near the end of his life he took a slightly more tolerant stance toward them. The first emperor to adopt Christianity was, of course, Constantine who was baptized on his deathbed in AD 337.

At some point between the late fourth century and the early sixth century the Rotonda was transformed into a Christian church, at first dedicated to the Holy Martyrs. At this time a semi-circular apse was added to the east side of the building (as a Christian sanctum) and the interior was decorated with mosaics depicting various martyrs, paradise and angels. In subsequent documents spanning the Byzantine period, the Rotonda was referred to as a church of the archangels (*Arkhangélon*), the hierarchs (*Taxiarkhón*) or of the angels (*Asómaton; Agíon Angélon*). Between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, and again between 1525 and 1591, the Rotonda served as the *mitrópoli* – the main cathedral – of Thessaloniki.

In 1591 the Rotonda was taken over by the Ottomans, who had conquered the city in 1430, and turned into a mosque. Why it took the Ottomans 160 years to get around to converting the Rotonda into a mosque is not exactly certain. In 1591 it was a Christian who had converted to Islam, Georgios Khortatsis, who was instrumental in bringing about the Islamicization of the building. The tomb of Khortats Imam, as he came to be known, is one of two Muslim tombs in the precinct of the Rotonda. During the Ottoman period the towering minaret was built; it is one of the few minarets left standing on Greek soil. At some point during or just after the Ottoman period the Rotonda became known to Christians as a church of St George. A smaller church of St George is located about fifty yards away.

Thessaloniki was captured from the Ottoman Empire by the Greek state during the first Balkan War in 1912 and the Rotonda once again became a church, but only briefly. In 1913 it was declared a 'national monument' and the 1917 government of Venizelos issued a declaration converting it to a Macedonian museum, and placing it under the control of the Directorate of Byzantine Antiquities. Excavations on the Rotonda and surrounding structures were carried out in 1918 by French archaeologists and in 1939 by Danish archaeologists. The mosaics were cleaned and restored in the early 1950s and in 1974 further excavations were carried out by Greek archaeologists.

During the period from 1917 until 1978, when Thessaloniki was hit by a severe earthquake forcing the closure of the Rotonda until the present day, the building

was overseen by the Ninth Ephoria of Byzantine Antiquities. Permission was occasionally granted to the church to hold religious services. The pattern that emerged was for these services to be held two or three times a year. Situated close to the University of Thessaloniki, the Rotonda was used for a ceremony in the autumn marking the beginning of the academic year; then for the ceremony of the Three Hierarchs in January; and also for the celebration of St George (23 April), the patron saint of the church. In 1964 an altar (*Agía Trápeza*) was installed and consecrated in the Rotonda.

Thessaloniki was designated the cultural capital of Europe for 1997 and European Community funds began pouring in during the preceding years. A considerable portion of this money was earmarked for the restoration and public opening of Byzantine and Ottoman monuments, many of which had been closed since the 1978 earthquake and evidently never funded for restoration by the Greek state. The restoration of the Rotonda was also supported by separate funds from the 'second Delors packet' (as it was known locally) and matching funds from the Greek government amounting to 400 million drachmas in total (£1.1 million sterling). If classical antiquities enjoy priority over Byzantine antiquities this is because, since independence in 1832, the Greek state has been most eager to emphasize its links with ancient Greece. The restoration and opening to tourism of important monuments such as Olympia and Delphi served this purpose in a way that renovating churches and monasteries could not.

The Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis or the Temple of Hephaistos in the Agora at Athens are parallel monuments to the Rotonda whose archaeological treatment demonstrates the nationalist priority of Greece's Hellenic (Ancient) over its Romeic (Byzantine/Christian) heritage. Both the Parthenon and the Temple of Hephaistos were converted into churches in the Middle Ages and, after Greek independence, both were converted back into stark classical temples in conformity with European philhellenic ideals of Ancient Greece (Yalouri 1993: 27; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996: 121). Like so many classical sites, the Acropolis was cleared of all post-classical structures including a mosque with a minaret and a Frankish tower. Of course the Rotonda is a Roman, not a Byzantine, building and therefore potentially a reminder of Greek subjugation. This may be one reason why the state's plans to maintain the Rotonda as a secular museum space are foundering. The case for preserving this particular past is not automatically compelling. If the Ancient Greeks had built the Rotonda its conservation as a secular antiquity would, I imagine, have been more difficult to resist.

As Thessaloniki prepared to become Europe's cultural capital, the church's opposition to state plans could also be seen as a nativist movement resisting the European absorption (and secularization) of Greece by protecting its Orthodox heritage. Where the Europeanizers, funded by the EU, mounted secular displays and exhibitions, there the church would prefer a functioning Orthodox religious space to remind everyone of Greece's eastern form of Christianity. The church has long spearheaded anti-Western suspicions in Greece. In addition, during the 1980s a group of formerly left-wing intellectuals started a neo-Orthodox movement maintaining that traditional, indigenous Greek values were contained in the

teachings of the Orthodox church. Orthodoxy came to replace Marxism as a mode of opposing the West.

THE EVENTS OF 1995

This very brief historical sketch brings us up to recent events, and especially to those that are my real subject of interest. Restoration work on the Rotonda was well under way by late 1994 and the building was scheduled to be opened by 1997 as a monument that could be used as a civic space for exhibitions or meetings, and perhaps as a museum. Before this official opening, however, the Bishopric of Thessaloniki got permission to mount a display of icons in the Rotonda over the Christmas period in late 1994 and early 1995 (17 December–7 January). They also obtained permission to hold one Holy Liturgy inside the Rotonda during the period of the exhibition, and a liturgy was held to mark the opening of the exhibition on 17 December, 1994 (*Mak* 18 December 1994). According to local sources the church actually held three or four liturgies during the period of the exhibition.

In order to hold these services they moved in an altar, icons, paraphernalia and seats. These items were all left inside the Rotonda when the exhibition closed on Saturday, 7 January. On the following day some thirty or forty people gathered at the Rotonda under the impression that a Sunday worship service would be held. This information had probably been disseminated by one of the religious groups strongly supporting the Bishopric. In the event, they found the gates to the building firmly shut. This exclusion generated frustration and rancour amongst the faithful and rumours began to circulate. One of the most remarkable of these was that the Ministry of Culture was planning to turn the Rotonda into a Centre for Islamic Studies.³

At this point the church called for an all-night vigil to be held at the Rotonda on the following Tuesday. Beginning at 6.30 p.m. a crowd began to assemble outside the locked gates to the courtyard of the Rotonda. Police, together with guards and employees of the Ninth Ephoria, faced them down from inside the gates. The crowds shouted slogans such as: ‘*Oúte khávra, oúte tzamí, ekkliísia ellinikí?*’ (Not a synagogue, nor a mosque, but a Greek church) and ‘*Édo éinai Elláda, den éinai Alvanía, gia tí Makedonía kai tin Orthodoxía?*’ (This is Greece, not Albania; [onwards] for Macedonia and Orthodoxy). Shortly before nine in the evening the massed crowd, numbering in the hundreds, was able to push the police force inside, and burst through the gates, the locks of which had been picked, or damaged, previously. The vigil began shortly after nine, was attended by hundreds of people and lasted several hours but not all night.

The intensity of these events came as a surprise to most of Thessaloniki and gave the principals in the dispute the chance to air their views in the press, both national and local. A canon, or senior Archimandrite (*protosýngkelos*), named Ioannis Tassias emerged as chief spokesperson for the church. In interviews in the newspapers *Makedonía* (local), and *Ta Néa* (Athens, national), Tassias lost no time in going on the offensive. He claimed that the Rotonda had been an important church for many

years, even a *mitrópoli* for a while, and that it must always remain a church (*Thess* 12 January 1995). Furthermore, he asserted that in apportioning it to the Ministry of Culture, the state had never ruled out its use as a church, and indeed, from 1964 it did function as a church for the university (on one or two occasions a year). He posed the issue as one of freedom of religious expression. On top of these arguments, Canon Tassias charged the archaeologists with plundering and desecrating the Rotonda: the altar consecrated in 1964 was lost and no one knew where it was, and a cross that used to be on top of the cupola was missing. He even asserted that the Rotonda had been used in 1986 for the projection of porno films (*ibid.*) and that if the structure was safe for such events, then surely it was safe for the celebration of church liturgies.

In Canon Tassias' view the Rotonda should be accepted as a religious space, as a church which could also be used as a museum for exhibitions of Christian objects, or events such as evenings of church music. He further contended that the building never would have been saved if it had not been converted into a church. The palaces of Galerius, for example, had been destroyed. I subsequently heard the observation that the religious function of the building had insured its survival from shopkeepers and residents in the immediate vicinity of the Rotonda.

A couple of days after the vigil, on 13 January, the church brought a lawsuit against the Archaeological Service for violating the freedom to worship on the previous Sunday. They also cited the archaeologists for criminal sacrilege and plunder with regard to the missing crosses from the top and the entrance to the building, the missing altar and a missing relic (*engkaínio*). Canon Tassias stated, 'The Turks took the cross down from the church, and so did the archaeologists. The Turks were the first to destroy the altar, and then the archaeologists. What is going on?' (*Mak* 14 January 1995).

Shortly before the closing of the exhibition of icons on 7 January, the church had, in fact, made a petition to the Ministry of Culture to be allowed to hold regular liturgies in the Rotonda. The Sunday 'lockout' could perhaps be seen as an over-optimistic assembly in expectation that the decision would have been taken in time for worship to be allowed. By mid-January, no decision had been handed down, and the archaeologists effectively closed ranks saying that they were just doing their job (safeguarding the Rotonda and proceeding with the restoration), and that they too were awaiting a decision from higher up. The Minister of Culture still insisted that until a decision was reached, no use should be made of the Rotonda, but shortly before Sunday 15 January, he relented and verbally consented to the Rotonda being used for church services.

By 17 January no judgement had been issued. The Ministry of Culture for Macedonia and Thrace, however, came out in favour of the double use of the Rotonda as a museum and as a place for occasional religious services. The archaeologists also set about rebutting the charges against them of plunder. They pointed out that the cross on top of the building had disappeared before 1955 because it is not evident in a photo taken then. It probably fell off in the 1933 earthquake. Another piece, the *engkaínio* (holy object used in consecrating a building/altar), was apparently taken to Copenhagen. And they asserted that the missing altar was, in fact, removed by the

Bishop of Thessaloniki (*Mak* 17 January 1995). Canon Tassias stated that he was in favour of the Rotonda becoming a church: not a parish church, but rather a place of worship for the young and a counter-balance to the various 'heresies' propagated at the university. The Rotonda is just a stone's throw from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece's largest university.

A decision was finally reached later that day, and it limited the religious use of the Rotonda to three times a year: the feast day of St George, the feast day of the Three Hierarchs and the beginning of the academic year. The general secretary of the Ministry of Culture stated that in his view this decision respected the history of the monument, as well as the religious use of the space. Canon Tassias was displeased by the decision and declared it unacceptable. He protested that the faithful and the young cannot be limited to three times of worship per year just on the insistence of some archaeologists. A day later, the Bishopric officially rejected the decision and planned another liturgy for the coming Sunday. The charge that students at the university were succumbing to heresies was repeated, and it was further added that on Fridays Muslims were worshipping in the School of Theology at the university.

Members of the University of Thessaloniki issued a statement saying that the Rotonda should be given over to public use, managed by the appropriate state authorities. The Rector of the University of Thessaloniki supported a double use of the Rotonda, as both a religious and secular space. The Dean of the Theological School concurred with this idea, calling for co-operation between the Bishopric and the archaeologists in settling the dispute. He also pointed out that some restraint on the part of the church was necessary for international political reasons. He hoped that one day the Turks would allow Orthodox Christians to celebrate the Holy Liturgy inside Hagia Sophia.⁴

30 January is the feast day of the Three Hierarchs. The university held its service in another church rather than in the Rotonda. Invitations had been printed in advance and university officials did not think the Rotonda would be ready for use. University services for the Three Hierarchs, patrons of letters and a national holiday for schools, had not been held in the Rotonda since before 1978. On the same day, the faithful supporting the Bishopric assembled to hold the festival of the Three Hierarchs at the Rotonda, but it was locked. A few young men vaulted over the wall of the courtyard of the Rotonda, but did not succeed in opening the gates to the crowd. One youth cut his hand in jumping over the fence and the gory details were recorded by TV news cameras.

On following Sundays the Rotonda remained locked but the faithful nonetheless assembled in the cold and the rain and held the Sunday liturgy outside the gates of the Rotonda, in the middle of the road. During this period the Citizens' Union of Thessaloniki, composed of architects, academics and other interested residents of the city, intervened. The Union expressed its opinion that the Rotonda was, and should be treated as, a fundamentally secular monument under the protection and administration of the Archaeological Service and the Ministry of Culture. The church continued to protest the decision limiting worship to three times a year. It wanted to hold services every Sunday and on holidays. In early March the church

made an appeal to the highest court in Greece (*Symvoúlio Epikrateías*) that this earlier decision be invalidated.

On 30 May the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Greece declared the Rotonda a space of worship (*proskynimatikós khóros*) thus indicating that the national church of Greece was involved at the highest level in the Rotonda affair. And on 6 June the Supreme Court passed a temporary ruling that the Rotonda could be used as a church. This opened the way for the church to conduct Sunday worship in the Rotonda throughout the summer, although they still had to request special permission from the Ninth Ephoria of Byzantine Antiquities.

The church formally requested and received permission to hold an all-night vigil on 9–10 September (Saturday and Sunday) to conduct a special service celebrating the holy relics of St George. During the night the archaeological service watchman observed suspicious numbers of clerics entering and re-entering the Rotonda carrying large objects wrapped in red, ecclesiastical velvet. Some time later in the night he peeped into the Rotonda and saw what he made out to be a work crew. He suspected that they were building an altar, although palm fronds largely obscured his vision. The next day it became clear that this was the case. The Bishopric had seen fit to build an altar out of marble and cement and to consecrate it upon the relics of St George.⁵ This action, of course, exceeded the church's limited rights to 'use' the Rotonda, and it also violated state law by making unauthorized additions to a conservation monument.

An altar is a consecrated object and it violates the Holy Canons of the church to remove it. The Ninth Ephoria filed a complaint about the unauthorized modification of the building, but they were loath to remove it themselves. For one thing, they already stood accused of criminal plunder and sacrilege over the disappearance of the 1964 altar. For another, they preferred to place their trust in due process. If it was illegal to install this altar, then a Greek court should rule that it be removed. I strongly suspect that their own positions as Orthodox Christians made it difficult to contemplate doing anything more directly. In resanctifying the building the church sought to wrest it away from secular control and I will return to consider this strategy later.

Undoubtedly the most dramatic event to occur in the saga of the Rotonda took place on Monday, 30 October. A recital of improvisational jazz piano music by Sakis Papadimitriou, a Thessalonikan pianist, was scheduled and permission for it to be held in the Rotonda obtained from the Ninth Ephoria. The Bishopric responded by calling for a vigil at the very same time in an obvious attempt to spoil the event. Shortly before the concert was due to begin, when only the pianist, a few members of the audience and a few guards from the archaeological service were present, a throng of people gathered outside. In a piece written for the national Sunday newspaper, *To Víma* (5 November 1995), the well-known historian Andonis Liakos described his experience among those inside the Rotonda, listening to the pianist testing the acoustics of the building while the crowds surged and seethed outside the locked gates. They were shouting 'Anti-Greek', 'Anti-Christ', 'Do you want to turn the church into a mosque?' and 'God will burn you'. Finally they broke in, knocking one of the guards to the ground as they entered.

Exclamations were heard from the crowd such as, 'A piano inside the church!⁶ The anti-Christ!' They then proceeded to overturn chairs and to kick, shove and hammer on the piano, destroying it and shunting it to the side among the scaffolding and building materials. A monk was heard to threaten one of the archaeologists with physical violence.

At a certain point Canon Tassias took the microphone and declared: 'The people of God have triumphed. They tell us that Thessaloniki is a multi-historical city.⁷ If they mean that many conquerors passed through here, then I agree. But the Orthodox character (*prósopo*) of the city was never altered.' In his article Liakos paused to reflect on how worthy Thessaloniki was of becoming Europe's cultural capital for 1997. 'It's close to becoming Teheran,' he wrote, while optimistically hoping that the broken piano would become a symbol of the resistance to barbarism.

ANALYSIS

What are the reasons for the conflict? Why is it happening now? I asked these questions of all parties at the time. One of the legal advisers to the Union of Citizens felt that it all came down to money. In his view, the Bishopric wanted to get hold of the Rotonda so that they could use it as they pleased; not only for Sunday liturgies, but for lucrative baptisms and weddings as well. That was why already in January 1995 the Bishopric appealed to the Holy Synod to declare the Rotonda a pilgrimage site rather than a parish church. This designation means that its earnings are tax free, and go directly to the Bishopric where Canon Tassias is located. Other citizens expressed the opinion that Canon Tassias, a hitherto little known cleric, is waging this campaign out of personal ambition. As *protosýngkelos* he is second in command within the hierarchy of the Bishopric which is headed by octogenarian Bishop Pandeileimon II. Succession is not automatic, but through election by the Holy Synod of the church – which is now well acquainted with Canon Tassias.

When I asked Canon Tassias his opinion, he explained that the government had been trying to close churches throughout Greece. Furthermore, he was worried that the government was supporting Muslim interests to a greater degree than it should. He implied that both of these tendencies needed to be resisted, and the events surrounding the Rotonda were signs of the church putting its foot down. It should be added that Prime Minister Papandreou's socialist government made several moves during the 1980s, such as the introduction of civil marriage, which decreased the power of the church. They also sought to nationalize extensive church properties in the late 1980s and the church's opposition to this and other initiatives precipitated the controversial resignation of the Minister for Religion and Education in 1988. These issues concerning the relationship between church and state were left unresolved when Papandreou's party was voted out in 1989.

In my view the church is testing the bounds of its political authority by directly challenging the state. The Bishopric of Thessaloniki, in particular, realized its public strength around the Macedonia issue which took a serious turn for Greece when the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gained independence in September

1991 and expressed the intention to call itself Macedonia. Neither of Greece's major political parties immediately sought to make anything of this issue and the Greek government might well have been content to receive diplomatic assurances from the former Yugoslav republic and then allow the country to be recognized. It was, rather, ultra-nationalists who persuaded the large body of middle-of-the-road nationalists that this was an unacceptable stance. This single issue galvanized the electorate. In the early days of the Macedonia controversy it was the church in northern Greece that spearheaded the rousing of popular support. The Bishopric of Thessaloniki was at the forefront of the several hundred thousand-strong demonstration in Thessaloniki on 14 February 1992, opposing European Community recognition of Macedonia. The incumbent New Democracy party failed to channel this upsurge of nationalist sentiment to its own advantage and was replaced by the church's old foe, Papandreou's PASOK party, in 1993.

When the former Yugoslav republic declared its intention to name itself Macedonia, the Greek church presented itself as the guardian of the national interest, indeed as the representative of the nation or *éthnos*. It did so before the state could establish a convincing position, and was so successful that the state could not stop the momentum created by the church and the nationalists, but rather had to go along with it. The Macedonia case helps us to see the parameters that are at stake in the Rotonda issue. Basically it is the state as lawmaker and enforcer that rules the *éthnos*, and the church as well, since the Greek church is beneath the state. Church clerics are civil servants receiving state salaries in Greece. The *éthnos* and the church are closely identified, virtually equivalent, and equally powerless before the state.

A fraught history underlies this arrangement. During the Ottoman period the Sultan allowed representatives of the Orthodox church to oversee education and to mediate civil disputes at the local level amongst Orthodox Christians. This was a feature of the so-called '*millet system*' whereby the Ottomans regarded religious leaders as both the spiritual and political representatives of their people. The Patriarch of Constantinople was thus the leader of *all* Orthodox Christians (not just Greek-speakers) in the Ottoman Empire. The Patriarchate was ecumenical in outlook and, sitting right under the eyes of the Sultan, could not support the national liberation movements that swept through the Balkans in the nineteenth century. In an historical episode that Greeks prefer not to remember, the Patriarch Gregory V anathematized all incipient nationalist revolutionary movements in the early nineteenth century (Just 1988). He enjoined Orthodox Christians to remain loyal to the Ottomans in a spirit of 'voluntary submission'. This Patriarchal position helps to explain why, upon gaining political autonomy, Orthodox nations such as Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria declared their national churches to be autocephalous; that is, independent from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. From the liberated nations' viewpoint the Patriarchate was still in occupied territory (Kitromilides 1989: 180).

Greece was the first Balkan country to gain independence from the Ottomans and the first to declare its state church, the Orthodox church of Greece, autocephalous. This marked the beginning of the subordination of church to state that still holds today. The newly founded national church willingly embraced the

national cause, even when this involved accepting the demolition of Christian accretions on classical monuments such as the Parthenon. Its compliance went some way towards making amends for the Orthodox church's reluctance to support the Greek revolution when it first broke out. Sudden and total subordination to a secular government must, however, have posed a difficult transition, both for clerics and for the population, which had grown accustomed to the earlier arrangement. The church went from being the political guardian and representative of the nation to being just another element of national identity, unempowered to pronounce on or alter the definition of this national identity. These may seem remote historical events, but large portions of what is now Greece only made the political transition from Ottoman control to incorporation within the Greek state much later than the rump Greek state of 1832. Thessaly was annexed in 1881, Macedonia (including Thessaloniki) in 1913 and over a million ethnic Greeks came as refugees directly from Ottoman Turkey, where they had been living in a *millet* arrangement, in 1922. Many settled in Thessaloniki. These are still fairly recent events, and it is likely that church officials maintain some memory of their past political role. Perhaps current governments do as well – with a certain nervousness (Prodromou 1994: 129).

Despite the disempowerment of the Greek Orthodox Church, Christian Orthodoxy remains a cornerstone of Greek ethnic identity. Proselytism is not allowed in Greece, such is the perceived danger of religious conversion; it pulls members away from the Greek *éthnos* and the state opposes any forces that threaten the nation (Pollis 1993: 350). Jehovah's Witnesses in Greece, many of whom have converted from Orthodoxy, sometimes have difficulty obtaining identity papers that state their religious identity (Herzfeld 1992). Jehovah's Witnesses accused of proselytism have appealed their cases to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg claiming violation of their religious freedom (Stavros 1995: 16).

The foregoing suggests how closely bound the Orthodox church and the Greek nation are. The church does not, however, have any official political means of commanding the obedience of the people, except by showing itself to be protecting or representing their interests. On the Macedonia issue this ethnic interest involved an alarmist concern that the Greek nation not allow itself to be confused or conflated with people of a Slav Macedonian ethnicity. In other words, the Orthodox church galvanized popular support by raising the spectre of an external enemy that (supposedly) wanted to lure away part of the Greek nation,⁸ and potentially some Greek land as well. In promulgating this picture, the church took on a role normally played by the state and the state did very soon rush in to assume this awkward international political position itself. The Greek state's position on Macedonia has fairly isolated it in EU and international politics. Greece's staunchest ally has been Serbia over the past few years. It could be said that the Greek state has 'lost' on the Macedonia issue both at the national and international levels (Veremis 1997).

In the case of the Rotonda there is a twist to the story. Here the church is directly contesting a state ministry; it is church against state with the *éthnos* in the middle, forced to decide which entity better represents its interests. The nation, or at the very least the population of Thessaloniki, is being forced to pit one aspect of its

identity, its religion, against another aspect, its allegiance to governmental authority. The nation is literally being pulled apart. One member of the Thessaloniki Union of Citizens told me that when she disagreed with clerics over whether the Rotonda should become a church, they turned on her and cast her status as a *bona fide* Orthodox Christian into question.

While *consciousness* is no doubt a prerequisite of ethnic identity formation and its recognition by a surrounding group, once past the phase of ethnogenesis, it would seem that an ethnic *conscience* comes to be of equal or greater importance. This conscience mediates the proper, perhaps one could say moral, performance of one's role as a member of the group. 'Conscience' and 'consciousness' are conveyed by one and the same word in Greek, *syneídisi*. One can see *syneídisi* in the sense of 'consciousness' clearly at the fore of ethnogenetic processes in Danforth's (1995) research on the 'Macedonian conflict'. He presents interviews with members of the Macedonian community in Australia who arrived in that country thinking of themselves exclusively as Greeks. These emigrants came from the Greek region of Macedonia and, in addition to Greek, could also speak a Slavonic language. Once they gained knowledge of a Slav Macedonian identity, a knowledge and exposure that were not available to them in Greece, they came to consider themselves as purely Macedonians and not as Greeks. On the other hand, Herzfeld (1992) gives a good example of how *syneídisi* in the sense of 'conscience' is used on a daily basis to judge and criticise the actions of fellow members of the nation. After a bomb scare on a boat from the Greek islands to Piraeus, the national daily *Eleftherotypía* ran the following report, 'the continuation of the investigation revealed that there had been yet another hoax by a conscienceless "Greek"' (Herzfeld 1992: 106). As Herzfeld comments, 'The reporter's use of the inverted commas suggests a pious exclusion: the hoaxer was only "metaphorically" Greek'.

The introduction of ethnic 'conscience' as an analytic criterion is not my own imposition, but one that frequently crops up in public discussions in Greece, for example over whether the Slavophone population of Greek Macedonia has a Greek or a Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM-ite) *syneídisi*. In other words, they may be Greek citizens, but are they really *loyal* to the Greek state? Greek politicians actually passed legislation after the Second World War that involved distinguishing the populace at large (*laós*) from the nation (*éthnos*). A member of the *éthnos* properly possessed an ethnic conscience (*ethnikí syneídisi*, *ethnikophrosýni*). This was formally recognized by the issuance of a 'certificate of national probity' that differentiated them from other citizens perceived to be enemies of the nation, perhaps because of their role in the civil war (1946–50), or membership in the Communist Party (Tsoucalas 1981: 330). Those deemed lacking in ethnic probity could be prevented from pursuing the career of their choice and even sent into internal exile. These so-called 'para-constitutional' measures lasted through to the fall of the military junta in 1974. It was as if the McCarthy era had gone on for three decades in Greece.

These measures are no longer in force, but their long period of existence has arguably influenced political culture. Today, in moments of serious public dispute, especially when national security is thought to be at stake, political opponents often

publicly accuse each other of 'betrayal' or of lacking 'national conscience'. The strategy is to appropriate the nationalist moral high ground and accuse swiftly and vehemently. Greek journalists likened the anthropologist Anastasia Karakasidou to a cannibal who wanted to devour her own people when news of her research on Macedonian oral history first reached them (Karakasidou 1997: 229). Karakasidou's research involved the local history of a group of villages fifty miles north of Thessaloniki. All of the villagers in this region are Greek citizens, and consider themselves exclusively Greek. They would say that they have a Greek *syneídisi*. Karakasidou's research, however, revealed that the area once held a large percentage of Slavophones and that some of the current residents were descended from Slavonic speakers, indeed may have known Slavonic as children. Nationalists in Greece perceived the mere suggestion that the history of this region was not always and only Greek as traitorous. Karakasidou was lambasted in the press and the villagers in the area of her research were so mortified that they issued a public statement reaffirming their Greekness.

The Rotonda incident reveals a similar inability to accept that the history of the Thessaloniki area, like most places, is a palimpsest, a series of successive migrations, invasions, occupations and accretions. The past is plural but the nationalistically constructed Greek present prefers to project its current ethnic singularity back in time. Signs covered Greece at the height of the Macedonian conflict with messages such as 'Macedonia is Greek, always has been, always will be! Learn your history!' Canon Tassias' opinion that Thessaloniki has always been essentially Greek Orthodox reflects a similar type of unitary thinking about the past. And the Bishopric's strategy of vilifying opponents by identifying them with every conceivable anti-Greek, anti-Orthodox force represented just another symbolic means of impugning these co-citizens' ethnic conscience. The whole Rotonda incident furnishes an instructive case example of the politics of authoritarianism in a contemporary European Union member country. The church is pitting its authority to define the type of conscience that befits Greek national identity against that of the state.

CONCLUSION

In the case of the Rotonda, I think it is possible to parallel the struggle over a building's designation as secular monument or sacred church, with a struggle over Greek ethnic *conscience*. The church argues that once a building is sanctified, this is done 'in eternity' (*esaef*). Granted this, and granted permission to hold even one liturgy per year in the building, the church claims the right to veto other uses of the building that would conflict with its holy nature. Art films, especially those involving nudity (classified as 'porno films' by the church), jazz music and the smoking of cigarettes are thus all incompatible with the sanctity of the space. Likewise, in the view of the church, once it is conceded that the Rotonda is a church, it becomes impossible for the state to regulate how, and how often, church authorities can use it for religious purposes. Compromises, such as limiting worship to three or seven times a year, are seen as ridiculous by the church. The Rotonda either is or isn't a

church. There can be no grey area. Since everyone concedes that it can be a church three times a year, then it is a church all the time.

These considerations contextualize the contemporary church's strong reaction to the disappearance of the altar installed in 1964, and help us to understand the full importance of the reinstallation of a new altar, this one cemented into place, in September 1995. This act resanctified the building and did away with any doubts as to whether it was a holy place. In sanctifying the Rotonda the church placed it under a claim of what I term 'immanent domain'; they transformed a secular space into a sacred, religious space thereby giving the church complete authority over what practices may properly be performed there.⁹ An authority on Orthodox Canon Law, advising the Bishop of Thessaloniki on exactly this matter, provided the following interpretation:

The sanctification of a Holy church constitutes, according to the Orthodox faith, a mystery. According to the dogmatic and canonical teaching of the church, the consecrated church must only be used for holy worship, or for purposes that accord with the holiness of a Christian church, and not for other purposes.

(Letter from Bishop Pandeileimon Rodopoulos, 25 January 1995)

Against this appeal for 'immanent domain' consider the following opinion of one of Greece's leading experts on Constitutional Law:

The Constitution does not just safeguard the right of the faithful to worship, but the right of all citizens to civilization (*polítismós*) and to the long-term protection and development of the cultural heritage of the people to whom they belong. The second right, since it is broader, encompasses the first, and it surpasses it if, in specific circumstances, the protection and development of the cultural good requires it.

This competition between immanent and eminent domain¹⁰ over a building parallels, in very precise legal fashion, the contest between the Orthodox Church and the Greek state to possess the allegiance of the nation. Are the dictates of one's conscience basically religious or secular? This too is a struggle between immanent and eminent domains. A contest over material culture, over the Rotonda, serves as an incitement to, and as a metaphor for, the definition of Greek identity at the individual and national levels.

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kindnesses. I am especially grateful to Giorgos Moulkas who provided me with valuable newspaper cuttings and documents relating to the Rotonda. I would also like to thank Paschalis Kitromilides, Stathis Potamitis, Eleana Yalouri and Amalia Zepou. A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a Fellowship at the National Humanities Center made this research possible.

NOTES

- 1 Greece actually has two 'Supreme Courts': the *Áreos Págos* and the *Symvoúlio Epikrateías*. The former judges on criminal cases, or cases involving litigation between citizens or civil entities, while the *Symvoúlio Epikrateías* rules on cases that involve the government, such as the present case which concerns the jurisdiction of a government agency, the Ministry of Culture.
- 2 This secularism has been tested at various times since Indian independence, notably in the case of the Hindu Somanatha temple in Gujarat. This shrine was repeatedly destroyed by Muslim conquerors and a mosque built on the site. After independence there was no doubt that it would be restored as a Hindu temple, symbolic of the resilience and triumphant continuity of Hinduism, but the question was whether this reconstruction should be done with government funds (van der Veer 1994: 146ff.). Ultimately the temple was rebuilt with government support, but without government funding.
- 3 The restoration proposal funded by the EU included conservation of the minaret and the two Muslim graves, facts that irritated the church. Clerics pointed out to me that there is no external symbolic indication that the Rotonda ever was a church; the crosses that used to stand atop the dome and above the entrance gate have disappeared. The issue of minarets is still a sensitive one in Greece as indicated by the sudden suspension of official building permission for a minaret in Kimmeria, Thrace in November 1996. Fears were that Muslim Greek citizens were going to build the minaret to an illegal height.
- 4 Originally a Byzantine church, Hagia Sophia was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest in the fifteenth century and then into a museum in 1934 by Kemal Atatürk. While the Rotonda was still being contested, Islamists in Turkey proposed that Hagia Sophia should be converted back into a mosque. On 29 May 1996, the 543rd anniversary of the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, hundreds of Islamists demonstrated in favour of this idea outside Hagia Sophia. On that very same day, demonstrators also took to the streets of Thessaloniki demanding that the Rotonda reopen as a church of St George. A month later it was reported that the Turkish Minister of Culture was proceeding with plans to convert a different Hagia Sophia, this one in the Black Sea city of Trabzon, from a museum to a mosque (*Athens News Agency Bulletin*, no. 923, 28 June 1996, posted on the Internet). The Turkish actions implicitly raise questions about the recognition of the Muslim phase of the Rotonda.
- 5 One may compare events that took place at the monastery of Hosios Loukas in central Greece. The Ministry of Culture managed this Byzantine structure, a much-visited tourist attraction located between Delphi and Athens, as a museum with admission. In the mid-1980s the relics of St Luke, which had been removed during the Crusades, were returned to Greece in a goodwill gesture by the city of Venice and the remains of the saint returned to the main chapel (*katholikón*) at the monastery. This consecratory event precipitated a surge of religious sentiment prompting the conversion of the main chapel back to a functioning church; popular devotion effectively wrested it away from the Archaeological Superintendence. The translation of a patron saint's relics back to his church leading to a valid resanctification of the building presents a striking precedent to events at the Rotonda. I am grateful to Carolyn and Robert Connor for information on Hosios Loukas.
- 6 A piano is viewed as a Western musical instrument, completely incompatible with Eastern Orthodox church music, which is characterized by the modal chant. The piano does not figure in Greek popular folk music either.
- 7 Liakos thinks he meant to say *polypolitismikí* rather than *polyistorikí*; multi-cultural not multi-

historical. The conflation is instructive; historical pluralism is a precondition of multi-culturalism. In the case of this monument, the problem is that at least four discrete phases of historical meaning – pagan, Christian, Islamic and secular – are all architecturally stamped onto the same structure.

