

Commitment, Objectivity and Accountability to Communities: Priorities for 21st-Century Archaeology

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It is no longer possible to ignore the unprecedented levels of destruction resulting from development projects imposed by multinational corporations and governments. In this context, it is important to address the role archaeology and related professions, such as heritage management, play from the perspective both of the threat to physical heritage and our relationship with affected communities. This paper explores ways in which professionals can learn to work in a mutually accountable way with communities opposing destructive development, and together seek alternatives to development which threatens lives, livelihoods, culture, and environment. Case studies from the Boyne Valley and Tara in Ireland, Ilisu dam in Turkey and the Oaxaca valley in Mexico, illustrate some of the issues. The implications of the growing privatization of professions, particularly for communities in the Third World whose poverty undermines their power to refuse even the most globally devastating developments, making it imperative that professionals look again at what we aim to accomplish and how much we are actually accomplishing it. As professionals we cannot afford to be ignorant of what communities want, need and are entitled to in order to develop and flourish. Archaeology and people's cultural roots are not separable from these questions.

KEYWORDS Local communities, Ethics, Ireland, Turkey, Salvage archaeology, Development

Introduction

It is no longer possible to ignore the unprecedented levels of destruction resulting from development projects imposed by multinational corporations and governments. The projects are often backed by multilateral agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank or large non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Their size often ensures that many thousands of people and sites can be affected. The

norm is little or no consultation and few if any benefits. Thus many communities find they must struggle to establish their right to survive. In this context, it is important to address the role archaeology and related professions such as heritage management play from the perspective both of the threat to physical heritage and our relationship with affected communities.

I am not a heritage manager but rather an academic, a teacher of archaeologists, whose research and teaching focuses on the development of a public archaeology in which professionals can learn to work in a mutually accountable way with communities opposing destructive development and together seek alternatives to development which threatens lives, livelihoods, culture, and environment. This approach has developed out of work in different countries over the last 14 years. The work has included investigating and documenting the ways in which archaeological excavation and management practices may be facilitating developments that are detrimental to the survival of communities and cultural heritage, and working out alternatives with communities (Ronayne 2006a reviews this method).¹

The negative impact of measures to protect culture

One of the best known ways to protect significant sites and landscapes is their legal designation. However well-intentioned professionals are, legal designations of an area do not happen in a vacuum. Such status is a double-edged sword for communities resident in protected zones, not unconcerned with their cultural roots but trying to survive. Greater mention among professionals of inclusion and community involvement represents a change in language, which in my experience usually arises in response to protests by local communities about their exclusion from planning and management. But the response appears orientated towards containing community involvement rather than a genuine mutual accountability.

Heritage tourism in the Boyne Valley, Ireland

The potentially negative impacts of the heritage tourism industry on archaeological sites are widely recognized and there is a growing discussion on impacts on communities living in the vicinity of such sites (Caftanzoglu 2001; Ronayne 2001; Duke 2007; Silberman 2007) and who are often dependent on tourism for their livelihoods or have other connections to the sites (e.g. Bender 1998; 2001). But what does ‘sustainable tourism’ really mean in the context of the protective measures professionals often advise?

In the 1990s I undertook a study of the effects of the tourist industry at one of the island of Ireland’s three World Heritage Sites. Within a bend in the River Boyne on Ireland’s east coast lie three enormous Neolithic mounds containing passage tombs surrounded by many smaller examples, a variety of other Neolithic ritual monuments, and sites from other periods. A long history of investigation since the seventeenth century led to a significant tourist industry. Mass tourism in the twentieth century enormously increased visitor numbers particularly at the ‘honeypot’ site of Newgrange, a passage tomb renowned for its winter solstice alignment and megalithic art. In 1993, the area within the river-bend was declared a World Heritage Site. In 1997 a new multimillion-pound interpretative centre was opened.

This designation in the Boyne Valley and its previous status as a protected area since 1987 had the opposite effect to the stated intention of protecting the monuments, increasing the market value of the sites and leading to greater visitor numbers. It also had unplanned consequences for the community. People spoke of the designation and subsequent management as restrictive control by state officials (Ronayne 2001, 156). Silberman (2007, 188) has noted:

[I]n practice, the inspiration for major heritage projects is almost always economic. Whether it is the complex and expensive application process for listing on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list or the construction of a new visitor centre, local government authorities justify their funding applications and budgeting on the idea of local economic development.

