

Dynamics and dilemmas in the sustainable development of Sukur World Heritage Cultural Landscape (Nigeria)

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ABSTRACT: If environment, economics, society and culture are the four dimensions of sustainable development, then heritage must represent an integration of the historical aspects of these four dimensions that is dynamically active in the formation of the present and future. Sukur, a place, a dwelling, a society and a culture located in the Mandara mountains of north-eastern Nigeria, was inscribed as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape in 1999 precisely on the grounds that its landscape – also an integration of environment, economics, society and culture – is both the product and means of achieving an adaptation that has been demonstrably sustainable. The question raised by this paper is whether Sukur's heritage, and in particular cultural heritage, can remain sustainable in the face of new challenges, many directly associated with responses to its World Heritage status. Some are generated internally; others are external in nature.

1 INTRODUCTION

The question raised by this paper is whether Sukur's heritage, and in particular cultural heritage, can remain sustainable in the face of new challenges, many directly associated with responses to its World Heritage status. Some are generated internally; others are external in nature. In order to answer this question I relate the story of the nomination and eventual citation of Sukur as Nigeria's first World Heritage Site and Africa's first Cultural Landscape. The latter category was granted because Sukur was deemed to be 'an exceptional landscape ... that marks a critical stage in human settlement and its relationship with its environment' that has 'survived unchanged for many centuries' with 'a strong and continuing spiritual and cultural tradition' (Sukur Cultural Landscape, excerpts from Criteria iii, v, & vi). This leads to a further question: are heritage and sustainability compatible?

1.1 *Historical background*

In many respects the Sukur are like numerous other ethnic groups of the Mandara mountains of northeastern Nigeria and northern Cameroon. They have the same social and cultural building blocks – including a language of the Chadic family, a chief and several clans, a cycle of ceremonies, and a sustainable economy that has transformed their rocky environment by the terracing of slopes on which they cultivate a wide range of crops, as well as raising livestock and poultry. However, unlike other Mandara montagnards Sukur has a reputation that had already extended beyond its narrow borders by the 19th century and probably before.

The German explorer Heinrich Barth who travelled through the region in 1851 was the first European to write about Sukur as 'a powerful and entirely independent pagan chief in the mountains south from Mándará' (1965 II: 100 [1857-59]). Kurt F. Strümpell, Resident of the Adamaua administrative area of German Kamerun, was the first European to visit Sukur, some-

time between 1906 and 1908. He accurately described the now famous paved ways, as well as the house of the chief. After World War I with Sukur part of the League of Nations territories mandated to the British, C.K. Meek, Government Anthropologist, interviewed its chief at a settlement on the plain circa 1927. Meek comments that the chief of Sukur was regarded 'as a person of outstanding spiritual importance. It may be possible in the future to extend the administrative authority of the chief of Sukur on these grounds' (Meek 1931 I: 253). Two items in Meek's sketch caught the imagination of colonial administrators: the sacred nature of Sukur chiefs and Sukur's purported importance on a regional scale.

Anthony Kirk-Greene (1960) introduced Sukur to a wider audience when he published 'The kingdom of Sukur: a northern Nigerian Ichabod' in *The Nigerian Field*. His account is a synthesis of his own observations made during visits to Sukur while a District Officer in Adamawa Province in 1954, and earlier sources. According to Kirk-Greene 'by the end of the 18th century Sukur appears to have reached her prime and become the foremost kingdom in the Yedseram valley. This position, however, was not due to spiritual supremacy alone. There is every reason to believe that until the rise of the Mandara empire Sukur ranked as a considerable military power' (1960: 71-73).

Research by Nicholas David and myself from 1991 to the present has denied both Sukur's military and spiritual dominance, arguing that its primary role was as a producer of iron which it exported widely in the region and north towards Lake Chad (David & Sterner 1995, 1996; Smith & David 1995; Sterner 2003). However, its chief, while no divine king, was and is regarded as senior in ritual matters by several of the neighbouring chiefdoms.