- 8 A look at the various slogans chanted by the church faithful at demonstrations outside the Rotonda reveal that every traditional enemy of the Greek nation is placed on the side of those opposed to their position: Muslims, Albanians, Jews, anti-Christians, anti-Hellenes, Turks.
- 9 Immanent refers to the 'indwelling of God or any spiritual being' by contrast with transcendence. Events at Ayodhya again furnish a striking parallel. In December 1949 images of the gods Ram, Lakshman and Sita 'appeared' in the Babri Masjid. This 'miracle' helped devout Hindus to gain permission to worship Ram's image once a year in the mosque and to claim it as a functioning Hindu shrine (Gopal 1993: 15; van der Veer 1994: 156). After this event the building never again functioned as a mosque.
- 10 Eminent domain: 'the right by which the supreme authority in a state may compel a proprietor to part with what is his own for public use' (Chambers' *Encyclopaedia*).

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Newspapers

Mak *Makedonia* (Thessaloniki, daily)
Thess *Thessaloniki* (daily)
Nea *Ta Néa* (Athens/national, daily)

15 *The politics of the past: Emain Macha (Navan), Northern Ireland*

BARBARA BENDER

In a complex present there is no simple past.

(Mary Robinson)

PREAMBLE

There are two questions that I want to address in this chapter.

First: in a country like Northern Ireland where people have been in terrible conflict, how is the past used by the contestants, and how can it be used by those working towards reconciliation and peace?

Second: what role does – or should – the archaeologist play?

People's understanding of who they are, whether as individuals, groups, part of a nation-state or the European Union, part of an alliance of oppressed people, or whatever, always involves some sense of the past: fragments of history, memories, stories, accounts of homelands, migrations, exiles, of ancestors and martyrs. People's sense of their past and of who they are not only differs one from another, but is context-dependent and relational. Gender, age, class, ethnicity, religion, political motivation or economic considerations variously take pride of place in one context, become background in another. Accounts of the past, like identities, are both multiple and mutable.

We, as archaeologists, are only archaeologists in some contexts. At other times or places, other aspects of our identity are more important. As archaeologists, it is sometimes appropriate and necessary to say: 'Look, this is what we have found out about the past – we have the evidence of how, or when and where people lived'. At other times we may want, or need to be, more anthropological. We may need to stress how relative, how subjective the past is, how it is used, and how it forms part of unequal power relations. Sometimes, as human beings, we may have to accept (as in the case of Ayodhya) that the past-in-the-present is so fraught, so lethal, that we would do better not to probe, not to insist, but to leave things covered for a while and laid to rest. Alternatively, there will be other times when – wearing whatever hat suits, and as one among equals – we may attempt to facilitate, help create

spaces for people to be heard, where they can express their sense of self and suffering, can argue, and – in the best of worlds – agree to differ.

THE PLACE AND LANDSCAPE

The work that I have been engaged on in Northern Ireland concerns a pre-historic site which some call Navan Fort and others Emain Macha. The name one chooses has political consequences, just as it matters whether one is called Seamus or Philip. Navan Fort is the English name, Emain Macha the Irish.

Emain Macha is in County Armagh. It's drumlin country, green humpback hills formed by glacial action.¹ Small, hedged and slightly unkempt fields are mixed with relics of once-extensive orchards. Fine walking country, but there are not many walkers. Fine traditional music in the pubs, but not many tourists to listen to it. County Armagh borders the Republic and during the Troubles it has been one of the most bitterly contested areas in the Province.² For some, South Armagh was 'sacred territory to military Republicans'; for others, it was 'bandit country'. Tony Clarke, a former paratrooper, wrote: 'Forget home and comfort, think nasty. Think bombs and bullets. Think death.' (Sharrock 1996).

Armagh City, three kilometres from Emain Macha, is the ecclesiastical capital of Northern Ireland. It has St Patrick's Cathedral; indeed, it has two St Patrick Cathedrals – one Church of Ireland (Protestant), the other Roman Catholic. It has some fine Georgian civic buildings but most have been bombed and rebuilt. During the Marching Season the quiet streets still resonate to the Orange marches and the red, white and blue flags and daubings are aggressively on display. Meanwhile, down near the Shambles, the IRA graffiti continued, until very recently, to go up.

Three kilometres away, the site of Emain Macha is a small green hill, gentle and airy, with two mounds on top and a large ritual ditch and bank circling the base. The site is important because of the long sequence of occupation found below the mounds and because, at around 100 BC during the Iron Age, a great concentric timber setting with a massive central oak upright was constructed on the site of the earlier buildings. The timber structure was then almost immediately filled with stones. The stones were worn and had been brought from somewhere else – they embodied prior history and social relations. Then timber and stone were fired, and afterwards the remains were earthed and turfed, the soils being brought in from many different places (Waterman 1997: 228).

Close to the hill of Navan are two votive pools, one artificial, one natural; one earlier, one later. The first, the King's Stables, 650 metres north of Emain Macha, contains the remains of many offerings of wild and domestic animals and human beings. Around the edge are the remains of bronze working. It probably dates to around 1100 BC. Loughnashade, 150 metres to the east, is the small remnant of a much larger pool where, again, offerings were made, including, at around 100 BC, four fine La Tène decorated trumpets. The hilltop enclosure, Haughey's Fort, lies 1400 metres due West and may be contemporary with the King's Stables (Mallory *et al.* 1996).

These places, then, are part of the ancient landscape, although until the last few years they were not often visited. Even so, most Irish people know about Emain Macha. They know because the stories about the great heroes and heroines of Ulster – Macha, Conchobar, CúChulainn, Deirdre of the Sorrows, the knights of the Red Branch – are grounded in this place. Here, at Emain Macha, CúChulainn's father raised the alarm that Ulster was being invaded; here, on the ramparts, Deirdre encountered her lover; here, below the hill, were the playing fields of the young warriors (Mallory 1985; 1997: 202–6). The stories wrapped around this place were retold down the centuries in quite different contexts. First, they were part of an oral tradition. Then, sometime between the seventh and twelfth centuries, and for their own particular reasons, the early Christian Fathers wrote them down. Later, they lapsed from popular memory and were replaced by stories of fairies and bewitchings up on the hill. Then, in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they re-emerged, were reinvented, as part of the Gaelic revival, itself part of the emergent Irish Nationalist movement (Graham 1994; Turpin 1995). In more recent times CúChulainn, the Hound of Ulster, has been torn apart across the sectarian divide. On the one hand, his statue stands, proudly commemorating the Easter uprising of 1916, in the GPO building in Dublin. Like some latter-day saint, his bronze toe has been rubbed smooth by constant touching. On the other, he figures in the paramilitary murals not only on the gable ends of Loyalist buildings in Belfast, but, equally, on the gable ends in the Bogside area of Republican Derry (Turpin 1995).

THE THREAT TO EMAIN MACHA

In the 1980s Emain Macha came under threat. It was not the site itself that was threatened, for that had a protection order, but the adjoining landscape. The threat came from a gigantic extension of the nearby quarry. There had been small-scale limestone quarries in the neighbourhood since the early nineteenth century. By the 1960s the quarries were being exploited on a completely different scale and by the 1970s the 30-metre deep quarry face had encroached to within 40 metres of the pre-historic bank and ditch. In 1984, after his application to quarry all of his adjacent landholding (55 hectares) had been rejected, the quarry owner submitted, with the tacit consent of the planning service and the Historic Monuments branch of the Department of the Environment, a request to quarry an area of 13.75 hectares.³ This would eventually have resulted in about a third of the perimeter of Emain Macha being flanked by a steep quarry face.

Why did Historic Monuments go along with this request? Partly because in Northern Ireland they are under the umbrella of the Department of the Environment, which also houses the (larger) Mines and Minerals branch. Partly because, in the face of high unemployment in the area,⁴ the Conservative government at Westminster had sent instructions that planning permission should, wherever possible, be granted. And partly because both the legislation protecting pre-historic monuments and the way in which archaeologists think about and excavate such

monuments is site-specific (Evans 1998). The pre-historic landscape, and the movement and connectedness between places, were outside the archaeologists' remit.

In January 1985 the application went to the District Council. The quarry owner must have thought he would be given the go-ahead. He had played the employment card, the Department of the Environment seemed to be on his side, he was a Unionist related by marriage to an Official Unionist MP, and the majority of people on the District Council were Unionists.

Predictably, after heated discussion, the Council voted along sectarian lines. Eleven Unionists voted in favour of the quarry extension, six Nationalists and one Independent voted against. One Unionist – bravely – crossed the divide (*Ulster Gazette*, 17 January 1985).⁵ Despite the vote, the quarry owner was in trouble. Archaeologists from Belfast, led by Jim Mallory and Tom McNeil from Queen's University and Richard Warner from the Ulster Museum, had raised the alarm. Thirty-three objections had been tabled. In the face of mounting clamour, the Minister for the Environment for Northern Ireland (and head of the Department of the Environment) conceded a public enquiry.

THE SAVE NAVAN CAMPAIGN

The Belfast archaeologists had to move fast. They set up The Friends of Navan campaign group. To win, they had to get cross-sectarian public support and raise money to cover heavy legal costs. The trouble was that the Nationalists (or Republicans) had laid claim to all things Irish: landscape, language, culture and history. In their accounts the Protestant Unionists/Loyalists were always the outsiders and oppressors. The Protestant Unionists/Loyalists, partly in response, partly because of their attachment to Britain, although they passionately defended their territory, rarely attempted to create a history of *longue durée* or even a gut sense of place. Instead, they created a legitimizing history that focused on events like the 1641 Rebellion, or the 1689 Siege of Derry, or the 1690 Battle of the Boyne (Graham 1994).

The campaigners had to persuade all sides that Navan/Emain Macha mattered. They stressed its uniqueness, its place in oral traditions, and the importance of the surrounding ritual landscape. They also insisted that the site, long predating both the Troubles and the plantations, should be seen as part of Ur-Ireland and as such should be protected by every Irish person. At the same time they stressed that the heroines and heroes of Emain Macha were the rulers and defenders of Ulster. Since both Unionists and Nationalists, whatever their fundamental differences, feel strongly about the Province, they must fight alongside each other to save Ulster's pre-history.⁶

In many ways the campaign spearheaded by the archaeologists was both astute and successful. They gained the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop and the Protestant Primate, they got the support of both Unionist- and Nationalist-led District Councils and they lobbied across the political spectrum. From very early

on, not just the Republican but also the Unionist newspapers came out on their side.

But what is interesting is that while both Unionists and Nationalists, or Loyalists and Republicans, supported the campaign, they did not accept the campaign's attempt to create a united history of the *longue durée*. Rather, they created decidedly contemporary narratives, part shared, part different. Both sides railed against the English for neglecting and marginalizing the province and its history. Both sides insisted on the world importance of the site. The Catholic *Armagh Parish Bulletin* (January 1985) fulminated: 'Would any proposal of a destructive nature be even entertained in relation, say, to Stonehenge, which is of much lesser historic importance?' The Unionist *Belfast Telegraph* (25 January 1985) described the modest green hill of Emain Macha as: 'Ulster's Stonehenge, Parthenon, Troy and Camelot all rolled into one.' But, beyond that, the histories diverged and were often exclusionary, particularly in the hands of the more extreme ends of the political spectrum. Thus, even before the District Council meeting, a Unionist paper, while insisting that the site must be protected by 'all people of Ulster, regardless of political or religious persuasion', went on to give their particular gloss on its past:

Here was a kingdom ... that was the last to surrender to such invaders as the Gaels, Scythians and Normands, and kept itself to itself, separate from the rest of Ireland ... The time has come for us to say thus far and no further, or to use an old Ulster saying 'Not an Inch'.

(*South Belfast Post*, 10 January 1985).

'Not an Inch' is, of course, a Loyalist war cry.

Meanwhile a Sinn Féin leader threatened to lead a sit-in: 'The preservation and care of Navan fort is ... not a matter which can be left in the hands of eleven bigoted councillors.' He made it clear that he had 'little faith in Chris Patten's [Minister for Northern Ireland] Inquiry – given the destruction wrought on our Irish culture and heritage by his countrymen down the years' (reported in the *Ulster Gazette*, February 1985).

The Ulster UDA, a Loyalist paramilitary organization, shortly followed by the Young Unionists, weighed in with a more extreme version of Ulster's pre-history:

Long before the invasion of Erin (Ireland) by the Northern Spanish tribe of the Gaels, there lived in the North of our country, in the kingdom of Ulster ... , the original inhabitants of our emerald isle. ... They were known to the Ancient Greeks as 'Pretani' and from this word are derived both the word 'Cruthin' and 'Briton' ... It is from these people that we receive our heritage, to which we have every historical right, for from them we can trace a direct line of descent ...

The Cruthinic Northern Kingdom of Ulster has always had a separate and distinct identity ... Cuchulain ... gives every Ulsterman cause to remember him with pride for it was he who defeated the Men of the South again and again ... Eventually however, after centuries of fighting ... the Kingdom of Ulster ...

fell ... [The] power of the Cruthin was moved to Dun-da-Lethglass [Downpatrick] and it is from this line of kings that our present monarchy is directly descended.

For hundreds of years the Gael has stolen our heritage and because they claimed it for their own we refused to identify ourselves with it. A Sinn Fein picket is planned These men stole Navan from us by force in the past, now they are attempting to steal it with words, they cannot be given the chance to claim for themselves something that is ours by right.

(*Young Unionist*, Vol. 1 1985)

These are cribbed versions of Ian Adamson's rather more subtle revision of Unionist history (Adamson 1991).

There were attempted mediations. From south of the border, the historian Liam de Paor tried to rework a non-exclusionary Unionist identity:

You are not passers-by, sojourning in Ulster for a day, or a century The Plantation is long enough ago, but your ancestors were in Ulster long, long before The narrow channel that divides Northern Ireland from Northern Britain has been crossed and recrossed endlessly down the millennia ... [Navan Fort] represents a past from which we all come It is, or should be, common ground.

(de Paor 1985)

The non-sectarian publication *Peace by Peace* (April 1985) put the argument somewhat differently. Yes, Emain Macha was the centre of a specifically Ulster civilization. Yes, the Ulster Cycle is all about conflict between Ulster and the rest of the island. But, instead of being a blueprint for sectarian divisions, Emain Macha could be a blueprint for a recognition that:

[T]here have always been divisions ... population shifts and shifts of allegiance ... , there is no single 'Irish' tradition or community or tribe. ... No one [tradition] is more legitimate or historically valid than any other ... No group ... has any right to claim they are the true people of Ireland or people of Ulster [W]e all have a right to be here.

And so it went on – different pasts subsumed, rewritten and marshalled in the legitimization of many different presents.

For three months the discussion was contained within Ireland. With only a month to go before the enquiry, the quality British papers finally took note. They supported the campaign, but did no more than repeat the press releases provided by the Friends of Navan. Only John Collis, in a magisterial editorial, took the argument a step further. Rather than focusing on the politics of Ulster, he turned the spotlight on the politics of archaeology. Archaeologists, he said, not only had a duty to explain their findings to the public, they should act as a pressure group to

influence how their own society develops. That intervention, he cautioned, 'may lead to conflict with the existing political establishment' (Collis 1985).

The campaign marshalled massive support. It should also be noted that it was an auspicious moment for such cross-sectarian action. The Unionists felt that they had been betrayed by Westminster; the Nationalists recognized that many people in the Republic were no longer interested in fighting for a unified Ireland and had, instead, turned towards Europe. Thus, across the sectarian divide there was a sense that their place and their identity was indeed in Ulster rather than in either Britain or a united Ireland. They could fight the campaign alongside each other because, though they might be Cruthin or Celt, they were at the same time, and more importantly, Ulstermen ('men' advisedly; in nearly all the commentaries hardly a woman's voice was to be heard).

The Public Inquiry lasted twenty-two days and cost over £500 000. The chairperson was less than even-handed. The inquiry found in favour of the quarry owner. But by this time the cause had gained such momentum, with calls to the Minister from all parties, and questions in Westminster, that the Minister was forced to refuse the findings and overturn the planning consent.

THE POLITICS OF HERITAGE

The logic of this decision was that, if Emain Macha was so important, it must surely merit a major visitor centre. At the Public Inquiry Historic Monuments had said that they had intended, ever since 1982, to build one. The Northern Irish Tourist Board predicted that with proper marketing there could be 70–100 000 visitors a year (*The Irish News*, 27 August 1985). The Friends of Navan Campaigners suggested that the American International Fund could be targeted since it promoted schemes in the Border Counties to create employment and promote reconciliation. A heritage centre at Navan, they suggested, could be a flagship of peace. Six years, and £4 million later, the Navan at Armagh Centre was opened. Has it worked? What does 'a flagship of peace' look like? Have the tourists arrived? The short answer is 'no', or 'not enough'.

The feasibility study for the Centre worked on the premise that it would attract 180 000 visitors a year by the millennium, and that it could break even at 80 000. These figures include not just ordinary visitors but all the schoolchildren associated with the education programmes. To put it mildly, the figures were wildly optimistic. The population of Northern Ireland is 1.5 million, while the population of the Republic is something over 4 million. The uneasy cease-fire has meant that people from overseas, who plan their holidays ahead of time, have not put Northern Ireland on their itinerary. People from the Republic of Ireland have more flexibility – Ulster is at most a few hours away – but they are hypersensitive to cease-fire 'blips'. The cease-fire is always particularly vulnerable during the Marching Season, and County Armagh is always the most vulnerable of places. A bomb at Markethill, a few cars burnt out in Armagh City, things that local people tend to call 'a bit of nonsense' (though the bombing of Omagh would not be so lightly dismissed), and,

right at the opening of the summer season, the visitor figures tumble. The result: where they need 80 000 to break even, the figures hover around 50 000.

The Centre receives no money towards running costs. There may be a political dimension to this. For despite the cross-sectarian support during the campaign, and despite the best intentions of the people running the Centre, there remains an ingrained reluctance on the Unionist side to see it as their place, their heritage:

We just haven't been able to convince the Unionist people to start thinking beyond the fifteenth century type of thing ... As soon as you mention to a northern Protestant anything to do with Celts or Gaelic language they immediately associate that with being nationalistically green.

(Sutherland, pers. comm.)

The Centre will not go under – politically, there is too much at stake. But the problems at the Centre are not only to do with the politics of tourism. They have to do with the politics of presentation.

THE FLAGSHIP OF PEACE?

The pre-historic site is still in the guardianship of Historic Monuments. Until recently they presented, by way of three modest plaques on site, a conservative, academic interpretation that was difficult for those that did not have the 'right' knowledge to understand. The information offered had little to say about the connection between site and landscape. It failed to link site and interpretative Centre. And it had nothing at all to say about how past and present were connected. Even the quarry, lying right alongside, was totally ignored. There remained a strong sense that Historic Monuments was committed to preservation rather than communication. As one of their spokespeople mused: 'All these people getting interested in the site – I'm not sure it's a good thing' (pers. comm., October 1987). The plaques have now been removed, but nothing has been put in their place (Mallory, pers. comm.).

The Navan at Armagh Centre is obviously more dynamic. Its specific aims are to help people understand the pre-historic complex, encourage archaeological research, and foster a non-sectarian sense of heritage and place. Leaving aside for the purposes of this paper the question of archaeological research, the question remains as to how successful it has been in achieving its other goals.

The building is imaginative. Designed by a Northern Irish firm, it is made to look as though it were built into a mound. Entering down a stone-lined passage, the doors glide open on to a central circular hall with tall timbers somewhat evocative of a chiefly house. The rooms beyond swirl round each other as though part of an Iron Age La Tène design. But there are problems. On the one hand, despite the designers' best intentions, the building remains site-locked. It does not open to the landscape. And on the other, the building is almost too modest, and has little inbuilt flexibility. There is no room for exhibitions to 'grow', or for temporary or travelling

exhibitions that might respond to changing ideas, changing events, visitors' questions and so on.

In the thinking about what should be included, and what should happen in the Centre a radical split was created between the exhibition and audio-visuals into which the money was poured, and the much more modestly funded education programme. I believe it is this split that, more than anything, undermines the intention to create a 'flagship of peace' or a 'non-sectarian sense of heritage and place'.

The exhibition – big, expensive and static – is for adults and adults with children. Like the placards up on the hill, it avoids any consideration of a present past or the politics of the past. Rather, the past is over and done with, is objective, is 'facts'. After a short introductory video, the main exhibition, designed by an English company, is entitled 'The Real World'. More than half is about 'The Archaeologist as Detective'. Adrift from archaeological ideas or interpretation, or even the site of Emain Macha, it focuses on archaeological techniques. After 'The Detective' (who could be anywhere), the exhibition finally focuses on the site: the excavator, the excavation, the finds. One small innovative flickering diorama evokes the events up on the hill and offers an interesting and thought-provoking interpretation.⁷ But it is no more than a side-show. In the last part of the exhibition, a watery invocation of the rituals surrounding the votive pools within the larger landscape somehow fails to evoke.

Having passed through 'The Real World', the visitor enters the audio-visual auditorium, to see 'The Other World' – a blood and thunder rendition of the myths and legends of parts of the Ulster Cycle. You can like or dislike the images and stories in The Other World. Brett labelled them 'neo romantic verging on Celto-kitsch', and there are rather a lot of wild mountains, sunsets, fierce warriors, beautiful maidens and blood (Brett 1994). But that is a question of taste, and the children certainly seem to enjoy it. That is not where the problem lies. What is missing, in both 'The Real' and the 'Other World', is any attempt to discuss the way in which the past is interpreted and used, or its significance within a contemporary setting. Nor is there any attempt to create spaces for visitors to react and argue.

Where these things do happen, and where they work, is in the education programme. This is overtly political. Groups of children drawn from Protestant and Catholic schools are taken up on the hill together. They look towards the town of Armagh and are shown the two cathedrals of St Patrick – one Catholic, one Protestant. They are told how St Patrick built his church at Armagh in face of the pagan centre of Emain Macha. They talk about what they see in the landscape, including the quarry, and they talk about their own landscapes and what they remember about them. It is all about getting the children to experience a sense of place and belonging, about thinking about and taking responsibility for the landscape and environment. There are, as always, questions that might be asked – such as what about children who, for whatever reason, do not feel 'rooted', or who, coming from deprived urban backgrounds, do not resonate to this bucolic scenery. Children that come from:

The duplicated Protestant and Catholic cities of Belfast and Derry, [with] their heavily protected and often-bombed centres ... [or the] dreary monotonous

plantation and landlord towns, disfigured by security barriers and fortified stations.

(Graham 1994)

But these are questions that, within a flexible programme, can be addressed.

ENTERTAINMENT OR EDUCATION?

The divide between adult 'entertainment' and children's 'education' needs urgent attention. This divide is commonplace, and is, perhaps, particularly entrenched in Northern Ireland. Adults are assumed to be set in their attitudes. Children can be (re)educated – they are the hope for the future. But the reality is otherwise. People of all ages – as the current peace process has made abundantly clear – constantly rethink their positions and their relationships with others. If Emain Macha is to be a 'flagship of peace' it should aid this development by helping people to understand some of the processes by which they come to create a sense of place and of self.

The exhibition should therefore question the taken-for-granted divide between the 'Real' and the 'Other' world. It should show that the 'Real World' is sieved through the understanding of the archaeologist, just as the 'Other World' was sieved through the understanding of the Christian Fathers.⁸ Both 'Real' and 'Other' are made meaningful within the conditions of their time (Lambkin 1994; Mallory 1997: 200–01; Bender 1998). The exhibition should talk about myth-making – not as something that other people once did or that 'primitive' people still do, but as something that we all do. Myths are as vital to existence as food and water; they form part of people's sense of who they are and where they belong. The exhibition could take the myth of CúChulainn and show how it resonated within different contexts – pre-historic, medieval, as part of the late nineteenth/early twentieth-century rhetoric and politics, and in the contemporary murals on the gable-ends of Belfast and Derry.

The exhibition should make the link between the way in which we understand and interpret past places and landscapes and the way we think about and engage with contemporary ones. It should make people critically aware that both history and landscape are relative – how you engage with them depends on who you are and where you are situated.

The exhibition should also create space for people to talk back, and talk to each other. As Gaynor Kavanagh put it:

Where [museums] omit, they legitimise omission. Where they divide experience, they sanction division. In contrast, where they ask questions, they can encourage questions. Where they offer explorations, they can promote explorative thinking.

(Kavanagh 1990: 127)

Archbishop Tutu came to Northern Ireland and said that if the peace process held there would be more, not less, need for a process of ‘truth and reconciliation’. People would have to find ways, and places, in which to express their sense of what has happened and of who they are. The Centre could play a part in this process; it could indeed be a flagship. And the archaeologists could be there, trying, alongside everyone else, to understand what Mary Robinson meant when she said, ‘In a complex present there can be no simple past’. They could help make redundant the famous line from Seamus Heaney’s poem – ‘Whatever you say, say nothing’ (Heaney 1990: 78).

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NOTES

- 1 Drumlin is the Gaelic word for hump. The drumlin belt, which stretches between the County Down coast and Donegal, creates a major physical divide. Estyn Evans, the great Ulster geographer, believed that it was an important ingredient in the creation of a separate Ulster identity (Evans 1970).
- 2 Since 1969, 419 people have been killed in Armagh County. A quarter of the army’s fatalities (113 people) occurred there. The Troubles actually started in Armagh City. During a civil rights march in 1969 the B Specials opened fire. A Catholic, minding his own business as he came out of the pub, was killed. That night there were riots and the linen factory was set on fire.
- 3 Later, the DoE denied that there had been any ‘cosy agreement’, but, in fact, they not only coloured in the area that the quarry owner should apply for, but attached a note concerning the suggested area to the notice of refusal issued in 1984. As the quarry owner’s counsel at the inquiry put it, they ‘had given him the nod’ (*Ulster Gazette*, 13 June 1985).
- 4 Claims concerning the number employed were infinitely elastic. In reality, the numbers were small, and employment at the quarry was seasonal. The quarry owner maintained that although the quarry did no business during January and February, and therefore only ten men were employed during those months, nonetheless at the height of the busy season he employed between fifty and sixty men at the quarry (*Ulster Gazette*, 2 February 1985). The local residents insisted that the quarry was closed from November to March (*Ulster Gazette*, February 1985), and The Friends of Navan suggested that, in reality, the number employed was twenty-three, and of those, nine were taken on after the inquiry was launched (McNeill *et al.* 1986).
- 5 The dissenting DUP councillor’s message was contradictory. On the one hand, he maintained that ‘the matter’ (of preserving the landscape) had no sectarian connotations; on the other, he evoked, with passion, a very particular past:

This historic site ... [was the] headquarters of the Red Branch Knights of Ulster and [was] associated with the province’s greatest champion ... CúChulainn, who died at the Gap O’ the

North bravely opposing the invaders of Ulster ... These same forces subsequently ... destroyed Emain Macha ... and over-ran Ulster.

(*Ulster Gazette*, 17 January 1985)

- 6 What was not stressed in this narrative is that there are relatively few sites in Ireland that date to the last millennium BC and yet this is a vital period for those interested in questions about the Irish language or Celtic invasion/diffusion (Mallory 1985). These issues were too volatile, too loaded towards a Nationalist sense of identity, to be helpful in creating a non-sectarian sense of the past.
- 7 The display is based on the very innovative work of Chris Lynn. He has suggested that the form and layout of the great structure may symbolize the binding together of many parts (timber/priests, stone/warriors and soil/cultivators), with a dominant element (the great post/the king) in the centre. Or/and the great central post may have been the *axis mundi* that linked the under-ground (in Indo-Aryan cosmography, the producers) with the surface (the warriors) and the sky (the priests). The firing of the building is equally symbolic – the Laws of Ireland relate that the ruler is ‘the cauldron that cooks together every raw thing’ (Lynn 1992; Waterman 1997: 229).
- 8 The medieval Christian Fathers appropriated the pagan mythology – which often sat quite easily with their own – and reworked it. In the story in Aided Conchobuir, Conchobar is portrayed as Ireland’s first Christian, the foster-brother (comatta) of Jesus. The way their version goes, Conchobar, on hearing the news of the crucifixion, underwent a dramatic conversion – the blood that burst from his head with Mesegra’s brain effectively baptized him (Lambkin 1994).

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16 *Making news out of archaeological sites: the experience at Ijaye Orile, Nigeria*

C.A. FOLORUNSO

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

If we are to properly address the issue of conservation that is paramount to archaeology today, we must continually engage the general public in a useful dialogue on the subject of archaeology. If a discipline did not communicate adequately to its followers and the general public, it would not contribute to knowledge, and would not prosper or even survive.

Archaeology is an exciting scientific enterprise that deals with the fascinating history of humanity and its environment. However, archaeology depends on a limited and constantly decreasing resource base which can only be properly and adequately sustained through the support and understanding of the widest possible audience. It is also true that much of archaeological research is supported by public funds and archaeologists are therefore under an obligation to inform the general public of the results of their research. We need to generate public interest in archaeology and respond adequately to that interest. To protect basic cultural resources which are under threat of destruction, and to ensure that they receive maximum consideration and conservation will require improvements in the quality, quantity and direction of communication, both within the profession and from it to other audiences.

Archaeological preservation will be better served 'through better public understanding of archaeological interpretation and the fragility of archaeological resources' by exposing more people to archaeological investigations (McManamon 1991: 1). A programme to promote public education and awareness, and encourage public involvement in the protection and management of its cultural resources, would increase the public's enjoyment and appreciation of archaeological resources, reduce the destruction of these resources, and demonstrate and encourage good stewardship of them by the public (Brook 1992: 2). It is therefore essential that archaeological investigations should be thrown open to the public through community presentations, site visits, documentary video recordings, radio talks and feature articles in daily newspapers and weekly magazines.

PRESENTING ARCHAEOLOGY TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Making archaeology available to the general public is not without its problems. 'The study of ancient civilizations has always held a romantic fascination for people, but archaeologists often left sharing the science to writers, film makers, and other interpreters' (Osborn 1994: 15). Many efforts made in the United States of America to provide interpretation of archaeological sites for the public fail to use information generated by archaeological and archival research. This is because of the inherent differences in perspective between archaeologists and professional interpreters. There must be a balance between the desire of archaeologists to get the public to appreciate their technical information and the desire of exhibit and programme designers to provide an uncomplicated, educational yet entertaining programme (Jameson 1991: 1–4). To do this effectively, we need to understand the general public's perceptions of the past and what they would like to learn about it (Stone 1989).

In the USA, the Indiana Jones movies have done much to make archaeology a household word. There is, however, more adventure in archaeology than the sort of adventure that is the focus of the Indiana Jones films. Adventures in modern archaeology are more often and better portrayed in videos and television programmes that can be seen regularly on public stations. The *Nova* series sponsored by PBS, for example, frequently has shows on archaeological topics. So too does the *Archaeology* series, sponsored by the Archaeological Institute of America, and The Learning Channel, which has appeared regularly since 1992. Some of these television shows, like films not produced for television, are obtainable either by rent or purchase through video rental stores or film distributors (Stuart and McManamon 1996: 36).

Three points have been identified as of primary importance when presenting archaeology to the public, including tourists. The first is that 'no matter how easy or "natural" good interpretation may appear to be, the guidance of a media professional in the areas of site design and interpreter training is essential for effective public programming'. Second, 'on-site archaeological interpretation is best done by archaeologists themselves ... rather than by guides who are not members of the field crew'. Lastly 'if archaeological interpretation is not to become just another piece of the same old stuff that put us to sleep in high school, any particular interpretative moment must be a unique event, tied explicitly to its place, its time, its interpreter, and its audience' (Parker and Porter 1991: 11).

RELEVANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGY TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Archaeology is quite relevant to the public as it provides both education and entertainment and it is not new to get information on archaeological research findings from both the electronic and print media in the Western world, where public

awareness is high. We in Africa receive news on archaeological findings from the West via media agencies such as Cable Network News (CNN). While these are often re-echoed on our national electronic media, the same media show little interest in archaeological findings in our countries. Commercialization of the media houses in Nigeria means that you pay for the news you make to be transmitted. It is therefore difficult to make the general public informed of research findings of interest to them. The research was funded from individual initiatives rather than a grant. To pay a media house to broadcast the findings of such research is absolutely not feasible.

The Internet has made it even easier to diffuse archaeological information around the world for those who possess the facility. They, of course, are mostly in the Western world while we in Africa can hardly get beyond our immediate constituency, the professional/academic circle. What we often see on our electronic media are annual cultural festivals and certain ceremonies that are recognized nationally and internationally. Archaeological findings are rarely broadcast, primarily because of the very low level of archaeological research activity, which in turn is the result of non-availability of funds for research. It may seem that the past represented by the archaeological sites is dead to the public and has no relevance to them. This is not true, but the public in our own part of the world has no choice as to what they are presented with on the electronic media.

The past is not dead; it is in constant use by those of us in the present. We use it in telling stories, to validate actions, to bring to memory past events and people important to us. One of the best ways we come to understand the past is through the scientific investigation of archaeological sites, collections and data (Kennedy 1994: 3). 'Places can teach!' Archaeological sites located throughout a region reflect nearly every part of its history 'including aspects not well represented in textbooks. The information on local communities is especially rich' (Osborn 1994: 18). The numerous legends and traditions told by the various African peoples can be validated or refuted through archaeological findings, and those peoples will definitely be interested in findings which add to their knowledge of their own history.

Archaeology has a lot to offer the public through stories 'about how our ancestors adapted to the different climates, different landscapes, and different family arrangements. There's a unique association with the past when we stand at the very spot where people lived and laughed and cried centuries ago' (Knudson 1994: 5). The archaeological record offers evidence that the peoples we are told about and read about were actually born, were confronted with problems and challenges and, as Knudson puts it, 'solved problems, prospered or declined, and lived through it'. It gives information about how the climate varied, how plants and animals changed, and how people adapted. This is invaluable information for the general public, when we seek to cope with today's changing environment, but the dry scientific details need to be converted into an everyday language narrative for the public to benefit directly (*ibid.*).

