

# *Paying for Archaeology: The Move from State Funding to Commercial Contract*

Simon Buteux and Vincent Graffney

## *Introduction*

The last fifteen years has seen a revolution in the way that archaeology in Britain is funded. During this time state funding for archaeology has declined relative to other sources from more than 70 % in 1979 to c. 30 % in 1991 (Spoerry 1992). This has resulted in a number of structural changes within the discipline, some of which are good, some of which may not be so desirable. It is probable that Britain has been in the vanguard of such change within Europe, and that the gradual withdrawal of the state from much archaeological funding may be a process which will occur elsewhere in Europe. If this is the case, it may be worthwhile to consider what impact the move away from state funding has had upon archaeological organisations and whether the British experience carries any lessons for archaeologists elsewhere in Europe.

## *1. Who pays for archaeology?*

### *Archaeology in Britain 1979-1990*

In order to assess the nature of change within British archaeology it is necessary to know something about the history and development of archaeology in Britain.

Prior to the 1960s, Britain had a very small professional archaeological community. It was entirely state funded and had its roots in structures set up in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Very few of these organisations held a direct commitment to excavation. Organisations, including the Royal Commissions for Scotland, England and Wales and officials, including the Inspectors of Ancient Monuments, were primarily concerned with listing and recording monuments worthy of preservation (Hunter and Ralston 1993a). State funded excavation was rare until the Second World War when funding was released largely as a result of the increased level of destruction of monuments caused by military activity. Fieldwork, when funded, was largely carried out by state officials using paid, manual workers. Post excavation was rarely paid for. Not surprisingly, this period of archaeological history was marked by the rapid growth of a publication backlog. Elsewhere, professional fieldwork was carried out by university lecturers and museum staff. This work tended to be seasonal and was heavily oriented towards research.

Much of the above would, we suspect, be relatively familiar to many European archaeologists. However, one aspect of British Archaeology that is not so evident elsewhere in Eu-

rope is the extensive role of the amateur archaeologist (Hunter and Ralston 1993a). Amateur archaeology has always thrived within Britain, and amateurs have been a significant force in fieldwork and archaeological publication since the mid-nineteenth century. The Council for British Archaeology, an organisation originally founded to support amateur groups, was established in 1944 and today there are more than 150 local groups with an average of 50-200 members.

The situation began to change from the 1960s onwards largely as a result of major economic growth and rapid development in Britain. The massive threat to cultural monuments that resulted from these events had two primary consequences. Local Government engaged archaeologists to manage local Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs). Equally significant was the decision of the Department of the Environment after 1973 to encourage and fund the creation of regional archaeological field units to carry out rescue work in advance of development. These units varied in their nature and origin. Some were local government based, some were located within universities, whilst some were independent charitable trusts. It is also significant that a number of these units developed from amateur groups. A total of c. 80 units were created and although these organisations did not provide a uniform nationwide cover they demonstrated the viability and value of permanent archaeological field teams. Ultimately these organisations were receiving c. 85 % of all monies granted as block grants (Hunter and Ralston 1993a, Thomas 1993).

The situation where money was provided as a block grant led to a predicament where a lack of serious financial control was reflected in an increased backlog of unpublished sites and the increasing commitment of funds to backlog publication. The decline of available funding for new work also led to a lack of new initiatives and an archaeology that was becoming in many respects stagnant.

Such a situation could not be maintained, and the context for change emerged in 1979 following the election of a Conservative government whose ethos emphasised value for money and the distancing of national government funding from non-essential services. In 1979 the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act attempted to break from the past by establishing the principles of project-based funding. This move was significant for a number of reasons. Historically, the act provided the first legal framework for consistent state funding of archaeological fieldwork. The emphasis on the need for a formal research design for archaeological funding applications ensured the advancement of new ideas

and the provision of an academic base for new projects. The need to apply for monies on a project basis also meant that new organisations could receive government money. The converse of such a situation meant that there was a possibility that some organisations would not secure funding and might not survive the change to project funding if they could not provide projects which were of sufficient quality. This occurred and several units were closed.

