

The Conservation  
Theme of the 5th World  
Archaeological Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
June 2003

# Of the Past, for the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation



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and Conservation**



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Proceedings of the Conservation Theme at the 5th  
World Archaeological Congress, Washington, D.C.,  
22–26 June 2003

*Edited by Neville Agnew and  
Janet Bridgland*

THE GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE  
LOS ANGELES



The Getty Conservation Institute

Timothy P. Whalen, *Director*

Jeanne Marie Teutonico, *Associate Director, Field Projects and Science*

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# Foreword

I am very pleased to write the foreword to this publication of papers from the conservation theme of the Fifth World Archaeological Congress (WAC-5), an international gathering of professional archaeologists, held in Washington, D.C., 21–26 June 2003.

Since its earliest days, the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) has had as one focus of its work the conservation and management of archaeological heritage. Over the past twenty years, the GCI has established itself as a leader in this area, in particular, through conducting training courses and undertaking projects in different parts of the world. At sites as diverse as the Laetoli hominid trackway in Tanzania, the tomb of Nefertari in the Valley of the Queens in Egypt, the Maya site of Joya de Cerén in El Salvador, and rock art sites in Baja California, Mexico; through conferences such as “Management Planning for Archaeological Sites” (2000) and “Conservation of Archaeological Sites in the Mediterranean Region” (1995) and the publication of the conference proceedings; and in specialist colloquia on site reburial and sheltering, the GCI has worked with partners and colleagues on issues related to the conservation of archaeological sites. Many of these undertakings have extended over many years. Most recently, the GCI has embarked on an initiative, with the New York-based World Monuments Fund, to assist in supporting the management of archaeological sites and capacity building of archaeological and conservation professionals in Iraq.

The Getty Conservation Institute’s emphasis on and approach to the conservation and management of archaeological sites corresponds directly with its mission. It is especially appropriate, given the significance of the archaeological record as an archive of the past—a record that increasingly is

under threat from looting, war, development, and mass tourism in many parts of the world.

In recognition of these threats to archaeological sites, the World Archaeological Congress, the only representative worldwide body of practicing archaeologists, which includes among its primary aims promoting the conservation of archaeological sites, invited the GCI to organize the conservation theme, “Of the Past, for the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation,” for its 2003 meeting. This was the first time that conservation was a major theme and an integral part of the agenda of an international archaeological conference. This publication serves as the permanent record of the presentations and discussions on conservation at the congress. Nine resolutions calling for the integration of archaeological and conservation practice came out of the congress and are now included in the statutes of WAC. This is an important step forward.

The partnering organizations for the program sessions are from around the world, and many of the major institutions in the field of cultural heritage conservation co-organized and participated in the sessions. The GCI is grateful for their important and thoughtful contributions to the success of the undertaking. We are grateful also for the invitation of the WAC-5 organizing committee to the GCI to undertake and organize the conservation theme.

With about twelve hundred delegates from sixty-five countries in attendance at WAC-5, the GCI and its partnering organizations created and sustained a successful collaboration that included bringing to Washington, D.C., many foreign delegates, among them—and for the first time—participants from Afghanistan, Iraq, and China. One result is that there is now a member from China on the WAC council.



This step in strengthening the relationship between the professions of archaeology and conservation will bear fruit now and over the long term and will serve as a landmark in encouraging the two disciplines, not only to work together, but also to integrate their thinking and practice for the survival of the archaeological record into the future.

My particular thanks are extended to the steering committee for WAC-5. This included colleagues from within the The J. Paul Getty Trust: Neville Agnew, GCI, who led the committee and our fruitful collaboration with WAC; Claire Lyons,

Getty Research Institute; Jerry Podany, J. Paul Getty Museum; and Jeanne Marie Teutonico, Martha Demas, and Tom Roby, all from the GCI. Janet Bridgland undertook the challenge of coordinating various partner organizations and worked closely with Neville Agnew in the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

TIMOTHY P. WHALEN

Director

The Getty Conservation Institute

# Introduction

*Neville Agnew*  
*The Getty Conservation Institute*

**T**he Pulitzer Prize–winning biologist Edward O. Wilson speculates in his book *In Search of Nature* that we are genetically predisposed to think only one or two generations into the future. An intellectual adventurer, Wilson, in a later book, *Consilience*, strives to make a case for the unity of all intellectual disciplines. The essence of these two ideas—overcoming blindness to the needs of the generation to come and applying a holistic approach to how we should meet obligations to the future—increasingly underlies conservation thinking. Conservation is a futuristic activity vested in the belief that we, who have the power today to safeguard or degrade what is of value to society, should strive to be good ancestors for future generations.

It is this philosophy that prompted the Getty Conservation Institute’s partnership with organizations from around the world to present integrated conservation approaches at the Fifth World Archaeological Congress (WAC-5) in June 2003 in Washington, D.C.

Preservation of the archaeological heritage has always been the concern of archaeology and practicing archaeologists, but it has not truly been integral to the theory and practice of the discipline. The degree to which this concern has been manifested in preservation efforts has covered the spectrum from conscientious attempts to care for and protect sites and excavated artifacts to abandonment. In the past, no doubt, neglect of conservation resulted from the lack of a defined, acknowledged profession to provide the guidance and expertise necessary to ensure preservation, to which may be added that the primary interest of archaeology is in the research and informational content of sites and their buried objects rather than as cultural heritage in need of protection and preservation. In recent times, however, increasingly a cen-

tral role in conceptualizing, decision making, and implementation regarding preservation of archaeological materials and sites has been claimed as the domain of conservation. It is clear too that conservation has matured as a truly interdisciplinary profession in response to needs that transcend the traditional role of the conservation technician working on an archaeological site. Indeed, the interface between archaeology and conservation has been growing stronger, particularly as a holistic approach to decision making that includes stakeholder and community involvement has become more the norm in the planning, assessment, management, and conservation of archaeological sites and collections. And more field archaeologists have come to seek the expertise of conservation professionals, both during and after excavation; but much progress has yet to be made.

When the GCI was invited by WAC-5 to organize sessions on conservation throughout the congress, an unparalleled opportunity presented itself. The WAC-5 organizing committee identified conservation as a major theme for the congress, reflecting the trend of archaeological organizations, most of which have highlighted conservation as a core value of their code of ethics, mission statements, and governance.

Here was an invitation to reach out to the archaeology profession and to communicate a message of holistic conservation, stressing the partnership role that conservation, broadly defined, can play in archaeology, particularly if brought into the process from the beginning. The fifth congress is the first to have a major theme running throughout its duration devoted to the conservation of archaeological sites and materials.

In defining the scope and subject matter for the conservation theme at WAC-5, the emphasis of the GCI planning

committee, which included staff members from the Getty Research Institute and the J. Paul Getty Museum, has been to address global issues that are crucial to the survival of the archaeological heritage in today's world. Among these positive aspects of the evolution of the discipline are policy based and social issues that now counterbalance the traditional scientific and technical domains of expertise in archaeological conservation. Foremost among the directions in which archaeological conservation has moved are methodological site management planning and implementation and support for the increasing participation of indigenous peoples and communities and other stakeholders in decision making and in interventions on sites together with a say in the disposition of excavated objects.

On the other hand, in many countries war and development increasingly threaten the archaeological record, while mass tourism to archaeological sites, with its many attendant stresses on fabric and authenticity, has been a boom industry of recent decades and shows no sign of abatement. The discipline of conservation, and the expertise it brings, is likely to increase in the future as it takes on more aspects of decision making for the management, use, and sustainable preservation of sites and collections. Here awareness and education, for the professional and, indeed, for the public as well, are increasingly relevant to the acceptance of this role. Thus, a fusion of interests between archaeology and conservation serves both disciplines.

In conceptualizing the conservation theme, it was apparent that the voice of the discipline would be heard with greater emphasis were partner organizations to be involved; therefore, a coalition was formed to authoritatively represent and address components of the theme. The GCI joined with ten international organizations and three U.S.-based institutions to develop subthemes and identify potential speakers. Participating organizations are listed at the end of this introduction. Three plenary addresses and eleven panel sessions were presented in which leaders in their fields, some sixty-three professionals, presented papers to bring forth critical issues and stimulate discussion from the audience.

Designing a thematic program linking archaeology and conservation to fit the time constraints of the congress was challenging. Issues of urgency and threats to the archaeological heritage were the first consideration, but geographic representation—a desire of the congress organizers and consonant with that of the GCI as well—was also important. In the end a mix was decided on: mass tourism to sites, war and the inevitable accompanying looting, community and stakeholder

participation in decision making, the curation and uses of archaeological collections, and issues at archaeological World Heritage Sites, among other topics, were balanced by seeking representation from geographic areas that had not been well represented at previous congresses: China, Afghanistan, Iraq, Africa, and Latin America.

The themes of the conservation sessions are intended to address most of the major issues facing the survival of the archaeological heritage today. Among these are the threats to archaeological World Heritage Sites; the increasing (and appropriately so) demands of stakeholders for a voice in decision making about the care and use of sites and artifacts; the challenges facing the conservation of archaeological collections; mass tourism to iconic sites, which in many developing countries are exploited as a springboard for economic growth but are also a source of national pride; technical responses to sites at risk (how one assesses the best types of intervention, from sheltering and interpreting a site to its reburial); innovative approaches to site preservation (both pros and cons), from private acquisition of a site to protect it to privatization of national heritage (a step that has been greeted by some with outrage); meeting the challenges of rapid economic growth in China today; and the management of archaeological sites and rock art in the southern African subcontinent.

Rather than present papers or case studies at WAC-5, the representatives of the partnering organizations and the GCI formed panels of ninety minutes' to two hours' duration—each addressing a particular topic—with five to six well-known professionals presenting the issues and entering into dialogue with the audience. As much as possible, professional archaeologists were sought to present the case for conservation by speaking from their own knowledge and experience. Each topic was introduced by short presentations to define the issues. After the topic was elaborated on by responses from other panelists, the discussion was opened to the audience. This publication is the record of the sessions.

The outbreak of war in Iraq immediately prior to the congress brought into acute focus the issues of heritage destruction and looting (which continues) but regrettably led to the withdrawal from the conservation theme of one partner organization because the congress venue was Washington, D.C. The panel "Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Iraq and Afghanistan" linked the common issues of these two countries, and papers were presented on the basis of firsthand observation.

It is hoped that the conservation theme at WAC-5 and this volume will help to undo the artificial divide between

archaeology and conservation—two disciplines that are natural partners. Like many other disciplines, archaeology and conservation have tended to go their own ways, as specialization became the rule. Scholars may claim that understanding causes and rates of deterioration is not within their professional remit, nor is knowledge of how to stop or slow destructive processes. This is true, but when one considers the entire range and scope of heritage, of which archaeology is one part, the fragmentation and pigeonholing of disciplines and responsibilities becomes apparent. If this separation is reversed, meshing of the two can work powerfully to secure the archaeological record for the future while allowing its study and appropriate current use for the benefit of society.

At the close of the congress, nine resolutions were put forward by the organizers of these sessions for consideration by the WAC Executive. After revisions, these were among the resolutions adopted by the executive branch in December 2003, and they now form part of the organization's statutes. These resolutions, given below, will help to foster close working relationships between archaeology and conservation for the benefit of the global archaeological heritage.

### Partner Organizations

American Institute for Conservation of Historic  
and Artistic Works  
Australia ICOMOS  
English Heritage  
ICCROM  
Council of National Monuments of Chile  
South African Heritage Resources Agency  
State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China  
US/ICOMOS  
World Monuments Fund  
World Tourism Organization

Two delegates from Afghanistan, one from the National Museum in Kabul and the other from the Afghanistan Institute of Archaeology, participated in collaboration with Wellesley College and New York University to present the enormous problems they face in the aftermath of years of war and destruction.

### Resolutions Relating to the Theme

“Of the Past, for the Future”  
Adopted by the WAC Executive in December 2003

### Addressed to Professionals

**Resolution 1:** WAC resolves to promote a close working relationship between archaeologists and conservation professionals in order to foster an integrated approach to archaeology that includes research, conservation, management, and the interpretation of archaeological sites and collections.

**Resolution 2:** It is the responsibility of archaeologists to plan for the conservation of the sites on which they work, the materials they excavate, and the associated records they create over an entire project through the provision of adequate funding and professional expertise, regardless of whether these responsibilities are mandated by law or not.

**Resolution 3:** Proposed interventions, such as the restoration or reconstruction of sites and artifacts for interpretation and presentation, should be critically assessed beforehand to ensure that authenticity and integrity are not adversely (negatively) impacted.

**Resolution 4:** It is the responsibility of archaeologists conducting fieldwork to make themselves familiar with, acknowledge, and respect all the cultural values of the sites they are working on, including social and spiritual values, and in turn to share their knowledge about the archaeological significance of the sites with the local communities.

**Resolution 5:** In cases where the archaeological heritage is impacted by armed conflict, WAC strongly recommends that conservation professionals be included in the initial response teams to assess damage and prepare action plans.

### Addressed to National Authorities

**Resolution 6:** Recognizing that partnerships between the public and private sectors can further the goals of conservation, WAC nevertheless calls upon national authorities not to relinquish their responsibilities for the preservation and stewardship of archaeological heritage places and collections.

**Resolution 7:** WAC urges that decision makers strive for the inclusion of all stakeholder voices in the use, management, and preservation of archaeological places and collections.

### Addressed to International Organizations

**Resolution 8:** WAC resolves to recommend to UNESCO that an active program to inventory and document archaeological collections in museums and other repositories be undertaken



and that duplicate records be safeguarded elsewhere than at the location of the collections.

**Resolution 9:** WAC notes that many World Heritage Sites have archaeological values which need protecting, but that management planning provisions do not always recognize archaeological values or provide adequately for their protection, and

recommends to the World Heritage Centre that it sponsor workshops on the conservation and management of the archaeological resources of World Heritage Sites, and also that it reexamine the management provisions that need to be met for the nomination and inscription of archaeological sites to the World Heritage List.

PART ONE

# Plenary Presentations



# Looking Forward, Not Backward: Archaeology and the Future of the Past

Brian Fagan

*Scientists have it within them to know what a future-directed society feels like, for science itself, in its human aspect, is just that.*

—C. P. SNOW, *Science and Government* (1961)

**Abstract:** *The destruction of archaeological sites is reaching crisis proportions. At the same time, a chasm exists between the disciplines of academic archaeology and archaeological conservation. Archaeological ethics are basically little changed from the early twentieth century, and cultural resource management activity is based on the same premise—that digging is the best conservation. Archaeology places the highest value on original discoveries rather than activities such as conservation, which further compounds the problem. This paper argues for fundamental changes in archaeological value systems, for better training in ethics at the graduate level, and for changes in the ways in which archaeologists are trained, beginning with a sustained dialogue between academic archaeologists and the conservation community, so that what remains of the archives of the past is the first priority. Originally a keynote address, this is a general statement about the current state of archaeology, designed as a basis for discussions and actions that bring together archaeology and conservation into a common discipline.*

I am a rare breed in an archaeological world of increasing specialization—a generalist. This means that I work with a broad canvas and appreciate more than many people what a grim future archaeology faces. There are powerful lessons behind the destruction that surrounds us, but I often despair of bringing them to a wider audience. Thus it was that some months ago I fell into a profound depression about the future

of the past, which lingers still. I needed a dispassionate observer who would help to point the way ahead. There was no one, until I thought of Kent Flannery’s “Master,” an Eastern wise man who resided in Antelope Springs, Oregon—but he was unavailable (Flannery 1986). As Flannery had feared, the local populace had fed him into a belt-driven International Harvester shredder.

So I decided instead to consult that most fashionable of individuals in contemporary rock art circles—a shaman. As it happened, I knew one, a former graduate student with supernatural powers, but had lost touch with him. One summer evening I called on him high in Southern California’s Santa Ynez Mountains.

The shaman sat motionless by a smoldering hearth, his countenance wreathed in swirling tobacco smoke. He gestured at a place in the dirt by the fire. I sat down gingerly, brushing aside the detritus of several meals.

“So you’ve come at last,” he remarked. “Depressed are we? Well, I’m not surprised. You archaeologists live in a never-never land.”

“You can’t say that,” I exclaimed. “Look at the spectacular scientific advances since you left graduate school—the Lords of Sipán, the Ice Man, and dozens of other discoveries.”

He cut me off with a gesture. “Discoveries, discoveries—that’s all you talk about! Nothing’s changed since I left graduate school.

“So many archaeologists, and so many of them in pursuit of the trivial, their papers full of pretentious theory, and so specialized. Everyone seems to be wearing intellectual blinkers. And in the academic journals, hardly a word about conservation. Where are your priorities? Have you forgotten what Petrie, Pitt-Rivers, and others said over a century ago?

Who reads Petrie's *Methods and Aims in Archaeology* [1904] today?"

I admitted that I had never read it.

"There you are!" he said. "At least some of your forebears had some ethics behind their study of the past. Do you teach your students ethics today? You certainly didn't in my time."

"Of course we do," I replied defiantly. "They're fundamental to any archaeological course. I've taught them to college freshmen for years."

"Ah, but do you teach graduate seminars on ethics? They're the future professionals."

I had to admit that courses on ethics were virtually unknown in graduate schools and barely mentioned in passing in any seminar.

The shaman pounced at once.

"Discovery, discovery—that's all you people seem to think about! Why? What's going to happen in a generation or two, when there is less and less to discover, to dig up? What about conservation? What does 'conservation' mean to you?"

"Petrie's conservation strategy was straightforward," I responded. "Excavation and yet more excavation, with careful attention to the smallest object, and, above all, prompt and full publication. But he was no paragon of archaeological virtue. He recovered many objects by paying his workers for them, lest precious finds ended up in a dealer's hands."

"True," said the shaman quietly. "But what about today? All this talk about cultural resource management? Isn't that more of the same philosophy?"

I started to explain that cultural resource management was all about legal compliance and management of a finite resource, but he waved aside my words.

\* \* \*

The cave was now pitch-black, save for some flickering candles and the smoldering hearth. My host resumed his discourse.

"Mention the word *conservation* to most archaeologists, and they'll regale you with their minor triumphs in the field—such as lifting a delicate infant burial or piecing together a clay pot. In most archaeological circles, conservation means conservation of artifacts, or of buildings, rock art, or other tangible remains.

"I'm amazed how most archaeologists are blissfully unaware that archaeology and conservation are closely intertwined. Conservation encompasses a much broader field of endeavor than only the care of objects!"

"We all know that," I remarked sharply. "It's commonplace. Look at the work done by the Getty, by English Heritage, and by dozens of other organizations."

"Ah yes, but do you academics place conservation at the very center of your research, as an integral part of the project? In most cases, you don't."

I defended my colleagues and myself. "Of course fieldwork and conservation go hand in hand. We all know we are disturbing a finite archive."

"Yes, yes," replied the shaman testily. "But you're just paying lip service. Do you plan conservation as part of your research design on a non-CRM project? Almost invariably, you don't. Look at the number of academic archaeologists who are out there just surveying and digging even today without regard to conservation. Many of them go out summer after summer and just go digging, with no regard to the long-term future. They have a question to answer, important or trivial, have students to train, who also act as their labor, and data for publications to acquire. Often they never publish a final report. People have been doing this with impunity for years."

"We are encouraged, nay begged, to publish," I pointed out. "Haven't you heard of publish-or-perish? Believe me, it's a reality!"

The shaman pounced once more. "What I am talking about is *final* publication that puts a site on permanent record. That's one of the most fundamental aspects of preservation, quite apart from building conservation strategies for now and the future into your research.

I pointed out that antiquities laws in most countries carefully define ownership, protection, and permit requirements for excavation.

"Yes, they do," said the shaman, as he lit still another cigarette. "In many nations, tight regulation surrounds any form of fieldwork, and so it should. In fact, in some countries, the notion that conservation comes first, archaeology second, is commonplace. The United States isn't among them."

I agreed with him.

"But what about people who choose to work overseas because it's easier and they can avoid bureaucratic regulation and conservation requirements?"

The shaman's eyes narrowed. "Such people deserve our utter contempt," he snapped. "When will they realize that conservation is a deadly serious issue that affects all stakeholders in the past—not just archaeologists?"

To that there was no reply.

\* \* \*

“You seem to take a long-term view of conservation,” I observed.

He agreed. “So many people talk about conservation as if it’s instant gratification. You can’t just preserve a site and walk away. There are all kinds of issues: the long-term future of the site, the changing roles of stakeholders, the potential impact of tourism, and so on. You should be conserving for eternity.”

“That’s a very different perspective that looks far beyond a few years,” I remarked. “I doubt if many archaeologists think this way.”

“No, they don’t, because they’re obsessed with short-term goals and their careers. They don’t think about the long-term future.”

“Somewhat like the debates over global warming,” I said. “We have great difficulty making decisions that affect our grandchildren rather than ourselves.”

“Right. And this is where archaeologists need to change their thinking profoundly. The irony is that they’re comfortable dealing with long spans of time in the past—and ignore the implications of their work for the long-term future. All this quite apart from the issue of stakeholders.”

“Stakeholders? Why are these important?”

“Who owns the past? You don’t! Does the local archaeologist you may or may not work with? Does a landowner, the merchant, or tour operator who runs people to Stonehenge? Do indigenous people? For years, you archaeologists have assumed that you were the only game in town. You talk of linear, scientific accounts of human history, of restoring history to people without writing or history? Well, you’re not the only game in town. Stakeholders are an integral part of conservation. They have as much right to be consulted as you do.”

“This is too much,” I snapped. “So far you have insulted archaeology, implied that we ignore conservation, and accused us of living in a never-never land! Why are you so angry?”

