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Stakeholder relationships in the Flemish archaeological sector

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Abstract

The implementation of the Heritage decree in 2016 led to the privatization of the archaeological sector in Flanders. The sector is currently expanding, and the regulations have already received their fourth update. However, many players are concerned about the effect of free market principles on archaeological excavations. Research has shown that this problem is not unique to Flanders but occurs in nearly every commercial setting. This study aims to determine the views of different groups active in the sector on this issue, identify the needs of each group, map the existing legislation, initiatives and partnerships and finally provide managerial recommendations. The most important stakeholders in this study are academic and commercial archaeologists. Therefore, the central research question is : “Which elements influence stakeholder relationships in the archaeological sector, and more specifically the relationships between academic and commercial actors?” In this context, quality assurance plays a central role.

An interview guide was designed based on a review of the literature on both stakeholder management and archaeology in Flanders. For each stakeholder group, respondents were selected who represented a large number of actors within the group. The coding of the interviews and some additional documents such as conference proceedings and parliamentary treatises was performed by means of the software NVIVO. Power and interest levels were assessed both after the first part of the literature review and after the analysis. An analysis of the responses demonstrates that both internal and external stakeholder relations would benefit from more transparent communication and increased knowledge sharing.

The results of this analysis make clear that another stakeholder group, namely the broader public, is more important than often assumed, and it is recommended that all stakeholder groups focus more on public participation in the future. In addition, the role of government institutions such as the Flemish Heritage Agency is declining, and the decision-making power of certified (commercial) archaeologists will gradually increase. This group should receive sufficient guidance and trust from the entire network. Further research is needed to compare the situation in Flanders to other countries and to question the broad public on archaeology.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1.
2. Literature review.....	3.
2.1. Theoretical framework: stakeholder management.....	3.
2.1.1. Stakeholder theory.....	3
2.1.2. Evaluating stakeholder-manager relationships.....	4.
2.2. Context: the archaeological sector in Flanders.....	6.
2.2.1. Overview of different actors.....	6.
2.2.2. Establishing different stakeholder groups.....	10.
2.3. Competing interests between different stakeholder groups.....	13.
2.3.1. Academic archaeology.....	13.
2.3.2. Commercial archaeology.....	14.
2.3.3. The government and the broader public.....	16.
2.4. Bridging the gap.....	18.
2.4.1. Between the government and commercial archaeology.....	18.
2.4.2. Between academic archaeology and commercial archaeology.....	19.
2.4.3. Between academic archaeology and the government.....	21.
2.5. Stakeholder management and power relations in the archaeological sector.....	22.
3. Methodology.....	24.
3.1. Research design.....	24.
3.2. Data collection.....	26.
3.3. Data analysis.....	28.
4. Analysis.....	30.
4.1. Introduction.....	30.
4.2. Internal stakeholder dimension.....	32.
4.2.1. Academic archaeology.....	32.
4.2.2. Commercial archaeology.....	32.
4.2.3. Government.....	34.
4.2.4. Interim conclusion.....	35.
4.3. External stakeholder dimension.....	36.
4.3.1. Academic archaeology and commercial archaeology.....	36.
4.3.1.1. Quality.....	36.
4.3.1.2. Knowledge enhancement.....	39.
4.3.1.3. Grey literature and cherry picking.....	40.
4.3.1.4. Academic education.....	41.
4.3.1.5. Partnerships.....	43.
4.3.1.6. Interim conclusion.....	44.
4.3.2. Academic and commercial archaeology and the government.....	46.
4.3.2.1. Regulation of the archaeological process.....	46.
4.3.2.2. Research.....	49.
4.3.2.3. Partnerships.....	51.
4.3.2.4. The role of the government in the archaeological process.....	54.
4.3.2.5. Interim conclusion.....	57.
4.3.3. Academic, commercial and governmental archaeology and the broad public.....	58.
4.3.3.1. Public image of archaeology.....	58.
4.3.3.2. Support base.....	59.
4.3.3.3. Public outreach in archaeology.....	61.
4.3.3.4. Interim conclusion.....	65.
4.3.4. Policy alternatives.....	66.
4.4. Conclusion: archaeological stakeholder relations explained.....	68.
5. Conclusion and recommendations.....	70.
6. Bibliography.....	72.
7. Appendix.....	76.

1. Introduction

The word 'archaeology' often brings to mind rare artifacts, faraway countries and spectacular TV shows. However, there is an archaeological sector in Flanders too, and it shows no resemblance to popular movies. This sector is young and old at the same time. Government-led archaeology has been the norm in Flanders until 2013, when the first steps towards commercialization were taken. This change transformed the roles of all actors in the field – academics, field workers, governmental employees and even the public. What caused this change? A new European legislation, named the Valetta treaty, signed in 1992. Archaeology organized as prescribed in this legislation is called 'Malta-archaeology'.

Since the implementation of this legislation in Flanders in 2016, the Flemish government developed a new legal framework for the archaeological sector. The Valetta agreement states that archaeologists should highly value preventive methods, because the best preservation method for archaeological remains is *in situ* preservation, i.e. buried in the ground. This is why companies who plan to 'disrupt' the soil (such as construction companies) are the ones responsible for the archaeological remains they will destroy by constructing a building. The new legal framework states that the disturbing party will also be held accountable for the (financial) cost of the archaeological study.

The implementation of this legislation caused the archaeologic sector to boom. Companies are expanding and new players arise in a more competitive market. However, this market is 'distorted' because players in the construction sector do not really care about the core business of these companies: archaeological research. They choose a company based on the lowest price or the fastest results, and the motivation to conduct this research is mainly because of legal obligations. This means that archaeological companies are not always conducting qualitative research, due to a lack of time and money. The assumption is made that companies who are linked to university initiatives (LRD, Spin-offs) might tackle these problems in a different way because of their focus on quality.

This study considers possible solutions or favorable outcomes to this problem. The research consists of two complementary parts: Rosalie Hermans will focus on the

commercial archaeological sector itself and its stakeholders. The following questions are asked:

- To what extent do academic initiatives face similar issues to those identified for the commercial sector, such as dependence on the market and the resulting concerns about quality?
- Which stakeholders can we identify? Are they different from the stakeholders in commercial firms?
- Which power relations are manifested in the sector?
- What recommendations can be made for a better cooperation and understanding of the different stakeholder groups within the sector?

The focus of this dissertation is the relationship between academic and commercial archaeology, for which only Flemish archaeology . As a result, the main research question can be formulated as follows: “Which elements influence stakeholder relationships in the archaeological sector, and more specifically the relationships between academic and commercial actors?”.

The adopted stakeholder-approach allows us to identify stakeholder groups, and more importantly, conflicts and interests of different actors. Academic literature on archaeological management in general is limited, certainly for Flanders, although recently, opinions of Flemish archaeologists can more frequently be found in peer-reviewed journals, as a result of the new framework for archaeology. The issue of stakeholder management in the archaeological sector has not been considered yet, and therefore it is useful to apply these strategic management principles to a sector that was previously not the focus of management literature.

The dissertation starts with a literature review, consisting of a short stakeholder management overview, a contextualization of the Flemish archaeological sector, a description of the most important stakeholders and their interests, and a discussion of elements described in academic literature showing promise for finding compromises. A methodologic overview follows, explaining why a qualitative research method based on in-debt interviews was adopted. The third part consists of an analysis in which the framework provided in the summary of the literature review is compared to the interview results. New elements that arose during the interviews and their processing were also discussed in the analysis.

2. Literature review

2.1. Stakeholder management in the archaeological sector

2.1.1. Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder management aims to manage the relationship between a company and its stakeholders in the best way possible. The first definition of a 'stakeholder' was formulated by Rhenman, who defined it as follows: "individuals or groups which depend on the company for the realization of their personal goals and on whom the company is dependent" (Rhenman, 1968, p. 25). This means that there is an interdependence between different stakeholders. More than 50 definitions have been proposed, each with a distinct focus, but gradually two distinguishable groups emerged: broad and narrow definitions (Friedman & Miles, 2006). In the narrow definition, only those groups that are vital to the survival of the corporation are included, whereas the broad definition encompasses "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984). Freeman illustrates this stakeholder view of the firm by way of the following figure:

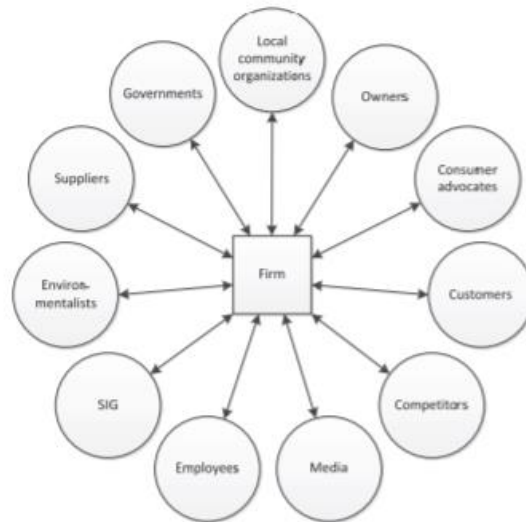


Figure 1. The stakeholder view of the firm (Freeman, 1984, p. 55)

The firm is visualized here in the center of the network. Rowley, however, argues that firms do not necessarily occupy such a central position in the network, but rather that their position defines the behavior of the stakeholders (Rowley, 1997). Consequently, it is interesting to investigate the structure of the network itself, as well as the positions of different actors within this network. More recent research has led to a so-called 'two-tier

stakeholder map', which includes changes in the primary business relationships between different actors (Freeman et al., 2007). The importance of Clarkson's groups of primary (vital for the survival of the organization) and secondary (not vital, but important) stakeholders are made visible in this figure (Clarkson, 1995).



Figure 2. The basic two-tier stakeholder map (Freeman et al., 2007, p. 7).

2.1.2. Evaluating stakeholder-manager relationships

It is vital for an organization to identify its stakeholders. In order to make the right 'classes', Mitchell et al. (1997) have set up a model with the aim of creating the right stakeholder groups, based on the concepts of power, legitimacy and urgency. 'Power' can be coercive power, involving physical resources of force, violence or restraint. Utilitarian power, on the other hand, is based on material or financial resources, while normative power relies on symbolic resources. Legitimacy means that a stakeholder is linked closely with the survival of the focal organization. Urgent claims are of a time-sensitive nature and are important or even critical to the stakeholder (Mitchell et al., 1997).

Entities who possess none of these three traits are non-stakeholders. 'Latent stakeholders' have one of these attributes. Most of the time, managers will not even identify this stakeholder group. Latent stakeholders could be dormant (power), discretionary (legitimacy) or demanding (urgency). Stakeholders who possess two attributes are called 'expectant stakeholders', subdivided into the categories of dominant (power and legitimacy), dependent (legitimacy and urgency) and dangerous (urgency and

power) stakeholders. The combination of all three attributes defines ‘definitive stakeholders’, to whom managers give priority. Needless to say, the more attributes one entity has, the more stakeholder salience this entity will have and managers will respond more quickly to their claims (Mitchell et al, 1997).

However, stakeholder groups can be defined by other attributes, such as interest and power (Ackerman & Eden, 2011). This approach includes the impact a certain actor has on other stakeholder groups. After the identification of stakeholder groups and assessing the level of power and interest of a certain player, management can adjust their strategy in order to engage with stakeholders in a more efficient way. Ackerman and Eden distinguish four categories of stakeholders in their power-interest grid.

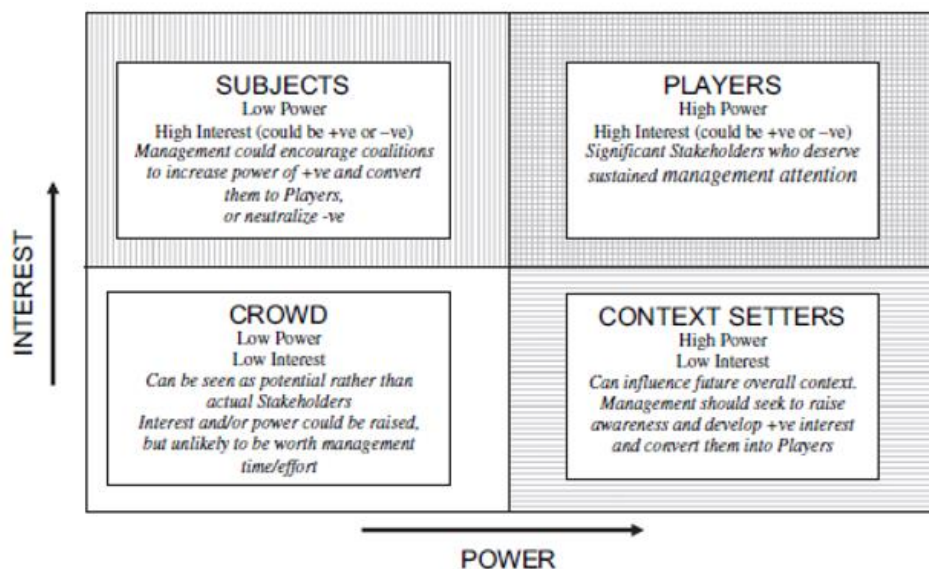


Figure 3. The power-interest grid (Ackerman & Eden, 2011, p. 183.)

While identifying the different groups of stakeholders, it is important to be aware of the power exercised by the network of the company and the position the company occupies within this network. If the company has a central position, stakeholders will not be able to pressure the company to take certain actions, but rather the company is able to influence the behavior of others in the network (Rowley, 1997). Thus, the network density and the centrality of the focal organization are important traits to understand the power relations in the network. Rowley identifies focal organizations as ‘compromisers’, ‘commanders’, ‘subordinates’ and ‘solitarians’ based on the density of their network and the centrality of their own position within the network.

A Structural Classification of Stakeholder Influences: Organizational Responses to Stakeholder Pressures

		Centrality of the Focal Organization	
		High	Low
Density of the Stakeholder Network	High	Compromiser	Subordinate
	Low	Commander	Solitarian

Figure 4. A structural classification of stakeholder influences (Rowley, 1997, p. 901).

2.2. Context: the archaeological sector in Flanders

2.2.1. Overview of different actors

Several parties are involved in the organisation of the archaeological sector in Flanders. The sector consists of the government, academics, museums, cultural heritage organizations and private companies. Compared to other countries, the Flemish archaeological sector is highly privatised. In certain circumstances, a developer is legally obliged to fund archaeological research, hence the term ‘development-led archaeology.’ The developer hires a private company to conduct the excavations. In contrast, academic archaeology carries out excavations in the context of research financed by scientific institutions. In Flanders, there are three universities offering an archaeology program: Universiteit Gent, KU Leuven and Vrije Universiteit Brussel. The findings of both academic archaeology and development-led archaeology have to be reported to the Flemish government.

The relevant legislation is quite complex. In Belgium, archaeology falls within the competence of the Regions, which have authority in territory-related matters. In contrast, movable heritage (including archaeological objects once they have been excavated) is handed over to the Communities, which decide on people-related matters. In Flanders, Regions and Communities have been unified in 1980, but in the other two regions (the French-speaking and the German-speaking part), this is not the case. Scientific archaeological research is the responsibility of the minister of culture, scientific research and education (De Roo, De Maeyer & Bourgeois, 2016). The Regions issued a new immovable heritage decree in 2013, implementing the principles of the Valetta Treaty of 1992. The Valetta Treaty or the ‘European Convention on the Protection of the

Archaeological Heritage (Revised)' forms the basis for rescue archaeology (Council of Europe, 1992). Some important guidelines set out by the treaty include the following:¹

- Efforts should be made to preserve archaeological remains as much as possible *in situ*, i.e. buried in the ground.
- The possible appearance of archaeological remains should be taken into account when doing spatial planning
- The polluter pays for the research and documentation and for the excavation if needed.
- Educational initiatives should be undertaken to develop a bigger support base of the archaeological heritage in public opinion. In addition, public access to elements of archaeological heritage should be guaranteed.

The Immovable Heritage Decree aims to apply these Valetta Treaty principles by increasing the involvement of local governments, ensuring strategic policy planning and adopting a new view on preservation. The decree prioritizes research, stocktaking, protection, management, dissemination and preservation (De Roo, De Maeyer & Bourgeois, 2016). Concerning stocktaking, the Research and Protection Division of the Flemish Heritage Agency made an inventory, also called geoportal, of 'known archaeological zones' open to the general public. The Flanders Heritage Agency also created a 'code of good conduct' or a 'good practices guide'² for archaeological companies. Since 2016, a certification system was set up in order to professionalize the excavation process. If an archaeologist meets certain requirements (amongst other things they are holder of certain master's degrees and they have done a full-time year of fieldwork), he or she can receive a certification (*erkende archeoloog*). Only certified archaeologists are able to write an archaeological note or carry out (preliminary) fieldwork.³

The decree was implemented on June 1st, 2016. Initially, it was met with criticism from both the archaeological and the construction sectors (Acke & Vanderstraeten, 2016). In the meantime, improvements have been made, mainly by the Flemish Heritage Agency, and reception of the decree has become more favorable.