2. SUKUR RENAISSANCE

In an account of Sukur's progress to World Heritage site, a summary of external observers' views of Sukur should be complemented by one of Sukur's developing self-awareness and representation of itself to outside bodies. In the early 1970s young Christian Sukur (primarily men) of different settlements began to hold meetings. In 1976 six of these groups came together and founded the Sukur Development Association. In the following years chapters of the SDA were established in other settlements, villages, towns and cities where Sukur had settled. Their activities became increasingly concerned with development issues, as well as lobbying for the creation of a Sukur district (established in 1992). Presently there are branches of the SDA in towns and cities, a Sukur Student Association (with branches at colleges and universities in the region), the Sukur Youth Development Association, and a Jira and Tika Branch of the SDA representing Sukur actually living on the mountain plateau in the cultural landscape. It is with these Sukur that I am particularly concerned.

In the early 1980s a segment of Basil Davidson's documentary series 'Africa' filmed at Sukur focused on iron smelting. In 1989 Bawuro Barkindo, a noted Nigerian historian, presented a paper on the Sukur Kingdom at the launch of the SDA Appeal to raise funds to complete the primary school on the Sukur plateau, build a dispensary, renovate the chief's house, provide clean water, construct a road to the base of the mountain, and build tourist quarters. In early 1990 two Nigerian anthropologists from the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) conducted research at Sukur following a request from Sukur youth to declare the chief's house a National Monument. Later in the same year photographs documenting Sukur iron smelting were exhibited in the National Festival of Arts and Culture (Kaduna) by the Gongola (now Adamawa) State Council of Arts and Culture. In 1992 the Sukur Mini Museum, an initiative of the SDA, was opened. Local objects were exhibited and photographs of the earlier iron smelt were donated by representatives of the Adamawa State Council of Arts and Culture. A Sukur curator of the Mini Museum was appointed and funded by the Adamawa State Council of Arts and Culture.

It was in 1991 that Nicholas David and I made our first visit to Sukur, returning in 1992-1993 for an extended study. In 1994 Patrick Darling, a British expatriate consultant, contacted us while making an inventory of possible World Heritage sites for Nigeria in collaboration with NCMM and the National Parks Board. In 1996 David and I prepared a first draft of a World Heritage List nomination in consultation with the chief of Sukur and traditional titleholders. This was subsequently developed into the draft nomination to the World Heritage List. On 20

November 1997 Adamawa State gazetted Sukur as a state monument, enabling the NCMM to protect the site as National Patrimony. The final nomination was submitted by Nigeria in 1998 and the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List on 4 December 1999.

3 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sukur's inscription as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape was made on the grounds that its landscape – an integration of environment, economics, society and culture – is both the product and means of achieving a demonstrably sustainable adaptation, albeit at a very low standard of living. Justification for Sukur's nomination as a cultural landscape was based on Criteria iii, v and vi (Sukur Cultural Landscape):

- Criterion (iii): Sukur is an exceptional landscape which graphically illustrates a form of land-use that marks a critical stage in human settlement and its relationship with its environment.
- Criterion (v): The cultural landscape of Sukur has survived unchanged for many centuries, and continues to do so at a period when this form of traditional human settlement is under threat in many parts of the world.
- Criterion (vi): The cultural landscape of Sukur is eloquent testimony to a strong and continuing spiritual and cultural tradition that has endured for centuries.

These statements require elaboration and discussion.

The yearly round involves many activities that are dependent upon knowledge of the natural and spiritual world that have helped to shape Sukur's cultural landscape. Cultivation is adapted to topography and soils and involves extensive terracing. Steep slopes with skeletal soils are used mainly for millets, beans and squash, while the deep, moist soils in internal basins and along streams are planted with sugarcane, taro, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, bananas, rice, and other crops. Groundnuts, Bambara nuts and tiger nuts are cultivated in sandy soils. Crop rotation is practiced. Around the houses, fertilized by household, animal and human wastes, maize, tobacco, sesame, okra and many minor crops are grown. Arboriculture is practiced on a small scale for greens (baobab, hackberry), fruit (papaya, lemons, oranges, mangoes), fodder and lumber. Except on rocky slopes and in groves associated with spirits, almost every tree that grows is protected, trimmed, and exploited for one purpose or another. Among the most important is mahogany, an important source of oil, charcoal and fodder.

