

# ARCHAEOLOGY IN IRELAND: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

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# THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN': OBSERVATIONS ON ARCHAEOLOGY IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

PROFESSOR WILLEM J.H. WILLEMS

## **Netherlands State Inspectorate for Cultural Heritage**

I would like to start my contribution to this evening by telling you a joke, and since I am a good Catholic boy from the southern Netherlands, it is about heaven and hell, but it is also about my subject today. The story goes as follows:

Once upon a time, there were problems between heaven and hell because there was a lot of illegal trespassing. Angels used to slip down to go slumming in hell and devils sneaked up to enjoy the pleasures of heaven. Of course neither God nor Satan was very pleased about these highly undesirable visits, so they agreed to have a conference to put a stop to them. At the meeting, it was agreed to build a thick wall along the entire length and breadth of the border between heaven and hell. It was further agreed that both parties would each be responsible for half of the work and, as is usual in those circles, it was agreed that the job was to be completed in 7 days.

Work started immediately and the border region was clouded in dust, from which only the sounds of work could be heard. At the end of the seventh day, the dust settled, and the result could be seen. When he looked upon the work, Satan became very angry: it turned out that, while on his side there was a shining new wall, completely finished, nothing much had been done on the other side – merely some foundation trenches had been dug and that was all. Enraged, he rushed up to the heavenly father and complained. “My devils did their job as agreed, but you didn’t keep your part of the deal!” God was a bit embarrassed, but he had an excellent defence: “Well,” he replied to Satan, “that is easy for you to say. You have all the help you need, but I don’t have a single developer or contractor. All I have for this is a bunch of archaeologists.”

Now I hasten to say that not all the implications from this joke are necessarily correct, but I decided to start my address with it, not just because it's funny, but also because its mere existence is already significant. It is obvious to everybody working in archaeology in Europe today that the position of the discipline has gone through some rather drastic changes over the past decade and a half, and anyone involved with archaeological resource management is aware of the fact that its position in society has changed enormously. I am sure that future historians of the discipline will consider the adoption at Malta of the *European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* in 1992 to have been a watershed. It defines a standard for the way in which states should manage their archaeological heritage and it has placed archaeology – that used to be an academic discipline and in many countries a fairly exotic one – firmly in the world of spatial planning and public decision-making, sometimes to the distress of its practitioners.

Now, as I am sure you are aware, archaeologists are more or less the same all around the world. We are all motivated by a deep and genuine interest in the past: that is why we chose our profession against dire warnings of family and friends who – rightly at the time – suspected we would never make a buck and be condemned to a life of poverty. Or at least, that was what it was like for the current generations still active in the discipline except probably for the youngest generation, say the last 10/15 years or so, which in most countries started out with considerably brighter prospects.

Our predecessors were the generations of archaeologists from before the Second World War that had shaped the discipline in its modern form and given it a place at universities and in emerging government bureaucracies dealing with the protection of national antiquities. The training we received from them was in the pursuit of knowledge about the past, and we have always been devoted to that ideal and willing to endure various sorts of discomforts, from job insecurity and long unemployment to the hardships of fieldwork in remote places, the upside being such things as having a socially interesting profession, the joy of discovery and academic recognition. That one would do one's utmost to achieve the highest quality results has always been an unquestioned, self-evident and central premise in this context.

Today, it is precisely this formerly self-evident basic assumption that has come into question, because the practice of archaeology has changed such a great deal. The roots of this change date back to the 1960s when environmental concerns became important. It was soon recognised that not only natural but also cultural resources are in danger and need careful management, nowadays usually referred to as “sustainable”. This became the basis for the birth of archaeological resource management in the modern sense. Archaeologists became aware that their source material was rapidly disappearing while only a tiny fraction of the information could be recorded

by rescue excavation. Its survival needed a different approach that required communication with the outside world, influencing the political and socio-economic decision-making process, and enlisting the support of the general public. In most of the western world, existing notions of historic preservation through protection of ancient monuments were gradually replaced by more dynamic concepts of managing archaeological resources in the framework of spatial planning systems. This happened first in the US in the 1970s; it started a decade or so later in many parts of Europe.

In Europe the pace of this development varied strongly in different countries with different traditions and legal regimes. The Scandinavian countries, for example, were way ahead and did not really need the Malta Convention when it was adopted in 1992. The result has been that the rescue archaeology which had dominated fieldwork in much of Europe came to an end. It started with small-scale excavations during the post-war reconstruction effort and culminated in unprecedented operations accompanying infrastructure development in the 1970s and 1980s. Archaeology became part of the planning process and in a non-voluntary manner. Although the scope of the legal obligations varies from country to country, the impact of development on archaeological resources must be taken into account. This has created a vast increase in archaeological fieldwork that used to be referred to as “contract archaeology” and is nowadays also described as “development-led”, “developer-funded”, “commercial”, “consulting” or “compliance-driven” archaeology. Not all these concepts mean exactly the same because, for example, archaeology can be described as compliance-driven or developer funded without being commercial in countries where it remains state-operated.

There are significant differences in the way in which the Malta Convention is being implemented in various European countries. In my view, there are three models of how this is being done. They are related to prevailing political views, but also to fundamental legal notions about the role of the state and about private property. In addition, there are different opinions about the nature of archaeological work. In France, for example, all archaeological work is seen as research on behalf of the state. In a country such as the UK, archaeological work is seen as a service, not unlike many other services that can be bought and sold. Related to this are different political views on the usefulness of such things as a free market and the desirability to allow “market principles” to operate in the field of culture; and also the degree to which a market needs to be regulated or the quality of work controlled.