Whilst this process developed, the government also moved to separate the archaeological and historical monument services from the civil service in England. These were reformed as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission (English Heritage) in 1983: a legal body known as a QUANGO (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation). A clear emphasis on a return to the central governmental role of monument care and curation, rather than direct rescue fieldwork, was illustrated during the 1980s by an increasing emphasis on SMR enhancement and refinement of selection procedures for monument preservation (English Heritage 1991a; Thomas 1993).

These developments effectively cleared the way for the separation of the majority of field archaeology from state funding. By the late 1980s it was clear that state excavation funds would ultimately be restricted to sites which could be established as being of national importance on the basis of agreed scheduling criteria. Fieldwork on other sites would have to be paid for from non-governmental sources.

If the political context for change emerged during the early 1980s, the practical context for change rapidly followed. The mid 1980s witnessed a massive development and property boom accompanied by significant threats to cultural resources. Alongside this process was an increased general awareness of the need for environmental protection reflected in new legal directives and agreements on cultural protection at the national and supra-national level (Cleere 1993; Ralston and Thomas 1993). Relevant directives include EC Directive 85/337 which allowed local authorities to demand environmental assessment in advance of major development, and the results of the International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management, Lausanne 1992. The apparent paradox of increasing environmental threats and demands for environmental damage mitigation accompanied by declining political will to fund such work from central funds was answered, in Britain, by the publication of the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance Note

16, 1990 (PPG16). PPG16 confirmed the principle that "the pollutor pays".

#### *PPG16 and its aftermath*

The results of the "guidance" note PPG16 were significant. It caused an effective transfer of the financial burden of archaeological mitigation from the state to the developer. It also confirmed the local authority archaeologist in the role of the "curator" of the majority of the archaeological resource. More fundamentally, it resulted in the effective disintegration of many of the archaeological structures which had been maintained since the 1970s. This change involved two principal processes. The shift in financial burden to the private sector changed the relationship between developer and archaeologist. Archaeologists became contractors providing a service, and as such were treated very much as other service providers. Developers wished to choose who provided the services they bought, and as commercial concerns they also wished to ensure value for money. The result was a rapid move towards competitive tendering and the collapse of the regional structures of the 1970s as archaeological groups followed the money or became clients for companies operating across the country. New groups also sprang up to take advantage of the situation and financial opportunities that were presented.

A related process has been the gradual disentanglement of the local authority archaeologists who act as curators of the archaeological resource from the local authority units who had previously acted as a direct labour force. Many companies and independent contractors were suspicious of close links between curators and contractors within the same authority, and there were clearly ethical difficulties in such situations. One result has been the creation of "Chinese walls" around the different archaeological divisions within local authorities or the gradual loss of field teams.

Although the results of these changes are still evolving, by 1993 the essential trends within British archaeology were clear. Central governmental organisations were moving towards a pro-active managerial role and the position of national curator, whilst the greater part of archaeological activity outside this national core was being funded from non-governmental sources. The position was clearly outlined in an English Heritage policy statement in 1993 which stated that the aim of English Heritage was "to provide the strategic framework within which individual projects funded by

other agencies can be designed and executed and to provide a central source of advice, guidance and support nationally" (Thomas 1993, 147).

### *The impact of changes in British Archaeology during the 1990s*

The changing pattern of funding within British archaeology is very clear from the published data. Although in absolute terms the funds available for archaeology grew throughout the 1980s, central funding had declined from c. 71 % of the total amount spent in archaeology in 1979 to less than 30 % by 1991 (Thomas 1993; Spoerry 1992). It has also been notable that the largest proportion of the English Heritage budget has been directed towards post-excavation and publication of backlog sites (English Heritage 1991a). This accounted for more than 70 % of the 6.95 million pounds rescue budget available in 1988/89. It is also a notable fact that urban sites have absorbed more than 60 % of post-excavation funds throughout the 1980s, and that the majority of these sites were actually excavated during the development boom of the late 1970s (English Heritage 1991a). There is a salutary lesson here regarding the on-going costs of urban excavations.