Men and boys look after the sheep, goats, and a limited number of cattle that are kept in homesteads. The latter, mainly bulls, are kept in semi-subterranean stalls for ceremonial and increasingly commercial purposes. Women specialize in chickens.

Firewood and good lumber are difficult to obtain; long posts now come from adjacent mountains or places equally distant, requiring a half day's trip. Women farming distant fields take the opportunity to bring back a headload of firewood. Millet stalks are utilized for fuel. Grasses are harvested for use in mat and rope making, thatching, basketry and as fodder. Branches of trees and bushes are used in basket making, as shafts for agricultural tools, etc. The bark of the baobab tree is used by women and girls to make thread for bags and accessories.

Besides much use of rocks and daub for housing, local red clays are dug and prepared for use in granary and kitchen domes; other clays are procured by potters for making a range of utilitarian and ritual vessels.

Corvée labour brings people together to weed the chief's fields and for the annual clearing of paved ways. Work parties also are organized by individuals. A variety of ceremonies and ritual activities, some biennial, provide a framework for economic activities: these include the bull ceremony, male initiation, offering to a rain priest, a communal hunt, purification of the community and harvest.

The existence, and not only on steeper slopes, of some extremely poor fields of millet suggests that there is pressure on land. However, before the plains were safe for cultivation many parts of Sukur now abandoned were inhabited and farmed. David and Sterner (1996) estimated the population of the Sukur mountain settlement at 1803 in 1993 but at about 6000 in 1900 when it was supported in part by the import of foodstuffs and the export of large quantities of iron.

Changes to the agricultural and ceremonial year have occurred over the years. Many of the crops currently under cultivation are introduced. Maize, papaya, tobacco, and taro entered nor-

theastern Nigeria in the 17th century, followed by Asian rice, onions, sweet potatoes, and certain squashes in the 18th to 19th century (David 1976: 256, Table 4). At Sukur, groundnuts, a women's crop, were introduced in the 1940s and Irish potatoes first planted in the early 1990s. Integrating new crops can lead to changes in the landscape as household fields and terraces are adapted to their cultivation or low lying areas irrigated. In 2008 I learned of complaints by members of the Sukur diaspora that 'uneducated' young men on the mountain were destroying terraces. This may refer to an aborted community road project (to be discussed later) or the restructuring of some agricultural terraces on the plateau in order to accommodate increased maize production.

The single most significant change in production that has occurred over the last 50 years has been the collapse of the smelting industry and its replacement as a source of income by the making of zana matting by males and the cash-cropping of groundnuts by women. The Sukur produce almost all their own food. Groundnuts are the main, and for women the major cash crop. Women also raise money by selling chickens; some are active as porters in cross-border trade or carry cases of bottled beer up the mountain to sell for a small profit. Men sometimes sell goats, sheep and, exceptionally, cattle. Older men cultivate tobacco, cure it and sell it as snuff. As previously mentioned, many young men go off for several months a year to earn cash by making mats. Many of both genders and most ages are involved in petty trading and there are now some permanent stalls near the Jira school, but there is no proper shop on the mountain and no industry other than agriculture and mat-making.

Since smelting ended there has been considerable rescheduling of activities and transfer of agricultural responsibilities between the genders. Of more immediate relevance here, Sukur and informants from neighbouring communities are unanimous in stating that during the smelting era Sukur was an importer of foodstuffs, exchanging iron for grain, chickens and other livestock with neighbours, and for dried fish and other products with northern traders. Sukur is now a net exporter of foodstuffs.

