

Archaeology and Economic Development, UCL Institute of Archaeology, 21-22 September 2012

Hana Koriech* and Colin Sterling

Introduction

In August 2012 a report into the economic value of various international monuments by the Monza and Brianza Chamber of Commerce made headlines around the world with its claim that the Eiffel Tower was worth €435 billion to the French economy. As *Le Figaro* pointed out, this amounts to almost a fifth of France's entire annual GDP (Anon 2012). While far beyond even its nearest rival the Colosseum (worth apparently €91 billion to Italy), other sites on the list carried equally improbable valuations: in Britain the Tower of London (€70.5 billion) and Stonehenge (€10.5 billion) were ranked highest.

Attaching such outlandish figures to historic monuments is no doubt a useful crutch for beleaguered heritage managers arguing the case for investment in culture during an economic crisis (one imagines justifying a £500m tunnel under Stonehenge just became *slightly* easier), but the nature of this report does little to address the day-to-day operations of archaeologists working on sites unlikely to grab the world's attention in such a way. An awareness of the need to consider economic issues alongside traditional concerns of conservation and research has however been growing in the archaeological community. This conference, the first of its kind to address the relationship between

archaeology and economic development directly, would seek to conceptualise and contextualise a debate too easily hijacked by preposterous research results.

Over two days the conference included twenty-eight oral papers and one 'conversation' divided into six discussion panels. Having distributed papers to attendees beforehand, speakers on each panel were given just ten minutes to present, with the remainder of the session dedicated to questions, comments and discussion. This format worked well, providing ample opportunity for some genuinely stimulating debate. Dialogue was also fostered by the breadth of expertise in attendance, with the conference providing an interdisciplinary space welcoming papers from experts, practitioners and students of archaeology, development and economics to present examples of how they have addressed archaeology and economic development theoretically, ethically and/or practically. The success of this conference may be said to have laid the groundwork for an emerging field. Here we address a number of key themes that surfaced across the two days and will likely continue to shape the debate in coming years.

Day One: Global Questions, Grounded Solutions

Stephen Shennan, Director of the Institute of Archaeology, welcomed delegates on day one with an introduction which immediately brought to the fore the international nature

* UCL Institute of Archaeology
31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY
United Kingdom, hana.koriech.10@ucl.ac.uk

of the debate around archaeology and development. The discussion must be 'global not parochial' Shennan argued, and even a cursory glance at the programme demonstrated the organiser's commitment to this aim. With speakers from America, Brazil, Jordan, Italy, Belize, Kenya, Colombia, Australia, and, of course, the UK, nobody could accuse the conference of being provincial in its invitations. The fact these speakers brought to the table years of experience from Albania to Cambodia via Kyrgyzstan and Peru merely added to the breadth of geographical interest. The conversation promoted by such a diversity of cultural backgrounds and expertise cannot be underestimated.

Continuing this global theme, Richard Hodges' keynote paper began with a twelfth century quote on the virtues of internationalism (see Said 2000: 185), but his case study on the World Heritage Site of Butrint in Albania soon exposed the routine problems that beset overtures to co-operation. As an introduction to the complexities of economic development around archaeological sites the paper could not have been more apposite. While not underplaying the significant benefits the preservation of the site has brought to the regional and national economy - including employing 60-90 local people and encouraging over 500,000 tourists to visit the area since 1998 - Hodges' 'critical history' of the Butrint Foundation of which he is Scientific Director was refreshingly candid. Despite a 'lasting scientific prominence' the project had been 'an uncomfortable learning experience' which 'failed at grassroots level' he admitted. The factors behind this were manifold, ranging from pressure to develop the area for golf courses and marinas to conflicting models of the sites history. 'First world rhetoric,' argued Hodges, is 'alien to the daily operations of a World Heritage Site'. The dangers of a conference slipping into just such rhetoric are ever-present; that this was avoided over these two days is to be commended.