It was with these arguments in mind that we undertook our attempt at making available news of the archaeological research work we are undertaking at Ijaye Orile, a historic Yoruba town of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF IJAYE ORILE

Ijaye Orile is located in the Akinyele local government area of Oyo State in south-western Nigeria. It came to prominence in the geopolitical arrangement of nineteenth-century Yorubaland. Ijaye was originally an Egba Yoruba settlement, lying near the northern tip of the Egba forest and close to the limits of the oil palm belt. It was a part of Gbagura province in the days before the Egba Yoruba congregated and founded Abeokuta. Ijaye did not draw much attention until the fall of the Oyo Empire and the capture of its capital by the Fulani in about 1822 (Smith 1962: 329). It is, however, recorded that before his accession Alafin [King] Abiodun of Oyo had quarrelled with the son of the *Bale* (ruler) of Ijaye and that one of Abiodun's first actions on becoming king (c. 1775) was to order the destruction of the town (Johnson 1921: 187).

With the defeat of the Oyo army by the Fulani, many Oyo left their homes in the savannah country between the forest and the Niger and founded new settlements, mainly in the area between Osbomosho to the north and Ibadan to the south. Ikoyi, a town just north of Ogbomosho, had been raiding the farms of Ijaye. After Ikoyi fell to the Fulani, a remnant of the Oyo army commanded by a number of its chiefs, led by the redoubtable warrior Kurunmi, captured Ijaye. From this time Ijaye became an Oyo town. Many of the former inhabitants took refuge among their Egba brethren who had preceded them to Abeokuta. The fame of Ijaye's warrior ruler Kurunmi grew. Alafin Atiba, who had built the capital of his kingdom at present-day Oyo in 1839, conferred the title of Aare-Ona Kakanfo, or *generalissimo* of the kingdom, on Kurunmi (Smith 1962: 332–4).

Ijaye gained its importance from the roads passing through and radiating out from it. With the founding of Abeokuta and Ibadan the position of Ijaye as a communication centre was enhanced since both the Abeokuta–Oyo route and the Ibadan–Oyo route passed through the town. The defence of the Alafin's kingdom now rested on Ijaye and Ibadan. Ijaye was charged with the defence of the western frontiers against the menace from Dahomey, while the latter was responsible for warding off the Fulani attacks from the north (Smith 1962: 330–4).

The 1840s witnessed the beginning of the Christian missions in Yorubaland and the importance of Ijaye made it an early objective, despite the despotic reputation of its ruler Kurunmi. Missionaries visited Ijaye from 1852 and both Anglican and Baptist orders established mission stations there in 1853. The Baptist missionary work in Nigeria actually started in Ijaye (Smith 1962: 335).

The Revd Townsend of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) visited Ijaye in 1852 and estimated its population at about 40 000. He was impressed by the arrangement and level streets of the town, and he claimed the spacious market place at its centre was the best he had seen in Africa. The Baptist minister R.H. Stone, who took up residence in Ijaye in 1859, estimated the population at about 100 000 and was equally impressed by the market where, according to him, caravans from the interior and the coast met to exchange goods. The traders were mainly Muslim and Stone claimed to have encountered a Persian missionary of Islam in Ijaye. Stone described Kurunmi's compound as vast, containing many

storerooms filled with goods and accommodation for his 300 wives and 1000 slaves. Ijaye was well fortified. It had a wall of earth and ditch, and an encircling belt of forest. Narrow paths through the forest led to the gates (Smith 1962: 336–7).

Kurunmi of Ijaye was involved in a squabble with the Alafin Adelu of Oyo and the latter invited Ibadan to bring Kurunmi to order. A long-drawn-out war between Ijaye and Ibadan culminated in the destruction of Ijaye in 1862. The aged Kurunmi had earlier lost five sons in a battle and later died brokenhearted. Ijaye had been abandoned by its principal ally, Abeokuta, resulting in the destruction of the town in the night of 17 March 1862. The following day, the Ibadan army entered Ijaye and set it on fire. A party of Ijaye warriors fled to Abeokuta where they were assigned a part of the town still known as Ago Ijaye. The Revd G.F. Buhler, a CMS missionary, visited the ruined town of Ijaye in December 1862, eight months after its fall. He wrote that, although he had visited Ijaye twice before, he could not recognize it, and that he had never seen the work of destruction so complete. Ibadan had declared that Ijaye must never be rebuilt and it was not until more than thirty years later that a move was made to resettle at Ijaye (Smith 1962: 346–7).

IJAYE TODAY

Today, the glory of Ijaye has departed, but the name of its fierce ruler has become a pious legend among the people of the town. Ijaye today is a small settlement and is hardly heard of, while its contemporaries in the nineteenth-century geopolitical and economic struggles in Yorubaland (Ibadan, Abeokuta and Oyo), still play significant roles in contemporary Nigeria.

Playwrights have researched the personality of Kurunmi, who has been dramatized on the stage. In 1990, the government of Nigeria's Oyo State set up a technical committee, of which this author was privileged to be a member, to study and propose befitting monuments in remembrance of Aare Kurunmi, the legendary nineteenth-century ruler, to be located in present-day Ijaye. During the assignment of the technical committee, some of the ruins of Ijaye came to light and an appropriate recommendation for preservation was made in the committee's report. However, because of the incessant change of government in the country, the report has not seen the light of day.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RELICS IN IJAYE

Smith (1962) stated that there were a few physical reminders of Kurunmi's Ijaye; these include the remains of the earthen wall which encircled the town, enclosing an area much greater than that of the present Ijaye. He further stated that

For much of its course the wall now runs through thick bush and at places the earth has been thrown about by cultivation, but the remains are apparently continuous and can be seen on all the roads leading from the town. The

diameter of the approximate circle formed by the wall varies from one mile to one and a half miles.

(Smith 1962: 348)

A site identified as the location of Kurunmi's palace is situated near the centre of the village, where a raised platform of earth was described by the inhabitants as the floor of the famous reception and judgement hall. A broken effigy of *Shigidi* located nearby was apparently within Kurunmi's compound. In the south-western part of the town were ruined house walls, broken pottery and numerous wells in the woods and orange groves, while the site of the Baptist mission had recently been marked by a stone monument (Smith 1962: 349).

In 1990, when the Aare Kurunmi Monument Technical Committee visited Ijaye, we were taken to the site of Kurunmi's compound. In addition to Smith's description above, we identified a walkway into the compound that was lined with big pieces of iron slag, and the outline of a circular feature in the ground. This was said to be a pillar where Kurunmi tied his horses. We were also shown several shrines and cultural materials kept by the people living today in the area of Kurunmi's compound, which were said to be relics of the nineteenth-century Ijaye. We also visited the site of the Baptist mission.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF IJAYE

Olayinka (1994) carried out a limited ethnoarchaeological reconnaissance of Ijaye and reported some archaeological features outside the area covered by present Ijaye. He located parts of the ditch and embankment that encircled old Ijaye, an ash mound to the south-west of the village and several hollows on a rock outcrop located north of the village.

In 1996 Ijaye served as field school for the various levels of archaeology students of the University of Ibadan and further, but limited, reconnaissance and excavations were carried out.

About three mounds, other than the one Olayinka (1994) reported, were identified to the south-west of the village, while features already reported were visited. The 1998 field school located the area where Smith (1962) had reported ruined house walls and numerous wells.

EXCAVATIONS IN IJAYE

Two massive mounds among those identified to the south-west of the village (designated Mounds 1 and 2) were chosen for excavation. Mounds 1 and 2 cover an area of approximately 2641.5 and 1699.2 square metres. The highest points are about 2.70 and 1.50 metres above the surrounding ground surface. Three test pits were dug in Mound 1, but only one test pit in Mound 2. The depth attained in Mound 1 varied from 1.20 to 1.50 metres. The mound was found to contain a lot of ash. In Mound 2 the excavation revealed something more unusual. Big, unbroken

pots were found placed one upon another. This led to several extensions of the excavation, as more of the pots were uncovered. It then became obvious that we had uncovered a workshop site that was hurriedly abandoned and later covered intact by sedimentation. Ethnographic evidence suggests the site might have been a dye-making or soap-making workshop (Folorunso n.d.).

PUBLIC INTERPRETATION AND THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Once the workshop site had been uncovered, we were in possession of materials that could be of interest to the general public, in view of the historical importance of Ijaye. Aside from the question of interpreting the site's function, we were also faced with the problem of determining the period we were dealing with. Did the features belong to pre-Kurunmi times or to the Kurunmi period in Ijaye (Folorunso and Olayinka 1997)?

We strongly felt that our findings at Ijaye should be brought to public attention, to arouse interest in archaeology and local history. A student whose parents had good links at the National Television Authority's headquarters in Lagos undertook to get the producer or presenter of *Newsline*, a popular national weekly magazine programme, interested in the archaeological findings at Ijaye. For our part, we wrote to three television stations, including the local NTA station in Ibadan, inviting them to visit the site. None of the stations responded to our invitation. We did a follow-up through a reliable and close contact who was a senior member of staff at the NTA local station in Ibadan. We then got to know that the producer/presenter of *Newsline* had requested the Ibadan station to record the site and send the recording to him in Lagos. The problem, however, was that the local station could not provide transportation to the site. We therefore provided our own transport for the television crew.

COMMERCIALIZATION?

The crew met us still digging on site. They were excited by both the procedure of digging and the finds. The recording started and of course the first question asked was, how did we know something was buried underground at the site? We explained the methods used to identify and locate sites. Another thing that seemed curious to the television crew was why and how we dug with small implements like the trowel. Again we explained that excavation has to be systematic for proper recording of the contexts of finds to be made. Of course this sounded incredible to them. They then asked how old the site was and what took place there. We explained that we would not be in a position to give a definite answer until scientific methods were used to date some of the finds. The site might have been abandoned when Kurunmi's forces took over Ijaye from the Egba Yoruba settlers in about 1830, or when Ibadan destroyed Ijaye in 1862. If we took the earlier period, we estimated the workshop to be about 200 years old. They then interviewed two

students to discover how they were enjoying their training as archaeologists and their plans for the future after graduating. The students replied that they were excited by the training they were receiving and identified various opportunities in public establishments where they could be employed.

The story of the excavation and the interview on site were relayed twice in one evening, about two days after recording, in the news broadcast to seven states of the Federation of Nigeria in both English and Yoruba. Within three days the same story and interviews appeared on the national network news broadcast to all the states of the federation, but this time in English alone.

The feedback from the television broadcast was enormous. The response on the university campus was immediate, as colleagues and students from other disciplines came to ask questions. Those who knew nothing about archaeology started to learn about the subject. Outside the university campus people accosted us in public places such as banking halls and asked questions. Relations of colleagues in the department made phone calls to congratulate them on the research findings. But most importantly, some parents came to the department to inquire about the requirements for admission to study archaeology. There is no doubt that more people now know about archaeology in Nigeria through the news of the findings at Ijaye.

If resources and support are available, we plan to produce a documentary film, similar to Basil Davidson's documentary films, *Out of Africa*, which are occasionally broadcast by a private local television station in Ibadan. Such a documentary would have a greater impact than the *Out of Africa* series since the subject would be local history and the names of sites and personalities would be familiar to the audience. The goal would be to provide archaeological evidence for some of the oral traditions and legends, thereby giving people a better insight into their own history. In the specific case of Ijaye, it would be a good exercise in building public awareness of archaeology to provide a reconstruction and audio-visual documentation of the landscape of the settlement during the various periods of its history.

CONCLUSION

Before the broadcast on Ijaye, the archaeological finding of a canoe at Dufuna in the Yobe basin of north-eastern Nigeria was reported on the network news but, without pictures, the impact was not great. After the broadcast on Ijaye, archaeological findings from colonial sites at Zungeru in northern Nigeria were also reported on the network news. It is hoped that if more and more archaeological findings are brought to public view, we shall succeed in generating public interest and support for the discipline as well as the management of cultural resources.

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17 *The changing use of worship in Roman and medieval Córdoba*

JOHN EDWARDS

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Dr Peter Scales, historian, archaeologist, Arabist, Hispanist.

INTRODUCTION

Each year, on Palm Sunday, at the beginning of *Semana Santa*, the Holy Week in which the Roman Catholic Church commemorates the last days of Jesus' life as a man on earth, a procession enters the cathedral of Córdoba. For half a millennium the cathedral had been a mosque. The city's bishop blesses the palms to be carried in the procession inside the Puerta del Perdón ('gate of pardon'), at the foot of the Baroque tower which, in the words of a current guidebook, encloses the minaret of Abd al-Rahman I 'like an almond in its shell' (Castejón 1988: 17). Clergy and congregation then proceed southwards, across the Patio de los Naranjos ('courtyard of orange-trees'), in which the channels of water once used by Muslim worshippers for their ritual ablutions are still visible, and into the Mezquita-Catedral (still commonly referred to in Córdoba as 'the mosque' rather than 'the cathedral') through a Christian-built porch, the Puerta de las Palmas ('palm door'). The procession then weaves its way past medieval, Renaissance and Baroque side-chapels, under a forest of Islamic arches, into a sixteenth-century sanctuary with eighteenth-century choir stalls.

Ever since the early nineteenth century, when foreign travellers began to romanticize and publicize 'Muslim Spain', the attention of both scholars and tourists has tended to focus on Córdoba's long association with the three faiths of Abraham, or 'religions of the book'—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In particular, attention has been focused on the Mezquita-Catedral, which was built on the foundations of the Christian church of St Vincent, and was turned once again into a cathedral, now dedicated to St Mary, when the Castilians captured the city in 1236. The Córdoba art historian, Alberto Villar Movellán expresses the conventional view: 'This medieval episode has remained particularly engraved in the memory of Córdoba, because it is in effect in the Middle Ages, in the tenth century, that the city reached

the culminating point of its long history' (Puchol Caballero 1992: 9). Whatever the truth of this, the period since its capture in AD 711 by Muslim invaders from North Africa led by Tarik, has seen an almost constant shifting and adaptation of places of public worship. Yet new archaeological work, following on from efforts which had been made since the eighteenth century, is clearly demonstrating that the story of Córdoba began much earlier, in pre-Roman times.

THE PRE-ROMAN ERA

The search for a 'native' Iberian Córdoba, pre-dating the permanent Roman settlement of the second quarter of the second century BC, was begun in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Recent excavations, by J.F. Murillo, D. Vaquerizo and others, have confirmed the hypotheses of Ruano (1760) and Sánchez de Feria (1772), that the early Turditanian town was located to the west of the medieval royal castle, in the Huerta del Alcázar. Unfortunately, the modern development of the area is both interfering with archaeological layers and making anything more than rapid 'rescue' excavations impossible. In any case, the current consensus is that life continued in the urban settlement of Iberian Córdoba up to its definitive abandonment at the beginning of the first century BC. Before the Roman settlement existed, the Iberian town already had military and communications roles, dominating, as it did, the most viable crossing point on the middle reaches of the Guadalquivir, and trade-routes on the north-south and east-west axes. It seems probable, however, that some settlement to the north-east, on the 'terrace', or higher ground which dominated the Roman and medieval crossing of the Guadalquivir, had taken place before the foundation of the Roman colony. Thus, as Strabo wrote in his *Geography*, native Iberians always formed part of Roman Córdoba, though no conclusive evidence of pre-Roman worship sites has so far been produced (Puchol Caballero 1992: 19-32; Murillo and Vaquerizo 1996: 37-47; Murillo *et al.* 1997: 47; Scales 1997: 178).

ROMAN CÓRDOBA

The proconsul Marcus Claudius Marcellus came twice to Hispania, in 169-8 and 152-1 BC, and, probably during the first of these visits, chose the strategic site of Córdoba for a new military and economic settlement. A mixture of native Iberians and selected Roman settlers populated the new town. It was established on the quaternary terrace above the right bank of the River Baetis (now Guadalquivir), north-east of the old town. In the Roman Republican period, 'new' Córdoba was capital of the newly created, and soon highly Romanized, province of Hispania Ulterior Baetica. It was surrounded by a wall, apparently of variable height and, with an area of about 42 hectares, was probably the biggest city in Roman Spain. Contemporary writers, including Cicero, state that by 70 BC Córdoba had been rebuilt once more, on a grander scale, with fine houses decorated with oriental carpets and tapestries, as well as (the first evidence, this, of religious activity) statues of

the goddess Victoria. No remains have yet been found of the basilica which is also mentioned by writers of the period. The first blow to Roman Córdoba came as a result of its strong support for Gnaeus Pompeius during the civil wars that were to end the Republic and bring in the Principate and Empire. Having backed the wrong side, the town was largely destroyed by a vengeful Julius Caesar in 45 BC, but this destruction was to prove to be the making of Córdoba as a governmental and cultural centre. At the time of Christ, rapid development was taking place southwards, towards the river bank. Under the Julio-Claudians, an extensive programme of public as well as private building was carried out. A good impression of the result may be gained from recent excavations in the central areas of the modern city, though these have been criticized for obliterating later Roman, Visigothic and Muslim layers of settlement (Scales 1997: 181). A further impetus towards urban development, in the first century AD, was the designation of Córdoba as a colony under the direct protection of the Roman Senate, known as the *Patres*, hence the new name of Colonia Patricia (Corduba). A new bridge, now known as the Puente Romano and still after many vicissitudes a thoroughfare, was constructed to replace the fords that had attracted settlers in previous centuries. The size of the walled area was nearly doubled, to about 78 hectares. A gap was made in the wall on the eastern side for the construction of a religious site at the entrance of the Via Augusta, now the Calle Claudio Marcelo, leading along the Decumanus Maximus to the main forum of the colony, which was partly on the site of the present-day Plaza de San Miguel. Apart from extensive private building, a sewage and drainage system was introduced and streets were paved, mainly it seems with local stone. A second forum was built on the *Cardo*, in the newly developed southern sector of the town, around the modern Alta de Santa Ana and Calle Ángel Saavedra. Aqueducts and urban water channels were built to supply the growing population. Imported marble increasingly replaced wattle and daub, and thatch, as domestic building materials. Excavated artefacts show, as might be expected in a senatorial colony, strong Romano-Italian influence – pottery, black varnish ware and Italian amphorae. Though to a lesser extent than Hispalis (Seville), Córdoba was involved in supplying olive oil to the rest of the Roman empire (Funari 1996). During this period the town also acquired a large theatre, partly on the site of the present-day Museo Arqueológico, in the Plaza Jerónimo Páez, which was comparable in size to those in Rome itself, and to which an amphitheatre and a circus were later added. It is likely that a third forum was developed in the south-western corner of the town, near the river (León 1996a: 19–26; 1996b: 12–13; Ventura 1996: 26–9; Murillo *et al.* 1997: 47–8). During the first and second centuries AD, inscription evidence indicates the existence of three temples, in the older, northern part of the Roman town. In the north-western quarter, perhaps beneath the modern Edificio del Gran Capitán, was the *Templum Tutelae*. A second-century inscription records the gift to it of a silver statue representing the common *Genii* of Córdoba and the nearby colony of Espejo. A few hundred yards to the south, on the corner of the modern Calle de Sevilla and Calle Gondomar, there is evidence of another temple, dedicated to Cibeles. It is very probable that there was also a temple, dedicated to the imperial cult, in the central forum of the

colony (León 1996a: 26–8; Murillo *et al.* 1997: 48–9). The only Córdoba temple from this period which has been fully excavated, and survives as a partially reconstructed monument, is, however, the marble edifice which is known as the ‘Temple of Claudio Marcelo’, situated at the corner of the street of the same name and the Calle Capitulares.

The ruins of the temple of Claudio Marcelo were rediscovered in 1576, when work began on clearing the site of the new Council House (*Casas Capitulares*). The proliferation of marble fragments in the area led to its already being known, in the Middle Ages, as ‘Los Marmolejos’. By the later sixteenth century, surviving sections of column were being used by the Dominican friars of the neighbouring convent of St Paul (San Pablo) to display the Stations of the Cross. Parts of a building which had evidently been dedicated to the imperial cult of the first and second centuries AD, had by early modern times become a context for a devotion to Christ’s Passion, popular in Catholic Europe from about the time that the city was captured from the Muslims in 1236. Serious excavation of the temple site began in the 1950s, under the direction of Samuel de Santos Gener, at the eastern end adjoining the Casas Capitulares. At this time, the building acquired much of its present aspect, as the architect Félix Hernández, having perceived a strong resemblance between the Córdoba temple and the Maison Carrée at Nîmes, rebuilt the *pronaos* and part of the *cella* on this basis. A later excavation, in 1985–7, failed to establish securely that the temple had been dedicated to the imperial cult, which is known to have flourished in other public spaces in Colonia Patricia. Nevertheless, Jiménez is able convincingly to compare the Córdoba temple not only with that in Nîmes but also with the temples of Apollo in the Circus and on the Palatine in Rome. The most recent recorded phase of work, in 1994–5, has revealed evidence of a change of use in the third and fourth centuries, and even a sewer running through the western portico (Jiménez 1996a: 64–9; b: 129–53).

The abandonment of the Claudio Marcelo temple, and its imperial cult, together with the reversion from Colonia Patricia to *Curduba* as the name of the city, reflected social and political changes in the Western Empire as a whole. The reign of Diocletian saw not only the end of colonial status but also the deaths of two of Córdoba’s earliest known Christian martyrs, Acisclus and Victoria. Yet archaeology, with its concentration on pagan sites, has so far provided little or no clue to the development of the Christian religion up to this time, even though, as a major Roman urban settlement, the city must surely have numbered both Christians and Jews among its inhabitants after its first-century restoration.

The best opportunity to study public religious activity in this later imperial period emerged from a grandiose public-works project of the late twentieth century, the construction of a high-speed rail link between Madrid and Seville, timed to open for the great exhibition in Seville in 1992 to commemorate Columbus’ first voyage to America. As part of the construction works in Córdoba, the entire railway layout was altered, and a new station constructed to the west of the existing one. In the process of removing the old track, it became possible to excavate the suburb (*vicus*) of Cercadilla, situated several hundred metres to the north-west of the Roman city. Although the railway station was soon built on a large part of the site

(to which another concrete monument to present times, a new bus station, is now being added) much of the site, which had formerly been in railway use, is open to view and is the subject of annual summer excavation. The southern part of the Cercadilla site, which has not been excavated because it lies under the neighbouring Avenida de América, seems to have been a semi-rural settlement when Colonia Patricia was in its prime. It was probably involved in the cultivation of olives, which dominated the valley of the Guadalquivir between Córdoba and Seville (Funari 1996). It appears that the settlement had gone into decline by the time the late imperial palace was constructed, but remains, including capitals, have been found (Hidalgo 1996a: 122–3; Scales 1997: 177–8). In the third century, public pagan worship seems still to have been flourishing, with the building of more temples in Córdoba, but the imperial cult was in decline, and city space was increasingly being converted from public to private use. A temple to Diana, built in a cheaper manner than earlier constructions, seems to have been placed in the central forum, where worship had previously been offered to the imperial family. This, in turn, was abandoned at some stage in the fourth or fifth century, the site being used for housing, as it was to be in the Muslim and medieval Christian city (León 1996b: 29; Murillo *et al.* 1997: 50).

The major discovery which has been made during recent excavation of the Cercadilla site is that, while the old walled town may have been in decline or at least transformation, a new and elaborate centre of power was emerging a mere 600 metres to the north-west, at the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth. In a recent summary of the findings, Rafael Hidalgo refers to the current debate over the meaning and use of the term *palatium*, in particular its application to Diocletian's 'palace' at Split (Trier is another relevant example). Hidalgo contends that, in the case of Cercadilla, the term 'palace' is appropriate. He goes on to make two further points: first, that spaces which might elsewhere have a domestic function seem to have been undoubtedly public in this case, with domestic service easily available from the nearby town, or else from housing developed in the intermediate area. Second, the layout of the main basilica, with its peristyle and ambulatory, indicates a type of approach to an imperial figure, or Augustus, which was soon to become associated with the ceremony of the Eastern Empire. Well into the fourth century, Córdoba retained an important administrative role, though it seems normally to have been regional officials, rather than members of the imperial family, who received homage in the basilica of Cercadilla. After Constantine's conversion, it was possible for Christianity to become fully public in Córdoba, and the emperor's mentor, Osius, who presided over the Council of Nicaea (325), was the city's bishop, and may even have visited it after the Council. Edward Gibbon comments, in his customary acerbic manner, that Osius 'preferred the pastoral care of the whole Church to the government of a particular diocese'. It seems probable, however, that the hammer of the Arians did indeed come to Córdoba, and may well have resided at what had by this time become the satellite town of Cercadilla, though Hidalgo is firmly of the opinion that the site was never an episcopal palace in this period (Gibbon [1776] 1994: 1, 743, 790, 807; Hidalgo 1996b: 235–48; Murillo *et al.* 1997: 50).

As has already been noted, Córdoba Christianity had come to prominence in the third century, with the martyrdom, among others, of Acisclus, Zoilus and the 'Three Saints' – Faustus, Genarus and Martial. The veneration of these saints seems to have brought about the establishment of churches for Acisclus and the Three Saints, though the earliest evidence of a church to commemorate Zoilus dates only from 613. The cult of the martyr Secundinus is not documented until the tenth century, at the apogee of the Caliphate of Córdoba. The basilica of St Acisclus, to the west of the Roman and medieval city, in the quarter now known as the Ciudad Jardín, was excavated in 1950 by De los Santos Gener. The basilica of the Three Saints appears to have been on or near the site of the late medieval church of San Pedro, to the east of the walled city in what became, in the Muslim period, the Ajerquía. In the 'palace' complex of Cercadilla, a further basilica was established, dedicated to St Felix, who was probably the martyr of Gerona whose relics were venerated in Córdoba. As an example of the vicissitudes through which Christianity passed in the late Roman, Visigothic and Muslim periods, in 613, during the reign of the Visigothic king Sisebut, the supposed relics of St Zoilus were transferred to St Felix's basilica. The church seems to have carried both dedications until, in about 1070, after the fall of the Caliphate, they were translated to Carrión, in Old Castile, by Fernán Gómez.

THE MUSLIM PERIOD

The fact that Cercadilla remained a Christian site well into the Muslim period has found support in the recent discovery, in the tombs which lie alongside one of the multi-absidal basilicas-cum-churches, of the episcopal ring of Abbot Samson, who was consecrated by Bishop Valentius in the church of St Zoilus, after the Council of Córdoba in 862. During this period, Spanish Christians became known as 'Mozarabs' and the church found itself in the midst of a Christian (Mozarabic) suburb to the Muslim city known as Vicus Tiraceorum (Rabad al-Tirazan in Muslim sources). The suburb very probably provided the labour force for one of the Caliph's textile factories, possibly in the large building that was excavated in 1991, by Pedro Marfil Ruiz and others, on the site of the old Córdoba railway station.

To the north of the walled Roman-Visigothic city was another basilica, the remains of which were excavated by A. Marcos Pons in 1973, on the site of the Baroque Mercedarian convent. It possibly had the same dedication as this thirteenth-century order of ransoming friars, that is, to the early fourth-century virgin martyr of Mérida, St Eulalia. Much of the best evidence of the context of public Christian worship in the late Roman and Visigothic periods has emerged from the excavation of the church of St Catherine (Catalina), situated a short distance to the east of the present-day Calle del Rey Heredia, in the now defunct late medieval convent of St Clare. The church, which may well have had three apses, contains within it the plan of a slightly irregular Greek cross (+), and measures 19.5 metres east-west by 21 metres north-south. Although the apses (if any) have disappeared, the sanctuary,

which has been identified, faces east and contains the remains of a mosaic which includes representation of vegetation. The fact that this space is largely enclosed suggests that it would have been suitable for the increasingly elaborate 'Mozarabic' liturgy of the Visigothic period, and it communicates directly, to the north, with what appears to have been the sacristy. The floor of this latter space is decorated with a quite well-preserved mosaic containing eucharistic and other Christian symbols, such as chalices, crosses and fishes. Looking at the building as a whole, with its considerable eastern influence, Pedro Marfil Ruiz holds the view that 'because of this we should see in the early Christian church of Santa Catalina a possible precedent for the typical Byzantine basilica that dominated from the sixth to the sixteenth century'. Although the southern part of the site lies under other existing buildings, and has not yet been excavated, it is apparent that the church formed part of a complex which was bordered by a wall running from north to south, parallel to the eastern façade of the later Mezquita, and following the line of the modern Calle Osio. Marfil compares the Greek cross plan of the Córdoba church with the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, Justinian's funeral chapel adjoining Hagia Sophia and the mausolea of Gala Placidia and Theodoric in Ravenna. Equally intriguing, and possibly significant, is the suggested connection between the mosaics in Santa Catalina and those in the sixth-century basilica of St Vincent (San Vicente). Not only this but, in Marfil's view, the artistic features of Santa Catalina had considerable influence on the Great Mosque which eventually replaced San Vicente. In addition, the plan of the Santa Catalina mosaics was reproduced in the Muslim period, on jars and boxes that were exported from the capital of the new Caliphate. The links between this Córdoba church and contemporary Byzantine work, which provide the antecedents of art and architecture of the Muslim period, followed naturally from the involvement of Byzantium in the southern part of the Iberian peninsula between 554 and 624. The church of Santa Catalina seems to have been built between 554 and about 572, while the armies of Justinian and Justin II apparently controlled Córdoba, until it was lost to the Visigothic King Leovigild. Santa Catalina provides valuable architectural and artistic links between the Byzantine world and Córdoba, but the basilica of San Vicente, which was constructed during the period of Byzantine rule on part of the site of the later Mezquita, was to prove far more significant as a reused religious building (Cabrera and Segura 1988: 30; Marfil Ruiz 1996: 33–45; Murillo *et al.* 1997: 50–2).

Soon after Tariq's invasion of Spain in 711, Córdoba fell under Muslim rule, and the city's new occupiers and colonizers immediately sought a house of prayer, especially for Fridays. The initial solution, which seems to have lasted for about thirty years, was for Muslims to worship in half of the fairly new three-aisle basilica of St Vincent. This was the period in which the city was under the authority of emirs who ruled on behalf of the caliphs of Damascus. The Umayyad ruler Abd'l-Rahman I continued to live in the neighbouring palace of the Visigothic governors, and worship in St Vincent's Church, but he seems to have become determined that both buildings should be replaced. Three years before his death, in 785, he bought out the Christians, giving them permission to erect other churches outside the city walls, and began the construction of a new mosque. Although the project entailed

the demolition of St Vincent's, this was certainly not the end of the Christian edifice, as virtually all of it was reused (Castejón 1988: 6–8; Scales 1997: 175). What, though, did St Vincent's Church look like in its original form? Archaeological excavation is beginning to establish more precisely the site and layout of the Visigothic cathedral. Work carried out in recent years has suggested that the *Cardo Maximus*, the main north–south thoroughfare of Colonia Patricia which by the late empire linked the central forum with the river, passed slightly to the west of the present-day Calles Blanco Belmonte and Céspedes. It passed through the Patio de los Naranjos and approximately the sixth to ninth aisles of the mosque of Abd'l-Rahman I. In 1935, Félix Hernández carried out a dig in the north-west corner of the mosque and patio, and discovered mosaics on the western side of the Fuente del Olivo (Olive Fountain), and two Roman aisles with Visigothic apses, alongside the original minaret of the eighth-century mosque. The Muslim writer Ibn-Baskwal, as recorded by Al-Maqqari, states that there was a former sewer under the mosque, and this may well have followed the line of the former *Cardo*. In the view of the group of archaeologists which is currently working on Roman Córdoba, the original mosque, and hence the Christian cathedral before it, was situated on a north–south rather than an east–west alignment, between the modern Calle Torrijos and the supposed southward continuation of the *Cardo Maximus* of the Republican Roman city. This street, which was certainly in existence by the fifth century, was finally blocked off in the tenth, by the last extension of the mosque at the order of Al-Mansur. Some of the results of the excavations of Félix Hernández are on display inside the Mezquita, and include part of a wall adjoining a former street, some Visigothic tiles and some mosaic. Now also on display, in glass cases in the south-west corner of the present Mezquita-Catedral, are some Christian stone pieces from its Visigothic predecessor. These include a font and the pillars of altars, in one case with the left and right arms of a cross smashed off, presumably by later Muslim worshippers. However, the most numerous remains of the church of St Vincent, such as columns and capitals, are to be found in the fabric of the mosque itself, and it is evident that much or all of this material had been used previously in Roman construction, whether for religious or secular purposes (Nieto and Luca de Tena 1992: 43, 121; Ventura *et al.* 1996: 106–9).

In terms of the reuse of religious buildings in Córdoba, the first phase of the Mezquita is perhaps the most intriguing case of all. The walled enclosure of Abd'l-Rahman I's first great mosque, which was finished after his death, in about 795, and is now part of the extended building, was almost square, and measured 75.73 metres north to south, and 79.5 metres from east to west. The northern half of the site consisted of a courtyard containing an *aljibe* (cistern) for ritual ablutions, which is now part of the Patio de los Naranjos, with a minaret of which the remains have been identified. The enclosed southern section contained eleven aisles, separated by reused Roman and/or Visigothic columns and capitals. At the southern, or river, end of the central aisle was a *mihrab*, the place of custody of the Koran and the focus of worship. A feature which appears to have survived the demolition of St Vincent's basilica and the construction of the first mosque is the direction of the aisles, which continued to run from north to south rather than crossways, as was customary in

Islamic worship spaces in the East. The first extension of the worship area, under Abd'l-Rahman II, in the mid-ninth century, worked on the same lines, punching holes in the south wall, lengthening the eleven aisles by just over 24 metres, and providing a new *mihrab* in the south wall. This phase of work also used existing material from Roman and Visigothic buildings. A century later, Caliph Abd'l-Rahman III extended the courtyard of the mosque northwards and provided a new minaret, which is now enclosed within the tower, and then, during the 960s, Al-Hakam II brought the worship space to its current length with a further extension of about 50 metres. It was at this stage that the present *mihrab* was constructed. At the peak of the fortunes of the Córdoba caliphate, in 987, the famous general Al-Mansur ordered the enclosed worship space and the patio to be extended 50 metres to the east, thus bringing the Mezquita to its present size. It was at this stage that the Roman thoroughfare between the centre of the city and the bridge was definitively blocked. Unlike their predecessors, the last two phases of the work were undertaken with new materials. It was thus nearly a millennium before a line was finally drawn by the Muslim conquerors under Roman and Visigothic Córdoba, if only in its southern, riverside sector (Castejón 1988: 25–6; Nieto Cumplido and Luca de Terna 1992: 83–4, 125). In terms of material and style, Abd'l-Rahman I's mosque had as its main feature the columns which had very probably supported the nave of the basilica of St Vincent, which were made from the pink marble of Cabra, to the south of the city. The ten side-aisles, five on each side, have columns which alternate between similar Cabra marble and granite from Pedroche, to the north of Córdoba. Abd'l-Rahman II added eight arcades to the existing twelve, using grey marble columns which had been looted from the Roman theatre in Mérida. Al-Hakam II, in turn, added twelve arcades, half in blue Córdoba marble and half in Cabra pink, giving an effect rather like shot silk, when viewed from the side. The long aisles of Al-Mansur's extension were supported by columns of alternating blue and grey marble from the Sierra, to the north of the city. Castejón notes that many of the columns bear mason's marks, and refers somewhat scornfully to Christian legends of apparitions of the Virgin Mary, as well as carvings made after the Christian 'Reconquest' of the thirteenth century. In recent years, however, casts have been made of these marks, and are displayed in the south-east corner of the Mezquita. They are in Arabic script, but reveal a large number of Christian names, suggesting that not only were many of the materials used in the construction of the Mezquita of Christian origin, but much of the labour force was Christian too.