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There was a long silence. The shaman drew a blanket around his naked shoulders.

“I’m afraid for the future of the past,” he whispered. The fire flared up, casting his face in deep shadow. “Why am I angry? Because your value system is flawed. Your priorities and ethics stink! That’s why I’m trying to make you uncom-

fortable! In the competitive world of museums and research universities, archaeology is a science of discovery: survey, excavation, laboratory work, and peer-reviewed publication. Wrong! It’s so much more. Look at the social pyramid of archaeology—academics and discovery at the summit, then CRM, teaching, curating collections, public archaeology, and administrative roles in descending order. Conservation doesn’t figure in the hierarchy at all, except as a generally accepted, and ill-defined, basic ethic, which is taught in virtually no graduate programs.

“What you don’t realize is just how firmly you’re stuck on an endless treadmill of survey and excavation, publication, then more fieldwork and yet more publication. Your life’s driven by a constant search for research money, by the guidelines of university promotion committees. Deans urge you to think constantly of national rankings, as if academia were a football game.”

“You can’t judge archaeology, or its practitioners, by the excesses of the publish-or-perish world,” I responded.

“Oh yes you can! Look closely, and you’ll see a fundamental reason why conservation is on the margins—the treadmill of the social values of archaeology and academia generally.”

The shaman lit another cigarette and inhaled deeply. “I think it’s safe to say that most of you would rather excavate and write stimulating preliminary reports than undertake the laborious, time-consuming work of a final report. And few agencies give grants or summer salaries for writing up research.”

“Yes, publication is definitely archaeology’s dirty little secret. We’re really lax about it.”

“Just look at biblical archaeology. Look at all those people digging away every summer and ignoring their publication responsibilities. Have they no ethics, no care to leave a permanent record behind them? All they are leaving are devastated sites.”

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The shaman looked at me shrewdly. “Feeling bad?” he asked.

“Yes, and, like Kent Flannery, deeply depressed. You make me feel a failure.”

He smiled maliciously. I sensed we had come to the moment of truth, that my mentor had been clearing the decks. He turned the pages of a battered southwestern journal, the *Kiva*, lying on a nearby boulder.

When I knew you were coming, I reread Bill Lipe's "A Conservation Model for American Archaeology" from back in 1974. A shrewd man, Lipe."

"I know Bill and his work. He's written a whole stream of important papers on conservation. The *Kiva* article is a very perceptive contribution. It's required reading in a lot of graduate programs," I added triumphantly.

A loud snort echoed around the cave.

"Yeah, they just get to read that and then go back to academic theory and culture history—what they call 'the data.' How many graduate programs take conservation, heritage, and CRM really seriously?"

I agreed with him for once. "Last time I looked into it, precious few. I read somewhere that some of the first rate programs said they were 'too busy' and understaffed to teach such things."

"Remember what Lipe said: 'We are now beginning to realize that all sites are rather immediately threatened, if one takes a time frame of more than a few years'" (Lipe 1974:214).

"True," I said. "But he also talked of 'leisurely salvage'—'when we know the date at which the site may be lost.' I think that a lot of academic archaeologists would say they work on such sites."

"But he said something else, remember. 'If our field is to last for more than a few decades, we need to shift to a resource conservation model as primary.' I think history will judge this as one of the more influential papers of late-twentieth-century archaeology—I wager it'll be cited longer than any of Binford's pronouncements."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because Lipe talked about managing the past, about putting conservation right in the center of our world, and not at the side. He stressed that basic research kept the field healthy, but there was another priority as well."

"Conservation?" I said. "So we are good guys after all."

The shaman shook his head. "Lipe's paper was successful in that he drew attention to the basic strategies for managing the past, the Big Book, and advocated it as a priority. It's still not a priority in much of the academic world."

"So he was one of the founders of CRM!" I retorted. "And look how that dominates archaeology in most parts of the world. He certainly made us think about conservation."

The shaman shook his head. "Call CRM a success if you will, but, in the final analysis, it's a highly sophisticated extension of the Flinders Petrie philosophy: dig it up before someone else destroys it. Undeniably there are triumphs where discoveries have been snatched from the jaws of bulldozers,

then published thoroughly. Europeans have done some wonderful work this way. So have the Chinese and Japanese. CRM is often the only strategy to employ as sites vanish. But all too often there's a chasm, and antipathy, between the academy and the CRM world."

I had to admit that there was some truth in what he was saying. Only last week, I heard a graduate student lamenting her summer spent doing CRM.

"Look at the job opportunities in archaeology these days. Almost all of them are in CRM, and more and more of them in private sector companies, who do archaeology for profit. CRM's an attempt to salvage as much information as possible with the time, money, and methods available. In some respects, it indeed represents the successful implementation of part of Lipe's conservation model. Yet many academics denigrate it as a potential career. They forget that if current trends continue, archaeology will soon become a profession focused almost entirely on managing the past."

"Nonsense," I retorted. "Academic archaeology is alive and well. Look at the opportunities compared to even thirty years ago."

"You've missed the point. There'll be academic jobs all right, but will the candidates for them have the conservation-based training that brings CRM activities and basic training together? We can't afford snobbery, or overproduction of academic researchers."

"Your point about overspecialized researchers and too many of them is well taken," said I. "After all, it's easy to train clones of oneself. But it sounds as if you're talking about a new type of academic archaeologists who place conservation at the center of their work and take the ethics of placing the archive on record very seriously."

The shaman nodded. He cast a glance behind him, at his bulging library on crude shelves at the back of the cave.

"You can see one problem there," he remarked. He gestured at rows of what appeared to be mimeographed reports.

"The gray literature?"

"Yes. Reports of limited circulation, or in cyberspace, which, despite efforts to the contrary, are effectively inaccessible to most people."

"Here you go again, generalizing without thinking." I retorted. "Haven't you seen some of the wonderful, intellectually sound monographs that are coming out of CRM? Haven't you heard of the research of [I mentioned a series of names]? They're on the cutting edge."

The shaman shrugged. "Sure, I generalize. But, you know, I'm right. Yes, some CRM folk expiate archaeological

sin. But look at all those dreadful limited-circulation reports that are purely descriptive, all too often inadequate, and supervised by bureaucrats who are interested merely in legal compliance.”

“The point is this,” he added. “CRM is reactive. Integrating academic archaeology and conservation will be proactive. That’s the priority, and something that happens only rarely.”

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I heard the shaman sigh. Then he said, “You people have played while Rome burns. When are you going to wake up?”

“Fine,” I said. “Let’s assume you are right. What do you suggest we do to make conservation part of the central fabric of archaeology?”

He sat back, clutched his blanket and inflated his chest as if making a pronouncement.

“First, reorient graduate training and exercise serious population control in the number of newly minted academic specialists, many of who end up in the CRM world and hate it. These are the last people who should be salvaging the past. Start some serious training in conservation as a mainstream part of archaeology.”

“How do you do this?” I asked, knowing just how hard innovation is in academia.

“Remember all the academic debates about early states, the center and the periphery? You don’t have to confront anyone. Work at the periphery.”

The suggestions came fast and furious.

“Start a debate between academic archaeologists and conservation folk about curriculum. Is this happening at the moment? Hardly. Stand-alone conservation programs aren’t enough. As part of this, integrate conservation into the very fabric of academic research, the powerful notion of stewardship of the past as a fundamental responsibility.”

I stopped him in full oratorical flood. “But how do we do all this? It’s all very well just talking—”

“My dear sir, shamans are talkers. We use our supernatural perceptions to show the way forward. All I can give you are ideas:

- Foster intensive research into—and development of—nonintrusive archaeological methods to minimize excavation in the future.
- Require that all doctoral dissertation proposals make conservation a centerpiece of the proposed research.

- Stop insisting that every Ph.D. dissertation involve fieldwork. That’s nonsense in these days of huge unpublished collections. Encourage grant-giving agencies to insist on conservation plans as part of all funding proposals, as the first priority.
- Decouple archaeology from the publish-or-perish culture, and reward conservation projects with the kudos given basic research.
- And what about a series of highly prestigious prizes or awards that give prominence and prestige to archaeological conservation?”

“Stop!” I cried. “Are you seriously suggesting that we give up basic research altogether?”

He laughed. “Of course not. It’s the lifeblood of archaeology. But you need to look far beyond the transitory gratification of a new discovery, or of a peer-reviewed paper published in the pages of *Science*—to the long, long term. We don’t need more mindless, overspecialized fieldwork that culls a diminishing inventory of undisturbed sites.

“Nor do we need an archaeology with dozens of desperate, unemployed, overspecialized academics. What about some redirection and some population control in graduate programs? If this doesn’t happen, then academic archaeology really will become irrelevant.

“Enough said,” he said with finality. “I want you to look at the future without such redirection. Take this.” He threw me a fragment of desiccated mushroom, which I eyed with apprehension. His eyes dared me to swallow it.

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The bright sparks triggered by the hallucinogen intensified in dazzling showers. I found myself in a nightmare archaeology of the future . . .

High season along the Nile. Egypt’s Valley of Kings fenced off as hundreds of tourists press for a glimpse of just a tomb entrance. Inside, the tomb walls are devoid of paintings, eroded by the sweat and humidity of thousands of visitors.

The Petén rainforest in Guatemala—except almost all the forest has gone, swept away in the accelerating global deforestation of the early twenty-first century. Crumbling Maya cities stand out against a landscape of stunted grasslands and rocky outcrops, looters’ trenches on every side. They are naked to inexorable forces of destruction. No archaeologists monitored the deforestation.



Then I find myself in a university library back in the United States in late evening. A weary graduate student labors over her dissertation research. She searches in vain for final reports, for detailed accounts of the data recovered from now-destroyed sites. She abruptly leaves the room, looks up at the stars, and screams in helpless frustration. The Big Book is empty, the site gone, the published record merely a few preliminary reports. The archaeologist's stewardship had been found lacking . . .

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I shuddered involuntarily as I returned to the real world. The shaman glanced across at me and raised an eyebrow.

"Ah," said he, stirring the fire with a stick. "Enlightenment at last. You've left your comfortable intellectual cocoon."

"I think Flinders Petrie was right," I said eventually. "Because he said, 'Has not the past its rights—as well as the

present and the future?' [1904:112]. I think we have forgotten that, which is one reason we are in trouble."

"Petrie said that a century ago—I was forgetting," said the shaman, as he watched the sunrise.

"Well, go and do something about the future of the past . . ."

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# The Monumental and the Trace: Archaeological Conservation and the Materiality of the Past

Rosemary A. Joyce

**Abstract:** *Beginning from critiques of universalism in concepts of global cultural heritage, I propose that archaeologists and conservation professionals reconceptualize archaeological materials as traces. A collection of traces, materials of archaeological interpretation and preservation, from decontextualized objects to landscapes, are transcribed into documents. These representations of traces embody specific points of view. The universally valued monument that dominates archaeological heritage places archaeological practitioners in the position of antiquarians or contemporary collectors of antiquities. Forced to participate in authentication of high culture, archaeologists lose opportunities to represent perspectives more accessible to people who do not identify with elite producers of monuments. Reenvisioning their position with respect to material traces of the past, archaeologists may find common ground with conservation professionals increasingly concerned about preserving active life histories of things.*

During my field season in June 2003 in Honduras, working at a site declared a national monument and recently opened for visitation, I was faced every day with contradictions between different forms of archaeological materiality. As our ground-penetrating radar and magnetometer surveys covered the apparently featureless surface around the twenty-meter-high mounds of Los Naranjos, visitors stood at the side of our test excavations and asked me, not about the visible soil color contrasts, all that was left of perishable buildings and past human activities, but about the massive grass-covered mounds rising untouched by us. When, one history teacher asked, would the site be visible in all its splendor?

I struggled to explain to her that earthen construction is incompatible with the restoration of pristine ancient

buildings she was imagining, based on her experience of Copan, a World Heritage Site in western Honduras. I sketched out the construction history of the mounds, revealed in the 1960s by archaeologists who trenched them, indicating that there were multiple periods: which should be restored? I talked about the kind of construction materials used and indicated cobble-faced terraces reexposed by recent excavations (unrelated to our project) already eroding from the earthen core of the structure. As I explained the challenges posed by trying to expose, stabilize, and monitor such features, I was struck by the way that the monument, not a target of our project at all, dominated the exchanges I had with visitors at this public site of history, overriding interest in features representing the lives of the ancient inhabitants of the site.

What do we seek to preserve, conserve, interpret, and present when we manage archaeological sites? The same archaeological materials can have distinct importance for different people. William Lipe (1984) identified a range of values, from the aesthetic interests that motivate art collectors to connections with the past identified as heritage, with the values specific to archaeology—the use of materials as evidence of past societies—somewhere in between. More recently, Claire Lyons (2002), in a perceptive discussion of opposing *amicus curiae* briefs filed in regard to Italian claims to repatriate a gold vessel illegally imported into the United States, highlighted differences between archaeology and museum communities in concepts of authenticity, authority, and the relation of art and artifact. “Holistic scientific knowledge” was the ultimate measure of value for archaeologists, while “the perceived aesthetic qualities of an object” were the universal values championed by museums.

As Lyons (2002:125–26) noted, contemporary archaeological explorations of materiality stress the fluidity, performativity, and polysemous nature of material things. Rather than see the perspectives sketched out by these and other authors as simply different viewpoints on unchanging materials, we need to explore how archaeological materials are transformed when different values are invoked. Pursuing this, I identify a tension between monumentality—the material condition assumed in cultural heritage management legislation and policy—and the trace—archaeological materiality that is more subtle and contextual, and, in the absence of special attention, much more fleeting.

Considerable attention has been directed to preservation and interpretation of monumental materiality. Less thought and effort is usually expended on heritage management of traces of past human presence on landscapes. One unfortunate side effect of this imbalance is the perpetuation of an image of archaeology that is not that far from the position espoused by art collectors. Another undesirable outcome is alienation from people who might potentially be interested in material traces of the past but feel no inherent tie to actors foregrounded by archaeological monumentality. Contemporary archaeologists need to reexamine our role in perpetuating an antiquarian perspective that values the monumental over the trace and the negative effects this has had on helping to foster archaeological conservation.

### Monumental and Trace Materialities

To define monumentality, we can do no better than begin with criteria for inclusion of cultural properties in the United Nations World Heritage List (UNESCO 2001). These implement Article 1 of the UNESCO Convention on World Heritage, which defines eligible properties as *monuments, groups of buildings, or sites*. To be eligible as World Heritage, properties must be of “outstanding universal value” as determined by application of certain criteria and a test of authenticity. I return to the issue of “authenticity” later; first, let us consider what criteria determine that some material remains of the past are of outstanding universal value. I give the exact text of these criteria, as enumerated in the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Organization, to demonstrate that they embody a particular point of view on what events and people in the past had global significance (see Cleere 1996, 1998).

A World Heritage Site should

- i. represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;  
or

- ii. exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design; or
- iii. bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; or
- iv. be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; or
- v. be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; or
- vi. be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances and in conjunction with other criteria, cultural or natural).

Criteria (i) and (iv) are framed in terms of the idea that certain materials represent masterpieces of creative genius made at certain points in time. By implication, everyday materials that make up the bulk of past materiality—everything I cover here with the term “trace” (following Petzet 1995)—is not worthy of appreciation, protection, preservation, conservation, and interpretation on a global scale.

Criteria (ii) through (vi) specify further some of the conditions under which material remains of the past may merit global appreciation as human heritage: when they exemplify essentialized cultures, categorized as “civilizations” and “traditions,” and their settlements, and in particular when they exemplify exchanges of human values. These criteria require material traces of the past to be conceptualized in terms of macroscale groups, ideally groups that can be thought of in terms of narratives of progress over time culminating in civilizations.

Only criterion (vi) opens any space for a less macroscale past, in the particularity of “events,” “ideas,” “beliefs,” and “works.” The reservations expressed in the original guidelines about this criterion underline the inherent assumption of a macroscale unity of the past that is itself conceptually monumental.

The significant past envisaged in World Heritage criteria is a past of peoples and nations, of cities and landscapes, but not of people and their actions and surely not of people and the actions through which, every day, societies were produced and reproduced. The materiality that these criteria invoke is monumental in scale, both physically and temporally, enduring over time, surviving to act as a sign for future generations. It is monumental in its homogenization of the diverse interests and identities of past actors under individual essentialized icons. It lends itself to nation-building projects while failing to connect to individual actors other than leaders who are assumed to be necessary for such projects to be carried out.

In contrast, the excluded archaeological traces are the stuff of the fleeting everyday world of repeated actions. Traces are often all that remain of living sites of the majority of people. Traces attest to placement of work spaces and thus directly to the labor through which individual actors produced the things that they needed, things that sometimes persisted to be taken up today as evidence for archaeological interpretation. Products of everyday labor rarely survive as complete and unaltered objects; however, large intact objects loom in the popular and scholarly imagination, whose emphasis is on tombs and temples. Rather, products of everyday life survive as discarded material that ceased to have its original purpose and was transformed into refuse. The sense of unexpected survival against the odds that such traces embody stands in sharp contrast to interpretations of monuments as things *intended* to endure intact and without significant decay, conveying set meanings over time.

These two forms of materiality contrast fundamentally in the way they are taken to signify the passage of time. Traces are unintended consequences of action with life histories from production to use, disuse, and reuse; monuments are treated as intentional statements and often as causes of large-scale social and cultural cohesion that inherently deny human scale temporality (Herzfeld 1991). Monumental materiality has a point of view distinct from that of the trace. And it is that uninterrogated point of view that dominates much thinking about cultural heritage, including assessments about what it means to preserve archaeological sites and monuments (Omland 1997).

### Material Points of View

Once we acknowledge that concepts of heritage, even those purporting to represent universal values, actually represent particular points of view on time, change, and the role of materiality in social cohesion, then we must consider whose

point of view we inhabit when we favor the monumental over the trace. In comparing contrasting attitudes expressed by museum representatives and archaeologists, Lyons (2002:131) proposed that from the archaeological point of view, “sites . . . are essentially monuments—monuments that go down into the earth rather than rise up from it.” This image captures a sensibility peculiar to archaeologists, where traces of past human actions we document as we disassemble sites have a significance equal to, or more important than, the meaning assumed to reside in conventional monumentality. But by adopting the term “monument” as the image to which archaeological sites are equated, we may inadvertently cede the unique position that archaeology occupies with respect to the trace.

I suggest that we think seriously about another, alternative equation: monuments are essentially traces, traces whose materiality is so obtrusive that we are forced to attend to them, traces whose materiality often points us away from their very contingency and active lives. Michael Petzet (1995) argues convincingly that archaeological excavation is a form of transcription in which an original document (the traces that make up a site, including monumental traces) is replaced by a new document (the transcript of the site in archaeological records). The point of view of the trace is the perspective of archaeologists, a position from which a transformed concept of stewardship can be articulated (Joyce 2002a, 2002b). The perspective of the trace could bring together archaeologists, conservation professionals, and other stakeholders unconvinced that the universal values of monumental world heritage speak to their concerns.

Archaeologists no longer control management of the traces we transcribe. The philosopher Alison Wylie (1996, 1999), in analyses of the reinterpretation of “stewardship” in the revision of the ethics statement of the Society for American Archaeology, argues that because contemporary archaeological ethics acknowledge that there are multiple legitimate stakeholders in the past, archaeologists can no longer claim that archaeological stewardship includes rights to the final word in disputes about managing archaeological resources. Archaeologists once made the assumption that the relative contribution to solving problems of general scientific concern could be used as an objective, and hence universal, measure of significance (Raab and Klinger 1977). Wylie’s analyses expose the limitations of this approach, which assumed that all interested parties agree that science is objective, universal, and hence a reliable way to judge competing claims. Many archaeologists have accepted that we do not have grounds to enforce decisions on—or over the objections of—descendant

groups. Archaeologists also have begun to question our role in assessing authenticity of links proposed between contemporary stakeholders and archaeological materials (Lyons 2002:123–27).

Arguments about authenticity involve judgments about connections among persons, stereotyped identities, and specific places (and the things used at those places) that can be incongruous in light of contemporary perspectives on identity in the social sciences. Arif Dirlik (1996) argues that such postmodern questioning of authenticity of identity is problematic for those in less privileged economic and political positions who are only beginning to consolidate places in the world on the basis of such identities. He advocates a firmer conception of “history as project” in which “the past . . . is constructed at all times, and ties to the past require an ongoing dialogue between present and past constructions” (Dirlik 1996:24). Judgment of authenticity teeters between assuming static, ahistorical, changeless, uniform cultures or choosing as exemplary particular moments in what in reality are ongoing historical trajectories. It is precisely the latter strategy, whose violence to living residents of a Cretan town Herzfeld (1991) exposed, that has been characteristic of archaeological judgments of authenticity.

As archaeologists seek to avoid the questionable moves of invoking authenticity or universality as ultimate grounds for judging claims of different stakeholders, we have to seriously engage with all those who make a claim to a stake in the past. This may include not only descendant communities with a voice in defining objectives of archaeological investigation (e.g., Lilley and Williams 2005) but also other members of descendant groups who view sites as most significant as sources of economic gifts from ancestors (Matsuda 1998) or as the location of agricultural land gained through more recent histories of revolution and republic (Rodriguez 2001). Nor can we arbitrarily ignore such commonly dismissed groups as New Age believers, goddess movement members, and even tourists.

What constitutes a material trace of past human activity is itself subject to incommensurate understandings by different stakeholders. An “unaltered” landscape may be imbued with historical knowledge, as Keith Basso (1996) has poetically shown for the Apache of the U.S. Southwest. The plant communities present on a landscape, perceived as “natural” vegetation, may have resulted from intensive and long-term inhabitation by human populations (Cleere 1998). In many places in the world, locations of past human passages through landscapes, marked or unmarked, served and continue to serve to orient people with spiritual beings.