The second keynote by Dallen J. Timothy addressed a far broader scope of research,

outlining current issues and trends in post-modern heritage tourism. Timothy, self confessedly 'not a real fan of tourism,' offered a series of definitions and forecasts that, at times, felt redundant given the audience. He identified two types of heritage tourist, the casual and the fanatical, arguing that 'grandiose tourism' around monuments and major sites does not provide 'for the more sophisticated tastes of the new generation'; those who seek out ever more remote locations and engage with 'everyday heritage'. Given the complexity of tourist motivations and experiences, such a simplistic dichotomisation adds little to debates on current heritage practice and archaeological site management. Perhaps more worryingly, an obsession with quotidian aspects of the past and escaping crowds of locals and 'casual' tourists at major heritage locations risks a peculiarly postmodern conceit: engaging with the proletariat of history to avoid confronting the masses of the present. Of course, one could argue that tourism 'off-the-beaten-track' does bring attention to areas and sites desperate for investment and protection. If one theme could be said to characterise the conference, it would surely be the need to use heritage resources to address current economic injustices.

Despite this overly generalised perspective on contemporary tourism, Timothy's understanding of development did help to contextualise subsequent discussions. In countries like Britain and the U.S., the term commonly refers to 'quality of life, community pride, regional image, migration and employment'. In contrast, 'development' implies 'money and basic survival' to the so-called developing world. Under such circumstances, according to Timothy, conservation and protection almost always require an economic rationale.

Following these keynotes the first panel considered 'Concepts in Archaeology and Economic Development'. One of the major successes of the conference was the coherence of panels and the seemingly organic progression of ideas over the course of two days. The first panel began this process by

laying the groundwork for how we might begin to think about archaeology and economic development. As the opening speaker and conference organiser Paul Burtenshaw argued: 'archaeologists need a conceptual and empirical surefooting'.

Drawing on research carried out in Scotland and Jordan, Burtenshaw made the case for 'closing the gap' between cultural and economic values. Archaeologists have traditionally shied away from the latter, he suggested, seeing them as subsidiary to or even degrading cultural grounds for protection or research. Burtenshaw persuasively argued that the two should in fact be seen as inseparable, and that archaeologists and other heritage professionals must begin to recognise the positive ramifications of valuing sites through an economic lens. Here the issue of data was brought to the fore, and the importance of collecting, measuring and analysing a broad spectrum of information related to the public and economic value of archaeology would raise its head throughout the day. While most delegates agreed with Burtenshaw on the need for archaeologists to fully engage with such data, there was a lack of consensus as to whether that data already existed and merely required revised examination, or whether wholly new studies were required to generate relevant statistics.

Cultural economist Arjo Klamer offered another perspective on this question, arguing that any data so far generated around the economic impact of archaeology has been misguided, focusing on grants from government and the marketisation of sites. As Klamer rightly suggested, when such studies demonstrate the economic worth of archaeology they run the risk of arguing themselves out of monetary support, as governments are able to respond that if you can subsidise yourself through the market, you should do so. To navigate this paradox archaeologists should realise their sites as social or cultural goods - things you cannot buy or sell - rather than public or private goods. For Klamer this must entail 'contribution', an enig-

matic term that boiled down to involving greater numbers of people in the control of archaeological sites. Given Klamer provided an important perspective from outside the discipline, it is forgivable that he appeared unaware of the significant research that has gone into just this notion in recent years, primarily from the field of public archaeology. Indeed, such work was evident in the papers from George S. Smith and Alexander Herrera, both of whom called for community focused archaeology. As Herrera suggested in relation to Peruvian heritage, we should 'use the sites for what they were built for - bringing people together'.

Johannes Linn of the World Bank concluded this panel with a 'simple' diagram of common concepts and their interactions in archaeology and economic development, showing how 'cultural assets' generate values for stakeholders who in turn need to conserve those assets for future generations. This closed loop of heritage stewardship is 'lubricated' by information and persuasion. Why should people take part in this cycle, Linn asks, when they could work elsewhere, spend their money elsewhere, or simply ignore the issues completely? Drawing together multiple themes from the session Linn argued that 'incentives' were key to persuading people to 'contribute' (whether through time, money, labour), and that measuring the results of this contribution through rigorous data collection and analysis is key to then encouraging further stakeholder participation.

In the subsequent discussion around supply and demand (a misleading way of framing the problem according to the panel) Klamer provided a note of caution for the conference as a whole, urging archaeologists to beware of the 'silly measures economists impose on you', his pragmatic stance seemed an appropriate end to the morning.