If central funding is in a relative decline, what then of archaeology in general? The available figures make it clear that there is more money actually being spent on archaeology in Britain than ever before (Spoerry 1992). There has been a rise from 5.7 million pounds in 1979 to 33 million pounds in 1991. However, more than 50 % of the total budget for archaeology is now paid directly by developers. These figures find reflection in the fact that in 1991, at the height of a major economic recession, a survey carried out by Rescue suggested that there were nearly 2,000 professional archaeologists in Britain and that only 7.3 % of the total were employed by national heritage organisations (Spoerry 1992). The majority of these archaeologists were employed within field archaeological units. Although most of these organisations originated in the units of the 1970s, either as local authority divisions, university-based units or charitable trusts, a significant number were new organisations emerging to take advantage of the changed economic circumstances (Bell et al. 1993). The structure of these organisations also reflects the competitive market within which they work. Although there still remain a number of very large organisations, new organisations tend to be smaller and operate with a relatively

small turnover and profit margins (Bell et al. 1993). Flexibility is the essence of most archaeological organisations and almost all operate using a system of short term contracts as the basis for employing archaeological staff (Bell et al. 1993). Whilst many may have regarded archaeology as a "job for life" during the 1970s, most archaeologists now survive on a string of short-term contracts which may last as little as one month at a time. In short, archaeology in Britain has become a service industry and is now development rather than research led.

## 2. MANAGING ARCHAEOLOGY

It is clear from the recent history of British Archaeology that archaeological units will only prosper if they can adapt to the market. This means that they must successfully and satisfactorily complete projects for which there is funding. In most cases funding for these projects will be provided from the private sector and will be given following competitive tendering. Success in such situations will, hopefully, be given to those organisations who can provide competitive tenders whilst ensuring an acceptable standard of work. Efficient and cost effective project management is therefore essential. Of course there has always been management within archaeology, but as projects become more complex and funding for individual projects may involve hundreds of thousands of pounds, there is a need for an increasingly professional approach to management. There has been some argument that archaeology as a discipline is so varied and unpredictable that regulation and management in a true business sense is difficult or impossible. However, this is not the case - indeed it cannot be the case. No serious funding body will entertain organisations which do not provide evidence for a good management structure and financial controls. If these are not available the result will be mis-management, an increasing lack of success and ultimately closure. Motorway construction, for instance, will not wait for the deliberations of incompetent archaeologists.

Archaeological management is therefore devoted to the successful completion of archaeological projects. Projects are defined as a predetermined series of tasks, carried out in a specific order and leading to a goal. The ultimate goal in archaeological terms usually being a report or publication. The production of a final publication has frequently proved difficult for many archaeologists in the past; the aim is complicated further in commercial archaeology by the contrac-

tual necessity to carry out work within a specified time and for a specific sum.

The detail of the work to be carried out by an archaeological group is usually presented in the form of a brief prior to tendering for work, and may then be detailed within a project specification (or project design). A number of organisations now provide sample specifications which can be consulted by interested groups, but it is usual that most specifications contain the following minimum information (ACAO 1993; IFA 1993):

- 1) Site location, map and description
- 2) Context of the project
- 3) Archaeological and historical background
- 4) General and specific aim of the fieldwork
- 5) Field methodology
- 6) Post-fieldwork methodologies
- 7) Report preparation, contents and distribution
- 8) Copyright
- 9) Archive deposition
- 10) Publication and dissemination proposals
- 11) Timetable
- 12) Staffing
- 13) Health and safety requirements
- 14) Any specific reference to appropriate legislation
- 15) Monitoring arrangements
- 16) Contingency arrangements (if appropriate)

Having got a job, it is the responsibility of the archaeological organisation to ensure that the project is managed correctly and efficiently and that the project is completed as per the specification. These are managerial problems. Within British archaeology the move to contractual archaeology has resulted in a considerable amount of interest in the nature of management (Cooper 1993). English Heritage, as a pro-active manager whose role is to provide the framework within which individual projects can be designed and executed, has provided explicit guidance in a book entitled 'The Management of Archaeological Projects' and is often referred to as MAP2 (English Heritage 1991). This is rapidly becoming the standard framework within which most projects, including those in the private sphere, are managed. Whilst it would not be useful simply to repeat detail from this important publication here, it is worth summarising the key points.