¹ This list is non-exhaustive, the full text of the agreement can be consulted at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168007bd25>

² In Dutch, this is called 'code van goede praktijk'. The full version can be consulted here: <https://www.onroerendergoed.be/de-code-van-goede-praktijk>

³ The full requirements can be consulted here: <https://www.onroerendergoed.be/erkenningvoorwaarden-archeoloog>

The immovable heritage decree has led to an increase in the number of archaeological operations. Before 2004, the private archaeological market was virtually non-existent (Wouters, 2012). In 2014, 23 private companies were active in Flanders (Ameels, 2014). Today, 33 companies can be found on the website of VONA (Vlaamse ondernemers in archeologie).⁴

The Flemish government expanded its archaeological services during that period. Each provincial government now employs at least one archaeologist, except in the province of West-Flanders. These 'province' archaeologists should have knowledge of the whole process (legislation, preservation and management, conservation and restoration, projects and exhibition). Of the 308 cities and municipalities in Flanders, seven have their own archaeological service. Three of them carry out their own archaeological field surveys. Municipalities and cities who do not have their own archaeological service are sometimes grouped in what is called an IOED, i.e. an intermunicipal archaeological and immovable heritage service.⁵ The provincial governments collaborate with archaeological museums located within their province (the Gallo-Romeins Museum in Limburg, Ename and Velzeke in East Flanders, Raversyde in West Flanders). In addition to organizing exhibitions, these museums have their own scientific research units (Ameels, 2014). These research units also collaborate with the academic staff employed by universities. Each province oversees a division of 'Monument Watch', an association responsible for advising heritage workers, conservation and managing heritage in Flanders. Monument Watch contributes to the *in situ* conservation of archaeological heritage (Ameels, 2014). All these different actors work together regionally. In their article on development-led archaeology in Flanders, Wim De Clercq et al. discuss some projects in the region of East Flanders, where the university of Ghent, the Ename museum, provincial archaeologists, city archaeologists and intercommunal services collaborate (De Clercq et al, 2009).

De Roo, De Maeyer and Bourgeois argue that the development of this market has not resulted in an increased quality of recorded data and has produced only slightly better insights into Flemish history (De Roo, De Maeyer & Bourgeois, 2016).

⁴ This number is not absolute, as not all companies are necessarily member of VONA. However, the majority of new enterprises becomes a member. An overview of the list can be found here: <http://www.vona.be/index.php/leden/>

⁵ In Dutch, this is called an 'intergemeentelijke onroerenderfgoeddienst'. A list of IOED's can be found here: <https://www.onroerenderfgoed.be/overzicht-van-de-erkende-ioeds>

The commercial archaeological process is explained in the ERD-chart below (De Roo, De Maeyer, Bourgeois, 2016). In short, the developer must appoint a certified archaeologist if his project meets certain conditions. The most important factor is the area covered by the project: if this exceeds 100m², an archaeologist should be involved. The archaeologist makes a study request. The Flemish Heritage Agency checks whether the request is valid or not (i.e. whether the project meets the requirements of an archaeological study). If the request is invalid, the Flemish Government decides on the further course of events. After a preliminary investigation, the certified archaeologist drafts an archaeology note concerning the necessity of further excavation. The Flemish Heritage Agency initially had to reach a decision whether to confirm or reject the archaeological note within 21 days (Du Gardein, 2017). Today, this term is only 15 days, and the report should not be approved formally, as there is only a cognizance (Ribbens & De Groote, 2020). The developer composes a planning permit request with or without excavation condition. The certified archaeologist carries out the excavation, after which a report is drafted. The report is checked for compliance with the guidelines, and finally sent to the immovable heritage agency. This procedure is required for approximately 10% of the building dossiers (Wouters, 2012).

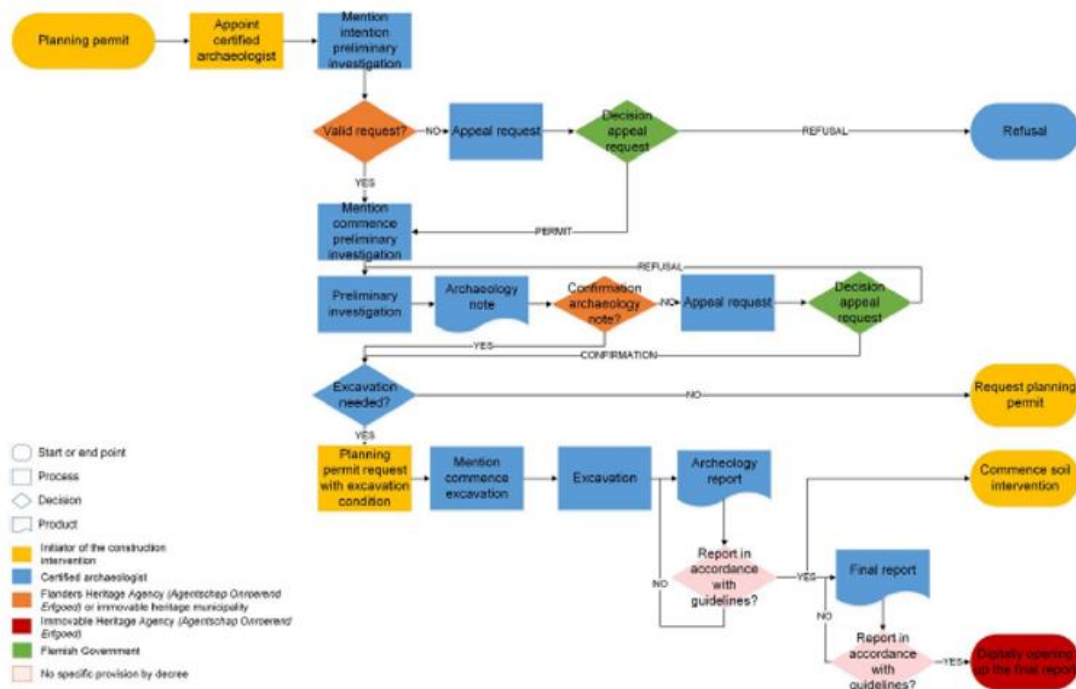


FIG 2. Flowchart of the process described in the new Flemish Immoveable Heritage Decree for archaeological fieldwork in case of a planning permit (based on Vlaams Parlement, 2013). [Color figure can be viewed in the online issue, which is available at wileyonlinelibrary.com.]

Figure 5. Flowchart for archaeological fieldwork in case of a planning permit (De Roo et al., 2016, p. 1934).

Academic archaeology has another standardized procedure. The scientific researcher already received funding for the project and works together with a certified archaeologist. As is the case for development-led archaeology, the Flemish Heritage Agency and/or the Flemish government have to decide about the validation of the request. Afterwards, the investigation takes place, an archaeology report is drawn up and checked. Finally, the report is sent to the Flemish Heritage Agency.

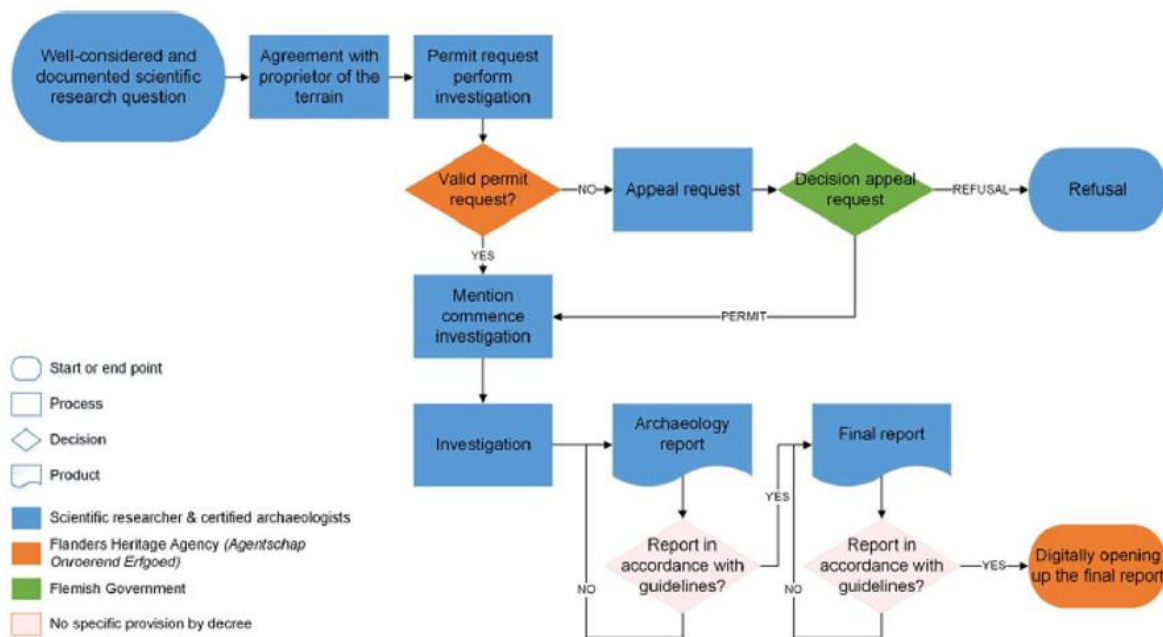


FIG. 3. Flowchart of the process described in the new Flemish Immoveable Heritage Decree for archeological fieldwork in consideration of a scientific research question (based on Vlaams Parlement, 2013). [Color figure can be viewed in the online issue, which is available at wileyonlinelibrary.com.]

Figure 6. Flowchart for archaeological fieldwork in consideration of a scientific research question (De Roo et al., 2016, p. 1935).

2.2.2. Establishing different stakeholder groups

As described in the introduction of this study, academic archaeology and commercial archaeology will be the focus of this research. It would undoubtedly be very interesting to explore all actors within the archaeological sector in detail, but due to the limited scope of this paper, the choice was made to focus on these two groups. In the tables below, statements are made about both the influence and power of certain stakeholder groups on both academic and commercial archaeology, based on the functioning of the archaeological sector as shown in the description above. The power-interest model of Ackerman and Eden was used to assess stakeholder relationships. Ackerman and Eden formatted the levels of power and interest in two categories, namely 'low' and 'high', but in this study, a third category (average) was added in order to better distinguish between different categories and provide a more qualified view.

Academic archaeology	
Commercial archaeology	<p><u>Average level of interest:</u> only academics who work in Flemish archaeology have an interest in the work of commercial archaeology as they do the sampling and registration of the data for research. Possible partnerships could be established. However, only a minority of researchers at Flemish institutions study Flemish archaeology.</p> <p><u>Low level of power:</u> A small amount of researchers rely on development-led archaeologists for their data on Flemish archaeology. Most of them do their own sampling. If researchers are interested in a site, they can apply for 'research based on scientific questions' and also gain access to the site.</p>
Government	<p><u>Average level of interest:</u> The governmental institutions are the mouthpiece of the policy and legislation of archaeology. It is advantageous for academics to have a broad societal support base for their own discipline. However, they do not have a direct influence on the decisions or organization of the research institution.</p> <p><u>High level power:</u> the academic sector relies on government funding, based on student enrolment rates.</p>
Broader public	<p><u>High level of interest:</u> In contrast to science and engineering and bi-medical sciences, nearly all research funding for the humanities comes from taxpayers. A broad societal support base is needed for archaeological research, the awarding of grants, and the selection of research topics. Another factor is the enrolment rates for the archaeology programs.</p> <p><u>low level of power:</u> the broad public has no direct influence on the organization or decision making.</p>
(other) Flemish research institutions	<p><u>Low level of interest:</u> A research institution is not impacted by the performance of another research institution.</p> <p><u>High level of power:</u> if a certain grant is not awarded to one research institution, it is awarded to the other institution. If a student with an passion for archaeology chooses for one university, he or she will not choose for the other institution.</p>
Funding organizations	<p><u>Low level of interest:</u> research institutions are not affected by the performance of the funding organization.</p> <p><u>Average level of power:</u> academics are directly affected by the decisions funding organizations take regarding budgets, focus points... However, this only affects the research staff. For educational purposes, academics do not rely on these funding institutions, only on direct governmental funding.</p>

Table 1. Assumption of the power and interest of stakeholders on academic archaeology

Commercial archaeology	
Academic archaeology	<p><u>Average level of interest:</u> Commercial archaeologists are affected by the performance of universities when it comes to the quality of education, because they (nearly) only hire candidates with an archaeology degree.</p> <p><u>Low level of power:</u> Academic decisions do not have a direct impact on the activities of commercial archaeologists.</p>
Government	<p><u>High level of interest:</u> The government organizes the drafting and implementation of archaeological legislation. Companies have an interest in having a significant voice in policy-making.</p> <p><u>High level of power:</u> Governmental decisions impact companies directly (e.g. if the government would decide to reduce the obligation to carry out archaeological research, companies would have fewer clients)</p>
Broader public	<p><u>Low level of interest:</u> since there is an obligation for developers to carry out archaeological research, the sector does not have any interest in how the public behaves towards them.</p> <p><u>Low level of power:</u> decisions or opinions of the broad public do not have a direct influence on the organization of archaeological companies.</p>
Developers	<p><u>Average level of interest:</u> since there is an obligation for developers to carry out archaeological research, archaeological companies do not have interests influencing the decisions developers make, even though they are their main employer. Of course, the companies would like to have good personal relations with possible employers so that they would appeal to them again later.</p> <p><u>Average level of power:</u> if the construction sector were to collapse tomorrow, the archaeological sector would go down with it.</p>
Competitors	<p><u>Average level of interest:</u> an archaeological company is not directly affected by the performance of their competitors. However, it could have an impact on how the company behaves (e.g. lower prices, faster work,...)</p> <p><u>high level of power:</u> If a company decides to invest in a certain technology or hire more or more specialized staff, it could make the company more competitive and lead to a reaction of other companies.</p>

Table 2. Assumption of the power and interest of stakeholders on commercial archaeology

In this paper, we will further explore the stakeholder relationships that are most valuable for the research question (relationship between academic and commercial archaeology). The aim of this study is to test these assumptions on the functioning of the sector against the impressions and experiences of the people active in the sector. First of all, an internal stakeholder analysis will be carried out, for which the stakeholders '(other) Flemish research institutions' and 'competitors' will be the most important groups. For the more extensive external analysis, commercial archaeology, the government and the broad public will be the most important stakeholders. Developers and funding institutions will not be further explored.

2.3. Competing interests between different stakeholder groups

In the following section, the different interests of all groups within the archaeological sector are defined from the viewpoint of the relationship between academic and commercial archaeology. After an extensive literature review, some issues could be identified for every stakeholder group. These issues will be further explored in the analysis of this study (see below in the section 'analysis').

2.3.1. Academic archaeology

In Flanders as in other European and North American countries, there are growing tensions about the objectives of archaeological excavations (quality, goals, availability of data, ...), especially between academic archaeology and commercial archaeology. Universities and scientists believe that each excavation should contribute to the knowledge of the human past. As a consequence, every project should be the result of a research question formulated beforehand. The excavation is not only about 'digging up' and registering traces and remains, but it should have a predetermined strategy. (Vanmontfort, 2012). As Laurie Beckelman, US Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair said after a failed excavation campaign in New York: "Any archaeological excavation is useless without a research design... it's like driving a car in a foreign country without a road map or destination." (Carver, 2011, p. 61).

Moreover, academics are worried about the consequences of free market principles for archaeological excavation (Ford, 2010). Commercial archaeology is blamed for competing on time and money and as a consequence not having a predetermined strategy. It is assumed that excavations carried out by universities are more knowledge-based because these projects have more research time, which means more time to 'do things properly' (Ravn, 2013). However, in some cases, project funding is so-called 'scoping money', considered by universities to be a kind of investment for which they want something in return, such as funding for a new project. Scholars are expected to think of the next project application before completing the current research. Long-term projects have become rarer over the last 40 years (Carver, 2010).

In addition, academics would prefer a different handling of data. They claim that the excavation reports are not accessible enough and that interpretation of the finds is missing. This results in so-called 'grey literature', archaeological reports with limited distribution, usually client reports prepared by archaeological contractors (Darvill, 2009).

Grey literature has mostly negative connotations, due to problems such as limited accessibility, poor structure, content and language (Börjesson, 2015). Finally, academic researchers are funded by governmental and private institutions (in Flanders, this institution is mainly the FWO, Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek) and these organizations have relatively high standards of publication. Therefore, unlike commercial archaeologists, academics 'communicate' through scientific publications and they would like to see the excavation reports of the development-led archaeologists published too.

As a conclusion, quality, data collection and research-based excavations will be important topics to assess when conducting the interviews.

2.3.2. Commercial archaeology

Companies claim to have a more practical approach to the carrying out of excavations in comparison to academic archaeologists. They accuse academics of walking with their heads in the clouds and not doing enough field work to be able to judge the possible standards for excavation and reporting. It is, as Carver states "a bit like engineering taught by people who don't actually know how to build a bridge" (Carver, 2010). De Clercq et al. observe that "the role of universities seems at the moment to be limited to a very few programmed excavations, and former development-led projects are now delegated to spin-offs", meaning most of the fieldwork in Flanders is performed by commercial archaeology (De Clercq et al, 2009). Secondly, academic projects are not subject to the financially competitive environment commercial archaeology is dealing with. Most companies are constrained by time and budget and they are doing what they can in terms of preservation of objects, data management and reporting.