4 SUKUR WORLD HERITAGE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Analysis of developments since Sukur's inscription as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape are conveniently approached through an examination of Sukur's first management plan (covering the period from 1999 to 2004) as presented in Appendix B of the Nomination of Sukur Cultural Landscape document (NCMM 1998). The plan was intended to provide an 'overview of what the implementing agency, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments of Nigeria, considers as crucial strategies that will be adopted to adequately document, preserve, develop and present this property for now and prosperity' (1998: 1). In addition a commitment was made to maintenance of the integrity of the site in conjunction with poverty alleviation and participatory development (1998: 5). Sustainable management of the site would depend upon participation of the community; workshops were to be held to inventory natural and cultural resources; a program of conservation and restoration was to be developed; provisions for cultural resource training were to be made; and tourist facilities and educational materials were to be developed.

4.1 Stakeholders and their responsibilities

Unspecified in the first management plan, the various stakeholders and their respective responsibilities are listed in a paper by an NCMM staff member presented at the Africa 2009 Seminar on Sustainable Tourism and Immovable Cultural Heritage (Aliyu 2004). This document appears to be an early draft of a 2006-2011 Sukur Cultural Landscape Conservation Management Plan prepared in 2006 (NCMM 2006). More information on the stakeholders and their responsibilities, as well as what has been accomplished since 1999 is included in this document. As of April 2008 this plan had yet to be adopted and it is unclear whether this has occurred subsequently. However, most stakeholders listed are now members of a Joint Management Committee inaugurated on 12 January 2010 (Archibong 2010).

The following listing of stakeholders and their responsibilities is drawn primarily from Aliyu (2004).

1. NCMM through its Directorate of Monuments, Heritage and Sites is the agency responsible for implementing the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. It is responsible for preservation, conservation, documentation and proper management of the site. NCMM operations relating to Sukur are based in Yola, the capital of Adamawa State, where a curator of a branch of the national museum oversees the operations of the site in partnership with other stakeholders and reports to the Director of Monuments, Heritage and Sites (Aliyu 2004: 39). NCMM is responsible for registration of site visitors and employs two local guides. Above all NCMM coordinates the activities of the other stakeholders.
2. Adamawa State Government is responsible for infrastructure projects such as the construction of a paved road from the main highway to the base of the mountain and electrification.
3. Madagali Local Government Council is responsible for security, rehabilitation and maintenance of local roads, establishing crafts centres, promotion of local cultural festivals, and involvement in the official commissioning of the site.
4. Sukur community are the legal owners of the site and thus 'the central focus of the World Heritage programme' (Aliyu 2004: 39). Their participation in all facets of implementation of the convention is essential. Communal work parties are to carry out necessary tasks essential to the preservation and conservation of the site. They are also to construct rest places and latrines, as well as organizing festivals and ensuring the security of the community.
5. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assisted in community development between 1999 and 2003. Their contributions included health education and training of local health care workers, improvement of agricultural productivity, micro credit, potable water, adult literacy programmes, and providing training in areas needed by the community. The UNDP also offered support to other projects aimed at site maintenance, environmental protection, and sustainable tourism.
6. A final category of stakeholders included other federal and state agencies, NGOs, the private sector, etc.

The material found in these documents provides valuable background to understanding the changes I saw when Nicholas David and I briefly returned to Sukur in 2004, events we witnessed in 2008, more recent conversations with Sukur friends, and articles in the Nigerian press.