MAP2 emphasises the essential requirements for an efficiently managed archaeological project. These are:

- 1) Clearly defined objectives

- 2) Sound estimates of resources needed to achieve these objectives

- 3) A team manager capable of motivation and co-ordination
- 4) A team with appropriate skills (professional archaeologists, not manual workers)
- 5) Adequate lines of communication between team members and external specialists
- 6) A system of quality control
- 7) A system to monitor progress in accordance with contractual deadlines

Because archaeology is an unpredictable pursuit, you rarely ever find exactly what you expect. Indeed, there would be no point in archaeological fieldwork if you did. On almost every occasion something surprising occurs which you have to react to. You may for instance find unexpected waterlogged remains or an early Christian cemetery when you thought you were digging an Iron Age settlement. It is essential, therefore, to identify phases within archaeological projects during which priorities and goals can be reconsidered and resources re-directed. These are known as thresholds for review. MAP2 defines 5 principal phases which act as thresholds for review, and into which virtually every archaeological project can be divided (see Figure 1).

- 1) Project planning
- 2) Fieldwork
- 3) Assessment for analysis
- 4) Analysis and report preparation
- 5) Dissemination

These phases are further sub-divided into a cycle of repeated activities which are carried out within each phase (Figure 1):

- 1) Proposal (P)
- 2) Decision (D)
- 3) Data collection (DC)
- 4) Review (R)

Within each phase MAP2 has much to contribute towards the detail of management. Again, whilst it is not useful to repeat this detail, several points of principle can be emphasised. The need to ensure that every member of a team is aware of the project's objectives, and understands its organisation and methodology is essential. The urge to collect data which is not required by the project design, or to carry out analyses which are of interest to the individual but not essential to the completion of a project, are also to be avoided scrupulously. There should be constant vigilance to ensure