Both the original mosque of Abd'l-Rahman I and the extension by Al-Hakam II were provided with lanterns, but their ironically Trinitarian effect was not to survive into the late Middle Ages. It has been argued that the vaulting of these lanterns, or at least of those which survived alterations made after the thirteenth-century Christian Reconquest, are the most original architectural features of the Mezquita. They were to have considerable influence on Spanish Christian (Mozarabic) architecture during the High Middle Ages, and the pilgrimage to the shrine of St James of Compostela was effective in spreading their stylistic influence to northern Europe. Although considerable changes have been made since the Mezquita

became a Christian church, nothing has disturbed the *kibla* in the western part of the south wall, which contains the *mihrab* and continues to be a magnet for tourists. All the area surrounding the *mihrab* itself is decorated with Byzantine mosaic, very probably made by Christian craftsmen, and the white columns were possibly gifts from the emperor himself. The elegant Kufic texts in this part of the mosque leave no doubt as to its Muslim character, yet the columns and capitals throughout the building display a rich mixture of Roman, Byzantine, and Latin medieval styles, even before the Castilian conquest in 1236 brought further changes (Castejón 1988: 22–47). If Muslim Al-Andalus in general, and Córdoba in particular, took up its Roman, Visigothic and Byzantine architectural and artistic heritage, as it reached the summit of its power in the tenth and eleventh centuries, how did the dominance of Islam affect Christianity, and those who practised it?

Muslim writers at the time offered two main reasons for the choice of Córdoba as the capital of the Spanish emirate and later caliphate. One was the richness of the area's natural resources and economy, while the other was the city's heritage as a centre of Roman and Visigothic government. To these may be added its possibilities as a communications centre, which, after centuries of virtual marginalization, have now been revived by the construction of the high-speed rail link to the formerly insignificant town of Madrid. Changes in the use of places of worship did not, of course, take place in isolation and were inevitably affected by wider developments. Thanks to its importance as a political centre, more is known about Muslim Córdoba than about any other European city of the period, except perhaps Rome and Constantinople. The original walled town, now known as the Medina, covered almost precisely the Roman and Visigothic site, but an equally large enclosed area, known today as the Ajerquía, had developed a short distance to the east. As in the late Roman period, with the development of the new governmental and religious centre at Cercadilla, the caliphs built palaces outside the city itself, on the lower reaches of the sierra to the north, and some of these became, in effect, suburbs or satellite towns. The most famous of them is the huge, and still only partly excavated, site of Medina Azahara (Scales 1997).

It has already been noted, however, that the old northern suburb of Cercadilla, and very probably others, still contained a considerable Christian population, who undoubtedly had churches in which to worship. Within the city itself, it is more difficult to establish the relative numbers of churches and mosques, because of later developments and a lack of excavation. It should however be remembered that the Muslim religious and legal concept of the *dhimma* was applied in Córdoba as elsewhere, allowing restricted, but none the less guaranteed possession and use of places of worship, as well as communal self-government, to both Christians and Jews. Thus two older assumptions about Muslim–Christian relations in early medieval Córdoba have come to be questioned in recent years. One is that Christianity effectively died out when the city was conquered by the Muslims, while the other is that the execution of at least forty-eight Córdoba Christians for either blasphemy (insulting the Prophet Muhammad) or apostasy betokened a systematic persecution of citizens of that faith by the Muslim authorities. The current view is that the case of Eulogius and the other ninth-century 'Córdoba martyrs' indicates

that there was still a large, and to some extent at least vibrant, Christian community in the city at that period, which had the support of numerous churches and monasteries, many of which were in the suburbs and the surrounding area as in the Visigothic period. It also indicates that the 'crisis' of mass conversion to Islam did not in fact occur until that comparatively late period (Bulliet 1979; Wolf 1988; Coope 1995). If the main symbol of Islamic power in Córdoba, the Great Mosque, was partly built by Christian craftsmen, using Christian and even pagan materials, it is clear that the true significance has not always been accorded to the city's Christian heritage throughout the period up to 1236. The conflict of the mid-ninth century seems to have been an exception to what was normally a principled but pragmatic relationship between Islam and Christianity in Córdoba (Cabrera 1993: 30). During the decline of Muslim power following the *fitna*, or break-up of the Córdoba caliphate, and its subsequent division into smaller kingdoms known as *taifas*, there is no evidence as yet of significant changes to the city's religious buildings (Wasserstein 1985; Scales 1994).

THE 'RECONQUEST' PERIOD

The next major alteration to the religious landscape of the city began with its semi-accidental conquest by the forces of Ferdinand III of Castile in 1236. By that stage of what was sometimes even known at the time as the 'Reconquest', in other words the restoration of Christian rule, there was considerable interest from the rest of Europe in the reversal of Islamic fortunes in Spain. Thus foreign troops and a papal blessing accompanied both the Castilian king and his neighbour James I of Aragon, who, while Ferdinand was conquering western Andalusia, added the kingdom of Valencia to his domains. In the years immediately following the conquest, it is clear that Ferdinand paid just as much attention to the Christian life of Córdoba as to its political, economic and social structure. While the distribution (*repartimiento*) of urban and rural property was taking place, in the early 1240s, a parish system was being established in the city, and the diocese was being reconstituted after long institutional separation from the Roman see. The Mezquita had been occupied immediately after the official conquest, on 29 June 1236, and was consecrated and dedicated to St Mary, thus reoccupying the space previously taken from Christianity, when Abd'l-Rahman I replaced St Vincent's basilica with a mosque. Fourteen parishes were set up in the town, seven in the Medina, including the largest, which was attached to the cathedral, and seven in the Ajerquía. Reflecting the ecclesiastical fashion of the time, the king also founded four friaries, for the Dominican, Franciscan, Trinitarian and Mercedarian orders, the latter two being largely devoted to the ransoming of Christian captives held in Islamic lands (Edwards 1982: 164–5; Nieto Cumplido 1991: 79–99, 232–44).

As in the case of the earlier Muslim takeover of St Vincent's, the conquering Christians, who largely displaced the Muslim population of the city after 1236, were slow, but not as slow, to make major alterations to the Mezquita. To begin with, services were held in a new side chapel, dedicated to St Clement, which

proved to be the first of many such additions. At the end of the thirteenth century, the first major liturgical construction took place, with the installation of the Royal Chapel (*Capilla Real*), which was the first place of burial of the Castilian kings, Ferdinand IV and Alfonso XI. This beautiful chapel, to the north of the *mihrab*, which was undisturbed, was combined with the Capilla de Villaviciosa to form a new Christian sanctuary, but in a building style which blended perfectly with its Muslim surroundings, and without disturbing its Islamic predecessor. It was to be the centre of cathedral worship until the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, when the first major destruction of the ninth-century arcading took place, with its replacement by Gothic vaulting to form a new nave on the conventional Western European model. In the meantime, and particularly from the latter part of the fourteenth century, chapels, many of them private chantries for the saying of masses for the repose of the souls of the donors and their families, began to proliferate. Throughout the late medieval period, Christian artworks, including altarpieces, monuments and tombstones, spread steadily through the mosque site. A far greater disruption of the late tenth-century structure than the building of the first cathedral nave was to take place in and after the reign of Charles V. The project was to last almost three centuries and involved the construction of an entirely new choir, with transepts, sanctuary and lantern, in styles ranging from the Plateresque of the early sixteenth century to the Baroque of late eighteenth-century Andalusia. It included elaborate eighteenth-century choir stalls carved by the Sevillian Duque Cornejo, who is buried in situ (Madrazo 1886: 315–27; Castejón 1988: 62). Like Spain as a whole, the Mezquita-Catedral went through many vicissitudes during the nineteenth century, but the serious restoration of the Muslim heritage began, under the direction of Ricardo Velázquez Bosco, after the building had been declared a national monument in 1882. Some later accretions were removed, such as a medieval wooden altarpiece in the *mihrab* and a lean-to building on the west façade.

It could be argued that it was at this point that conservation began to replace organic development, not only in the Mezquita but also elsewhere in the city. In recent years, with the help of the new regional government (the *Junta de Andalucía*), major works have been carried out both in the cathedral and in the neighbouring Alcázar, the medieval castle. The Alcázar was the headquarters of the Inquisition from the 1480s until the early nineteenth century, though that fact is nowadays little publicized. New stone has been put in place, plaster and paint applied, and the sites made more 'attractive' to the mass tourism which is being encouraged by mushrooming hotel development on the left bank of the Guadalquivir, opposite these restored sites. A new lighting system has been installed in the Mezquita, which greatly assists tourist photography, but makes it hard for the average visitor to appreciate the mystery of the building, which was so stressed by nineteenth-century writers and still tangible as recently as the 1970s, when a Muslim might slip in and pray before the *mihrab*, and not be disturbed. Another case in point is the so-called 'Judería', which today covers a much greater area than the quarter which in fact housed Córdoba's Jews, before they either converted to Christianity or dispersed, after a violent attack on them, as part of a wave of such assaults throughout Spain in the early summer of 1391. There is a surviving medieval synagogue in the

Judería, which was constructed in 1314–15. Many of its worshippers seem, in and after 1391, to have either left the city, moved to other quarters within it, or else transferred to the nearby chapel of St Bartholomew. The chapel had become a parish church by early in the fifteenth century, but the synagogue continued in use for Jewish worship up to the expulsion of Spain's Jews, on the orders of Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1492. It then became a hermitage chapel (*ermíta*) for a hospital for sufferers from hydrophobic rabies, but in 1536, under the dedication of the 'Cross of Christ', it was adopted by the religious confraternity of SS Crispin and Crispinian. Although traces of Christian use remain, the synagogue began to return to its original form in 1884, and Christian worship in it was formally abandoned in 1916. Thus it is now a partially restored tourist attraction, known only for its 178 years of Jewish use, and not for its 424 years as a Christian chapel (Cantera Burgos [1955] 1983: 3–32; Peláez del Rosal 1988: 123–64). Streets which probably never had Jewish residents are now said to be part of the Judería, and are the subject of intensive touristic development (Centella Gómez 1992). In view of the sufferings inflicted by Catholic Christians on both Jews and Muslims, in Córdoba as elsewhere in Spain, in the late medieval and early modern periods, this concentration on the Jewish and Islamic past may seem an entirely just outcome. Changes of use have commonly been a part of the long history of worship spaces in Córdoba, even up to the effect of the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, in the 1960s, on the services in the Baroque choir of the cathedral, and in the city's medieval parish churches. Perhaps modern tourism, too, is part of Corduba-Colonia Patricia-Córdoba's organic development, like pagan cults, early Christian martyrdoms, the Islamic worship of the caliphs, the prayers of Jewish sages, the violence of the Inquisition, the equally violent anti-clericalism of the Republicans who butchered dozens of the diocese's priests in 1936, or the hundreds who today take part in or attend the processions of Holy Week, *Semana Santa*. Two old questions remain. How does the use of worship space relate to the life of humans, as individuals and as groups? How is it possible to have religious fervour without conflict? The old stones of Córdoba have a complex tale to tell.

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18 *The Adriatic Islands Project: monument destruction and protection in the Central Dalmatian Islands*

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INTRODUCTION: THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL DALMATIAN ISLANDS

The Central Dalmatian Islands are among the most beautiful in the Mediterranean. From the earliest of times these islands were settled, fought over and colonized by numerous peoples including Venetians, Byzantines, Greeks and Romans. The importance of these islands may seem strange to visitors today. However, the key to understanding the history of the region lies in the way the islands link the eastern and western shores of the Adriatic. To early mariners, who needed frequent safe ports and always tried to sail in sight of land, the islands represented the safest sea route from Greece to Italy. Traders also had to pass the Central Dalmatian Islands, going north to the head of the Adriatic, there to join the great trade routes into central and northern Europe. The islands were also strategic positions: Greeks, Romans and Venetians fought in turn to control them. The dramatic history of Central Dalmatia is reflected in the archaeological and historic monuments that are scattered across the landscapes. Ancient burial mounds, pre-historic hillforts, Greek colonies, Roman villas and Venetian defences all bear witness to the importance of the islands over millennia of European history.

The Adriatic Islands Project is studying how these islands were settled, and the evidence for how people used the area from the earliest of times to the arrival of the Slavs (Figure 18.1). The earliest communities in the area were hunter-gatherers who lived here more than 12–13 000 years ago, during the Upper Palaeolithic. Unfortunately most of the settlements of these people may have been lost when, following the end of the Ice Age, the Adriatic basin was inundated by the sea between 8500–6000 BC. After this time the islands were settled by people who were farmers. Carbon 14 dates from these settlements show that agriculture spread from south to north after the eighth millennium BC. Within the Central Dalmatian Islands this time, known as the Neolithic and Eneolithic period, is almost exclusively represented by cave sites. Key sites include Grapčeva and Markova Spilja on Hvar, and Kopačina on Brač. One important exception was the discovery on Palagruža, by the Adriatic Islands Project (AIP), of an open site associated with the

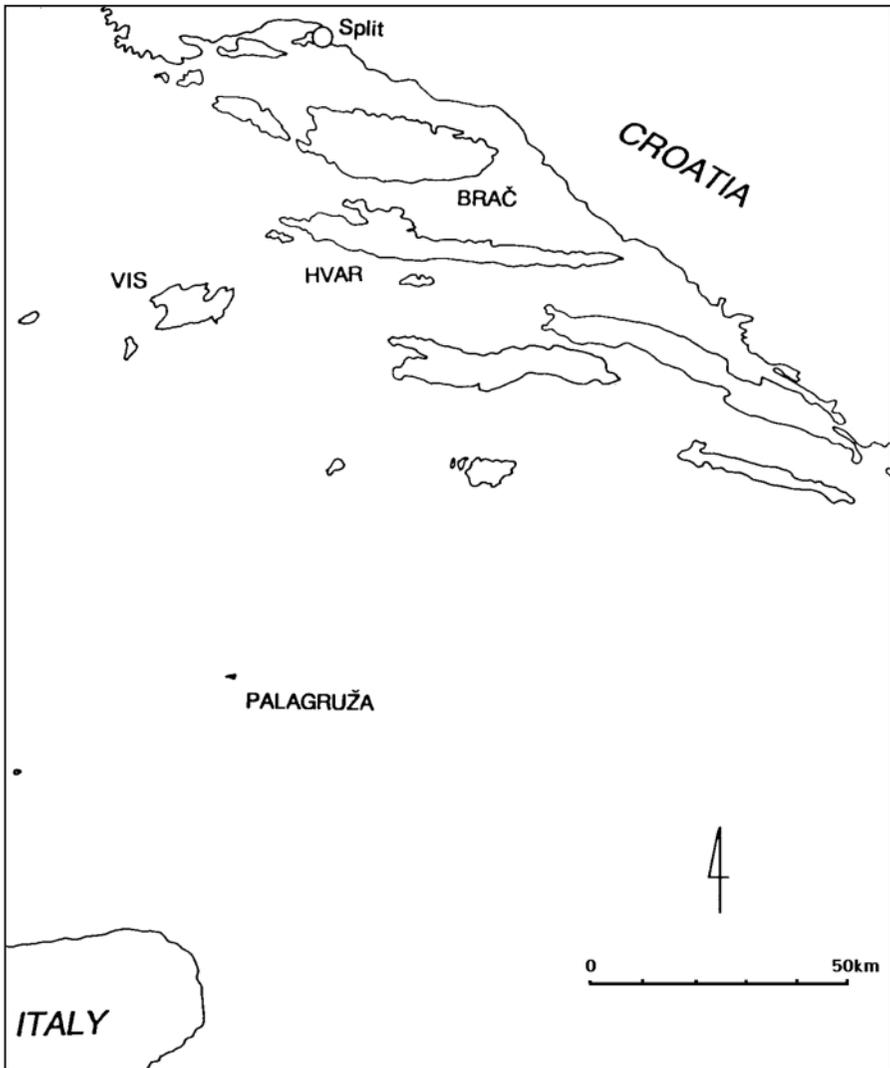


Figure 18.1 Adriatic Islands Project: the study area

very earliest Neolithic period. The island provides some of the first evidence for Early Neolithic ventures into the deep waters of the Adriatic, demonstrating that the chain of islands was important for communication over 8000 years ago.

The first use of metals in Dalmatia is in the form of simple copper and, later, bronze objects. During the Early Bronze Age our evidence is largely restricted to isolated finds in caves and burial mounds (tumuli). Discovery of Early Bronze Age artefacts on the island of Vela Palagruža seems, however, to be associated with use of a flint quarry on Mala Palagruža. Aside from this, a series of tumuli on Hvar represents the most significant group of sites associated with the Early Bronze Age.

Furthermore, the construction of a tumulus cemetery at Vira (Hvar) suggests that this period may also have witnessed the creation of the first public ritual monuments, and that these were associated with rituals linked to land fertility. Soils on the Dalmatian limestone are very fragile, and early farmers may have been affected by declining soil fertility and soil loss only a very short time after the introduction of farming.

Evidence for settlement and land use during the Middle Bronze Age is almost unknown within the islands, and is poorly documented elsewhere in Central Dalmatia. It is only in the Late Bronze Age in Central Dalmatia that we see a conspicuous increase in settlement evidence – mainly associated with defended hilltop enclosures (hillforts or *gradine*). Work on the islands suggests a tendency for large hilltop enclosures to be sited with respect to fertile land, and it is possible that they are positioned to control agricultural resources – again possibly the result of increased soil erosion caused by agriculture. More significant has been the recent find of Mycenaean pottery at Škrip on Brač, which suggests that by the late second millennium BC, there was contact between this region and Greece, or communities in contact with Greece.

In many ways the Iron Age is very similar to the Late Bronze Age. It is dominated by hillforts, but there is increasing evidence for intensive external contact. Of particular importance is the presence of pre-colonial Greek finds at a number of localities in the region. Sites which are particularly important during this period include Hvar Castle, Talež (Vis) and Palagruža. During the earliest period it is likely that we are seeing evidence for trade, and for Greek exploration. The links of the region with Italy and to the Etruscan sites at the head of the Adriatic must have been appreciated as important by the Greeks, who must also have noted that the islands possessed land that could be colonized. We know of several Greek colonies in the area, but there is some debate as to which is the first. The colony on Vis, named Issa, may be the product of a fourth-century Syracusean venture, but it is also possible that it may be a slightly later foundation. The first colony that can be confidently dated is that of Pharos on Hvar, whose dramatic foundation, by the Parian Greeks, at Stari Grad on Hvar in 385–4 BC is recorded by Diodorus Siculus (XV, 13–14).

Whichever was first, the fate of these two cities varied considerably. Pharos may eventually have been controlled by local dynasts, and probably went into steep decline and perhaps abandonment, during the second century BC. Vis, although occupied by Ardiaean forces during the First Illyrian War (228 BC), seems to have maintained its independence, and indeed planted further colonies on other islands and the mainland.

Elsewhere on the islands, the native inhabitants lived without significant change. Indeed, it is uncertain when the islands eventually came under direct Roman control, although likely that both Pharos and Issa were *de facto* Roman possessions by the late first century BC. Following incorporation into the empire, the Roman city of Salona emerged as the local political and economic centre. The islands lost their strategic value, but the Pax Romana allowed them to flourish economically, prospering by feeding the growing urban populations of the mainland coast.

The fate of the islands under the later empire is less certain. Dalmatia passed between Western and Eastern empires during the fourth century but it is likely that

the Central Dalmatian Islands were largely unaffected by the civil wars of that time. During the mid-fifth century the area functioned as a semi-independent territory under the *comes rei militaris* of Salona. After this date, however, the region changed hands between the Goths, the Byzantine Empire and, at some time during the first half of the seventh century, the Slavs. The fate of the Central Adriatic islands during this period is uncertain. The islands were undoubtedly an important source of food while the mainland urban centres functioned, but when the urban centres fell, or declined, much of the evidence we have for settlement disappears.

RECORDING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF THE CENTRAL DALMATIAN ISLANDS

The Adriatic Islands Project has been at the cutting edge of research in archaeological computing, and has led the way in the application of regional computer databases, geographical information systems and remote sensing in archaeology. All the data collected during more than ten years of fieldwork have been stored in a large sites and monuments database. This database contains extensive information on all the known archaeological sites on the Central Adriatic Islands from the earliest pre-history to the early medieval period. Now that it is available in digital format this information may be easily accessed and used in any number of archaeological analyses. Apart from their academic use, these data are also used to study the condition of archaeological monuments and to manage them as a resource.

At the same time that the AIP team were carrying out fieldwork on the ground, they were also using airborne and satellite remote-sensing techniques to gather information on archaeology and the local environment. For instance, aerial photography has been used to plot the extent of the exceptional Greek field system on the Stari Grad plain of Hvar, while interpretation of Landsat TM satellite images has allowed us to plot land use and examine land potential across very large and poorly mapped regions.

All this information is integrated into a geographical information system (GIS). Using a variety of analytical modules provided by a GIS, we can analyse the relationship between the natural environment and archaeological site locations, model the territories of past communities and much more. Innovative use of GIS can give us an insight into how past societies used the land and for what. Finally, using all the environmental and archaeological information within the GIS we can construct predictive models for the location of different types of archaeological sites, enabling the discovery of new sites as well as protection and management of existing archaeological resources.

THE CENTRAL DALMATIAN ISLANDS: SOME KEY SITES

The Adriatic Islands Project has recorded more than 2000 archaeological sites, amply reflecting the rich history of the region. The following section presents

Table 18.1 Chronological table for some key archaeological sites in the Central Dalmatian Islands

<i>Date</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Sites</i>
7–800 AD	The Arrival of the Slavs	Salona, Roman Issa, Lovrečina
	Domination by Rome	
5–300 BC	Greek colonization	Foundation of Greek colonies at Pharos and Issa
		Hillforts at Hvar Castle and Talež. A Greek sanctuary on Palagruža?
1000	The Iron Age	The first hillforts. Mycenaean contacts on Brač
2200	The Bronze Age	Tumulus burials and the beginning of the cemetery at Vira Cave sites at Grapčeva Spilja and Krajicina Farming starts and there is the first evidence for deep-sea sailing at Palagruža
6000	The Neolithic	Hunter-gatherers at Kopačina (Brač)
13 000	The Upper Palaeolithic	

short summaries of some of the most important sites. Table 18.1 provides a chronology for the islands and shows how these sites, among others, are placed in time.

The islands of Palagruža

PALAGRUŽA: THE ISLANDS OF DIOMEDES?

Merely 1300 metres long and 330 metres wide, Palagruža is waterless and rugged (Figure 18.2). Cliffs and steep slopes rise from the waves, folding knife-like along a central ridge which is indented by a pair of small plateaux. Anchoring one end of the island, at its highest point, stands the oldest manned lighthouse in the Adriatic. Across a narrow channel lies Palagruža's sister island, Mala Palagruža, only a fifth the size but an even more forbidding terrain. Some of the scrub vegetation and animal life here is indigenous to Palagruža and unique. It is sustained by moderate amounts of rainfall throughout the year, yet despite its barren aspect, voyagers have visited Palagruža repeatedly over the last 8000 years.

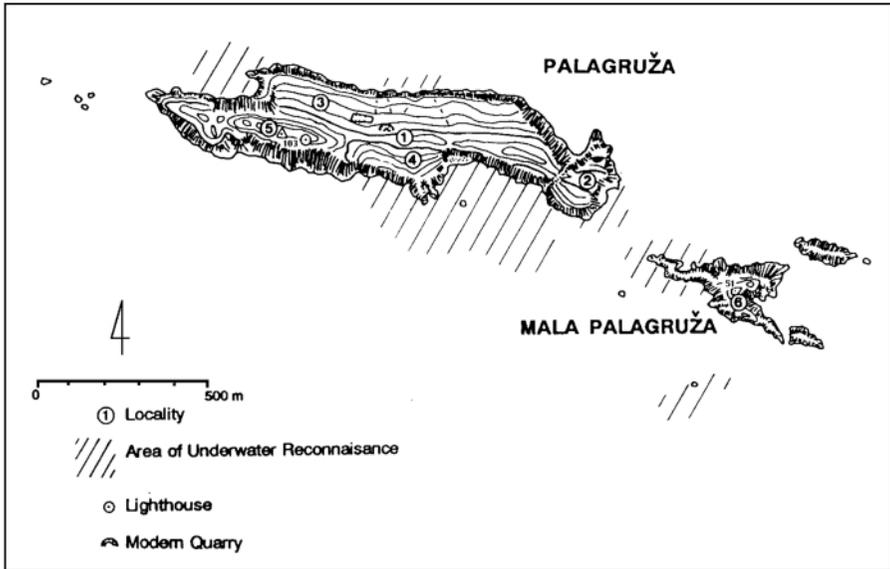


Figure 18.2 Palagruža

Palagruža is the central island in a chain that spans the Adriatic. From Italy to Dalmatia, the islands of Tremeiti, Pianosa, Palagruža, Sušac and Vis are stepping stones across the sea: standing on one of these islands you can see the next one, sometimes even the mainland. Offering anchorage, a modicum of shelter, and a place to rest, these islands have attracted sailors and fishermen for millennia. By using these islands as stopping places, sailors could traverse the Adriatic without losing sight of land. Indeed, ancient mariners could hardly help making Palagruža a port of call for, among other things, two major currents – one easterly, the other westerly – converge on Palagruža. Where they meet, the water swirls and eddies around the island, helping to make Palagruža the centre of the Adriatic's most productive fishery. In retrospect, the island's archaeological riches might perhaps have been expected.

Indeed, Palagruža has been known to archaeologists since the late nineteenth century. The Italian archaeologist, Carlo de Marchesetti, and the English adventurer, Sir Richard Burton, visited the islands in 1875 while the lighthouse was being built. They reported finding stone blades, broken pottery and architectural fragments bearing Latin inscriptions. Their lead, however, was never followed, so since 1992 the project has visited Palagruža four times in order to carry out surface surveys, underwater reconnaissance and limited test excavations. Localities on Palagruža and Mala Palagruža include pre-historic remains of the Neolithic, of the Copper Age and of the early Bronze Age; historic localities yielded Classical Greek, Hellenistic, Roman and early medieval finds.

PALAGRUŽA IN PRE-HISTORY

Several potsherds and stone blades mark the first landfalls on Palagruža, made sometime around 6000 BC. Like calling cards left behind after a visit, fragments of pottery distinctively decorated with the zigzag impressions of a *Cardium* seashell were found on the island's easternmost extremity. Test trenching of this area revealed no structures, just a low-density distribution of Neolithic pottery and lithics.

Pottery of the kind found on Palagruža is elsewhere firmly associated with the spread of the first farmers throughout the north Mediterranean basin. Identified as the Cardial Impressed Ware culture, small communities of agriculturalists began settling in places along the coast, never penetrating far inland, in the seventh millennium BC. Despite distance, time and tide, people maintained contact with one another and, as Palagruža so clearly shows, at least part of that contact was seaborne.

At some point early on, though, it was recognized that Mala Palagruža was an abundant source of chert. Nodules of grey-blue chert speckle exposed rock faces all over the tiny islet; eroding out of their limestone matrix, broken nodules collect at the bases of cliffs and ledges. In places, gaping holes mark the spots where chert was quarried. The evidence suggests that low-intensity chert mining on Mala Palagruža began in the Neolithic.

The next chapter in Palagruža's pre-history takes place towards the end of the third millennium BC, as the Copper Age drew to a close. The story can be read at a site at the island's centre where a small plateau overlooks cliffs and a pebble beach. Excavation here failed to find any structural features dating to the pre-historic period. However, a careful search of the slopes below located a profusion of stone tools, lithic production debris and ceramics of the Cetina culture scattered over 6000 square metres. Other significant finds included decorated, stone archers' wristguards and several blades of central Mediterranean obsidian. A systematic transect of the site was dug revealing that these artefacts were consistently associated with each other, washing down the north slope of the island in a layer of colluvial sediments.

The Cetina culture spans the transition from the Copper Age to the Bronze Age. It is best known from a series of stone cairns, elite burials, in central Dalmatia. The burial sites typically contain grave goods of intricately decorated beakers and other drinking gear, finely flaked arrowheads and archers' wristguards. Like the closely related Bell Beaker phenomenon, this kind of elite, male, sumptuary behaviour is a common expression of the competition for prestige in third millennium BC Europe. Its appearance in Dalmatia is significant because it marks the first serious social differentiation to cleave local communities there as high status individuals began to act out roles on a broader stage. Finds of Cetina pottery among rock-cut tombs in Puglia in Italy demonstrate the extent of the network in which Adriatic elites now participated.

Chipped stone artefacts, in astonishing numbers, make up the largest part of the Palagruža assemblage. They show that highly skilled flint knappers used Mala Palagruža chert to produce blades, blade segments, arrowheads and lunate arrow

armatures. Extrapolating from the controlled excavated sample, thousands of arrowheads and tens of thousands of blades must have been made on Palagruža – far more than anyone there ever needed. It is reasonable to suppose that specialized stone tool production at this scale was aimed at export: for a while in the second half of the third millennium BC Palagruža seems to have occupied an important position in a newly created network of élite-oriented production and exchange. This network linked the central Adriatic islands to the mainland of Dalmatia, to the Italian mainland regions of Puglia and Calabria, and even as far as the central Mediterranean Aeolian islands. It was on the basis of maritime networks like this one that the early civilizations of the Mediterranean were later to emerge.

PALAGRUŽA IN THE GREEK AND ROMAN PERIODS

One of the most intriguing discoveries on Mala Palagruža was a copious amount of Greek Black- and Red-Figure pottery and Hellenistic fine ware. More than 2000 fragments have now been recovered, mostly representing kylixes and skyphoi, as well as bowls, plates and hydriae. The presence of such a variety of fine ware (along with the specific shapes of the vessels) suggested that there must have been a Greek shrine or sanctuary as early as the late sixth century BC. The position of the islands on important maritime routes further suggested that any shrine may have been dedicated to the Greek hero Diomedes, whose cult was known to be important for sailors and traders.

Many ancient literary sources state that there were points on the Adriatic where the hero of Troy was worshipped, and some of these sites are known. Most significantly, the ancient sources mention an island (or two islands) of Diomedes situated in the Adriatic. Unfortunately, none give a precise location. Italian medieval cartographers and historical geographers connected these islands with the Tremiti islands to the west of Mount Gargano, possibly because it was thought that the cult of Diomedes was also present on the Italian Adriatic coast, and also because the Tremiti are the only Italian islands on the Adriatic coast. As a result of this early identification, the location of the islands of Diomedes has rarely been a contentious issue. However, the discoveries on Palagruža prompted a reassessment of the evidence by project staff. Further reading of the texts of Strabo (2, 5, 20/123–4; 5, 1, 8/214; 5, 1, 9/215 and 6, 3, 9/283–4) suggested that the description of the island of Diomedes better corresponds to Vela and Mala Palagruža, rather than the Tremiti, particularly given the lack of Greek evidence there.

More conclusive is the further evidence provided by pottery collected on the central plateau of Vela Palagruža by Jadranko Oreb, lighthouse keeper at Palagruža. This pottery was brought to the attention of project staff in 1994, and comprised over 100 pieces of Greek and Hellenistic fine ware. Among this collection were several fragments of pottery with graffiti, one of which bears the name of Diomedes. This seems to be firm evidence of a sanctuary dedicated to the hero, and this has been further supported by finds of more pottery during 1996, some of which also have graffiti mentioning Diomedes.

Palagruža was also inhabited during the Roman period. A Latin inscription

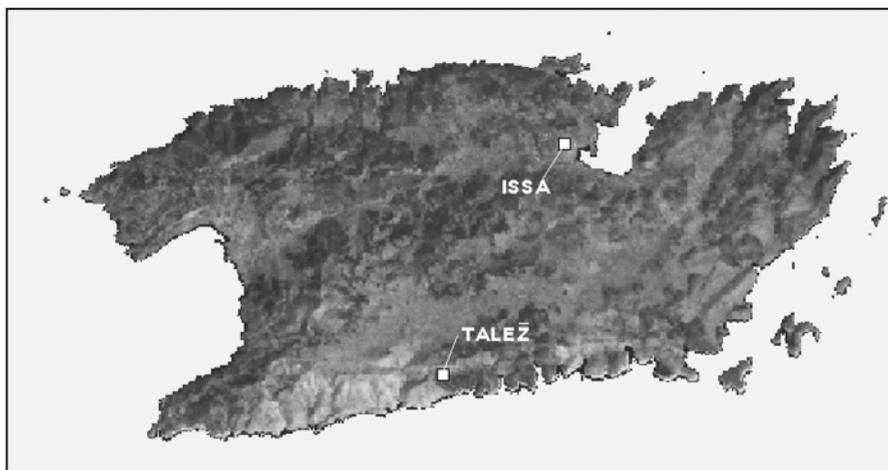


Figure 18.3 Vis, Talež and Vis town, the site of ancient Issa

recording the existence of a temple on the island was found here during the nineteenth century. Excavation on Vela Palagruža has also provided mosaic tesserae, round bricks from a hypocaust and fine and coarse pottery and glass. Late Roman material is also present in abundance.

Palagruža was clearly an important point for successive travellers and traders crossing the Adriatic throughout the past eight millennia, connecting communities on both sides of the Adriatic. Shipwrecks from all periods, unfortunately now all looted, further emphasize the role of the island.