From the later 1980s, the crisis of rocketing visitor numbers was the pretext for the imposition by the state of a development plan for the entire Boyne Valley (Brady Shipman Martin 1996). The drive behind this plan was to open up mass tourism to private operators. The World Heritage Site status was part of this plan as was the centre through which the state intended to regulate the flow of tourists. Three different locations were considered, two on the north side of the river and the one finally selected, just outside the World Heritage Site on the south side (Mitchell & Associates 1992).

The community opposed: they were not consulted adequately and those on the north side whose livelihoods depended on passing tourist trade would lose out. All tourists would now go through the centre to access the monuments, no longer travelling independently on the north side of the river; time on sites and buses was to be closely controlled. People were also aware that this initiative was tied into bigger private sector interests and development, including construction of the M1 motorway, crossing the River Boyne a few miles away. Other local people supported because of promises of employment. The centre went ahead and in its first year of opening alone, I observed an even bigger increase in tourist numbers to the World Heritage Site, spread over a longer time period. Today there are continuing reports of economic and other difficulties this management plan has brought to the local rural community (Keogh 2008) and the village of Slane: 'a modern milestone in the village's decline was the establishment of the interpretative centre' (McNally 2008).

The state's heritage managers claimed to be undertaking model consultation processes to implement what they called sustainable development (Brady Shipman Martin 1996; Keane 1997, 37; 1998, 8). But the community campaign and work I undertook showed that this was not the case: 'we had several meetings and they wouldn't even come to hear our views [...] Also, Meath County Council [...] told our representatives that it was too late for all of this' (interview, 1997). I found deep distrust of the profession of archaeology and the state heritage service, and a feeling of betrayal and displacement: 'I don't think the ordinary person has much say in it. They're just a body and that's it. They just don't seem to have listened to the ordinary person's complaint. They just don't seem to care' (interview, 1997). People raised the point that one of the main weaknesses of their campaign was lack of support from professionals (interviews, 1997). A number spoke of the way in which their lives and the area they lived in were restricted by the protected status, a sort of frozen timewarp echoed inside the centre where visitors are encouraged to gaze from viewing galleries

at the 'prehistoric landscape' outside (Ronayne 2001, 157). People contrasted this with the way in which the tourist development was waved ahead.

I raised these concerns with the relevant bodies and reported on them publicly (Ronayne 2001). In 2008 the Heritage Council, a statutory body which advises the Minister of the Environment regarding heritage policy, began developing a new research framework for the valley with selected researchers (Heritage Council 2008). It is said that the project involves community consultation (Heritage Council 2008). The public may attend its seminars and make submissions but it seems that the framework has, once again, been set in motion without the substantive involvement of all sectors of the community or others concerned with the area.

Road development in Ireland: Tara and the M3 motorway

The recent development boom in Ireland is heavily dependent on inward investment by multinationals, the vast majority from the US with the EU providing funds for infrastructural development. The chief roads developer is the state's National Roads Authority (NRA), subcontracting projects to the private sector. The rationale is easing the burden on Ireland's growing commuter population but tolls and continuing traffic jams have left commuters doubtful. Not surprisingly, the roads industry is associated with extensive corruption, with reports of lobbyists paying off politicians and planners to secure decisions on route selection; one high-profile case is under investigation by the special legal tribunals for planning corruption (McDonald & Nix 2005, 152; O'Loughlin 2006).

Some highly significant heritage has been impacted. As with the Boyne Valley and in the same county, the Hill of Tara and its landscape has been the scene of controversy. Tara is Ireland's pre-eminent national site, the traditional seat of its high kings and queens, with the landscape around the hill forming a royal demesne of sacred pre-Christian and Christian significance, famed in myth and medieval documents (Breathnach 2005). Archaeological investigations have revealed evidence of sacred ceremony and ritual from the Neolithic period onwards (Newman 1998; Fenwick 2002), while in recent centuries Tara has been the scene of rebellion (in 1798) and political gatherings. A road development through the valley below started as one bypass (Newman 2007, 68) and became a billion-euro four-lane motorway servicing industrial development. High stakes are indicated by the companies tendering for the project including a Halliburton subsidiary (famously profiteering in Iraq); the contract eventually went to the Eurolink consortium. Many routes were proposed; it is suspected that the final selected route will give maximum profit from tolling (Newman 2007, 75), with reports of land speculation as well (McDonald & Nix 2005, 192). Although construction has started on the M3, campaigns to stop the road are continuing; a number of archaeologists have involved themselves.