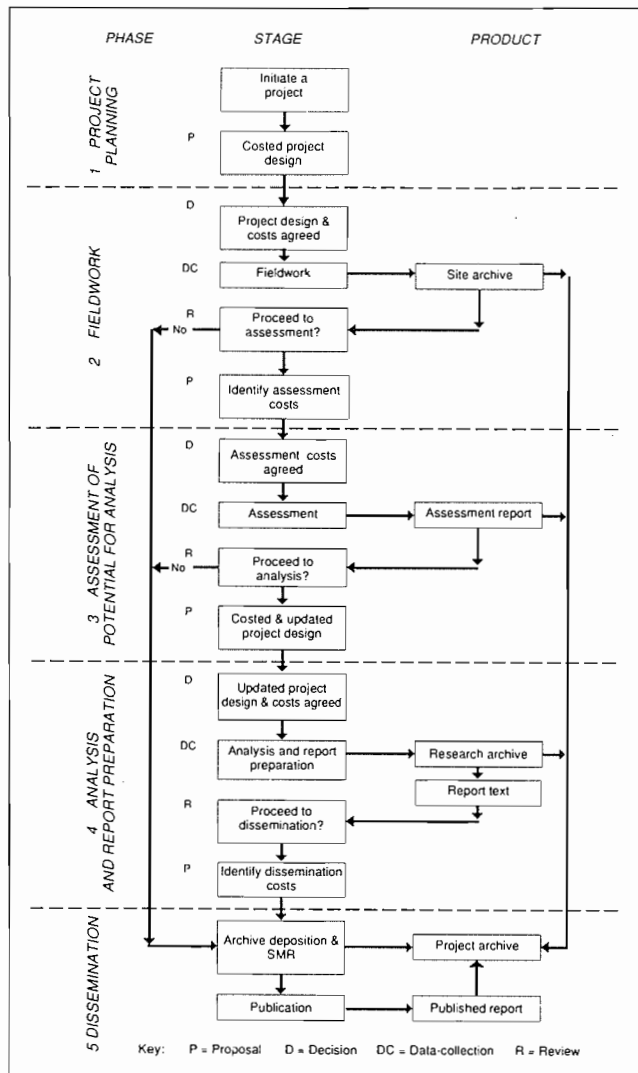


Fig. 1

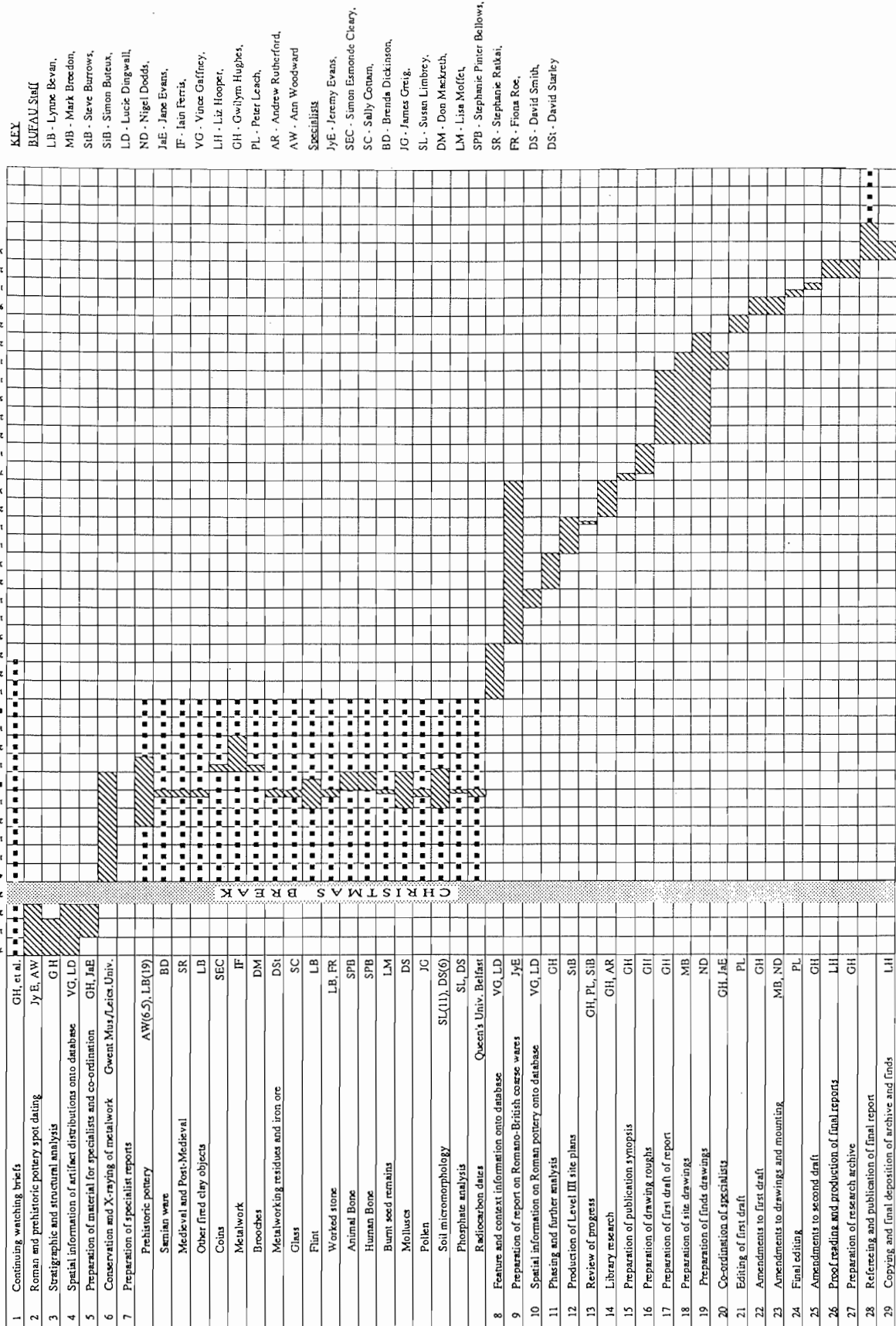
that funds are being spent correctly, that no overspend is occurring, and that agreed timetables are adhered to. The need for constant review and forward planning to adapt to changing circumstances cannot be over-emphasised.