The second panel of the day drew upon the breadth of international expertise present with case studies from Europe, South America, Central Asia and China. Based around the theme 'Regional Perspectives on

Governments, Archaeology and Economic Development', this contextual variety helped flesh-out models and concepts developed during the morning session. Pedro-Paulo Funari provided a useful introduction to the topic, reminding the audience that in most contemporary contexts governments control public policies that enable or hinder development. Simultaneously, they enact policies that affect archaeology, making it 'even more amazing that archaeologists took so long to care about economics'. Reiterating earlier comments, Funari's stimulating paper concluded with a call for archaeology to facilitate 'more humane social relations', an aspiration that would re-appear throughout the conference.

K. Anne Pyburn's paper on Kyrgyzstan was a case in point. Her combination of archaeological and anthropological expertise helped problematise the issue of government involvement in heritage, with 'accidental' research that demonstrated ways in which local 'uneducated' people care for archaeological remains the government chooses to ignore. Against a background of rising ethnic conflict, Pyburn's main concern was to show how archaeologists can assist local communities in ways that do not foster greater antagonisms. In the framework of economic development, this means a responsibility to show what systems of heritage management have worked in comparable situations; providing, in essence, ethnographies of multinational, global and national governmental and non-governmental organisations that local communities can draw upon to help steer their own projects. Crucially, according to Pyburn, this must be done on a personal and human scale.

A similar reframing of the debate emerged during Luca Zan's discussion of cultural heritage in China. Zan, Professor of Arts Management at the University of Bologna, described his research as an 'ethnography of administration' wherein 'archaeologists are my animals'. The results of this enquiry were illustrated through the 'Heritage Chain', a diagram illus-

trating the impact of various activities (preservation, excavation, research) on heritage resources from production or discovery to final use, most commonly in museum presentation. This constructive business-oriented perspective provided an important reminder of the scale of economic development in China, and the crucial role heritage resources are playing in this vast system. Asked what the motivating factors were behind China's renewed interest in the past, Zan suggested that archaeology has been deployed as part of a political agenda that seeks to foster cohesion and maintain order as 1.4 billion people 'lose their ideology'. We must wonder what influence concepts like contribution, community involvement and humane social relations hold under such circumstances.

It is also vital to recognise the increasing economic impact of China on the global stage. As Tim Winter (2010: 120) has written in relation to Cambodia, Chinese lending has become as influential as The World Bank or Asian Development Bank, while intra-regional tourism across Asia is greatly affecting the daily management of heritage sites. If the conference can be criticised for one omission it is the lack of a voice from inside China to discuss these issues, although we understand this was not due to a lack of effort on the part of the organisers (Burtenshaw Pers Comm).

Tim Schadla-Hall completed the panel with a European perspective on the gap between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' public archaeology initiatives. Drawing us back to the core issue of the conference, Schadla-Hall's informative and entertaining overview concluded that greater liberalisation was needed in utilising archaeological resources if economic benefit was to be a central concern of such projects. While empowering local communities to care for and benefit from archaeology seems a relatively uncontroversial proposition, one audience member who had been involved in a case study alluded to negatively by Schadla-Hall highlighted the complex circumstances under which divisive

decisions had been made. Intentions to provide economic or social benefit may be lost among the many concerns of contemporary archaeology. The ability to argue more persuasively for their prominence in decision-making would hopefully be one outcome of this conference.

The final panel of the day on 'International Organisations, Archaeology and Economic Development' began with a high profile talk from Jonathan Foyle (standing in for Lisa Ackerman), CEO of World Monuments Fund Britain. The inherent grandeur of the WMF's remit may suggest the need for a different approach to economic development than that put forward by archaeologists dealing with less monumental contexts. Grand projects around internationally recognisable buildings can attract the attention of the public, and indeed developers and governments, in a way most archaeological sites can only dream of. Yet during a talk that reiterated calls for greater dialogue with the development field and more robust data it became clear that these issues resonate throughout a sector anxious to demonstrate its relevance to wider society.