The biggest threat for commercial archaeology is competition on time. This pressure on development-led archaeology entails two risks. First, the use of a standard methodology, with no room for innovation or the use of the right methods adapted to the specific archaeological sites. Second, the reduction of the excavator to the role of a non-thinking technician, who only acquires data and does not interpret them (De Roo, De Maeyer & Bourgeois, 2016). Most companies do not have the financial means nor the time to interpret their own excavation results, and they feel judged for this. In the end, commercial archaeologists are holders of a master's degree too, and they cannot achieve the same academic standards as universities, largely due to a lack of funding. Some commercial archaeologists question academics as to why they do not focus on the

interpretation of data from hundreds of excavation reports produced by development-led archaeologists rather than carrying out new excavations (Plets, 2016).

Companies agree with academics that heritage under threat should be preserved. For archaeological objects, the best preservation is *in situ* or buried in the ground. Therefore, the preservation of threatened objects is a priority over knowledge enhancement (Vanmontfort, 2012). In this situation, knowledge enhancement is at odds with rescue archaeology, not only because of the type of projects carried out, but also because of the relatively small research territory in comparison to academic projects. In Flanders, open space is constantly under pressure. Widespread ribbon development has resulted in a fragmentation of the land, meaning excavation projects are rather small and therefore unrepresentative for knowledge enhancement. A bigger project such as a harbor excavation would reveal more archaeological finds than the construction of an apartment block, due to the small research surface presented by the latter (De Clercq et al, 2009).

The construction sector is the main sponsor of archaeological excavations in Flanders, albeit involuntarily. Developers legally required to hire a certified archaeologist to investigate the area for archaeological remains (Departement Kanselarij en Bestuur, 2013).⁶ Developers are generally believed not to care about the quality of the research. They consider the investigation to be a necessary evil and they would like to receive their archaeological note of the terrain as soon as possible. Developers are obliged by law to pay for archaeological intervention, and by their shareholders to pay as little as possible (Carver, 2010). The selection process of comparative tender cannot be referred to as a 'free market', since the actor of quality is missing (Demoule, 2012). So the only criteria are low budget and low time. A 2017 report by Unizo, an organization for entrepreneurs in Flanders, states that the archaeological costs should be lowered as soon as possible (Unizo, 2017). Here we see no interest of the construction sector to deliver qualitative archaeological research.

⁶ Article 10.3.1 states the following: "Tenzij het anders overeengekomen is, worden de kosten van het archeologisch vooronderzoek en de archeologische opgraving gedragen door de aanvrager van de omgevingsvergunning voor stedenbouwkundige handelingen of het verkavelen van gronden zoals bedoeld in artikel 5.4.1 en 5.4.2." English translation: Unless agreed otherwise, the costs of the archaeological preliminary investigation and the archaeological excavation are borne by the applicant for the environmental permit for urban development activities or the parceling of land as referred to in articles 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. See:

<https://codex.vlaanderen.be/Zoeken/Document.aspx?DID=1023317¶m=inhoud&ref=search>

Shortly after the implementation of the decree on immovable heritage in 2016, there were many complaints, claiming that 80 percent of the archeological notes were refused, causing a delay in the construction plans. For many developers it was unclear – due to a lack of updates on the geoportal – whether or not an archaeological note was necessary (Acke & Vanderstraeten, 2016). 90 percent of all requests invoked an exception to the rule (5.4.5 of the decree). Furthermore, the cost of the archaeological note was higher than expected, because the process could take up to nine weeks, much longer than the previously assumed period. In addition, the certified archaeologists were over-burdened, which caused further delays in construction (Acke & Vanderstraeten, 2016).

In sum, it is clear that market-oriented thinking and its relation to with the quality of work will have to be taken into account in this paper, together with innovation, time pressure and knowledge enhancement.

2.3.3. The government and the broader public

To summarize the information on government provided above, the main responsible for the archaeological sector in Flanders is the Flanders Heritage Agency. This agency has several divisions, such as the Heritage Policy division (responsible for the preparation of new legislation and evaluation of heritage policy), the Research and Protection Division (responsible for the inventory of archaeological zones), management division (gives advisory opinions and allocates grants) and the information and communication division (responsible for the communication strategy and the library and archives) (Ameels, 2014). The past ten years, the Flemish Land Agency (under Environment, Nature and Energy) has also been more involved with heritage and archaeology in land use.

It is quite difficult for the government to correctly assess the importance attached to archaeology in the country by the broader public. Therefore, implementing the principles of the Valetta Treaty is a strategic tug-of-war between different actors. Archaeology could be an economic asset, for example in promoting tourism or urban gentrification, in marketing and branding or the direct sale of material, through antiquities trading (Burtenshaw, 2017). Cultural economists divide archaeological value in use value (expressed through a market) and non-use value (unable to be expressed through the market). Although market value seems the most obvious concern for the government, this also has potential disadvantages, such as *disneyfication* or motivation for looting. The non-

use value of archaeological heritage is often only shown when the material culture is directly under threat, and for this reason it is very difficult to assess its value at a given moment (Burtenshaw, 2017).

The government plays a central role in the way archaeology is organized in Flanders. The immovable heritage decree of 2013, implemented in 2016, has attempted to introduce a more standardized practice in order to grant equal rights to all developers. However, the legislation still draws a lot of criticism from various parties. Academics complain about how the archaeological practice is cast as a fixed process that can be subdivided in different objective steps (Plets, 2016). The government is accused of being obsessed with routinization, and to quote De Clercq et al. 'this repetitive scenario is of course comfortable from an intellectual point of view and manageable from a commercial and administrative angle, but is this the way to understand the past?' (De Clercq et al., 2012, 52).

To summarize, attention should be paid to topics such as the evaluation of the legislation, routinization, governmental initiatives for research, stakeholder management in decision-making strategies and the collaboration between governmental levels.

2.4. Bridging the gap

2.4.1. Between the government and commercial archaeology

The problems between the four actors outlined above also occur in several other European and North American countries (Kristiansen, 2009). Following the Valetta Treaty, each country decided on how to implement the principles agreed independently. There are essentially two models: the socialist model in which citizens believe it is a public responsibility to protect and excavate threatened archaeological heritage, and the capitalist model in which people expect the free market to take care of the excavations. Examples of the socialist model include France and Sweden; an example of the capitalist model is the UK. Flanders and the Netherlands are somewhere in between (Kristiansen, 2009). Similarly, Martin Carver makes a distinction between ‘unregulated’, ‘regulated’ and ‘deregulated’ archeological environments, in which ‘regulated’ is similar to the socialist model and ‘deregulated’ is related to the capitalist model (Carver, 2010).

Type of regime	Unregulated	Regulated	Deregulated
Source of finance	Trust, charities	State	Developer
Method of procurement	Ad hoc	State program Media pressure	Planning system Planning consultants Curators' specs
Who does the fieldwork?	Volunteers, students, directed by individual researcher	Laborers, directed by Inspector	Archaeological contractor Professional excavators
Research output	Peer pressure, Depends on the individual	Depends on government priorities	(not part of contract)
Quality control	Peer-group	Inspectors Licenses	Consultants (?)

Table 2. Archaeological procurement in three different types of political system (Carver, 2009, p. 366).

Kristiansen highlights that both ‘models’ agree on two principles. The first one is that the developer or the so-called ‘polluter’ should pay for the disruption they cause, and secondly, that the patron and the excavator should be two different institutions. Of course, the outcome of the latter differs in the two models. In a capitalistic setting, the developer can choose the company responsible for the excavation, whereas in the socialist model, it is the heritage authority that has the right to decide (Kristiansen, 2009).

Kristiansen concludes that both models can lead to knowledge-based archaeological research. However, the author seems to favor the socialist model as, in his view, contract archaeology requires some adjustments in order to achieve a good academic background.

The main modification would be prioritizing research above price competition. Dutch heritage scholar Monique Van den Dries responds to Kristiansen and argues that the existing capitalist model does not rule out knowledge production (Van den Dries, 2011). She argues that all field work potentially contributes to the production of knowledge. Danish archaeologist Mads Ravn refines this argument, stating that all data might be valid in a quantitative, rather than in a qualitative way (Ravn, 2013).

In addition, Van den Dries highlights a potential pitfall of the socialist model, namely the 'democratized' research interest a government-led excavation holds. In the Netherlands, local governments do not feel responsible for broadening the knowledge of the past (Van den Dries, 2011). These governments want qualitative research, but only for that part of the past they are interested in. Other periods are seen as unimportant and thus there is no subsidy for it. Van den Dries concludes that knowledge production depends on who has the power to make decisions, not on the two models described by Kristiansen, nor on who carries out the excavation work. Mads Ravn argues that local authorities should not have the kind of power to make research and preservation decisions. A solution needs to be found that addresses the concerns of both the local stakeholders and of the scientific community (Ravn, 2013). Such a model solution can be found in the Norse and Swedish models, which are further discussed below.

During the interviews, respondents will be asked which 'archaeological policy' they prefer, when comparing Flanders to other (European) countries, or what policy they would decide on if they could be the only decision maker in the field and they could start anew. This question will shed new light on the matter and is required to formulate policy alternatives and recommendations.

2.4.2. Between academic archaeology and commercial archaeology

Despite all the negativity, there is hope for a reconciliation between academics and commercial archaeology. Some common ground exists between the two parties. First, it is clear that academics and commercial archaeologists both consider rescue archaeology an improvement. Most of them reckon that it can generate an enormous volume of data and that this means a potential for new knowledge creation. The 'randomness' of these operations (meaning that only the areas that will potentially be destroyed are studied), could also be a benefit: some issues may come to light that were previously not considered to be of interest. Moreover, both parties believe that the application of new technologies

in commercial archaeology could further our understanding of the human past (Vanmontfort, 2012). However, as a Dutch study pointed out, the quality of an excavation does not only depend on the technology used, as it is the individual researcher who is responsible for making the correct observations (Ministerie van onderwijs, cultuur en wetenschap, 2011).

Concerning the accessibility of the data, there are some initiatives that accommodate both points of view, such as the *Archaeological Data Service* in England and the EDNA (*E-depot voor Nederlandse archeologie*). In Flanders, there is the OAR (*open archief van publicaties*), a collaboration between the Flemish government (Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed), academia and commercial archaeology. Last year, the reports produced in the period 2004-2018 were made available (Agentschap onroerend erfgoed, 2018). We could say that this problem is being recognized and the three parties strive towards a better accessibility of all excavation reports.

Not all academics consider 'grey literature' to be useless reporting. Scholars like Michael Fulford (University of Reading) embrace this new type of source. He wrote a new monographic study devoted to the history of Roman Britain based on grey literature (Fulford, 2011). Fulford states: "Despite the difficulties, we have to adapt to an archaeological record that is massively expanded and, at its best, of far better quality than has been achieved by academics, who are often very part-time fieldworkers." (Ford, 2010, p. 827).

According to Vanmontfort, academics and companies should compromise: academics must get used to the way archaeology is done (rescue archaeology) in order not to lag behind the facts (Vanmontfort, 2012). Some scholars are embracing a compromising solution, e.g. through providing research advice to companies and participating in development-led archaeology themselves. In Flanders, there are some university spin-offs such as GATE (Ghent University) and ArcheoWorks (KU Leuven, which is technically an LRD-division). Governments and commercial archaeology should acknowledge the problems concerning quality in development-led projects, and they should be open to research advice provided by scientific institutions.

It is clear that collaboration between academic and commercial archaeologists will be an important topic to explore in the course of this paper. Within this subject, important focus points include the use of grey literature, exchange of knowledge and data management.

2.4.3. Between academic archaeology and the government

When it comes to archaeology, the Flemish government and the universities are more similar than it appears at first sight. As mentioned above, the immovable heritage decree also applies to academic excavations. However, many academics believe that the government is unable to manage this archeological legislation and planning. To quote Gertjan Plets, 'Clearly, such an Enlightenment-embedded belief in the objectivity of the archaeological 'process' is intellectually thin and ignores most postmodern archaeological literature, which emphasizes the importance of reflexivity in archaeological analysis' (Plets, 2016, p. 201). Therefore, the government could adopt a more knowledge-based approach in its process description of archaeological research.

Mads Ravn thinks the Norse and Swedish models present good practices that can inspire approaches to a better collaboration between the government, universities and companies. In Norway, excavations are always performed in an academic context, as each university has both an educational, research and an excavation department. There is no real competition between universities because each of them has their own fixed geographical investigation area. Decisions are made together. Mads Ravn agrees that this is in fact a monopoly but it is still preferable to a model in which one of the actors (universities, government, developers or companies) is dominant (Ravn, 2013). In addition, each university has its own museum, where the finds can be made public. Local narratives and material culture can be exhibited to the public. In Sweden there is a legal obligation to publish all excavation results in academic journals. In this way, there is a return for the broader public. The Norse and Swedish governments only contribute 10 percent of the total budget, the other share is paid by the developer (Ravn, 2013).

From this section, it is clear that collaboration between government and academics, which seems less common than collaboration between the other two stakeholder groups, is an important relationship that should be further explored. As foreign examples show, this cooperation can lead to fruitful results.

2.5. Stakeholder management and power relations in the archaeological sector

Despite the fact that commercial archaeologists, and in particular certified archaeologists, are irreplaceable actors in the Flemish archaeological sector, their position is not a very strong one. They depend on legislation, as in the absence of a legal obligation to carry out archaeological study before the start of construction, probably no developer would hire an archaeologist. Academics do not have a strong position either, as they are judged by their quality standards, which they cannot always reach due to time pressure. This is a vicious cycle because the intellectual status of the excavation decreases when commercial archaeologists have no voice in the interpretation of their sites (Berggren & Hodder, 2013). The government is merely a mouthpiece of political influence. Despite the fact that all three actors have the same goal, namely acquisition of knowledge of the past, the different stakeholder groups seem to be divided and not willing to cooperate.

In the course of this study, the aim is to map the interests of these three stakeholder groups, in order to correctly assess their interests and needs. As a summary, the topics explored in this literature review are displayed at the level of stakeholder groups. These topics will be used to prepare the interview guide.

Focal group	Stakeholders relevant for the research question	Topics to discuss
Academic archaeology	Commercial archaeology	Quality of research and excavation
	Government	Knowledge enhancement, alternative regulations
	Other research institutions	Partnerships and conflicts
	The broad public	Support base for archaeology in general
Commercial archaeology	Academic archaeology	Grey literature, data management
	Government	Regulation of the archaeological process, alternative regulations
	Competitors	Partnerships and conflicts
	The broad public	Public participation, support base
Government	Academic archaeology	Research opportunities for Flemish archaeology
	Commercial archaeology	Knowledge enhancement,
	The broad public	Public image of archaeology, support base, public participation
	Governmental actors	Partnerships and conflicts

Table 3. Summary of key issues to explore in the analysis of this dissertation

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

The research started with an extensive review of the literature on stakeholder management and on the organization of the archaeological sector in Flanders. After the reading process, several stakeholder groups were identified. In addition, both Rosalie Hermans and I consulted our co-workers in the archaeology departments at the universities we work for (VUB and KU Leuven) to confirm the validity of our stakeholder list. As the intention of the paper is to survey the entire archaeological sector, the groups have not been selected from the perspective of a single focal organization, but rather following the network approach stakeholder theory as described by Hill & Jones (1992) Rowley (1997) and Friedman & Miles (2006). We identified the following stakeholder groups: commercial archaeology, academic archaeology, governmental organizations, the broad public and the construction sector. In the literature review of this paper, the properties and characteristics of the different stakeholder groups are described. The primary focus of the analysis is the mutual relationships between these groups, e.g. conflicting or competing interests, willingness to collaborate, possible areas of tension, etc.

As mentioned before in the introduction to this paper, Rosalie focuses on the stakeholder groups most relevant to the commercial sector and I concentrate on the groups related to the academic sector. After the start of this study, we met UGent researchers who, at the request of the Flemish Heritage Agency, are in the process of mapping all initiatives targeting a broad public within the archaeological sector. Therefore, we decided to focus less on this group in our study but to use the data provided in the research paper of the UGent researchers. Consequently, I focus mainly on the academic sector and Rosalie on the construction sector, with the commercial sector and the government as 'shared' stakeholders.

In order to obtain information from each stakeholder group and to correctly assess their needs, level of interest, expectations, influence, commitments, and constraints, a qualitative research methodology is most suited. Such a qualitative approach allows us to correctly estimate the authenticity of the answers of the different participants and to gain an in-depth insight into their interests, motivations and emotions concerning the relationships with other stakeholders. The semi-structured interview form we opted for

has the advantages of both structured and unstructured interviewing: it is possible to gain an overview of the responses and to make objective comparisons, while still being able to ask for clarification to answers. On the other hand, the interviewers need to do research before actually starting the interview in order to make the results reliable (Edwards & Holland, 2013). To overcome this possible disadvantage, an extensive literature review was undertaken before the start of the interviews. Another disadvantage of this methodology is that there is no interaction with or feedback from other parties, so the researcher gains insight into individual perceptions only and therefore, multiple interviews are needed to identify a range of issues (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2010). For this reason, we approached as many suitable respondents as possible, striving for an equal representation of different stakeholder groups.