Moving from landscapes to more durably marked locations of human activity, we can see that even in the communities of archaeology and conservation, what constitutes a significant material trace of past human activity is a very fluid thing. Some sites in North America that would be highly significant for a history of labor, class, and racial and ethnic relations cannot qualify for inclusion on the U.S. National Register because their materiality takes the form of the trace rather than the monumental materiality of the stereotypic cultural heritage site (Ludlow Collective 2001).

Even in the realm of sites that conform to the requirements of definition as national or world heritage monuments, distinct aspects of materiality may be held less important, without debate about their potential to illuminate aspects of the past that might be of significance to certain stakeholders, such as daily life and the experiences of those who created monuments that glorified an elite few. The potential significance of the trace and the potential loss of knowledge entailed in destruction of apparently featureless deposits become more evident as new technical analytic approaches proliferate, like micromorphology, applied to pick up physical signs of such quotidian actions as sweeping a floor.

### **Archaeological Conservation and the Materiality of the Past**

The destabilization of the condition of objects once buried in archaeological sites, curated without thought to their actual fragility and standing as miraculous traces of past human efforts, dramatizes the real impact of excavation, as objects assumed by archaeologists to be durable erode away in curation facilities. An expressed value of preservation has been a constant in archaeological ethics statements since the first examples were set on paper. Lack of concern for and attention to the postexcavation condition of the majority of excavated objects seems to contradict this. This contradiction illustrates points of conjunction and disjunction between archaeologists and conservation professionals, stakeholders whose position with respect to past materiality at first glance seems identical.

Like sites and landscapes, objects are transformed when seen as monuments or traces. As Lyons (2002:131–32) notes, the art perspective on objects views the multiplicity of excavated things of similar classes as redundant examples of interchangeable value until converted to art market commodities, unique monuments to past human genius validated by the aesthetic judgment and economic capital of the collector. Conservation professionals and archaeologists see objects as traces of unique sequences of events, as biographies. For

archaeologists, the contextual interrelations of things endow them with historical specificity. Usually thought of as connections between objects and features in sites, context also includes relations among traces preserved in the material of objects themselves.

Conservation professionals and archaeologists diverge in other aspects of their relationship to traces. Debates at a meeting held in 1997 to consider how to manage deteriorating sculpture at Copan exposed significant differences in these perspectives (Joyce 2002c). Archaeologists working at the site represented traces and monuments as data for scientific analysis, resulting in documentation of the historical development of the ancient Maya kingdom. From their perspective, information contained in stone sculpture could be enhanced by abstracting the original, eroded monuments from the site and replacing them with replicas in which details had been filled in by employing specialist knowledge.

Conservation professionals represented a distinct perspective. They emphasized an ideal of minimal intervention and a commitment to gathering data over a long term before taking action. Conservation professionals were more closely engaged with the monument as an object with a material history sketched out in traces of alteration that might be measured over the short term and projected onto the long term.

The preservation of sculptures at Copan, a monument with universal cultural significance, should not have been open to such radically different viewpoints by otherwise similarly situated persons. As a monument, *restoration* of the sculpture to its appearance when newly constructed might seem the self-evident correct action. But the debates did not turn on differences in interpretation of the significance of the site at a *monumental* scale. Instead, they reflected diversity in understanding the site as a set of traces of human and natural action.

Attending to the history of the alteration of the site reinstates a sense of the passage of time, including time at the human scale. Archaeological conservation could not simply be directed to stopping time and turning back the clock. Rather, the interventions of conservation professionals can add to the documentation of traces of the experiences of durability and perishability that all archaeological sites offer (cf. Petzet 1995). Viewed as a set of traces, Copan exposes the reality implicit in many things considered monuments today: they were not created to last forever, unchanged and unambiguous.

## Back to Los Naranjos

Reflecting on these experiences, I return to my beginning point: Los Naranjos, an archaeological site whose monumen-

tal materiality is fragile and whose anthropological significance is best justified by its status as a place where repeated traces of past human action crossed and recrossed a landscape. The disassembly of parts of the traces of human presence at the site requires adoption of a perspective that values individual action in the past, juxtaposing it to the macroscale monumentality that first strikes a visitor. To interpret and present the site as traces requires a new form of dialogue with the visiting public.

In this trace-centered dialogue, there can be no question of authenticity conceived as a judgment of the consistency and value of cultural wholes at particular points in time. The residents who added a house platform to one of the monumental earthen pyramids in about 400 B.C.E. were not inauthentic in their conversion of use of space. An adequate representation of the site in—as the local teacher quoted earlier called for—“*todo su esplendor*” (all its splendor) requires a complex history of the life of the material remains both of monuments and of traces. This alternate presentation poses different questions concerning preservation and conservation.

As archaeologists, we seek to *preserve* sites. Conceived as traces, this obligates us to refrain from excavation as much as possible—a mandate that should lead us to champion the presentation of unexcavated, un-“restored” structures as often as or more often than the problematically restored and unstable buildings that proliferate at heritage sites. In common with conservation professionals, we share a commitment to *conserve* archaeological materials. Conceived as traces of life histories, this should entail a shared ethic of minimal intervention and stabilization, again as often as or more often than “restoration.” The challenge this presents is to manage archaeological places as historicized spaces in a process of transformation that we intersect at a point in an ongoing history—not as timeless, unalterable, static monuments.

## Conclusion

All exposure and use of material traces of past human activity shortens the possible life span of things that were not built with the intention that they survive forever. Each stakeholder who claims a voice in dealing with the materiality of the past inherits with that claim a responsibility for the effects this stake has on the ultimate life span, contextual integrity, and interpretive potential of these astonishing points of contact with the living human past (Omland 1997). Contending claims must be judged at least in part by the damage their exercise would inflict on those who see other significances in the same materialities.

Such conflicts are not easily resolved through the formulation of guidelines and rules, however detailed, since they stem from very different understandings of how material things are significant in the contemporary world and for the future. In debating decisions about preservation, conservation, interpretation, and presentation, archaeologists and conservation professionals can legitimately, and indeed must ethically, each represent the expertise that is unique to their stakeholding positions, without demanding the final word. Their perspectival differences constitute different stakes in the same materialities, stakes that may be incommensurate. These differences must be understood if we are to be able to collaborate on the task of ensuring that future generations will have any opportunity to experience the kind of direct connection to past human action that surviving material makes possible for us today.

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PART TWO

**Innovative Approaches  
to Policy and  
Management of  
Archaeological Sites**





# Introduction

*Douglas C. Comer*

Archaeologists and preservationists typically deal with the shell of the nautilus after its vital inhabitant has expired. This is true for nearly all prehistoric archaeological sites and the cities, villages, and settlements of most ancient civilizations. The Temple of Dendur, Angkor Wat, Macchu Pichu, and Petra are well-known examples. Exceptions are in places where the infrastructure and social organization that originally created and supported the site remain somewhat intact, such as marketplaces in the Middle East, wats in Thailand, and Plains Indian medicine wheels in the western United States.

Everywhere, however, the forces of entropy are relentless. Because of the interrelationship of physical order and social order, successful archaeological site preservation depends on bolstering, modifying, or reintroducing the social order necessary to support physical remains. Preservation goes far beyond conducting archaeological research and determining conservation treatments. It goes to site management.

The papers in Part II speak of a range of efforts to establish the social organizations required to maintain sites. In the absence of the feast days and social hierarchies that once focused human attention and labor on the repair of architecture and the prevention of vandalism, efforts must be made to mobilize bureaucracies, universities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous inhabitants, and the private sector to such ends.

The involvement of the private sector is often seen by preservationists and academics as problematic. Clearly, site management guided by an unrestrained profit motive could produce shallow tourist attractions, destroy original site fabric, and lead to exploitation of local communities and indige-

nous populations. In my paper, the first to follow, I examine the private sector's role in establishing the world's first system of protected areas, the U.S. national park system. That system would not exist today without initial enthusiastic support from a private sector that expected visitation to national parks to produce profits. I also observe that the World Heritage Convention was modeled on the U.S. national park system. Finally, I argue that successful management of protected areas requires obtaining support from the private sector, which must be considered a key stakeholder, along with indigenous groups and international preservation organizations.

Pisit Charoenwongsa, director of the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA), located in Bangkok, also advocates a holistic approach, one involving, in Charoenwongsa's words, "various stakeholders, sometimes more than one donor, and possibly more than one implementing organization or agency." This sort of coordination, he argues, can work very effectively at the regional level. He sees the establishment of site management as a development project that can only succeed when formulated and carried out in a culturally sensitive way. Coordination of such projects by a regional cultural center such as SPAFA, which can become deeply familiar with the social conventions and mores of member countries, is both logical and effective.

Cultural sensitivity emerges as a central theme again in the paper by Aysar Akrawi, executive director of the Petra National Trust, a Jordanian NGO. In recounting efforts to establish effective site management at Petra, a World Heritage Site in southern Jordan, she maintains that the patterns have largely been provided by studies conducted by international preservation organizations that did not sufficiently involve local communities. A national NGO, she argues, can provide

an essential link between international experience in establishing site management organizations and the cultural environments of the nation and the local communities.

In his paper, Larry Armony, general manager of the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park Society (BHFNPS), notes that the cultural organization that once sustained the monumental defensive structures of Brimstone Hill and Fort Charles—one that had as a central element the practice of slavery—is now defunct. No one would dispute that this is a quantum improvement in social mores, but what social organization can now maintain these structures? Armony reports that the BHFNPS has evolved into an organization “that recognizes and promotes the fact that structures such as Brimstone Hill Fortress embody the contributions of the colonized and are testimony to the multicultural nature of Caribbean society.” He argues that an NGO such as BHFNPS can exercise the finesse necessary to balance the promotion of an emerging national consciousness with the need to educate visitors about the history of the site and to elevate the standard of living for the island by increasing revenues from tourism.

Gaetano Palumbo sets forth the sense of community as an ideal. In response to the recent advent of privatization of heritage sites in many countries, in particular, Italy, he argues that the community, not the private sector, should play the lead role in preserving archaeological sites. He draws a distinction between cultural heritage *exploitation* and cultural heritage *use*. Exploitation occurs when value is placed only on the economic benefits of heritage. The private sector, he maintains, will invest in properties only in ways that will increase financial return and only so long as sites return a profit. Investment by the private sector will likely focus on increasing tourist appeal as opposed to preservation of original fabric, research, and community involvement. This will lead to degradation of the site, an eventual decrease in financial returns, and, finally, abandonment of the site, which then will again become the concern of the state. Better, says Palumbo, to

strengthen ties between the site and the community by encouraging community *use*, thereby increasing the likelihood of long-term and sensitive site stewardship.

Interpretation at archaeological sites has often been regarded as a desirable but unessential aspect of site management. Neil Silberman and Dirk Callebaut argue vigorously that interpretation is a central element in that effort. Silberman was instrumental in drafting a charter for interpretation that is now being reviewed and modified by ICOMOS for possible universal acceptance by UNESCO. This has, since its inception, been called the Ename Charter, after an archaeological site in Belgium where innovative technologies were employed. These technologies were effective in telling a story about the site, and preservation professionals involved with the project were pleased. However, they realized that such technologies could be used to tell not only stories based on rigorous research and evaluations of findings that complied with academic standards but also erroneous or biased ones. The charter, which Silberman and Callebaut describe, addresses this concern and related ones.

Each of these papers has been prepared by a preservationist with long experience in the field. The authors are, or have been, academics or employees or heads of NGOs, employees of governmental organizations charged with site preservation, and practicing site managers. The topics addressed reflect this diversity of background. At the same time, despite differences in their points of view, all of the authors recognize, explicitly or implicitly, that their concern must be cultural dynamics: the vital organisms that produced the shells that attract our attention and that sustain them today. Our effort to preserve archaeological sites permits us the hope that one day we will more fully understand the cultural dynamics that gave rise to them. Understanding the cultural dynamics that affect them today allows us to hope that we can preserve them.

# Ideology, Economics, and Site Management

Douglas C. Comer

**Abstract:** *Many approaches to archaeological site policy and management that might be termed innovative, including privatization, have been prompted by the widespread lack of resources necessary to adequately manage archaeological sites, including World Heritage Sites. This paper argues against privatization but also that the current situation stems in large part from the failure of preservationists to recruit the private sector as the principal supporter of government-managed protected areas. It offers an anthropologically based context in which to examine cultural site management as part of an ongoing dialectic among stakeholders, including the private sector. This approach explicitly recognizes that ideology and economics determine the roles played by all stakeholders, including archaeologists and preservationists. The U.S. National Park Service has been the model for many protected area programs, including the World Heritage Convention. An examination of this case reveals that the private sector must be involved in two ways: the protected cultural site must provide economic opportunities to local communities and groups; and international companies that benefit from visitation to protected areas must be brought into the site management dialogue for political support and, in some cases, as contributors of needed resources.*

Francesco Bandarin, head of the World Heritage Centre, remarked at a recent observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the World Heritage Convention that a list showing how many of the 754 World Heritage Sites were threatened would comprise about 754 entries. Of the 754 World Heritage Sites, 582 are inscribed because of outstanding cultural values, and another 23 are inscribed for reasons of mixed cultural and natural values.

Many World Heritage Sites are located in developing countries that lack the means needed to ensure that development, looting, and poaching will not produce damage to the very qualities that prompted their inscription on the World Heritage List. At the typical World Heritage Site, money and trained personnel are in short supply. Consequently, deficiencies in management organization, facilities, and equipment are common.

Many approaches have been taken to remedy the chronic lack of resources necessary to effectively manage archaeological sites, especially those that are open to public visitation. Among these are privatization, management of sites by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), management by NGO and government partnerships, and assistance to site management by government-supported regional centers. Enhancements in the way sites are presented as a means of increasing site revenue and improving the visitor's experience may also be used as means to overcome scarcity of resources.

To facilitate and widen the dialogue on innovative approaches to site management, this paper considers the global ideological and economic context in which archaeological site management takes place, that of postmodern culture and hypercapitalist economy. It also makes some recommendations as to how preservationists' efforts should be informed by the structure of this context.

It is important for the dialogue to be widened because typically preservationists do not talk to the right people in the right way. At present, they spend most of their time talking with each other, and occasionally with employees and representatives of the governments of the countries in which the sites they wish to preserve are located. Among themselves, they

discuss policy, technique, and frustration. With countries, they promulgate standards, recommend good management practices, and warn against privatization. Unfortunately, they have few useful recommendations for securing the resources necessary to implement good management practices. Preservationists should spend more time talking with the private sector in ways that will motivate it to lobby governments to build effective site management organizations and to contribute the resources necessary to accomplish that goal. There is a model, a history, that preservationists can deploy in that effort—that of the U.S. National Park Service (NPS).

The perspective here is anthropological. Preservation, like all human undertakings, is a cultural one, and preservationists are subject to the same sorts of cultural forces that determine the success or failure of the activities of all human groups. These ideological and economic forces drive the uses to which archaeological sites are put and define the roles played by a variety of stakeholders, including archaeologists and preservationists, as both protectors and exploiters of archaeological sites. Preservationists must direct those forces to the best of their ability while also being subject to them.

To begin the argument, it is essential to state what many scholars have noted before: protected areas exist largely because political and economic leaders at certain times and places believed that they would provide substantial economic benefits to the countries and regions in which they were located. Business interests have actively promoted the establishment of protected areas, to the extent that one might wonder if these areas would exist at all without their intervention.

The close interweaving of the goals of business and preservationists is clearly illustrated by the genesis and growth of the U.S. NPS, which has served as the precedent for the establishment of nationally protected areas worldwide. As Joan Zenzen (1997) has noted, among others (Kinsey 1992; Runte 1979), the railroads were instrumental in the drive to establish a national park system in the United States and in promoting the parks after they were established. Parks gave people a reason to travel to undeveloped areas (fig. 1). Zenzen says:

For national parks, western railroads were essential to their early survival and development. No other nineteenth-century transportation system could have reliably moved so many people to such isolated areas as Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon. Railroads shaped the national park experience by building rustic luxury hotels, constructing trails and roads, and providing comfortable transportation. . . . The railroads extended the national park myth's



FIGURE 1 Poster encouraging travel by railroad to national parks.

nationalistic message to their own ends of promoting tourism and land sales [and] had established a regular tourism business to the national parks by the second decade of the twentieth century. (1997:274)

Other providers of lodging, food, and any number of products and services to travelers soon joined the railroads in forming a strong and vocal base of support for the national park system in the United States. One notable example was the



Fred Harvey Company. Even more notable is the coalition that formed between the railroads and conservationists. In 1899 the chairman of the board of the Union Pacific Railroad, Edward Harriman, undoubtedly one of the most powerful figures in America at the time, hosted twenty-six of the nation's leading scientists along with authors, poets, artists, and photographers on an expedition to Alaska. For two months, aboard his 250-foot steamer, Harriman exchanged ideas with such conservation luminaries as George Bird Grinnell, himself a former, and extremely successful, businessman; John Muir, the archetypical crusading environmentalist; Edward Curtis, who began his most notable achievement, documenting the lives and culture of Native Americans, on the trip; and C. Hart Merriam, founder of the National Geographic Society. It is certain that Harriman exerted influence pivotal to the establishment of national parks in the United States. In 1905 John Muir asked Harriman to lobby the U.S. Senate for passage of the bill that would establish Yosemite as the first national park. Given that the bill passed by a single vote after energetic lobbying by Harriman, there is little doubt that his support was crucial.

The U.S. system, being the first, has been used as the pattern by which to establish park systems in many other countries. It also set the pattern for preservation of what are now regarded globally as the premier cultural and natural sites, World Heritage Sites. Yet while the private sector has benefited from the establishment of World Heritage Sites, it has not provided support on a par with that which it provided to the U.S. national park system. Prime among the reasons for this is that the type of dialogue that occurred between industrialists and conservationists one hundred years ago has no parallel today.

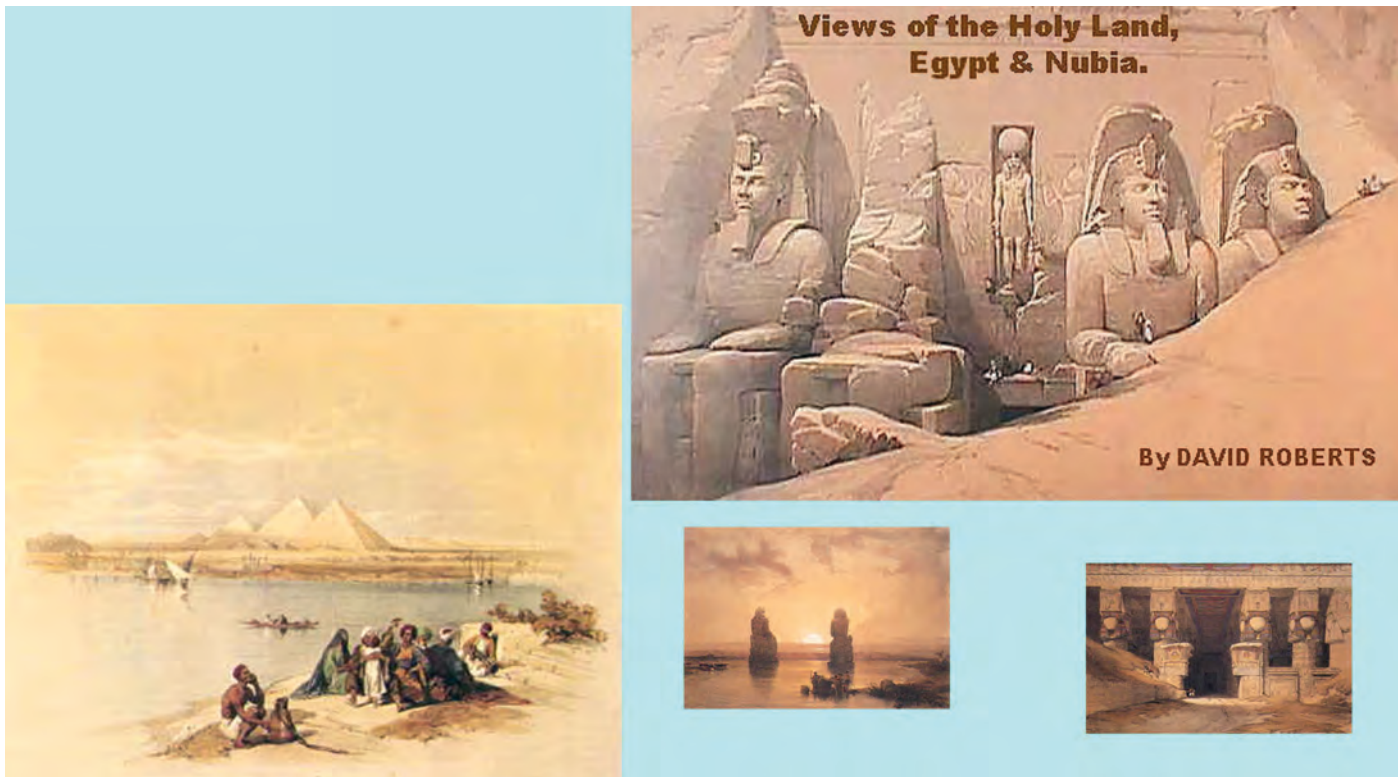
Before the establishment of park and world heritage systems, archaeological sites in the developing world were considered by archaeologists and conservators as preserves for research, properly opened only to the elite, Western or Westernized, who brought with them the economic and intellectual resources necessary to undertake and appreciate the visit. That elitist past is largely responsible for what archaeological sites, especially those containing architecture, are today: items of value in both ideological and economic systems. The value first attached to these sites in the early nineteenth century, which can be seen in the drawings of David Roberts (fig. 2) and Frederick Catherwood and the writings of "explorers" such as John Lloyd Stevens, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, and Richard Burton, eventually made it possible to market them to a broader audience within the tourism industry. Readers of,

for example, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt and Petraea* and *Incidents of Travel in the Yucatan* became the first "consumers" of archaeological sites.

