

Discovery of the Extremely Well-Preserved Roman Mosaics: the Role of Protection in the Construction of “Heritage”

Eisuke Tanaka
University of Cambridge
Contact: eisuket@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper will explore how archaeological and historical significance of cultural manifestations comes to be recognised as an important resource for tourism, and in what way different agencies (e.g. nation-states, archaeologists, and the locals) articulate significance of ‘cultural property’ for claiming the control over such objects. For this purpose, it will focus on the case of Zeugma in southeast Turkey, where a huge number of extremely well-preserved Roman mosaics discovered through the salvaging excavations in 2000. The discovery of these mosaics stimulated both Turkish and international media attention, and through this the Zeugma mosaics were recognised as one of the world’s greatest mosaic collections both in size and in quality, and as one of important cultural property of Turkey. In this process, the Zeugma mosaics became the important resource for the local tourism industry, which also entailed a shift in the local attitudes towards these mosaics. This shift was indicated when the Roman mosaics of Zeugma were again featured by the Turkish (and some international) mass media in 2004.

Analysing the ways in which the Zeugma mosaics were recognized Turkey’s important cultural property, this paper will examine how different groups involved in this case, Turkish state agencies, Turkish and foreign archaeologists, and the locals, came to claim the significance of the mosaics as ‘cultural property.’ In so doing, the paper will focus on the role of the idea of protection, which was deployed by these agencies to express their attitudes towards significance of these mosaics. It will suggest that difference between articulations of cultural property by different agencies is made distinct through the idea of protecting cultural property, which was considered to be a good in itself.

Introduction:

Turkey is one of the countries where the protection of objects marked as “cultural property” attracts public attention. This is partly because there are a large number of archaeological and historical sites found in its territory. International as well as Turkish mass media frequently raise issues surrounding cultural property such as the restitution of cultural materials illegally removed from the country. Moreover, issues concerning conservation and preservation of historical and archaeological sites affected by the state development projects

have also attracted media attention recently. One notable example is the case of the rescue excavations conducted at Zeugma, an ancient city remains on the Euphrates, in 2000 because archaeologists found a number of extremely well-preserved Roman mosaics from the site. Through the discovery of these mosaics the Zeugma mosaics were recognised as one of the world's greatest mosaic collections both in size and in quality, and as one of important cultural property of Turkey. In this process, local attitudes towards the Zeugma mosaics have changed. They came to see them as an important resource for the local tourism industry, and this shift even entailed a tension between the local inhabitants and other agencies involved in the rescue excavation, such as the Turkish state and an international organisation that supported. This shift was indicated when the Roman mosaics of Zeugma were again featured by the Turkish (and some international) mass media in 2004.

This paper explores how archaeological and historical significance of cultural manifestations comes to be recognised as an important resource for tourism, and in what way different agencies (e.g. nation-states, archaeologists, and the locals) articulate significance of “cultural property” for claiming the control over such objects in this process. Analysing the ways in which the Zeugma mosaics were recognized Turkey's important cultural property, this paper examines how different groups involved in this case, Turkish state agencies, Turkish and foreign archaeologists, and the locals, came to claim the significance of the mosaics as “cultural property.” In so doing, the paper focuses on the role of the idea of protection, which was deployed by these agencies to express their attitudes towards significance of these mosaics. It will suggest that difference between articulations of cultural property by different agencies is made distinct through the idea of protecting cultural property, which was considered to be a good in itself.

Before the Discovery

Zeugma was a Hellenistic and Roman city whose remains are today found in the village of Belkıs on the Euphrates, 60 km east of Gaziantep, southeast Turkey.¹ Archaeological

¹ In the 3rd Century BC, Seleucus I Nicator, one of the commanders of Alexander the Great and the

excavations at the site started in the late 1980s, although it was already known in the early twentieth century to locals and to some Europeans who visited the region as the site where Roman mosaics and inscriptions were discovered. Some of the excavated mosaics are said to have found their way to museums in Turkey as well as Europe and the United States, and also to private collections (Kennedy 1998b: 11-13). By the 1960s, some locals discovered the monetary value of the mosaics, and are said to have been involved in clandestine excavations for the international art market (Ergeç 2000: 20). Archaeologists who began excavation at Zeugma frequently reported that many of the mosaics found in Zeugma had been damaged by such “illegal” excavations (Campbell and Ergeç 1998; Ergeç 2000: 21). Moreover, Turkish journalist Özgen Acar (2000a: 6) notes that many of the Roman mosaics in various museum catalogues, whose place of origin is described as “East Mediterranean,” or “said to be from East Turkey,” or “near Syria,” are probably excavated from Zeugma.