These differences have led to different systems by which the Malta Convention is being implemented. Sometimes, as in Germany, Switzerland or Spain, where cultural autonomy lies with the states and not the federation,

there are even considerable differences within one country. If you look at what different systems seem to exist, there are two basic questions:

- 1. does the state consider archaeological work to be a service, or does it not?
- 2. does the state wish to control the quality of archaeological work, or does it not?

If you put these into a diagram, you get 4 different options. As you can see, one of the boxes is empty: I don't know of any situation where a country does not consider archaeological work to be a service and at the same time is not interested in exercising control over the work that is being done, by whatever means (Fig. 1).

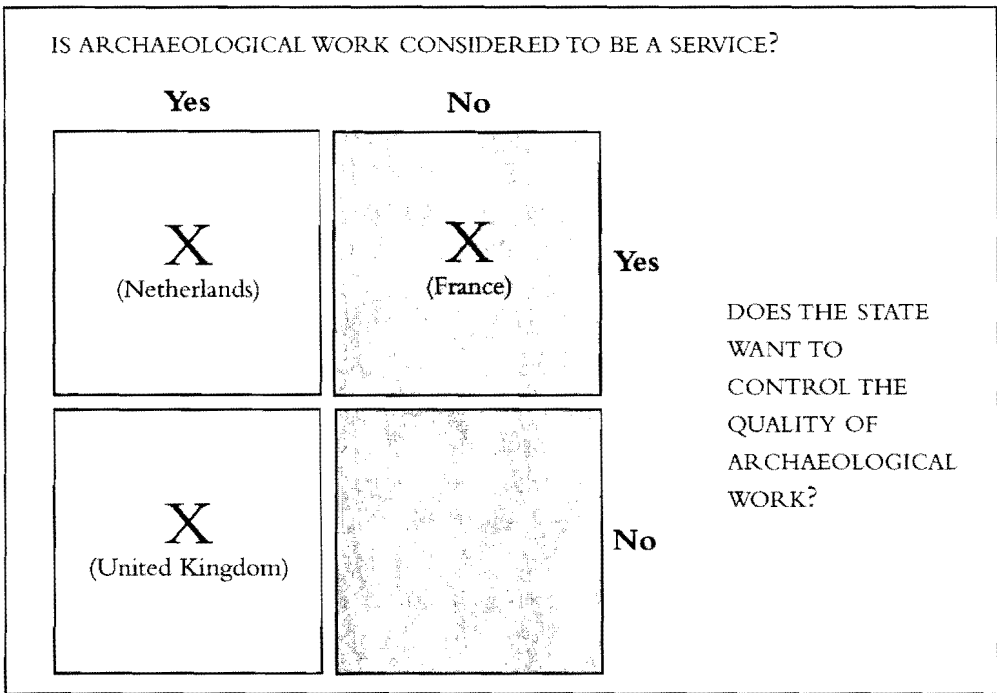


FIG. 1

In practice, there are thus three different systems in existence. I shall begin with a model that was adopted in a very explicit form in the Netherlands but that exists in many other countries.

In my country, the political decision has been that, in view of the increase of archaeological work, a market for archaeological services should be created in which “market principles” apply. Private excavation companies are allowed to offer their services in competition with each other. They can offer these

services to private or public developers who need to have some kind of archaeological work done. However, this is only one aspect of the decision. The complementary part is that, while it is acknowledged that archaeological work may be a service, it is also acknowledged that its result is important for the understanding and valuation of the national archaeological heritage. Therefore, market principles can only be allowed to operate when the quality of the necessary work has been ascertained. Otherwise, there is too big a risk that commercial and financial considerations will prevail. Therefore, a free market system was introduced in combination with a system of quality assurance which is based on the law.

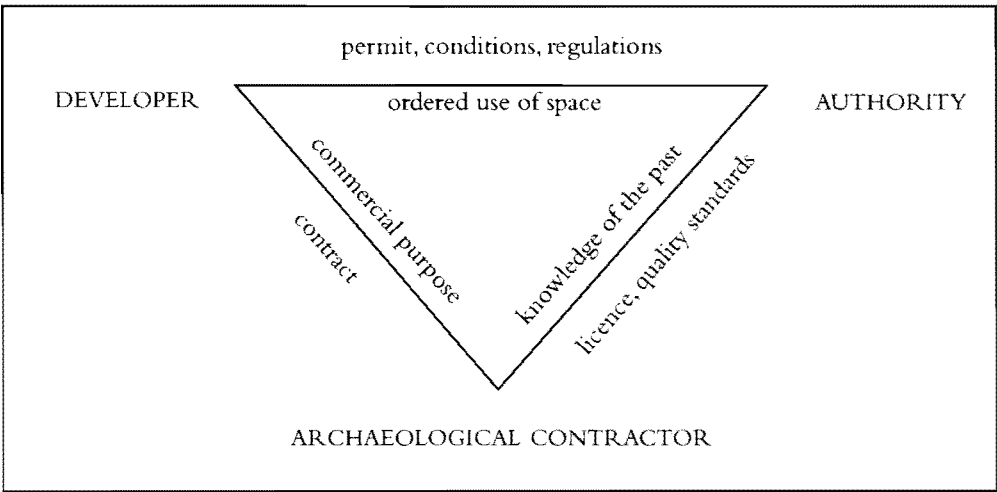


FIG. 2A

This is illustrated in Figure 2a which shows the triangular relationship that exists between the authority, top right, which can be a local or national government, the developer of plans, top left, and the archaeological contractor at the bottom. The upper line of the triangle gives the relation between the competent authority and the developer: their relation takes the form of a permit, or usually a whole series of permits, which the developer needs in order to realise his plans. The main issue here, indicated inside the triangle, is the ordered use of space and control of the impact of the proposed development. The right part of the triangle gives the relation between the competent authority and the contractor. The main issue, in this case, is the way in which we acquire knowledge about the past. Archaeological sites are an important source of information about our past and are also a fragile resource, which makes it a government's responsibility to ascertain that they are properly handled. In the Dutch view, this cannot be guaranteed by the mechanisms on the left part of the triangle: the issue there is time and money. When the developer has the right permit, he