Relying on legal status alone to save sites and landscapes is unwise as the case of Tara demonstrates. The Irish government changed the law in 2004 so that the minister, the government and, by implication, development interests, decide whether and how to protect or remove national monuments, distancing archaeologists and public from the decision-making (McDonald & Nix 2005, 32 and 158). In 2007, an internationally significant Iron Age ceremonial site was uncovered during the M3 salvage excavations at Lismullin. It was declared a national monument but the minister

ordered its excavation rather than preservation following advice on site conditions (Lismullin Advisory Committee 2007, 2).

The Hill of Tara and its surrounding landscape do not enjoy the protected status of a World Heritage Site. The Irish Minister for the Environment has stated that he is minded to include Tara's landscape in Ireland's 'tentative list' of proposals for such status (O'Brien 2008), obtaining advice that the M3 need not be an impediment. Unfortunately and despite information presented at WAC 6, the World Archaeological Congress issued a press release supporting this but failing to oppose the M3 motorway (WAC 2008). Were the world heritage committee to agree, the negative implications for World Heritage Sites globally would be immense. Neither is it likely to prevent further development in Tara's landscape if the political will is lacking to implement legislation and other protections.

Even without a motorway, any planned World Heritage Site status for Tara would have to be decided upon with a community fully informed of others' experience in similarly designated areas. This is very unlikely given the recent record of the state agencies and developers concerned. This case is an example of how promotion of a project is no substitute for consultation: the NRA's large public relations budget and its many attempts to describe the M3 in glowing terms, often using salvage archaeology, are not the same as being answerable to the community. Local people noted this failure and the division of their communities caused by the many different possible routes proposed (e.g. Meath Archaeological and Historical Society 2005, 28–33).

When heritage is protected from the public but not from developers

Developers and state officials can ignore legislation protecting heritage, while the same protective measures prevent the public from accessing sites. It is one of the great contradictions behind 'public benefit' arguments the same developers often put forward.

The Ilisu dam in Turkey is a case in point. Part of the giant Southeast Anatolia Development Project (GAP), Ilisu is a hydroelectric dam which would flood over 300 sq km and displace up to 78,000 (mostly Kurdish) people. It threatens environmental pollution, waterflow cuts to Iraq and Syria, and immense heritage destruction. Consultation has been minimal, particularly with women who, together with their children, would be most severely impacted (Ronayne 2002; 2005; 2006b). Local and international campaigns to stop Ilisu succeeded in 2001/02 but a new consortium received provisional backing from the German, Swiss and Austrian governments. The lead company is Austria's Andritz which has links to the Carlyle Group, the private equity firm associated with the US government and allies.²

In the 1980s GAP was rebranded as 'sustainable development' but it doesn't benefit local communities; many reports have shown that the projects are public-private partnerships benefiting multinationals, their governments, and large landowners in the region (e.g. McDowell 2000; KHRP, Cornerhouse and Ilisu Dam Campaign 2002; Ronayne 2005, 19–46). It's particularly expedient for the Turkish State and its powerful military to have a project which would ethnically cleanse Kurdish communities, their culture, and other culture repressed by the state like Armenian heritage; Ilisu and GAP are of course increasingly important for US interests in the Middle East.

There has never been a full archaeological survey of the affected area. Impact assessments commissioned by dam builders continually downplay the numbers and significance of heritage affected. Based on preliminary surveys of only parts of the area (Algaze 1989; Algaze et al. 1991; Tuna et al. 2001; Tuna & Velibeyoğlu 2002; Ökse et al. 2008), desk research, local community knowledge that I have been given, and other work I have done in the area, my estimate is that thousands of sites would be flooded. These include sites and landscapes with evidence for our human origins, the origins of agriculture, various empires, medieval dynasties, sites sacred to a number of religions, and more recent heritage important to Kurdish, Armenian, Arab, and other communities.