In June of 2004 we drove along the familiar road from Maiduguri to Sukur. As we passed through Madagali, a town just north of the turnoff for Sukur, I noticed that there was now an Adamawa State Local Museum. It had been established in late 2003 by the newly founded State Agency for Museums and Monuments. The main room has a few glass cases containing a miscellany of objects made by Sukur and other local ethnic groups. We continued to the Sukur turnoff. In addition to the old sign welcoming the visitor to the 'ancient Sukur kingdom,' we found another sign, declaring that Sukur is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Dreading the potholes, bumps, bogs and detours that we remembered over the next twelve kilometres, we turned onto the dirt track – and immediately realized that something was different. We crossed the stream on a bridge! The track was now an unpaved but recently graded road, with along it a line of poles strung with electric cable! Soon we were at Mefir Suku market, full of people for it was market day and larger than before. Young men on motorbikes shuttled people and their goods to the base of the mountain, taking nearly an hour off the 500 metre climb to Sukur. Along the paved way we noted new stone benches, and on the mountain plateau there was now signage, another guest room and one or two tiny but permanent stalls.

By 2008 there were several further changes including an (unused) visitor centre/ticketing office at the junction with the main highway. The road to the base of Sukur had been tarred and electrification had reached the foot of the mountain. A number of UNDP projects had been completed, including a new health care centre, two boreholes, training of traditional birth attendants, micro loans for small businesses, and so on. Unfortunately few of these projects directly benefited those living on the mountain in and around the designated World Heritage Site.

While a Joint Management Committee for the second plan was finally inaugurated in January of this year, the Sukur World Heritage Site has yet to be officially commissioned by UNESCO. In 2008 the UNESCO World Heritage Site signage was stored at the Sukur Tourist Haven, a private initiative near the base of the northern paved way; it likely remains there.

In his contribution to the 2002 UNESCO conference on 'Cultural landscapes: the challenges of conservation', Joseph Eboreime (the recently retired Director-General of NCMM) observed that the community of Sukur is 'full of expectations, which include the provision of modern

amenities such as light, a potable water supply and employment ... The challenge is how to balance these "development needs" with active conservation' (2003: 144). In 2008 the chief of Sukur, Gizik Kanakakaw, told a correspondent with a Nigerian newspaper that his community still lacked health care facilities, potable water and a road (George 2008). The following section offers two case studies of misjudged development on the mountain, one indigenous, one imposed.

4.2 Case studies: the 'road' and the 'gallery'

In October of 2007 a Reuters reporter, Estelle Shirbon (2007), reported that those Sukur living on the mountain plateau desired a road, for they had to carry their surplus produce to the market on their heads and in the same manner make the return journey with goods purchased. The sick had to be carried down to a clinic on the plain. It is therefore not surprising that 'the men of Sukur pooled resources and effort last year to start building a road.' Construction was halted some months later by the state government, and a 'wide gash in the hillside is still visible from where the village men started digging a road.'

Why did the state government, and the NCMM I later learned, halt construction of the road? It runs close to and twice crosses the ancient paved way that is one of the features integral to Sukur's inscription as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape. It has the further potential to damage the paved way by erosion, potentially endangering Sukur's World Heritage status.

This community road is now the preferred route for locals up the lowest part of the mountain from where the tarred road ends and stone benches and latrines have been built by the SDA. It is also the tourists' first experience of the site. Seen from the plain, the road scar is the most visible humanly produced feature of the upper part of the slope. The project was initiated by the Jira and Tika (mountain) Branch of the SDA, with the approval of its national chairman, the chief, and the district head. Work parties, based on traditional forms of community labour, worked on Saturdays on a route 'surveyed' by a former driver. The project began in September of 2005 and by October was said to be 40% complete. At that time the Jira and Tika Branch of the SDA sent out an appeal for additional funds. In a letter dated 17/10/2005 they outlined the key reasons for the project:

1. To enable the community to transport their farm produce to the nearest market.
2. To enable the community access to health care facilities, especially for pregnant women.
3. To ease the water shortage on the mountain.
4. To reduce migration to Cameroon.
5. To empower the people economically through trade.
6. To boost tourism, for the road would enable more tourists to reach the site.
7. To reduce the suffering of the people.

Road building continued until some time in February 2006 when state government and NCMM representatives visited Sukur to attend the Yawal festival, saw the damage done, and used the (then unofficial) Management Committee meeting to require the SDA to cease and desist from road building. Having walked the controversial road I can attest that it could never have supported even four wheel drive vehicles, although recently a motorcycle was ridden from the foot of the mountain to the plateau (Ujorha 2010).