becomes a principal to the archaeological contractor and their relationship takes the form of a contract by which the principal seeks to ascertain that the work is being done as economically as possible and within a specified period of time. That, and nothing else, is the product which the developer wants from the contractor. The government, however, wants the contractor to produce something very different, namely relevant knowledge about the past, and for that reason the government needs its own control in the process, which is a licence requiring, among other things, work under quality standards.

The whole point of the Malta Convention is that the permit which the developer needs should preferably not be given if valuable archaeological remains are at stake. If he does get it, because other interests are considered to be more important, archaeological investigation should be a condition and it is up to the authority to guarantee that this investigation is properly done. Therefore, the system of quality standards must be backed by the law, so that it will not be easily circumvented. As I said before, comparable systems are in use in other European countries, although explicit archaeological standards are only one way in which the state controls quality. In Germany, for example, in those German states where commercial archaeology is permitted, no explicit standards exist but control is exercised by control of the market: the state archaeological service selects the firm that will do the work. Another variant to this type of control can be a licensing system, in which it is somehow established which contractors are, and which are not, considered capable of doing the work.

This is the essential difference with similar systems elsewhere (Fig. 2b), notably in England where – in principle – the right part of the triangle is lacking. There are exceptions, and I know I am simplifying matters, but in principle only the upper and the left part of the relationship exist: what is being done about archaeology is largely determined by the conditions imposed by the authority on the developer and, second, by what that developer, in his role as principal, agrees with the contractor. There are no legal provisions covering the relationship on the right. In the 1980s under Mrs Thatcher's ultra-liberal regime, archaeology was privatised without safeguards, in the same way as was done in the USA and Canada a decade earlier, and this is precisely what most European countries want to avoid. Before I go on, I would like to add that I am not implying by this that archaeological contractors in the UK do not have standards. As you all know the IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists) has quite good ones, but these are not backed by legal demands although their use is often encouraged by county archaeologists. Nor do I wish to imply that there can't be developers – in the UK or elsewhere – who do in fact take great care to ensure that the archaeological work they commission is properly

done. But the basis of the system remains that most archaeological work is being done without an enforceable mechanism for control by the government, and much depends on the contract between developer and contractor.

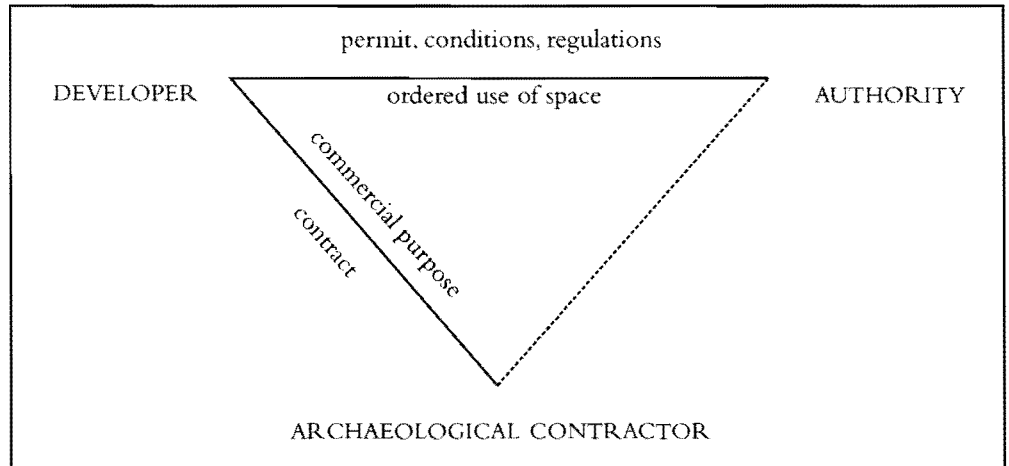


FIG. 2B

The French system is in fact just the opposite. Again I stress that my model is a simplification, but in principle it is the left part of the triangle which is lacking there (Fig. 2c). The French law has an archaeology tax, which is imposed on developers as compensation for the damage inflicted on the national heritage and which is used to pay for archaeological work. In France, it is the government that determines what the developer should pay and what he should comply with before the development can take place, and it is also the government that controls the archaeological work. This is done by a public administrative institution called Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives (INRAP), and although there will in reality surely be contractual arrangements with the developer, almost all archaeological work is a state monopoly. This system does not have explicit standards or guarantees for the quality of the work being done because that is ascertained and provided by INRAP. Moreover, there is no direct connection between the tax yield from any given development and the amount that INRAP will in practice spend on the excavation. From an archaeological point of view, this is a very good mechanism to ensure that money is being spent where it is needed most. On the other hand, there is obviously some contradiction here with the way in which the “developer pays” principle in the Convention was intended. Elsewhere, a development might simply become too expensive and be relocated because of archaeology; in the French system that would require other mechanisms.