Douglas Comer continued the theme of monumental heritage by arguing that data collection around rising visitor numbers following the World Heritage Listing of Petra had missed the point of 'phantom benefits'. Furthermore, he reminded us that when increasing visitor numbers are seen as the key route to economic development the 'historic and scientific values' of these 'non-renewable resources' may be damaged. While Holtorf (2001) has been critical of such a stance, Comer's paper may be seen as a grounded return to the disciplines core values. Of greater concern from the perspective of economic development was his suggestion that, in many cases, monetary benefits that do result from increased tourism gravitate away from local people and towards international organisations. Perhaps confronting such injustices should be added to the core values of archaeology.

Issues of scale also emerged during the final two papers from Arlene Fleming, an advisor to the World Bank, and Gerry Wait, commercial archaeologist and Director of Nexus Heritage. Fleming's work gives her a familiarity with policies and standards that few archaeologists possess, and the documents and statements presented here were an example of the bureaucratic reality that any archaeological investigation faces when major international organisations are involved. It was also unclear from Fleming's paper how excavations and other research carried out under the auspices of vast natural resource projects - such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline she presented - go beyond archaeological value to benefit 'local communities'. On a smaller scale, Wait argued that most infrastructure projects now rarely go ahead without consulting local people and demonstrating a genuine concern for sites and artefacts from the outset. This is the case even in 'desert fringes' where 'nothing [...] is remotely close to being relevant on the world stage'. Away from the impact of tourism (positive and negative), it was heartening to discover a continued concern for archaeology and its role in social and economic development.

This upbeat end to the papers was followed by a discussion around best practice, with Comer arguing that it is imperative archaeologists and heritage professionals produce relevant guidelines that set out 'minimum expectations' of site management. Given that Schadla-Hall and others had earlier suggested such guidelines often fail to reflect local context, it is to some extent discouraging that a provocative and practically oriented day of papers should end with a call for further directives destined to be ignored by the majority of archaeological custodians. As Comer himself admitted, it is vital that we understand the importance of process, communication and dialogue over top-down instruction. The first day of the conference offered a model for such an exchange of ideas.

Day Two: Ideas in Action

Day two began with a conversation between Elizabeth Graham and Jaime Awe on the subject of ethics and the moral responsibilities of archaeologists towards communities and economic development. This simple introduction to the themes of the day covered a diverse topic with practical examples from Belize, where both scholars have worked for a considerable period. The dedication they have shown both to archaeology and the local communities of the region demonstrated a fundamental need for projects to look beyond the short-term. Moreover, the conversation showed how abstract ideas like morality and ethics remain relevant in day-to-day archaeological research. Rather than suffocating the audience with theories or standards of practice, Graham and Awe offered important evidence of natural, human experience and the hardships and accomplishments that come with investing time and energy in particular sites and their communities.

Speakers on panel one contributed towards the theme 'Archaeology and Community Economic Development'. The first paper from Robert Bewley, Director of Operations at the Heritage Lottery Fund, made a lively case for the lasting difference heritage can make to people's lives. Following in the spirit of the opening conversation, Bewley provided examples of how a scarcity of funds can in fact open doors for creativity in cultural management, with the biggest obstacles being political and intellectual rather than monetary. Drawing out the fundamental importance of community consultation to the 'Heritage Cycle', Bewley ended with the by-now familiar attestation that investment in heritage can have a significant positive impact on the national economy.

Large and small scale examples of archaeological research, education programmes and collaborative work in action animated the remainder of the panel. Deborah Gangleff, President and CEO of Crow Canyon Archaeological Centre in Colorado, discussed

tensions that have emerged over the use of public land in the U.S., stressing the need for archaeologists to convey the importance of preserving the historic environment through tourism. She also underscored the benefits of being a privately funded non-profit organisation under such circumstances, arguing the case for research freedom and greater collaboration and participatory methods. Drawing on research carried out in Ireland and Belize, conference co-organiser Peter Gould presented a thought-provoking paper that pulled together various strands from across the two days. Arguing for the creation of local level institutions supported by common governance and resources, Gould provided a model of archaeological project management that may well reap significant benefits in future years. In a return to the core issue of data, Apsara Iyer of Yale University presented a highly quantitative approach to understanding cultural awareness and the economic potential of archaeological sites. With equations that might have flown over a few heads, Iyer's paper was a useful example of the detail archaeologists require as they face greater demands for data in the fight to place heritage higher on the political agenda.