One notable example is the mosaic of Dionysus and Ariadne. In 1992, a local guard for Zeugma noticed a tunnel, which led to the remains of a Roman villa. Archaeologists based at the Gaziantep Museum excavated the site and uncovered a mosaic depicting the wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne (Başgelen and Ergeç 2000: 18). They decided to preserve it in situ. However, a large part of this mosaic was cut out by looters on 15 June 1998 (Acar 2000b: 7), and has been missing since then.² Archaeologist Rıfat Ergeç, who was the director of the Gaziantep Museum between 1989 and 1999, notes that the name of Zeugma became known for the first time to the locals in Gaziantep through the news coverage of the discovery of this mosaic piece (Ergeç 2005: 52). He also mentions that the villagers living near Zeugma started to visit the site showing an interest in the Dionysus and Ariadne mosaic, and also began to appropriate the motifs of the mosaic for the designs of their handicrafts (e.g. carpets) (Ergeç

founder of the Seleucid Empire, founded twin towns on the Euphrates: Seleucia on its west bank named after himself, and the other on the east bank, which was named Apamea after his queen. Since these towns were connected by a bridge over the Euphrates, Seleucia came to be known as “Zeugma” meaning “span” or “bridge.” As a junction linking Syria and Mesopotamia, Zeugma consequently gained military as well as economic importance especially under Roman domination in the 1st century. For two centuries it became one of the important military posts on the eastern border of the empire, and was also a cultural centre. However, its prosperity came to an end by the 3rd century AD. Zeugma was abandoned and disappeared from the historical record in the Middle Age. By the 18th century when European travellers came to explore the region, its exact location had been forgotten by local people (Kennedy 1998b, 11-13).

² The remaining part of the mosaic is currently exhibited in the Gaziantep Museum.

2000: 52). However, it is not until in 2000 that Zeugma became well-known for its Roman mosaics internationally as well as nationally.

Salvaging Extremely Well-preserved Roman Mosaics:

Since the 1960s a number of archaeological and historical sites in Turkey have been submerged because of dam constructions and many more will soon be underwater. Most affected are the country's southeastern regions, where a number of dams have been constructed on the basins of the Tigris and the Euphrates as part of the state's regional development project.³ Archaeological projects to record the archaeological remains which would be inundated by the dam water have also been conducted (e.g. the "Keban Project").⁴ However, from the end of the 1990s especially, dam constructions in relation to the protection and conservation of archaeological and historic sites attracted much public attention (Siiler 2000:3). In 2000, international as well as the Turkish mass media highlighted issues involving the rescue excavations at Zeugma.

The rescue excavation at Zeugma was intensely featured by the various Turkish national and local newspapers (Hürriyet, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Radikal et al) after the construction of the Birecik Dam was completed in April 2000. Using many coloured photographs of the finds, notably of the Roman mosaics, these newspapers reported developments of the excavation at the site, and emphasised the significance of the uncovered objects through the excavation (see Figure 1). In such intense Turkish media coverage, the discovery of well-preserved Roman mosaics was described 'as if historical objects were gushing out from Zeugma as they dig the soil (*Toprağa dokundukça Zeugma'dan tarih eser fışkırıyor*

³ The project is named "Southeastern Anatolia Project (*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*)" (Southeast Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration 31 March, 2006). The GAP started in the late 1970s, aiming for regional development of the southeastern part of Turkey through large-scale irrigation scheme as well as hydro electronic power production through constructing a number of dams in the basins of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers.

⁴ In his article on Archaeology in Turkey in the *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Encyclopaedia of Turkey during the Republican Period), Güven Arsebük wrote that the Keban Project was a rescue excavation project for archaeological sites found in the regions which were to be submerged through the construction of the Keban Dam on the Euphrates basin in eastern Turkey. The project was carried out at more than 20 sites by Turkish and foreign archaeologists from the mid-1960s, and continued for a decade.

adeta)' (Hürriyet, 2000b).⁵ In addition, Turkish media coverage indicates that various public figures in the country from politicians including who was the Prime Minister of the country at that time) to popular fashion models started show their attention to Zeugma especially after June, when the site started being submerged under water, and some of these people actually visited the site.

What is intriguing here is that intense Turkish press coverage on the salvaging excavation at Zeugma seemed to be stimulated further by the foreign press such as the Economist and the New York Times newspapers. The article entitled “Watery Grave” that appeared in The Economist on 27th April, 2000 is the earliest example of the foreign media coverage that reported the rescue excavation at Zeugma (The Economist, 2000: 109-110). Also, an article about the rescue excavation appeared in the first page of the New York Times newspaper in May 2000 (Kinzer, 2000). They describe the situation of Zeugma as destruction of “heritage of humanity” in the sense that despite the discovery of the extremely well-preserved Roman mosaics the site would be inundated soon without enough salvaging works.

Turkish newspaper actually referred to such foreign press coverage. For example, an article that appeared in Hürriyet, a Turkish national newspaper, writes that ‘describing Zeugma as a 2nd Pompeii, the New York Times, one of influential newspapers in the United States, reported in its first page that the site will be flooded soon’ (Hürriyet, 2000a). Moreover, some of Turkish archaeologists and journalists referred to the foreign press coverage in order to emphasise that the situation of Zeugma was the “destruction” or “erasure” of cultural property, which was caused by Turkish “indifference” to the protection of such objects found in the country. Turkish journalist Özgen Acar (2000b: 8) writes ironically that the articles that appeared in the Euro-American media ‘shook the world first, and strangely then Turkish media, intellectuals, the Ministry of Culture, and politicians as if a big earthquake’ (Acar, ibid: 8).