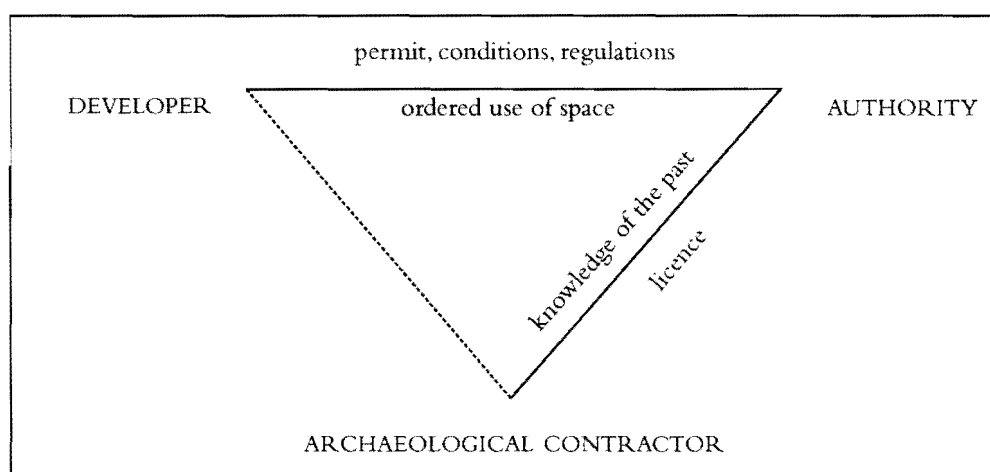


FIG. 2C

This kind of comparison illustrates what the strengths and weaknesses can be. In the Dutch type of system, for example, the archaeological contractor or consultant can get in a very difficult position, because that contractor always has to serve two masters. In the English type of system, there is inadequate government concern for the quality of archaeological work and a strong risk that financial considerations will prevail. And in the French type of system, there is no market competition with a drive for innovation, there is the risk of an inefficient bureaucracy and there is an assumption that if the work is being done by a semi-governmental organisation it is done well.

Of course each system also has its advantages, and I would like to stress that none of these systems is necessarily superior. Much depends on the way in which archaeological heritage management in a given national context actually works in practice. Some theoretical disadvantages or weaknesses can be remedied by the way in which things are being done in real life. In Sweden, for example, there used to be a French type of system. Currently, that is undergoing a shift towards more commercial, market-adjusted practices, with more archaeological contractors and no longer a state monopoly. But this is still being done in a controlled way. Instead of competitive tendering a County Board decides who is to carry out the contract archaeology and how much this should cost, and it instructs the developer to make a deal with the chosen archaeological unit. So there you have a system that moves from the French to the Dutch model, but without market competition.

I would like to return now to Figure 1 and I have indicated where some of the countries that I mentioned should be placed (Fig. 3). It matters, of course, if archaeology is seen as a public task or if this can be shared with, or

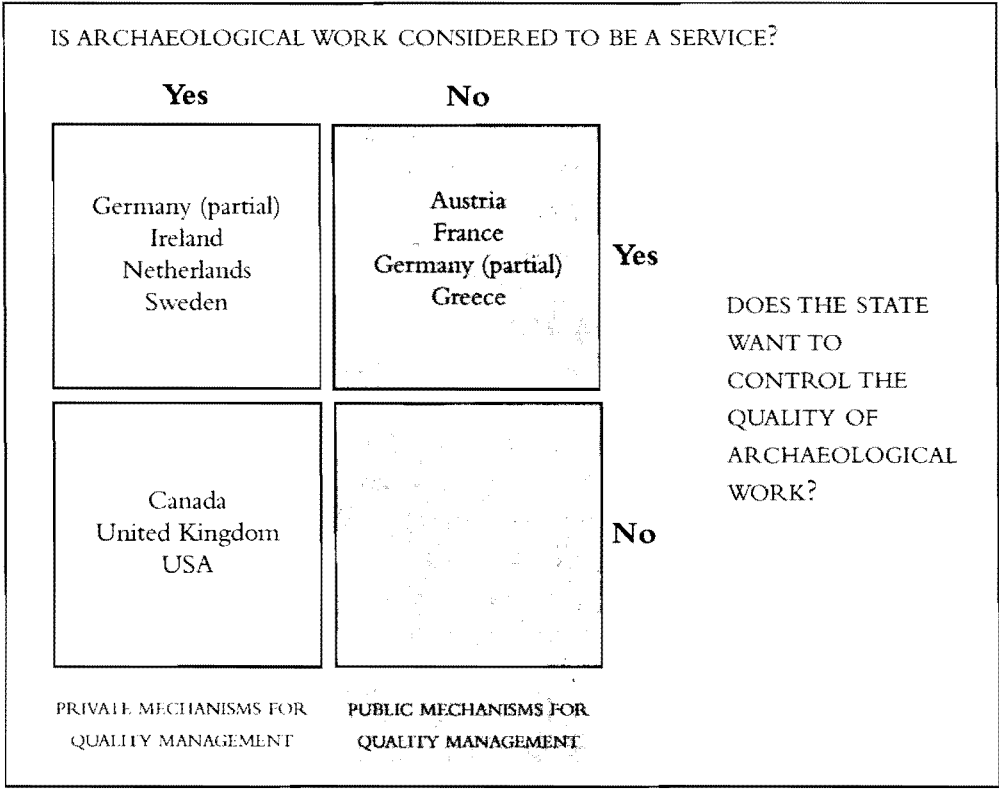


FIG. 3

even left to, the private sector. And it also matters if the state wants to control the quality of what is done. However, while the merits of these approaches can be discussed, the choice is usually not up to archaeologists. Archaeology as an academic discipline strives to achieve the best results in acquiring knowledge about the past. This is the dominant perspective of archaeologists and, in theory at least, of the administrations and politicians that make the rules. The immediate goal for archaeologists is to achieve an academically relevant result, but the ultimate goal for both parties is to obtain meaningful knowledge about the past for the benefit of society as a whole. The next question then becomes how to achieve this goal, and there are differences in the way that this is done. In the English model the profession itself has to arrange for mechanisms to manage the quality of what is being done. They have to self-regulate, because the state provides very little in that respect. In the French type of system there appears to be an almost total reliance on public mechanisms. That is not surprising, because this model resembles most closely the way things were done in the past. As long as archaeology was largely an academic discipline and firmly within the public domain there were of course occasional disputes over alleged failures to comply with academic standards, but the issue of quality management never arose.