The market for archaeological sites increased rapidly following a number of developments over the past half century. Improvements in transportation systems, most notably air travel, have made archaeological and, more generally, cultural sites accessible to large numbers of people. As the bourgeois of the 1960s and 1970s followed in the footsteps of the elite in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, certain sites experienced enormous increases in visitation. One felicitous result of this increased visitation was that it produced a constituency for these sites. That constituency comprised not only site visitors but also members of the various sectors of the economy that enjoyed revenue derived from visitation. This alliance of business interests and private individuals—which depended on the belief that cultural sites somehow conveyed something valuable to all who had a chance to visit them—grew alarmed at the well-publicized damage brought about by natural disasters and infrastructure developments in the 1960s.

Flooding in Venice prompted the formulation by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) of the Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites in 1964. Out of this, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), an international NGO dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites, was born. At the UNESCO general conference in Paris in 1972, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, or World Heritage Convention, was adopted. This convention noted that "the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction." The Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value, called the World Heritage Committee, was formed by the Convention, and this committee was charged with maintaining a World Heritage List. The list was to comprise sites possessing outstanding universal value, "in terms of such criteria as it shall have established."

As Russell Train noted at the ceremony to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, it was no coincidence that the convention was signed on 16 November 1972, one hundred years to the day from the



**FIGURE 2** Engravings by David Roberts, popularizing exotic archaeological destinations.

date when the U.S. national park system was established. According to Train, a former undersecretary of the Department of the Interior and the first chair of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, the World Heritage Convention was born in the White House. In his Message on the Environment in 1972, President Richard Nixon (who Train declares was anxious to be remembered kindly for his environmental record) said, "It would be fitting by 1972 (that being the centennial anniversary of the establishment of Yellowstone National Park) for the nations of the world to agree to the principle that there are certain areas of such unique worldwide value that they should be treated as part of the heritage of all mankind and accorded special recognition as part of a World Heritage Trust" (Train 1992). Thus the system of World Heritage Sites was very consciously patterned after the U.S. national park system.

There are certainly flaws in the model, but it has worked well in the United States for several reasons. Economically, the U.S. national parks remain an enormous engine for tourism

revenue and tourism-related jobs. Although the park system was first promoted by the railroads, automobile travel brought the parks within the reach of virtually the entire middle class, and airplanes now bring in millions of foreign tourists to "must-sees" like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, the monuments in Washington, D.C., and the Statue of Liberty in New York. All of these are managed by the U.S. NPS.

The national parks are almost entirely supported by tax dollars. A vigorous economy makes this possible, as does the dominance of an ideological system that differs in some respects from those in place in many areas of the world. Although there are many divisions in American society, the idea of nationhood is well accepted, and from there it is an easily negotiated leap to the idea that a national institution should be formed with the mission to protect and present tangible portions of the national heritage. The U.S. private sector is well developed, and the legal system is vigorous, to say the least. Our media thrive on exposés that if not always thoughtful, are engaging to most of the populace. This opens up opportunities both to involve the private sector in preservation and to subject that involvement to critical review.

It is important not to underestimate a final factor in this regard, however. The national park system in the United States

has succeeded as well as it has in no small part because of the role played by conservationists in mediating between the interests of the business sector and local, usually traditional, communities. The workforce at U.S. national parks is drawn about equally from local people and the well-educated specialists who relocate to the remote areas where most national parks are situated. Willing to forgo the luxuries of more populated areas and to work for little pay, these staff members often come from a background in the sciences. They are typically motivated by what they see as the opportunity to play a role in an important effort to preserve irreplaceable resources. They occupy a middle ground between the interests of traditional groups and those of businesses and bureaucracies and knit these together in a common social network.

Social networks depend on the internalized standards and modes of behavior that make up culture. "Culture" is an enormously popular term today, and it is most frequently used in the sense that anthropologists assigned to it after a century of studying collective human behavior. Culture in the anthropological sense is not the high culture of operas and art museums but the forces that determine patterns of human behavior. Although anthropologists are not in perfect agreement about all aspects of culture, it is probably safe to say that most anthropologists learn in college that culture is influenced mostly by notions of kinship. Kinship defines patterns of appropriate behavior based on each person's position within a web of ancestry. In traditional societies, this web is inevitably seen by societal members as stretching back to the founding ancestors. The founding ancestors are those that made the world and established the standards that all succeeding generations must meet. In traditional societies, one may have disagreements with one's relatives but will band together with them against nonrelatives. To create alliances and avoid conflict, fictive kinship can be established through paying joint homage to a fictive ancestor, usually one among the group regarded as founding ancestors.

As I have argued elsewhere (Comer 1996), we in the West often call groups that define identity through explicit reference to ancestry and homeland "primitive" or "traditional." We ignore the fact that capitalism employs its own ways of establishing fictive kinship. Often, this is through membership in a corporation, but it might also be through membership in a professional or avocational society. We see in such groups the same veneration for founding ancestors and the same concern with emblems of status that are laden with great meaning to those in the group, although not necessarily to those outside it. The structure of culture is the same, every-

where. The difference is really a matter of degree and context, not of kind.

There are in the United States a great number of traditional societies having what academics readily identify as traditional or "folk" cultures. This is something that we frequently celebrate. The largest and most famous U.S. national parks tend to be located in areas where traditional societies are the norm. This in itself is evidence that traditional and modern groups can coexist and even thrive while maintaining their differences, as long as each side maintains an ideological and economic place for the other. That place is usually created by mutual economic benefit. If production of certain items and provision of special services falls comfortably within the ideological system of one side and is valued by the other and if both sides feel that value is gained by the exchange, then peace and a certain level of prosperity often follow. In fact, this is largely the situation that obtains within the U.S. NPS, which is a modern, federal system that employs the services and purchases the products of the more traditional groups that reside in the interior of the country.

This involves establishing a management system at each site that is largely tried and proven and that is standard enough that personnel can function if rotated from site to site. At the same time, the system must be sufficiently flexible to allow for local cultural variability. Most personnel can be trained to function well in such a system. Rising within it, however, usually involves adopting a worldview less grounded in immediate kin and homeland points of reference and more grounded in the fictive kinship of the central authority and the more abstract landscape of the nation.

All of this can work so long as the central authority can bring to the table jobs and the opportunity to market the services and products that the local community feels comfortable providing. A viable income is needed not only for the most obvious reasons—to maintain the site and to provide visitors with protection, interpretation, and other amenities—but also as the means by which to engage the local communities and populations in an exchange that is meaningful and satisfactory to them. To provide the latter benefit, income does not have to go through the government. It can go directly to local providers of goods and services, as long as (1) there is the general understanding that such exchange is attributable to the presence of the archaeological site and (2) the central government is perceived as the steward of the archaeological site.

In the end, effective site management is a matter of establishing good governance. Government must take ultimate responsibility not only for preserving the site but also for



seeing to it that the site generates income that accrues fairly to all stakeholders, especially those in the private sector. The exact manner in which that is done must involve local communities and other stakeholders in open and transparent transactions, according to standards and regulations that ensure that resources and communities are not destroyed in the process of generating the income that is necessary to preserve them. In doing so, governments must balance the interests of the international and local private sectors.

Governance, however, involves more than the government. While a legitimate role of government is to regulate and reform the private sector, the private sector can play a strong role in reforming government. The private sector is especially likely to promote policies and programs that encourage social stability and economic growth, conditions that benefit it as well. Among these programs can be those that provide the structure and resources necessary for effective management of archaeological sites. Dialogue with these organizations is also essential to ensure that local economic interests are not overwhelmed by competition with large international companies. In some cases, for example, international companies might be induced to provide support and training to small, local firms.

In conclusion, management of cultural sites should not be turned over to the private sector. Preservationists and, more broadly, conservationists face the difficult but essential task of educating not only the private sector but also local, tra-

ditional groups about the value of safeguarding resources. The interests of both groups must be acknowledged as a step in convincing them to add their voices to those of preservationists in declaring the need to effectively manage cultural resources.

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# NGO and Government Collaboration in Archaeological Site Management: The Case of Petra, Jordan

Aysar Akrawi

**Abstract:** The Petra National Trust (PNT) is a nongovernmental and nonprofit organization that was established in 1989. It is one of the organizations responsible for the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of Petra. PNT does not set policy but works with the policy makers in the government of Jordan and with other nongovernmental organizations to achieve its objectives. This paper addresses the experience of Jordan in site management, using the case of Petra to portray developments in this field. It describes the situation in Petra today and cites some of the management models that the government has adopted. It concludes with a proposal for how Jordan should proceed toward management of its archaeological heritage.

Petra is located halfway between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea (fig. 1) and has been inhabited for more than two hundred thousand years. Traditionally the tribes were shepherds and farmers. Today people in the area live in modern hillside villages and Bedouin encampments. In recent years, with the arrival of tourists, they have moved closer to the archaeological site and earn a living by working on excavations and guiding tourists. One of the most spectacular sites in the Near East, Petra (fig. 2) has long attracted travelers and explorers, and archaeological investigations have been conducted in the area since the 1930s.

The site of Petra covers a protected area of 264 square kilometers and is surrounded by six main villages (fig. 3) with a total population that has grown from 2,000 in 1960 to 25,000 today. In the absence of zoning and building regulations, came

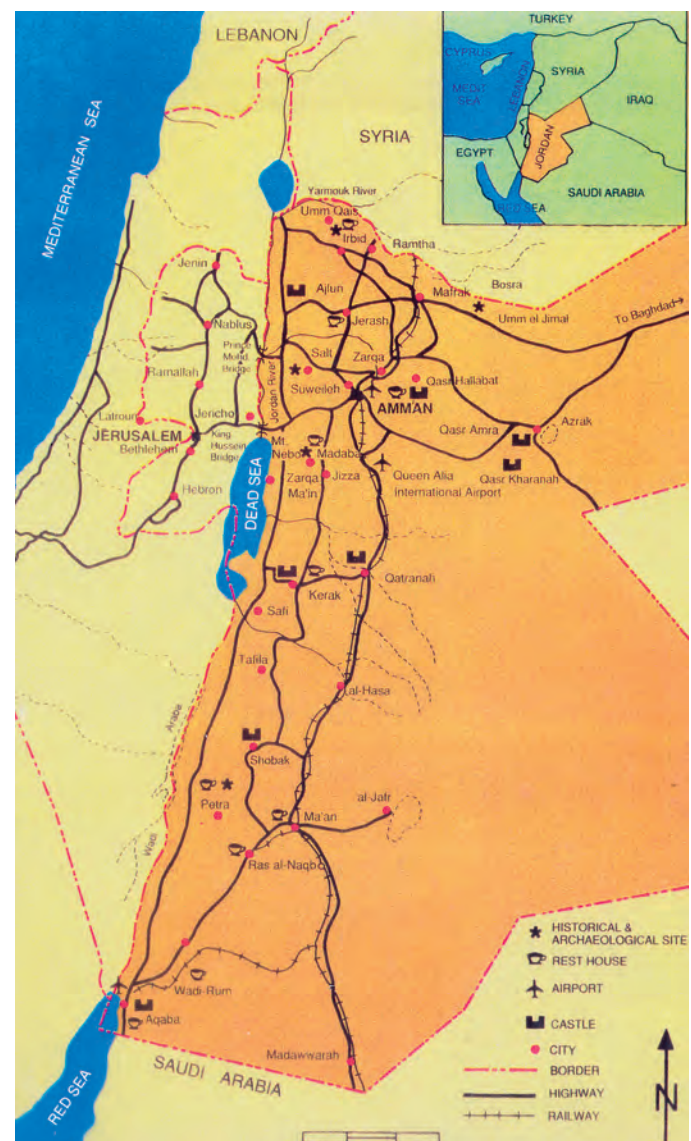


FIGURE 1 Jordan. Courtesy of Petra National Trust



**FIGURE 2** al-Deir. Courtesy of Petra National Trust

uncontrolled construction to meet the expanding requirements of the communities and to cater to tourists. Statistics issued by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities show that the number of tourists more than quadrupled between the years 1989 and 2000. The high concentration of visitors coupled with the lack of circulation plans within the site presented a threat to its integrity (fig. 4).

### Site Management

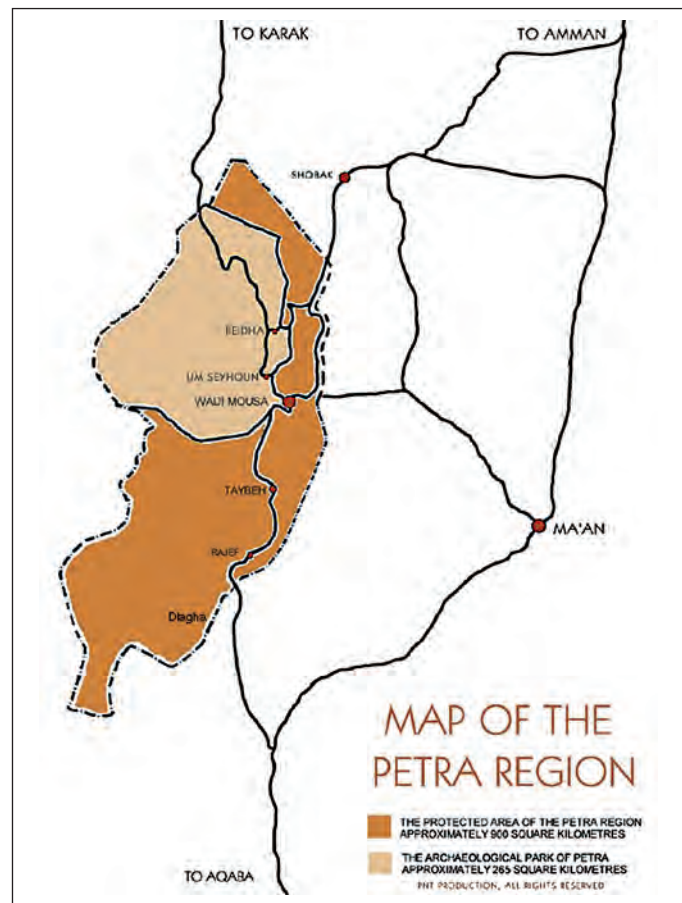
Petra Archaeological Park is managed by the Department of Antiquities, which is part of Jordan’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Numerous other government departments are also involved, and their responsibilities often overlap. Jordan has undertaken a number of measures to resolve the confusion in responsibilities and chain of command, as explained below. The sudden surge in numbers of visitors spurred by the peace agreement with Israel in 1994 abruptly brought to the surface the issue of site management. The Department of Antiquities, whose primary concern had been archaeological research, found itself unprepared to effectively manage Petra or other sites in Jordan.

**FIGURE 3** Petra region and protected area. Courtesy of Petra National Trust

### Stakeholders

A number of stakeholders have an interest in the region as a whole. These are

- local inhabitants
- the government, including the Department of Antiquities, the Ministry of Tourism, the Jordan Tourism Board, the Petra Regional Authority, and other ministries
- Jordanian and international archaeologists
- conservation professionals
- international institutes and aid agencies involved in research and preservation
- tour operators, tourism investors, hotel owners, and souvenir vendors
- tourists
- NGOs







**FIGURE 4** Restaurant. Courtesy of Petra National Trust

The differing and often incompatible interests and roles of these groups need to be reviewed and defined to avoid friction between them.

## Management Plans

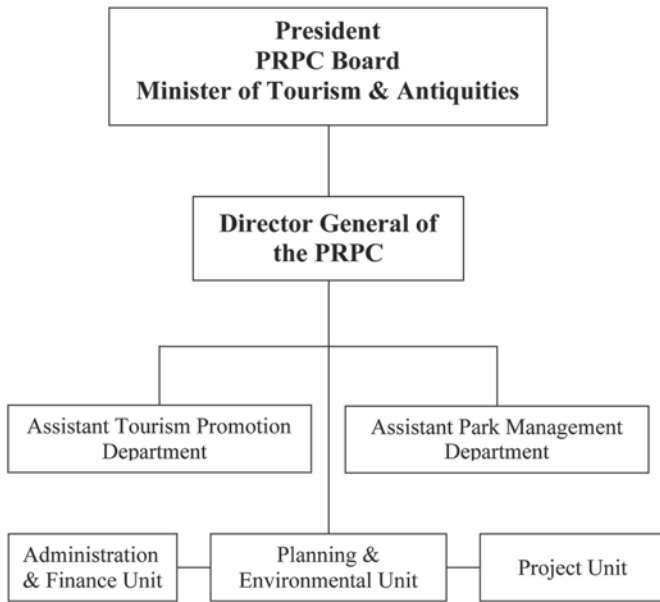
In 1985 Petra was inscribed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites in recognition of its unique cultural and natural heritage. In 1999 Petra was put on the World Monuments Fund's Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites, and that designation was renewed in 2002. Well before those dates, the government, in response to the potential impact of increasing tourism and later the increase in visitation numbers, invited international institutions, on four occasions, to prepare management plans for Petra:

- the U.S. National Park Service Master Plan for the Protection and Use of the Petra National Park, in 1968;
- the UNESCO Petra National Park Management Plan, in 1994;
- the US/ICOMOS Management Analysis and Recommendations for the Petra World Heritage Site, in 1996; and
- the U.S. National Park Service Operational Plan, in 2000.

In 1968 the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) was invited to prepare a master plan that was to be used as a guide for the use, development, interpretation, protection, and general administration of what came to be known as the Petra National Park. Many of the issues identified in this plan have now intensified. Whereas the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is now independent, in 1968 it was a department within the Ministry of Culture, and there is no institutional recollection of the procedure that was followed by the U.S. NPS in this study. In the ensuing plans, some participation of Jordanian counterparts was included. It is clear, however, that there was no systematic participation of stakeholders in any of the stages of master plan development or thereafter in the formulation and follow-up of the recommendations they presented, and to this date this approach largely continues.

The first two studies analyzed the management structure at a time when the Ministry of Culture and later the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities managed Petra from their headquarters in Amman. The Ministry of Tourism was responsible for issuing development licenses; the Department of Antiquities was responsible for scientific research and the management of the archaeological resources. With limited staff and poor coordination, the management of the entire area was ineffective. Most of the problems then and now are a result of this circumstance. On the basis of their findings, the U.S. NPS and later UNESCO stressed the need to create a single independent governmental authority that would manage and coordinate all aspects of park management. They differed in their approach as to whom this new body would report to. The outcome was the Petra Regional Planning Council (PRPC), which was established in 1995 (fig. 5). The charter gave the council the mandate to comprehensively manage an area of 1,000 square kilometers, inclusive of the protected area, disregarding the fact that the Law of Antiquities gives the Department of Antiquities (DOA) full authority to manage all aspects of the park. Herein lies one of the fundamental problems affecting the efficient management of the park—that of the appropriate location of this body within the government.

The 1996 study conducted under the auspices of ICOMOS recommended the introduction of a separate authority for the protected area of the park, the Petra National Park Agency (PNPA), which would be dedicated solely to the management of the park. Once again the location of the PNPA within the framework of the government was disputed; its final location was a subject of intense controversy.

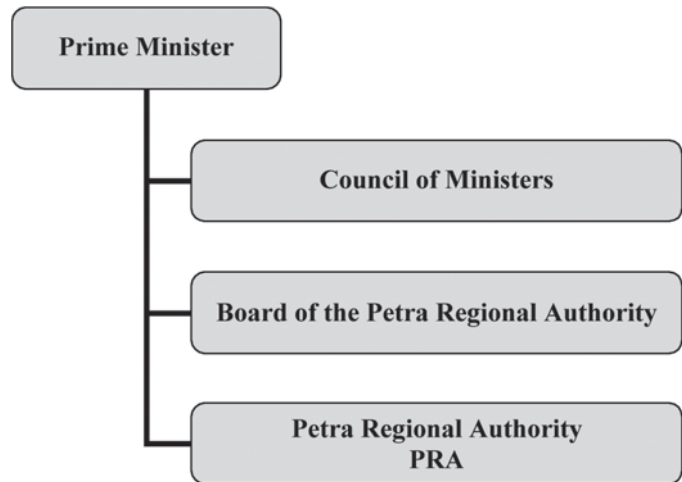


**FIGURE 5** PRPC organization chart. Courtesy of Petra National Trust

In 2001 the PRPC was replaced by the Petra Regional Authority, now reporting directly to the Prime Minister’s Office rather than the Ministry of Tourism (fig. 6). The new board was composed of government officials and a few members of the local community, but it eliminated the membership of PNT. The undeclared reason was that in its efforts to protect the buffer area from overdevelopment, PNT was seen as an obstruction to progress. The new law gave the Petra Regional Authority control of the entire area; however, more important, the jurisdiction of all aspects of the management of the Petra Archaeological Park finally lay with the Department of Antiquities, thus resolving on paper at least the issue of which governmental department would be responsible for the management of the site.

The government has not officially endorsed any of these plans. Nevertheless, they have served as a reference point in many instances, for example, in the development of the institutional capacity of park staff and tourist-related facilities. The neglect of the recommendations, on the other hand, has had a negative effect on several parameters, social, environmental, economic, and visual.