The international media coverage over the issues concerning Zeugma attracted further financial support for the excavation project from outside Turkey. The Packard Humanities

⁵ Similar expressions are also found in the titles of the articles in the several Turkish national newspapers such as “History Is Gushing Out From Everywhere (*Tarih Her Yerden Fışkırıyor*)” and “Treasure Is Overflowing From a City That Is Being Flooded (*Boğulan Şehirden Hazine Fışkırıyor*)” (Şahin, 2000 and Milliyet, 2000).

Institute (PHI) in the United States proposed financial support for the salvage excavation at Zeugma, and an agreement was consequently made between PHI and the Turkish state in 7th June 2000 (Başgelen and Ergeç, 2000: 46). PHI funded 5,000,000 US dollars for a three-month archaeological rescue operation from July to the beginning of October 2000. PHI also agreed to support post-excavation works, such as construction of the laboratory for conservation works of the finds. 120 specialists from Turkey, Britain, France, and Italy were involved in this project, which was directed by the Ministry of Culture in coordination with the Turkish state.⁶

In this process, the mosaics discovered at Zeugma were recognised as one of the world's greatest mosaic collections both in size and in quality, and as one of important cultural property of Turkey, which also led to change the local attitudes towards Zeugma. As a result, declaring that the Turkish State 'assigns special importance to the protection, conservation, tourism, related promotion of the cultural heritage of the region' (Southeast Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration, 2006), the GAP administration now presents the conservation works at Zeugma and the finds from the site as one of the cases that exemplify this policy on "cultural sustainability," by which it means 'the transfer of cultural heritage to future generations' (Southeast Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration, 1999).⁷

Moreover, highlighting the significance of the site as national "heritage," the local government in Gaziantep exploits images of the excavated objects as one of the symbols of the city,⁸ through which the mosaics became an important resource for the local tourism industry. Archaeologist Rıfat Ergeç, who excavated in Zeugma as the director of the Gaziantep Museum (between 1989 and 1999), told me about the proliferation of the images of the Zeugma mosaics,

⁶ According to Rob Early from Oxford Archaeology Unit, a UK-based private agency that undertakes archaeological heritage management, PHI made a contract with Oxford Archaeology Unit in order to coordinate excavation works and undertook post-excavation works until 2003 (the interview with Early was conducted in April 2005). PHI also sent a team led by Roberto Nardi from the Centro di Conservazione Archeologica (CCM) from Rome to carry out conservation works for the excavated mosaics and frescos.

⁷ In 1999, the GAP administration declared to adopt the idea of sustainable development in its master plan for the GAP. It referred to restoration, conservation, salvation, and documentation of cultural property as part of its framework of sustainable development. "Cultural sustainability" seems to be articulated in this context (Southeast Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration, 1999).

⁸ A similar situation is reported in the case of Çatalhöyük a prehistoric city remains near Konya, central Turkey (Bartu, 2000: 105; Hodder, 1998: 129). Ayfer Bartu (2000: 105) notes that the image of a figurine of a naked woman which was found from Çatalhöyük, was used in the front page of the nearest local town's promotion brochures.

pointing out that only the mosaics had become important in Gaziantep after the year 2000:

“Zeugma is not the only important archaeological site in the region of Gaziantep. Moreover, as a city on the border of Anatolia and Syria, significance of the site does not only come from the mosaics discovered. However, it is understood as if Gaziantep was only identified with the mosaics. [...] Now you can see images of the “Gypsy Girl” mosaic everywhere in Gaziantep.”⁹

Making a similar point in his article written for a local business magazine, he also notes that “Zeugma” is sometimes used as a synonym for the Roman mosaics discovered from the site (Ergeç, 2005: 53). In fact, images of the mosaics are even found in the central reserve of the street in the city centre of Gaziantep (see Figure 2). In such a situation, questions like who controls the mosaics, where and how they should be protected, and by whom, have become focal points in the discourse of protecting Zeugma mosaics. This shift is indicated when the Roman mosaics of Zeugma were again featured by the Turkish (and some international) mass media in 2004.

Movable or Immovable Cultural Property?

In the spring of 2004, the Turkish state planned a temporary exhibition of the Zeugma mosaics at the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul from June, when the NATO summit was to be held in the city. The aim was to exhibit them to a wider public, especially to the foreigners attending the summit. However, this plan faced strong oppositions of the locals in Gaziantep. A group of local organisations and some individuals in Gaziantep, which included those who were from local tourism industry, formed a group which they named Gaziantep Zeugma Platform (GZP).¹⁰ They articulated its aim as to protect culture (*kültüre sahip çıkmak*), by which they meant to cultural objects (*kültür eserleri*) found in the Gaziantep province as well as Zeugma; to support further excavations at Zeugma; to construct a new building for Gaziantep Museum to exhibit the Zeugma mosaics (Gaziantep Anadolu Ajansı, 2004a). They criticised the Turkish state and PHI,

⁹ I interviewed with him in September 2005.