Looking back, this lack of concern seems hardly justified, with innumerable unpublished excavations, half-excavated and abandoned sites, repositories full of inadequately documented and often deteriorated materials, incomplete or even missing site archives, and so on. To be sure, there are some valid excuses for this state of affairs, as any archaeologist knows, but at the same time we all know these excuses do not justify all that went wrong. And, I should add, all that can still go wrong as long as we do not develop explicit mechanisms for quality management. In that sense the third situation, where the state does want control but at the same time allows archaeological resource management to be done as a service, seems to trigger the development of self-regulatory mechanisms in addition to legal and administrative controls.

This is, of course, because we do not trust the market mechanism. There has been widespread concern over the academic quality of development-led archaeology ever since the introduction of commercial archaeology, and for good reason. That reason is not that the innate suspicions of archaeologists about the nature of working in a commercial setting are necessarily correct. The reason, in my opinion, lies solely in the fact that commercial work depends on market principles to operate, which in archaeology they do only to a very limited extent. The so-called “archaeological market” is an artificial creation. The product bought from an archaeological contractor is of no inherent interest to a developer and moreover he has no exclusive rights to it: it must be delivered to, or at least shared with, the state, which is an additional motive for wanting to buy it as cheaply as possible. Thus, there is no economic impetus for quality of the archaeological product and the more competitive the market is, the more prices go down, and the quality of the archaeological result is even more in danger. The state can provide regulatory mechanisms to counterbalance some undesirable effects of the artificial market. Controlling access to the market is one such tool: in many countries, a licence is needed before archaeological services may be supplied, and in that licence many requirements can be stipulated. Another is supervision of the market by a government agency, such as my Inspectorate does in the Netherlands. But the problems posed by the market can also be dealt with through private, not public mechanisms. (Fig. 4)

INGREDIENTS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE	
by legal means	by self-regulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monuments act</li> <li>• license</li> <li>• inspectorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality standard</li> <li>• professional register</li> <li>• research agenda</li> </ul>

FIG. 4

This has led to the creation of professional associations that established standards of performance on the one hand and defined ethical principles on the other. Depending on the social and legal national context in countries where this type of organisation now exists, it may have a role in defining the profession, in developing systems of quality management, or it may embody aspects of a trade union and be involved with training and education. The first of these was established in the USA in 1976 as SOPA, the Society of Professional Archaeologists, later succeeded by the Register of Professional Archaeologists. In the UK, the Institute of Field Archaeologists was formally created in 1982. There are similar organisations elsewhere – we have one in the Netherlands, and you do as well in Ireland. They can be concerned with codes of conduct, standards of performance, a register and a grievance procedure tailored to the needs in each national context. In many other countries, however, these have not even begun to be created yet. Despite the fact that, as I said before, the need for such self-regulation may not be felt in some systems, it seems likely that this will happen in future years, as more countries change to market systems for archaeology. Probably even more significant in this respect is the trend for international organisations such as the European Union, the World Bank or the International Finance Corporation to issue mandatory policies on dealing with cultural heritage in projects that they finance. It seems inevitable that this will lead to a need for basic standards regarding organisations, staff and products.

The discussion above has given an overview of the mechanisms we are using in the Netherlands, and what I want to do next is to look at these in some more detail. I think the Dutch situation resembles the Irish one in several respects, not only in the ways that I have already mentioned, but also in other aspects such as the rapid growth in recent years (Fig. 5). This graph gives you an overview and a breakdown of employment up to 2000, which as you can see is mainly due to the introduction of private enterprise. Growth has stopped now, but at the moment the total employment is estimated at around 1,000 Full-Time Equivalents.

As I mentioned before, the law requires archaeological work to be done by companies which have demonstrated that they are capable of doing so. Second, it requires work to be done according to “accepted standards” and this is defined as the Dutch Archaeological Quality Standard that has been accepted (and is maintained) by the community of Dutch archaeologists. Because the standard which is the basis for the quality assurance system must be widely accepted, it has been developed by the Dutch archaeological community as a whole. In 1999 a national preparatory committee was established, in which all sectors: universities, private enterprise, local, regional and national government, the Dutch Association of Archaeologists and also

developers were represented. An intensive process of consultation has assured that the archaeological community was involved and by and large accepts the outcome. Of course it was evident from the start that much archaeological work is quite difficult to standardise and there was consensus about the idea that most of this work is in fact research, which should not be made inflexible by too many prescriptions. For these reasons, the approach taken by the committee is that detailed specifications of products are only given in some cases. In most cases the process of work has been described instead of the product, and for all critical steps in a specific process, for example in an excavation, the actors have been defined. So instead of always defining in detail what needs to be done, the standard often says who is allowed to do it. I will not go into the details here, but we produced an English version of the text available from [info@erfgoedinspectie.nl](mailto:info@erfgoedinspectie.nl) if you are interested.