One site in the area, the town of Hasankeyf, is a first degree protected archaeological site. The town has a spectacular range of religious and secular monuments from the medieval period when it was a flourishing city on the Silk Road; remains from many other periods are also found there and many caves, some still inhabited. The town holds great significance for its mixed Arab and Kurdish population and for Kurdish people the world over because of its significance in their culture and history (Ronayne 2002, 74–6). There has been widespread local opposition to the dam's threat to this town and other heritage in the area: 'We kept telling them that they cannot transport the whole city to some other place. Because Hasankeyf is a whole, you cannot fracture it; you cannot cut it into pieces' (Ronayne 2002, 134).

The Hasankeyf municipality took a legal case using the heritage legislation. Another case was taken in Istanbul, which has now reached the European Court of Human Rights. But the state and the Ilisu consortium have continued with plans to submerge most of the town. Residents have spoken many times of restrictions imposed by the heritage legislation, e.g. many homes are temporary and unsafe with poor sanitation but it is legally impossible to make alterations or build new homes (Ronayne 2005, 85). They can go to jail for damaging any part of the town's architecture. The state's plan, worked out with salvage archaeologists, is to salvage a few of the monuments, build a new Hasankeyf nearby with relocated monuments in a 'cultural park', and turn the town's citadel, which would remain above the dam waters, into an 'archaeological park' for tourists, with boat trips from the reservoir's edge (IEG 2005, 6/13–6/16). Needless to say, residents would be forcibly displaced.

In response, some campaign groups, archaeologists and ICOMOS Turkey have promoted the town for inclusion in the World Heritage List (Ahunbay 1999). But even in the unlikely event that the site would be proposed for the list, given Turkey's record, such status would not guarantee stopping the dam or that residents' concerns about living within a protected site would be listened to. However, it is a growing problem that well-funded campaign groups and professionals advising them promote solutions which are not based on what local communities want and which are unaware of or ignore negative impacts of similar solutions elsewhere. In the case of Ilisu, some NGOs have recently focused on 'Save Hasankeyf' — a strategy some of us advised against in 2001 because it prioritizes sites and artefacts over the lives and needs of communities alive and making culture today. The full extent of the dam's impacts on them is hidden, undermining their opposition to it.

A similar example comes from the Oaxaca Valley in southern Mexico. In March 2008, representatives of Mixteca, Triqui, Zapoteca and other peoples of the area,

descendants and inheritors of Oaxaca's immense cultural heritage, invited women colleagues and myself to witness their struggle to preserve their communities and culture from the US-backed development project Plan Puebla Panama (Lopez 2008). Development would include dams, roads, dry canal, sweatshop factories, heritage tourism, and appropriating communal land for private use which the communities explained would devastate livelihoods, environment, and cultural sites. A massive teacher-community movement arose in response, which faces severe human rights violations (Lopez 2008).

The community was concerned that I witness the privatization of heritage tourism at the ancient Zapotec capital, Monte Albán. We were unable freely to enter the site with community representatives: fees are too expensive for most of the area's inhabitants. The degradation of the site from great tourist numbers was clearly visible, with chaotic scenes in the coach parks. Another case concerned the World Heritage Site of Oaxaca city where we witnessed how, despite its protected status, the local governor's 'regeneration' of the *zocalo* (central square) had resulted in the disappearance of the cathedral's magnificent wooden doors, the felling of ancient trees and other destruction. The communities believe that money for this 'regeneration' was used for electioneering. To date there has been no official investigation.

People view this as part of an attack on their cultural roots along with suppression of indigenous traditions of the communal assembly, work, exchange, and decision-making. Everyone I asked had the same story about professionals including archaeologists: 'They come here and study our sites but they don't consult or work with us to try to stop this destruction.'

Negative impacts of our role in development processes: the case of salvage archaeology

Professionals have come to view salvage archaeology as a way to save sites 'by record'. But villagers repeatedly pointed out that salvage archaeology is facilitating the coming of the Ilisu dam and they don't want that kind of archaeology done because they get, as women said, 'a project which harms us' (Ronayne 2006). The problems faced by salvage archaeologists have been discussed before (McGuire & Walker 1999; Cumberpatch & Blinkhorn 2001; Everill 2007) and it is useful to consider also the effect on communities.