Several measures were taken to assure the reliability of our research. Reliability is defined as 'the consistency of the analytic procedures, including the account for personal and research method biases that may have influenced findings' (Noble & Smith, 2015, 34). Both Rosalie and I are employed in the archaeological sector: she works as a PhD student at the VUB and I work as a tutor for the archaeological department at KU Leuven. As a result, we already had foreknowledge about the context of this study and we could reach out to our network to find respondents. We were conscious of possible bias and careful to avoid it by practicing reflexivity in order to balance subjective expectations to the study topic. In addition to reliability, validity is an important criterion used to evaluate the credibility of research findings. Validity is defined as 'the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data' (Noble & Smith, 2015, 34). In order to ensure validity in our research, the respondents were carefully selected and intercoder reliability was ensured for the respondents about whom we shared the data.

We obtained the (spoken) permission of all respondents to record and transcribe the interviews, on the condition of anonymity and confidentiality. This means we will ensure all data are kept private and are only accessible to the research team. We will remove personal identifiers to protect the identity of the participants if possible, because the archaeological sector in Flanders is quite small and the description of the profile of the respondent can lead to the identification of the person.

3.2. Data collection

We opted for individual semi-structured face-to-face interviews, either at work or at home with the interviewee. After the 18th of March, all interviews were conducted via Skype for Business as a result of the measures to combat Covid-19 which prohibited any non-essential travel. The duration of the interviews varied between 50 minutes and 2 hours. The interviews were all transcribed in order to facilitate the analysis strategy.

The collection of data was done with purposive sampling, i.e. selecting respondents according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. First, we made a list of possible respondents, based on internet research and verification with our network. We made sure to balance the respondents in each stakeholder group (e.g. different kinds of companies and various research institutions). All interview invitations were sent via e-mail. In some cases, respondents mentioned other contacts we might interview, because they might share a different opinion in order to allow us to have a complete overview of attitudes within a certain stakeholder group. This snowball sampling technique was the data collection method for a minority of the respondents we interviewed.

In the earliest stage (January - March) of the data collection, we started with the so-called 'shared' stakeholder groups and interviewed the first respondents together. One of us interviewed the respondent while the other observed. This allowed us to receive more background information than if we would have interviewed these respondent separately. In a later stage (end March – May) we each interviewed the remaining respondents alone but shared our data with each other for the analysis.

In the table below an (anonymous) overview of the different respondents can be found, together with the date of the interview and the interviewer.

Nr.	Stakeholder group(s)	Profile of respondent	Date of interview	Interviewer	Number of words
1.	Commercial archaeology	Respondent is active in the Flemish archaeological companies within the sector and manager an archaeological company in Flanders	29/01/2020	Rosalie and Freija	15.314
2.	Commercial archaeology	President of an umbrella organization of entrepreneurs in Flemish archaeology and works full-time for an archaeological company	6/04/2020	Rosalie	4.158
3.	Commercial archaeology / public outreach	Co-director of an archaeological company and editor of a public-oriented magazine about archaeology	26/03/2020	Rosalie and Freija	8.118
4.	Commercial archaeology	Respondent worked for an archaeological company for several years before going into the academic sector	30/04/2020	Rosalie	2.182
5.	Commercial archaeology / academic archaeology	Employee of an archaeological unit of a Flemish university and employee of the archaeology department at this university	10/03/2020	Freija	9.590
6.	Commercial archaeology / academic archaeology	Employee of an archaeological unit of a Flemish university and employee of the archaeology department at this university	24/03/2020	Freija	3.905
7.	Academic archaeology / government	Head of a governmental heritage department, lecturer at two Flemish universities	24/03/2020	Freija	9.428
8.	Commercial archaeology / academic archaeology	Head of an archaeological LRD division of a Flemish university and professor of archaeology at a Flemish university	5/02/2020	Rosalie and Freija	7.505
9.	Academic archaeology	Professor of Archaeology at a Flemish university	3/03/2020	Rosalie and Freija	5.717
10.	Government/ academic archaeology	Head of the research department of the Flemish Heritage Agency, guest lecturer at a Flemish university	5/03/2020	Freija and Rosalie	9.428
11.	Government	Employee of an inter-municipal heritage service	5/05/2020	Freija	5.686

12.	Academic archaeology	Professor of Archaeology at a Flemish university	28/05/2020	Freija	6.077
13.	Government	Quality assurance employee at the Flemish Heritage Agency	12/05/2020	Freija	5.411
14.	Academic archaeology	Professor of Archaeology at a Flemish university with experience in governmental and public archaeology	27/05/2020	Freija	6.060
15.	Government	Employee of an archaeological department of a regional government	4/06/2020	Freija	5.100

Table 4. Overview of respondents from each stakeholder group

The questions asked concerned mainly the relationship of the interviewee with other stakeholder groups. Some conceptual models of stakeholder theory were applied to the design of the interview questions. Table 1 provided in the appendix is an overall interview guide providing an overview of the questions that were asked and their relevance to the research.

3.3. Data analysis

After the collection of the data, we transcribed all the interviews word by word, taking into account non-verbal expressions based on the paper notes taken during the interviews. The analysis was carried out with the software NVIVO 12. This software allows the researcher to import all sorts of files, therefore policy-related documents were taken into consideration in the analysis. More specifically, annual reports for archaeology of both 2018 and 2019 of the Flemish Heritage Agency were added, together with the recent report about knowledge enhancement, published in June 2020. Two more papers and a report of a parliamentary session were included, because these documents contain personal views of actors belonging to important stakeholder groups. These additional documents were referred to non-anonymously and can be found in the bibliography, as these are established and published personal views of archaeologists, contrary to the information provided in the interviews.

For the content analysis, a mixed a-priori and inductive approach was used, seeking to generate new elements from the existing data (Mortelmans, 2017). The aim of the analysis was not to test a predetermined hypothesis, but to use an emergent framework to group the data and look for relationships. The identification of the framework was guided by the

research question. As Rosalie Hermans and I both had different research questions and other focal stakeholder groups, we decided not to compose the same coding scheme but both compile our own document and compare the results afterwards in order to ensure intercoder reliability. The interviews were first coded by hand, with constant comparison, meaning we compared each new passage of text with all those passages we already coded in that way. This way, we could arrange the different responses into categories and identify recurrent themes. Intercoder reliability was ensured by comparing both coding schemes. The software NVIVO 12 helped to define these nodes and allowed us to objectively analyze the data. The initial codes generated in NVIVO 12 were compared with our own findings, in order to increase the internal reliability and validity. Thereafter, axial coding was performed and central themes emerged, while the insignificant nodes became even less prominent. The central themes are elucidated in more detail in the analysis section of this study.

The combination of the a-priori approach and the inductive approach is visible in the fact that nodes were drafted before the start of the coding and were further defined during the process itself (Mortelmans, 2017). Table 2 in the appendix provides an overview of all nodes and relationships. It will become clear that the majority of these nodes emerged from elements that appeared in the literature review, summarized in the table at the end of the chapter. When respondents talked about interesting relationships which are not the focus of this study (such as politics), an additional node was created to code this information. However, these nodes are not included in the analysis.

4. Analysis

4.1. Introduction

In this section, the internal stakeholder relationships will be discussed first, followed by the external stakeholder dimension, based on the NVIVO analysis. After the data analysis, the existing notes and relationships were summarized and formed into a comprehensive unit, without the intention generalize too much and with attention for individual opinions. The internal dimension highlights the interplay between two actors within the same stakeholder group (e.g. two companies within the group of development-led archaeologists, or two governmental actors). It is useful to study the internal relations first in order to uncover on the one hand possible conflicts and potential power imbalances and interdependency on the other hand (Deschepper et al., 2014). The external stakeholder part consists of the potential causes of conflict outside the internal environment. The first part focusses on the relationship between academic and commercial archaeology, because of the need to carefully describe those two stakeholder groups in order to answer the research question of this dissertation. Secondly, the interests and themes described in the first part of the external stakeholder dimension are described in relation to the position of the government and thirdly in relation to the interests of the general public. Finally, some conclusions are drawn.

A visual summary of the documents and interviews coded is given in the hierarchy chart below. This figure can help to see patterns in the coding. The innermost ring is the top level of hierarchy. Some rings have segments, which represents 'children' in the hierarchy. Based on this figure, it becomes clear that the node 'commercial archaeology' is the largest segment, followed by the government. The node 'academic archaeology' is rather small. This derives from the fact that big topics such as 'quality' and 'market orientation' are placed under the node 'commercial archaeology', because these are inherently part of this segment. The node 'government' is larger than previously assumed. As a result, this stakeholder group received a prominent place in this study. As mentioned above, the node 'politics' is not used in the analysis. When the respondents mentioned something related to this topic, it was coded in this node because at first it was unclear if this stakeholder group would or would not have to be further explored in order to provide an answer to the research question, namely stakeholder relationships between commercial and

academic archaeology. After all coding was done, it became clear that this node did not need further clarification.

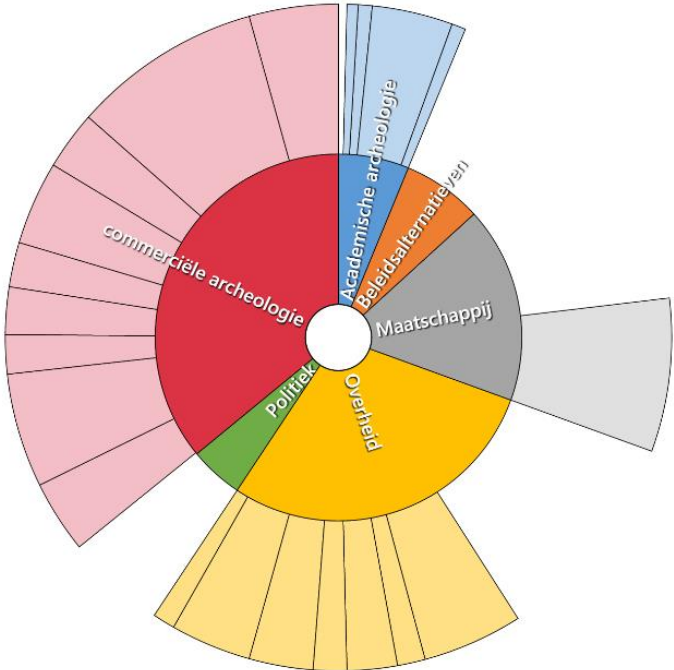


Figure 7. Hierarchy (sunburst) chart of all nodes in NVIVO 12.

4.2. Internal stakeholder dimension

4.2.1. Academic archaeology

The relationship between the three Flemish universities offering an archaeology program (KU Leuven, UGent, VUB) is a complex one. Despite some shared research projects (such as the CRUMBEL-project conducted by VUB and UGent), there are no real partnerships between these actors. In rare cases, lecturers at one of the three universities also act as guest lecturer at one of the other institutions. When this happens, it tends to accelerate and facilitate cooperation. Respondents working for these educational institutions all admit that there is a competitive environment, both for research grants (as they all apply for FWO-grants) and for new students (as subsidies are granted for all new students and for students who obtain their master's degree). The available avenues for funding thus do not encourage collaboration. Respondents indicated that it is easier to work together with colleagues in the Netherlands, France and the Walloon region since they are not in the same pool for research grants, apart from the EOS-funding, for which the collaboration of two research institutions is a prerequisite. For governmental research funds such as the synthesis studies (described in detail below), the competition is less pronounced, because the subject of those research projects should be Flemish archaeology, while the subject of most academic research lies abroad.

One could argue that archaeological education in Flanders is sufficiently diversified for students to choose a university based on their own interests, because the courses that are offered are often closely related to the specialization of the professors working for each university. One respondent from UGent indicated that he fears budget cuts for personnel due to the economic crisis in the aftermath of the coronavirus, which could lead to a reduction in the number of courses (as happened with the archaeology program at KU Leuven a few years ago). The respondent believed this cut in investments for the program could cause lower enrolment rates. However, other respondents indicated that the course subjects or the number of classes offered is often not the main reason for students to choose a particular university.

4.2.2. Commercial archaeology

The commercialization of the public archaeological sector caused an increase in the competition between different actors within the field. Respondents indicated that in the

early days competition was higher, but today the atmosphere is more relaxed due to the growing number of contracts in the sector and an increased demand for archaeologists in general. Recently, new partnerships between different companies have been established, aimed at a higher capacity or expertise within a certain field. This mainly concerns subcontracting and temporary joint ventures, meaning that one company always takes the lead and clear arrangements are made before the start of the project. Most respondents evaluate these collaborations positively, mainly because more experience is shared. In other circumstances 'it feels like every company is an island on its own'.

However, commercial respondents indicated that they would only collaborate with companies they trust and have the same 'values', meaning quality standards for excavation. Qualitative work requires extra efforts that cannot be passed on to the developer, which sometimes makes a company less competitive. Some companies are blamed for submitting a discounted tender and charging additional costs at a later date. According to some respondents this 'disgraces' the archaeological sector and gives developer the impression that the archaeological process cannot be accurately budgeted.

As indicated in the literature review, most development-led archaeologists actually do not prefer the commercialization of the sector. The main reason for this is that the archaeological market is not a classical model of a free market, as the client has no added value in a high-quality execution of the work. Indeed, a more qualitative approach inherently means a higher cost. One respondent indicated this as follows:

"Why would you pay one euro extra to someone because he can explain the archaeological process well? I mean, they prefer to hire a cheap, blind archaeologist. This is very simple." (Respondent 1, personal communication, 29/01/2020)

The growing market and the fact that demand exceeds supply means archaeologists have one hundred percent employment rates right after graduating. This situation is unheard of prior to the commercialization of the sector. However, for several years, archaeologists have been working in uncertain conditions at the pay rate of an unskilled laborer (Vlaams Parlement, 2017) without much attention for safety. Only the last five years better terms of employment have been agreed upon, partly with the emergence of the interest group VLAC (Vlaamse ondernemers in archeologie). Nonetheless, there are still stories

⁷ Since the interview was in Dutch, the original statement is the following: *"En waarom zou je een euro meer betalen aan iemand omdat hij het goed kan uitleggen? Ik bedoel, ze willen liefst van al een goedkope, blinde archeoloog hé. Dus dat is heel simpel."*

nowadays, about employers who do not want to pay for the necessary resources for their employees, such as access to scientific journals or even central heating during the winter period. Respondents indicated that at this moment, mostly experienced archaeologists are dissatisfied with their job, mainly because of the lack of career opportunities. Despite the overall positive evolution of these labor conditions, some archaeologists still dedicate a lot of their free time to their jobs, especially when they care about topics such as public participation and research communication.

4.2.3. Government

This stakeholder group consists of many actors, namely IOEDs (Intergemeentelijke onroerend erfgoeddiensten), OEs (Onroerend erfgoedgemeenten), the Flemish Heritage Agency, regional archaeological institutions such as urban archaeologists, heritage consultants and smaller local groups at municipal level. The most important stakeholder within this group is the Flemish Heritage Agency, because this institution is involved in both policy making and executive work. Many respondents indicated that within the Agency, internal relations are far from ideal. There is said to be a high staff turnover and employee dissatisfaction. The respondents ascribed this to the fact that the Agency is too hierarchical, with a lot of 'incompetence or unwillingness at the top of the organization'. They feel executive staff is more focused on monuments and buildings and consider archaeology (and landscapes) far less important. The policy department and the research and management departments often disagree on certain matters, despite the presence of archaeologists on all levels. Respondents working for the government said that the organization of the Agency and the tasks they take up 'make no sense and this is perceived from the way the employees perform their jobs'.

Other governmental actors have to collaborate often with the Agency, but none of these respondents was entirely satisfied about this relationship. Respondents believe a lot of employees at the Agency mean well, but are not given enough responsibilities or time to deal with certain matters themselves. Communication appears to be the biggest stumbling block, and they feel like they are not heard by the Agency. The Agency seems to be aware of this problem. Minister Matthias Diependaele has commissioned a new green paper, in which he wants to map alternatives for policy-making, and explore methods to more accurately involve local actors in the process.

4.2.4. Interim conclusion

In the chart below, a summary of the internal dimension of the stakeholder analysis is provided.

Internal analysis	
Academic archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few partnerships - Competition for enrolment rates and research projects - Budget cuts imposed by the academic government or the faculty are a constant threat to the quality of archaeology programs
Commercial archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnerships become more frequent, and this is evaluated positively (both for the sharing of knowledge and the creation of a less competitive environment) - Although the market is booming, a changing political environment with budget cuts or different regulations is a possible threat - Experienced commercial archaeologists sometimes feel undervalued due to the labor conditions and the lack of career prospects
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flemish Heritage Agency is the most important player within the stakeholder group - There is a lack of communication between the Agency and the other governmental players.

Table 6. Internal analysis

4.3. External stakeholder dimension

4.3.1. Academic archaeology and commercial archaeology

4.3.1.1. Quality

In the literature review, the conclusion was reached that all parties see salvage archaeology as an improvement. After analyzing the interviews, this statement needs to be qualified. Although none of the respondents explicitly pleads for a return to the situation of archaeology in Flanders prior to the immovable heritage decree in 2013, implemented in 2016, some respondents have reservations about the impact on the quality of salvage archaeology excavations. Academics believe that Malta archaeology automatically means a separation of interpretation and excavation. This reality becomes painfully clear in some small elements, such as the current name of Stone Age sites quoted by the Flanders Heritage Agency, namely 'Stone Age Artifact sites'. Although Professor Wim de Clercq says in his testimony to parliament that 'according to the Valetta treaty, the separation of research and excavation has no *raison d'être*', (Vlaams parlement, 2017) many academics believe that the current legislation in Flanders does not allow for interpretation of the 'rescued' data. Dries Tys even calls this phenomenon the 'Malta Boomerang' (Tys, 2015), by which he means that there is not enough time for post-excavation research, which will result in archaeology based on empirical evidence rather than research questions. Some academic respondents stated that as long as the observer on the site does not adopt a scientific attitude and asks the right questions in order to interpret the site later on, we gain nothing from the fact that the companies 'prepare the data' for the researchers. Either the companies have to do the scientific interpretation, or the academics have to be involved earlier in the process.