The island of Vis

Vis, which lies to the south-west of Hvar, covers an area of 90.26 square kilometres (Figure 18.3). During the summers of 1993–4 and 1996–7, the Adriatic Islands Project carried out a survey, and a series of excavations, across the island. This fieldwork recorded more than 240 sites, as well as mapping the area of the ancient town of Issa. Prior to this, a survey of classical sites on the island was carried out in 1986 by local archaeologists Dinko Radić and the late Vid Biličić, who recorded some eighty sites.

ISSA: A GREEK COLONY ON THE ISLAND OF VIS

The remains of the ancient city of Issa are situated at the end of the Bay of Vis and adjacent to the modern town. The ancient town covered an area of some 12 hectares at its zenith. Not much of this settlement has been excavated and much has already been destroyed, especially following the construction of new houses, hotels, entertainment complexes and roads. At Martvilo ('the place of the dead') are the remains of the colony's ancient graveyard. Nearby, at Gradina the city walls date from the third or fourth century BC and lie partly preserved within long,

stone, clearance mounds. Nearer the shore are the ruins of the later Roman baths, while on the Prirovo peninsula remains of the Roman theatre are preserved within the walls of the medieval monastery. Around the seafront are submerged remains of the sunken Greek and Roman ports.

The rural sites on the island belong essentially to the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. During this time the entire island was occupied and the land fully utilized. This suggests that as early as the Hellenistic period, Issa could have supported a considerable population. If so this may help explain the evidence we have for other Greek colonization in the region. In the early third century BC the Isseians founded a settlement on the neighbouring island of Korčula – Kerkyra Melaina. Issa also founded settlements on the Dalmatian coast: at Tragyrion (modern Trogir), Epetion (modern Stobreč) and possibly Salona (modern Solin).

One of the most striking results of the field survey on Vis was the discovery that while there was a proliferation of sites during the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, very few sites produced Late Roman finds. This pattern is in striking contrast to the neighbouring islands of Hvar, Brač and Šolta, where Late Roman sites predominate in the archaeological record. What happened on Issa? After nearly 500 years during which Issa was the most important urban centre in the region, did it perhaps decline in the later Roman period as Salona became the central settlement and the other islands competed more successfully to supply the regional centre?

Talež – the precursor to Issa?

The hillfort site of Talež lies on the southern and central side of Vis (Figure 18.4). The site consists of a series of massive terraces and walls associated with a precipitous west–east ridge. Although many walls have either collapsed or been destroyed by later military activity, it is clear that they incorporate a minor peak at 245 metres above sea level. To the south the ridge dominates a more gentle plateau covering about 5 hectares. The land falls away sharply on all sides of this plateau. The site is also separated by a steep valley from a narrow ridge to the east that contains the Vela Gomila tumulus. Geodetic survey of the site also revealed the location of a semicircular structure on the eastern edge of the hillfort – that which directly overlooks the tumulus at Vela Gomila.

The results of surface survey and excavation at Talež provided tens of thousands of pre-historic objects (mainly pottery). Imported ‘Greek’ ware comprised 8.3 per cent of the total, and dated from the sixth to the fourth century BC. The widespread occurrence of iron slag and other evidence for metal-working on the site suggests that the hillfort at Talež is associated with a hitherto unknown, exploitable, iron resource.

The significance of the results from Talež cannot be underestimated. The presence of a pre-Greek colonial settlement with access to an exploitable iron resource was totally unexpected. The region is mineral deficient and the nearest known resources lie in Bosnia. The importance to be derived from control of this resource during the early Iron Age must have been considerable. Indeed, the presence of such iron reserves may also go some way to explaining early Greek activity both on

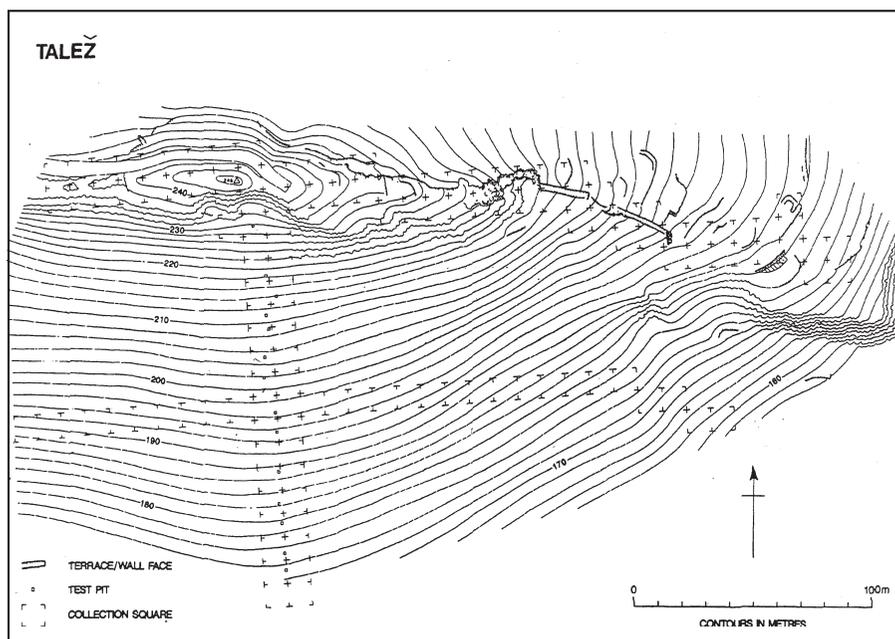


Figure 18.4 The hillfort at Talež

the island of Palagruža and even, perhaps, the position of the later Greek colony of Issa. Certainly the extraordinary quantities of imported pottery on the site can only be explained through the active exploitation of this resource and trade with the Greek world. The dating evidence for the abandonment of the site should coincide with the beginnings of Greek urban settlement at Issa. Unfortunately, an exact date for the ‘foundation’ of Issa currently escapes us. There can be little doubt that the settlement of Talež must have controlled a large part (if not all) of the island of Vis during the fifth century BC. It therefore becomes a key site for our understanding of pre-colonial Greek contacts with the central Adriatic.

The island of Hvar

Strikingly long and thin, the island stretches for 68 kilometres from east to west, but never exceeds 15 kilometres in width (Figure 18.5). Although dominated by a rocky mountainous spine, which reaches 628 metres above sea level at Sveti Nikola, Hvar’s most notable characteristic is the wide and fertile plain which runs for 6 kilometres between the towns of Stari Grad and Jelsa in the central northern section of the island. Hvar has many attractions. Frequently called the ‘Madeira of the Adriatic’ in deference to its climate, the island has attracted millions of tourists. Aside from this, it also possesses some of the most important archaeological sites in the region. Work by the project members on the island has involved the excavation and survey of Neolithic caves and Roman villas, pre-historic tumuli and

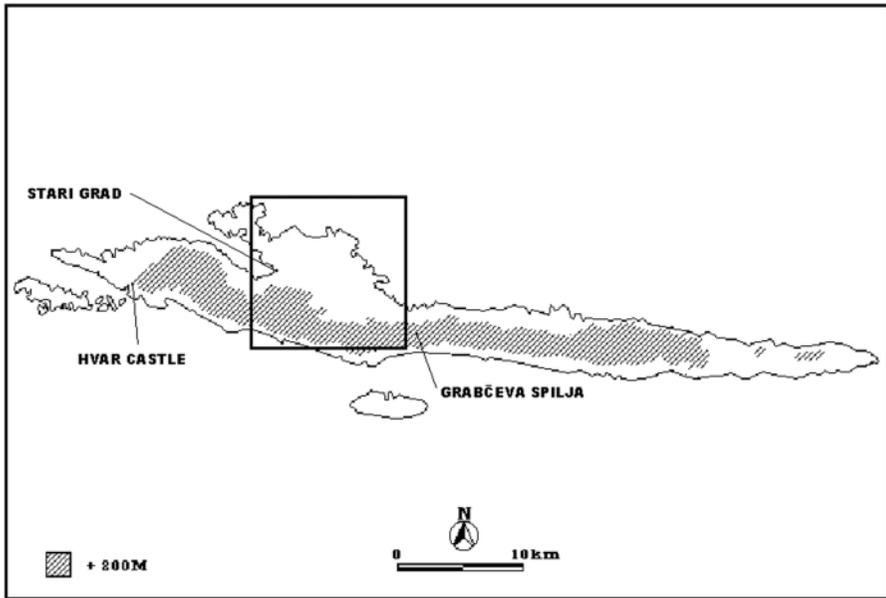


Figure 18.5 Hvar Island, Stari Grad, Hvar Castle and Grapčeva Spilja (inset square is shown in detail in Figure 18.6)

Greek watchtowers. The Adriatic Islands Project started on Hvar, and the outstanding results of study on this island inspired the larger project.

GRAPČEVA SPILJA

The best known Neolithic cave site in the eastern Adriatic lies hidden in a hill above the remote southern shore of the island of Hvar (Figure 18.5). From the entrance to Grapčeva cave the view south opens towards the outlying islands of Korcula and Lastovo and the sea beyond. This entrance was once much larger, but at some time in the past a massive rock-slide almost succeeded in sealing up the cave. The result was a well-protected shelter, collecting over the passing millennia the refuse left by occasional tenants of the cave.

Between 1887 and 1952, the cave was excavated by a number of different people. The most important excavations were carried out by Grga Novak, a native of Hvar who later became president of the Academy of Sciences and Arts. It is to his credit that the attractive, red-painted pottery from the cave became synonymous with the eastern Adriatic Neolithic, and that the first well-defined Neolithic 'culture' in the area was named after his island.

Novak excavated about half of the available area down to the bedrock, gathering a massive amount of archaeological material from the cave, but preserving relatively little contextual information. This state of affairs inspired the latest archaeological exploration of Grapčeva by the Adriatic Islands Project in 1996.

A small test unit located the edge of Novak's trench, as well as the undisturbed cultural strata beyond. More than forty stratigraphic units (mostly superimposed hearth remains) were recognized in a sequence almost 3 metres thick, representing some 3500 years of occasional occupation that spans the periods from the Late Neolithic to the Bronze Age. Abundant fragments of charcoal throughout the sequence have allowed reliable absolute C14 dating of the deposits and the associated finds. This marks a major contribution. Previously, the regional pre-historic cultural sequence had virtually no absolute dates. Now, some of the gaps have been filled and a reliable chronology is being built.

PHAROS AND ITS CHORA

The Stari Grad Plain is the largest and most fertile area on the Adriatic Islands (Figure 18.6). Apart from its obvious agricultural wealth, it is also the site of the Greek colony of Pharos, sited beneath the modern town of Stari Grad. It was founded in 385–4 BC by Greeks from the Aegean island of Paros. However, Greek pottery has been found at Stari Grad, which suggests that an earlier Greek settlement may have existed.

Despite the clarity of the foundation tale, the position of Pharos on the island of Hvar was a subject of domestic and foreign academic debate for more than a century. Although most authorities eventually accepted the claim of Stari Grad as the site of the colony, the size of the town and its defences was not clear until a programme of excavation and survey was carried out after 1993. We now know that the town may have covered more than 8 hectares and part was surrounded by a substantial wall.

Beyond the walls are the remains of the colony's *chora* or territory. The territory of Pharos is remarkable because it contains the remains of a massive field system that was laid out by the colonists. Survey and excavation inside the Stari Grad plain, as well as aerial photographic, geodetic and geomorphological analysis of the field system demonstrates that the whole plain was divided into a series of parcels (*striga*). Seventy-three of these parcels can be identified, each measuring 906 by 181.2 metres (16.4 hectares), and covering a total area of about 1100 hectares. While similar systems can be found elsewhere (for example Metapontum and Hersonas), the remains on Hvar are probably the best-preserved examples of such a system in the Greek world. Research on the plain suggests that the basic unit used by the Parian colonists for laying out the field system was a 'foot' measuring 302.16 millimetres, similar to units used at Isthmia and Epidarus.

Survey suggests that there are only a small number of Greek sites in the plain, and that they are concentrated near Pharos. There are, however, numerous Roman villas, some of which are very large, and it is possible that later land use has destroyed or covered early Greek occupation.

Nevertheless, it is likely that the majority of Greeks lived within the walled city at Pharos, if only because of the ever-present threat from rival local communities. This insecurity is best demonstrated by the construction of two defensive towers by the colonists. One was situated on the northern edge of the plain, on a hill called

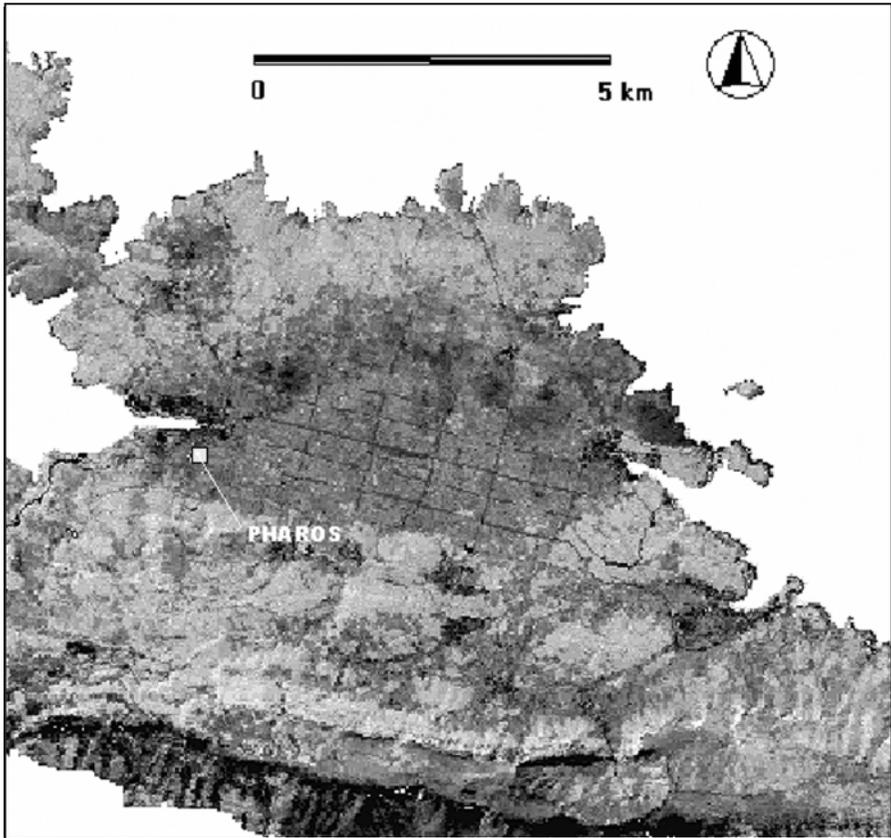


Figure 18.6 Pharos and the Stari Grad plain (Landsat)

Maslinovik, while the other lies at Tor, high on a hill, south of the town of Jelsa and east of the plain. These watchtowers or *phryktoria* communicated with each other via smoke or fire signals, functioning as part of a single defence system. The furthest tower at Tor was in direct visual communication with that at Maslinovik (a distance of 7.5 kilometres), while the tower on Maslinovik, situated 3.5 kilometres from Pharos, was positioned to communicate between Tor and the town. Together the towers controlled the northern and eastern approaches to the colony.

Numerous excavations have taken place within the ancient town area, but those undertaken by the AIP, as a limited sampling exercise, have been the first to establish a datable sequence for the succession of Greek and Roman settlements beneath Stari Grad. One sondage, positioned within gardens and abutting the remains of a rectilinear walled enclosure within the town area, revealed over 2 metres of stratigraphy. Most fortuitously, this preserved four phases of stone buildings.

At the lowest level early fourth century BC structures of the first colonists appeared to have been damaged by fire before a later phase of reconstruction. A new Hellenistic layout sometime in the third century was associated with a kiln

producing terracotta figurines. Thereafter, a phase of dereliction may have ensued before the erection of a substantial new Roman building, possibly at the very end of the first century BC. This was occupied until sometime towards the mid-third century AD, when the still partly upstanding remains of the walled enclosure replaced it. This feature, for long believed to represent part of the Greek defences of Pharos, can now be confidently identified as a hitherto unknown later Roman stronghold. The status of Pharos as a Roman town is much less certain, but the later Roman fortification, apparently reusing material from the earlier derelict Greek walls, may have survived through its reuse as the precinct of the early Christian community. The latter is still represented by the adjacent church and remains of Sv. Ivan recently excavated by the Split regional Zavod.

HVAR CASTLE

The site of the modern town of Hvar must always have been attractive to settlement. Lying on the south-west of the island, the town possesses an excellent port, which is protected to the south by the Pakleni group of islands. It also has a large fertile area to the east, which is well provisioned with water. However, in the past the site of the town of Hvar achieved a far wider significance because of its key role in long-distance trade up and down the eastern Adriatic coast.

In 1989 the AIP carried out an extensive survey of the Hvar Castle hill, which dominates the harbour and was the obvious site for the Venetians to construct a castle in the twelfth century. A short assessment of the distribution of pre-historic material within the outer ward of the castle led to a more detailed surface survey over an area of about 1.43 hectares. This survey allowed a more precise definition of the pre-historic settlement area, and provided considerable amounts of datable pottery. A few fragments suggested that there was some sort of settlement on the site from the Eneolithic period onwards, but the most intense occupation is testified during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages (approximately 25 per cent of the collected material was of Bronze Age date and 75 per cent of Iron Age date). Of special interest is the presence of imported Italian, Messapian and Appulian geometric pottery dating from the ninth to the fourth centuries BC. These finds, along with imported pottery from Greece and Greek colonies in Italy, indicate that the site maintained extensive outside contacts throughout most of the first millennium BC. Unfortunately, despite the quantity of the pre-historic finds on the hill, the construction of the medieval castle and later landscaping have removed all surface traces of contemporary structures.

The results from Hvar Castle suggest that a more complex social situation existed on the island during the first millennium BC than is represented in the historical record, and indicate that this was probably the largest and most important later pre-historic settlement. The presence of imported pottery on the site suggests that the settlement had privileged access to exotic imported goods during the pre-Greek period and that it enjoyed some degree of social pre-eminence within the island. This hypothesis is further strengthened by its proximity to the largest barrow cemetery on the island, at Vira to the north-west of Hvar.

Almost certainly the importance of the site at Hvar Castle was achieved as a result of its geographical position on the eastern Adriatic trade routes. If this is correct, the available data go some way towards answering some fundamental problems with respect to the nature of Greek/native relations during the initial period of Greek colonization on Hvar. It suggests why the colonists were allowed to establish themselves and why there was a period of peace between the two communities before the violent conflict recorded by Diodorus.

The evidence seems to suggest that the Greek colony on the Stari Grad plain was peripheral to the principal pre-historic settlement situated above the town of Hvar. The distance between the two settlements probably allowed the peaceful establishment of the colony, a peace which was shattered when the increasing activities of the new colony eventually came into conflict with the authority of the inhabitants of the site at Hvar Castle.

The island of Brač

The third largest island in the Adriatic Sea, Brač is nearly 36 kilometres in length and 12 kilometres wide. Its precipitous southern coastline rises to 778 metres above sea level at Vidova Gora, the highest peak on all the Adriatic islands. Composed primarily of limestone and dolomite, the quarries of the island have been a source of stone for building and decorative stonework for centuries. Indeed, Brač 'marble' was used in the construction of Diocletian's Palace in Split.

Although studied for more than a century, the archaeology of the island was imperfectly known, and heavily biased toward the pre-historic and Early Christian monuments. However, an extensive survey of Brač during a four-month field campaign in 1994 by AIP team members recorded a total of 597 sites of all periods, an increase of nearly 60 per cent.

Škrip: Mycenaean in the Adriatic?

The hillfort at Škrip was the excavation focus for an investigation into the origins of later pre-historic territorial centralization within the islands, the emergence of hillforts or hilltop enclosures, and on Brač itself, the apparent change in site distributions from higher inland plateau locations in the Late Bronze Age to the more coastal sites of the Iron Age (Figures 18.7 and 18.8). The still partly preserved 'megalithic' walled enclosure at Škrip was always presumed to be Greek Iron Age in date, and the site was subsequently a focus for both Roman religion and Christianity on the island. Other workers had already carried out some of the most extensive series of excavations in the study region. The material results of this earlier work suggested that a well-directed, modern excavation might achieve significant finds.

Excavations at Škrip in 1995 sampled two areas of deep stratigraphy surviving close to the east and west perimeters of the walled enclosure. To the west, and partly beneath it, the earliest phase of activity at the site involved the deposition of Early Bronze Age Cetina type vessels within a natural rock crevice. The earliest structure here seems to be the base of a drystone revetted cairn, of a type widely

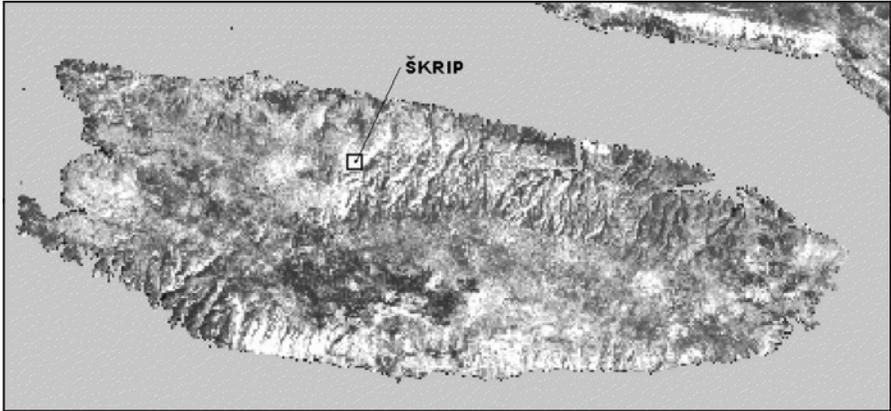


Figure 18.7 Brač and Škrip

identified elsewhere in the islands, the Dalmatian mainland and in Bosnia. Many such cairns probably originate from the Early and Middle Bronze Age; some were burial mounds, while others functioned primarily as ritual and territorial foci, as here at Škrip. No great interval may have separated the erection of this cairn with

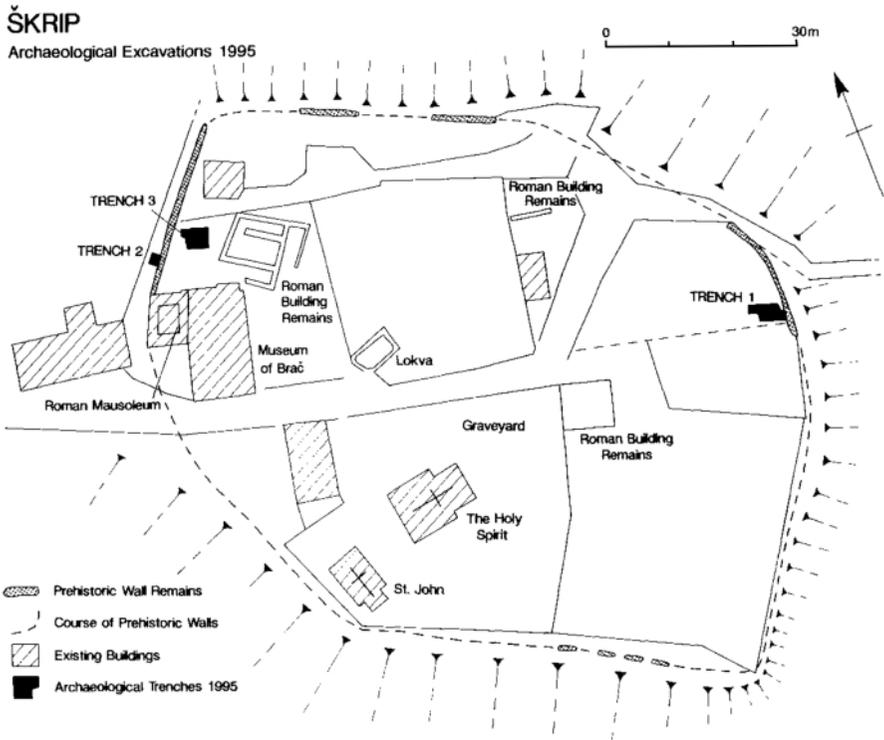


Figure 18.8 Plan of Škrip

the building of a circuit of massive drystone 'megalithic' walling around the top of the hill. Behind this over two metres of deposits had accumulated, dumped from over the cairn to the east to seal its surviving lower revetment and at least one shallow, drystone-built platform at its base. An extensive and well-stratified assemblage of native coarseware and animal bone was recovered here, associated with several sherds of Late Helladic IIIc Mycenaean pottery. A second section to the east revealed the full width of the 'megalithic' wall and its rubble rampart backing, butted by occupation deposits and the remains of a complete fired-clay oven within a natural rock fissure.

In contrast to the earlier assumed Iron Age date for the walls at Škrip, virtually all of this activity can now be assigned to the Middle–Late Bronze Age. Mycenaean material, either from the core Mycenaean territories in Greece or centres with trading or permanent settlements in Italy, is very rare on the Eastern Adriatic coast. The presence of Mycenaean pottery at Škrip, once again, emphasizes the strategic importance of the islands for trade, and is perhaps indicative of maritime trade links up to the head of the Adriatic. The amount of such pottery, however, is very small, so we would be unwise to suggest that this was a Mycenaean 'colony' or settlement. It seems better to suggest that the 'megalithic' style of walling at Škrip was perhaps inspired directly by Mycenaean or, perhaps more likely, south Italian prototypes. The context of contact or inspiration is less clear, but perhaps we are seeing a native settlement and/or a ritual centre reflecting the aspirations of a local chief or ruler. However, Škrip may also be one part of the complex trade network which linked the Mycenaean with much of continental Europe; one link in the chain that stretched along the eastern Adriatic shore past the northern Dalmatian Islands, later known to the Greeks as the Electrides or Amber Islands.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

One of the most important aspects of the Adriatic Islands Project is its ability to provide quantitative information on the state of preservation of the cultural monuments in the study area. This information may be used to assist in providing policies for protection and conservation. Preliminary analysis of this information suggests that, until very recently, the destruction of cultural sites on the islands was a relatively slow process, and was largely restricted to natural erosion and agricultural damage. The rate of destruction has increased dramatically in the last thirty years and the current situation is outlined in Table 18.2.

Most of the damage recorded resulted from the development of mass tourism and the construction of tourist and infrastructure facilities. Unfortunately, specific types of monument are particularly vulnerable to development. Significant lengths of the remarkable Greek land divisions on the Stari Grad plain on Hvar have already disappeared. However, the most obvious victims are the pre-historic stone tumuli on the islands that are being robbed for hard core.

Given what is known about the land, it comes as no great surprise to know that

Table 18.2 Destruction data for the Adriatic Islands Project in percentages

	<i>Brač</i>	<i>Šolta</i>	<i>Hvar</i>
<i>Well preserved</i>	43	37	52
<i>Slight damage</i>	16	5	13
<i>Damaged</i>	16	13	3
<i>Destroyed</i>	9	11	13
<i>Excavated</i>	14	10	19

the coastal seas of the Central Dalmatian Islands are also among the most attractive archaeological regions of the eastern Adriatic coastline. Virtually every type of underwater archaeological find or site may be found here, covering every time period, and originating from many parts of the Mediterranean. Many of these finds are unique. This observation must, however, be put into the context of the very high levels of damage recorded for underwater sites, including deliberate or accidental destruction and the theft of their antiquities. While the information we have on the levels of exploration and condition is far below that of sites on land, the data collected by the project suggest that the majority of underwater sites have now been damaged or looted.

How should these monuments be protected? Such decisions are not for archaeologists alone, but we have a role to inform and influence. By making the Adriatic Islands Project data on monument survival available to anyone in the region who has an interest in their protection we hope we are doing just that.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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19 *'Pious vandals': restoration or destruction in Sri Lanka?*

GAMINI WIJESURIYA

INTRODUCTION

Destruction of cultural property takes different forms. In Sri Lanka we suffered one of the worst destructions of cultural property the country has experienced shortly before the WAC Inter-Congress on The Destruction and Conservation of Cultural Property. Bombing of the Temple of the Tooth Relic (a World Heritage Site) was intended to provoke tension between two ethnic groups as part of an ongoing war. We are presently also faced with numerous problems caused by vandals who destroy our ancient cultural objects for the purpose of stealing valuables that they believe to be deposited in religious places. Quite apart from all this, the repairs made to religious places to cater for the needs of modern-day worshippers are, in the opinion of professionals, another form of destruction. As professionals engaged in conservation, we have to intervene with the religious communities and arrive at compromise solutions for the restoration of religious monuments and objects. Conservation is also criticized by certain sections of the profession and the public, who call it destruction. Restoration, although very much in the vocabulary of the conservation professionals, should be attempted carefully. Archaeologists are vehemently 'opposed' to restoration as it could destroy the documentary value of the monuments.

Some of the religious monuments dealt with by the Sri Lankan Department of Archaeology are owned by sections of the community while others are in private hands. The owners have themselves historically subjected such places to various interventions, long before we developed new disciplines such as archaeology and conservation. Neglect of religious places in this part of the world during the colonial era has aggravated the thirst for recreating the lost values of such sites. As Linstrum observed: 'Religious buildings occupy a special place in the feelings of those who worship there because of what they represent in their lives. They are symbolic as well as personal' (Linstrum 1993: 3).

The intention of this chapter is to present the Sri Lankan experience of the restoration of religious buildings by interested parties and professionals, all of which

might have led to the destruction of cultural property. I intend to debate whether we, as professionals, should engage in restoration at all if it is truly destruction.

PIOUS VANDALS IN SRI LANKA

The title of the chapter has three inter-connected sections: pious vandals, restoration and destruction. I did not coin the term 'pious vandal'. In the course of an address before the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) in 1930, Dr Goloubew, a well-known archaeologist of the time from l'Ecole Française de l'Extrême Orient referred to the 'pious vandals' who were then at work in Sri Lanka (Pearson 1931). He was referring to the Buddhists who (as members of restoration societies) were restoring religious edifices that had been abandoned for nearly four centuries, following the invasion of the Western colonial powers. Among the monuments was one of the oldest and largest *stupas*, Ruwanweliseya (first century BC) in Anuradhapura.

The *stupa* is a repository for a relic of the Buddha and forms one of the most prominent ritual elements of a Buddhist monastery. Worship of these ritual structures is one of the principal customs of the lay Buddhist community. The *stupa* was added to the architecture of the Buddhist monasteries as early as the third century BC. Within two or three centuries, it had grown from a small architectural feature to a magnificent edifice rising to a height of over 120 metres. Some of the *stupas* in Sri Lanka are the largest in the world, and in fact, the *stupa* finally became the symbol of ancient Sri Lankan civilization. *Stupas* are built out of fired brick plastered with a mixture of lime and sand. They are whitewashed annually with lime. However big they are, *stupas* possess very little resistance to tropical weather where, as in Sri Lanka, there is frequent heavy rain. Neglect over a few centuries had badly damaged these *stupas* and the brickwork was exposed, destroying the grandeur of the monument and adversely affecting their symbolic character. This had not, however, diminished the significance Buddhists attached to them. Buddhists who wish to worship them therefore consider rebuilding to be one of their prime tasks.

Pearson, who headed the Department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka in 1931, recorded Dr Goloubew's address. He referred to the Buddhist rebuilders as 'ardent but inartistic and unscientific people'. Paravitana, the first Sri Lankan archaeologist to head the department, described the efforts of such restorers as 'pious and well meant but ill planned' (ASCAR 1930–31: 23).

It is clear that the pious vandals of my title were engaged in the restoration of cultural properties that had been neglected for years. They were devotees of the Buddhist religion and carried out their restoration in good faith. Some even related the restoration movement to the national struggle for independence from foreign powers. The repair of religious buildings was, moreover, considered a meritorious act in the Buddhist religion. The religious buildings were built to last forever and their builders devised various means of caring for them. Traditional restoration principles dictated that rulers consider restoration and maintenance a prime duty while on the throne (Wijesuriya 1993).

The Western world is scarcely aware that strong ideals of conservation have developed in Asian countries. It is impossible to exemplify these ideals in detail in this chapter, but we may mention here that the preservation of the relics of the Buddha in the form of *stupas* started as early as the third century BC. The building of a special structure to preserve the Tooth Relic (seriously damaged in the recent bomb attack) continues to the present. Rulers granted property to monastic communities and exempted them from taxes to enable the continuous repair of monasteries. Trained craftsmen were retained exclusively for the purpose of renewing monastic buildings. Such arrangements are well illustrated in the following ninth-century inscription.

[There shall be] clever stone cutters and skilled carpenters in the village devoted to the work of [temple] renewal. They all shall be experts in their [respective] work Means of subsistence, to the same extent as is given to one of these, shall be granted to the officer who superintends work. Moreover, when thus conferring maintenance on the latter, his work and so forth shall [first] be ascertained, and the name of he who is [thus] settled [with a livelihood], as well as his respective duties, shall be recorded in the register. Those of the five castes who work within the precincts of the monastery shall receive [their] work after it has been apportioned; and they alone shall be answerable for its correctness. The limit for the completion of work is two months and five days. Blame [shall be attributed to] the superintendents, the *varikas* and labourers who do not perform it according to arrangements.

(Epigraphia Zeylanica 1923 I: 8–9)

One of the rulers appointed an officer to be in charge of temple renewals (Epigraphia Zeylanica 1923 II: 83). There was once a Minister in Charge of the Restoration of Monuments in Anuradhapura (Culavamsa 1953: ch. 78, verse 101).

Ancient treatises such as the *Mayamatha* had chapters devoted to the conservation of monuments. One includes the following passage:

Those [temples] whose characteristics are still [perceptible] in their principal and secondary elements [are to be renovated] with their own materials. If they are lacking in anything or have a similar type of flaw, the sage wishing to restore them [must proceed in such a way that they] regain their integrality [sic] and that they are pleasantly arranged [anew]; this [is to be done] with the dimensions – height and width – which were theirs and with decoration consisting of corner, elongated and other aediculae, without anything being added [to what originally existed] and always in conformity with the initial appearance [of the building] and with the advice of the knowledgeable.