In Ireland, by law, development must be monitored by archaeologists who carry out salvage excavation if needed. But since the 1990s, as archaeological sites came to be seen as a burden to be cleared away, we have seen the state's attempt to turn archaeology into a service industry for developers. Questions of ethics and standards are brushed aside. Field archaeologists employed by the increasing numbers of private companies, often for low pay and in poor conditions, are pitted against communities opposing roads or other developments. The profession of archaeology has divided on the question of development (for more detailed discussions see Waddell 2006; Ronayne 2008b). In addition, a new tier of professional archaeologists is employed by the biggest developer, NRA, the state's agency for roads, and despite best intentions is answerable first of all to this employer/developer. In Turkey, the state's

archaeological salvage organization, TAÇDAM, is connected to its agency for dams, the State Hydraulics Works (DSI).

In the cases of both Ilisu and Tara, the quality and independence of archaeological impact assessments and other reports by private sector companies have been contested by other professionals (Kitchen & Ronayne 2001; Newman 2007; Ronayne 2008a). Critical reviews are becoming a regular occurrence. When ethical questions are raised in assessment and salvage processes, it is often said that a legal and planning framework exists to regulate any problems. That this is questionable is demonstrated by many cases. With Tara, proponents of the motorway say that it went through an effective planning process (Gowen 2007). But the same planning authority ruled seven months later against a golf course in the same area because it would be 'visually intrusive in this sensitive landscape' and 'would detract from the character, appearance and interpretive experience of the region' (MAHS 2005, 15). This does not sound like a healthy planning process.

More cases are coming to light of archaeologists refusing to work on salvage projects they consider too destructive or unethical. In 2001, private sector archaeologists in the UK's archaeological trade union voted to impose a 'green ban' on the Ilisu dam which meant that members would be supported by their union if their company got the salvage contract and they refused to work on it; the idea came from the successful halting of the Franklin dam in Australia in the 1970s (Anonymous 2001). Ilisu salvage excavations continue despite the impossibility of effectively and ethically surveying and salvaging thousands of sites across over 300 sq km of often difficult terrain in a war zone. Ilisu salvage archaeologists I have worked with have passed me information anonymously on poor standards. At Tara, salvage excavations have gone ahead though a number of archaeologists have said privately or publicly that they decided not to work on it. Some of those who did work on it (not everyone has a free 'choice' despite best intentions) are following the lead of Ilisu and other examples by blowing the whistle on unprofessional practices (e.g. Ronayne 2008a; Swobaba 2008).

Responses to threatened destruction: an alternative to salvage archaeology?

It is not my contention that archaeologists or the public should never have recourse to the law in order to protect heritage or that salvage archaeology is never beneficial; of course there are situations when both are appropriate and welcomed. But the useful implementation of protective measures is dependent on the wider society acting strongly enough to direct them and to press governments to implement them. Archaeologists increasingly seek solutions other than salvage archaeology, for example, joining with other sectors of society to prevent cultural destruction as occurred in the examples discussed here.

Since 1999, to oppose large dams in Turkey, I have tried to put archaeology's case against the destruction of culture, together with the women's case for the survival of families and communities. I see this as an alternative to an approach that relies on either prioritizing the legal protection of sites or their salvage in advance of dam construction.

This approach began not with artefacts but with people, prioritizing accountability to communities. Finding out what people wanted, in particular what women said, was key: as chief carers for their families and communities they, more than anyone, know what the full, devastating effect of the dam would be. Women spoke of the terrible effects of forced displacement by dams and war, children lost or ill after the move, poor or no housing, unsanitary conditions and polluted rivers, loss of land to grow food, compensation (if any) paid only to men, increased poverty so women have to beg in the streets, and the unbearable increase in workload as they try to care for loved ones in the new conditions (e.g. Ronayne 2005, 22–26, 70–72). This is also an attack on culture, what I have called (2007) the culture of caring, and on the person whose work creates that culture. Unless we think women’s work to keep everyone going is not culture whereas ancient pottery sherds are.