The final plan that was submitted in July 2000 differs from its predecessors in that it constitutes a major step toward



**FIGURE 6** PRA organization chart. Courtesy of Petra National Trust

the establishment of comprehensive management policies, detailed operating procedures and standards, a training plan, and the recommended position of Petra Archaeological Park under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Regrettably, however, some very important prerequisites such as the financial and human resources essential to making the plan feasible were missing, and the practicability of any plan depends on the government’s commitment to providing the necessary resources. Once again, the preparation of this plan did not include any local participation until after its submission to the government. Difficult as it may be to coordinate, local participation of key stakeholders is vital if the plan is to be identified with and implemented. To date, this plan has not been put into practice.

### The Role of NGOs in Site Management

Today we discuss archaeological and cultural sites in very specific ways. It should be emphasized that Jordan is only beginning to define how it preserves, conserves, and yet makes available the wonders of its cultural heritage. Both government and nongovernmental organizations are involved in site management and preservation of heritage, and cultural and natural heritage NGOs have existed since 1966. There are three NGOs whose activities are related to this field in Jordan, the earliest being the Royal Society for the Conservation of

Nature (RSCN), which was established in 1966; it owns and manages six natural parks successfully. PNT was established in 1989. In reality it is the only cultural NGO that has been actively involved in the preservation and protection of archaeological sites, although its mandate is restricted to Petra, and as such it is a pioneer. Over the years it has been active in two main roles, advocacy and preservation. As such, it maintains a close relationship with both the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the World Monuments Fund. For example, it played a pivotal role in supporting the creation of a separate entity within the park to manage the site of Petra independently under the aegis of the Department of Antiquities and consequently resolved the controversy regarding which government body ultimately was to be responsible for the management of archaeological sites. In its role as a preservation organization, it has executed a number of preservation projects in the fields of hydrology (fig. 7), biodiversity (fig. 8), and local community development. In the execution of these projects, PNT partners with the government and conservation specialists in the private sector. Finally, the Friends of Archaeology was established in 1990; its main involvement has been concentrated on public awareness about the field of archaeological heritage.

### Site Management Models

Three site management models involving NGOs have been experimented with recently: in Petra, in Wadi Rum, and at the Baptism site. All three sites fall within the boundaries of semi-autonomous regions—the Petra Regional Authority, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZA), and the Jordan Valley Authority. These models are described here briefly. In the case of Petra, unlike the other two models, and in compliance with the Law of Antiquities, the site is managed by the Department of Antiquities. The U.S. NPS Operational Plan, submitted in 2000, is yet to be implemented. Its implementation will constitute a major step toward the establishment of a comprehensive policy for safeguarding Petra and the sustainable development of its region, as well as the implementation of much-needed sound management and conservation practices. Whereas PNT has been instrumental in initiating and following up cooperation between the U.S. NPS and the government, its future role in the implementation stage is currently under consideration. Because of lack of experience in site management, the government needs the assistance of an NGO—PNT or a similar body—that can serve as facilitator



**FIGURE 7** Water channels. Courtesy of Petra National Trust

and catalyst between the U.S. NPS and the government to ensure adaptation of the plan to local conditions and constraints as well as its long-term continuation.

In the case of Wadi Rum, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature was contracted to prepare a master plan



**FIGURE 8** *Cercaetus gallicus*. Courtesy of Petra National Trust

for the management of the area and to conduct training. The RSCN was successful on both counts: however, as the RSCN is specialized in the protection of natural parks and not in the preservation of cultural sites, its management plan reflected weakness in archaeological conservation. Despite its good performance, the regional authority under whose jurisdiction Wadi Rum falls preferred to manage the site itself rather than exercise the option of partnering with an NGO. It should be noted here that the initiative to contract an NGO to introduce more effective site management was promoted at the outset by the World Bank and not by the government..

The third model is the Baptism Site Commission, founded in 2002. It was established by royal decree and operates independently of the Ministry of Tourism, the Department of Antiquities, and the Jordan Valley Authority within whose boundaries it falls. While the Department of Antiquities retains responsibility for archaeological conservation, the Site Commission manages other aspects of the site.

The concept of establishing protected areas to manage cultural heritage sites in Jordan is still in its very early stages. The 1996 USAID study addressed important park policy issues by providing recommendations for a protected area policy and an integrated management system. It investigated several options but fell short of recommending a specific organizational structure. This document has not been activated, and to date there is no national policy streamlining the responsibility for the management and protection of the multitude of archaeological sites in Jordan.

## Conclusion

Site management has been a concern for at least the past thirty-four years. As the region became more accessible, policy makers understood the importance of Petra and other sites for economic advancement. Hence the number of studies conducted and models adopted. There has been consensus in the government recently for the need to explore innovative approaches to site management and to allow NGOs to participate; however, it has been inconsistent in its approach, which has been prompted more by economic factors than preservation and protection, and it has hesitated to relinquish some

responsibility to NGOs. Instead of developing a unified park policy throughout Jordan, the government selected models that have resulted in overlapping responsibilities, duplication, and the ultimate fragmentation of the role of the Department of Antiquities. There is an urgent need for the parties concerned to come together to consolidate the numerous studies and their recommendations and to reevaluate the role of the Department of Antiquities and its appropriate position within the government, as well as its role vis-à-vis the geographic regions within the country; and to assess the management models adopted and emerge with an integrated nationwide policy for the protection of archaeological sites. The integrated approach being put forward here speaks to a complementary partnership between governmental and nongovernmental organizations in the field of site management, which is the most effective way for Jordan to achieve this objective. NGOs, unlike the government, are in the unique position of being nonprofit and, therefore, not motivated by economic gain; at the same time, they are not overburdened by bureaucracy, which gives them the ability to operate effectively. For this union to succeed, both the Department of Antiquities and related NGOs need to expand their capacity and hence their effectiveness. The department furthermore is required urgently to reinforce its role and to enhance its capacity to manage sites at Petra and elsewhere.

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# Privatization of State-owned Cultural Heritage: A Critique of Recent Trends in Europe

Gaetano Palumbo

**Abstract:** *Privatization, the market sale of cultural heritage properties belonging to the state, is a growing trend. Examples from Italy, Britain, and France show that this trend is not likely to stop, putting at risk the concept of the state as steward of public good. The risk for the resource itself is in its loss of authenticity following market-oriented attempts to develop it to enhance its economic value. This paper introduces the concepts of cultural heritage exploitation and use as two different models of heritage management. It argues that cultural heritage exploitation has only an apparent economic advantage but in reality is unsustainable over the long term as it requires continuous reinvestment to remain competitive; cultural heritage use can be sustainable as it implies active involvement of the local community in the decision-making process and state-private partnerships in the process of development, conservation, management, and protection of the cultural resource.*

The subject of privatization of cultural heritage is vast, as each country has different legislation under which various forms of privatization or private input in heritage conservation and management may be allowed. Privatization may be limited to the management of services of a heritage place, such as ticketing, restaurants, general maintenance and upkeep, museum shops, security, and, in some cases, even inventory and conservation. In other cases, privatization refers to the sale of a scheduled building or site, for which change of use is allowed (which potentially takes the site out of public use). In still other cases, privatization refers to the selling of a heritage place to a private company so that it can be transformed into a tourist attraction.

In this paper privatization is discussed as one of the elements of *désétatisation*, a French term indicating decentraliza-

tion and the state's attempt to reduce expenditures. As mentioned above, there can be many forms of privatization in the cultural sphere.<sup>1</sup> This critique is limited to the actual sale of cultural heritage sites to private individuals or corporations, either for further development as cultural attractions or for other use.

Recent episodes are used to illustrate changes being introduced in some countries. For example, in Italy a century-long tradition of promoting public over private interests in heritage conservation is being dismantled in favor of an approach that sees privatization as the only cure to the problem of lack of maintenance and management. In Britain, an alarmed English Heritage realized perhaps too late that local history was at risk of being lost following the selling off of local council properties, including those of local and regional importance. These new and different approaches to managing cultural heritage mark a turning point in the traditional approach whereby government bodies are seen as most qualified and responsible for the conservation of cultural heritage sites.

The privatization of cultural heritage has always been considered by the proponents of "lighter" government (where state ownership of immovable property is reduced to an absolute minimum and most services are privatized) as a way to ease the burden of conserving, protecting, and managing so-called lesser heritage. If by "lesser heritage" is normally meant all those historic buildings and monuments that are of local or regional importance and not usually considered worth listing in national registers or being given special protection status, the distinction between major and minor heritage, between important and less important sites, is very dangerous and should be avoided. Altogether these



buildings and sites form the character of historic towns and cultural landscapes, and their existence as an integrated system transforms these buildings into “heritage” and gives communities a cultural landscape in which they identify themselves (Settis 2002). It may be argued that it is not the change of ownership that modifies the physical structure of a town; however, if the change of ownership is also associated with radical change of use and the commercialization of public spaces, the effect can be disruptive for the sociocultural and physical structure of the town (Hassler, Algreen-Ussing, and Kohler 2002).

The exploitation of heritage sites by private entities is indeed more dynamic than that by public organizations. It is more market oriented, as income is needed to maintain the property and obtain a financial return. It is more customer oriented, as economic success is the result of strategies aimed at attracting more visitors and rewarding them with an experience that meets or exceeds their expectations. By allowing private individuals or corporations to buy heritage properties with the purpose of obtaining revenues from them (especially if such revenues are tied to the cultural marketing of the property), the central government accepts the principle that it is not able, as private enterprise is, to promote, market, and exploit all heritage sites and monuments under its jurisdiction and that private enterprises have the flexibility required to make a profitable business by “selling” heritage.

Why, then, criticize a model that seems to work? I argue that the privatization of cultural heritage is a risky business that may have some short-term economic advantage for the state and the private sector (which makes it so appealing), but in the long term it may weaken or destroy the trust that citizens have in the state as the steward of public good (“public good” being intended here not as commodity but as a political process) (Throsby 2002).

Noneconomic parameters in what is mainly an economic justification to privatize heritage places have often been ignored, but they should not be. Economists such as David Throsby, Arjo Klammer, and Peter Zuidhof have warned that especially in cultural heritage matters, the long-term economic advantage is not necessarily the one that produces revenue but the one that improves the well-being of the people (Klammer and Zuidhof 1999; Throsby 2002). Improving services with the help of the private sector is one thing; encouraging the private sector to support conservation and maintenance activities is another (Settis 2002). However, the hands-off approach that some governments are taking, where the selling off of sites and buildings of cultural importance is presented

as a revolutionary step rather than the extremely conservative approach that it is, makes the privatization of cultural heritage as a whole a very difficult topic to discuss.

Access by the private sector to the cultural industry is a trend that cannot be stopped; but its consequences must be better understood. More important, this access must be better regulated, especially in terms of controlling the quality of the private intervention and ensuring that the public benefit is enhanced rather than limited by the change in status of the cultural property.

In Italy, the present government’s efforts to find financial support for its program of infrastructure development and tax reduction extend to the listing of many properties, including those scheduled for natural or cultural reasons, for possible sale directly or through competitive bidding. The original plan included the creation of a new holding, Patrimonio SpA, which translates as Heritage Inc., to which state properties could be transferred by a decree signed by the minister of finance (and endorsed by the minister of culture and the minister of environment in the case of scheduled properties). The properties on this list could be sold or given in concession to private enterprises. By a simple signature, the minister of finance could also transfer any of these properties to another holding, Infrastrutture SpA (Infrastructures, Inc.). The market value of the properties in this holding was intended to be used to issue bonds and as security for bank loans. The bank would, in effect, then become the new owner of the property until repayment of the loan.

Critics of this approach, which include Salvatore Settis, director of the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa and previously director of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, have pointed out several issues:

- There was no need to include scheduled properties in the lists, as the state owns a large quantity of buildings and land having no cultural or environmental value.
- That they were included means that there is a complete lack of understanding of values other than purely economic ones.
- The laws accompanying the creation of these holdings, as well as those authorizing the direct sale of state properties to private companies, explicitly deny the Ministry of Cultural Heritage the right of first refusal. This has recently been put into practice with the sale to the Carlyle Group of the buildings of the state-owned tobacco company, Manifatture Tabacchi,

most of which were scheduled modernist buildings from the 1920s and 1930s, without informing the local authorities. In the case of the Manifatture buildings in Florence and Milan, projects had already been prepared—and paid for—by the city councils to transform them into community and art centers.

- The inclusion of many cultural heritage properties on these lists marks a worrying trend in the identification of these properties as moneymaking opportunities for the state to take advantage of their added cultural heritage value by selling and for the new owner to transform or resell.
- In the case of Italy, no prior assessments were made of the significance of these properties, and many nonscheduled properties put up for sale were actually worthy of scheduling, thus also showing a lack of commitment by the state to its own constitutional principles, according to which the public good takes precedence over economic considerations (Article 9 of the Italian constitution). The example of disused prisons and military barracks is particularly relevant, as not even the State Board of Architectural Heritage, the Soprintendenze, has protested their inclusion in the list of salable properties, and this when the cultural, historic, and social value of these properties is recognized internationally.
- Although a transitory and not a permanent regulation, the present evaluation of the market value of state properties made by the Demanio dello Stato, the authority that administers buildings and land owned by the state, is accompanied by a time limit of 120 days for the Soprintendenze to declare whether a site should not be put on sale because of its heritage value. Although in theory this time frame would allow such an evaluation to be conducted, in practical terms it is absolutely insufficient, given the work overload of every Soprintendenza in Italy. The invitation by the minister of culture to the Soprintendenti to take a site off the list of properties that can be sold, when in doubt, does not relieve critics' concerns about the consequences of this law in the long term, nor does the directive to the Soprintendenti by higher state hierarchies to use this power with discretion.

The Italian example has been followed by France, which has recently announced the sale of a number of buildings and

landholdings, mostly belonging to the army or to various ministries (Masse-Stamberger and Richard 2004).

These examples show that there is a clash between different concepts of use of cultural heritage resources: one more market oriented, the other more inclined to accentuate the social value of cultural heritage. This is not limited to Italy; it is a global trend whose effects are visible in many countries.

The market approach may be defined as *cultural heritage exploitation* and the social approach as *cultural heritage use* (table 1). The first seeks economic return; the second looks at the broader role the resource can play in society, without limiting it to an economic one. The first identifies a basic value (frequently an aesthetic or a historic one) and markets it in order to promote the site; the second balances all the values and allows them to define the significance of the site. The first isolates the site from its surroundings, as it sees the resource as a single element; the second sees the site in its wider physical and social context. The first needs continuous reinvestment in terms of new infrastructure, new exhibitions, or restoration to determine success based on visitor numbers and straight economic return; the second creates the means for its own conservation, as it balances social and economic benefits by entering into the cultural sphere of the community. Since this protection is not based on massive restorations and interventions, it is locally apt and sustainable. It creates the opportunity for community involvement, which is not necessarily dedicated solely to tourism services but can also cover aspects of documentation, assessment, conservation, and education.

The local community in a cultural heritage exploitation approach is seen as being at the service of this initiative, by providing a labor force for all the activities generated by the tourism industry. In a cultural heritage use approach, the community “owns” the resource (not necessarily in a legal sense but rather in a social way) and organizes itself around this ownership.

The nonsustainability of the cultural heritage exploitation approach is demonstrated by the fact that rapid exploitation tends to degrade the resource, especially if reinvestments after the initial push, usually encouraged through bank loans or preliminary investments, are not adequate. The sustainability of the cultural heritage use approach is given by the involvement of the community and its understanding of the values of the resources and means to preserve these values without radically altering them.

In short, *exploitation* sees cultural heritage as a product to manipulate, a product that exists on its own and has

**Table 1 Cultural Heritage: Exploitation or Use?**

	<b>Market Approach: Cultural Heritage “Exploitation”</b>	<b>Social Approach: Cultural Heritage “Use”</b>
Economy	Seeks immediate economic return.	Does not consider economic value as most important.
Values	Marketing of limited sets of values, favoring those that can be easily sold to the public, such as aesthetic value.	All values shape the significance of the site, with high importance given to local interpretations and feelings about this heritage.
Context	Considers the site an isolated entity, a monument that has little relationship with its surroundings.	Considers the site part of a cultural continuum with its surroundings.
Management	Needs continuous reinvestment to maintain competitiveness.	Balances use and conservation.
Main Objective	Tourism	Public good
Local Community	Local community is in service to cultural heritage exploitation.	Local community participates in conservation.
Effects	Exploitation degrades the cultural resource.	Use adds value to the resource.
Sustainability	Nonsustainable	Sustainable

superficial links, if any, to society at large and to the local community in particular. The relationship to the resource is purely aesthetic for the consumer, purely economic for the manager. This is not an overly pessimistic view. Concepts of *edutainment*, theme parks and the like, where interpretations of past and present cultures are naive at best and deceptive at worst, are now seen also at the level of interpretation of cultural resources.

The other consequence of the indiscriminate sale of cultural heritage is the isolation of a few universally recognized monuments, thus severing the cultural relationship they have with their physical and social environment. The disruption of this continuity is what the critics of the indiscriminate sale and state hands-off policy fear the most. This is expressed by English Heritage in its 2002 *State of the Historic Environment*, where a generally good condition of protection and conservation for Grade I listed buildings does not extend to buildings of local value, which are being sold by cash-strapped local councils.

What is at risk with the present trend of privatization of cultural heritage sites is the loss of significance (as a balance and an expression of many values) and the loss of authenticity of the resource. In the longer term, this will translate into decreasing community interest, as the resource does not “belong” to them anymore, and decreasing visitor satisfaction, with dire consequences for a site that the private owner no longer sees as profitable, thus encouraging a process of rapid sale of nonprofitable properties or of their contents, such as furniture or art objects, to raise cash for repairs (English Heritage 2002). This has serious conse-

quences for the ability of state authorities to control the legislation protecting the resource. In the United Kingdom, for example, many manors and villas were destroyed by owners who were not able to maintain them, requiring that specific legislation be introduced to ensure their protection (Settis 2002). (See table 2.)

What is the alternative? How can private enterprise help cultural heritage conservation and not be part of the problem?

First, the hands-off policy of the state does not pay in the long term. Partnerships between state and private bodies should be strengthened, with the understanding that the advantage to the private sector comes especially from tax incentives rather than from theoretical, often illusory economic advantage. The result would be a general improvement in the social and economic condition of the community in which the site is located, because a conservation approach is more balanced than an aggressive strategy for extracting income. Many economists are now looking at cultural heritage sites in a community as an element that contributes to its well-being even in the absence of direct moneymaking opportunities. These sites, if well managed, and the benefits they provide in terms of generating culture, social cohesion, and a sense of ownership are sufficient to start a process of upgrading and economic improvement that can be assessed and properly evaluated.

Given the trends observed in Europe, there is reason for pessimism. If, on one side, there are opportunities for private enterprises to successfully contribute to cultural heritage conservation and to the public good, if states realize the benefit of such partnerships, pessimism still prevails because of the

**Table 2 Privatization: Does It Work?**

Expectations	Reality
Sale of property frees the state of administrative and financial burden and the property is better taken care of.	Private company reduces expenditures on conservation and protection to maximize revenues.
The new private ownership can make money from the resource.	Conservation costs may be higher than revenues, thus forcing the company to either resell or reduce the exploitation of the site.
State gains from the sale of the property.	State may be forced to pay for the site's conservation if the private company fails to do so. The immediate revenue from the sale may also be absorbed or canceled by expenditures required to provide public services, such as road access or other needed infrastructure.
Site increases in economic and cultural value following its privatization and development.	Site loses authenticity after inappropriate interventions and excessive development and/or change of use.
Investment in cultural heritage calls for more investments.	Scarce revenues do not justify reinvestments.
U.S. model shows that large museums and historic properties can be private and make a profit.	There is no profit without large donor base (difficult to achieve in other countries with more restrictive fiscal legislation concerning donations).

strong temptation of public officers to equate private sector participation in heritage conservation with its privatization.

Public administrators, unfortunately, lack the capacity to think and program long term. Although cultural heritage management curricula now exist in many institutions of higher learning in Europe, it is still difficult for these newly formed programs to have a say in the processes of urban, economic, and cultural heritage planning, especially at the local level. The development of these new professional programs cannot, alone, help to better manage cultural heritage assets if local communities do not realize that their history, memory, and, ultimately, social cohesion are at risk if they fall victim to the sirens of hastily accepted economic models.

**Notes**

- 1 John Myerscough (2001) illustrates several aspects of privatization in the cultural sector: *plural funding* (search for funding—and finance—from nonpublic sources); *purchaser provider splits* (separating the purchase of public services from their provision); *outsourcing* (contracting out by government department or public undertaking to independent for-profit or not-for-profit suppliers). He adds that “privatization” is also applied to the “process of giving state institutions more responsibility and freedom of action, by simplifying their financial regulations or reconstituting them as non-departmental public bodies or as non-profit companies or trusts or foundations” (p. 8).

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# Regional Site Management Planning and Training: The SPAFA Example in Southeast Asia

*Pisit Charoenwongsa*

**Abstract:** *This paper examines the Southeast Asian regional approach adopted for the management of archaeological sites as encapsulated in the training programs of the Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA) of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation. It seeks to show how SPAFA, based in Bangkok, Thailand, has achieved a balanced approach that can satisfy the varying demands of all the stakeholders concerned and overcome constraints often dictated by economic necessities. In particular, attention is paid to promoting the active engagement of local communities in archaeological site management.*

With the introduction of training workshops, the Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA) of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMO) enables professionals in various disciplines, such as cultural specialists and managers, to undertake sustainable heritage preservation projects throughout Southeast Asia. Providing skilled management techniques is just one facet of this regional center's commitment to a successful ongoing training program.