(*Mayamatha* 1985: 121)

Twentieth-century professionals have nevertheless held various views on the pious vandals and their acts. While everybody agreed that they were inexperienced and not capable of handling restoration, some believed that the monuments

should not be restored at all. Pearson writes: 'So far as the archaeologists are concerned these ancient cities will never be anything but cities of ruins' (ASCAR 1930–31: 24). The architect Oertel was invited by the colonial government in 1890, through the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, to prepare restoration plans for the Mirisaweti *stupa*, the first colossal *stupa* built in Sri Lanka in the second century BC. He held a different view from Pearson:

As regards the general principles that should guide us in the task of conservation, I need hardly say that we should confine ourselves to preservation, and that restoration is only justified if the preservation of the rest of the structure demands it. In this light, the restoration of Mirisaweti *stupa* must be regarded as an exceptional case. With the recent revival of Buddhism, it is natural that its votaries should desire to have at least one of their historical shrines at their sacred city restored as near as possible to its original appearance, to what these mysterious monuments were like when complete, and to serve as a guide in similar restorations which may be undertaken in future. It cannot be doubted that the government is justified in assisting these efforts, both as the custodian of Ceylon's ancient monuments and for reasons of policy, for it must be remembered that Ceylon is still regarded with special veneration by all the southern Buddhists in Burma, Siam [Thailand], Annam and throughout the Indian Archipelago as the source from which the sacred Law emanated.

(Oertel 1903: 90)

PIOUS VANDALS IN ENGLAND

Before we discuss the other two terms in the title of this chapter, let me trace a specific reference to a similar international movement that can be called 'pious vandalism'. In England, the Camden Society, like the restoration societies of Sri Lanka, emerged as a result of a religious revival movement. The Camden Society was founded by Cambridge undergraduates in 1839. Its members firmly believed that the architectural fabric of the medieval church buildings had been spoilt by additions and alterations and had therefore lost the appearance conducive to ecclesiastical activities. They believed the religious symbolism once attached to churches had been lost and should therefore be reinstated.

In order to recreate the lost medieval setting, they started to restore churches to their original form, as they believed that 'nothing but the original structure would bear the stamp of truth' (Prince 1981: 45). They believed that 'to restore is to recover the original appearance which has been lost by decay, accident or ill-judged alterations' (Dellheim 1982: 82). Their actions were labelled vandalism by campaigners such as John Ruskin, who called restoration a lie from the beginning to the end (Ruskin 1849). Although both movements were concerned with the restoration of religious buildings, there was a fundamental difference. In the case of Buddhist monuments, it was ruins that were subjected to restoration while, in the case of churches, it was a historic phase of construction that was removed.

RESTORATION OR DESTRUCTION?

It is difficult today to understand the traditional meaning of restoration. As a modern intervention on monuments, however, restoration is recognized by all professionals. Its aim is to revive a particular historic phase in the life of a monument. The Venice Charter stipulates the principles that should be followed in its articles 9–14.

Pious vandals were thought to be destroying monuments. The strength of opposition to the restoration of religious buildings in Sri Lanka during the 1930s led to strong legislation, empowering the government to control such activities (Antiquities Ordinance 1940). The truth is, however, that the concept of restoration was incorporated into the legislation.

In England, philosophers such as Ruskin voiced their opposition to the activities of the Camden Society. Jokilehto, tracing the history of the European conservation movement, writes: 'Following the late nineteenth-century antiquarian criticism against the restoration of medieval churches in England, an anti-restoration movement gradually also developed in other countries (Jokilehto 1986: 4–5). Proponents of the anti-restoration movement such as Ruskin, Morris and Boito all stressed the 'material authenticity and documentary value of the monument (ibid.: xxiii). According to Jokilehto 'The penetrating mind of John Ruskin and the efforts of William Morris gave it a clear definition, emphasizing the question of historic time and authenticity in relation to the original object, and the impossibility of reproducing an object with the same significance in another historical-cultural context. Any reconstruction was refused, and additions were recommended in contemporary form' (ibid.: 4).

Jokilehto concludes that the Venice Charter was a watershed in the development of this movement but, paradoxically, a greater part of the charter is devoted to explaining the principles of restoration outlined above. Most national legislation has recognized restoration as a legitimate intervention on historic buildings. Archaeologists have indeed gone beyond restoration and advocated reconstruction. The Archaeological Heritage Management Charter of ICOMOS has this to say: 'Reconstruction serves two important functions: experimental research and interpretation. They should, however, be carried out with great caution, so as to avoid disturbing any surviving archaeological evidence and they should take account of evidence from all sources in order to achieve authenticity' (ICOMOS 1990).

Cleere has examined the principle of reconstruction and writes:

Reconstruction of ruins is a highly contentious field. The purists set their faces resolutely against any form of reconstruction, even the replacement of fallen architectural elements in what are incontrovertibly their original settings. Such a stance would seem unnecessarily restrictive, and certainly not in the interests of public enjoyment and understanding. However picturesque a ruin may be, it is often difficult for members of the public to make the imaginative effort to visualize the site or monument in its complete form. It is surely not in the best interests of the cultural heritage as a whole for those responsible for its

conservation and display to take refuge behind academic niceties of interpretation in order to avoid sympathetic reconstruction.

(Cleere 1984: 129)

What about the restoration of *stupas* by professionals? As professionals, we were asked to carry out restoration under the law that had emerged as a reaction against any form of restoration in 1940. As one can see from the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon's administrative report, our task was challenging. 'In controlling the restoration of ancient ruins by private bodies, the Department has undertaken a task bristling with many difficulties. It has to be carried out without hurting the religious sensibilities of the people; for this, much work of educational nature has to be undertaken to convince the religious authorities that interventions by the Department does not affect their vested interests and traditional rights' (ASCAR 1940–45: 48).

We cannot say in certain terms that we are not destroying the monuments. If we consider excavation as a destructive technique for retrieving data from the archaeological deposits, the same applies to restoration. Restoration is a destructive intervention to prolong the life of a monument. It can thus be concluded that both pious vandals and professionals are engaged in restoration and, in the process, contribute to the destruction of cultural properties.

THE RESTORATION OF *STUPAS*

Let me give several examples of restoration by the so-called 'pious vandals' as well as by the professionals. The restoration societies or 'pious vandals' carried out a number of restoration works on *stupas*. The first *stupa* built in the third century BC was restored at the beginning of the twentieth century. They also carried out a major task in restoring the Mahatupa or Ruwanwelisaya. It is well accepted that the monuments are coded documents and that their documentary value is one of the most important concerns to present and future generations; there are few records other than the *stupas* themselves.

The Antiquities Ordinance of 1940 introduced legislation to control the restoration of privately owned monuments. Very soon, however, the task had fallen into the hands of the professionals. The law did not rule out restoration but instead made provisions for the owners to prepare restoration plans and get approval from the Department of Archaeology, which is responsible for implementation of the ordinance, before carrying out the work. Alternatively, the department itself granted authority to prepare restorations plans and carry out the work. Socio-political pressure for the restoration of some of the *stupas* made the department undertake the work.

In restorations carried out by the department, all possible measures were taken to record the data. On the other hand, restoration plans were prepared in keeping with accepted principles and based on archaeological data retrieved from the site. I have elsewhere described cases where sufficient data were available to conjecture the

dimensions of the dome and the *pesawas* (Wijesuriya 1993). Dimensions were available for the *hatareskotuwa* but the reconstruction of the spire and pinnacle was based on the styles of the area, in a scale appropriate to the *stupa*. Details were available for the reconstruction of the terraces. In selecting the historical phase to be reconstructed, the department chose the latest phase, while leaving earlier phases intact. Bricks were made to the size found in the *stupa*, but were marked to identify them as new.

We can be happy that professionals were able to protect the documentary value of those monuments, in contrast to those restored by the pious vandals. In the end, however, the objectives of religious communities have in both cases been fulfilled. Both approaches have destroyed the monuments in the name of restoration but only one has respected the principles of restoration. However, several questions remain to be answered. Do we have the right to intervene in these monuments? Are we not destroying them in the process? On the other hand, is it only the documentary value that is most important? If, however, restoration is imperative for the religious communities using the monuments, should we not address this issue more seriously?

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20 *Destruction or conservation? Some aspects of monument policy in British India (1899–1905)*

NAYANJOT LAHIRI

I cannot conceive any obligation more strictly appertaining to a Supreme Government than the conservation of the most beautiful and perfect collection of monuments in the world.

(Curzon, September 1900)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines some aspects of the monument policy of the British Raj during the viceroyship of George Nathaniel Curzon (1899–1905), an initiative which has almost unanimously been hailed both by the viceroy's contemporaries and by subsequent scholars. Consider what John Strachey had to say as early as 1900:

Few things in these troublous times when there has been so much to make one unhappy, has given me so much pleasure as the knowledge that India has found a viceroy who has resolved that the British Government shall become a more faithful guardian of her 'priceless treasure-houses of art'.

(*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 362)

In a similar vein, almost forty years later, Alfred Foucher recorded a series of perceptive reflections on the character of archaeological conservation during this phase which he, in fact, treated as a watershed. He described Curzon's initiative, compared with the 'spasmodic extemporizations' of the nineteenth century, as marking the advent of

[a] period of a well-organized service, of projects carefully prepared and brought to completion, of wisely conducted preservation work, of excavations steadily resumed year after year, of Annual Reports building up stately arrays on the shelves of libraries, whereby each new discovery became the common possession of students throughout the world.

(Foucher, in Cummings 1939: 353)

Scholars and political leaders of independent India have also remembered this epoch in much the same way. Sourindranath Roy characterized it as ‘the dawn of a new era’ (Roy 1961: 78), while Jawaharlal Nehru believed that ‘after every other viceroy has been forgotten, Curzon will be remembered because he restored all that was beautiful in India’ (cited in Rose 1969: 239).

While such writings have highlighted the important ways in which archaeological policy was consolidated during the time of Lord Curzon, they have quite remarkably viewed it as a neutral domain. They fail to refer in any detail either to the political context of the empire or to the various groups of Indian people for whom these monuments constituted an integral aspect of their physical and mental landscapes.

The issue that is absent, then, in previous assessments of the Curzon era will form the theme of this chapter. I shall draw attention to the varied and complex connections between imperialist attitudes, which such assessments almost completely ignore, and the upkeep and conservation of monuments that form the focus of their attention. The sources used in this context are the records of the various government departments, meticulously and (fortunately for scholars) obsessively docketing the proceedings relating to archaeology. What these sources reveal also permits us to reconsider the ‘preservationist mission’ of Curzon and the attitudes towards ‘native sensibilities’ and community rights it embodied.

THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF CONSERVATION

There is no doubt at all about the scale of the conservation work undertaken under the supervision of Curzon and his young director of archaeology, John Marshall, in these years. Scores of monuments ranging from the beautiful Pearl mosque at Lahore to the Mandalay Palace in Burma, from the viceroy’s special love, the Taj Mahal in Agra, to the medieval temples of the Madras presidency, were overhauled and repaired in a fairly short time (Marshall 1939). In the case of the Taj Mahal, this involved clearing the approaches of bazaars, rebuilding the ruined colonnades of the *chowk-i jilo khana* (forecourt), restoration of the Fatehpuri mosque and also the whole garden, its pavilions and water architecture (*ibid.*: 16). The spectrum of conservation and restoration work undertaken at many other less famous monuments was equally wide ranging.

Equally important is the fact that conservation was generally executed with skill and sensitivity. Apart from paying close attention to technical details which ensured that the restorations were unobtrusive, specialized stonemasons were, in several cases, brought from a great distance to ensure the quality of the work. The masons who worked on Mandugarh came from Jaipur. New funds were also made available at federal and provincial levels. The Archaeological Department was provided with a lakh of rupees for the purpose of giving subsidies to aid special work that was beyond the financial capacity of the local administrations. Additionally, provincial budgets significantly expanded, multiplying sevenfold in a brief span of five years. From the statistics that Marshall provided in 1904 it seems that whereas in 1898–9

the provincial outlays were in the vicinity of Rs. 43 292, in 1903–04 these had expanded to Rs. 330 429 (*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 24). Because of the close association of the Archaeological Department with such work, repairs were often satisfactorily completed at a much lower cost than initially envisaged by local governments. The Public Works Department at Ahmedabad, for instance, had estimated that a lakh of rupees would be needed to restore the famous Sidi Sayeed mosque there, whereas the actual cost of restoration was only Rs. 1680 (*ibid.*: 193)!

At the same time, monuments were sometimes destroyed in the process of ostensibly conserving them. Thus in 1904, a Mr Cook, the State Engineer, while repairing the famous Buddhist *stupa* ('The Great Stupa') at Sanchi near Bhopal, removed and destroyed a number of original pillars and coping stones of the main railing, several of which were inscribed with the names of donors of the early historic period.¹ Many of these were badly split, some had collapsed, but instead of finding some way of preserving the stones in their original contexts, Cook replaced them with new ones. Hoping to undo the damage, Marshall personally inspected Sanchi but found that the 'restorations' could not be rectified. And so Sanchi became the site where, to borrow Curzon's description, the Archaeological Department was forced to consecrate 'a desecration'.²

It has been necessary to mention Sanchi because, like many other such cases, it is rarely ever discussed in the available publications on the subject. Even Marshall, in his definitive volumes on Sanchi, while summarizing the history of conservation there, chose to remain silent on Cook's destruction of the main railing of the monument (Marshall and Foucher 1983 reprint). Treasure hunters and British archaeologists of the nineteenth century including Alexander Cunningham and H.H. Cole were mentioned and the harm done by 'Moslem iconoclasts' was specially highlighted, but Cook's act of 'restoration' was excluded. Possibly, this silence was the result of a larger anxiety to construct an unsullied narrative of archaeological conservation in the Curzon era.

Apart from preserving buildings, Curzon also addressed the question of securing portable antiquities lying around the Indian countryside that he considered of some significance. However, in contrast to the earlier practice of carting antiquities to museums in major cities, he stressed the necessity of developing local museums for preserving ancient relics and antiquities at or near some of the major monuments with which they were originally associated. The question of whether antiquities should be preserved in the provincial capitals or at archaeological sites came up specifically when the issue of removing the collection of objects at Bijapur was being discussed. Henry Cousens, the archaeological surveyor of that area, had suggested that the Bijapur objects should form the nucleus of an antiquarian museum for Western India that could be situated at Poona. The Governor of Bombay considered that this museum should be based in Bombay's Town Hall. Curzon, on the other hand, argued against removing them from their original locality:

The question raised is one of principle, and it involves a much wider range of application than the limited case of Bijapur. It is a question whether we are to encourage local collections or museums in India, in connection with the

localities or neighbourhood where the objects have been found, or whether we should, for the reasons named by Bombay and by Hon'ble Member, centralize in capital cities or larger towns. To my mind there can be little doubt that the former is the sound and the latter the faulty principle ... where a collection already exists, in connection with a famous group of monuments or remains, that attracts visitors on its own account, and represents the architecture or sculpture of a particular epoch or style, then I think it is a great pity to sever these objects from their natural surroundings, in order to add to the size or the symmetry of a central collection.

(*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 62–3)

Because of this initiative, several local collections were started along these lines at Bijapur, Malda, Peshawar and Pagan. To these ideas, Curzon added yet another perspective. While the colonial administration was to jealously safeguard India's archaeological heritage, this in no way gave it the automatic right to cart away antiquities to Great Britain. Instead, relics of archaeological and historical value were to be conserved in British India. Cultural plunder, in some cases, could even be returned to India. It was, after all, at Curzon's initiative that the *pietra dura* panels which today form the backdrop to Shah Jahan's throne in the Diwan-i-Am of Lal Qila, Delhi, had been brought back from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and successfully restored to their original place.³

This was a perspective that also led to tensions of various kinds. Some saw it as encroaching on the legitimate rights of the British Museum in London. On the question of the proposal to give the collection that Aurel Stein had made in Chinese Turkestan in its entirety to the British Museum, the viceroy's suggestion to keep a major portion of this at the museums in Calcutta and Lahore was strongly opposed. Curzon, however, stuck to his original proposal and his note on this clearly underlines why he wished to reassert the Government of India's control over Indian heritage:

We shall never get a really representative collection in India if the British Museum argument is steadily and logically applied. Our object should be to persuade scholars to come out here, and to study our treasures and relics in India, instead of allowing them to be swamped in the overstocked collections of the British Museum The answer to the second question, why should our Indian Museum have the first claim on archaeological finds in Chinese Turkestan, seems to me to be equally simple. It was because they were found with our money and our man.

(*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 61–2)

Curzon did not always get his way. Antiquities continued to find their way to the British Museum and other such institutions, even with his knowledge. Clearly, vested interests of various kinds blocked what was a crucial departure in notions of colonial heritage from getting as successfully deployed as the viceroy desired.

These then, very broadly, are some of the important ways in which Curzon

undertook to conserve and restore India's monuments. At the same time, as was stated earlier, this policy was conceived and deployed in India as part of the policy of a colonial state. Its functioning is thus part of a history that is more complex than is suggested by a mere recounting of the technicalities of upkeep. It is to some of these issues, which impinged upon and influenced the manner of conservation, that I now turn.

THE VICEROY'S CONSERVATIONIST AGENDA: MOTIVES AND METHODS

First, what were Curzon's motives in undertaking a vigorous conservation policy? His deep interest in matters pertaining to monuments is well known (Linstrum 1995). Even before he came to India in 1899, conservation was a high priority of his. As early as 1890, following his visit to Greece, he had publicly advocated and had tried to persuade Gladstone to return the Parthenon marbles to their original site on the Acropolis of Athens (Gilmour 1995: 82). In India, however, he articulated this concern in terms that were often pompous and patronizing. Curzon claimed to be 'an imperialist heart and soul. Imperial expansion seems to me to be an inevitable necessity and carries a noble and majestic obligation' to provide good administration and priority to Indian development (cited in Gopal 1965: 224). Good governance was also considered necessary because India was the focus of British interests and on her, Curzon believed, the position of the British empire in many ways depended: 'As long as we rule India we are the greatest Power in the world. If we lose it, we shall drop straightaway to a third-rate power' (cited in Gopal 1965: 224). One of the important instruments for making imperial governance seem more human and which, he believed, would foreground its beneficence in India was the restoration of her architectural heritage. Curzon's speech at the temple town of Brindaban (5 December 1899) illustrates this:

Your most ancient structure, the temple of Govind Deva which I have seen described as the most impressive religious edifice erected by Hindu art in Northern India, also owes its restoration to the British Government, which 25 years ago, allotted a sum of more than Rs. 30 000 to the task ... it exemplifies what, in my opinion is one of the primary duties of government in this country.

(Indian Archaeology 1899–1905: 71)

This policy, it was hoped, would also help the British Raj in atoning for what was described by the viceroy as 'a century of British vandalism and crime' (ibid.: 421) towards Indian monuments. The natural and human factors involved in the despoliation of subcontinental monuments were several: exuberant vegetation, illegal and unscientific excavation, indigenous as well as British destruction and conversion of archaeological structures into offices and residences, the lack of responsibility and of a financial and supervisory system at both imperial and

provincial levels. Curzon, however, singled out the era of ‘vandalism’ inaugurated by the early phase of British rule in India, as being the most recent and widespread context of such despoliation.

The structural and functional metamorphosis of many of India’s magnificent medieval monuments into dingy governmental spaces has been vividly captured in Curzon’s communications. In Lahore alone, the Diwan i-Am was serving, without any apparent sense of incongruity, as a hot weather dormitory for British soldiers, while Moti Masjid was a currency reserve treasury, the Choti Khwabgah a church, Anarkali’s tomb the Civil Secretariat record room and library and the Dai Anga Masjid (also called the ‘Railway Mosque’) served as the railway traffic superintendent’s office (for details, see *Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 421–41). Clearly, from the perspective of viceregal policy, monuments needed to be restored and colonial desecration – ‘from which even a Goth would have shrunk’ – rolled back in order to provide a more ‘enlightened’ face to British rule in India.

Along with making the restoration of monuments an essential aspect of imperial beneficence, Curzon tried to make a further statement. The very enterprise of restoring historic buildings was a British responsibility and not a European one. Consequently, its sustenance could not, in any possible way, be provided by the organization that his predecessor, Elgin, had warmly welcomed – a European association overseeing an ‘Indian Exploration Fund’ (cf. Lahiri 1997: 131). Curzon lacked enthusiasm for that proposal because he believed that continental scholars and travellers would, as in the past, use the opportunity to loot Indian antiquities for enriching the collections of European museums. This was a widely shared sentiment. In a confidential letter, James Burgess had complained about French vandalism in the Gandhara region in 1900. ‘The British Museum possesses very few Gandhara sculptures, mostly presented by private individuals; at Paris I hear about a hundred pieces representative of early Buddhist art from Swat and Yusufzai are to be exhibited – all brought home by a French traveller quite recently’.⁴ More importantly, he used this letter to draw attention to a case of German ‘banditry’ in Pagan, where Thoman Gillis had removed, slab by slab, the fresco paintings at the Theinmazi Pagoda and had tried to sell them to the Ethnological Museum of Berlin. Subsequently, at the instance of the Indian government, this case was taken up by the British ambassador at Berlin. The German government admitted that Thoman Gillis had indeed offered for sale a collection of objects from Burma, including the frescoes mentioned by Burgess but ‘owing to the disproportionate amount of the price asked for, the offer was not accepted’.⁵ A vigorous conservation policy along with the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904 would, it was hoped, help in stemming the flow of such antiquities from the sub-continent to European museums.

Second, which monuments came to be conserved in these years? Curzon’s address on the Ancient Monuments Bill to the Legislative Council in Calcutta suggested that it was the duty of the imperial government to restore all ‘the great remains or groups of remains with which this country is studded from one end to the other’ (quoted in Raleigh 1906: 198). The viceroy’s notes on a Foreign Department file, however, reveal a more discriminating system. It was clearly understood

that while the political horizon of the British government encompassed the eight provinces of India constituting British territory and the nearly 700 Native States, monuments in British territory were to have, on the whole, a prior claim to those in Native States.⁶ So monuments came to be most systematically preserved in the 943 000 square miles under the direct sovereignty of the Crown, while the roughly 770 000 square miles falling within the expression 'Native States' were relegated to a secondary position. Additionally, Curzon believed that 'Monuments that are likely to be visited by large numbers of people have a prior claim to those in out of the way parts'.⁷ While he did not spell out the meaning of 'visitors', he does not seem to have included worshippers at religious shrines. This is evident from the correspondence that was exchanged on the issue of restoring the Khajuraho temples. While the Director of Archaeology in India forcefully argued for a large financial outlay for conserving them, which he described as the 'most famous group of Hindu temples in Northern India', Curzon was not very enthusiastic. This was because the Khajuraho temples did not fall within British territory, nor were they visited very often – 'I do not know if visitors are ever attracted to Khajuraho. I should imagine but rarely, though it is possible that the temples may attract Hindu pilgrims!'⁸ Possibly, the term 'visitors' only implied scholarly researchers, administrators and European travellers.

INDIGENOUS SENSIBILITIES

So where did the colonized (the 'natives' of the British Raj) figure in this grand imperial programme of monument conservation? What was the state's perception of indigenous groups who regarded many of these monuments as forming part of their living heritage?

There are various types of statements concerning the 'natives' relationships to India's monuments. There are those which reflect the impatience or inability of British officials to confront and grapple with the alien world of Indian religious complexes. Curzon, for instance, was incensed at the refusal of a temple committee to admit non-Hindus, including the viceroy, into a temple enclosure at Bhubaneswar. I quote his observation in full:⁹

It struck me as very absurd that the Bengal Government should be willing to spend money upon the restoration of this group of temples, but that, owing to the supposed prejudices of the peasant population of this tiny place, which ought to be overjoyed to get any money spent upon it at all, the Engineer should not even be permitted to inspect the work which it was proposed to undertake.

On discovering that after the handing over of a mosque at Bijapur to Muslims, it had been 'whitewashed, that prayer matting had been spread, lamps suspended, and prints pasted on the back wall', John Marshall suggested that no mosques or other buildings which had once been the property of the government should be

handed back to Muslims and that they should only be allowed to pray subject to strict regulations. The act of conservation, thus, was clearly loaded with the same ideological rationale as imperial rule to ‘reconstitute the native as someone to be ruled and managed’ (Said 1994: 158). And in case the ‘natives’ refused to be easily ‘managed’, then the state, in the name of salvaging India’s archaeological heritage, could threaten the resumption of monuments. That the spirit of such conservation was clearly positioned against the indigenous inhabitants is also evident in the viceroy’s comments regarding the above mentioned Bijapur mosque:

having saved them from the destructive carelessness or the uncultured neglect of white men, we were not going to hand them back to the dirt and defilement of Asiatic religious practices.

(*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 217)

Another recurring theme is that of trying to link monument destruction by Indians to genetic defects, while British colonial destruction of the same was merely uncultured behaviour. Thus the removal of the marble pillars and fretwork from Jahangir’s tomb at Lahore by Ranjit Singh, an important nineteenth-century Sikh ruler in the Punjab, for the purpose of decorating the Golden Temple at Amritsar, was explained as a consequence of congenital vandalism in the Sikhs (*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 420). Among the Muslims as well, the defacing of buildings was considered to be a ‘natural sequence’ of their occupation or reoccupation. At the same time, there were the realities of the Indian situation, where the British Raj was co-operating with several Indian princely families who were actively involved in monument conservation. In such situations, the tenor of government proceedings became more generous. For instance, while recommending that a reasonable sum should be given by the government for the monuments at Mandu, even Curzon was forced to acknowledge that the ruling family of the Dhar Darbar had ‘at different times within the past quarter of a century expended certain sums upon the upkeep of a possession of which it is intensely proud’.¹⁰

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that at the level of formal policy, there is no acknowledgement of such Indians or of the possibility that they could be incorporated as active collaborators in the monument policy of the state. This is evident from the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904 (*AIR Manual* 1989 [I]: 581–93), two of which are especially relevant. First, for the purpose of preserving ‘protected monuments’, Clause 5 of this act, at least theoretically, regarded as essential the transference of the guardianship rights enjoyed by all owners, trustees and village officers to the government (*ibid.*: 585). This was a unilateral transference that precluded any active initiative towards conservation by individuals or groups of people outside government portals. ‘The Bill provides that the owner or the manager of the building which merits greater care than it has been receiving may be invited to enter into an agreement for its protection and that in the event of his refusing to come to terms the collector may proceed to acquire it compulsorily or take proper course to secure its application’ (*ibid.*: 581). Second, in the case of religious monuments, only those owners could enter into an agreement

with the government who were followers of the religion to which the monument belonged: 'Nothing in this section shall be deemed to empower any person not being of the same religion as the persons on whose behalf he is acting to make or execute any agreement relating to a protected monument which or any part of which is periodically used for the religious worship or observances of that religion' (Clause 6.3 of the act). Ingrained in this provision is a larger colonial notion that the religion of a 'native' congenitally prevented him from acting in the religious interests of 'natives' following religious practices other than his own, while the British, being a more superior race, ostensibly displayed an exemplary impartiality towards shrines and establishments of all religions and creeds.

If such provisions had, in the main, remained only in the statute books, they could have been treated as mere theoretical formulations. But in fact architectural conservation came to be premised on such assumptions. An instance in point relates to a group of monuments in Jaunpur where a barrister, Moulvi Abdul Majid, and his family had, for several generations, been spending thousands of rupees annually on repairing and restoring mosques (*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 413–14). Instead of creating a system whereby an equable partnership could be created, with the Archaeological Department guiding the barrister on the manner of restoration, the government thought that it would be more fitting to create a committee on which Majid, the collector and District Engineer would be *ex-officio* members and on which the leading Sunni Muslims of Jaunpur would be invited to sit. Why the state considered religious affiliation as being the most important criteria for membership to this committee makes sense in the light of the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act.

More serious were those cases where this exclusive religious frame of reference attempted to exclude and evacuate several shrines of their varied patronage. One example of such exclusion was the renowned shrine of Mahabodhi in the Indian State of Bihar where Siddhartha Gautama, the historical founder of Buddhism, had attained enlightenment in the sixth century BC. Since the time when a temple was first built at Mahabodhi in commemoration of that sacred incident, it had continued, with only occasional interruptions, to be a 'living' shrine. Like many such shrines with long histories, however, it became a religious place where a mass of heterogeneous practices and traditions, Buddhist and Hindu, came to be inscribed. This is evident from the various medieval antiquities and inscriptions that the shrine complex has yielded and from which it is apparent that intense Buddhist veneration existed alongside Vaishnava and Saiva worship (Cunningham 1892; Barua 1934). By the fourteenth century AD, for example, the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha had meditated was incorporated into the circumambulation of holy places that Hindu pilgrims to Gaya (a religious town, 8 kilometres from Bodh-Gaya) were to visit. It was a circuit steeped in Vaishnava tradition and which continues well into the present century. The legal proprietorship of Mahabodhi has, incidentally, been vested since 1727 in a Saiva *mahant* (priest).¹¹

This did not create any problems for Buddhist worshippers until the creation of a pan-Buddhist axis towards the end of the nineteenth century. The contentious politics that subsequently came to surround the shrine, the nature of the pan-Buddhist

agenda in which the historical evolution of the shrine was ignored, and the other implications of this controversy for the land of Buddha's birth deserves to be the subject of a separate study. What is, however, relevant is that this coincided with an imperial initiative, undertaken by Curzon, which, contrary to the principle that the British government did not interfere in matters of religion, invested great prestige and energy in the dispute.

The Maha Bodhi Society spearheaded the movement to 'reclaim' the Mahabodhi temple from a Hindu proprietor and Hindu forms of worship. Curzon also considered the Bodh-Gaya temple complex to be exclusively a Buddhist shrine 'intended for the accommodation of Buddhist images and Buddhist worship' (*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 228). Nowhere did he choose to refer to features connected with Bodh-Gaya's archaeology and history or to the fact that these clearly attested to the antiquity of its mixed pilgrim traffic. This is both interesting and important, especially for those who have followed and admired Curzon's deep interest in monuments. This view of Mahabodhi was obviously premised on a classification of religious complexes, very similar to that contained in the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904, in which these were perceived as belonging to only one religion and its community of believers – the religion of the founders of the shrine. Any hybridity or blurring of distinctions among places of worship came to be seen as evidence of debasement and/or degeneration. So, in Curzon's scheme, the multi-religious character of Mahabodhi was only evidence of the shrine's desecration, from which he now proposed to rescue it.

The case of Bodh-Gaya, however, also demonstrates that such classifications could be effectively resisted. Notwithstanding various recommendations and draft agreements and the threat held out by Curzon to take over Mahabodhi through legislation, the Hindu priest, Krishna Dayal Gir, was obdurate and refused to negotiate seriously. What seems striking, in retrospect, is that this priest was the only person who put forward a resistance premised on the multi-religious character of this shrine and similar shrines in India. As he put it, while there were other Indian temples where worship was carried on by people of different sects and religious faiths, nowhere had the British government desired to exercise control or superintendence as they were trying to in the case of Mahabodhi. His statement, citing examples of places where people of various faiths worshipped, often in their own ways, is worth quoting:

The renowned Durgah, or tomb, of Ata Saheb in Ajmer, Rajputana is daily visited by numberless Hindu and Muhammadan pilgrims from different parts of the country simultaneously; the shrine of Mahakal on the Observatory Hills at Darjeeling is regarded as a very sacred spot by the Hindus (of all classes) and the Buddhists, each performing their worship in accordance with their own faith; the Hindus offer sacrifices of animals too; the temple of Bodh in Nepal is a place of great sanctity to the Hindus and Buddhists, where both the sects perform their worship without the least friction ... But the object of so-called reli-

gious crusaders is quite different from that of *bona fide* pilgrims, *viz.* to create certain rights over the shrine and thereby to cause a friction and disturbance.

(*Indian Archaeology* 1899–1905: 319–20)

Subsequently, in 1904, Curzon was forced to abandon his agenda of making the main temple an exclusive Buddhist shrine, partly because of the stout resistance offered by the Mahant.

Similarly, with regard to the Sanchi monuments, John Marshall believed that the protection of the Buddhist *stupa* there was only possible through the appointment of Buddhist *chowkidars* (guards).¹² Without consulting Sultan Jahan Begum, the local ruler of the princely state of Bhopal, who all along had borne the cost of maintaining Sanchi, he had even arranged with the Mahabodhi Society for such a caretaker. The Begum, however, was horrified at the idea, and very effectively withstood all pressure for making such an appointment. Over time, she successfully showed how the religion of the guardians of Sanchi, be it that of the humble *chowkidars* or the ruling house, was irrelevant to the issue of providing support to these monuments. It is no coincidence, then, that Marshall was eventually to dedicate his Sanchi volumes ‘to the memory of Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jehan Begam Sahiba’.

CONCLUSION

Since the British ruled India, it was in their interest to construct an image in which they appeared as the saviours and guardians of subcontinental monuments. However, as this chapter has tried to demonstrate, it is important to look beyond the frameworks that were created for India and reconstruct a picture where the mapping of the Indian archaeological universe is shown as being related to the larger imperial agenda of the British Raj. That this was an agenda that could view the pious as ‘desecrators’ and attempt to remove heterogeneous forms of worship and guardianship at religious shrines has also been highlighted. Viewed in this light, the terms of the problem are altered in several important ways. Among other things, instead of the stereotyped image of Curzon as the conservator *par excellence*, a more complicated picture emerges where the destruction/exclusion of cultural meanings accompanies the conservation of cultural property. Equally important is the sense that ‘natives’ resisted conforming to British notions of them. Instead of a passive accommodation to the conservation measures proffered by the government, indigenous groups appear to articulate their sentiments and policies around their own agendas, agendas that were not exclusively shaped by those of the colonial state.

NOTES

The primary sources mentioned in the notes were consulted in the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

- 1 Details of this are available in Proceedings of the Foreign Department (PFD hereafter) (Internal), nos. 421–22, August 1905.
- 2 Proceedings of the Home Department (Archaeology and Epigraphy [AE hereafter]), no. 6, July 1905, 'Notes' section for Curzon's comments, dated 8 May 1905.
- 3 Proceedings of the Department of Revenue and Agriculture (PRAD hereafter) (AE-A), no. 28, January 1903.
- 4 PRAD (AE-A), no. 4, August 1900, letter from Burgess (marked confidential) to Secretary to the Government of India, dated 5 April 1900.
- 5 PRAD (AE-A), no. 3, December 1900, communication from Frank C. Lascelles, Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to Berlin, to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, dated 30 July 1900.
- 6 PFD (Internal – A), nos. 49–62, May 1906, 'Notes' section for Curzon's note, dated 18 April 1905.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 PRAD (AE-A), no. 3, December 1903.
- 10 Southern States of Central India and Malwa Agency Records, no. 4/21/1903 (II), Curzon's note on Mandu.
- 11 This section on Bodh-Gaya is based on *Indian Archaeology 1899–1905*: 218–338.
- 12 PFD (Internal – B), nos. 378–9, May 1906.