¹⁰ Gaziantep Zeugma Platformu originally consisted of 23 local organisations such as Gaziantep Artisans Associations Union, Gaziantep Lawyers Association, Friends of Gaziantep Museum, Gaziantep Tourism Association, Architects Society Gaziantep Office, but the number of participating organisations increased later (see Gaziantep Anadolu Ajansı, 2004a).

which had supported conservation works for the excavated Zeugma mosaics since 2000. This controversy even went into litigation, and ended up the cancellation of the exhibition.

The focus of dispute over the exhibition plan in Istanbul was whether the mosaic pieces would be damaged through their transfer between Gaziantep and Istanbul. The GZP declared that its main objective was to protect the mosaics from damages, making a slogan saying that “We will claim ownership of culture (*Kültüre sahip çıkacağız*),” by which they meant that the mosaics retrieved from Zeugma should be kept and protected in Gaziantep. Moreover, its claim against the exhibition in Istanbul was also made in relation to who should protect the mosaics and where they should be protected. The GZP claimed that the Zeugma mosaics should be exhibited at a museum in the city, not anywhere else, although it acknowledged the importance of advertising Gaziantep to the wider public through them (NTV, 2004), implying that the Zeugma mosaics is a important resource for the local tourism industry.

What is intriguing here is that such local claims to protect Zeugma mosaics relied on Law No.2863 on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Property (*Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu* No. 2863, the 2863 law), the current Turkish cultural property law which declares state ownership of cultural property found in Turkey.¹¹ In particular, the GZP referred to the articles of the 2863 law, which defines mosaics as immovable cultural property (*taşınmaz kültür varlıkları*) and the way in which such immovable cultural property should be protected (NTV, 2004). Based on the state legislation, the GZP criticised the Turkish state and the way in which it control the mosaics, and argued that the exhibition was illegal (NTV, *ibid*). Given that things categorised as “cultural property” are state property according to the 2863 law, this also means that the locals acknowledged the state’s superordinate ownership of the mosaics by invoking its status as “immovable cultural property,” and transferring the mosaics was a violation of the state law by the Turkish state itself. With this logic, the locals in Gaziantep criticised what they saw as the state’s mishandling of the mosaics. The locals in Gaziantep, who opposed to the state’s exhibition plan, were not simply concerned about physical damages that the mosaics might have through the transfer between Gaziantep and Istanbul, but also what was

¹¹ In fact, the theme of state ownership of cultural discovered within the state territory that has been the leitmotif of the legislation on things defined as cultural property from Ottoman times to the present ().

essential for these people was not to remove the mosaics from Gaziantep.

By contrast, the Turkish state those involved in planning the exhibition in Istanbul emphasized that the mosaics from Zeugma are recognized as one of the best-preserved Roman mosaic collections in the world. They claimed that the mosaics were “movable,” putting a stress on the safety of their transfer. This claim was made first and foremost to emphasise a point that the mosaics were recognised as one of the “world-class” Roman mosaic collections and thus should be accessible to the wider public. Criticising the locals’ lawsuit as a mistake, Erkan Mumcu, the Minister of Culture and Tourism at that time, said ‘Zeugma is a heritage of humanity (*bir insanlık mirasıdır*),’ and ‘it must not be made to belong to one province (*taşralılaştırılmamalıdır*)’ (Radikal, 2004). Moreover, when the court concluded the litigation over the exhibition plan in Istanbul but the plan had to be cancelled due to the limit of time, Mumcu also commented that ‘if the Zeugma mosaics could have been taken to Istanbul, 7,000 foreigners, who would visited Istanbul for the NATO summit, would have been able to seen them’ (Gaziantep Anadolu Ajansı, 2004b). Thus, the Turkish state claimed to its right to handle the mosaics through emphasising these mosaics as “world heritage” of sorts, which belong to the much wider public, not simply to a local community (Gaziantep). This also suggests that emphasising aspect of “world heritage,” the Turkish state also saw the mosaics as a resource for tourism industry, but in a different way from that of the locals in Gaziantep.

On the other hand, in responding to the GZP accusation against PHI, PHI issued “an Open Letter to the People of Gaziantep” in national Turkish newspapers in early April 2004 (Packard Humanity Institute, 2004).¹² It was written in the name of David Packard, the director of PHI, and ‘to correct certain inaccurate public statements made by the GZP’ (Packard, 2004). In the first place, the letter attempts to justify and defend what PHI and conservators’ sent by PHI had done. Contrasting the situation of the Zeugma mosaics at Gazantep Museum in June 2000, which was described as ‘totally inadequate,’ with the conservation works by PHI team, it attempted to emphasise that they had ‘devoted the past three years to helping Zeugma’ (Packard, *ibid*).

¹² The English version of this statement was available online at <http://www.packhum.org/phi/letter.html> (Accessed on 15 March, 2007).