There are a number of management techniques and technical tools available to archaeological managers to help them achieve these goals. Regular team meetings are essential and should be costed within the project. These meetings will

ensure that lines of communication are maintained, involve team members in decision-making and allow monitoring of project progress. Each project should have an adequate work plan detailing the project timetable, tasks to be carried out, the order of tasks and the timescale for each task. These work plans should take account of any change in priorities and timetabling, and should be maintained and updated regularly. The use of management aids including software which can produce Gantt charts or carry out critical path analyses are very useful for these purposes and are easily acquired (Figure 2). Real-time resource accounting should be practised. The organisation should be able to cost resources, and know, at any point in a project's timetable, what expenditure has been incurred and what it has been spent on. It is no good finding out that a project has made a loss several months after the event. Contractually, you will probably have to finish the job whether you make a profit or loss, and consistent losses might close your organisation.

If the basic principles outlined in MAP2 are followed, along with the detailed recommendations related to each project phase, projects will be well presented and justified, and characterised by consistent and professional standards. Work will be completed on time, to agreed standards, and sponsors will be satisfied. The archaeological organisation carrying out the work will also be competitive and successful. If not, projects will be characterised by incompetence and inefficiency. It should be emphasised that the net result of such a situation may not simply be a mild case of embarrassment: large organisations hiring archaeological contractors do not accept delay to projects with any degree of resignation. Behind every major company is a major legal department ready and willing to act on your mistakes. Failure to complete a contract may result in legal action, and it is not insignificant that a recent article recommended a minimum professional indemnity of 5,000,000 pounds for an archaeological contractor tendering for a major project (Colcutt 1993; Darvill and Atkins 1991). It might also be noted that one by-product of the growth of commercial archaeology in Britain is the emergence of archaeological consultants who advise clients on archaeological matters (Colcutt 1993). Consequently, failure to meet prescribed standards or the provision of inadequate archaeological advice by a contractor might result in legal action in which expert archaeological witnesses may be called to challenge archaeological decisions. There is big money in British archaeology, but there are big pitfalls for the unwary or inexperienced.

THORNWELL FARM, Chepstow,  
Post-Excavation Cascade Diagram



KEY

- BUFAU Staff
- LB - Lyne Bevan,
- MB - Mark Breckon,
- SIB - Steve Burrows,
- SIB - Simon Buteux,
- LD - Lucie Dingwall,
- ND - Nigel Dodds,
- JAE - Jane Evans,
- IF - Iain Ferris,
- VG - Vince Gaffney,
- LH - Liz Hooper,
- GH - Gwilym Hughes,
- PL - Peter Leach,
- AR - Andrew Rutherford,
- AW - Ann Woodward
- Specialists
- JYE - Jeremy Evans,
- SEC - Simon Esmonde Cleary,
- SC - Sally Centem,
- BD - Brenda Dickinson,
- JG - James Craig,
- SL - Susan Limbrey,
- DM - Don Mackreth,
- LM - Lisa Moffet,
- SPB - Stephanie Pinner Bellows,
- SR - Stephanie Raitkai,
- FR - Fiona Roe,
- DS - David Smith,
- DSI - David Starley

Fig. 2

### *Commercial Archaeology - A Panacea?*

There have been many major changes within British archaeology over the last 20 years. The move towards contract archaeology is undoubtedly one of the most important and it is still uncertain what the overall result of such a move may be. Personally, we would say that, taken overall, standards within British field archaeology are higher now than at any time. Units, or individuals who do not perform adequately or professionally will not receive contracts and will find it difficult to continue to operate.