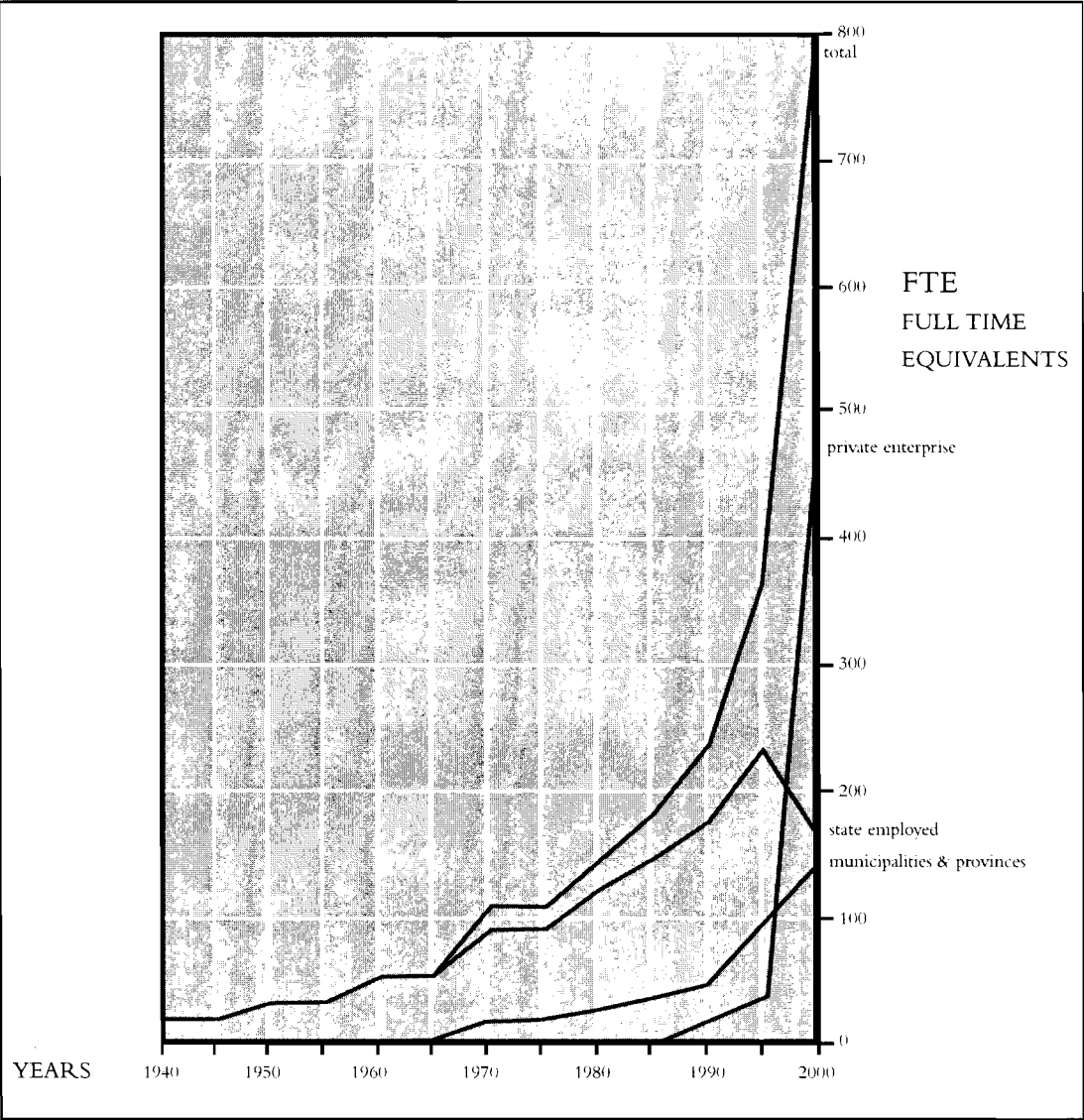


FIG. 5

This system has had some unexpected but positive consequences that are worth mentioning. What the national committee did was to define in detail the job of a “senior archaeologist” (Fig. 6). There are also a so-called medior and a junior archaeologist, but the standard has been written in such a way that no excavation work can be done without a senior archaeologist. Originally, I was personally rather dissatisfied with this definition, which was a compromise, because I thought it should be tougher. However, as it turns out, there is a shortage of senior archaeologists. The positive effect of this shortage is the influence on salary. There are not enough people that meet these demands, so senior archaeologists are in demand and companies are offering decent salaries to these people, because they need them to stay in business. And because they are relatively high in the salary scale for archaeologists, their income level in fact also influences positively the wages of the other archaeologists, the field technicians, excavation workers and other staff. That is the way any salary pyramid works. We were a little bit afraid that we might get a similar situation to that in England, where some colleagues are working for appallingly low wages. But it appears that by creating quality guarantees we also created some scarcity, and scarcity produces better prices. Of course competition also prevents too high salary costs, but in any case there is no strong downward spiral, as many people feared.

#### THE SENIOR ARCHAEOLOGIST:

- Subscribes to a code of ethics or similar (member of NVvA, IFA or RPA).
- In case university training has not been in the archaeology of Northwestern Europe, the minimal demonstrable experience must be entirely in Dutch archaeology.
- Demonstrable experience in depth, broadness and length (must be substantiated by a CV, diplomas and references).
- Demonstrable experience in working with the Standard.
- Demonstrable experience in writing final reports.
- At least 6 years of employment in archaeology (minimum of 1225 hours annually), of which at least 3 years in a managerial capacity. Period may have been interrupted for up to one year. Interruptions of more than one year are not accepted as time in employment.
- 6 relevant publications, of which at least 2 as the sole author.