Moreover, saying that ‘if PHI had believed that there was any chance that the Zeugma mosaics would not return to Zeugma, PHI would never have offered to sponsor this Istanbul exhibit’ (Packard, *ibid*), the letter emphasises that PHI had no intention to bring the Zeugma mosaic outside Gaziantep and never to return them. However on the other hand, the letter also made a point that ‘the question of a permanent home for the Zeugma mosaics, however, has nothing to do with the merits of a temporary exhibit in Istanbul’ (*ibid*). Thus, PHI saw the exhibition in Istanbul as an opportunity to let the mosaics of Zeugma known to the wider public, saying that ‘showing mosaics to NATO leaders has never been a motivation for PHI,’ but ‘a NATO visit could generate international news coverage, which could stimulate future tourism to Zeugma’ (*ibid*). Arguably, this letter was written because the GZP doubted the return of the mosaics after the exhibition outside Gaziantep. PHI emphasised that the mosaics should be exhibited where they were found, and that the exhibition was planned mainly by the Turkish state authorities.¹³ Through this, it distanced its standpoint from the Turkish state. In so doing, it also made a point that did not claim the right to control the Zeugma mosaics.

Ownership, Protection, and Cultural Property as a Resource for Tourism

Recent anthropological discussions on ownership of cultural property (e.g. Handler, 1988; Brown, 2003 and 2004) have suggested that the notion of cultural property is mobilised in the discourse about protecting manifestations of a “culture,” which works to reify the culture as if it was a thing to be owned. This entails to designate a certain group as the owner of such materialised cultural objects. It is worth noting significance of cultural manifestations is articulated through evoking the necessity of their protection such as conservation and restoration of historic sites, monuments and artefacts, preservation of cultural landscapes, and safeguarding “traditional” practices (like rituals and music) and “indigenous” knowledge. In this context, protection, that is the bid to save cultural property from destruction, becomes one of the focal points in the discourses of cultural resource management and other cultural property

¹³ Asked comments about this controversy by Aljazeera, Richard Hodges, archaeologist who worked as a coordinator of the excavations at Zeugma from PHI, answered that Packard “reluctantly” agreed with the exhibition plan at Istanbul. (See Gorvett, 31 May, 2004).

related phenomena like illicit trade of antiquities (e.g. Carman, 2002; Daifuku, 1968; Renfrew, 2000 and Tubb, 1995).

However, the idea of protection does not simply mean safeguarding cultural property from destruction, but it is also used to denote protecting the owner's right to control cultural property in the sense that what is often at stake in the cultural property debates is where and by whom such objects should be protected; and who can decide where such objects are protected. Nation-states exert ownership of historical and archaeological remains, and formulate laws and regulations that define the state role in protecting these objects found within the territory. This often entails nation-states' claims for the restitution of cultural objects "illegally" removed from their country of origin (e.g. the Parthenon Marbles debates).

On the other hand, threats to destruction of cultural property (such as maintenance deficiency through the lack of financial and human resources of a state, state development projects, armed conflicts and political changes) are often recognised as beyond the scope of nation-states' internal regulations. In such contexts, the necessity of international regulations for cultural property is claimed for example by UNESCO (Magness-Gardiner, 2004: 27). Also, some of international non-governmental organisations alert about the risk of destruction of cultural property. For example, since 2000, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)¹⁴ has published reports on historical monuments and sites in danger of destruction (see e.g. ICOMOS, 2004). Sometimes, this also entails criticising certain nation-states' policies claiming that they would cause the destruction of such objects.

This suggests that political and symbolic significance of cultural property is not simply defined in relation to the issues surrounding national and ethnic identities. Examining the discourse of scientific knowledge, Marilyn Strathern (2004) points out that the debates over cultural property echo Euro-American conceptions of property and the commons: cultural manifestations are considered to belong to two collective or communal entities "near" and "far," i.e. "heritage" of a particular community and "world heritage." While as "world heritage" cultural manifestations are accessible to the much wider community (the community far) as

¹⁴ ICOMOS defines itself as 'an international non-governmental organization of professionals, dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites' (ICOMOS, 2006).

‘non-exclusive, distributable resource,’ the community near restricts the use or more precisely commodification of cultural property as “their” own resource (Strathern, *ibid*: 92). Since “cultural property” is implicated in general in the constitution of a nation or an ethnic group, in the case of Zeugma mosaics, the Turkish nation-state appears to stand as a particular community to which cultural property belongs, as opposed to the wider community i.e. “mankind” to which “world heritage” belongs. In fact, this is also legally authorised (the 2863 law). However, the materials presented above suggest that this framework does not work straightforwardly.