Even though construction of the road was halted four years ago, this episode continues to be discussed. It is an example of the disjunct between Sukur living on the mountain in and around the designated cultural landscape, and the educated Sukur diaspora living in Nigerian towns and cities. Recently Salih Kinjir, a Sukur activist, was quoted as saying 'Educationally, we in Sukur, are so much behind. We are very backward. I am one of the early graduates, and I think this educational disadvantage has contributed to the current situation. Due to lack of awareness, some Sukur youth want to destroy some parts of the site. It is difficult to even convince some people to appreciate that what is happening today is in their own interest. They say we at the lowlands are reaping all the benefits coming to Sukur. We need more awareness and a legal framework to protect the site. Some Sukur youth insist roads must be built connecting the lowlands to the top of this hill. They say people are dying in the upland settlements, while every facility is being cornered by those on the plains' (Archibong 2010).

It seems little has changed since I was last in Sukur in 2008. Although I was pleased to see parties visiting from schools and colleges, there are very few tourists. Nigerian visa require-

ments ensure there are none from the First World. Only one workshop to create local awareness of the potentials of the site has taken place, and that in 2001 (Archibong 2010). In 2008 Nicholas David and I discussed with locals the possibility of building a road that would not impinge on the paved way or other integral features of the cultural landscape but approach the site from the south. We identified a route that might work and brought this to the attention of the NCMM, together with suggestions for its funding. Such a road has the potential to enhance tourism as well as address local needs. Visitors complain of the arduous trek up to the plateau; some do not make it. The developers of the Sukur Wonderworld Resort Project site, presently constructing (for whom?) accommodation and other facilities near the base of the northern paved way, propose another solution to this problem, a cable car from beneath the mountain to a wall-defended entry onto the plateau (Tourism-Projects Consult 2008; updated 2009)!

Above I cited Eboeime on the challenges of balancing 'development needs with active conservation'. In 2008 the first thing we noticed as we neared the massive terrace near the chief's house was a round structure some ten metres in diameter. It seems that this building, built at the heart of the cultural landscape partly and inappropriately of non-traditional materials, and of which there is no mention in either site management plan, was constructed some six months after the halting of the community road project, with NCMM funds but without meaningful community consultation. Locals benefited by being paid to bring rocks, sand and water to the site, transport cement and lumber up the mountain, and provide wood, grasses and labour for construction of a huge thatched roof. However, they are unhappy with its location on the ceremonial area where it takes up space badly needed during festivals (besides blocking a superb view to the west). It was apparently intended for use as a gallery but has never been completed. In 2008 its sagging roof was held up by props.

5 CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

If environment, economics, society and culture are the four dimensions of sustainable development, then heritage must represent an integration of the historical aspects of these four dimensions that are dynamically active in the formation of the present and future. In no way does this sustainability imply fossilization of any of the four elements distinguished above. All have been changing interactively throughout what we know of Sukur's history. However, the criteria established by the World Heritage Committee for Cultural Landscapes 'may not be acceptable in that it is constraining the people involved to a way of life that may be one or more of arduous, economically precarious, and missing out on advantages of modern developments' (Aplin 2007: 432).

Over the centuries of interaction with societies that included predatory Sudanic states, the greatest changes came about with European rule. From the 1920s onward there were significant changes to the local economy, as well as to social and cultural practices: taxation, labour migration, new crops, schooling and Christianity, to name a few. More recently it could be argued that climate change is a factor. Changes in duration of the rainy season and the amount of rainfall are reported as causing movement to locations with year-round water, in particular to settlements on the plains with boreholes. New crops have necessitated changes to terrace design and other farming practices. Downward migration may take place in order to be closer to roads and markets. Youth who were forced to move to towns and cities to continue their education may not return. Access to health care is another motivation. Meanwhile some areas are abandoned on the mountain while it still welcomes occasional returnees from the plain.