FIG. 6

The definition of actors in the Quality Standard also requires a definition of all personnel working in archaeology, and the Dutch Association of Archaeologists has been asked by the State Secretary for Culture to design what is called a national register of archaeologists, which allows professionals

to be registered according to education, training and experience. This has not become operational yet, but the Association has agreed on the basic principles and a blueprint for the register has been presented to the archaeological community two years ago. What is operational is of course a committee, the so-called Committee of Experts, which is responsible for maintaining the standard. This committee is like the preparatory committee in that it has members appointed by the various sectors: universities, local and provincial government, developers, the professional association, private enterprise and two non-voting members on behalf of the State Service and the Inspectorate. This also provides an excellent forum for discussion of problems or needs across the discipline. The current standard, which is version 2, will be replaced by version 3 by the end of 2006, when hopefully our revised Monuments Act will become law.

At the moment, we are working under a transitional decree, but under the new law any organisation that wants a licence to do excavations or field evaluations or any other type of work must demonstrate, either by a certificate or a formalised process of admission, that it can work according to the Standard and that it has the right equipment, the necessary internal procedures, qualified personnel and so on. So the requirements are exactly the same, no matter if it is a private company, a university, or a municipal archaeology service that wants the licence. In practice, this means that archaeological companies from abroad can also work in the Netherlands. As long as they can meet the requirements, they can participate in tendering processes and do the work. Of course reports should be written in Dutch and work must be done by archaeologists who have a good knowledge of Dutch archaeology, but in principle these can be specifically hired for that purpose.

This entire system is of course dependent on many other things. I won't discuss the entire new structure but it is useful to draw attention to some aspects that are not the same everywhere else.

One important element of the new system is that there is a legal obligation to report all information to a central information system that is maintained by the State Service. We have local sites and monuments records, but all basic information has to go into this central system, so that up-to-date information is available to all parties in the heritage management process. The results of the innumerable field evaluations that are done each year are especially important, and it is not possible for a developer to keep these for himself. When delivering a report to his principal, the archaeological contractor is obliged to give the same data to the information system. The web-based version of this registration system, called ARCHIS2, became operational two years ago (<http://archis2.archis.nl/archisii/html/index.html>).

A second element in the new system is that a State Inspectorate has been created. Much is being delegated to the private sector, and the State

Service will have a role as a national centre of expertise, which is incompatible with that of policing. Therefore, an independent inspectorate is needed to monitor what goes on in practice and to report to the Minister when correction is needed. Quality assurance systems do not work when there is no independent supervision and the Minister of Culture needs an instrument to be able to implement political responsibility for such a system. In addition, as any archaeologist knows, it is possible to comply formally with standards while still doing a very bad job in the field, so there must be a way to establish if work is being done properly and if reports are produced on time (that is, in our system, within two years).

A final element which is considered of vital importance is that all archaeological work should be research-driven and problem-oriented. A quality assurance system provides guarantees for the standard of the work being done, but it does not guarantee that the right questions are being asked. Therefore, the quality system requires that the cycle of archaeological work will begin with a project outline that will contain the research questions. In some cases this work is done by a curator in the service of a local authority but it can also be done by a consultant. In principle, therefore, the developer does not just get a permit for a development on condition that an excavation is done first, he also gets a project outline which specifies what should be investigated, why, and, most importantly, how. In short, he gets the basis for a research design which is as detailed as needed in a particular case. This assures that the work done will be relevant from a research perspective. And it also assures that the amount and the kind of work to be done does not play an important part in the tendering process. So in principle one contractor cannot be cheaper than another because – for example – environmental analysis is left out. It has been recognised that for this advice to be most effective, it would be very valuable indeed if research agendas were developed at the national and preferably also at lower levels of government. That is one more tool that has been developed in a process where the State Service and Dutch university institutes have taken the lead, but in which all the other parties take part, such as the provincial archaeologists, the Standing Conference of Municipal Archaeologists and the Association of Archaeological Companies. At the moment, a first version of this National Research Agenda has been nearly completed and it is available at a special website. Between the summer of 2003 and June 2006, when the website went on-line, 75 authors have written the various chapters and about 90 others have been involved in review committees, so no fewer than 165 colleagues have been actively involved in creating the 800-page research bible that is now available.



For the final part of this address, I shall now discuss some of our experiences with this new system (Fig. 7). I am sure all of you realise that things are never as nice in practice as they sound in theory, especially not in archaeology. At the moment this whole system has been operational for about five years, at least as far as that was possible under the decree which established the transitional policy. An important missing element is that there is not yet a fully legally binding developer-pays principle. Even though many parties are willing to act as if it was a legal obligation, many others, including municipalities, refuse to do so, or do so only to a limited degree. Obviously, when finances are lacking, implementing standards can be a problem. A serious handicap resulted from the fact that the Quality Standard was adapted to what – during its creation – the Preparatory Committee expected would be the new legal system, while during the interim period that new system was not yet in place and some of its vital elements were lacking. For example, the role of Project Outline, or Brief, constitutes a cornerstone in the Quality Standard. A good Project Outline ensures 1. that the archaeological work is relevant as a research project, and 2. that economic competition is fair.