When the rescue excavation at Zeugma was at issue during the year 2000, international and Turkish media coverage indicates that the language of protection is mobilised to address issues concerning safeguarding the discovered mosaics from destruction, and that the issues on the control of the mosaics was not the focal point of the controversy. However, in the dispute over the exhibition plan in 2004, different groups appeared in the media coverage (i.e. the locals in Gaziantep, the Turkish state, and the PHI) used the idea of protection in relation to claiming to the control of the Zeugma mosaics. In this context, these people deployed two distinct interpretations of the idea of the mosaics as cultural property in order to articulate their views on where and by whom the mosaics should be protected: the mosaics as heritage of the community of Gaziantep and as the “common heritage” of humanity.

The locals in Gaziantep, who opposed to the exhibition plan, used the idea of the community near, through which they made their claim to keep the mosaics in Gaziantep. The GZP opposed to the exhibition plan by emphasising a link between the mosaics and the community of Gaziantep as their place of origin. Moreover, their claim was based on the state’s legal framework on cultural property that categorises the mosaics as “immovable.” Being “immovable cultural property,” the mosaics are “naturally” linked with Gaziantep as their place of origin, through which they are claimed to belong to the community of Gaziantep. However, what is intriguing is that this state legislation also defines the state, not the community of Gaziantep, as the legitimate right holder to protect cultural property. In this sense, relying on the state law, these locals paradoxically produced their own standpoint to claim the control of the mosaics based on a close link between the object and their place of origin.

On the other hand, those planned the exhibition stressed the point that the Zeugma mosaics belong to the community far in the sense that they are recognised as one of the best preserved Roman mosaic collections found in the world. In responding to the locals' claim to protect the mosaics, both the Turkish state and the PHI argued the importance of making the mosaics accessible to the wider public through the exhibition in Istanbul. In this context, the category of the mosaics as "movable" cultural property became an important basis for their arguments.

However, it is also important to note that the Turkish state and the PHI did not seem to share the same interests in exhibition in Istanbul. As PHI attempted to distance itself from the issue of ownership claim, it emphasised the Zeugma mosaics as "world heritage" implying that as a non-exclusive, distributable resource, they belong to "mankind" (see Strathern, 2004). For the Turkish state, given that the state is legally authorised owner of cultural property in Turkey, exhibition of the mosaics in Istanbul through highlighting the significance of the mosaics as "world heritage" meant to exercise their right to control the mosaics, arguing that the mosaics did not only belong to a particular local community. The idea of "world heritage" was deployed to establish the state's right to control them, rather than to make a claim that the mosaics should be accessible to all.

Assuming that the Zeugma mosaics should be protected carefully, all the groups involved in the dispute over the exhibition plan (i.e. the locals in Gaziantep, the Turkish state, and the PHI) also regarded these Roman mosaics as an important resource for tourism in the sense that they are available for the benefit of the public. However, their claims also differed in the ways how they saw the mosaics in relation to tourism, which were also connected to their claims for protecting the mosaics. Categorising the Zeugma mosaics as "immovable" cultural property, the locals in Gaziantep argued that the mosaics should only be protected and exhibited to the public in Gaziantep as their place of origin. Emphasis on the close link between the mosaics and Gaziantep as their place of origin was thus mobilised to justify the locals' standpoint to control over these mosaics. Though this, the locals in Gaziantep also made their claim to utilise them as a resource for the local tourism industry. By contrast, the statement

made by Turkish Cultural Minister suggests that the Turkish state saw the Zeugma mosaics as Turkey's important resource for tourism, rather than as that of Gaziantep. This was connected to the Turkish state's claim of the mosaics as "movable" cultural property, which was used to destabilise the close link between the mosaics and Gaziantep, which the locals in Gaziantep attempted to establish. On the other hand, claiming aspect of the mosaics as "heritage of humanity" as something belong to the public domain, its approach to exploit the Zeugma mosaics for tourism was also distinguished from the other two. Thus, while the idea of protection emerges as an assumption of the claims for control over the Zeugma mosaics, it also worked to differentiate these claims. This entailed to affect these groups' approach towards the mosaics as a source for tourism.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to show how the language of protecting cultural property worked to frame debates over the control of archaeological objects marked as "cultural property," mobilising groups of people across different levels (i.e. local, national, and international) and shaping their approaches towards such objects in relation to tourism. The discovery of the Zeugma mosaics in 2000 attracted much media attention both national and international, through which these mosaics also became widely known as one of the finest Roman mosaic collections and thus recognised as "cultural property" that can be utilised for tourism industry. This is indicated in the language of protecting the mosaics. While the controversy over rescue excavation at Zeugma concentrated on the preservation of the discovered mosaics from their physical destruction, issues concerning the control over these mosaics became the focal point of the dispute over the exhibition plan in 2004.

This suggests that the ways in which the groups involved in the dispute were not only opposed but also differentiated through the notion of protection, which also reflects a political relationship between local/regional communities and the Turkish state in dealing with the items of cultural property. In this particular case, the objects in question were present in their place of origin (Gaziantep) from the time when their significance as "heritage" came to be recognised

internationally as well as nationally. For the local community of Gaziantep, the state's ownership claim for the mosaics (the exhibition in Istanbul) did not simply mean to take them away from Gaziantep, but also affected negatively its recently constructed relationship with the mosaics as the symbol of the city. It is in this context that the idea of place origin was called into play as a signifier of local interests to redefine the notion of protection.