However, there are problems (Morris 1993). Despite the increase in the overall level of funding, it is apparent that wages for archaeologists have not improved proportionally. It is also true that the profession is characterised by a high degree of uncertainty. The market is a fickle mistress and displays considerable volatility. During 1991, when c. 2,000 archaeologists were employed in Britain, the continuing development recession also led to the loss of more than 300 jobs. The loss of experience and skills represented by such redundancies is a serious problem.

There are also concerns relating to the nature of field archaeology as developed by the market. In an increasingly commercial environment there is a need for an independent arbiter of standards and an institution to act for the profession. Within Britain this role has largely been taken on by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, which was established in 1982. Other considerations include an anxiety about the general direction of field archaeology. There are clearly larger numbers of excavations being carried out now than at any previous time. However, these excavations reflect development, not research priorities, and there is a point when excavation may simply become stamp collecting, and the return in terms of extended knowledge is debatable. While the number of archaeological excavations may have increased, many are now on a very small scale, often 'evaluations' intended only to determine potential archaeological constraints on development and formulate mitigation strategies.

The market may therefore pay for archaeology, but it does so largely on its own terms. It shows little concern for research, synthesis or conservation. Who monitors these? To some extent national government has devolved this responsibility to local government. However, local government is in crisis in Britain and across Europe. It is doubtful whether the resources or even skills to carry out such monitoring currently reside at this level of government.

The market has therefore been a mixed blessing to British archaeology. It is clear that whilst extension of the funding base opens up many opportunities, the market brings its own discipline. There is, for instance, no place in the profession of the 1990s for the largely amateur attitudes that characterised pre-80s British archaeology. This prospect may be disturbing for archaeologists in other countries who are only now facing the prospect of commercialisation of archaeology, but it should not be. The creation of an archaeological market seems inevitable in most areas of Europe, especially as barriers to trade in services are eroded. Archaeologists should not be fearful of such a market, but they should be prepared for it.

### *Selected bibliography*

- ACA 1993. *Model Briefs and Specifications for Archaeological Assessments and Field Evaluations* (Association of County Archaeological Officers), London.
- BELL, M., DRUMMOND-MURRAY, J., NIXON, T. and SCHAAF, L. 1991. Review of Archaeology in Britain 1991, *The Field Archaeologist* 8, 356-362.
- CLEERE, H. 1993. British Archaeology in a wider context, In: J. HUNTER and I. RALSTON (Eds.), *Archaeological Resource Management in the UK: an Introduction*. Stroud, 115-124.
- COLLCUTT, S. 1993. The archaeologist as consultant, In: J. HUNTER and I. RALSTON (Eds.), *Archaeological Resource Management in the UK: an Introduction*. Stroud, 158-168.
- COOPER, M. 1993. Archaeology and management perspectives, *The Field Archaeologist* 8, 346-350.
- DARVILL, T., and ATKINS, M. 1991. *Regulating Archaeological Work by Contract*, Institute of Field Archaeologists Technical Paper Number 8.
- ENGLISH HERITAGE 1989. *Management of Archaeological Projects*, London.
- ENGLISH HERITAGE 1991a. *Exploring Our Past: Strategies for the Archaeology of England*, London.
- ENGLISH HERITAGE 1991b. *Management of Archaeological Projects*, London.
- HUNTER, J. and RALSTON, I. 1993. The structure of British Archaeology, in: J. HUNTER and I. RALSTON (Eds.),

## Palagruža, arheološko srce Jadrana

Timothy Kaiser in Branko Kirigin

*Archaeological Resource Management in the UK: an Introduction*. Stroud, 30-43.

IFA 1993. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*, Institute of Field Archaeologists.

IFA 1993. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments*, Institute of Field Archaeologists.