As an intergovernmental organization, or IGO, SPAFA has extensive experience dealing with governmental and nongovernmental agencies in the public and private sectors alike. This provides a sound understanding of the issues involved in developing training programs that address the challenges that must be met to achieve a balanced approach to site management.

## **Why Adopt a Holistic Approach?**

The policies and management of archaeological sites take place in a complex setting involving various stakeholders,

sometimes more than one donor and more than one implementing organization or agency.

The framework of economics, trade, and politics provides a wider backdrop that often makes it difficult to follow a cohesive approach that can achieve a balance among donor and recipient needs. Thus there is a need to consider the management of an archaeological site as a specific development project but in a broader economic and political context. For this reason, all stakeholders need to develop an understanding of one another's perceptions and values, so that potential conflict between different stakeholders can be managed and productive working relationships achieved. This requires "cultural analysis" (involving historical and archaeological research and site evaluation) during planning and implementation. In other words, a holistic approach needs to be adopted in management planning and training. This should be seen as an opportunity to ensure viability and sustainability.

The use of cultural analysis to develop a better understanding of values in a particular community can contribute to the following long-term goals:

- Equitable sharing of natural resources in social and economic development;
- Reduction of poverty through effective and sustainable project implementation;
- Increased sustainability through the fulfillment of community-based action (known as demand-oriented community action), commitment, and ownership; and
- Increased understanding, tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity.



## The Need to Innovate

Over the past decade, the objectives of development programs have shifted from direct intervention to capacity building through partnerships, with “recipients” as stakeholders who participate in and own the development process. This is because development can be defined as a transformation that reflects improvement for all sectors of society—a better standard of living and access to health care and education—and thus enables poor people to have better opportunities. All too often, however, advocacy for such participatory processes is only abstract or academic. The need to innovate, to be “inclusive,” can foster equitable economic development. This is crucial for a successful outcome.

Quite often, the failure—or limited success—of many management interventions can be attributed to a lack of cultural sensitivity in the planning and implementation processes. This has a negative impact because development policies conducted in a top-down manner do not accommodate local knowledge and experience, and hence overlook communities or individuals as contributors or innovators. This, in turn, has negative consequences for the achievement of sustainability and the future independence of donor-initiated programs or projects because the crucial importance of capacity building is neglected. Only when there is mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity and people’s life contexts—so that the local community is involved in design, planning, and implementation—can development programs and projects truly succeed.

## Learning from the Past for a Better Future

SPAFA has been collaborating with governments, international and academic organizations, universities, other not-for-profit organizations, and the private sector for the past eighteen years. Thus it has a wealth of experience to draw on, and even past mistakes can provide valuable lessons.

In November 2002 SPAFA held its first international conference on the theme, “Issues of Culture, Context, and Choice in Development.” The conference came about in response to the recognition that there is an urgent need to ensure the successful outcome of “responsible” development policies. Thus its major aim was to provide vital stimulus to the conceptualization and conduct of development projects, including management interventions at archaeological sites.

At its close, I stated my belief that the conference would contribute to inculcating in the implementers of development

projects the need to emphasize cultural context as a priority for the benefit of the communities for which these projects are intended. The forthcoming training program is a tangible outcome of the conference and demonstrates that SPAFA was able to set in motion a train of events that place culture on the development map as a central issue.

The conference brought together representatives from the governmental, nongovernmental, and corporate sectors. Discussions focused on the issues raised here: different management models, models of private–public partnership, and local community participation. Corporate or private sector involvement is seen as key to privatizing the alleviation of poverty. By capitalizing on the business skills of the corporate sector, skills that are usually lacking in government agencies and NGOs, a way forward can be provided for income generation through cooperation and mutual benefit, not just donation. Participatory, mutually beneficial projects truly can happen. Moreover, they can be sustainable and self-funding.

At SPAFA, we are now devising the content for a training course in managing the integration of culture in development projects. The course will address the fundamental issues of ownership, governance, consensus-building processes, and rights-based approaches, choice and knowledge, perceptions, honesty, and tolerance. I believe that SPAFA’s direction here can be usefully applied in the future, specifically, in providing guidance regarding innovative approaches for the policy and management of archaeological sites.

## SPAFA and Training

SPAFA began to conduct ASEAN Foundation–funded training workshops, “Training for Managing the Integration of Culture into Development Programs,” in August 2003. The course objectives were to

- increase awareness of the need to include cultural dimensions in development initiatives;
- highlight cultural opportunities to facilitate innovative and participatory programs;
- equip participants to plan and implement programs that are sustainable because they are culturally integrated;
- devise tools for identifying and managing potential situations of conflict;
- facilitate access to resources; and
- strengthen regional networks.

It must be noted that the training program is not designed specifically for archaeologists. As the experts, archaeologists provide key discipline-based knowledge, but in the planning and implementation stages of the management of an archaeological site, many players are involved.

The SPAFA training programs that are being developed are aimed at those people who share an interest in the preservation of cultural heritage. Participants from all ten member countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) will be invited. The immediate beneficiaries of the workshops will include project managers from donor and implementing agencies and organizations and technical and cultural specialists. The ultimate beneficiaries will be the grassroots stakeholders of development projects. It is these people, working alongside the experts, who also have to be aware of the critical importance of fully integrating culture into any sustainable heritage project.

A total of forty participants per workshop is viable, based on the successful experience of the August 2003 workshop. University faculty and cultural specialists from the ASEAN countries as well as cultural and technical experts from international organizations such as UNESCO and ICCROM will teach the workshops. They will instill knowledge about how to plan and implement sustainable programs that are integrated in the recipient culture. In this respect, more innovative and participatory site management planning will be achieved. Moreover, potential conflicts will be

identified, and methods to manage these conflict situations will be devised.

The success of the training program will be evaluated as follows:

- Workshop participants will be asked to write a report on their individual management planning projects. They can comment on how the workshop helped to shape and determine improvements in sustainable outcomes. Based on positive (and any negative) feedback, the training program can be reviewed and reassessed before further training is carried out.
- Previous participants will be invited to facilitate future workshops.
- Final evaluation of the training workshops will be conducted.
- A guidelines handbook will be developed from the outcomes of the training workshops. This handbook will serve as a reference for further discussions and will include practical activities and examples for training purposes.

This type of training is an exciting departure for SPAFA. It represents a new and innovative Southeast Asian response that aims to address the root cause that can undermine the successful outcome of any management practice when it is not culturally conceived.

# Interpretation as Preservation: Rationale, Tools, and Challenges

Neil Silberman and Dirk Callebaut

**Abstract:** *This paper surveys some of the new philosophical approaches and technological tools for the public presentation of archaeological sites and historic monuments and landscapes that have been developed in Europe in recent years. It suggests that the interpretation of the significance of historical and archaeological remains is an essential component of physical conservation. In particular, it describes the central concepts of the Ename Charter Initiative, carried out under the sponsorship of ICOMOS, which seeks to establish a set of international professional standards for the interpretation of public heritage resources. The draft charter makes recommendations for the preparation of school enrichment programs, public outreach, university heritage curricula, and professional training in interpretive methodology. This paper highlights the motivations for the proposed charter and some of the most important background considerations. Finally, it discusses the practical advantages of such a set of general international guidelines—and the ideological challenge of avoiding cultural homogenization in their formulation and implementation.*

Europe—especially in its rapidly expanding incarnation as the European Union—possesses an extraordinary quantity of recognized, preserved, and heavily visited historical monuments and archaeological sites. These range in magnitude from World Heritage Sites and international cultural attractions to regional landmarks to places of strictly local significance. Likewise, their states of preservation, presentation, and maintenance vary widely, from well equipped, well staffed, and packed with satisfied visitors to crumbling, abandoned, and all too often littered with garbage and scarred by graffiti. As the other papers in this volume clearly demonstrate, the situation is universal, and archaeologists everywhere are playing

an increasingly important role in addressing the central challenges of conservation—both in planning and in the physical preservation of significant material remains.

It has become abundantly clear that the activity of *physical* conservation, although the indispensable core and focus of all attempts to preserve the material heritage for future generations, is entangled in a dense web of political, economic, social, and even psychological relationships that—if ignored—can doom even the most sophisticated restoration projects to neglect and eventual destruction (Hall and McArthur 1998). Thus the initial stage of professionalizing and codifying the international standards for physical preservation (exemplified by the 1964 Charter of Venice and the 1992 Malta Convention) has been broadened and strengthened by the formulation of international standards on professional training, heritage tourism, and cultural site management, among others (Petzet and Ziesemer 2000). All have addressed the importance of site interpretation in varying degrees of detail but have rarely examined the relationship among the various types of interpretation that might be subtly connected to the success or ultimate failure of continuing preservation efforts at a heritage site.

As we suggest here, the modern social function of interpretation—its modes, its audiences, and the various public, private, and professional interests that determine its form and meanings—is of paramount concern. The local community's general and personal identification with the site, no less than the sophistication of the formulation and presentation of its significance by (usually) outside scholars, designers, and educators, can determine whether it will be maintained and protected by everyone, from the mayor to the members of the local preservation society to the general public to the neigh-



bors or even to a bored, unemployed seventeen-year-old with a can of spray paint.

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In recent years the importance of interpretation has been acknowledged among international heritage professionals, and the range of practical applications and scholarly literature on this subject has expanded enormously (e.g., Jameson 1997; Little 2002; Uzzell and Ballantyne 1999). Traditional didactic, museum-type text displays are now used primarily when budgetary constraints mandate only the cheapest, no-frills presentation—not by choice. More creative and energetic interpretive solutions, such as special-interest or thematic guided tours, costumed or character-based interpreters, special educational activities, and interactive applications and virtual reality experiences, are usually employed when the project budget permits. But they are of widely differing cost, quality, and technical means. And their impact on visitors, on attendance figures, and indeed on the perception of the site as a whole among the local community has only now begun to be studied in great detail.

Among the increasingly popular multimedia solutions—especially virtual reconstructions—a basic problem exists. Scientific standards of evidence and proper archaeological documentation, through which the virtual reconstruction might have a demonstrable connection with reality, are subjects that are widely discussed but not yet resolved (Frischer, Niccolucci, and Ryan 2002). A common scientific solution—to use conspicuously unrealistic schematic models that allow for incompleteness—often fail to capture the attention and imagination of visitors (especially younger visitors, accustomed from infancy to watching television and playing video games). Yet the most elaborate of the virtual presentations, loosed from the bonds of what is perceived as overly aggressive scholarly oversight, are so perfect in their vivid recreations that they are sometimes more Hollywood than heritage.

The gulf between scholarship and entertainment is itself part of a central philosophical problem in heritage interpretation today. In an era when public culture budgets are shrinking and cultural institutions of all kinds are being forced to be self-sustaining, the viability of a preservation and presentation project is, in the long run, often tied to its success in stimulating economic development—by paid admissions, subsidiary sales of postcards and other museum shop items, employment opportunities, and a steady flow of tourist rev-

enue for hotels, shops, and restaurants in the immediate vicinity (e.g., Leask and Yeoman 1999). Finances and balance sheets are the real tyrants in this age of increasingly self-supporting culture. Everything may look perfect to the invited dignitaries and guests at an elaborately preserved and interpreted site on a festive opening day. But three to five years later, when unrealistic expectations of increased visitation have failed to materialize and the costs of adequate staffing, maintenance, and regular content updating have soared, its physical state and its once-enthusiastic acceptance by its promoters and the general public may have radically changed for the worse.

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These are some of the challenges regarding the wider roles of interpretation in the larger preservation effort that led to the idea for the Ename Charter Initiative, “Authenticity, Intellectual Integrity and Sustainable Development in the Public Presentation of Archaeological and Historical Sites and Landscapes.” In 2004 three preliminary drafts of the charter text were produced by the staff of the Ename Center under the sponsorship of the Institute of the Archaeological Heritage of the Flemish Community of Belgium and the Province of East-Flanders—both longtime supporters of the public presentation program at the site of Ename. The initial charter drafts have been circulated for continuing review and revision under the auspices of ICOMOS and are available for general review.<sup>1</sup>

A central theme is the importance of integrated planning—in which the interpretation is not seen merely as the attractive or enlightening feature that is meant to fill the silences and empty spaces of a physical site. Interpretation must effectively communicate significance, and it must be the rationale for the preservation project itself. The present charter draft text is divided into four sections: scientific and professional guidelines; planning, funding, and management; tourism aspects; and heritage education. The section on scientific standards stresses the importance of scholarly standards for virtual reconstructions and other computer re-creations and underlines the dangers of interpretive technology that is too elaborate or more concerned with visitor satisfaction than historical accuracy. The section dealing with the integrated planning of site presentation projects offers recommendations for cooperative strategies in which scholars, managers, and community members set quantifiable and achievable goals for heritage projects—especially in regard to educational and social goals for the local population beyond the mere raising of tourist revenues. The section on tourism

aspects deals with sustainability and quality-of-life issues, in which realistic projections of site carrying capacity are determined at the outset and the final form of the heritage site's presentation is designed, not as a conspicuous "tourist attraction," but as a natural part of the community's landscape and daily patterns of life. Finally, the section on heritage education stresses the need for programs aimed at four distinct audiences: local school children, adults in the local community, university students, and heritage professionals. The goal is to address the most common problems that time and again have doomed lovingly preserved sites to become deteriorating eyesores in just a few years.

Regarding the physical infrastructure of interpretive programs, the present draft of the Ename Charter makes some general recommendations. The careful consideration of size, scale, intrusiveness, and appropriate technology must be one of the first elements in the planning of a preservation project—and not solely on the basis of educational or informational criteria but also on the kind of infrastructure that a particular site is capable of supporting in a sustainable, long-term way. Budgets available or anticipated in succeeding years for proper staffing, maintenance, and security should become a primary factor in determining the ambitiousness of the presentation at the start.

With regard to the information conveyed in the interpretation, particularly archaeological sites, a basic method of allowing visitors to recognize the difference between authentic remains and conjectured reconstructions—without detracting from the coherence of the presentation—must somehow be made. An even more complex challenge is accommodating sometimes widely differing meanings of the site and possible relationships to it by young, old, local, foreign, male, and female visitors. The primary significance of a castle kitchen, stable, or chapel, for example, is neither single nor unequivocal to various visitors. And this is where the usefulness of interactive installations is particularly evident; permitting visitors to explore a wide range of possible interpretations offers a flexible, personalized approach.

In the larger issue of project planning, continuous, close consultation with the local community is stressed. The charter draft suggests that representatives of the local community be meaningfully involved in the creation of their own historical self-representation and that they be given the opportunity to offer comments and constructive suggestions at every stage of the work. In addition, the physical impact likely to be felt by the residents around an interpreted site must also be considered and carefully balanced with the

needs of touristic development and effective integration with the local economy.

Last, it is stressed that raising of visitor attendance figures or increasing visitor attendance alone should not be the only target or criterion of success. The presentation must also serve a range of educational and social objectives for the benefit of the local community. These may include special educational programs, training and employment opportunities in the interpretive programs, and regularly scheduled community activities. The underlying rationale for all of these recommendations is the achievement of a basic and far-reaching transformation—not of an excavated site into a beautifully and entertainingly presented site but rather of an excavated site into an active, dynamic cultural institution within a living community.

\* \* \*

We welcome input, suggestions, and reactions to the ICOMOS-Ename Charter as it is expanded and improved through intensive review and revision under the auspices of ICOMOS. But it may be worthwhile to skip ahead briefly to consider the possibility that some day, in some form, an international charter on interpretive standards and techniques may indeed be adopted and widely accepted. Will that solve all our problems? It has long been assumed that increasing the quality or extent of site interpretation will increase public awareness and thus interest in participating in the wider preservation cause itself. But is this always true? Will we pay enough attention to both the art of creating vivid public interpretations and the social significance of the newly established heritage site as an element in the complex landscape of a modern community?

Indeed, the positive impact of interpretation on preservation is not to be taken for granted. Recent studies (e.g., Lowenthal 2002) and our experience in European heritage projects have shown that in the planning stages, if the right balance is not achieved between the contribution of outside professionals and the input from the local community, the preservation project, even if successful, can appear to local residents as an outside imposition—like a shopping mall or a private theme park—with solely or mainly economic significance for the community. If it succeeds, the commercial benefits will make those with a direct economic stake in its success or failure potentially great supporters of preservation. Yet it can also sow resentment among those not immediately benefiting from the gains, and who often suffer from the

successful site's side effects—a lack of parking, traffic congestion, and disruption of normal routines. It can thus be dismissed as “someone else's” monument, an alien intrusion not meaningfully integrated into the memories, stories, and attitudes that constitute the entire community's shared identity.

Thus the key linkage between interpretation and preservation lies not only in professional creativity, technology, and rational planning but also in the intensity and honesty of interaction with the local community and in the depth of commitment to creating a valuable local institution—sustainable in the long run not because of how it looks or what information it contains but because of how it functions within the community. Its sustainability is a function of its social relevance and benefit to the local inhabitants. And that modern dimension of heritage must become an integral part of preservation planning.

There is no question that interpretation has great potential for stimulating public interest in preservation. But it can only do so when all of the potential preservers—from scholars to design consultants to heritage administrators to businesspeople to the seventeen-year-old with a can of spray paint—are meaningfully involved in what is perceived as a community effort and have reason to consider the site not only “theirs” but also an important part of their lives. That is an intellectual and social challenge that any true preservationist of the twenty-first century must increasingly be forced to confront.

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## Notes

- 1 The initial charter drafts may be accessed at [http://www.enamecenter.org/pages/public\\_prog\\_charter.html](http://www.enamecenter.org/pages/public_prog_charter.html).

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# Preservation of Heritage Sites in the Caribbean: The Experience of the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park of St. Kitts and Nevis

Larry Armony

**Abstract:** *St. Kitts and Nevis are part of a group of Caribbean islands that were once prosperous sugar colonies. Most of the country's people are of African ancestry—a consequence of the infamous Atlantic slave trade—with some Europeans, Asians (Indians), and Amerindians. The intangible culture is a syncretic blend of these ethnicities, but the built cultural heritage derives mainly from Europe. As the islands moved toward independence, for the most part the inhabitants eschewed physical reminders of the colonial past. This paper discusses a parallel movement to protect the forts, greathouses, and other colonial structures because of their perceived heritage value. It focuses on the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park Society (BHFNPS), which, from its beginnings in 1965 as an elitist and seemingly Eurocentric clique, has evolved into a more egalitarian organization that recognizes and promotes the fact that structures such as Brimstone Hill Fortress embody the contributions of the colonized and are testimony to the multicultural nature of Caribbean society. The inscription of the fortress on the World Heritage List and the process of application for nomination have taught valuable lessons and provided impetus to the growing recognition by the people of the value of such sites.*

St. Kitts and Nevis are two islands that constitute one independent sovereign state, referred to as the Federation of St. Kitts (or sometimes St. Christopher) and Nevis. Located at the northeastern curve of the arc of Caribbean islands that extend eastward from the tip of Florida and then southward to the South American mainland, this nation-state is just 270 square kilometers in area and has a population of 45,000.

The islands of the eastern Caribbean were once sugar colonies of England, France, and the Netherlands. Today, the Dutch islands are semiautonomous territories; the French islands are departments of France; and some of the British

islands, like St. Kitts and Nevis, are independent states, while a few of the smaller ones are still colonies. Some among the former and present British colonies have come together to share judicial, monetary, and economic services as the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a large trade grouping of former British colonies and now includes Haiti and the former Dutch mainland colony of Surinam.

The people of the OECS are predominantly of African ancestry, descended from those brought in bondage during the appalling Atlantic slave trade of the sixteenth through nineteenth century. There are sprinklings of ethnic Europeans (French and English), Asians (Indians), and native Caribs, with a significant proportion combining in various degrees the major ethnic groups of the world. The culture of the Caribbean, as expressed especially in its intangible forms, comprises a syncretic blend deriving mainly from Africa and Europe but including East Indian and Amerindian elements. Its systems of law and governance are European.

For the people of the young nations that emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, some questions inevitably arose: To what structures and institutions could they justly lay claim? What could they embrace in affirmation of a new and sovereign identity? The built structures, after all, spoke of an era of colonial exploitation and neglect by European powers. How could they identify with the ruins of plantation factories and greathouses abandoned by absentee “aristocrats” after sugar had become unprofitable, and with Brimstone Hill Fortress and the Forts Charleses and Georges replicated throughout the chain of islands and seen as symbols of slavery and oppression?

The purely African material heritage was ephemeral, not readily apprehended. And there was little knowledge of or, where there was, no value attributed to the remains of the

indigenous Amerindian societies. As a result, “culture” became confined to and defined by performances in dance, music, storytelling, and festivals where African survivals seemed clear and evident. Yet it is increasingly becoming apparent to those students of Caribbean history and culture who are unfettered by the neocolonialist perspectives perpetuated by regional academia and influenced by a more holistic scholarship expressed by anthropology, archaeology, and sociology that all areas of Caribbean culture, including built structures, are syncretic expressions incorporating elements from Africa, Europe, native America, and, in some cases, Asia.

Culturally, the people are indeed distinctive, formed by environment and history. The more enduring elements of the built cultural heritage, made of stone—the forts, churches, mill houses—are, in a sense, products of Europe and Africa in the Caribbean. And just as (by way of one example repeated throughout history everywhere) the English today proudly present Viking archaeological sites, Roman walls, and Norman castles—the cultural remains of conquerors and plunderers—as aspects of British heritage (which, it must be added, provide also a basis for a booming tourism industry), so it is that the people of the Caribbean, are the *inheritors* of a colonial legacy that can be used for their education and edification and for the creation of revenue and employment.