Claims for the protection of the Zeugma mosaics were articulated in terms of two seemingly opposing categories: "heritage of a particular community," and "heritage of humanity." However, the materials shown above suggest that those who claimed the protection of the Zeugma mosaics mobilised both of these two categories in order to justify their claims. In fact, they used these two approaches at the same time, the relationship between "heritage of a particular community" and "heritage of humanity" appears to be more intricate, not simply opposing but actually entwined.

Moreover, those who involved in the issues surrounding protecting the Zeugma mosaics commonly sought for a more "appropriate" way of protecting cultural property, through which the notion of protection 'acquires a taken-for-granted status' (Strathern, 1995b: 154). In this context, the protection of cultural property is regarded as a good in itself. The idea of protection is not simply part of control over things marked as "cultural property" but an assumption of dealing with such objects, which frames the arguments made by the groups involved in the issues surrounding handling such objects. As an assumption, the idea of protection becomes transcendent across different claims for controlling the Zeugma mosaics. From this point of view, discrepancy between claims made by the locals in Gaziantep, the Turkish state, and the PHI is made explicit through difference between the ideas these groups deployed to justify what they regarded as an "appropriate" way of protection, such as category of the mosaics, the idea of place of origin, and legal ownership right of control.

Figure 1: “Gypsy Girl,” one of the mosaics discovered through the rescue excavation at Zeugma
(Photo by E. Tanaka).



Figure 2: Images of the Zeugma mosaics found in the central reserve of the main street in Gaziantep (Photo by E. Tanaka).



Bibliography

- Acar Ö. 2000a. Mosaics and Heads of Statues Plundered from Zeugma. *Culture without Context* 7: 5-8.
- . 2000b. Yıllardır Devam Eden Zeugma Trajedisi. *Arkeoloji ve Sanat* 98: 6-9.
- Arsebük, G. 1983. Keban Baraj Gölü Bölgesinde Yapılan Arkeolojik Çalışmalar. In *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*. (ed.) Z, Türkkkan. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Bartu, A. 2000. Where is Çatalhöyük?: Multiple Sites in the Construction of an Archaeological Sites. In *Towards Reflexive Method in Archaeology: the Example at Çatalhöyük* (ed.) I. Hodder. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.
- Başgelen, N. & Ergeç, R. (eds) 2000. *Belkıs/Zeugma, Halfeti, Runkale: A Last Look at Histroy*. İstanbul: Archaeology and Art Publications.
- Blake, J. 1994. The Protection of Turkey's Underwater Archaeological Heritage: Legislative and Other Approaches. *International Journal of Cultural Property* 2: 273-293.
- Bray, T. L. 1996. Repatriation, Power Relations, and the Politics of the Past. *Antiquity* 70, 440-444.
- Brown, M. 2003. *Who Owns Native Culture?* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- . 2004. Heritage as Property. In *Property in Question: Value Transformation in the Global Economy*. (eds.) K, Verdery, & C, Humphrey. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Campbell, S. & Ergeç R. 1998. New Mosaics. In *The Twin Town of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*. (ed.) D, Kennedy. Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement 27: 109-127.
- Carman, J. 2002. *Archaeology and Heritage: An Introduction*. London and New York: Continuum.
- Daifuku, H. 1968. The Significance of Cultural Property. In *The Conservation of Cultural Property: With Special Reference to Tropical Conditions*. (ed) UNESCO. Paris: UNESCO.
- Ergeç R. 2000. "Bekis/Zeugma 1992-1999/2000": Çalışmalar, Araştırmalar ve Kazılar. *Arkeoloji ve Sanat* 98: 20-29.
- . 2005. Zeugma Gerçeği ve Gaziantep'te Çağdaş Müzecilik. *Genç Çizgi* 16: 52-54.
- Handler, R. 1988. *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Hirsh, E and Strahern, M. 2004. Transactions and Creations: Property Debates and the Stimulus of Melanesia. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Hodder, I. 1998. The Past as Passion and Play: Çatalhöyük as a Site of Conflict in the Construction of Multiple Pasts. In *Archaeology under Fire: Nationalism, politics and heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East* (ed.) L. Meskell. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2000. *Towards Reflexive Method in Archaeology: the Example at Çatalhöyük*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research; London : British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara.