Both academics and companies consider the debate about quality in Flemish archaeology a difficult one. Academics are dissatisfied about the fact that they have to rely on the companies in order to have access to qualitative data for their own research. One academic respondent indicates this as follows:

"Academic archaeology has a major problem, that is the fact that we have to chase after commercial archaeology. This data has to be qualitative, so that we can work with it and

*there are nearly no opportunities to carry out scientific excavations anymore.*⁸
(Respondent 9, Personal communication, 3/03/2020).

Others have given up on collaboration with certain companies, stating that ‘in their worst nightmares’ a company would excavate a site within their field of study and therefore would not ‘do things properly’. Some commercial archaeologists on the other hand feel rejected by academics who describe them as ‘soil remediators’ (*saneerders*) instead of archaeologists, while they try hard to deliver quality and keep the construction sector satisfied, a combination which often results in them having to invest in research outside of working hours. One commercial archaeologist brought this up as follows:

*“(...) but we notice often that universities – rightly so – think the dataset we provide is not sufficient for research purposes. This is of course very painful, because, you could say... I maybe am a soil remediator who collects the data, but those records are not even good enough for universities. (...) this means that as a sector, we are doing the wrong thing.”*⁹ (Respondent 1, personal communication, 29/01/2020).

They indicate that they now ‘rescue’ 80 per cent of all archaeology in the soil, and if universities want this number to be 95, they should know that the additional cost of salvaging this 15 per cent is disproportionate to the gain of data. Of course, this argument does not take into account the general problem of the separation of data and interpretation discussed above.

Nevertheless, most of the commercial archaeologists who were questioned indicated that they were also concerned about the quality of (post)excavation and research at this moment. Elements such as market competition and time pressure (certainly with mechanical labor involved) are invoked, which are of course not new, and other factors include the fact that some companies are less motivated to pursue knowledge enhancement (the so-called *nine to five mentality*) as well as the composition of many teams, which often consist of a lot of young archaeologists who have not yet acquired expertise in all of the scientific excavation methods. Some commercial archaeologists

⁸ Original statement: *“Academische archeologie heeft natuurlijk het grote probleem dat wij moeten achter de commerciële archeologie aanhollen hé. Die data moeten van kwaliteit zijn voor ons zodanig dat wij ermee kunnen werken en er zijn bijna geen kansen meer om wetenschappelijke opgravingen uit te voeren.”*

⁹ Original statement: *“(...) maar wij merken vaak dat een universiteit –terecht- vindt dat de dataset die wij verzamelen niet voldoende is om een onderzoek verder te doen. Dat is natuurlijk wel pijnlijk want, ja, je zou kunnen zeggen, ik ben dan wel een saneerder die gegevens verzamelt, maar blijkbaar zijn die gegevens nog niet eens voldoende voor de universiteit. Om mee verder te gaan, dan ben je echt wel... verkeerd bezig als sector natuurlijk.”*

indicated that they do not have a library at their disposal because their employer is not willing to invest in it, and therefore cannot perform adequate research. Some respondents working for a company indicated that they would like to have more information about the research carried out by the academics and that a lot of erroneous sampling and data collection could be prevented if they received more instructions and could discuss the excavation with the experts. A system such as the French URM (Unité Mixte Recherche) was suggested by academics as a possible solution to this problem.

It should be noted that academics and commercial archaeologists are not diametrically opposed to each other in this discussion. Multiple respondents (university staff and others) indicated that academic fieldwork is not always more qualitative than rescue archaeology. Everything depends on the individual carrying out the excavation. This individual should always adopt a scientific attitude and the archaeological activities should not become 'routine' work. All academics said that the quality of the work of all companies differs and cannot be measured by the same yardstick. Companies whose archaeologists are offended by statements about quality by academics are clearly the ones that care and do their best. In addition, respondents who work in both commercial and academic projects declared that their academic colleagues did not dislike their 'speedy' approach. They are convinced that it is possible to be efficient and still deliver quality, and that it comes down to making the right decisions.

Concerning quality, most of the respondents blame the government. Only one of them indicated that the minimum standards for excavation as described in the code of good conduct will certainly lead to a qualitative excavation. The others want the government to take on a sterner role and guard qualitative excavation and research. In the parliamentary assembly report concerning archaeology (Vlaams parlement, 2017) Wim De Clercq emphasized the importance of the government and the Flanders Heritage Agency in quality assurance by means of the ratification of archaeological notes. In 2019, the Flanders Heritage Agency changed their procedures reducing their own role in the process from ratification to taking note (Ribbens en De Grootte, 2020). This issue is further elaborated below in the section about the government.

4.3.1.2. Knowledge enhancement

In his PhD dissertation on late Roman society in Northern Gaul, Vince Van Thienen indicates that Roman archaeology of the 4th and 5th century in Flanders has been 'neglected' since 1990, resulting in the absence of new interpretative studies of this period. The author attributes this negligence to the emergence of rescue archaeology (Van Thienen, 2016). Although it covers a different period, the knowledge enhancement report of the Flemish Heritage Agency seems to confirm this statement. The authors note, after having reviewed all submitted reports of development-led archaeology between 2016 and 2019 that there are hardly any sites without results, but that the knowledge enhancement for late Roman archaeology and the 5th and 6th century in Flanders is limited 'as usual'. Moreover, the report indicates certain methodological problems. Finally, it states that the final notes procedure is a positive way to indicate knowledge that would otherwise be overlooked (Ervynck, Haneca, 2020).

Most academics involved in this study seem to believe that the system of development-led archaeology cannot lead to knowledge enhancement. They highlight the artificial separation of 'heritage artifacts' as data and sites as the residual product as a problematic aspect of this system. Furthermore, there are too many 'regulatory absurdities'. As an example of this, Dries Tys cites a site in Pulle, which was partially excavated because only a part of the site was threatened. Such operations according to him are a waste of effort (Tys, 2015). Urban archaeologists employed by the regional government share this opinion and indicate that when they are informed about excavations carried out in historically 'interesting' parts of the city, they tend to organize the dig themselves. In their view, companies see the excavation too much as a finite project, whereas for the urban archaeological team every excavation represents a jigsaw piece to a historical framework, in which the bigger picture can only be observed with years of expertise in the region.

How can knowledge enhancement be assured? There seems to be multiple opinions. Most academics would like to change the core of development-led archaeology, others are convinced that it is impossible to step away from commercialization now. Dries Tys notes: "I do agree that we have to accept that archaeology cannot demand unlimited time and resources, but we must dare to choose sites whose research potential is important to the research agenda" (Tys, 2015). Gertjan Plets makes a similar suggestion in his paper (Plets, 2016). Commercial archaeologists indicate that this is theoretically an improvement, but

do not think researchers will be likely to cooperate if they do not know beforehand what the site entails, and extensive research will have to be done in advance in order to select sites. The employees of the Flemish Heritage Agency believe that choosing sites would mean carrying out less research in general, regardless of the research quality.

Who should be responsible for knowledge enhancement? Most respondents think it is the duty of all archaeologists to pursue the same goal, namely learning about the past. As a result, none of the respondents wishes to hold only commercial archaeologists responsible for the knowledge enhancement of all development-led projects. However, the government and academics believe commercial archaeologists should show more ambition to adopt a scientific attitude and not see themselves as 'soil remediators' (see above). There is a stark contrast here with the academics' concern about the outsourcing of the Flemish archaeological research *status quaestionis* (*onderzoeksbalans*). This document is currently in need of an update, as the last revision dates from 2008. The Flemish Heritage Agency, which manages the *status quaestionis*, outsourced the scientific update of the first three chapters (Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic) by means of tender. Academic respondents fear that the price of the offer will be the main criterion in the selection of the reviewer, which means that a company could possibly be hired to update this *status quaestionis*. In the academic's opinion, this is solely their terrain of expertise and therefore, they should be involved in order to assure the quality of the work.

4.3.1.3. Grey literature and cherry picking

The debate about grey literature described in the literature review was a minor but constant topic in the interviews. Some academic respondents with experience in development-led archaeology state that 'every site and every report is individual, and it is not for others to judge the decisions taken on the field.' However, most academics were convinced that the development-led reports are difficult to work with. The most common reasons cited were the lengthiness of reports which nevertheless contain only brief descriptions of the site and the artifacts. Interpretation is often missing, caused by the lack of a scientific research question. Some academics also suspect plagiarism in some of the reports, in the form of passages copied literally from synthesis works or other reports. Academic respondents think there should be a better literature review before starting the excavation and writing the report, in order to avoid that "common knowledge is rediscovered because not enough time is spent in libraries" (Tys, 2015). Of course, the

quality problems discussed above are reflected in the reports too. For instance, some natural research methods such as charcoal study and micromorphology are less common in the reports (Ervynck & Haneca, 2020). Finally, academics are dissatisfied with the insufficient checking of the reports by the Flemish Heritage Agency. All of the academic respondents state that they have read ‘unusual’ statements in approved by the Agency, such as contradictory dating and inappropriate use of scientific methods.

The Flemish Heritage Agency understands this criticism and admits that there are problems with grey literature in general, concerning both the quality and workability of the reports, and the fact that academics refuse to work with them, again stressing the argument that universities trained the archaeologists who write these reports. Development-led archaeologists indicate that they have problems with the academic concept of ‘*cherrypicking*’, referring to the academic selectiveness as to choose sites or objects to examine. Archaeologists working for a regional government select interesting sites for knowledge enhancement. Academic researchers, but also divisions such as ArcheoWorks choose sites based on their own research interests. Commercial archaeologists often cannot afford to be this selective. One respondent, who is the manager of a company, said one of his employees is currently doing research for her master’s thesis based on one of their excavation projects, so the data are clearly not ‘impossible’ to work with. Gertjan Plets describes a discussion of the FVA meeting of 2013 where one participant working for an archaeological company criticized the universities archaeological projects abroad and questioned why they are not focusing on the grey literature instead (Plets, 2016). Academics refute this criticism by stating that there is nothing wrong with *cherrypicking*, and it is part of every research process. Academics work thematically on a certain subject and are not there to ‘process’ all data collected during commercial excavations. Some respondents even go so far as to say that it is impossible to use grey literature for research because the excavation is always a partial registration and not a project from a scientific point of view.

4.3.1.4. Academic education

Nearly all archaeologists working in the Flemish sector graduated at one of the three universities offering an archaeology program. However, the relationship between alumni and their alma mater is not always self-evident. Universities train students to become academic thinkers, who can look at the world from a broad perspective and critically

evaluate it. There is some degree of consensus among companies that KU Leuven students are best prepared for fieldwork, UGent students usually have an extensive knowledge of Flemish archaeology itself and VUB Students are best versed in policy. However, companies also think that all universities do not dedicate enough time for students to become good fieldworkers. Universities refute this by saying that they do not aspire to deliver 'trained moles'. Moreover, they believe that companies (and also the Flanders Heritage Agency) offer too little challenge to their new hires by describing some kinds of archaeology as specialisms (e.g. prehistoric archaeology or soil science), while these are in their view among the standard competencies of archaeologists. When it comes to quality, companies believe that academics' complaints are ironic since the universities have trained the field archaeologists themselves, and they should be held responsible for any loss of quality. All things considered, universities seem to understand that students are not always well prepared for the job market. Professor Wim de Clercq made clear at the hearing in the Flemish Parliament that universities would prefer to see a two-year master's program, more specifically two types of masters, namely a research master and a work field-oriented master's program (Vlaams Parlement, 2017).

Internships are an important link between academic education and the job market. VUB presents the choice to let students do an internship at a company as a negative one, because few other options are available. Academics there are convinced that the students will not learn the work in the same detailed way they themselves did, at big excavations of the government. UGent decided not to allow students to take up an internship at a company because of the varying quality standards of companies. This choice evokes mixed reactions among field archaeologists. Some think this is an unrealistic decision that denies everyday reality, others understand the choice but blame it on the fact that universities themselves are not able to provide enough guidance to students in the field. A group of academics within UGent is in favor of reviewing this measure, but agree that selecting the companies who meet their standards would mean disrupting the market. This is a curious argument given that the KU Leuven does not have a problem with selecting companies who meet their standards. Companies can send projects to the internship team, after which they select the most interesting projects. The internship team admits that this is sometimes a dive into the unknown, but the internship reports can help in assessing the quality of the tasks assigned to students. However, if the report shows that the student has done no meaningful work, it is of course too late for this

particular student, but it could be a warning or a reason to decline projects of this company in the future. KU Leuven emphasizes the fact that they want to supervise their students better in the future and be more present at their internships.

Finally, the fact that commercial archaeology provides employment is beneficial for universities. This results in a higher enrolment rate at all Flemish universities. The media also reported positively about this new situation (Le Bacq, 2018). The jobs companies create influence the career choices of students, leading in turn to more funding for academic programmes.

4.3.1.5. Partnerships

Despite the difficulties, commercial and academic archaeologists often work together in partnerships that value both sides. In the literature review companies such as ArcheoWorks and GATE Archaeology were discussed, whose staff works both for universities and in commercial archaeology. Secondly, there is a structural dialogue between VONA (*Vlaamse Ondernemers in Archeologie*) and universities. Individual companies sometimes ask academics for their opinion and expertise about an excavation they are conducting at that moment and conversely, salvage archaeologists are asked for input about the academic education of universities when it comes to work field orientation. Thirdly, they work together for synthesis studies (*syntheseonderzoek*) commissioned by the government, for which the collaboration between academic and commercial partners is possible and recommended (Agentschap Onroerend erfgoed, 2020). Finally, university staff and commercial archaeologists meet at congresses such as the *Romeinendag* and *Archaeologia Medievalis*.

Most respondents indicated that more cooperation between the two described stakeholder groups is desirable. VONA would like to start their own training courses in collaboration with universities, because the training provided by the Flemish Heritage Agency, which must always take place with the goal of a better understanding of the code of good conduct, does not always meet the needs of companies. Some respondents indicated that they would like academics to share their research and expertise with them on a structural basis, not because they happen to have good relations with someone at the university. Some governmental organizations such as IOEDs try to respond to this and

provide a bibliography for companies in order to enable them to quickly find regional scientific literature.

As mentioned above, academic respondents indicate that there are differences between companies. Their criticisms about quality and knowledge enhancement are mainly directed against the companies they never meet at congresses and that never ask questions to university staff. These companies have a less extensive network and rely only on themselves when it comes to methodological expertise. Academics sometimes even feel indignant when these companies carry out an excavation on a site within their field of expertise without informing them or collaborating. They regret the fact that enthusiastic, passionate companies whose employees often invest a lot of free time in archaeological research, while at the same time trying to increase public support for archaeology, feel offended by their criticism, because they should know they are not the targeted group.

4.3.1.6. Interim conclusion

We can conclude that the interest base of both commercial and academic archaeology was underestimated in the assumption made in the literature review. Both stakeholder groups expressed the desire to cooperate more in the near future. The problems indicated above do not occur among all actors in these two stakeholder groups. For instance, several companies are concerned about quality standards and some academics see development-led archaeology in a positive light. In the tables below, a more accurate view is provided on the stakeholder dimensions before and after the analysis.