In my professional reports and submissions, in media work and speaking engagements I was able to articulate women’s case — the most powerful, once it is visible — despite governments and developers rarely wanting to hear about women. Though women’s first priority was survival, this does not mean that they dismiss the dam’s impact on physical heritage. Women’s concerns lent support and power to the case of archaeology; we were now not just talking about ‘a few sites’ but the devastation of the community and its cultural roots. Women’s perspective also enabled me to describe the full extent of physical heritage that would be submerged: like villages forcibly evacuated by the military to which people demand to return, and mass graves of Kurdish people who disappeared in the state’s war against them in the 1990s. This case was circulated by the British Government to other governments considering credit for the dam as part of the campaigns that halted the project in 2001.

When professionals support women and their case for community survival, then the case for saving everything we call culture, including physical heritage, can be strengthened. When we get drawn into an either/or debate on heritage or development we create problems for ourselves and others and discredit ourselves in the eyes of the public who see us as prioritizing archaeological sites above human survival needs; once again we may fall into the trap of seeing culture as somehow in a class above food, shelter, and well-being of other human beings. So the basis on which we win is crucial for the survival not only of communities but heritage in the longer term. But this demands that archaeologists integrate their work with the community’s concerns, particularly with defining what development is really about.

Drawing out connections: development for whom?

Development is not just a right but a necessity for all of us on the planet, but it is clear that as it is currently carried out by governments and corporations, much or even most development does not benefit most people. All over the world, communities are undertaking campaigns when a motorway or dam or quarrying comes to their area; many have turned into successful grassroots movements and in some areas, across Latin America for example, these movements are changing societies’ priorities: demanding and increasingly winning development shaped to meet their needs.

What should our role as professionals be? Our instinctive reaction as archaeologists, to survey and excavate or to demand protection by law, is not always what communities want. Legal and other protective measures which professionals may be

required to implement in the management of sites may end up targeting the community, imprisoning or excluding them, and in the long term damaging sites as well. Changes to heritage professions and particularly increased privatization have made it far more difficult for professionals to act accountably to each other, to the archaeological record and, importantly, to communities. Salvage archaeology may well result in extraordinary discoveries. But looked at from the perspective of communities whose land has been taken or whose homes or health are threatened, talk of great finds sounds like professional interest prioritized above the well-being of human beings.

This reflects a deeper problem: our profession fetishes sites and artefacts (Ronayne 2006a; Hamilakis 2007, 23). I try to ensure my students understand why our first relationship must be with people in the present. But once those students go to work in the profession the pull in the opposite direction is difficult, if not impossible, to resist individually. We are trained to assume that truly professional work demands that we separate ourselves from communities. Those who mention principles are often told to 'live in the real world'. But the real world for most of its people is an unending struggle to survive, and mega-development projects are often part of what threatens survival. We are told that 'rather than taking the position of anti-development campaigners, [archaeologists] can and do play an important constructive role in terms of protecting archaeological heritage and minimizing the impact of a development' (Gowen 2008, 13). On this view any independence from developers or commitment to particular communities is viewed with incredulity. It reduces you to subjectivity, bias, or even being 'extreme' (Gowen 2008, 13), while colleagues working with developers are 'objective'. In fact that separation from people places us within a very small minority pitted against the great majority of communities and their heritage that we are trained to protect from them. Refusing to objectify communities trying to oppose destruction leads to independence from governments, multinationals and developers: a commitment to upholding principles and standards, including professional objectivity.

A question lingers over debates within academic and professional discourse. There is a danger of coming to see internal debate as more real and more important than the experience of thousands and even millions. We are mistaken if we think theory is something we read in books and then apply in the field; rather it is created out of experience and interchange. In this case we recognize the contradictions that arise when our interests as professionals much further up the hierarchy conflict with the survival interests of grassroots communities, and we must in practice try to work that out. My first attempt at public archaeology in the Boyne Valley in the 1990s was an academic study. I still believe it may have some merit, but the way in which it was planned and the questions I was asking were not designed with the community as a priority and were of limited value to them. The work with communities opposing the dams in Turkey was a response to my earlier failure to 'live in the real world' with most people.