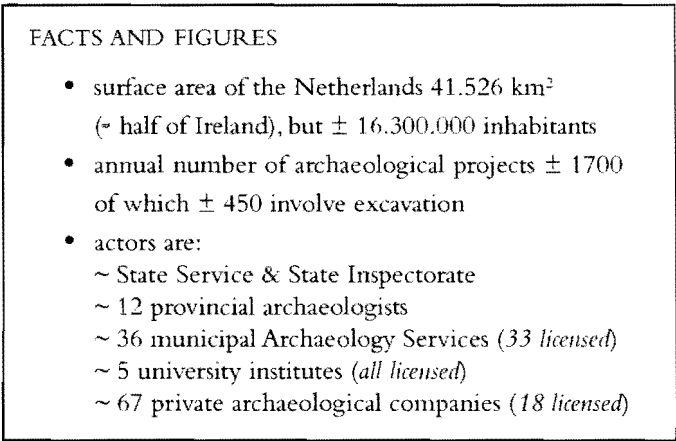


FIG. 7

In the Quality Standard it was assumed that the “competent authority”, the government body empowered to take the decision what should happen in a particular case, would ensure that a Project Outline was drawn up and approved. In practice, this did not always happen, which had consequences, sometimes quite serious, for the quality of the work. In those cases price became the decisive factor in competitive tendering – exactly what we wanted to avoid – and there was no level playing field. For example, companies that included analysis of botanical samples or C<sup>14</sup> analysis would lose the tender to a company that did not include such methods. Apart from these start-up problems, the experience so far has shown that writing an

adequate Project Outline (PO) to ensure that the research aims are clear, and thus the methods to be used in the field that also create a level playing field for the tendering process, is by no means simple. Even the very basic step of actually having a PO takes considerable time before it becomes common practice, let alone the next step of having an adequate PO. At the moment, we are still far from satisfied with the practical and scientific quality of the Project Outlines that are being produced, though they are getting better, not worse.

Another relevant experience has been that many new companies which are non-archaeological entered the emerging archaeological market. This was not unforeseen, but nevertheless it had some unexpected consequences. One of the stated reasons for starting a State Inspectorate had been the concern that independent control was necessary to oversee archaeological work by commercial companies. In practice, while the mere existence of the Inspectorate has had a positive influence on the way in which various parties have performed, there has been only limited evidence that archaeology firms were performing substandard. There are a few that do, but on average their performance is not inferior to that of traditional licence-holders, such as town archaeologists. The same cannot be said about companies which took up archaeology alongside their main activities: big contractors, some developers and companies doing environmental work. Almost immediately, such non-archaeological companies appeared on the market. Most of them avoid offering excavations but they specialise in field evaluations. In itself this type of work is already the most profitable and least risky from a commercial point of view. It is far less risky than an excavation. Less than half a year after the interim policy had become effective, the Inspectorate had the first evidence that very low quality surveys were being done by non-archaeological companies. For archaeological heritage management, such substandard surveys are of course absolutely fatal, because the (usually municipal) authorities base decisions on false indications – usually negative indications, of course, although examples of false positive conclusions were also encountered, which shows that the bad results were due to incompetence, not on purpose. Meanwhile, this situation has improved because a special decree has been issued, at the request of the Inspectorate, which now requires a licence for all survey work including augering, so that the worst effects of the situation have been remedied.

Another issue that is worth some comment is the issue of reports. As everywhere else, we have always had the problem of unfinished excavations, because they remained unpublished. There is never a problem with reports from field evaluations, because in that case the developer has an interest in the result. For excavations, the developer only has an interest in the

fieldwork being done so that his development can go on, and in most cases he does not care about the report. We now have the rule that a report with the basic analysis of the excavation must be completed 2 years after the end of the fieldwork at the latest. Already, it is evident that this works: many more reports than before are being completed, because companies, but also municipal services and universities, will lose their licence if they do not. I have to say that we are not always satisfied with what is actually in those reports, but even if the quality is inadequate in some cases, that still gives us a much better situation than before, when hardly anything was completed with a basic analysis and a publication. At least the general data is becoming available now, for research and for heritage management. And it is also true that the number of high quality research reports has risen considerably.

This basic analysis also helps with another problem, namely the storage of finds. Prehistoric sites hardly pose a problem here, but it is important that we don't have to store all the immense quantities of finds from Roman, medieval, and later sites, only a selection. Space in storage facilities is already scarce, and with the increase in excavations of the past decade, this is fast becoming a problem. Archaeological finds become the property of the municipality, the province or the state, but none of these provides enough storage space. The developer has to pay for everything else, so maybe a solution may be that there will also be a fee for storage, but at the moment we have a problem. Even though selection is now largely accepted and some of the finds are being removed instead of stored, there is not enough space. In some cases, companies are forced to maintain finds in their possession because there is no museum or repository to receive them! Obviously, collections that are public property cannot stay in private hands, but a solution has not yet been found.

I would like to conclude by saying that one thing we did manage relatively well during the transformation period is that we have so far been able to avoid major problems between the various sectors in the discipline. There is sometimes a lack of mutual respect, and there has been opposition to the changes, especially from a small group of municipal archaeologists that would have preferred to stay king in their own town. But we do not have divisive absurdities such as the use of the concept of "professional archaeologist" – not as a designation for someone having been trained and being employed as an archaeologist (as opposed to, for example, an amateur archaeologist) but as opposed to an academic or government archaeologist. I believe that the collective work and the need to come to an agreement, in particular on the Quality Standard and on the National Research Agenda, have been immensely valuable in this respect. The process of making these has created understanding between key players involved, and the need to

maintain these tools creates forums for discussion. Also, the extensive consultation has secured the active involvement and thereby the commitment of a large proportion of archaeologists in each of the sectors, and almost invariably the most involved tend to be the most vocal and prominent people.

I hope that your forum tomorrow will prove to be a stepping stone in a similar process, and I thank you for your attention.