Academic archaeology		
Commercial archaeology	<p><u>Assumption:</u></p> <p>Average level of interest: only academics who work in Flemish archaeology have an interest in the work of commercial archaeology as they do the sampling and registration of the data for research. Possible partnerships could be established. However, only a minority of researchers at Flemish institutions study Flemish archaeology.</p> <p>Low level of power: A small number of researchers rely on development-led archaeologists for their data for Flemish archaeology. Most of them do their own sampling. If researchers are interested in a site, they can apply for 'research based on scientific questions' and also gain access to the site.</p>	<p><u>Analysis results:</u></p> <p>Some academics indicate that it is impossible to use commercial data (for multiple reasons). This statement would mean that there is a low level of interest. However, it would be important for academics to ensure knowledge enhancement, in order to contextualize their own research. This is why they would like to be involved in new projects, such as the planned update of the <i>status quaestionis</i>, in order to help maintain the overview of archaeology in Flanders.</p> <p>Furthermore, enrolment rates have gone up since the commercialization of the archaeological sector in Flanders. We could say that these elements contribute to assessing the interest of academic archaeology in commercial archaeology as 'high'.</p> <p>Contrary to what was assumed after reading the literature, academics feel companies have an average level of power because although they do not directly rely on companies for data, a company can carry out an excavation on a site that is the subject of an academic's research, and there is nothing the researcher can do to prevent the excavation. The fact that some companies do not often use certain scientific research methods, results in a loss of data for his researcher, irrespective of the quality, so the analysis cannot be done afterwards.</p>

Table 7. Assessment of interest and power of commercial on academic archaeology

Commercial archaeology		
Academic archaeology	<p><u>Assumption:</u></p> <p>Average level of interest: Commercial archaeologists are affected by the performance of universities when it comes to the quality of education, because they (nearly) only hire candidates with an archaeology degree.</p> <p>Low level of power: Academic decisions do not have a direct impact on the activities of commercial archaeologists.</p>	<p><u>Analysis results:</u></p> <p>After analyzing the interviews, it becomes clear that universities have no intention to specifically prepare students for their work in the field but provide a broad education. In the assumption, the importance of personal contacts between companies and academics was underestimated, since companies often appeal to academics for advice. A good personal relationship increases collaboration.</p> <p>The analysis did not necessitate a change in the level of power.</p>

Table 8. Assessment of power and interest of academic on commercial archaeology

4.3.2. Academic and commercial archaeology and the government

4.3.2.1. Regulation of the archaeological process

Since the implementation of the immovable heritage decree in 2016, the Flemish Heritage Agency has changed its regulations quite frequently. The fourth version of the code of good conduct entered into force last year. The Agency promised to evaluate these regulations no earlier than 2022 in order to allow the sector to adjust to the measures. However, the forecasted future is not very bright for archaeologists: many respondents indicate that they expect the government will evaluate the current legislation as too expensive for the construction sector to bear. Archaeology needs to be cheaper. On the other hand, all respondents feel like not enough government investments were made (both financial and operational) for the archaeological process to be a meaningful and qualitative one. Most respondents do believe that the current situation is an improvement relative to the situation prior to Malta archaeology, because there was no legal framework and all archaeological excavations depended on the goodwill of the construction sector. One respondent called this ‘the Wild West of Flemish archaeology’. Nonetheless, the implementation of the Valetta treaty has been a slow and painful process for all parties, mainly due to a very ill-prepared legislation and its questionable communication, which many respondents blame the Agency for.

Both academic and commercial archaeologists indicated that the Agency’s regulations have at times been ill founded. Decisions like the criteria of the size of the area for mandatory archaeological investigation and the refusal to further expand the archaeological zones seem to be taken under the watchful eye of pressure groups. The Agency admits this, indicating that it is their task to take all stakeholders into account. The immovable heritage decree did not arise in a vacuum within the archaeological sector but is an interplay of different actors, all of which are equally important.

This decree brings both advantages and disadvantages for archaeologists. On the plus side, there is a higher employment rate and more power and room for decision-making for certified archaeologists. Companies indicate that before 2016, the Agency told companies what to do and how to conduct an excavation, leaving commercial archaeologists with a passive role. Today, certified archaeologists make all decisions in the archaeological process (except for the incidental finds or *toevalsvondsten*), which is evaluated both positively and negatively by the same stakeholders. On the downside, most

actors are concerned about quality of archaeological excavations, as indicated above. However, the government and politicians are convinced that all archaeological research done by companies should be equally qualitative, regardless of the likelihood of the presence of archaeological remains. Some development-led archaeologists and mostly academic archaeologists believe that this is not a realistic aim. Dries Tys articulates this as follows: “This will not work if we want to do everything, if we adopt the arrogant position that every dig is equally important” (Tys, 2015).

The Agency indicated that they ‘only impose minimum requirements’ for the excavation work and reporting and that the responsibility lies with the certified archaeologist. However, they should be aware that these minimum requirements are translated as the ‘quality standards’ for market-driven companies. Both academic and commercial archaeologists feel like the Agency attaches too much importance to this market logic, which is reflected also in the assessment criteria of the Agency for the tenders companies sent out to the developers, in which the price has the biggest impact on the evaluation. The Agency defends itself by saying that it does this to meet the requirements of the construction sector, but ironically this is also the most important factor in the choice of a company for the framework contracts for incidental finds, which is paid for by the government.

All respondents from the commercial and academic sector indicated that the Agency should increase control over companies and projects. Immediately after the implementation of the decree in 2016, the refusal rate of all projects was high, but following complaints by the construction sector, the refusal rate lowered over time. From the 1st of April 2019 onwards, archaeological notes or notes are no longer subject to approval, as explained in the figure below (Ervynck, Haneca, 2020). One respondent working for the Agency admitted that some projects carried out now would have been refused before this measure was adopted, but added that politicians asked the employees of the Agency to prioritize the much sought-after guidance of certified archaeologists over the task of (dis)approving archaeological notes.

The guidance of certified archaeologists is indeed much needed, but it should not come at the expense of the evaluation of the projects. One respondent states that ‘he has little good to say about the way in which the Agency treats certified archaeologists’. This group of archaeologists have to make too many decisions by themselves, receiving too little guidance and are sometimes responsible for a whole project without having enough experience in the specific field required. According to the Agency, common sense should be relied upon to a great extent, but respondents think the Agency should guard that this ‘common sense’ is the one of a researcher:

*“I do think the Agency admits that common sense is needed on site. This common sense should be that one of an archaeologist, though, and not that of a merchant. You should be guided by a research agenda, not by the developer. Fair enough, they cannot do everything, just as we cannot do everything, but they should have the reflex to think about knowledge enhancement.”*¹⁰ (Respondent 15, personal communication, 4/6/2020).

In addition, the Agency recently subdivided the certifications in a type 1 (can undertake all forms of archaeological research) and a type 2 (only research without soil intervention) certifications, resulting in even more archaeologists getting certified, which raises the question as to how the Agency will be able to provide sufficient guidance to all certified archaeologists. This eased subdivision is contrasted with the strict approach of the Agency towards academics: if this group does not meet the requirements to be admitted to the certification, they cannot act on site. One of the respondents indicated that the Agency did not think he was suitable for the task although the subject of his doctorate was very closely related to the site in question.

The code of good conduct was designed to set quality standards and to provide guidance to archaeologists, but it issues too many administrative instructions and does not include enough methodological or interpretative support. The code is not considered by most respondents to be a quality standard because ‘the archaeological process is much more complex than is described in the code of good conduct’. Furthermore, the code is conceived too theoretically and is sometimes not practically achievable on the site. One of the respondents testified that ‘you can have ticked all the boxes of the code of good conduct but still have ruined the whole site.’ In addition to this ‘administrative’ code of

¹⁰ Original statement: *“Ik denk dat het Agentschap zelf wel toegeeft dat het op het terrein ook vaak gezond verstand gebruiken is. Dat gezond verstand moet dan wel dat van een archeoloog zijn, en niet dat van een commercant. Dus je mag je niet te veel laten leiden door de projectontwikkelaar maar door dat van de onderzoeksagenda. En fair enough, ze kunnen niet alles doen, wij doen ook niet alles, maar je moet wel de reflex hebben om aan kenniswinst te denken.”*

good conduct, the government should provide guidelines on interpretation and knowledge sharing between different stakeholders.

4.3.2.2. Research

The Agency has reinvented itself several times over the years. One of the most important recent changes is that less research is carried out, although the Agency is still a scientific institution. In their own words, this new focus includes ‘research concerning preservation and valuation of heritage, where in the past knowledge about the history of Flanders was the end goal’ (Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed, n.d.). Before 2014, the Agency was a competitor of university projects in Flanders when it came to research, resulting for instance in privileged access to certain sites. Some respondents indicated that this competition caused considerable tension and that the new focus of the Agency creates a better balance between both stakeholders. Nevertheless, both academic and commercial respondents feel the government should take more initiative in promoting research opportunities. These respondents complained about the *status quaestionis* not being updated since 2008, therefore making criteria for identifying the needs to be met by the synthesis studies seem random. The respondents believed that, given the delay, the update is not important to the Agency, but the research department of the Agency strongly disagrees, indicating that the update is a top priority for them. Very recently, the first steps in this process have been taken, in the form of an outsourcing procedure for the first three out of six chapters of this *status quaestionis*. Some academic respondents reacted negatively to this news, mainly because the application procedure is also open to companies, and they fear that the prize will play a more important role than quality in the awarding of the contract. Academics believe that with this decision, the government ‘will let the ones who ask for guidance guide’.

The synthesis studies mentioned above are in fact subsidized by the government. Each year, around 1 million euro is available for detailed study (further research on one archaeological site) or synthesis study (broad research on one topic). Both kinds of study should have a link with Malta archaeology and therefore work with grey literature. Nearly all respondents evaluated this initiative as positive and have expressed the hope that this funding opportunity will become permanent. However, both commercial and academic respondents criticized the fact that there is no systematic approach in the allocation of these projects. The update of the *status quaestionis* should bring more clarity in this

matter. While some academic respondents appreciate the fact that companies can actively work on research now, others dismiss the possibility of knowledge enhancement from these studies, indicating that 'synthesis studies are the standard recapitulation of everything we already know'. This critique is based on two arguments, the first being the fact that some scholars are not convinced research questions can still be answered *after* a site is already dug up. The second argument derives from the broad criteria the Agency applies for awarding a grant, namely the fact that in practice this consists of 'simple box-ticking and claiming you will investigate all possible remains in order to serve a broad societal value', while a focus study of a defined subject is much more needed. In addition, both commercial and academic archaeologists express their concern about the fact that these synthesis studies are referred to by the government as a solution for every topic that is not prioritized enough by the Agency, such as interpretation, knowledge enhancement and public participation. For example, the Agency decided that every synthesis study should conduct one activity aimed at a broad public. All respondents think this is a valuable action, but the provided budget should be for much-needed research only, and the government could decide to open a subsidy line for broad public initiatives in addition to these syntheses studies. One respondent summarized this criticism as follows:

*"These synthesis studies resemble a trash can, because one can use it to point out that they do something to solve problems. This measure should make all things right. And, one million euro, that sounds like a lot, but... if you were to split it in different pieces, it is not so much anymore. And it is always developed from a commercial point of view. Everything that has been excavated from the start of development-led archaeology onwards, not before. (...) For synthesis studies, there are a lot of criteria and you would have to score on several of them in order to be awarded the money. For instance, our project was refused because there was no public participation included, but what we wanted to do was not suited for public participation. (...) this means you need a certain type of project that incorporates all aspects and that way, you will have a bigger chance."*¹¹ (Respondent 6, personal communication, 24/3/2020).

¹¹ Original statement: "Die synthesesprojecten, ik heb het gevoel dat dat een beetje een vuilbak is. Om ernaar te kunnen wijzen dat er wel iets gedaan wordt. Dat moet alles recht trekken. En ja, een miljoen euro, dat klinkt veel, maar... als je dat gaat opsplitsen in verschillende stukjes schiet er niet zoveel meer over hé. En het moet nog altijd groeien vanuit een commercieel gegeven. Alles wat opgegraven is geworden vanaf het in voegen gaan van de commerciële archeologie. Van ervoor denk ik niet dat je moet afkomen. (...) "Er zijn een heleboel aspecten en je zou op verschillende aspecten moeten scoren. Bijvoorbeeld het project dat wij nu doen was in eerste instantie afgeketst omdat er geen publiekswerk aan gekoppeld was. Nu, wat wij deden, ik zie niet hoe je daar een publieksluik aan kunnen koppelen, dat leent zich daar niet toe. Dat is al meteen een handicap dat je hebt? Je moet dus een bepaald type aan projecten gaan creëren die zoveel mogelijk voldoen aan die aspecten en dan maak je de meeste kans."

4.3.2.3. Partnerships

The government collaborates with academics and commercial archaeologists through IOEDs (*Intergemeentelijke Onroerenderfgoeddienst*) and OEs (*Onroerend Erfgoedgemeenten*), urban or regional archaeologists, depots, incidental finds and heritage consultants. The collaboration for the incidental finds is evaluated positively by all respondents, who indicate that ‘the Agency learns from companies about methods and techniques, while companies learn more about interpretation of finds’.¹² (respondent 10, personal communication, 5/03/2020).

Less frequently partnerships are formed for educational purposes. Fieldschools (the first introduction for students to learn archaeological techniques on the field) quite often involve a collaboration between universities, companies and governmental partners. Some employees of the Agency have a guest professor role in the archaeological department, for example Frank Carpentier at KU Leuven and Marnix Pieters at VUB. In some cases, the Agency outsources valuation research to universities. All respondents indicated that they have good personal contacts with all stakeholder groups, but that there is an absence of structural networking opportunities or consultation between government and universities, whereas this is provided between government and companies. Government employees all indicated that they would like to collaborate more with university staff.

Most commercial archaeologists are dissatisfied with the cooperation with the Agency, the heritage consultants and the depots. Links with the IOEDs and OEs were either more positively received or not mentioned. Both academic and commercial respondents indicated that they felt the Agency is ‘deaf’ to their input. The Agency has a culture of questioning but ultimately does not take the concerns their stakeholders have into account. This leads respondents to state that the role the Agency plays is non-transparent. The biggest stumbling block is the way in which the Agency communicates with companies, for instance about changes in the regulation, which was sometimes communicated very late so that companies could not adapt to the new rules in time.

¹² Original statement: “Dat is ook een manier van kennisoverdracht van ons naar hen en hen naar ons. Op technisch vlak, automatisering en methoden staan zij wel verder dan wij. Wij hebben en tijdje stil gestaan met de overheid... qua interpretatie zijn staan wij nog altijd mijlen ver voor de bedrijfswereld heb ik de indruk.”

Respondents from both stakeholder groups felt mostly negative about their experience with the Agency's heritage consultants. Some commercial archaeologists indicated that, in the past, this collaboration was considered better, because the consultants had a more active role on the field and did not only check the paperwork. Nowadays, academic archaeologists and to a lesser extent commercial archaeologists feel like they can rely on the research department of the Agency rather than the heritage consultants. One respondent indicated that some consultants are not satisfied about their jobs either, resulting in them leaving their post.

The most common complaint concerns the random assessment of cases, with regional differences emerging depending on which consultant is assessing the (archaeological) note. This problem is well-known in the sector and the Agency itself tries to ensure equal treatment of files. In the past, they have tried to curb the discrepancies by first dealing with all files together and later debating only the doubtful cases. Respondents also feel that the arguments provided by heritage consultants in a case under review mostly 'make no sense', but still companies have to take them into account and there is no possible dialogue or room for negotiation. However, since certified archaeologists have a bigger role in decision making in the archaeological process today, this problem should not be so prominent in the future. Communication between heritage consultants and companies is sometimes difficult. One respondent said that their heritage consultant recommended in a meeting with both the company staff and the developer to apply a 'flexible' approach of the code of good conduct in their project and try to lower the costs as 'they seemed to be quite high'. The respondent indicated that their role is to represent the existing regulations and not encourage them to adopt lower quality standards, let alone point out to the developer that the price is too high.

The Valletta treaty and *ex situ* preservation in general lead to a central role for depots in the archaeological process. Flemish legislation sees archaeological finds as private property, which means that the developer is actually the owner of these finds. The owners can choose to preserve the archaeological finds themselves or to deposit them at a certified or uncertified depot. If the first option is chosen, the owner has to provide specialized conservation material (Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed, 2019). Nonetheless, commercial archaeologists said that this is not always the case, because the legislation is not sufficiently enforced.

In Flanders, regional depots can be certified as official heritage depots if they meet certain criteria.¹³ The Agency itself has its own depot in Vilvoorde. Academic respondents and the Agency itself indicated that there are problems with the accessibility of and provision of service by this depot. However, hardly any action is taken by the Agency in order to improve the situation. This problem is less common among other certified depots, but some of them have other problems such as a lack of an accurate inventory of objects. Preservation of material for scientific analysis such as pollen analysis and micromorphology is difficult for depots, resulting in less research potential. Furthermore, all depots have different requirements, making it difficult for archaeological companies to deliver the materials in the way that is expected of them. Some commercial respondents expressed the hope that the government can provide more support for this in the future, both financially and in terms of content.

There is also room for improvement in the collaboration between archaeological companies, academics and IOED's and OE's. OE's play an important role in the archaeological process since they may take over responsibilities of the Agency when it comes to taking note of documentation submitted by companies, such as (archaeological) notes and end reports. Commercial archaeologists indicate that 'in 90 per cent of the cases, this is a positive measure', but in some cases it gets completely out of hand, which can result in extremely loose or extremely strict excavation prerequisites, which is perceived as unreasonable compared to other projects. These municipalities also have the power to exempt plots of land from archaeological research (Ribbens & De Grootte, 2020), which can be dangerous if these institutions are under pressure from local politicians (Vlaams Parlement, 2017). Some IOEDs, such as WinAR (onroerendergoedgemeenten Rotselaar, Bekkevoort, Haacht en Holsbeek) concentrate more on archaeology because of in-house experience, while others focus more on historical buildings and admit that archaeology will not in the near future be a priority for them, such as IOED Pajottenland & Zennevallei. However, even the latter institution takes initiatives such as compiling a regional archaeological bibliography for companies in order to quickly find research material for their archaeological notes. These regional actors often possess a lot of expertise and knowledge about the sites, which makes them valuable partners for companies. The Agency indicated that most reports of incidental finds come from IOEDs

¹³ A list of all certified Flemish depots can be found on the website of the Flemish Heritage Agency: <https://www.onroerendergoed.be/overzicht-van-de-erkende-onroerendergoeddepots>

and OEs, because they keep an eye on construction projects happening in their own municipalities. Some companies are in favor of imposing compulsory cooperation, in the form of an obligation for companies to notify these regional services.