These are important—indeed, crucial—considerations: for these countries, still afflicted by poverty, facing a challenging future in a globalized world, and increasingly dependent on tourism, are allowing the tremendous resources of their rich and diverse cultural and natural heritage to be eroded, and to be destroyed, day by day. The story of the Brimstone Hill Fortress, however, provides an alternative option. The Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park Society (BHFNPS) is a nonprofit voluntary organization, registered as a company, and empowered by legislation to administer the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park, which is the property of the state.

The BHFNPS was founded in 1965 on the initiative of the then British colonial administrator and comprised for the most part members of the plantocracy and representatives of the mercantile community—who were essentially the same people or their agents. The founding members also included, however, the chief minister at the time, an erstwhile adversary of British colonialism and advocate of the working-class descendants of African slaves who only thirteen years before had attained the right to vote for limited representative government.

The objective was to acquire management control over the extensive but deteriorating complex of man-made struc-

tures on the upper slopes and top of the volcanic cone called Brimstone Hill and to rescue, reinstate, and restore the once-magnificent fortress often referred to as the “Gibraltar of the West Indies.” The human, material, and financial resources of the sugar estates, the wealthy merchant houses, and the government were brought to bear on the immense task of clearing, stabilizing, restoring, and—very important—maintaining Brimstone Hill.

In 1987 the National Conservation and Environment Protection Act, “in recognizing its national and international significance as an outstanding cultural and historical resource,” declared Brimstone Hill a national park and empowered the BHFNPS “to make and enforce regulations for (its) management and administration.” This was a signal acknowledgment of the accomplishments of the BHFNPS under the visionary leadership of D. Lloyd Matheson, president from 1967 to 1989.

Also in 1987, the BHFNPS, encouraged by the interest of the Caribbean Conservation Association, prepared and submitted a nomination dossier to the World Heritage Committee. After nearly two years of back-and-forth letters and telegrams, it was informed that nomination applications were to be submitted only by the state party. Another, more developed nomination dossier was prepared by the BHFNPS and presented in 1990 to the state party (government) through the Ministry of Education for submission to UNESCO. This dossier has never been found, neither in the files of the Ministry of Education nor at the offices of UNESCO or the World Heritage Centre.

In retrospect, this seeming setback proved fortuitous. The work of the BHFNPS had become more complex as successive externally funded projects were executed and the rate of visitation steadily increased. Beginning in 1990, volunteerism (with Peace Corps park managers playing an important role) gave way to a more professional management structure. In that year and in the years following, local people were employed in various newly created positions. There evolved a shift in emphasis in the presentation of the fortress and the interpretation of its history from a mainly Eurocentric and segregationist perspective to an approach that recognized the African and Creole involvement in the construction, maintenance, and defense of the fortress. Archival and archaeological investigations had been undertaken in the pursuit of historical balance. At the same time, the practice, as developed in the earlier period, of procuring professional and technical expertise as the needs arose was continued, and it remains an important element of the *modus operandi* of management.

Then, in 1996, at a UNESCO-sponsored workshop for the directors of culture for CARICOM member countries held in St. Kitts, the BHFNPS was made aware of the new requirements of the World Heritage Committee: management plans, national legislation, and buffer zones. Thus in 1998 it was better prepared to submit a new nomination proposal, one that was more complete and representative of the history and culture of the country. After preparation and submission to the minister representing the state party, it was, with his permission, dispatched by the society via courier to the World Heritage Centre.

In late 1999 at the twenty-third session of the World Heritage Committee the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List of Cultural Properties of “universal cultural value.” The inscription reads: “The Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park is an exceptional and well-preserved example of seventeenth- and eighteenth-

century military architecture in a Caribbean context. Designed by the British and built by African slave labor, the Brimstone Hill Fortress is testimony to European colonial expansion, the Atlantic slave trade, and the emergence of new societies in the Caribbean.”

Meanwhile, the organization entrusted with the management of this national, regional, and universal monument had been keeping pace with the new developments while maintaining its fundamental commitment to the proper management, preservation, and protection of the fortress. There is now, moreover, greater recognition by the people of the country of the value of Brimstone Hill and of their responsibility as custodians of the World Heritage Site. The site is a major tourist attraction, but it is also a popular venue for picnics, family reunions, weddings, and concerts. It is a place where the people can, through its interpretation, learn more about their history.



PART THREE

# **Conserving Archaeological Sites: New Approaches and Techniques**





# Introduction

*Neville Agnew*

The papers in Part III address sitewide, holistic conservation and discuss the challenges of conserving archaeological sites from different but coherently consistent perspectives. Frank Matero's perceptive overview synthesizes advances in thinking, which are exemplified by two pragmatic and yet creative case studies by Giorgio Buccellati and by Martha Demas and Neville Agnew. Their approaches to the conservation and interpretation of fragile sites—one mud-brick, the other a fossil imprint site—could be effectively implemented only as a result of the archaeologist and the conservation professional working in tandem.

The enormous range of responses of various materials to deteriorative influences is certainly widely realized, perhaps more so by conservators than by archaeologists. Yet this realization must be brought explicitly to the fore when undertaking fieldwork. I was reminded of this recently when looking at the sandstone Colossi of Memnon on the floodplain of the Nile. They sit with their feet almost in the river, having endured, though much weathered, more than three millennia, and expecting to go on forever: *sedent aeternumque sedebunt*. Excavated earthen sites of similar antiquity can be expected usually to survive perhaps a few years before disappearing with hardly a trace remaining. Acknowledging this great variability in materials' susceptibility is among the first steps on the path to designing appropriate protection and conservation strategies, and the two case studies do just this before consideration of other ways in which further needs may be met.

Matero states that archaeological sites, like all places of human activity, are constructed and that conservation still begins and ends as an interpretation of the site. The aerial view of Buccellati's site of Tell Mozan shows what Matero means but reminds us that the second "construction" is but

liberating the shell of the ancient site. Conservation as interpretation of an excavated past is no less well illustrated by this image. We also see in the image key points in new approaches and techniques to the conservation of archaeological sites: a demonstration of the critical importance of collaboration between archaeology and conservation for in situ preservation during excavation; and an example of the increasing emphasis on preventive conservation through an innovative, reversible shelter that itself interprets the site.

Buccellati calls for a true partnership of archaeology and conservation, each informing the other. His approach achieves protection of the excavated mud-brick walls through a synthesis of protection that is modular and progresses simultaneously with excavation and archaeological interpretation. He insists that conservation is (or should be) intrinsic to excavation for the good reason that "it teaches us about excavation." To achieve this synthesis, he calls for an educational component in the training of both archaeologists and conservators. In northern Syria, where it is possible to see the gamut of approaches to preservation of excavated mud-brick of great antiquity, from wholesale reconstruction to stabilization (itself displaying many techniques), his treatment of the excavated structures at Tell Mozan immediately affords the viewer a reading of the architecture. But Buccellati explores the consequences of this quickly and easily reversible protection further: it provides to the archaeologist a perceptual enrichment of the excavated walls—when the protection is in place "wholly unexpected relationships emerge"—not the least of which is to enhance the understanding and enthusiasm of the local people for the project.

The rigorous analysis for decision making about conservation, further scientific study, and whether the site should be

opened to visitation or moved to a museum or buried again, coupled with a technically sophisticated reburial design, itself to be sustained by a straightforward monitoring and maintenance plan, is presented in the paper on Laetoli. Here a case of reexcavation and conservation of a previously excavated and reburied site of the first scientific rank is presented. This remote site within a natural and cultural landscape presents an interesting example of the mutability of values, since following exhaustive scientific study of the hominid trackway, the scientific information perforce diminished but was replaced by a growing awareness of the symbolic importance of the footprints. Because reburial resulted in denial of future access to the site by visitors, the compensation was a robust museum display, designed for international visitors. This project brought together all the key elements to withstand the rigors of a harsh environment, to serve both local people and long-term preservation of the site: clear exposition of values of the footprint trackway; stakeholder involvement; an analy-

sis of how the values would be affected by consideration of alternative options (including radically different ones) for conservation, pointing to an irrefutable decision for reburial after reexcavation; an engineered reburial using technically advanced as well as locally available materials; and a straightforward routine monitoring and maintenance plan.

Matero points out the inherently oppositional nature of archaeology and conservation: excavation is subtractive, destructive, and irreversible; conservation is concerned with safeguarding physical fabric and by so doing preserving authenticity and significance. There may seem to be an irony here when often repeated in the volume is the claim that archaeology and conservation are “natural partners.” Both are true, for, so long as excavation is done and the remains exposed for visitors or further study, the onus is on professionals from the two disciplines to integrate their approaches and to plan for coordinated work both of the exposed remains and of the *ex situ* artifacts.

# Making Archaeological Sites: Conservation as Interpretation of an Excavated Past

Frank G. Matero

**Abstract:** *Archaeological sites, like all places of human activity, are constructed. Despite their fragmentation, they are complex places that depend on the legibility and authenticity of their components for visual meaning and appreciation. How legibility and authenticity of such structures and places are realized and ensured must be carefully considered and understood for effective conservation. Among the repertoire of conservation techniques applied to archaeological sites have been structural stabilization, reconstruction, including anastylosis, reburial, protective shelters, and myriad fabric-based conservation methods. Each solution affects the way archaeological information is preserved and how the site is perceived, resulting in a push and pull of competing scientific, associative, and aesthetic values. In an effort to address the economic benefits from tourist development, many archaeological sites have been directly and heavily manipulated to respond to didactic and recreational programs deemed necessary for appreciation by the public. In many cases this has resulted in a loss of place, sometimes accompanied by accelerated physical damage to those sites unprepared for development and visitation. This paper suggests that to balance this growing trend of seeing archaeological sites as predominantly outdoor museums, shaped by current museological attitudes and methods of display, it would be useful to approach them instead as cultural landscapes with phenomenological and ecological concerns. A more balanced combination of approaches could also mediate the often difficult but powerful overlay of subsequent histories visible on archaeological sites including destruction, reuse, and even past interpretations.*

## Heritage, Conservation, and Archaeology

Heritage and conservation have become important themes in recent discourse on place, cultural identity, and presentation of the past, yet few archaeological projects have included site conservation as a viable strategy in addressing these issues either before or during excavation (Berducou 1996:250). This has been due in part to archaeology's neglect of the long history and tradition of conservation theory and practice and the general misperception of conservation as an exclusively off-site, postexcavation activity associated with technical issues and remedial solutions. On the other hand, specialists in conservation and heritage management have been largely absent in the recent and rapidly expanding discourse on the meaning, use, and ownership of heritage for political and economic purposes. Both professions have avoided a critical examination of their own historical and cultural narratives pertaining to the construction of sites through excavation, analysis, conservation, and display.

The primary objective of conservation is to protect cultural heritage from loss and depletion. Conservators accomplish this through both preventive and remedial types of intervention (fig. 1). In so doing, conservation embraces the technical means by which heritage may be studied, displayed, and made accessible to the public and scholar alike (Sivan 1997:51). In this way, the conservation of archaeological sites is like other heritage conservation. Implicit in conservation's objectives is the basic requirement to remove or mitigate the causes of deterioration. For archaeological sites, this has a direct and immediate effect on visual legibility and indirectly conditions our perceptions and notions of authenticity. Among the repertoire of conservation techniques applied to

**FIGURE 1** Great House, Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, Arizona. Since 1879 both preventive and remedial measures have been taken to preserve this earthen Hohokam site, including the 1902 and 1935 (present) shelters and a continual program of applying amended earthen shelter coats on the exposed low wall ruins. Reproduced by permission of the U.S. National Park Service



archaeological sites are structural stabilization, reconstruction, reburial, protective shelters, and myriad fabric-based conservation methods. Each solution affects the way archaeological information is preserved and the site is experienced and understood, resulting in a push and pull of competing scientific, associative, and aesthetic values.

Conservation as an intellectual pursuit is predicated on the belief that knowledge, memory, and experience are tied to material culture. Conservation—whether of a landscape, building, or archaeological site—helps extend these past places and things into the present and establishes a form of mediation critical to the interpretive process that reinforces these aspects of human existence. Recently such intervention has expanded beyond the immediate material requirements of the object and site to a more open values-based approach that attempts to place them into contemporary sociocultural contexts (see, e.g., Demas 2000; Matero 2000).

The practices of archaeology and conservation appear by their very nature to be oppositional. Excavation, as one common method by which archaeologists study a site, is a subtractive process that is both destructive and irreversible. In the revealing of a site, structure, or object, excavation is not a benign reversal of site formational processes but rather a traumatic invasion of a site's physicochemical equilibrium, resulting in the unavoidable deterioration of associated materials

(fig. 2). Conservation, on the other hand, is predicated on the safeguarding of physical fabric from loss and depletion, based on the belief that material culture possesses important scientific and aesthetic information as well as the power to inspire memory and emotional responses. In the first case, the informational value embodied in the materiality of objects and sites has been expressed in conservation rhetoric through the concept of *integrity*. Integrity can manifest in many states as purity (i.e., free from corruption or adulteration) or completeness of form, physicochemical composition, or context. It has come to be an expression of authenticity in that it conveys some truthfulness of the original in time and space, a quality constructed partly in response to the unnatural interventions perpetrated by us in our effort to preserve.<sup>1</sup> Whereas archaeology decontextualizes the site by representing it *ex situ*, in site reports and museum exhibits, historic preservation represents and interprets the site *in situ*.

But archaeological sites are also places. If we are to identify and understand the nature and implications of certain physical relationships with locales established through past human thought and experience, we must do it through the study of *place*. Places are contexts for human experience, constructed in movement, memory, encounter, and association (Tilley 1994:15). While the act of remembering is acutely human, the associations specific places have at any given time



**FIGURE 2** Çatalhöyük, Turkey. Structural collapse and plaster surface delamination occur almost immediately on exposure and require both large- and small-scale temporary treatments during and after excavation. Photo: Frank Matero

will change. In this last respect, conservation itself can become a way of reifying cultural identities and historical narratives over time through valorization and interpretation. In the end, all conservation is a critical act in that the decisions regarding what is conserved, and who and how it is presented, are a product of contemporary values and beliefs about the past's relationship (and use) to the present. Nevertheless, technical intervention—that is, what is removed, what is added, what is modified—is the concrete expression of a critical judgment thus formed in the course of this process. What, then, does it

mean to conserve and display an archaeological site, especially when what is seen was never meant to be displayed as such, or at least in the fragmented manner viewed?

Archaeological sites are what they are by virtue of the disciplines that study them. They are made, not found. Archaeological sites are constructed through time, often by abandonment, discovery, and amnesia (figs. 3–6). As heritage they are a mode of cultural production constructed in the present that has recourse to the past (Kirstenblatt-Gimblett 1998:7). Display as intervention is an interface that mediates and therefore transforms what is shown into heritage, and conservation's approaches and techniques have always been a part of that process.<sup>2</sup> Beginning with the Sixth International Congress of Architects in Madrid in 1904 and later with the creation of the Charter of Athens following the International Congress of Restoration of Monuments (1931), numerous attempts have been made to identify and codify a set of universal principles to guide the conservation and interpretation of structures and places of historic and cultural significance.

Despite their various emphases and differences, all these documents identify the conservation process as one governed by absolute respect for the aesthetic, historic, and physical integrity of the structure or place and requiring a high sense of moral responsibility. Implicit in these principles is the notion of cultural heritage as a physical resource that is at once valuable and irreplaceable and an inheritance that promotes cultural continuity in a dynamic way.

Summarized from the more recent documents, these principles can be outlined as follows:

- The obligation to perform research and documentation, that is, to record physical, archival, and other evidence before and after any intervention to generate and safeguard knowledge of structures and sites and their associated human behavior;
- The obligation to respect cumulative age-value, that is, the acknowledgment of the site or work as a cumulative physical record of human activity embodying cultural beliefs, values, materials, and techniques and displaying the passage of time through weathering;
- The obligation to safeguard authenticity, an elusive quality associated with the genuine materiality of a thing or place as a way of validating and ensuring authorship or witness of a time and place;



**FIGURES 3-6** Coronado State Monument (Kuaua), New Mexico. The discovery and excavation (fig. 3), reconstruction as a ruin (figs. 4 and 5) and subsequent neglect and erosion (fig. 6) of an earthen ancestral puebloan village, ca. 1934-2000. Figures 3, 4, and 5 reproduced by permission of the Museum of New Mexico. Figure 6 photo: Frank Matero





- The obligation to perform minimum reintegration, that is, to reestablish structural and visual legibility and meaning with the least physical interference; and
- The obligation to perform interventions that will allow other options and further treatment in the future. This principle recently has been redefined more accurately as “retreatability,” a concept of considerable significance for architecture, monuments, and archaeological sites given their need for long-term high-performance solutions, often structural in nature.

Every conservation measure is a dialectic that engages in the definition, treatment, interpretation, and uses of the past today. Often historical arguments for or against the designation and retention of cultural property are based on an epistemology of scholarship and facts. Facts and scholarship, however, are explanations that serve the goals of conservation and are a product of their time and place.

Out of this dilemma, our current definition of conservation has emerged as a field of specialization concerned primarily with the material well-being of cultural property and the conditions of aging and survival, focusing on the qualitative and quantitative processes of change and deterioration. Conservation advocates minimal but opportune interventions conducted with traditional skills as well as experimentally advanced techniques. In contemporary practice, it has tended to avoid the renewal of form and materials; however, the level of physical intervention possible can vary considerably even under the current doctrinal guidelines. This includes even the most invasive methods such as the reassembly of original elements (i.e., anastylosis) and the installation or replication of missing or damaged components. Such interventions, common on archaeological sites, are often based on the desire or need for greater visual legibility and structural reintegration (fig. 7). These interventions become even more critical if they sustain or improve the future performance or life of the site or structure in its environment.

Obviously, for archaeological sites, changing or controlling the environment by reburial, building a protective enclosure or shelter on site, or relocating selected components such as murals or sculpture, often indoors, are options that allow maximum physical protection and thus privilege the scientific value inherent in the physical fabric. However, such interventions significantly affect the contextual meaning and associative and aesthetic values, an aspect already discussed as significant for many such sites. Conversely, interventions

developed to address only the material condition of objects, structures, and places of cultural significance without consideration of associated cultural beliefs and rituals can sometimes denature or compromise their power, “spirit,” or social values. In this regard, cultural and community context and dialogue between professionals and stakeholders are crucial.



**FIGURE 7** Convent of Mission San Jose, San Antonio, Texas. Stone consolidation and mortar repairs were identified as the most minimal interventions necessary to stabilize and reinstate the form but preserve the original fabric of this unique column on site. Photo: Frank Matero

If we accept the premise that the practice of conservation began with the relational study of the underlying causes of deterioration and the refining of an etiological approach, then it was in 1898, with the publication of Freidrich Rathgen's handbook of conservation for antiquities and the earlier founding of his conservation laboratory at the Berlin Museum, that the field was born (Rathgen 1898). Yet within the understood limitations of the scientific method to generate certain kinds of data, conservation still begins and ends as an interpretation of the work. One is not only dealing with physical artifacts and structures, but with complex cultural questions of beliefs, convictions, and emotions, as well as with aesthetic, material, and functional significance. Science helps to interpret, but it cannot and should not create meanings or singularly represent one truth.

### Archaeological Sites

The conservation and management of archaeological sites is a field of increasing interest, as evidenced by a growing number of professional conferences, published proceedings, and international projects (Matero et al. 1998:129–42). Archaeological sites have long been a part of heritage and its display, certainly before the use of the term “heritage” and the formal study of tourism. However, current concern can be attributed to the perception among the public and professionals that archaeological sites, like the natural environment, represent finite nonrenewable resources deteriorating at an increasing rate. This deterioration is due to a wide array of causes, ranging from neglect and poor management to increased visitation and vandalism, from inappropriate past treatments to deferred maintenance and treatment renewal. No doubt the recent pressures of economic benefit from tourist activities in conjunction with increasing communication and mobility have caused accelerated damage to many sites unprepared for development and visitation.

Despite the global increase in the scale of these problems, issues of recovery, documentation, stabilization, interpretation, and display have been associated with many important sites since the late nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> In the U.S. Southwest, preservation and archaeology were inextricably intertwined from the beginning. Indeed, the earliest preservation legislation in the United States—the American Antiquities Act of 1906—and methods of stabilization and interpretation were promoted and developed by some of the leading American archaeologists of the day: Edgar Lee Hewett, Frederic Ward Putnam, Victor Mindeleff, and Jesse Walter

Fewkes. All became involved early on in their careers in the excavation, preservation, and display of archaeological sites such as Casa Grande, Mesa Verde, and the Pajarito Plateau for the American public. This close interest in site preservation and interpretation by American archaeologists and ethnologists was fostered by their belief in portraying the Southwest as a region of cultural continuity, peopled by descendants of the ancestral cliff-dweller communities and equal to the ancient sites of the Old World.

As a result of these early interests, sites such as Mesa Verde quickly became the country's first federally sponsored aboriginal theme park, with stabilization and interpretation leading archaeology and settings constructed with contextual buildings to help tell the story. Conservation practices, including the use of compatible, reversible materials and techniques, clear differentiation between original and stabilized fabric, and protective shelters and wall capping, were implemented during the first generation of site preservation in the U.S. Southwest and thus represent unique and sophisticated approaches for their day, especially when compared with many Old World sites.