Sukur on the mountain, in particular those living within the designated cultural landscape, have seen their kin on the plains and other ethnic groups benefit from Sukur's fame as infrastructure and development generated by its World Heritage status (schools, health centres, roads, electrification, boreholes, micro-credit) are enjoyed by those living below. Their attempt to build a road was at one and the same time an expression of their frustration and an astute identification of an infrastructural element that would not only offer direct benefits to mountain dwellers but open up the way to others. However it must be asked whether boreholes, tourist facilities, a health centre, or a secondary school would compromise cultural landscape status? Prior to inscription the primary school, churches, and some rooms already had tin roofs.

Another factor is conversion to Christianity. The first conversions took place in the 1960s at which time churches and other Catholic, EYN (Protestant) and other evangelical sect facilities, were located on the plains. Since the mid-1990s small church halls on the plateau have expanded into proper churches. Followers need not migrate for they can practice their new religions and continue to farm the plateau. However traditional Sukur beliefs are often not compatible with the new religions. Certain sacrifices intended to benefit the entire community receive little support or underwriting from converts. The annual offering of a bull at the annual ceremony of purification, has been reduced to a small goat, and on one occasion to a piece of skin of a bull bred on the mountain. Instead of scores of bulls only one was sacrificed in 2008 during the biennial Hun Dle ceremony, by an elderly and robustly traditional titleholder. The Yawal deba shrine, site of important rites but misidentified by NCMM signage, is neglected and in danger of destruction. Even burial practices are changing, tombs are now often covered with whitewashed cement and many Christians are buried on the plain.

Yawal, a ceremony formerly held at the chief's pleasure to celebrate himself and his clan and reconciliation with clans that had previously held the chieftaincy, has now become an annual feast presenting Sukur's public face to the outside world. NCMM subsidizes repairs to the chief's residence. These profound changes made by a dynamically adapting society are not acknowledged in a recent UNESCO publication that states that 'key features ... have not been significantly modified over the centuries. The ways in which they have been maintained have remained traditional in the form of materials and techniques which are sustained by rituals' (Mitchell et al. 2009: 79).

6 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

As I move from Sukur to what has been written about it the less familiar it seems. Rössler states that Sukur 'represents a case of traditional management and customary law. ... It is a remarkably intact physical expression of a society and its spiritual and material culture' (2006: 203). Much of what she describes had already changed, or was in the process of change, prior to Sukur's becoming a World Heritage Site. Similarly Cleere states that the NCMM 'maintains a resident on-site archaeologist with a small support staff. ... There is a management plan drawn up by the NCMM in consultation with the local community, but priority is given to local custom and practice in day-to-day management and administration' (2006: 70). The Joint Management Committee was only inaugurated in 2010, locals are rarely consulted and the 'on-site' archaeologist/manager now lives some 120 kilometres away in Hong (a recent improvement since previously management was based in Yola). Recent events at Sukur reveal the disparity between the place inscribed by UNESCO and the daily reality of the most important of the stakeholders, the Sukur living in the cultural landscape. Esposito and Cavelzani have argued that it is essential that stakeholders 'must know what values are to be found in their cultural landscapes and consequently reinforce the protection and enhancement of the values' (2006: 409). They discuss the threats to authenticity, sustainability of lifeways, and the conservation of rituals and traditional knowledge essential to maintenance of cultural landscapes. Sukur and the Philippines rice terraces are among the examples given. They argue that human presence is essential for the maintenance of a cultural landscape and of the culture that interacts with the natural landscape to produce it. Unfortunately at Sukur unfulfilled expectations of development and the lack to date of sensitive and sustained support especially from federal government stakeholders may result in loss of the people needed to maintain the landscape. Sukur's paved ways were a critical element in its citation as a World Heritage Site. Today construction of an appropriate road might solve Sukur's most basic problem, and in the words of one Sukur farmer 'bring people back'.

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