Since the 1990s a debate has been conducted on the usefulness or not of codes of ethics and professional standards in archaeology (e.g. Lynott & Wylie 1995; Tarlow 2000, 2006; Smith & Burke 2003; Zimmerman et al., 2003; Hamilakis 2007). The impetus to address ethics came originally from the successful pressure applied by the

indigenous movement but the restrictive, bureaucratic and impractical nature of such codes is often now questioned. In particular, if the power relations most communities find themselves in vis-à-vis professionals and developers are not addressed then proposals of ‘shared stewardship’ and so on are not workable. On the other hand, to many communities the view that ethics is more situational, fluid and personal or that no one standard can be applied to the entire profession is equally unworkable, at best. Of course ethics is also personal but if it is only that, we may end up ignoring the body of ethics, and justifying on personal grounds submission to the highest bidder. In the case of Ilisu, being able to point to international codes of ethics and standards set by different professional bodies was crucial to showing what should apply in that case.

If this ethics debate begins from theoretical abstractions worked out firstly, without communities and secondly, without a clear grasp of the make-up and input of all sectors of communities facing destruction, then it may be irrelevant or, worse, cause further damage. I have learned that the questions of with whom in the community you are working and to whom you are accountable are crucial. This often gets confused. For example, NGOs and paid campaigners may claim they are on the side of grassroots communities fighting destruction but they can avoid representing what those most affected want by using as their point of reference those few community people closest to corporate interests. In this way, they can appear accountable to communities while really accountable to funders. So I believe that the establishment and continual review of international standards is vital but with these points in mind.

Thinking in terms of people

Others may have a different view, but I cannot accept that archaeology’s role is to serve development without independently assessing if it is detrimental to communities and their cultural heritage. As a professional I have tried to find alternative ways to work with communities. I have made many mistakes — this is not done quickly or easily. Barriers of language and resources often prevent us hearing of valuable work by communities with professionals around the world. I believe it is urgent, working internationally, to draw out connections between all these cases, communities and movements. This enables us to see the concrete effects of the same policies at work globally and how lessons learned and successes in one case can be useful elsewhere. More importantly, communities are calling on us to support them, which makes it imperative to find an international alternative to the model of ‘market-led archaeology’ (Gowen 2008) now being promoted. These deep conflicts of interest were recently debated at WAC 6 in Dublin and in the pages of the *Irish Times* (Gowen 2008; Ronayne 2008b); delegates at the WAC 6 plenary passed the following resolution:

Noting the increasing role of the private sector/Cultural Resource Management in the profession, the World Archaeological Congress expresses serious concern at the potential for erosion of standards and professional ethics. The Congress calls for explicit inclusion of these concerns in its Code of Ethics. The Congress calls on all colleagues to support those field archaeologists working in the private sector, who are striving to maintain professional standards in difficult conditions.

Unfortunately post-conference WAC did not adopt this resolution. The particular case that provoked the resolution was Tara and the M3 motorway but it goes well beyond Tara and even beyond one profession or country. The implications of the growing privatization of professions, particularly for communities in the Third World whose poverty weakens their power to refuse even the most globally devastating developments, make it imperative that professionals globally look again at what we stand for and what we are doing.

I am not suggesting that it is up to archaeologists to solve energy generation, food security or any other aspect of development, but I am saying that as professionals we cannot afford to be ignorant of what communities want, need and are entitled to in order to develop and flourish. Archaeology and people's cultural roots are not separable from these questions. They are not new questions: in 1968 Julius Nyerere, first president of independent Tanzania, in turning his country away from market-led development towards development based on the self-activity of communities, warned us of the mistake we are always in danger of making: 'What we were doing, in fact, was thinking of development in terms of things, and not of people (Nyerere 1968, 66 quoted in James 2007, 17). This, too, is our cultural heritage. It sets a standard that we professionals must run — and urgently — to catch up with. It is the starting point of saving our species by respecting every individual of it, and thus respecting the heritage we have produced. We will either save both people and heritage or save neither.

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Notes

¹ In all of the examples except the first, the orientation for this work has come from the international grassroots women's network of which I am a member, the Global Women's Strike. This orientation has been crucial in shaping my approach: it has ensured that the principle of accountability to grassroots communities and its practical application are always my priority. The network has national

coordinations in 13 countries, working together under the theme 'Invest in caring not killing' (www.globalwomenstrike.net).

² As this article goes to press, it appears that the dam has been stopped again; the three European governments have withdrawn support for Ilisu as a result of local and international campaigning.

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