IFA 1994. *Standard Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Institute of Field Archaeologists.

RALSTON, I. and THOMAS, R. 1993. Environmental assessment and archaeology: an introduction, in: I. RALSTON and R. THOMAS (Eds.), *Environmental Assessment and Archaeology*, Institute of Field Archaeology Occasional Paper No. 5, Birmingham, 1-9.

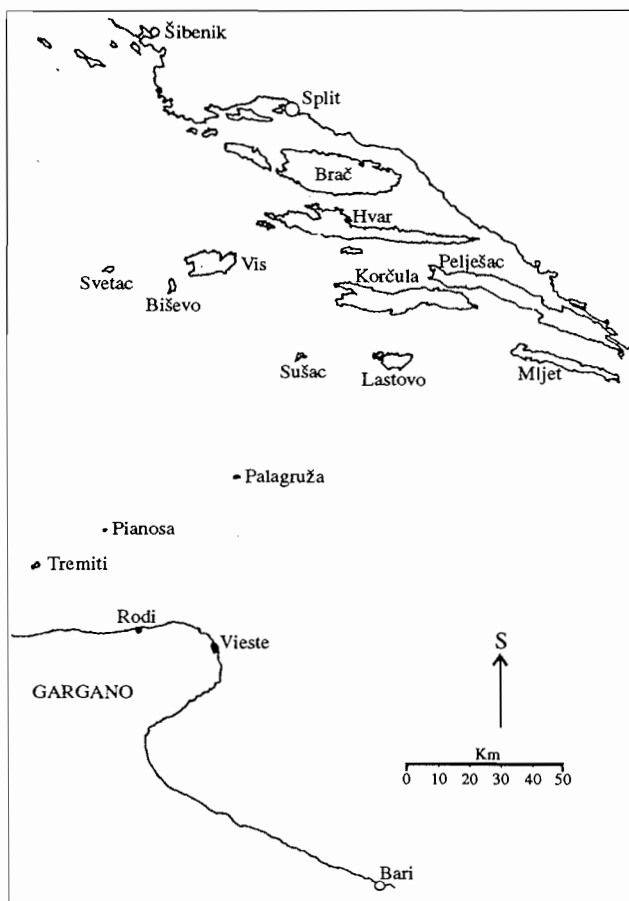
SPOERRY, P. 1992. *The structure and Funding of British Archaeology: The RESCUE Questionnaire 1990-1991*, Hertford.

SWAIN, H. 1991. *Competitive Tendering in Archaeology*, RESCUE and SCAUM, Hertford.

THOMAS, R. 1993. English Heritage funding policies and their impact on research strategy, in: J. HUNTER and I. RALSTON (Eds.), *Archaeological Resource Management in the UK: an Introduction*, Stroud, 136-148.

Ako se želi upoznati Jadran i kako je on funkcionirao u prehistoriji, antici i ranom srednjem vijeku, onda bez Palagruže kontakti između dviju Jadranskih obala uopće ne bi bili mogući ili bi ih se teško moglo razumjeti. Ova tvrdnja moguća je zahvaljujući istraživanjima koja su na Palagruži izvedena 1992. i 1993. godine a koja su izvršili stručnjaci okupljeni oko »Projekta Hvar - arheologija mediteranskog predjela«. Arheologija Hvara intenzivno je proučavana u periodu od 1982. do 1993. (Vujnović 1989, Kirigin 1993, 186-189), no da bi se ona bolje razumjela osjetila se potreba da se ispitaju i drugi srednjodalmatinski otoci. Odlučeno je da se u 1992. na jedan dan prvo posjeti najudaljeniji otok - Palagružu, što je i učinjeno 25. 8. 1992. godine.

Smještena je skoro posred Jadrana između Monte Gargana u Italiji i otoka Sušca, Lastova i Visa (Sl. 1). Naime za uobičajene vidljivosti sa Palagruže se vidi talijanska obala i



Sl. 1 Karta srednjeg Jadrana sa položajem Palagruže