- Hürriyet. 2000a. İkinci Pompei ABD Basınında. 12 May, p.4.
- . 2000b. Sezer Devrede Zeugma'ya Ek Süre. 5 June, p.6.
- Kennedy, D. 1998a. *The Twin Town of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*. Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement 27.
- . 1998b. Zeugma, the South-East Anatolia Development Project, and Fieldwork on the Turkish Lower Euphrates. In *The Twin Town of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*. (ed.) D, Kennedy. Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement 27: 11-18.
- Kinzer, S. 2000. Dam in Turkey May Soon Flood A '2nd Pompeii' *New York Times* 7 May, p. 1
- Lowenthal, D. 1997. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Magness-Gardiner, B. 2004. International Conventions and Cultural Heritage Protection. In *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and Consumption of the Past*. (eds) Y. Rowan and U. Baram. Walnut Creek: Artamira.
- Milliyet. 2000. Boğulan Şehirden Hazine Fışkırıyor. 14 May, p. 4.
- Özsunay, E. 1997. Protection of Cultural Heritage in Turkish Private Law. *International Journal of Cultural Property* 6: 278-290.
- Redhouse. 1997. REDHOUSE Büyük Elsözlüğü: İngilizce-Türkçe, Türkçe-İngilizce. İstanbul: Redhouse Yayınevi.
- Renfrew, C. 2000. *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership* (Duckworth Debates in Archaeology. London: Duckworth.
- Rowan, Y. & Baram, U. 2004. *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and Consumption of the Past*. Walnut Creek: Artamira.
- Siiler, O. 2000. Giriş In *Zeugma Yalnız Değil: Türkiye'de Barajılar ve Kültürel Miras*. (ed.) Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı.
- Strathern, M. Strathern, M. (ed) 1995a. *Shifting Contexts: Transformations in Anthropological Knowledge*. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 1995b. The Nice Thing about Culture Is That Everyone Has It. In *Shifting Contexts: Transformations in Anthropological Knowledge* (ed) M, Strathern. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2004. Transactions: an Analytical Foray. In *Transactions and Creations: Property Debates and the Stimulus of Melanesia*. (eds) E. Hirsch and M. Strathern, Oxford: Berghahn.
- Şahin, B. 2000. Tarih Her Yerden Fışkırıyor. *Cumhuriyet* 16 May, p. 9.
- The Economist. 2000. Watery Graves. 29 April, 355(8168): 109-110.
- Tubb, K. W. (ed) 1995. *Antiquities Trade or Betrayed: Legal, Ethical, and Conservation Issues*. London: ArcheType Publications.
- Türkkan, Z. 1983. *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- UNESCO. 1968. *The Conservation of Cultural Property: With Special Reference to Tropical Conditions*. (ed) UNESCO. Paris: UNESCO.
- Verdery, K. & Humphrey, C. (eds.) 2004. *Property in Question: Value Transformation in the Global Economy*. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Law:

No. 2863 Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu (the Law No.2863 on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Property) 21 July, 1983.

Online Sources:

- Gaziantep Anadolu Ajansı.2004a. Zeugma Platformu: Kültüre Sahip Çıkacağız. *NTVMSNBC.com* 16, March. Available online: <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/261474.asp> (Accessed on 19 March, 2007).
- . 2004b. Zeugma’da Tedirgilik Başladı. *NTVMSNBC.com*. 24, May. Available online: <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/271265.asp> (Accessed on 23 April, 2006).
- Gorvett, J. 2004. Clashes over Treasures of Zeugma. *Aljazeera*. 31 May. <http://english.aljazeera.net/English/archive/archive?ArchiveId=3996> (accessed 12 March 2007).
- ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites). 2006. *International Council on Monuments and Sites*. Available online: <http://www.icomos.org/> (Accessed on 24 January, 2006)
- . 2004. *ICOMOS World Report 2004/2005 on Monuments and Sites in Danger*. Available online: <http://www.international.icomos.org/risk/2004/index.html> (Accessed on 26 January, 2006)
- NTV. 2004. Zeugma Platformu’ndan Açıklama! *NTVMSNBC.com* 17, March. Available online: <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/262013.asp> (Accessed on 2 April, 2005)
- Packard, D. 9 April, 2004. An Open Letter to the People of Gaziantep. Possible Protext Campaign. Available online: <http://www.packhum.org/letter.html> (Accessed on 5 April, 2005)
- Packard Humanity Institute. 2004. Zeugma Press Information. Zeugma Press Information. Available online: <http://www.packhum.org/zeugma-info.html> (Accessed on 5 April, 2005)
- Radikal. 2004a. Belkıs Kavgası. *Radikal-çevrimçi*. 10 April. Available online: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=112814&tarih=10/04/2004> (Accessed on 12 April, 2005).
- Southeast Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration. 1999. GAP Regional Development Administration in Its Tenth Year. Press Release. T.C. Başbakanlık GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı. 6 November Available online: <http://www.gap.gov.tr/English/Basinbil/Bbil1999/bb153.html> (Accessed on 24 January, 2006).
- . 2006a. Background of Southeastern Anatolia Project. T.C. Başbakanlık GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı. 31 March. Available online: <http://www.gap.gov.tr/English/Ggbilgi/gtarihce.html> (accessed 12 March 2007).

- . 2006b. Belkıs-Zeugma: The Importance of Cultural Heritage in Southeastern Anatolia Project, Activities of the GAP Administration and the Antic City of Zeugma. T.C. Başbakanlık GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı. 28 December. Available online: http://www.gap.gov.tr/gap_eng.php?sayfa=English/zeugma.html (Accessed on 24 May, 2006).