The last two speakers of Panel 5 were Terry Little, Chief Operations Officer at the Trust for African Rock Art (TARA) in Kenya and David Morris, Head of Archaeology at the McGregor Museum in South Africa. Little's presentation seemed to greatly affect the audience with images of ancient rock art quarried and vandalised. The surest way to prevent such destruction occurring again, according to Little, is to foster 'a community who have an emotional or economic link to the heritage'. Working with the people of Mfangano Island to create the Abasuba Community Peace Museum, a gateway to the regions rock-art, the small-scale nature of TARA's work did not detract from its important contribution to the conference as a whole. Indeed, such endeavours provide a model for real-world workable solutions involving archaeology in economic and social development. The final paper from Morris

offered an alternative perspective on this issue however, with analysis of the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre in South Africa highlighting the complex problems that may beset such projects. This was a valuable if disconcerting way to end the panel, raising issues of post-colonialism, conflict and fragmentation that can lead to contested narratives and divergent interpretations. The byzantine nature of the archaeological record can be a far from straightforward route to poverty reduction.

The final session of the day on 'Archaeology and Economic Development in Action' had little to differentiate it thematically from the morning panel. It was however significantly more lively and controversial. The impressive roster of speakers included a number of outgoing personalities who have been instrumental in establishing key organisations in the sector, including Dr. Ran Boytner, founding Director of the Institute for Field Research (IFR); Dr. Lawrence Coben, founder and executive director of the Sustainable Preservation Initiative (SPI) among other impressive roles; Dr. Richard Leventhal, founder and director of the Penn Cultural Heritage Centre; Jeff Morgan, founder and Executive director of the Global Heritage Fund (GHF) and Dr. Dougald O'Reilly, founder and Director of Heritage Watch. Displaying a variety of approaches to 'action', the grounded examples of success and failure on offer here provided useful guidance for the archaeologists present. While it did sometimes become difficult to determine whether you were being sold a solution or granted an idea, the matter-of-fact approach to archaeology in practice was a far cry from academic discourse. As Ray Boytner explained in his paper, archaeology must above all be made relevant to contemporary lives for it to have a lasting impact. As founding Director of the Institute for Field Research, it should perhaps have come as little surprise that Boytner highlighted the importance of field schools in fostering such long-term socio-economic benefits. He was however persuasive in suggesting that educational initiatives can turn

focus away from the short-sighted benefits of tourism and towards learning as a sustainable revenue stream. NEW STUFF Coben provided an energetic discussion on what he believes constitutes community-based sustainable development, discussing its application in the San Jose de Moro project in Peru and demonstrating how tiny investments can generate a lot of activity and combat poverty. Next on the panel was Leventhal, who followed in the logic of the power of the locals, the importance of disseminating such power to the locals and the need for long-term planning. Morgan continued with examples of GHF funded projects, investing in community development and scientific conservation in what he called dents in global awareness, but also providing controversial criteria to their selective process, while, lastly, O'Reilly offered an interesting discussion around implementing a traditional sustainable development-style project in Cambodia, and the difficulty and challenges faced with such short-term projects, such as political barriers requesting termination of the project, poor education levels among participants or reluctance of new approaches.

The gap between academia and the business world also resulted in some intriguing debate in the question and answer session, with concerns over the criteria used to decide which sites are worth 'fixing', and what it means to actually 'help' a 'community'. As with much of the conference, the productive nature of this debate went far beyond the stereotypical back-and-forth banter of the scholarly world.

Unfortunately Richard Hodges was not able to make his scheduled concluding remarks, but Peter Gould stepped in to highlight seven points that had been raised during the conference: government, tourism, community, values, data, training, and sustainability. While clearly encompassing a wide range of issues, these potentially abstract themes were explored with reference to practical case studies and grounded experience over the two days, offering valuable and timely

evidence of the need for archaeologists to engage more fully with the world of economics. As several of the papers made clear, this may in fact be a mutually beneficial course of action. Current austerity measures seem enamoured with the quick-fix solution. If there is one thing archaeology and heritage can surely contribute towards economic debates, it is the need for a long-term perspective on any development initiative.

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