4.3.2.4. The role of the government in the archaeological process

All stakeholders have an opinion on what role the government should play and what the focus of the Flemish Heritage Agency should be. This is a difficult debate, because additional stakeholders not discussed in this study such as politics and the construction sector have a significant contribution to make in terms of policy decisions. While this is true for several topics explored in this study, the role of the government is more problematic because of their direct influence. Nevertheless, this part of the analysis is intended to analyze the interests and needs of the focal stakeholder groups, in order to deliver a complementary view to the paper of Rosalie Hermans, which focusses more on the interests of the construction sector and politics.

Commercial archaeologists would like to see a government that is very active on the field and plays a central role in the archaeological process. In the parliamentary discussion mentioned above, this is referred to as follows: “we would like to see a regulating government that can provide expert guidance” (Vlaams Parlement, 2017). By contrast, the Agency sees itself as an administrative institution which embodies the interests of all parties towards politicians and thus support all actors in the field. Companies feel like this administrative task carries too much weight, calling the Agency a ‘dragon with many heads’:

“The Agency is a dragon with many heads. They have different roles to play and this is done not at all transparently. Sporadically, they come and see you on site, more frequently for bigger projects. The role they play is often incorrect and unwelcome. I would rather not have them on the site, and I would rather represent the legislation myself. If heritage consultants try to circumvent their own legislation for the benefit of developers, what is the purpose of all this? (...) there is a randomness in the assessment of archaeological notes. (...) This is not transparent and the process is very subjective. This situation is really frustrating for our company and it is bad for all archaeologists. The Agency does not seem to notice that.”¹⁴ (Respondent 3, personal communication, 26/03/2020)

¹⁴ Original statement: *“Het Agentschap is een draak met heel hoofden. Zij hebben heel veel verschillende taken om te vervullen. Zij spelen daar ook geen doorzichtige rol in. Zij komen heel sporadisch eens langs op het terrein. Voor de grote dossiers zie je ze meer. De rol die ze spelen is niet altijd correct noch welkom. Dan heb ik liever dat ze niet komen. Dan vertegenwoordig ik liever zelf het beleid. Als erfgoedconsulenten het eigen beleid proberen te omzeilen voor opdrachtgevers, met wat ben je dan bezig. (...) Hoe archeologienota's benaderd worden is ook niet goed. Er is willekeur in de beoordeling daarvan. (...) Er is ondoorzichtigheid en het is ook heel subjectief. Dat zijn dingen die frustrerend zijn voor het bedrijf. Dit werkt heel slopend op de archeologen. Het Agentschap heeft dit niet echt door.”*

One respondent even went so far as to compare the Agency to ‘the ministry’ from the Harry Potter books, a secretive institution that only takes its own interests into account. The general opinion of the governmental role in the archaeological process is thus not very positive.

By extension, academic and commercial archaeologists believe that the government should be a neutral party between the competing archaeological companies, acting as an arbitrator when the balance between research and market orientation is being disrupted. According to the respondents, the government should also provide quality standards for companies, so that all actors can quickly assess the relevance of a project. For example, the archaeology department at UGent feels it is the role of the government to assess the work of companies in order to select projects for their students’ internships and to verify the excavation work on which their research is based. However, all respondents admit that the government does not have enough resources available to carry out this control.

According to academics and commercial archaeologists, the Agency and the government should assume a leading role in the decisions taken on the field, whereas now the certified archaeologist bears too much responsibility. Some respondents indicated that in the past they requested assistance from governmental employees, mostly the research staff of the Agency, and that sometimes, assistance was provided, even though this is strictly speaking not an obligation. This professional assistance is widely appreciated and companies expressed the hope that in the future the Agency could play a more advisory role. Respondents working for the government indicated that this will be problematic, since the government has not been hiring new researchers lately, whereas many experienced staff will retire over the next years, resulting in a loss of knowledge for the Agency.

Despite these strong concerns, there are some respondents (mainly those who have closer contacts with the government and the Agency) who appreciate the orientation of the government today and feel like the sector loses sight of the fact that a lot has been achieved in a short period of time. Many respondents feel the Agency takes the interests of the construction sector too much into account, but the governmental employees tress that it is the task of a governmental agency to accommodate all stakeholders. They believe

that they cannot only advocate for archaeological freedoms, but that they have to serve the interests of society as a whole. One respondent who works for the Agency said:

*“Furthermore, it was very important for the government to play a smaller role in the archaeological process and that the sector itself could have more autonomy and be more responsible. This we see as a goal that we have achieved. Our government creates the framework, but does not control the whole process.”*¹⁵ (Respondent 13, Personal communication, 12/05/2020).

¹⁵ Original statement: “Daarnaast was het ook heel belangrijk dat de overheid zich een stuk terugtrok uit de archeologie en dat de sector een belangrijkere en een meer autonome rol kreeg en dat die geresponsaliseerd werd, ook dat zien we als een behaalde doelstelling, wij zijn eerder een kader stellende overheid dan een controlerende overheid.”

4.3.2.5. Interim conclusion

Academic archaeology		
Government	<p><u>Assumption:</u></p> <p>Average level of interest: The governmental institutions are the mouthpiece of the policy and legislation of archaeology. It is advantageous for academics to have a broad societal support base for their own discipline. However, they do not have a direct influence on the decisions or organization of the research institution.</p> <p>High level of power: the academic sector relies on government funding, based on student enrolment rates.</p>	<p><u>Analysis results:</u></p> <p>According to the analysis, academics feel that since the Agency decided not to focus on research anymore, there is less competition between them and universities.</p> <p>It was assumed that academics would have an interest in the activities of governmental players because a broad societal support base is needed, but the analysis indicated that the government does not play a central role in this. Academics value direct interaction with politics and the public. Therefore, we could argue that the level of interest is rather low.</p> <p>The analysis confirms the fact that academics rely on governmental funding for both educational and research purposes. The government can also exercise power over researchers through e.g. the accessibility of their depots.</p>

Table 9. Assessment of power and influence of government on academic archaeology

Commercial archaeology		
Government	<p><u>Assumption:</u></p> <p>High level of interest: The government organizes the drafting and implementation of archaeological legislation. Companies have an interest in having a significant voice in policy-making.</p> <p>High level of power: Governmental decisions impact companies directly (e.g. if the government would decide to reduce the obligation to carry out archaeological research, companies would have fewer customers)</p>	<p><u>Analysis results:</u></p> <p>This high level of interest is confirmed by the analysis. Commercial archaeologists are afraid to have insufficient bargaining power in the future and to lose out compared to other stakeholders involved in the process of policy-making</p> <p>The power of the governmental actors have become less prominent recently. This can be seen in the fact that the Agency no longer plays a central role in the approval of (archaeological) notes and therefore cannot exercise control. The certified archaeologist has become the most important player in the decision making process and can exercise power, but this power is only by virtue of the governmental legislation. It can be concluded that the level of power of the government on commercial archaeology is average.</p>

Table 10. Assessment of power and influence of government on commercial archaeology

4.3.3. Academic and commercial archaeology, the government and the broad public

4.3.3.1. Public image of archaeology

In order to correctly assess the relationship between the general public and the three previous stakeholder groups, the public opinion on archaeology in Flanders was taken into account in the analysis of the interviews. The most common answers given in the interviews are also summarized by Johan Hoorne in the report of the parliamentary session on archaeology:

“Flanders has a rich archaeological past, mostly unknown, because it is not visible, but also because it is not ‘sold’ to the public. Fortunately, there are many passionate archaeologists who take action, but these initiatives are highly fragmented and one-time projects, that rely on the goodwill of the researcher and the ordering party. There is no wider framework, neither in content nor financially. However, minimal changes to the Heritage Decree would be enough, such as obliging large projects to dictate a part of their budget to public participation.”¹⁶ (Vlaams Parlement, 2017).

The general feeling that Flemish archaeology is not widely known is mostly attributed to the fact that it is not promoted enough. Immediately after the implementation of the Heritage Decree, there was a lot of negative press coverage, for instance the dispute between former mayor of Leuven, Louis Tobback, and an archaeological company. But politicians from smaller villages also questioned the ‘poor result’ compared to the cost of archaeology (Eysen, 2011). Dries Tys describes this as follows: “(...) archaeological research is seen as disconnected from the real world and the profession is underrated by the general public. Archaeology is regarded as an expensive nuisance and its contribution remains unclear.” (Tys, 2015). Local governments discredited archaeologists because of the commercialization. It becomes clear that the operation of heritage and archaeology in a market environment is a delicate issue, and that this situation often creates misunderstandings. One respondent indicated that the local community was opposed to the excavations carried out on one of their sites, and that a resident called one of the hired crane operators anonymously to inform him (fraudulently) that the archaeological company he worked for at that moment was bankrupt and that he did not have to finish the foreseen project anymore. On the other hand, archaeology is sometimes used as a

¹⁶ Original statement: *“Vlaanderen heeft een rijk archeologisch verleden, veelal onbekend, omdat het niet zichtbaar is, maar ook omdat het te weinig verkocht wordt. Gelukkig zijn er heel wat passionele archeologen die daar iets aan doen, maar die initiatieven zijn versnipperd en op projectbasis, afhankelijk van de goodwill van onderzoeker en opdrachtgever. Er is geen breder kader, noch inhoudelijk, noch financieel. Nochtans zouden minimale aanpassingen aan het decreet volstaan zoals grote projecten verplichten een klein percentage van hun budget te besteden aan publiekswerking.”* (Vlaams Parlement, 2017)

'solution' for a project that is received less positively by the public, for instance a building project in a nature area. Commercial archaeologists indicated that, although some passers-by showed genuine interest, they sometimes receive rude questions about their work when working on site. Most of these questions concern the purpose or the price of archaeological work. The FVA (Forum Vlaamse Archeologie) is currently compiling a guide for fieldworkers with standard answers on these topics, because they consider it the task of archaeologists to answer questions from passers-by.

Nowadays, there is a more positive approach in the media, with the finds or the knowledge enhancement being the focus of the articles. Respondents feel that they are finally being taken seriously by the media and that popular support for the discipline is growing. For instance, state secretary (i.e. a kind of junior minister) Matthias Diependaele went to archaeological excavations, which was covered by the press (Van den Houte, 2020). This is a positive evolution. However, one of the respondents was concerned about the way this reporting is done. Archaeologists should be careful not to cause a 'disneyfication'-effect, in which all archaeological finds are 'rare' and 'spectacular'.

*"The press, both written and spoken, archaeology starts... I do not follow it anymore, really, but I always hear the same comment, it always starts back from zero. The way archaeologists are mentioned is always 'they have found something again', as if it starts back from zero. The find is outside of the normal situation, rare. It does not matter if it is a whale or a castle, as long as it comes out of the ground. If this is the actual result of this, then I do not think it is necessary. I think it is overkill. The time we spend on it, we would better use to think (...) whether we do not need to spend time on knowledge enhancement itself".*¹⁷ (Respondent 12, Personal communication, 28/05/2020)

4.3.3.2. Support base

All respondents agree that the public is the largest stakeholder of the archaeological sector. It could be argued that the construction sector is the 'client' of archaeological companies, but this developer will recover the costs spent on archaeology from their own clients, which means that the broad public is also paying for archaeological research. Furthermore, they have a right to 'know' their own heritage. But what exactly does it take to 'know' your own heritage? Does this mean every detail on every excavation has to be

¹⁷ Original statement: *"De pers, geschreven en gesproken pers, archeologie begint daar... ik ben er zelf niet meer in mee, ik hoor altijd dezelfde opmerking, het begint altijd terug van nul. De manier waarop archeologen worden vermeld is altijd 'ze hebben weer iets gevonden', alsof men altijd terug van nul begint. De vondst buiten het normale, het vreemde, het rare, of dat dan een walvis is, of een kasteel, dat maakt niet uit, als het maar uit de grond komt. Als dat het effectieve resultaat ervan is, dan is het voor mij niet nodig. In die zin vind ik dat er overkill is. Laat ons die tijd die we eraan spenderen gebruiken om na te denken (...) of we geen tijd moeten besteden aan kennisverruiming zelf."*

included? Or is it possible to make a selection of sites and materials? This discussion is already elaborated on in the section ‘knowledge enhancement’ above. There are roughly two positions, both coming from academics. One view consists of the idea that archaeologists cannot ask our society to pay for all research, so we have to ‘choose’ sites that will provide us with more knowledge about our own past and to investigate those in detail. The other view comprises the idea that this selection inherently introduces a ‘filter’ on all new materials, determined by what we already know and therefore we will never gain new knowledge. One respondent explained this view as follows:

*“In our society, archaeology means ‘finding things’ and the usefulness of the discipline is frequently called into question, and archaeologists do not sufficiently address these matters. (...) We emphasize too little the value of archaeology, why we do it and why we cannot say: ‘there are two Roman farms, we already have one somewhere, so we can just destroy these’. This is very difficult and people... the sector often says, that they always have to finance the same thing. But they miss the intrinsic value of archaeology and we do not explain it enough. (...) One does not say to an employee from the city archive of Ypres that ‘those annual accounts, you can keep two and the others can be burned, because we already have a good archive from Bruges which is representative’, one does not do that.”*¹⁸ (Respondent 10, personal communication, 5/03/2020).

We can summarize that the public is an important stakeholder (or even a ‘shareholder’), who wants a return on investment, and preferably one we can link to education, tourism and culture. The need for a broader support base is mainly mentioned by respondents from the government and commercial archaeology. Academic respondents prioritized it less frequently, because they assumed a support base would be present anyway:

*“A support base is present anyway. I have never met someone who was not interested in his or her own past. This is our phenotype, historicism. We only have to explain why people need it. That is not the question, it is the content we provide.”*¹⁹ (Respondent 12, Personal communication, 28/05/2020)

Again, the question arises who is responsible for the enlargement of the public support base. Some respondents feel it is the duty of every company to ‘do its share’. Others think it cannot be the sole responsibility of companies and the government should at the very

¹⁸ Original statement: “Archeologie wordt in onze maatschappij voornamelijk bekijken als ‘dingen vinden’ en het nut daarvan wordt regelmatig in vraag gesteld, en daar besteden we als archeologen te weinig aandacht aan. (...) Wij benadrukken dus te weinig het nut van archeologie, waarom we het moeten doen en waarom we niet kunnen zeggen van: we hebben hier nu twee Romeinse boerderijen, we hebben er al maar dat wil niet zeggen dat we deze gewoon kunnen op de schop laten gaan. Dat is heel moeilijk en mensen... de sector zegt regelmatig, wij moeten altijd hetzelfde financieren. Maar zij missen het intrinsieke doel van archeologie en wij leggen het te weinig uit. (...) Je zegt ook niet tegen het archief in Ieper ‘goh ja die jaarrekeningen, we gaan er een stuk of twee houden en de rest verbranden want we hebben van Brugge al een deftig archief, en dat is representatief, dat doe je niet.”

¹⁹ Original statement: “Dat draagvlak is er sowieso. Ik ben nog geen mens tegengekomen die niet geïnteresseerd is in het verleden. Dat is ons fenotype, historiciteit. We moeten hen enkel proberen uitleggen waarom ze dat nodig hebben. Daar komt het niet op aan, het is de inhoud die we eraan geven.”

least give clear guidelines or take initiatives themselves. Most respondents see science communication and public participation in archaeology as the most obvious ‘solutions’ to this problem. However, this will not be an easy task, as the past then becomes political and certain political parties will pay more attention to their own heritage than others. Respondents make clear that the interaction between the archaeological sector and the public is not self-evident:

“Abroad, for example in Denmark, Copenhagen... when you visit the national museum, the prehistoric department, you see a room full of families, schools... people feel a connection with their history. When I visit the Arts and History museum with my students, nobody’s there, we’re on our own. That may be comfortable to teach, but also alarming, because in Flanders there is little connection between archaeology and the inhabitants and we do not have a method to maintain that relationship.”²⁰ (Respondent 7, personal communication, 24/03/2020).

This statement has to be qualified. The Flemish citizen is not a barbarian when it comes to culture. We seem to be interested in the heritage and history of other nations. Lien Van der Dooren uses the example of the Sagalassos exhibition of 2011 of the Gallo-Roman museum to underline this complexity. She indicates that the absence of marketing and promotion for Flemish and Belgian heritage and public participation is the reason for the relatively limited interest of the local residents in their own heritage (Van der Dooren, 2013).

4.3.3.2. Public outreach in archaeology

Public participation, public outreach, community archaeology, science communication and public archaeology are all terms for methods to carry out research in which the public is highly involved. In this section, I will mainly use the term ‘public participation’ because I would like to focus on the initiatives and activities in which the public can actively experience archaeology. These activities and initiatives can take many forms, from social media posts of archaeological companies to re-enactment groups. For academic research, the more appropriate term to describe outreach initiatives is ‘science communication’.