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21 *Use, value and significance in heritage management*

KEITH EMERICK

This chapter seeks to trace the way in which the perception of monuments has been constrained by notions of them as either 'living' or 'dead'. The pinnacle of this approach was typified in the United Kingdom by the Office of Works consolidation process of the 1920s and 30s, which invoked a limited interpretation of the word 'use' in its application to monuments. In more recent years, the heritage management vocabulary has adopted words such as 'value' and 'significance' alongside 'use'. The chapter continues with an examination of the relationship between the evolving notions of monuments, the heritage and the role of the heritage manager.

In 1913 Charles Peers, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments for the Office of Works, wrote:

There is a great distinction between buildings which are still occupied and buildings which are in ruins. Buildings which are in use are still adding to their history; they are alive. Buildings which are in ruin are dead; their history is ended. There is all the difference in the world in their treatment. When a building is a ruin, you must do your best to preserve all that is left of it by every means in your power. When you come to a building which is being used as a dwelling-house, or a church ... you have a different set of problems. You have to perpetuate it as a living building, one adapted to the use of the present generation, but which has a history to be preserved.

(Forsyth 1913: 135)

The Office of Works' approach to the preservation of ancient monuments became institutionalized throughout the 1920s and 30s, and owing to the secondment of trained staff, examples of this approach were to be found in Cyprus, the then Middle East Protectorates and as far east as India. The approach was, however, an amalgam of best contemporary practice drawn from a number of sources: the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), individual experience such as the work of Lord Curzon at Tattershall Castle using imported techniques perfected in the Indian sub-continent, and past work, particularly the monument conservation work of the Kilkenny and South East Ireland Society in the 1860s.

The approach was not without its detractors, although criticism tended to concentrate on techniques and materials used rather than overall philosophy. But there was a feeling that some medieval monuments might have been over-conserved: in a letter of 1922 to A.R. Powys of the SPAB, a local representative of that Society says: 'Have you heard that HMOW [His Majesty's Office of Works] have started in on Whitby to do their damndest, to give us another 'frozen ruin' from the Government cold storage? Help!' (SPAB 1922).

The approach manifestly 'froze' monuments in time and place; the clarity of the plan of the ancient monument or earthwork was paramount. Later features and buildings were removed to aid legibility. The papers produced by employees of the Office of Works contain many references to words such as 'dead', 'living' and 'use'. How were the words used and what has been the effect of the particular interpretation of these words?

In both Great Britain and the empire there was a notion that ancient monuments (largely, but not exclusively, roofless ruins and pre-historic sites) were 'dead', that they had no 'use'; Peers was not alone in believing this. 'Use' had a very narrow sense, the implication being that a ruined monastery had no continuing architectural use after the Dissolution. This completely disregarded any post-medieval social developments which might have occurred at the site, or the way monuments were used as architectural elements in designed landscapes. Gothic Revival architects pored over the ruins to extract the correct dimensions and proportions for their new churches; the buildings were places of inspiration for several generations of painters, historians and novelists. Stone was taken to build new buildings, people used the ruins. All this was ignored. The reasons why this was so are complicated. First, there was a need to preserve the great medieval ruins for the future, and to make the greater part of them 'legible'. This would mean that the later, non-medieval aspects and intrusions would be removed, for much the same reason that museum designers try to reduce the number of story lines in a museum display, to avoid confusion in the minds of the public. Second, there was a desire not to make the mistakes of the nineteenth century, when architects presumed to interpret – or demolish – medieval fabric. Many professionals would return to comment on the disaster which befell St Albans Abbey when its West Front was demolished and rebuilt. William Harvey, an architect with the Office of Works, wrote in 1922:

The creation of picturesque ruinous compositions ... is not the object kept in view by the Historic Buildings Branch, which aims at conserving the beauty and the stability of the old buildings in its charge The monuments are allowed to tell their own story without the intrusion of modern architectural design, whether good or bad, affecting the question. ... Some twenty years ago persons interested in the subject of ancient buildings learned from the fate of St Albans Abbey that works of restoration which involved new architectural designs entirely satisfactory to the architect himself might be anything but satisfactory to other spectators. The new works were held up to the rising generation as the awful example of architectural impertinence, and it was made a point of honour among those who laid down rules for the guidance of repairs

... that those who were entrusted with the work should see to it that they effaced their own personality in the presence of the work of a past age.

(Harvey 1922: 706)

The sense here almost suggests that the preserved ancient monument was part of a Garden of Rest, further reinforced by the artificial setting of the monument and its dislocation from its wider landscape. This is not to say that the economic and social landscape setting of a monastery was unknown: it is merely the case that the immediate problem of securing the monuments had to be addressed, whereas conservation of the wider landscape contained the problem of private ownership.

During the years before and after the First World War, the protection, conservation and interpretation of ancient monuments in Great Britain was in something of a paradoxical position. Professionals knew that the revised ancient monument legislation of 1913 was a considerable improvement on that of 1882 in that it gave the state power to undertake the conservation of medieval monuments on private land (following due process), but the status of private ownership was still considered a block to extending conservation work. It was recognized that historic, vernacular properties were as important as the high status abbeys and castles, in that they added character to an area, were regionally distinctive, could generate historic information and were in need of protection, but the professional and social resources required to 'take on' the rights of the private owner were not seen to be in place. However, this was not the case within the empire, where private ownership was considered less of a problem. Although the general principles of the Office of Works approach were applied, they were applied across a broader range and type of site. Cyprus is one example where townscapes were considered for preservation as at Famagusta or Nicosia. Individuals such as Lord Curzon experimented with a variety of treatments and vernacular craft skills in the Indian sub-continent. This experimentation applied to other aspects of conservation: regional and national surveys of monuments and archaeological sites seemed to be far advanced in parts of the empire, from the late eighteenth century onwards. England had to wait until the creation of the Royal Commission in 1908.

Experimentation does not capture the whole sense of what was being done. Individuals and organisations in the empire beyond England knew what was required and set about creating what they believed to be the correct conservation environment: those in England knew what was required, but could not move at their own pace. Scotland, it has to be said was a different case, and the most coherent demands for national action came from Edinburgh and Glasgow universities (Baldwin Brown 1905; Murray 1896).

We should, however, recognize that the interpretation of 'use' and by extension 'significance' was very limited in scope, although it was applied in a largely consistent manner to the monuments that passed into state guardianship. Although there were professional fora to debate issues such as 'use' or 'significance', the presumption was for the presentation of the single-period monument, that is, wholly medieval or Roman or whatever.

So what has changed? Three particular themes have become apparent since the end of the Second World War:

- the monument as part of the landscape
- local and native heritage management issues
- the identification of a World Heritage.

Historically, monuments survived and died in landscapes – social, economic, political and geographic. Without exception life around monuments continues up to the present; people farm, build towns, villages and homes, build visitor centres, visit and live in and on monuments. The realization of the importance of the landscape, including all its vernacular and industrial elements (which are now considered important by professionals and non-professionals alike), means that the people who inhabit those landscapes should have a participatory role in their management and use, because they have to live in and with the consequences of conservation.

The distinction between ancient monument and historic building or site has become blurred; the word ‘monument’ was used largely for the 1882 Act and the distinction between the two site types is in some respects an artificial one, which has become particularly apparent now that the heritage landscape embraces both urban and rural areas, high and low status. There is a significant problem developing in several countries that wish to attract particular types of tourist or resident to historic urban cores; these areas have often become home to the poorest sections of society and the upgrading and conservation of such areas has the potential to dispossess those residents. This is not solely a problem for the developing world; conservation work and tax credits directed towards the historic urban areas of the United States of America have encountered this problem in several cities. We now recognize that historic buildings have a better chance of survival if they have an ‘economic’ life or value, but this should be one geared to the community.

Sir Charles Peers had to accept that public opinion (specifically the notion of private ownership) was not ready to accommodate the broader conservation work that he and his contemporaries desired. It is now the case that whereas we are perhaps more secure in the knowledge that public opinion considers conservation ‘a good thing’, community rights and desires have supplanted private ownership as the issue with which conservationists must come to terms. Some communities – most notably native groups, such as the Zuni from New Mexico (Anyon and Ferguson 1995) – have long experience of arguing community and landscape issues with heritage managers, and these examples can serve as useful models for those attempting to manage their own identity and culture. They also serve to demonstrate that the combination of heritage managers and community groups is something that can produce positive results.

The idea of ‘significance’ as used in documents such as the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 1992) and associated conservation plans has now become commonplace. ‘Significance’ does not really appear in the conservation vocabulary until the 1970s, but by that time both ‘use’ and ‘value’ are understood differently. ‘Significance’ appears frequently in American and British contexts (principally) as an archaeological term, appearing at both ends of the archaeological time-scale.

Pre-historians began to debate whether archaeological methods had the subtlety to reveal the significance of the data. Were archaeologists to recover only what they could understand, or were they to record everything so that later archaeologists with more developed techniques could extract greater nuance from the data? And if everything was to be recorded, was there a significance in the fact that a brooch might be found one way up rather than another?

As historical archaeology developed, its practitioners realized that objects had a significance or meaning that was not necessarily made apparent by their archaeological context. This realization grew from the fact that documentary evidence both elaborated and clouded archaeological evidence, but also the proximity of historical archaeological periods to the present day meant that excavators could relate present-day use of objects and the many layers of meaning they often have to similar objects found in archaeological contexts.

In both pre-historic and historical archaeology, the trigger to reappraise 'significance' was provided by the condition of minority groups within contemporary society. Anthropologists, pre-historians and native peoples began to reveal the complexity of surviving native cultures while historical archaeologists began to recognize that large sections of society – women, African Americans – were completely invisible (or apparently so) from the archaeological record.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, 'significance' begins to appear more frequently in the British and American conservation vocabulary, and this is where 'value' and 'significance' begin to overlap. Throughout the 1980s it became apparent that not everything from the past could or should be saved. There was a developing belief that heritage had to pay its own way; with dwindling financial resources (coupled with a more realistic estimation of the actual cost of conservation) it seemed unrealistic to take what might be considered a purist line to conservation work. It was also the case that people realized that buildings or sites had a significance or value because they had been developed, modified, 'used' over many years. How then to define what should be saved and what relinquished?

The most commonly used system was (and remains) the application of a list of attributes to a site. A site type was defined and then a site within that type given a score or value rating against the list of attributes: completeness, documentary evidence, group value and so forth, until the best examples of each type could be identified – invariably for conservation.

To conservationists and heritage managers – as distinct from archaeologists – 'significance' has become a quality that can be tabulated. 'Significance' has become synonymous with the creation of conservation plans, stemming from its use in the Burra Charter, where it is presented as 'cultural significance'. 'Cultural significance' is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places and encompasses terms (or attributes) such as 'historic', 'social' or 'scientific'. A significant site is one which will 'help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations' (Australia ICOMOS 1992: 73). Once significance is defined it is then possible to construct policies which will protect that significance. Increasingly significance, or a scale of significance, is used to facilitate development; once the significance of a site is known, those parts of it which are 'less'

significant than others, become expendable. Thus 'significance' which embraces 'value' becomes 'use' related.

Heritage professionals and others have begun to realize that the landscape cannot be frozen, never has been frozen and that change must happen. Archaeologists, heritage managers and architects all bring the rationale from their own disciplines to create their scales of significance, but these may not be sensitive enough (or directed) to detect non-professional attributes, yet there has to be a forum for assessing significance or value.

Several archaeologists have begun to question the validity of attribute-lists, most notably Carver (1996), who questions whether the research value of sites is being realized and assessed because we have become conditioned to accept the notion of archaeological deposits as 'monuments' to be preserved. This could be juxtaposed with the earlier statement about historic buildings being given a longer life and use by having their economic potential realized. Carver would argue that archaeological deposits only have a use and value when their research potential is realized. Although archaeologists are involved in the creation of tables and lists of significance, it should still be understood that there is a continuing problem of how to recognize and interpret the significance of the actual archaeological deposit (Hodder 1982).

If a site is to be developed, and that site is in a living landscape (which by definition they all are) what happens when the residents decide that their criteria are nothing like those compiled by the professionals? Significance tends to be use related: it is also deeply value-laden, and who decides 'use'? Conservation plans are written because change is envisaged and the presumption is that if the object of least significance can be identified then that is the object which should be expendable. Such conservation plans have become tainted in some quarters because they have been perceived as a developer's charter, nearly always written from the outside looking in. That this is so is becoming apparent to many communities, who live and work in conservation areas, historic zones and so forth, but it has long been apparent to native communities. The work undertaken by the Zuni people of New Mexico, recounted by Roger Anyon, is a useful example. In a paper entitled 'Protecting the past, protecting the present: cultural resources and American Indians' (Anyon 1991), he described the conflict of preservation ideals between Zuni and non-Indian. The Zuni pueblo dwellers want to have modern homes and continue to live in the pueblo, but current preservation ideals are for the pueblo to retain its historic character; tourists expect to see something different from the present day town, but the Zuni do not wish to become 'a living museum' (*ibid.*: 219). Anyon concludes:

Non-Indians often expect the present to look like the past and are surprised when this is not the case. To the Zunis, the present does not have to look like the past because the past lives on in the every day actions of the Zuni people.

(Anyon 1991: 219)

Significance resides elsewhere.

Another interesting development in the field of significance is contained in a research report produced by Dr R. Weyeneth of the University of South Carolina (1995), on historic preservation and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It is sub-titled 'Identifying, preserving, and interpreting the architecture of liberation' and sets out to survey the extent to which the civil rights movement has been commemorated in the United States. It concludes that although there are wide ranging and imaginative efforts that seek to identify, preserve and interpret historic sites associated with the civil rights movement, they are hampered by the difficulties of commemorating chapters of history that are local, recent and controversial. It is the situation in the United States that modern sites cannot be put on the Register of Historic Places until they are fifty years old (except where they are of 'exceptional significance'). The civil rights research can therefore be seen as something of a dry run to identify those issues and aspects of material culture which are most problematic, before the listing process begins. However, it is interesting to see how a subject which is still quite recent is difficult to pin down; the story develops, becomes more complicated, motives become harder to identify. Whereas large sites such as college campuses and churches remain visible, the vernacular architecture and settings of the civil rights movement – such as bus stations, lunch counters of chain stores and bowling alleys – tend to be more vulnerable, and it was at this local level that sustained activity led to the desegregation of most American cities.

It is interesting that the idea of world heritage should be an issue at the same time as the move towards local heritage initiatives. The reasons for this are worth considering, as it may be possible to identify two areas where national approaches are beginning to be overtaken. In many nation-states the conservation authorities are located in one government or quasi-government department. Over the last thirty years conservation has become a huge subject – more than one organization can effectively handle – as it affects flora, fauna, tourism, archaeology, built heritage and so on. Most recently the word 'partnership' has figured in the conservation vocabulary as more work is undertaken between a number of governmental, non-governmental, charitable and private organizations that can also spread costs. Similarly, other local approaches are driven by the disintegration of nation-states and national bodies. Some of these changes have developed along ethnic lines and interests: one would expect archaeologists to be in the vanguard of those demonstrating how the fluidity of the landscape over time should transcend ethnic divisions, as archaeology and 'the heritage' is once again being used to define the nation.

Thus in some cases there is a national vacuum, either positively or negatively created, which is being filled by a coalition of local or regional and world concerns. Conversely, Lowenthal (1988), referring to Greece, makes the point that as some nations become more familiar with their own heritage, they might find it unacceptable that it should be taken to a 'higher', world plane, and cease to become something which is definitively 'theirs'. This dilemma between a world heritage and a nascent national/regional or community heritage is further illustrated by two articles in *Antiquity* (Mulvaney 1991, partially in response to Bowdler 1988) concerning the Kow Swamp Pleistocene burials, Victoria, Australia. The argument put forward by Mulvaney asserted that the early date of the skeletons made the issue one of

world heritage (because the burials contained valuable information concerning the origins of humankind) and more significant than an exclusively native repatriation issue.

The native contention was that it was disingenuous to create the 'world' heritage attribute when so little native culture had been within their own orbit. It is worth noting therefore that this same dilemma is found in a number of communities and is not one restricted to the relationship between native peoples and heritage managers.

The attribution of World Heritage status has also added a new dimension to the debate concerning 'value'. In the 1972 paper which defines the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1972), the term 'outstanding universal value' makes an appearance. In 1996 two papers were published (Cleere 1996; Titchen 1996) commenting on a situation which had already become apparent, namely that there were imbalances in the World Heritage List, with particular nations and site types being over-represented, caused by a lack of definition within the text of the Convention when it came to defining 'outstanding universal value'; the lack of universality in some nominations had degraded the value of the many (see also Cleere, this volume). Cleere's response was to suggest a moratorium on the addition of sites already well represented, coupled with active attempts to include under-represented regions and cultures. The problem was that the Anglo-European nations (primarily) mistook national for universal value. Titchen suggested that steps should be taken to define 'outstanding universal value' as an 'extraordinary combination of the unique and representative' (Titchen 1996: 240) and avoid the artificial distinctions of heritage being natural or cultural. Titchen also considered the 'serial' nomination of some type sites such as Gothic cathedrals, stressing that the wording of World Heritage criteria made it difficult to 'ensure the recognition of interactions between people and the environment of outstanding universal value' (ibid.: 235), thereby noting that landscape and interactions with the natural environment are significant expressions of cultural heritage, are a characteristic of indigenous peoples and are fundamental elements in implementing the Convention.

The examples of the Zuni, civil rights research and the dilemmas raised by Kow Swamp and Greece referred to above indicate that there are useful lessons to be learned by communities from communities on a variety of heritage matters, particularly issues such as significance, but are 'local' and 'world' mutually exclusive? I think not. We readily accept that a novel about a small Latin American community can give an insight into the human or universal condition, but we seem to be less able to see it in 'real' communities and people. The achievements of the Zuni, native Australians at Uluru, or civil rights demonstrators indicate that 'significance' is an inherently dangerous term and yet one can see that such 'local' victories have a 'universal' relevance, which is perhaps related to Titchen's preferred interpretation of the UNESCO charter. Much has been written about the problems of defining a world heritage, and many of the commentators (particularly Cleere 1996), recognize that the problem is one of over-representation of particular types of monument proposed by a small group of member countries, rather than any inherent weakness in the idea of a world heritage.

Even the problems of interpretation should not be seen as a barrier to world relevance. For several years there has been conflict and debate between native communities and those who study their material culture, one of the issues being the interpretation of their worldview, which many felt sat unhappily and unrealistically with the linear definitions preferred by the West. Why should it be difficult to accept two definitions or versions of the same phenomenon? The Western mind can accept such dualism when it is applied to poetry, or a scientific instrument such as the Harrison watch (Sobel 1996) but is less able (again) to accept it in real people and real communities. The Harrison watch was invented for mariners so that they could tell the time of day at the home port and simultaneously the time of day at the place they happened to be, which by extension told them exactly where they were on the face of the earth. Indeed the Harrison watch is an interesting analogy for ancient monuments: Fountains Abbey is always Fountains Abbey; it is also that thing which our biases tell us it is, and those two aspects have a cumulative value which tells us how far we have travelled and is – perhaps – the significance of the site.

The approach taken by Charles Peers and the Office of Works was all about ‘legibility’; monuments were to be allowed to tell their own story without the intrusion of modern architectural design, whether good or bad, affecting the question. In reality, only half the story was told. The challenge now is to understand that the ‘narrative’ is far from simple, that the first-person, professional view has put itself in question largely through its own success in reading and revealing the greater landscape. Once the greater landscape has been revealed as important or significant, then the heritage managers are duty bound to enter into dialogue with the occupants of that landscape. If there should be scales of significance and value, then there must be a mechanism for debating them with the new constituency. Some consider ‘partnership’ a false equality, implying shared finance rather than ‘participation’, which implies shared involvement. Heritage professionals have to be better at communicating the rationale of heritage management and the value of conservation – similarly, they have to be better at listening.

In 1992 Henry Cleere wrote an editorial in *Antiquity* referring to the creation of the International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management and the then little-known Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage. He urged archaeologists to join ICOMOS and its national committees. By now many archaeologists have heard of ICOMOS, but some feel that it should be taken more seriously – particularly in the UK. In the last edition of the ICOMOS News of 1997, the President’s Message asked questions about the future role, priorities and services to be provided by ICOMOS. I would suggest that ICOMOS, WAC and regional pressure groups such as the Asian and West Pacific Network for Urban Conservation (AWPNUC) have a fundamental role to play in the restructuring of conservation and heritage management which is taking place. I do not think that the nation-state is a thing of the past, but its role in heritage management (at least) is changing: it may be that its future is to act as the conduit or facilitator between local/regional and world organizations, rather than take on all aspects of an expanding discipline. Conservation groups now exist at all levels, in

most parts of the world, but I think that it is at this level, with organizations such as ICOMOS, WAC and AWPNUC, that the new conservation constituency can be informed and heard.

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22 *Is the past a non-renewable resource?*

CORNELIUS J. HOLTORF

Archaeological heritage management of our times is normally based on four key tenets:

- 1 Archaeological sites and objects are authentic, in other words, of true antiquity, and have a distinctive aura which fakes and copies do not have. Safeguarding this authenticity and the aura of the original is the rationale of many museum collections and justification for preserving ancient sites in the landscape. In a famous article 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', Walter Benjamin (1992) has given the notion of aura some philosophical grounding.
- 2 Archaeological sites and objects are irreplaceable and non-renewable, because we cannot go back into the past and remake them. Timothy Darvill argued accordingly that:

the archaeological resource is finite in the sense that only so many examples of any defined class of monument were ever created. ... The archaeological resource is non-renewable in that ... once a monument or site is lost it cannot be recreated ... Reconstructed archaeological remains lack authenticity.

(Darvill 1993: 6)

- 3 In the modern Western world, archaeological sites and objects are in danger of being destroyed by forces such as changes in ground-water levels, deep ploughing, wars, industrial and housing development and the antiquities trade. It has become a cliché to lament the loss of ancient sites and objects in the modern Western world. David Lowenthal reckoned (1985: 396) that 'this generation has ... destroyed more of prehistory than was previously known to exist.' As a consequence, rescue archaeology and the preservation of ancient sites have become the order of the day.
- 4 Professional archaeologists save archaeological sites and objects from further destruction on behalf of future generations who are expected to be grateful

that they too can appreciate these sites and objects, and thus the past. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre, for example, writes about its task:

With 552 cultural and natural sites already protected worldwide, the World Heritage Centre is working to make sure that future generations can inherit the treasures of the past. And yet, most sites face a variety of threats, particularly in today's environment. The preservation of this common heritage concerns us all.

(http://www.unesco.org/whc/nwhc/pages/sites/s_worldx.htm
11 November 1998)

Philosophies and ethics of resource conservation and preservationism name economic, academic, aesthetic and spiritual reasons for conserving archaeological resources. Other reasons to preserve the past for the future are based on ideological, political, educational and psychological considerations. All these reasonings have been often rehearsed in the theoretical literature on archaeological heritage management (Lipe 1984; Cleere 1989; Greeves 1989; Darvill 1993; Carman 1996; Carlie and Kretz 1998) and heritage management in general (Kiesow 1982; Lowenthal 1985; Siegel 1985; Samuel 1994).

These four tenets derived from specific contexts in Western European cultural history (Jokilehto 1995), but have now been adopted by global organizations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS as well as by states around the world as a general basis for archaeological heritage management (such as Charter 1990). In this chapter I will challenge the paradigm outlined above, and suggest that archaeological heritage management needs a different approach. This is done very much in a spirit of intellectual debate, and I hope others will take up and further discuss some of the issues raised. Let me discuss the four tenets one by one.

Archaeological sites and objects are authentic, that is, of true antiquity, and have a distinctive aura which fakes and copies do not have.

The actual physical age of an archaeological site or object can in many cases only be determined by specialists; even they will often still need the help of complicated apparatus to get a reliable date. Yet it can empirically be shown that visitors to archaeological sites or museums experience authenticity and aura in front of ancient originals to exactly the same extent as they do in front of fakes or copies – as long as they do not *believe them to be fakes or copies*. In virtually all circumstances, age, authenticity and aura are not essences of sites or objects but human constructs in particular contexts, dependent on specific meanings and particular experiences of archaeological sites and objects (see Larsen 1995; Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999). There is nothing special about an original ancient artefact: it is the assumption of antiquity that matters, not its veracity (Lowenthal 1985: 242; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 8–9).

To be credible historical witnesses, antiquities must to some extent conform with modern stereotypes. ... Moreover, the very process of conforming to

current expectations tempts renovaters to feel that the past they reconstruct is not only faithful, but *more* faithful than what once existed, just as they themselves are more knowledgeable about times past than those who lived in it.

Nashville's reinforced-concrete Parthenon of the 1920s is a case in point. Like many replicas, it is more complete than the original ... So 'authentic' is their replica, Tennesseans brag, that the Greeks would have to study the correct details in Nashville in order to rebuild the original.

(Lowenthal 1985: 354, 291)

Rather than reflecting its 'material' value and worth, the experienced aura of an object we possess, or at least view, in fact authenticates our taste and thus *our own* worth (Lowenthal 1989: 846). Perhaps this can explain why public interest in copies or reconstructions is not necessarily reduced when they are acknowledged or revealed as such (Lowenthal 1985: 290–91; 355–6). The rapidly expanding British High Street chain of shops *Past Times* advertises in its catalogue what it calls 'authentic replicas', while Greek tourist shops praise their 'original copies'. A German producer of archaeological replicas, who specializes in metal jewellery, has created a catalogue which resembles in both content and layout a museum catalogue. The products advertised are praised as 'authentic' in two seemingly contradictory ways: they are strictly based on 'archaeological finds of particular quality' and they contain irregularities and mistakes originating from the handicraft replicating process in which the new originals are being created (Neidhardt 1998).

I will now discuss the third tenet, and return to my second point later on.

In the modern Western world, archaeological sites and objects are in danger of being destroyed by forces such as changes in ground-water levels, deep ploughing, wars, industrial and housing development and the antiquities trade.

This statement is highly misleading. As a matter of fact, no society has surrounded itself with as many archaeological sites and objects as modern society in the Western world. Sinking ground-water levels, deep ploughing, the effects of wars, industrial and housing developments, and the activities of antiquity dealers, among other factors, tend to produce and reveal ever more 'new' ancient sites and objects which are then being preserved. If it were not for such admittedly brutal forces many sites and artefacts would forever remain in the ground and we would never know about them – in effect, they would not exist for us: discovery is invention (Shanks and Hodder 1995: 11; cf. Karlsson 1998). Typical for our Western world is thus not the loss of archaeological sites and objects but their accumulation, for example in museums, shops and the landscape. In 1995, England alone (not Britain) had more than 657 000 registered archaeological sites – this number having increased by 117 per cent since 1983 – and its archaeological sites and monuments records were expected to contain over 1 million entries by the end of the millennium. Between 1983 and 1995 on average 'nearly 100 entries' were daily added to the records, while only one site per day has been lost since 1945 (Darvill and Fulton 1998: 4–7).

The trend is not that we will one day have no archaeological monuments left, but that in the future more and more of our lifeworld will be recorded as some sort of historical (or natural) site worthy of preservation. But what do we need all these sites for (Borst 1993; Wienberg 1999)? Some observers already question why anyone should value ancient sites and objects at all (Treanor 1997). Even archaeologists will agree that the rapidly growing numbers of archaeological sites and objects create considerable challenges for responsible heritage management and finds administration, and make it difficult to keep with up with the overall task of 'writing history' (Tilley 1989). As Roger Thomas put it in relation to the huge accumulation of data from extensive rescue work, 'we are, in a sense, the victims of our own success' (Thomas 1991: 828; cf. Merriman and Swain 1999). If there is any problem concerning the preservation of archaeological sites and objects in the modern Western world, it could therefore be that we are overwhelmed by the sheer number of them. Other regions of the world should learn from this and reject Western rationales that might lead nowhere (Byrne 1991).

Professional archaeologists save archaeological sites and objects from further destruction on behalf of future generations who are expected to be grateful that they too can appreciate these sites and objects and thus the past.

If this is indeed one of the aims of professional archaeology it is fundamentally flawed. The significance of original archaeological sites for future generations' understanding of the past may be lower than is often assumed. Cultural appreciation of the past is not now, and never has been, to any large extent dependent on original ancient sites and objects:

The resource endowment sets, at most, a determining limit, on which final heritage products may be developed, and frequently not even that, as conservation moves along the spectrum ... from preservation of what remains, to maintenance, replacement, enhancement and fascimile construction of what might, could or should have been.

(Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 7–8)

If anything, the reverse is true: ancient sites and objects are not the origin but the product of cultural appreciation of the past. The past can be seen as a cultural construct which is experienced at certain places and on certain occasions (Nora and Kritzman 1996). This construct does not necessarily rely on archaeological sites and objects. Their significance for our understanding of the past depends largely on wider socio-cultural contexts within which they are given value and meaning (Leone and Potter 1992; Shanks and Hodder 1995; Karlsson 1998). John Carman (1996: 115) even argued that 'archaeological material is not protected because it is valued, but rather it is valued because it is protected'. This view appears to imply that if archaeological material had not been protected and preserved, the past could have been created using other means. Among the most powerful 'alternative' sites and objects evoking the past in our present are:

- Artificial ruins and Greek temples in landscape parks from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as in the park of Burg Schlitz in Germany (Plate 22.1)
- The breeding of formerly extinct animal species such as Przewalski's horse
- Buildings and town districts reconstructed in their entirety, such as Warsaw's town centre which was rebuilt after the Second World War
- Carefully restored or reconstructed heritage attractions such as the reconstructed pile-dwellings at Lake Constance (Plate 22.2)
- Locations of historical walks, plays and re-enactments (in life or on film) in the spirit of 'living history'
- Facsimile reprints of ancient texts and replicas of artefacts such as the crafts offered in Mediterranean tourist shops (Plate 22.3)
- Souvenirs, retrochic and other items of popular culture which are appreciated for their connection with the past: for example, the ride 'Valley of the Kings' at a funfair in Hamburg (Plate 22.4)
- Models and dioramas as part of exhibitions, either in miniature or to a scale of 1:1 suggesting actual time-travel, like the Neanderthal man in the Neanderthal Museum near Düsseldorf
- Certain elements of contemporary architecture, for example as in Mediterranean hotel buildings (Plate 22.5)
- Places where traditions are enacted, such as the annual initiation ceremony of the Welsh *Gorsedd of Bards* taking place in a modern stone circle.

In none of these cases is an explicit claim about true antiquity made, but they are all fully satisfactory in supplying people with 'authentic' experiences of the past and in satisfying most of our educational, economic, aesthetic and spiritual needs (Lowenthal 1985; Samuel 1994; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). As David Lowenthal noted (1985: 240), the felt past is, more than anything else, 'a function of atmosphere as well as locale'. Current fashions in retrochic, revivalism, resurrectionism, and re-enactments give substance to Jean Baudrillard's supposition (1988) that simulacra – copies for which there are no originals – can take the place of originals with no loss. It is probably fair to predict that when future generations remember the past, they too will not have to be terribly worried about the number of original archaeological sites and objects at their disposal; the past is made elsewhere. At any rate, it is quite impossible to know, and perhaps a peculiar kind of arrogance to assume that future generations will be grateful to us for what we preserve for their benefit (Moore 1997: 31).

As far as future archaeologists are concerned it can be argued that, given the expected methodological advances, it will matter less and less if actual sites and objects from the past have been preserved or not, and it may even stimulate research and interpretation if the amount of data available are limited rather than overwhelming. Moreover, large quantities of preserved archaeological sites are perhaps not as essential for scientific research as is often stated. This is *not* because I trust that we can record them 'in full' at the time of their destruction, or because a small sample of sites would in any case be representative, but because I am inclined



Plate 22.1 A nineteenth-century megalith in the park around Burg Schlitz, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

Photograph: C.J. Holtorf (1966)



Plate 22.2 Reconstructed pre-historic pile-dwellings at the *Pfahlbaumuseum Unteruhldingen*, Lake Constance, Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Photograph: C.J. Holtorf (1991)



Plate 22.3 Original replicas in a craft shop on Crete, Greece

Photograph: C.J. Holtorf (1996)



Plate 22.4 *Tal der Könige* (Valley of the Kings) at Hamburg's biannual funfair *Dom*, Germany

Photograph: C.J. Holtorf (1991)



Plate 22.5 Hotel façade in Roquetas-del-Mar, Andalucía, Spain

Photograph: C.J. Holtorf (1994)

to think that the success of archaeology is determined by how satisfactory the norms of its craft, or discourse, are exercised in practice and not by some objective measure of how close we have come to an understanding of the ‘real’ past (Shanks and McGuire 1996). In other words, archaeologists will be happy to do their fieldwork and analyse sites and monuments records with ever-new questions and methods, write clever academic books or papers and teach their students, no matter how many archaeological sites are left at their disposal.

Having said all this, I now turn to the second tenet in my list.

Archaeological sites and objects are irreplaceable and non-renewable, because we cannot go back into the past and remake them.

I have already argued that a meaningful understanding of the past and an appreciation of archaeological sites and objects as authentic has never required a very close link with sites and objects that are actually very old. Virtually every generation has constructed its own range of ancient sites and objects, which were fully sufficient

to evoke the past for them. I use the words of George Herbert Mead (1929: 240) to remind you of the truism that 'every generation rewrites its history – and its history is the only history it has of the world.' Over the centuries, many novel pasts have replaced others which had become redundant. With every new past, new archaeological and historical sites and objects were created or became significant in relation to this past (Samuel 1994; Trotzig 1998). A similar argument can be made about the various pasts, and sites and objects associated with them, created in different contexts and for different social groups, within any one time period. Tunbridge and Ashworth argued in respect to modern society that

There is an almost infinite variety of possible heritages, each shaped for the requirements of specific consumer groups An obvious implication ... is that the nature of the heritage product is determined ... by the requirements of the consumer not the existence of the resources.

(Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 8, 9)

Conservationists, Druids, New Age followers, astro-archaeologists, ley hunters, political parties and others reinvent the past in terms and at sites which can be very different from those of academic archaeology. The past as well as specific ancient sites and objects have been replaced and are renewed all the time.

It is ironic that modernism with its fetishization of the new and its desire to shape ever new futures (Samuel 1994: 110) was also characterized by a unique obsession with maintaining a supposedly unchanging and 'objective' past: all was to be modernized, apart from the past which needed to be preserved as it once had been. Such modern views of the past and of archaeological sites and objects were the construct of a relatively small group of intellectuals and their supporters, living mostly within very specific contexts of the Western world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But even within the framework of modern and contemporary archaeology, which puts so much emphasis on original sites and artefacts, it has virtually always been accepted that ancient sites could be legitimately destroyed, even where they were not threatened, as long as they could later be renewed from information recorded during the excavation and later published in reports. Ironically, in many cases it seems preferable for archaeologists to replace actual sites with records kept in archives and published catalogues (Lucas 2001: 159; Merriman and Swain 1999: 250). In effect, therefore, creating new pasts is a part of modern archaeology too.

In conclusion, I argue that archaeological heritage management should be concerned with actively and responsibly renewing the past in our time. There is little sense in preserving too much of the material past that might not be needed in the future, and in spending not enough thought and resources on providing experiences of a past that is beneficial to our own present (Leone and Potter 1992; Moore 1997: 30–31). Archaeologists have the skills, experience and responsibility to assist our society in constructing one or more pasts that are appropriate for all of us. If this is what we aim for, archaeologists must focus first and foremost on the character of experiences of the past in a given society, and not concern themselves excessively with the side-issue of how some archaeological sites and objects will decay and

disappear as time goes on. As Tunbridge and Ashworth argued, the production of heritage becomes a matter for deliberate goal-directed choice about what uses are made of the past for what contemporary purposes.

The recycling, renewal and recuperation of resources, increasingly important in the management of natural resources, can be paralleled in historic resources where objects including buildings can be moved, restored and even replicated. ... the deliberate manipulation of created heritage can be a valuable instrument [in an efficient management of historic resources].

(Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 9, 13)

I envisage that the future work of archaeologists will continue to involve the preservation, conservation, restoration, reconstruction and replication of established ancient sites and objects. But it will also require creating open spaces for the needs of the present, including the construction of new pasts. A certain amount of destruction of archaeological resources is therefore not only unavoidable but indeed desirable. This rationale may well accommodate the interests of archaeologists on the one side and those of politicians, developers, farmers, and antiquities dealers on the other side better than it often seems possible at present. We should welcome an opportunity of making some of the established battles between archaeological preservationists and modern land- and artefact-users redundant.

I end with a very brief anecdote, told by Steven Kemper (1991: 136), which also answers the question in the title of my paper. When visiting a relic mound with a friend, Kemper asked him whether the place was ancient. The friend replied: 'Yes, it was restored just last year'.

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23 *Cape Town's District Six and the archaeology of memory*

MARTIN HALL

South Africa's Table Mountain is Cape Town's signature – the distinctive profile of a world tourist destination, and a contender for hosting the Olympic Games in the coming millennium. But the mountain also has a more ambiguous history. For the Portuguese, the flat slab of sandstone and the adjacent jutting pinnacle of Devil's Peak was Adamastor recumbent, a giant who was the glowering force of nature. For the Dutch, these barren rocks were home to runaway slaves who constantly threatened firebrands and the desperate revenge of people without hope. More recently, the mountain has been scarred by a massive destruction of cultural property, the removal of an entire community from the lower slopes of Devil's Peak.

When slavery was finally abolished in 1838, government compensation had been invested in property, and streets and row houses were built outwards from the castle and the shoreline, reaching up towards Devil's Peak. The new suburb was named in 1867, when the municipality was divided for electoral purposes, and this area became District Six, a 'doorstep dormitory' for inner-city industry by the early years of the twentieth century. District Six derived a distinctive character from its port-side location, and as the first destination of many immigrants to South Africa. But this cosmopolitanism was counter to a deep-rooted segregationism, a wish to preserve privilege and cauterize miscegenation that found its logical extreme in apartheid. Throughout the 1970s, bulldozers worked the lower slopes of Devil's Peak, raising clouds of white plaster dust in the dry, hot summers and miring in the red earth during the winter rains. By the close of the decade about 60 000 people had been moved from their homes because they had been classified 'coloured'.

Thirty-one years after District Six was declared a 'whites only' residential area, a land commission was convened in a disused church housing memorabilia of the destroyed suburb. Amid photographs, artworks, collected street signs and archaeological exhibits, the commission heard testimony from one-time residents who had spent half a lifetime scattered in resettlement areas away on the windy Cape Flats. The commissioners ruled that District Six should be returned to its former occupants, recognizing their inalienable rights. This second history of the area – from the beginning of its destruction through until the initiation of its reconstruction – is a case study in the alienation and restitution of cultural property.

SOUTH AFRICA'S HIROSHIMA

Despite a wealth of documentary evidence for the construction of social history, little is known about the urban architecture of nineteenth-century District Six. General municipal surveys mapped out streets, lanes and the block plans of houses, but there were few individual drawings; as with many other nineteenth-century working-class suburbs, District Six developed rapidly, and as a set of variations on a few standard designs (Derek Japha and Karen Strom, pers. comm.). Archaeological work at several houses has, however, revealed the detail of house plans; front and back rooms with narrow corridors and back yards, and frequent modifications as tenants sought to make the best of crowded circumstances (Hall 1994; Hart and Halkett 1996).

Although the district varied from street to street, it was long overcrowded, with poor services and a mostly poor population. Residents were employed in clothing, leather working, tobacco, furniture and processed food production, and in a sizeable service sector within the suburb: retailing, shop workers, building and transport trades, self-employed tailors, carpenters, dressmakers, seamstresses, shoemakers and cabinet makers (Bickford-Smith 1990, 1995; Nasson 1990). Its cosmopolitanism led to a sense of distinction, defined by a rough, communal character. Although there were marked inequalities – landlords exploiting slum dwellers, pawnbrokers profiting from low incomes, skilled artisans holding themselves aloof from labourers – there was also ‘an environment marked strongly by mutual needs and sharing between families and neighbours, whatever the divisions of income, occupation or religion’ (Nasson 1990: 64). Overall, it was marked by poverty. In the words of Richard Rive, a writer born and brought up there, ‘it was a ripe, raw and rotten slum. It was drab, dingy, squalid and overcrowded’ (Rive 1990: 111).

The beginning of the end of this part of District Six’s history came in February 1966. Proclamation 43 set District Six aside for white ownership and occupation. The government estimated the population at about 62 000 people, three-quarters of whom were tenants, and all but about 1000 of whom were classified ‘coloured’ – of mixed descent – in the racial typology of the Population Registration Act (Horrell 1967). The intention had been to clear the area completely within five years, but by 1978 there were still coloured families in District Six and compensation, resettlement and demolition had cost the government six times its original estimates (Hart 1990). By this time, District Six had become a rallying point for opposition to the forced removals that were taking place throughout the country. There had been protest meetings at churches and mosques, while the 1976 Soweto uprising had raised the stakes in the politics of white minority rule. It was politically important for the government to continue, despite a clear lack of viability. When plans to house 15 000 whites in townhouses and high-rise flats failed because of negative publicity, the government turned to state-funded projects, planning housing for military and police employees and, from 1979, the Cape Technikon, reserved for white students only. Part of the cleared land was sold off to private developers and a small portion was redeclared ‘coloured’, apparently as a sop to reformist opinion (Hart 1990; Soudien 1990).

Despite these delays and political setbacks for the government, removals were complete by early 1984, almost two decades after the original proclamation. Mosques, churches and schools remained, as well as cobbled and paved streets, curbstones and the traces of wall footings where the bulldozers had been less efficient. But seen from the Table Bay shoreline, District Six was now a jagged scar, separating Cape Town from its suburbs; in Richard Rive's words, 'South Africa's Hiroshima' (*Cape Times*, 9 January 1986).

The completion of the District Six removal programme coincided with the growing popular uprising against the government, leading to the declaration of a state of emergency in 1985, the unbanning of a range of political organizations in 1990 and South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. This umbrella of increasingly successful resistance affected local politics in many parts of the country. In Cape Town, the Woodstock and Walmer Estate Residents Association (WOSAWA) was one of many 'civics' that took up local issues within a framework of national-scale opposition. WOSAWA used several issues in District Six as rallying points, including the preservation of St Mark's Church in the face of Technikon expansion and attempts to demolish the Silvertree Crèche (Soudien 1990).

In 1986 an international oil company, BP (Southern Africa), announced an initiative to rebuild District Six as South Africa's first open residential area, continuing in the government tradition of imposing policies on communities without consultation. BP's proposal – joined by a number of other companies and the Cape Town City Council – further focused opposition and stimulated the formation of the Hands of District Six Campaign (HODS), an alliance of more than twenty organizations and a significant number of former residents of the area, which campaigned for the abolition of the Group Areas Act prior to any redevelopment (Soudien 1990).

District Six's second historical phase, then, can be seen as the period from the beginning of forced removals in 1966 until the Land Court ruling of August 1997, which gave the area back to its former residents; a victory for the position taken by WOSAWA, HODS and the District Six Restitution Front, which had successively resisted government, private and municipal attempts to control redevelopment. In distinction to the period prior to forced removals, when the area had been a poor, crowded and cosmopolitan suburb of Cape Town, the geographical configuration of this second phase was a nested set of traces on the landscape. The footprints of houses – some left exposed by demolition, a few excavated, many more masked by debris and tall grass – were contained within a grid of streets and still-standing churches, mosques and schools. Seen from still further away, District Six was a single place within the apartheid geography of the Cape; a physical monument to those who had been dispersed to the resettlement townships and beyond, and to those who had successfully resisted the redevelopment of 'salted earth' at the hands of others.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY

This narrative of District Six – the history of its origins, growth and economy, its destruction and the rise and success of protest against the apartheid state – is the framework within which the complex and intertwined forms of domination and resistance can be teased apart and better understood. This unravelling can be started with three threads – three of many possible stories – sharing a common focus, but each different.

One: In September 1981 an artist heaps bricks, torn linoleum, a discarded kettle, a child's shoe and other remnants of the demolition on the floor of a gallery in downtown Cape Town, a few blocks from District Six. Six shrouded chairs – 'a sign of mourning, as a sign the owners have gone away' – and a recording of the recollections of former residents, the muezzin and the battering noise of the bulldozers complete the installation. Proceeds contribute to a fund for the creation of a museum to the community and its destruction (*Argus*, Cape Town, 18 September 1981).

Sue Williamson, who titles her heaped collection of debris 'The Last Supper', is a member of the Women's Movement for Peace, protesting forced removals and asserting her place in a community wider than apartheid's imposed racial divisions: 'the focus is District Six but the larger theme is what happens when people with power use it against those with no power and the wreckage these actions leave behind' (*ibid.*).

Two: Fifteen years later, a group of archaeologists make a systematic collection of artefacts from what had once been Tennant Street, close to the heart of District Six. The site had been a mid-nineteenth century urban midden, containing a rich collection of domestic debris from nearby tenement houses. The fieldwork is the centerpiece of an educational project in which school pupils, some of them the children and grandchildren of the dispossessed community, learn about archaeology and history, and the excitement of discovery and piecing together fragments of broken tableware (Clift 1996). Collections from similar archaeological sites form displays at the newly opened District Six Museum.

Overall, the archaeological project seeks a detached stance – a considered, measured history. But the involvement of children in the construction of their own heritage, making them aware of what they had not experienced directly in their own lives, brings informality and excitement:

It's terribly sad to think that all these people's most valuable things were demolished. Everyone is looking so busy. After a while we were tired and rested. Finally, the day of suffering as archaeologists has ended and we children of unit 4 – Madikaah, Mishtaah, Donna, Fatima, Fareda, Thabiet, Leila – would like to thank all the people who made this excursion possible ... What a success!!! Thanx a million and we loved it!!!

(Extract from field notebook, Tennant Street, 1996,
quoted in Clift 1996)

Three: The following September, the District Six Museum organizes a sculpture festival, with works scattered through the rank grass and ageing debris field. Several thousand people come to listen to the bands, eat koeksusters and boerewors and wander among the installations fashioned from broken glass, bricks, plastic and building rubble. Many have once lived here. Among them is Igshaan Jacobs, forcibly removed from Constitution Street, and an avid collector of ceramic sherds: 'This porcelain is how I relate to my history. If I could just piece together one small cup from all the pieces I've gathered I would have something to hold onto' (*Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 28 September 1997).

For Igshaan Jacobs, the collection and reconstruction of broken crockery is much more than a stimulating outing; piecing together the broken sherds serves as a metaphor for reconstructing his own history, and the impossibility of finding the perfect teacup expresses the limitations of history; the impossibility of restoring a culture that has been crushed and dispersed across the windy resettlement areas of the Cape Flats.

These small sequences in the much larger script of District Six are claims to cultural property. Everyone involved in small examples – and in the thousands of other, similar instances that constitute actions and responses to one of South Africa's most notorious forced removals – is asserting a connection to District Six's history through action: protesting, returning and mourning, documenting, discovering. Together, these shared actions constitute 'culture', contributing to a mass of books, photographs, oral testimony, art, documents, artefacts and memories which constitute the archive of a community – heritage, 'theatres of memory' (Samuel 1994).

But, in Raphael Samuel's words, "heritage" is a nomadic term, which travels easily ... a term capricious enough to accommodate widely discrepant meanings' (ibid.: 205). Beneath the apparent homogeneity of intent in the construction of District Six's archive are complex and often conflicting interests. In 1993, Sue Williamson returned to her earlier theme with 'The Last Supper Revisited'. Now, the fragments from District Six's destruction had been encased in resin and placed to cast pools of light on a white shrouded table. 1980s' agitprop has become 1990s' high art; artefact-icons were sold in individual perspex cases as a numbered edition, and the installation moved from Cape Town to the Venice Biennale. For one reviewer, this was no more than 'a large dressing table upon which is arranged the findings of our very own conscience-crazed bag lady'. But for another reviewer, 'Last Supper Revisited' was 'an excellent demonstration of art's more subtle powers' (*Cape Times*, 12 and 26 May 1993).

Parallel issues have arisen on a larger scale – in a sense, the whole of District Six has been up for sale. The 1997 Land Court had to adjudicate between two competing claims for the area. On the one side was the Cape Town City Council, which had set up the Cape Town Community Land Trust to steer the redevelopment of the area 'in the public interest', refusing individual claims by former residents in preference for a council-controlled housing project. On the other side was the District Six Restitution Front, arguing for direct restitution or financial compensation for former residents (Sandra Prosalendis, pers. comm.; *Mail and*

Guardian, Johannesburg, 8 August 1997). Seen in this context, Igshaan Jacobs' search for a complete teacup places him quite precisely in a complex political play with high stakes. Most of District Six's one-time residents were informal tenants and their claim in terms of the Land Commission ruling will be made through oral testimony rather than through the documents of title deeds and leases. Igshaan Jacobs' ceramic sherds could be much more than metaphors for a fractured memory.

'Culture', then – and particularly culture as property – is as likely to be an arena of disputation as an expression of common cause. But there is an additional twist in the case of District Six. The concept of property indicates value – the ownership of a resource, whether the title to land, material possessions or memories. Some forms of property may be alienable and have a market value, while others are inalienable. Property may be owned by individuals or may be the common asset of a family or a community. But the cultural property that gives substance to the current discourse of District Six has been constituted in the act of its destruction. Williamson's commonplace debris becomes iconic because of the remembrance of forced removals, giving a one-time resident's abandoned trash a high monetary value. Archaeological and documentary research becomes part of a literature of the history of the city in which the attempt to erase a community has served to lift it from the ordinary, making District Six unique, rather than representative of, immigrant and working-class suburbs of nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial cities. Igshaan Jacobs' sherds, beneath notice in any other urban wasteland, become a metaphor for his loss at a time when, after thirty long years, he may have the opportunity for recompense.

This paradox can be understood by thinking not of the destruction of cultural property, but rather of the construction of memory. In turn, the way in which memories of District Six have been constructed and contested, and given substance through the recognition of the otherwise mundane as valued cultural property, can be teased apart. This can be approached by thinking in terms of a multiple discourse that tends towards instability and fragmentation, rather than cultural homogeny, social spaces that are 'vitaly filled with politics and ideology, with the real and the imagined intertwined, and with capitalism, racism, patriarchy, and other material spatial practices that concretize the social relations of production, reproduction, exploitation, domination, and subjection' (Soja 1996: 68).

Seen in this way, archaeology, art and dispossessed remembrance become inherently unstable dimensions of an ever-changing spatial zone that cannot be reduced to a unitary construct of cultural property, or a simple binary of domination and resistance. Archaeology is inherently Cartesian, measuring and plotting, establishing context and date. Art recontextualizes, playing on memory in constructing an image of a past landscape and the violence done to its people. Others claim a 'third space' that is directly lived through its images and symbols, and is inherently unstable and challenging (hooks 1990; Bhabha 1994; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996).

MEMORY AS CULTURAL PROPERTY

Between 1966 and 1997, the raw scar of District Six was encrusted with a variety of meanings. For its former residents, it was marked ground, the geography of dispossession and dispersal. For the apartheid government, it stood for white entitlement and the principle of separate development. For reformist business and municipal interests, the land was an opportunity for investment and economic development. Such representations of space are different interpretations of what spatial configurations mean and how they can, or should, be manipulated (Lefebvre 1991).

The most notorious of these representations was the language of apartheid. Indeed, apartheid can be seen as the spatial proposition, a claim that the privilege of a small minority can be maintained by assigning it a disproportionately large share of the best land, and that this separation can be justified by a theory of inherent racial superiority. But, again, there were difficulties in bringing this vision to realization. Just as the state's plan of clearing out District Six's community in five years and resettling whites in new buildings foundered, so the classifications upon which separate development depended were difficult to resolve. Typical was the problem faced by the writers of the official yearbooks. It was common cause that coloured origins could be traced to miscegenation between settlers from Europe, slaves and indigenous hunters and herders – 'surely no country on the face of the earth could have been more mixed in its inhabitants than the Cape' (Union of South Africa 1953: 1096). But such mixing was the very thing that was supposed to be atypical, justifying separate development as natural in human history. The only solution was to define the 'Cape Coloured' in terms of exclusion from other 'races and tribes', falling back, bizarrely, on the Liquor Act of 1928 to define 'a Coloured person is one who is neither a White, nor an Asiatic, nor a native'. Having failed to achieve clarity through the use of race as a criterion, the 1952–3 *Yearbook* confused matters further through a clumsy attempt to lay down a grid of class, noting the three categories of 'educated Coloured people', farm workers, unskilled labourers and domestic servants and, finally, 'the undesirable class ... "skollies", the habitual convicts and ex-convicts, the drunkards, the daga-smokers, and the habitual loafers' (ibid.).

There was resort to religion and language. 'Cape Malays' were a sub-set of 'Coloureds' if they were Afrikaans-speaking (if they were not Afrikaans-speaking they were Indian Muslims), although Muslims not living in the Cape were 'Coloureds', along with Christians of mixed racial descent. Once defined, after a fashion, 'Cape Malays' could be described in terms of their 'racial elements' of 'Javanese, Arabs, Indians, Ceylonese, Chinese and Europeans' with a common 'Malay strain':

[the] pure Malay of the East ... small in stature ... with an olive skin which is sometimes yellowish, light brown or cinnamon-coloured ... flattish face, high cheek-bones, black (slightly slanting) eyes, a small nose, wide nostrils, a large mouth ... introspective, polite, kind towards women, children and animals ...

inclined to speak slowly, to be passive and indolent [modified at the Cape] as a result of Arabic and other infiltration.

(Du Plessis 1944: 3)

Thus, in an extraordinary convolution, religion and language were used to determine race, and race was presented as the determinant of language, religion, marriage customs, cooking, temperament and a host of other cultural characteristics – the particular madness of apartheid.

This, then, was the government's representation of the 'cultural property' that filled the space of District Six prior to the beginning of ethnic cleansing in 1966. Not surprisingly, the area was cast as slum – what else could be the fate of a suburb occupied by 'habitual convicts and ex-convicts', 'drunkards', 'daga-smokers' and 'habitual loafers'? There was an urgent need to 'shock the public into a realization of the conditions prevailing in these areas', to make the white voter aware that 'sub-economic housing still leaves the worst slums untouched' (Du Plessis 1944: 83).

Other representations of District Six filter images through the lens of nostalgia. Thus, for example, there is genre of painting and drawing the 'native subject' that can be traced to nineteenth-century representations of Cape Town and its people in the work of artists such as Thomas Bowler (Hall 1991). Emile Maurice, writing in the catalogue for an exhibition of the art of District Six, captures this in the concept of a particular sort of outsider 'who *stares*, who, from the safety of distance, gapes, perhaps with curiosity and intrigue, as he captures objects *not* subjects – caricatures of people, not people themselves – in his snare, his magical, dexterous and seductive weave of broken lines and subtle textures that so cajoles us to waft on the wings of nostalgia' (Maurice 1995: 20, original emphasis).

The romantic image is nostalgia with a twist of charm – a place where the sun shines, the gangsters are friendly and the hangovers don't interfere with play. One of the most successful examples of this image has been *District Six – the Musical*, written by David Kramer and Taliep Petersen, and played between 1987 and 1990 before audiences of more than 350 000 in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, as well as at the Edinburgh Festival. Its spirit is captured in the lyrics of one of its most popular songs, 'The Heart of District Six':

From Hanover Street/ Comes a lovely sound/ Can you hear the music that I hear/
A rhythm and a beat/ Of the people all around/ Melodies are ringing in my ears/
And it goes klop klop/ Beating out a rhythm/ Klop klop a rhythm that is living/
It's the heart that beats in District Six.

District Six – the Musical was followed in 1991 by *Fairyland*, which opened in January 1991, following the same formula: 'a light-hearted look at the people and places that characterized District Six' and capturing 'the authenticity of the era' (*Cape Times*, 8 January 1991).

Neither *Fairyland* nor *District Six – the Musical* have plots or lyrics cast in terms of racial superiority and prejudice. Indeed, the intention of their writers is quite the

opposite of *Katie Hendriks*. Kramer and Petersen aim to show the people of District Six as innocent victims of an evil policy:

We want to tell a story tonight/
About a place called District Six/
Together we lived there/
Brown black and white/
But the government changed that/
in sixty six/
All the so-called 'coloureds'/
Who had lost their rights/
Were forced to move because this area/
District Six/
Was reserved for whites.

But nostalgia and its weighty legacy tended to take the work where its authors did not intend it to go. *District Six – the Musical* opened in the last years of apartheid government, when civil unrest was a way of life, but when there was still no intimation that, within a few years, the state would concede and seek a political transition to majority rule. In its celebratory review, the *Cape Times* was quick to hope that District Six and the struggle of its people could now be consigned to history. It was 'inevitable', the reviewer supposed, that the musical 'must involve politics', but nevertheless the work was 'the definitive monument' to this now-destroyed part of Cape Town. This was because, despite the references to struggle and dispossession, the lyrics and music captured an eternal romance – they were 'ultimately about the people, their loves, their *joie de vivre* and their culture'. And, the reviewer lectured, the former residents of the District must realize that they were 'just as much to blame for the tragedy as those who callously ordered its demise' because 'people should question and not merely go along with plans, schemes and decisions made for them by the authorities' (*Cape Times*, 13 April 1987).

Nostalgia – a yearning for the return to the past – is very much a matter of who is remembering what. White writing and art may celebrate either a rustic idyll, in which the native shunned the city, or the merry riot of carnival untouched by politics, but victims will remember their own histories, blunting the rough edges of daily life with a romantic patina. Not surprisingly, representations of District Six's street and community life by those who once lived there are qualitatively different from outsiders staring 'from the safety of distance'. As Raphael Samuel has warned, historians have become 'accustomed to thinking of commemoration as a cheat, something which ruling classes impose on the subaltern classes'. But an expression of romance and nostalgia, which is reactionary and racist when inscribed by one seeking closure on the past, can be an effective act of remembrance in the service of an 'insider'. *District Six – the Musical* illustrates this well. While appealing to those who would consign the past to a chocolate box of romantic images, it also served to keep alive the memories of one-time residents. Many went to the performances, particularly when it was restaged at the Joseph Stone Theatre in the Coloured Group Area of Athlone. Many oral histories capture this same spirit of nostalgic remembrance. For example, Linda Fortune writes in her published memoir:

People who grew up and lived in District Six knew everyone who belonged in the area. So did the gangsters, who grew up there and lived there. They recog-

nised strangers immediately, and some of them would linger about, waiting to rob an unsuspecting victim. They never bothered any of us living in District Six.
(Fortune 1996: 58)

Indeed, the gangsters are cast as agents of redistribution, robbing Jewish-owned shops in what was termed 'free entertainment' by residents. For example, Shrand's shoe shop on the corner of Tyne and Hanover Streets was frequently burgled, often in broad daylight:

No bystander ever told the truth and no one ever saw or knew anything when questioned by policemen. If the Law asked which direction the thieves had gone, someone would always point the opposite way. Later in the week you would see children and grown-ups wearing brand new shoes that were obviously stolen. They would even dare to walk right past Shrand's shoe shop and stop to do window shopping!

(*ibid.*: 62)

Kramer and Petersen captured this often-told image of the 'community gangster' in their *Sexy Boys*: 'We are the Sexy Boys/ En ons is unemployed/ Die mense we annoy/ We are the Sexy Boys'.

Preserving the recollections of former residents such as Linda Fortune is central to the purpose of the District Six Museum, which originated in protests against redevelopment without community participation; opposition that crystallised in the Hands Off District Six movement of the late 1980s. Opened at the end of 1994, the museum became immensely popular with people who had been dispossessed by apartheid removals and, through its Trustees, connected the early work of WOSAWA with the eventual success of the District Six Restitution Front in winning back the land. Former residents are drawn to the museum's photographic display of life in the area. Noor Ebrahim, who took hundreds of photographs of the District from 1968 until he was evicted from his Caledon Street home, has found that photographs stimulate recollections of people, places and events, starting conversations that bring the community back to life (Noor Ebrahim, pers. comm., October 1997). This is nostalgia as a yearning for the past by those who feel loss, representations that create cultural property from fragments woven into a remembrance that blunts the edges of hardship in order to keep alive a sense of community. This is a nostalgia which is uncompromisingly opposed to the cameo histories of merry carnival, raucous flowersellers and amiable drunks, but which uses many of the same images.

But such use of common images leads to ambivalence, rooted in the use of the same signs and symbols as the purveyors of repressive histories. This was evident in the September 1997 Heritage Day holiday, when several thousand people reclaimed a large part of District Six's wasteland, fanning out through the grass and rubble to look at the work of more than fifty artists. Starting with a procession led by the Alabama Malay Choir, the entertainment included a 'free musical feast', games and food stalls. The participants were mostly black, varying from the

working class to the slick middle classes, well dressed and carrying cell phones (the ubiquitous South African symbol of success), to conservative Muslims dressed to custom, to the homeless (there is a new community in District Six, living in low shacks in the clumps of bushes, which will be the new victim of removals when the District is redeveloped). Some of the musicians were young, performing recent hits, but others were older, introduced with pride as 'sons of the District', and one-time victims of the racialization of entertainment. Such were the Boogie Men, a slick foursome of middle-aged men in cream linen suits, black shirts and gold chains. There was the general smell and taste of Cape Town's popular culture: breyani, boerewors rolls, solomies and Coke.

Carnival, however, is at the heart of both apartheid's ethnic caricature and the softer representations of 'coloured culture' that dismiss District Six from the stage of history. On Heritage Day, this ambiguity was captured during a momentary juxtaposition. A wiry, brown-skinned man with hollow cheeks marked the event by wearing a cardboard placard with the address of the house from which he was evicted, haranguing anyone who would listen with his contempt for those who destroyed his community. His vision of retribution was thoroughly modern: 'The devil has microwaves for the people who did this'. But the bus next to which he was standing, and which had brought people from Hanover Park, Athlone and the other apartheid townships to which District Six's residents were shipped, had air-brushed across its back an idealized, softly romantic panorama of the Waterfront and Table Mountain behind – a tourist's dream in which no trace of District Six was to be seen. At the same time the Cape Flats were experiencing open warfare between gangs and vigilante groups, beyond the control of the police. A few weeks later, the leader of the Sexy Boys gang – a successor to the musical's Nines, 'menacing but totally lovable' – was shot in the head as his luxury car pulled up at an intersection, assassinated as part of a dispute between the Cape's powerful drug cartels (*Cape Times*, 1 November 1997).

There is a surplus of meaning that lies in the appropriation and reappropriation of carnival, music, recollections and the other attributes of identity, and the ambiguity that is its consequence can work against those resisting the theft and destruction of their heritage. For example, the sustained opposition to forced removals from District Six has been paralleled by an accommodationist tradition that has celebrated 'coloured culture' – the happy, timeless world of carnival and song – and sought compromise with government attempts to entrench 'separate development' in the Coloured Representative Council, Tricameral Parliament and President's Council (Prah 1997). A different example: to celebrate the 'lovable gangsters' of District Six as the kingpins in a nostalgia for the past is to risk an ambivalence in the perception of violence, drug dealing and the role of the state in using organized crime to destabilize communities and assist in control and surveillance (Scharf and Vale 1996).

MARKING THE GROUND

District Six, then, has persisted as much more than ideas. Words, music and images are rooted in the scar across the slopes of Devil's Peak – a mark of shame and dispossession that serves as a monument – a mnemonic system that makes history tangible. For Lefebvre, such 'non-verbal' signs are not merely reducible to words – they have additional qualities, and in particular an ambiguity. This allows a unity of otherwise-disparate meanings, in which repression can be 'metamorphosed into exaltation'. The material thus has a complexity that is more than words alone – a 'horizon of meaning', 'a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of – and for the sake of – a particular action' (Lefebvre 1991; 222).

This is evident in the way in which responses to everyday objects, observed or retrieved, shift between nostalgia and anger. Thus, for example, the testimony of former residents, collected through the Western Cape Oral History Project, is often framed around the importance of household possessions: proudly kept interiors contrasting with dilapidated house exteriors, poorly maintained by landlords; washstands, fireplaces, ornamental clocks, carpets, lace, brass candlesticks, cutlery (Nasson 1990). Linda Fortune, recalling her childhood in District Six, remembers

pieces of wood from a tomato box that the bigger boys had brought home from the market in Sir Lowry Road were piled up outside on the pavement under the sash window with the wooden shutters. An empty jam tin was put on top and wilted pieces of cabbage, carrot leaves and potato peels – fetched from the kitchen where Mom was busy cleaning the vegetables – were put inside. The jam tin was then filled with water from another tin which served as a jug. In a few short minutes the food, cooked over a fire that was never lit, would be dished up with a piece of plank and 'spooned' onto toy plastic plates. Each little girl would pretend to eat and enjoy her helping of food.

(Fortune 1996: 21)

The District Six Museum's most popular exhibit is a display of street signs. Suspended as long banners from the high ceiling of the one-time church, these evoke rich memories of the District's complex physical and social geography. Former residents are immediately drawn to them – 'the street names open up their whole life, how it was' (former residents Linda Fortune, Noor Ebrahim, Vincent Kolbe and Irwin Combrink, 2 October 1997). This display also represents all the ambiguities and contradictions in the violence of apartheid in its own particular history. Long assumed destroyed with the rest of the District's architectural fabric, the street signs had in fact been secretly collected and stored by one of the white demolition workers employed by the state. Seeking relief from the burden of his history, the man presented himself and his collection to the Museum shortly after it was opened, as an act of personal reparation.

'Marking the ground' in ways such as these has been important in the continuing

construction of the memory of District Six. Visitors to the Museum are confronted by a large map of the District spread across the floor, and are encouraged to mark the places where they lived. Bolts of calico are draped over chairs, and former residents are asked to sign their names and recall their memories; many metres of cloth have been marked in this way since the Museum opened in late 1994. In turn, these acts of marking encourage people to talk about their lives. The Museum's staff feel that the past means much more to people when they can handle objects such as spoons and nails, collected from the area.

The same concept of marking has been extended into the landscape itself. Churches and mosques have continued in daily life, with those who are able often travelling long distances to worship in defiance of their removal from the area. In February 1996, the thirtieth anniversary of the proclamation of District Six as a white group area was commemorated by a memorial candlelight pilgrimage, led by priests, imams and community leaders. The pilgrimage started at St Mark's Church and followed the faint traces of Hanover Street towards archaeological excavations at the corner of Roger and Stukeris Streets. After a number of speeches had been made at the site, the procession wound back to the Muir Street mosque to coincide with sunset and evening prayers. In this way, people asserted their spiritual ownership of the scarred landscape, the lines of the streets and the few, still-standing buildings.

Thus the material traces of District Six give form and shape to verbalized memory, amplifying and giving substance to the remnants of former life and the evidence of destruction. The sensory experience of this material world cannot be reduced to words alone, a commonplace observation for art, and the source of the effectiveness of the September 1997 Sculpture Festival.

Most of the Sculpture Festival's installations made use of the debris of destruction: plastic, ceramic sherds, broken glass, stone, building foundations. Although none was by an archaeologist, they were all in a sense archaeological, creating meaning from artefacts, using material things as a medium to comment on past and present. Installations included a skeletal tree spray-painted luminous red and orange, with a small cairn of gold foil sandbags nearby – the treasure of memory – and branches touched by the sunset, or by blood. Next to this was a ship fashioned from paper and shredded plastic, with stick-figure goblins swinging in its rigging; a parody of colonial history. Cairns of Hanover Street kerbstones were taped off as a development site (or a crime scene), while further up the slope a garden of remembrance had been fashioned from stones, broken glass, ceramic sherds and the other debris of daily life, dug out from just beneath the surface; ordinary artefacts rearranged as a shrine.

The material world of District Six, then, signals a radically unstable space. Objects are continually reinterpreted and reclaimed, the ground is marked and paced out, and mosques and churches used in defiance of the wasteland. In consequence, the space that is District Six after the years of apartheid's bulldozers has remained 'lived': active, defiant, contradictory and contested. And this lived quality is founded in the material, the embodiment of 'third space' and the resistance of the margins.

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