The main problem with public archaeology and participation is the fact that this aspect is at present only incorporated on a voluntarily basis. An archaeological company cannot

²⁰ Original statement: “Als je naar het buitenland kijkt, Denemarken is daar natuurlijk een mooi voorbeeld van, Kopenhagen,... als je daar in de afdeling prehistorie loopt van het Nationaal Museum, dan zit dat daar vol, er lopen gezinnen, scholen... mensen voelen ook een verbondenheid met die geschiedenis. Terwijl als ik met mijn studenten in de cinquantenaire loop, dan zijn wij daar helemaal alleen. Dat is comfortabel om les te geven maar ook zorgwekkend, dat er in Vlaanderen heel weinig verbinding is tussen die archeologie en de bevolking en we ook geen manier hebben om die relatie te onderhouden.”

recover the costs of public participation from the developer, as this is not a part of the obligation. Sometimes, the developer is willing to pay the costs of a project for a broad public because their name is linked with a project that serves broad societal value. Unfortunately, most of the time, this is not the case. Some companies devote attention to public participation by funding projects with their own resources and thereby reduce their own competitiveness. Other companies admit that ‘scandalously little importance’ is given to projects for a broad public. They indicate that it is in fact the job of every archaeologist to give society a ‘return on investment’, but since the government does not oblige companies to do public outreach, they do not spend time and money on it. Additionally, some companies think it is more important to contribute to society through academic articles published in a peer-reviewed journal, than by writing an article in the monthly journal of the local heritage group.

For science communication, there is a similar problem. Although funding institutions such as the FWO include a section on science outreach in project applications, there is no formal obligation for researchers to engage in initiatives aimed at the broad public. It is also felt that academics who write public-oriented books about their own specialization, are not or not adequately accredited for it. Researchers often devote their free time to it, making them less competitive in comparison to other academics as regards academic publications. One respondent illustrated this with an example:

“Last year, we talked about the Bart Van Loo-discussion. How is it possible that a third-rate journalist who was a teacher in secondary school writes the reference work about the Burgundians? Actually, Jelle Haemers or Marc Boone should have done that. But they do not do it, because they do not have time for it and are not accredited for it. This is similar for archaeologists. We can write a new reference work for prehistoric archeology or medieval archeology, but we are not rewarded for it.”²¹ (Respondent 9, Personal communication, 3/03/2020).

However, some academic projects, such as the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project, are a textbook example of how public outreach for archaeological projects should be organized. Sagalassos has published public-oriented literature, has had multiple exhibitions in both Flanders and Turkey, undertakes initiatives that are newsworthy and resonate with the broad public, such as the ‘artisans in residence’ project and the facial

²¹ Original statement: *“Vorig jaar hebben wij de Bart van Loo-discussie ook aangehaald. Hoe kan het dat een derderangsjournalist die eigenlijk gewoon in het lager middelbaar stond hét boek over de Bourgondiërs kan schrijven? Eigenlijk had Jelle (Haemers) of Marc Boone dat moeten doen. Maar die doen dat niet omdat die daar geen tijd voor hebben en er niet voor beloond moeten worden. Dat is bij archeologie ook zo. Wij kunnen ook de archeologie van de prehistorie of van de middeleeuwen schrijven, maar wij worden daar niet voor beloond.”*

reconstruction of two ancient inhabitants of the Turkish city (Van den Eynde, 2019). Sagalassos has a clearly structured website where you can find more information on visiting the city itself, guided tours, 'becoming friends' and more scientific news.

Government employees indicated that they would like universities to spend more time on public outreach in their archaeology program, because archaeologists need to be more active in the public debate. The UGent indicated that they take part in the *Archeologiedagen* and give lectures for heritage organizations aimed at a wide audience. VUB focuses on heritage reflection and therefore attaches great importance to public participation. The KU Leuven programme also has a service learning-project 'community archaeology', with workshops about archaeology for children. The staff of the department also takes part in the *Archeologiedagen*, *Dag van de Wetenschap* and the *Kinderuniversiteit*. The KU Leuven has its own educational museum and science communication organization, called LARS (Leuven Archaeological Research Seminar), with lectures for a broad public on archaeological topics. Despite the fact that academics are often blamed for having an 'ivory tower mentality', universities attach great importance to outreach.

The Flemish Heritage Agency's knowledge enhancement report stated that in the future, more attention should be devoted to the 'translation and therefore accessibility' of the knowledge enhancement from Malta archaeology to the broad public because it is their right (Ervynck, Haneca, 2020). The words 'translation' and 'accessibility' are used as synonyms here, which is identified as a 'common mistake by the Agency' by respondents. The design of a product that is intended for a broad public is not the same as putting an end report of an archaeological company on a website. This problem was addressed in the report of the parliamentary session on archaeology, where Johan Hoorne compared this accessibility-strategy to reducing the Flemish BOB-campaign to referring people to statistics on alcohol and car accidents on the internet (Vlaams Parlement, 2017).

The FVA is a strong proponent of public initiatives for archaeology. The group, who consists of volunteers, started the public-oriented journal *Ex Situ* and created the *Archeologiedagen*, two initiatives that evolved into successful initiatives for public outreach. However, these actions do not receive government funding, only from VONA. The reason for this is that the government has its own organizations for public outreach, such as Herita and the Flemish museums. However, respondents indicated that Herita has no partnerships with most actors in the sector. They are not oriented towards

archaeology, despite the fact that it is their task to operate in this field. Therefore, FVA pleads for a 'more accountable' heritage organization. In addition, few initiatives by national museums concern public outreach related to (Flemish) archaeology. One respondent accurately summarizes the complexities in this relationship:

*"Museums are a difficult matter, and I hope that with the synthesis studies it will be better now, because there is not a systematic link between museums in Flanders and archaeology. All artifacts end up in a depot... and until the 20th century, the Arts and History museum collected all Belgian artifacts, but then it stopped, so it is some sort of fossil museum, what followed afterwards is collected in depots. A retranslation of what happens on the field to what is exhibited in museums is missing."*²² (Respondent 7, personal communication, 24/03/2020).

It seems that public participation in the archaeological sector is still in its infancy. Government employees indicated that, in the future, it is likely that more importance will be given to this topic. However, the respondents indicated that in the past, public initiatives were taken for larger projects such as Ename and Raversyde, but afterwards the Agency chose to no longer focus on public outreach, and that now the same will probably happen again. One respondent compared the Agency's strategy on this matter to the Echternach procession, 'three steps to the front, two steps back'.

²² Original statement: *"De musea bij ons, dat is ook een heikel punt waar we hopelijk gaan uitgeraken, en ik hoop dat dat kan via die projectsubsidies, maar er is geen systematische link tussen de musea in Vlaanderen en de archeologie, artefacten gaan naar een depot... en tot de 20^e eeuw heeft het KMKG alle archeologie van België tot het einde van de 20^e eeuw verzameld, maar dat is dan gestopt dus dat is een soort fossielmuseum, wat daarna is gevolgd zit in depots. Er ontbreekt een doorvertaling van wat op het terrein wordt opgegraven en wat er verschijnt in de musea."*

4.3.4. Interim conclusion

After this third part of the analysis, it becomes clear that the assessment done in the interview needs to be qualified. We will see that both archaeological and commercial archaeologists have a larger interest in the opinion of the broad public as previously assumed. This last stakeholder group will gain influence in the future and it is important for all stakeholders to ‘catch the train of public outreach’.

Academic archaeology		
The broad public	<p><u>Assumption:</u></p> <p>High level of interest: in contrast to science and engineering and bi-medical sciences, nearly all research funding for the humanities comes from taxpayers. A broad societal support base is needed for archaeological research, the awarding of grants, and the selection of topics. Another factor is the enrolment rates for the archaeology programs.</p> <p>low level of power: the broad public has no direct influence on the organization or decision making.</p>	<p><u>Analysis results:</u></p> <p>The analysis indicated that the assessment of the high level of interest is correct. We can add to the original statement that some research projects , e.g. Sagalassos, partly rely on donations from the general public for funding.</p> <p>The statement about the low level of power is not altered by the analysis.</p>

Table 11. Assessment of power and interest of the broad public on academic archaeology

Commercial archaeology		
The broad public	<p><u>Assumption:</u></p> <p>Low level of interest: since there is an obligation for developers to carry out archaeological research, the sector does not have any interest in how the public behaves towards them.</p> <p>Low level of power: decisions or opinions of the broad public do not have influence on the organization of archaeological companies.</p>	<p><u>Analysis results:</u></p> <p>The level of interest was underestimated. It is of vital importance for commercial archaeologists to have public support, because negative opinions (e.g. in the media) soon lead to questions concerning the inherent value of the archaeological process. Government and politics are not immune to this critique and this can undermine the existing regulations and deteriorate the position of the archaeological companies. We should assess the level of interest as ‘high’.</p> <p>The statement about the low level of power is not altered by the analysis.</p>

Table 12. Assessment of power and interest of the broad public on commercial archaeology

4.3.4. Policy alternatives

This section corresponds to the discussion of the legislation concerning archaeology in other countries in the literature review (2.4.1.). The aim of this part of the analysis is not to compare the performance of different legislative models, but to compare the views of the selected stakeholder groups on the current framework in which archaeology in Flanders is organized. In the literature review, it became clear that the issues explored in this study, such as quality assurance and knowledge enhancement, are not unique and would appear in every commercial setting. This section allows a broad framing of these issues and a reflection on the adopted approach, namely the commercial setting.

Most of the respondents indicated that there are roughly two options for the implementation of the Valletta treaty, the ‘Dutch’ (development-led) system and the ‘French’ (government-led) system:

In Europe, there are roughly two systems, a development-led system in which archaeology can always exist, but quality is a concern, and a government-led system in which archaeology exists because of government funding, and the main concern will be the funding. We are in a system where the ‘polluter pays’, although some developers are offered a premium, which entails that a lot of research can be carried out, but in the other system there is only a limited budget and you have to make tough choices. Now, quality assurance is always a concern.”²³ (Respondent 13, personal communication, 12/5/2020).

When asked how to organize archaeology at a legislative level, only one respondent spontaneously brought up the Scandinavian model. The model is explained in detail in the literature review and seems to meet the needs of both stakeholders that are concerned about quality and those who care about a bigger involvement of the broad public. However, since most respondents did not mention this model, it will not be further explored here.

Most of the respondents indicated that if they were to start over again, *tabula rasa*, that they would choose a French system. The UMR-system (*Unité Mixte Recherche*) would mean an exchange of knowledge between different parties. However, many respondents also said that this would mean a ‘step back’ because before Malta archaeology, archaeology in Flanders was government-led. The downsides of this system were that not

²³ Original statement: *“In Europa zijn er grosso modo 2 systemen, het commerciële systeem waar archeologie altijd kan plaatsvinden maar kwaliteit een zorg is, en overheidsarcheologie met overheidsfinanciering, daar is kwaliteit minder een probleem maar de financiering zal altijd dan de zorg zijn. Wij zitten in een systeem waarin de veroorzaker betaalt, sommige doelgroepen krijgen wel een premie, maar dat maakt dat er wel veel onderzoek kan gebeuren, maar in het andere systeem moet je het doen met een bepaald budget dat beschikbaar gemaakt is en dan moet je ook harde keuzes maken. Die kwaliteitsbewaking is een zorg.”*

all work was reported, most sites were destroyed and the archaeologist on the field had little responsibility. However, the conditions in which excavations took place were better and government funding would mean a 'fairer' market because the party who benefits from knowledge enhancement pays for the excavations, namely the government with tax payer money.

Respondents from all stakeholder groups indicated that the current setting rules out government-led archaeology as an option for the future. For the construction sector, time and money are both equally important, and it is believed that government-led archaeology would mean both higher prices and longer waiting periods. This element combined with the fact that political parties are not in favor of a large government and more permanent positions causes respondents to say that a switch to the French system is 'rather utopic'.

Some pleaded for an intermediate solution. One solution could be an expanded role for the government in fieldwork. It should be clear for companies from the outset what methods they should use on every site. If a company would like to carry out the work differently, they would have to apply and motivate. The government would have to approve this start of the excavation. This method would allow the government to anticipate and not remediate, as is the governmental approach today. This would be an improvement because it is clear that an archaeological excavation can only be done once. Thus, remediation is not at all possible. However, the realization of such an instruction manual would mean a large government investment.

Another intermediary solution is a solidarization of the burden of archaeology. Most respondents see this as a 'tax' all developers would have to pay. This way, bigger investments or sites that take more time to excavate could count on a rebate. The government has already drawn up a framework for a solidarity fund for projects with disproportionate costs, but according to the annual reports of the Flemish Heritage Agency, no archaeological solidarity fund has so far seen the light of day. It is clear that this solidarity fund is hard to realize on the initiative of archaeological companies with a little amount of players who participate in the fund. Alternatively, part of the commercial and academic respondents would like to see the government as the main initiator of this fund.

Respondents in favor of choosing sites for knowledge enhancement (as explained above) see a tax or solidarity fund as a funding strategy for their research-oriented approach. In this situation, all developers would have to pay for archaeology but only a few of them will have to 'endure' the research. This option would entail a more research-oriented government that assures quality and actively controls the fieldwork. These conditions are also stipulated in another intermediate solution: excavations paid for by developers, but administered by the government. This option would enable the government to select all companies for development-led projects. The construction company pays a fixed amount to the government, and the government can choose an archaeological firm based on (regional) specialization, staffing, time and money. This would create a 'monopsony' in which the quality of the product plays a role and where demand is not only based on the lowest price.

4.4. Conclusion: stakeholder relationships explained

The following table is a summary of the interim conclusions mentioned above. Each assessment (before and after) is motivated in the earlier parts. The aim of this conclusion is to clarify how the assumptions based on (a part of) the literature review were refined by the analysis. The most striking differences are to be found in the interest of commercial archaeology in the broad public, as it became clear that most respondents working in development-led archaeology consider society to be their most important stakeholder and indicated that it was very important for commercial archaeology to have broad popular support. Smaller changes include the higher level of power of commercial archaeology over academic archaeology and the lower interest of academic archaeology in the government. Another minor smaller adjustment is the declining power of the government on commercial archaeology due to an internal refocus.

Stakeholder group of focus: Academic archaeology							
		Low		Average		High	
Commercial archaeology	Interest						
	Power						
Government	Interest						
	Power						
Broad Public	Interest						
	Power						
Stakeholder group of focus: Commercial archaeology							
		Low		Average		High	
Academic archaeology	Interest						
	Power						
Government	Interest						
	Power						
Broad Public	Interest						
	Power						

Table 13. Summary of power and interest for stakeholders of both academic and commercial archaeology

X: Assumption based on literature review

X: Analysis

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The aim of this dissertation is to correctly assess stakeholder relations in the archaeological sector in Flanders and more specifically between academic and commercial archaeology. A first internal analysis pointed out that there is little cooperation between academic partners. Partnerships between commercial archaeologists, on the other hand, are more frequent compared to five years ago, at the start of development-led archaeology in Flanders. Governmental partners depend on each other and therefore cooperate frequently, but communication is not always optimal. The external analysis indicated that the level of interest between academic and commercial archaeology is high and despite the fact that the water is quite deep between both parties, most of them admit that more and better collaboration would be preferable to the current situation.

Both commercial and academic archaeologists have high expectations of the role of the government. However, the government does not see itself as a regulatory body, but more as an institution that facilitates archaeological work in Flanders. Generally, stakeholders would like the government to give more direction in the archaeological process and communicate more transparently. The last group in the analysis is the broad public. This is without doubt the stakeholder group that will gain more power in the future. A broad support base is essential, particular for commercial archaeologists and to a lesser extent also for academics. Finally, policy alternatives as mentioned by the respondents were reviewed in the analysis. Most respondents would prefer to modify existing framework for archaeology because the introduction of a new system seemed unfeasible to them.

An important issue that falls outside the scope of this paper is the exploration of the stakeholder group 'broad public'. This is the subject of Lien Van der Doorens master thesis, but this research dates from before the implementation of the heritage decree and therefore does not provide the most recent information. It would be interesting to review the perceptions of the broad public, for example by means of a survey and a quantitative analysis. Secondly, the internal stakeholder analysis of the government can be tackled more comprehensively, as there are some actors that have not been interviewed individually. As a suggestion for further research, a comparison between the archaeological process in Flanders and other (European) regions could be proposed.

Recommendations and possible managerial implications are the following:

- Design two types of master programs for archaeology (preferably a master of two years instead of one), namely a research master and a fieldwork master.
- Set-up of a body of communication (comparable to the French UMR-system) between academic and commercial archaeologists and governmental institutions according to regional or thematic expertise. In addition, it should be clear for commercial archaeologists which academics they can approach for which questions.
- Increase the accessibility of the depots and focusing more on materials for natural science study.
- Increase partnerships between different stakeholder groups so that all actors are on the same page. This way, the archaeological sector can represent a united front to policy-makers and politicians.
- The government should require companies to inform IOEDs and OEs about the excavations commercial archaeologists carry out in their region.
- Opening a separate subsidy channel for public outreach initiatives and subsequently exempting synthesis studies from obligations for public outreach.
- Encourage archaeological companies to include a budget for public outreach in their offers to the developers or introduce a tax for the purpose of public outreach initiatives.
- The government should appoint an expert on public participation who can be the spokesperson for all archaeological public outreach initiatives. This employee can support existing initiatives and answer questions from companies.
- Fund existing initiatives for public outreach which are currently carried out on a voluntary basis in order to ensure continuity.
- More attention should be devoted to the organization of the archaeological sector in other countries, which may provide useful models that are not generally known, such as the Scandinavian model.
- Encourage archaeology departments at universities to do science communication about their fields of expertise.
- Involve museums with archaeological finds. Create an interplay between commercial archaeologists and museums which results in the possibility for citizens to see the result of an excavation nearby in their local museum.
- Make sure public initiatives are qualitative and guard this quality. Archaeology is not a consumption product and requires reflexivity and focus.

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