One of the first coordinated attempts to codify international principles and procedures of archaeological site conservation was formulated in the Athens Charter of 1931 where measures such as accurate documentation, protective backfilling, and international interdisciplinary collaboration were clearly articulated. In 1956 further advances were made at the General Conference on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in New Delhi where the role of a centralized state administration in administering, coordinating, and protecting excavated and unexcavated archaeological sites was advocated.

Other charters such as the ICOMOS (Venice) Charter of 1964 extended these earlier recommendations through explicit recommendations that included the avoidance of reconstructions of archaeological features except in cases in which the original components were available but dismembered and the use of distinguishable modern techniques for the conservation of historic monuments. The Australia ICOMOS (Burra) Charter of 1979 expanded the definition of “archaeological site” to include the notion of place, challenging Eurocentric definitions of value, significance, authenticity, and integrity to include context and traditional use, an idea important for culturally affiliated indigenous groups. Finally, in 1990, the ICOMOS (ICAHM) Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage was adopted in Lausanne,



**FIGURE 8** Tumacacori, Arizona. Stabilization and early partial reconstruction of the church facade. Photo: Frank Matero

Switzerland, formalizing the international recognition of many archaeological sites as living cultural landscapes and the responsibility of the archaeologist in the conservation process.

In addition to these various international attempts to address the issues of archaeological site conservation through the creation of charters and other doctrinal guidelines, a conference to discuss the realities of such standards was held in Cyprus in 1983 under the auspices of ICCROM and UNESCO. In the context of the conference subject, that is, archaeological sites and finds, conservation was defined as traditionally concerned with the preservation of the physical fabric in a way that allows maximum information to be retrieved by further study and analysis (fig. 7), whereas restoration involves the representation of objects, structures, or sites so that they can be more visually “accessible” and therefore readily understood by both scholars and the public (fig. 8) (Foley 1995:11–12).

From the scholar’s position, the maximum scientific and historical information will be obtained through recording, sampling, and analysis immediately on exposure or excavation. With each passing year, except under unique circumstances, sensitive physical information will be lost through exposure and weathering. It is true that when archaeologists return to existing previously excavated sites, they may collect new information not previously identified, but this is often the result of new research inquiries on existing finds and archived field notes. Exposed sites, depending on the nature of the materials, the environment, and the state of closure of the site, will yield limited, certainly diminished archaeometric information, especially for fragile materials or features such as macro- and microstratigraphy, surface finishes, impressions, and residue analysis. Comprehensive sampling programs, instrumental recording, and reburial maximize the preservation of the



physical record both indirectly and directly. Sites with architectural remains and landscape features deemed important to present for public viewing require quite different strategies for conservation and display. Here the record of approaches is far older and more varied, both in method and in result (e.g., Knossos, Casa Grande [Arizona], Pompeii, and the Stoa of Attalos).

Not to distinguish between the specificity of what is to be conserved on site, or retrieved for that matter, given the impossibility of doing so, makes for a confused and often compromised archaeological program and interpreted site. Too often conservation is asked to address the dual requirements of an archaeological site as *document* and *place* without explicit definition and identification of what is actually to be preserved. The results have often been compromised physical evidence through natural deterioration—or worse, through failed treatments meant to do the impossible. On the other end, the need to display has sometimes resulted in confused and discordant landscapes that deny the entire story of the site and the natural and sublime state of fragmentation all ruin sites possess.

This last point is especially important on the subject of interpretation and display. In an effort to address the economic benefits from tourist development, many archaeological sites have been directly and heavily manipulated to respond to didactic and re-creational programs deemed necessary for visual understanding by the public. In many cases this has resulted in a loss of place, accompanied sometimes by accelerated damage to those sites unprepared for development and visitation. To balance this growing trend of seeing archaeological sites as predominantly outdoor museums, shaped by current museological attitudes and methods of display, it would be useful to approach such sites instead as cultural landscapes with phenomenological and ecological concerns. A more balanced combination of approaches could also mediate the often difficult but powerful overlay of subsequent histories visible on archaeological sites, including destruction, reuse, abandonment, rediscovery, and even past interpretations.

## Conclusion

Like all disciplines and fields, archaeological conservation has been shaped by its historical habit and by contemporary concerns. Important in its development has been the shifting, even expanding notion of site conservation to include the stabilization and protection of the whole site rather than simply in situ artifact conservation or the removal of site (architec-

tural) features. The public interpretation of archaeological sites has long been associated with the stabilization and display of ruins. Implicit in site stabilization and display is the aesthetic value many ruin sites possess based on a long-lived European tradition of cultivating a taste for the picturesque. With the scientific investigation and study of many archaeological sites beginning in the late nineteenth century, both the aesthetic and the informational value of these sites was promoted during excavation-stabilization. In contemporary practice, options for archaeological site conservation have included reconstruction, reassembly (anastylosis), in situ preservation and protection including shelters and/or fabric consolidation, ex situ preservation through removal, and excavation or reburial with or without site interpretation.

Despite the level of intervention, that is, whether interpretation as a ruin is achieved through anastylosis or reconstruction, specific sites, namely, those possessing monumental masonry remains, have tended to establish an idealized approach for the interpretation of archaeological sites in general. However, earthen tell sites such as Çatalhöyük in central Turkey at once challenge these ingrained notions of ordered chaos and arranged masonry by virtue of their fragile materials, temporal and spatial disposition, and sometimes conflicting relationships among foreign and local professionals and traditional communities. Moreover, changing notions of “site” have expanded the realm of what is to be interpreted and preserved, resulting in both archaeological inquiry and legal protection at the regional level. These aspects of site conservation and interpretation become all the more difficult when considered in conjunction with the demands of tourism and site and regional development for the larger physical and political contexts.

Archaeological sites, like all places of human activity, are constructed. Despite their fragmentation, they are complex creations that depend on the legibility and authenticity of their components for public meaning and appreciation. How legibility and authenticity of such structures and places are realized and ensured must be carefully considered and understood for effective conservation. Certainly conservators, archaeologists, and cultural resource managers need to know well the theoretical concepts and the history of those concepts pertaining to conservation; they need to know something of the historical and cultural context of structures and sites, archaic or past building technologies, and current technical solutions. They need to familiarize themselves with the political, economic, and cultural issues of resource management and the implications of their work for local communities,

including issues of appropriate technology, tradition, and sustainability.

The basic tenets of conservation are not the sole responsibility of any one professional group. They apply instead to all those involved in the conservation of cultural property and represent general standards of approach and methodology. From the broadest perspective, archaeology and conservation should be seen as a conjoined enterprise. For both, physical evidence has to be studied and interpreted. Such interpretations are founded on a profound and exact knowledge of the various histories of the thing or place and its context, on the materiality of its physical fabric, on its cultural meanings and values over time, and its role and effect on current affiliates and the public in general. This implies the application of a variety of specialized technical knowledge, but ideally the process must be brought back into a cultural context so that the archaeology and conservation project become synonymous.

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## Notes

- 1 Integrity is a common requirement for heritage found in many conservation charters and codes of ethics. See AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice, in *AIC Directory* (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 1995), 22–29; Australia ICOMOS (1999) 38–47; IIC-CG and CAPC, Code of ethics and guidance for practice for those involved in the conservation of cultural property in Canada, in *US/ICOMOS Charters and Other International Doctrinal Documents*, *US/ICOMOS Scientific Journal* 1, no. 1 (1999): 55–59; UKIC, *Guidance for Conservation Practice* (London: Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 1981), 1; The Venice Charter, International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, *US/ICOMOS Charters and Other International Doctrinal Documents*, *US/ICOMOS Scientific Journal* 1, no. 1 (1999): 7–8.
- 2 One of the earliest publications on display is M. W. Thompson's *Ruins—Their Preservation and Display*.
- 3 For a general summary, see Schmidt 1997; Stubbs 1995.

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# Decision Making for Conservation of Archaeological Sites: The Example of the Laetoli Hominid Trackway, Tanzania

*Martha Demas and Neville Agnew*

**Abstract:** *The 3.6-million-year-old hominid tracks at Laetoli, Tanzania, excavated in the late 1970s and reburied, were being destroyed by tree growth by the early 1990s. The decision-making process for conserving the site included methodological assessments of significance, physical condition, and the management context. Each of these was multidimensional and examined issues such as the scientific and symbolic values of tracks, the interests of stakeholders, causes of deterioration and current threats, and factors to be considered in managing the site to ensure a sustainable solution. The process led unequivocally to the decision to rebury the site while providing interpretive materials and a replica at the nearby Olduvai Museum. The systematic methodology used at Laetoli is universally applicable in that it offers the best options for preservation of a site's values.*

It is perhaps not surprising that as archaeology evolved into a formal discipline, conservation of the material record, both recovered and revealed, lagged behind. Archaeologists' interests lie in information and knowledge of the past; conservators', with preservation of the physical remains for the future. In the absence of solutions to address the formidable problems of deterioration, archaeology simply moved to fulfill its own needs and make do with whatever ad hoc solutions seemed appropriate for protection and preservation of the remains. Nor could conservation offer a systematic or cogent methodology for deciding how and for whom archaeological sites and their immovable remains should be preserved in a sustainable manner.

In recent years, however, there has been acceleration in the theory and practice of archaeological site conservation and management, and increasingly, conservation professionals have adopted a decision-making process that has at its core

the values and significance ascribed to a site. This values-based approach has a number of steps and a sequence: preparation and background knowledge of the site; assessment of values and significance, taking into account the interests of stakeholders; assessment of the physical condition of the site and causes of deterioration; and assessment of the context in which the site has and will be managed, used, and protected.<sup>1</sup> Based on the assessments, decisions are taken, objectives established, and strategies developed for implementation such that the values and significance of the place are protected and preserved.

Systematizing and formalizing a methodology of what previously was an implicit, vague, and at best inchoate process for conservation and management of sites has proved a powerful tool to serve the needs of both archaeology and preservation.

## **The Process through Example: The Laetoli Hominid Trackway**

In the case of the 3.6-million-year-old Laetoli hominid trackway (Site G) in Tanzania (figs. 1, 2), the result arrived at through the decision-making process was reburial after reexcavation and conservation. This famous site had been excavated by Mary Leakey and shallowly reburied in 1978–79 (Leakey and Harris 1987:553). By the mid-1980s trees had grown on the mound, raising concerns that their roots were destroying the footprints. Reburial was the option chosen by the Tanzanian Department of Antiquities (DoA) and the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) because it was the only one that offered hope of long-term preservation of the footprints. But acceptance of the decision was not universal.



**FIGURE 1** The hominid trails of the southern section of the trackway as reexcavated in 1995. (Hipparion tracks cross the hominid trail.) Trees have been removed, and the trackway is ready for reburial. The northern section, shown here still under Mary Leakey's original reburial and protective covering of rocks, was undertaken in 1996. Photo: Neville Agnew. © The J. Paul Getty Trust

Recognizing, negotiating, managing, and reconciling the differing agendas and perspectives that emerged, as well as designing the technical requirements of the reburial, were all integral to the decision-making process.

This paper discusses these issues and how they were resolved in the course of planning and implementation, with emphasis on the assessments and their role in making decisions and developing implementation strategies.

### The Assessment Process

Assessments of significance, condition, and management context took place mainly over a two-year period (1993–94), although information gathering and assessment continues

**FIGURE 2** The remote landscape of the Laetoli site, at the southern limit of the Serengeti, looking north. Photo: John C. Lewis. © The J. Paul Getty Trust



even after a decision is made and may result in modifications. The assessments were concomitant with extensive background research on the site, its environs, previous interventions, and identification of the persons, institutions, and groups who had an interest in the site, that is, the stakeholders.

### Assessment of Values, Benefits, and Stakeholders

This assessment involved review and analysis of background information, commissioning a statement of scientific significance from an eminent palaeoanthropologist, and discussions with numerous stakeholders. Not surprisingly, palaeoanthropologists were the most vocal stakeholders, and the scientific values they attributed to the site were brought



forth prominently. The statement of scientific significance articulates an essential attribute of Laetoli—its uniqueness: “The hominid footprints at Laetoli comprise one of the most unique and important discoveries in the history of human palaeontology. It is most unlikely that any similar resource will be discovered and recovered in the foreseeable future, if ever again. This singular discovery plays a crucial role in our understanding of the evolution of our own species” (Lovejoy and Kelley 1995:28).

What is Laetoli’s role in understanding the evolution of our species? Principally, the Laetoli footprints, unlike fossil bones, uniquely preserve soft tissue anatomy of the hominid foot—the great toe, arch, and heel—providing proof of an adducted big toe and a well-developed arch more than three million years ago (fig. 3). Because the trackway preserves the sequence and distance between steps, it also provides a means of understanding gait. The prints thus afford direct evidence, in a well-dated context, of fully bipedal hominids long before the development of the brain and the use of stone tools.<sup>2</sup>

The hominid and faunal prints at Site G comprise only one of dozens of fossilized print sites exposed through erosion in the Laetoli region (Leakey and Harris 1987:451–89). These record thousands of prints of animals, many now extinct, as well as plant impressions. They provide us with an unparalleled understanding of life in the savanna of East Africa at the

time and therefore also the ecological context of the hominids. Site G should be seen in the context of the immense research potential of these nearby exposures, containing also fossil bones of animals and the hominid *Australopithecus afarensis*.

Assessment of a site’s values requires consideration of the significance ascribed to it when discovered (usually the time when it received most prominence), its current significance (which may have changed), and its research potential (i.e., its potential to yield new information). In the course of the assessment of Site G, it emerged that the prints had not been studied in sufficient detail during their brief excavation in 1978–79 and there were still outstanding questions and disagreements about interpretation. Research potential became a pivotal issue, but the need for additional research opened old wounds, and academic divisions emerged anew, spurred by earlier accusations of poor excavation techniques on some of the prints. Thus the need for restudy became entangled with statements about the perceived mistakes of the past.<sup>3</sup>

Government authorities responsible for a site are principal stakeholders, who have legal mandates to serve and official priorities to consider. The DoA has legal responsibility for the site, but Laetoli is within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), managed by a quasi-governmental body (the NCA Authority, or NCAA). The NCA is a World Heritage

**FIGURE 3** The anatomy of the hominid foot is shown in this image of 1992 in which a photographic print (on the left) from Mary Leakey’s original excavation is compared with the same footprint, demonstrating also the efficacy of reburial. Photo: Guillermo Aldana. © The J. Paul Getty Trust



Site, nominated principally for its natural and wildlife values, and these values form the basis of management decisions and priorities of the NCAA.

Unlike scientific significance, expressed in academic publications imbued with the authority of the discipline, spiritual and symbolic values are often voiced through informal channels. One has only to peruse the Laetoli offerings on the internet to discern the wide-ranging attraction that the prints exert on the general public and the media. Spiritual and symbolic values derive from emotional response to the footprints. For Laetoli, these values follow from the affinity to modern footprints of these earliest imprints of our lineal ancestors on the earth's surface. Laetoli furthermore epitomizes universal symbolic values: the footprints offer a unifying and potent symbol of our species and our beginnings. The enduring fascination of the general public with human evolution also translates into tourism potential, and there was strong interest among many stakeholders to develop the site for visitors.

Another potential stakeholder was the local Maasai community. For the Maasai, Laetoli was, at best, a memory of the presence of Mary Leakey and her team in their landscape for a short time. Their interest insofar as the site was concerned related mainly to grazing their cattle.

### Assessment of Condition

The assessment of the physical condition and threats to Site G required an understanding of its environment, including drainage patterns, use of the area by the Maasai, the presence of large mammals, and the condition of the trackway surface and individual prints.

At the level of the trackway, the tuff into which the prints were impressed was revealed in a test excavation to be fractured and fragile, and especially where it had weathered into clay, it was subject to cracking and powdering on exposure and widespread penetration by small roots of weeds and grasses and by larger roots from acacia trees (Agnew and Demas 1998; Demas et al. 1996).

### Assessment of Management Context

The assessment of management context examined opportunities and constraints, specifically, the capabilities, resources, motivations, and limitations of the two authorities with responsibility for the site (DoA and NCAA); its location and accessibility; the economic and political context in which decisions needed to be made; and the potential of opening the site to visitation.

The assessment revealed few opportunities and many constraints. The principal opportunity lay in the ready-made tourist market that existed. In many developing countries, the archaeological heritage is a prime resource for tourism-generated revenue. With a wildlife tourism industry already well developed in the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater, it is understandable that the trackway, which is quite close to these areas, would present itself as an important site for visitation and educational purposes.

The constraints were formidable. The Tanzanian Department of Antiquities had few staff members, resources, or facilities. Laetoli is remote, without infrastructure (roads, electricity, and water), and often inaccessible during the rainy season; the nearest DoA staff were stationed at Olduvai Gorge without easy access to Laetoli. The Tanzanian experience with protecting and maintaining open sites had not been successful (Tillya 1996; Waane 1986). Furthermore, there was a history of poor cooperation between the NCAA and the DoA that reflected not only the professional nature-culture divide but also the dominance of the far larger and better staffed and resourced NCAA.

The Maasai were the only people with a regular presence in the region, which is set aside for their use by the NCAA and not open to public access. They were indeed curious about the goings-on, but ultimately their interest focused on grazing cattle, access to water, and, opportunistically, any materials being tested on site, particularly geosynthetics, which were frequently removed after the team's departure.

Finally, the politics of palaeoanthropology revealed itself in multifaceted ways. These emerged in the context of research agendas, project leadership, and the resurrection of old rivalries and the creation of new ones. Moreover, that conservation professionals should be making decisions about a site of such significance was regarded by some in the scientific community as presumptuous. Opportunistically, the Laetoli project also afforded a platform for contending political factions within the DoA.

### Response to the Assessment

As is frequently the case, alternatives for conservation and use of Site G had been under discussion by various constituencies (mainly palaeoanthropologists and those interested in tourism), and two proposals had been floated long before the project began (see, e.g., Ndessokia 1990). The two options were removal of the footprints to a museum or sheltering the trackway and allowing visitation by researchers and the public. Removal to a museum would have destroyed much of the

significance of the prints (study of gait, context of the prints, symbolic value of the trackway, future research potential and use of the site) and preserved only a narrow slice (evidence of soft tissue anatomy). In addition, there were constraints to museum curation, storage, and display similar to those that pertained at the site. Keeping the site open and sheltering it would have been the best means to reveal its significance but would not have been sustainable even in the short term. Given the management context and the physical condition of the trackway, both these options would have resulted in irreversible damage to the footprints.

A third option, reburial of the trackway after conservation, offered a way to preserve the footprints for the long term that was sustainable in the existing management context. As a form of long-term “storage” for archaeological sites, reburial holds their integrity and values in trust for future generations. When preservation techniques have improved or resources become available, or when new research questions arise, the reburial can be reversed and the site once again exposed, although reexcavation poses risks of damage and further deterioration.

The decision-making model was not one of building consensus among stakeholders but rather of joint decision making among the partners and consultation with various constituencies (scientists, NCA authorities, and the local Maasai community). Recognizing that no single decision would satisfy the interests of all the stakeholders, a strategy was developed to address multiple stakeholder issues while making the decision-making process transparent. A consultative committee was created (fig. 4), which included Mary Leakey; government authorities from the DoA and the Ministry of Culture; a regional UNESCO representative; representation from the Tanzanian and international scientific community; NCAA representatives; and a non-Tanzanian, African conservation professional to advise on and vet proposals, secure cooperation between the DoA and the NCAA for future management and protection of the area, and address specific issues such as the scientific restudy of the trackway.

### **Development of an Implementation Strategy**

To implement the decision to rebury the trackway, there were particular opportunities and constraints and a host of considerations (stakeholder, technical, and management) to take into account. The assessments provided the basis both for making the decision that reburial was the most appropriate and sustainable method of preserving the trackway and for developing the implementation strategy.

### **Stakeholder Considerations**

Opposition to the decision was voiced by small but vocal constituencies within the scientific community (international and local) and the DoA. It was channeled mainly through the press but was also brought before the Tanzanian parliament. Predictably, lack of access to the trackway was the ostensible reason, as expressed in a communiqué by a group opposed to the plan on the grounds that it was “incompatible with a long-term conservation strategy that involves displaying the footprints for educational, tourism and future scientific use” (Wilford 1995:C11). The press, ever alert to the controversies that seem endemic in palaeoanthropology, was quick to pick up the trail at Laetoli. The project became a cause célèbre, with accusations and rumors of various kinds bruited about: the project was a moneymaking venture or a colonialist undertaking, the environment was being poisoned by the use of chemicals, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

It became vital, therefore, to develop communication strategies for active press involvement, such as holding press weekends on site in 1995 and 1996; maintaining contact and sharing information with scientists, including publishing an article after the first conservation season in a journal targeted at that audience (Feibel et al. 1995); and opening the site during conservation to government officials, academics working in the region, and local Maasai and school groups. To enhance understanding of the reburial, a “dummy” reburial was created that showed the reburial stratigraphy and was effectively used to explain the technical aspects to press and visitors (fig. 5).

Importantly, to satisfy the research needs of the scientific community, it was desirable to compensate for lack of access to the trackway after its reburial. This involved restudy of the trackway (after excavation in 1995 and 1996) by three invited scientists nominated by senior palaeoanthropologists proposed by the consultative committee (fig. 6). Given the research agendas and politics, it is not surprising that the selection was contentious. More surprising, however, is that those scientists selected by their peers to undertake what was considered critically important research (on microstratigraphy, morphological description, and hominid gait) have been so slow to publish their findings.<sup>5</sup>

For future researchers, emphasis was placed on producing high-level documentation. Excellent casts made in 1978–79 of individual prints and sections of the trackway remain the most accurate documentation of the prints as originally excavated. Archival (epoxy) and museum-quality copies were made to ensure their existence in the future. Scientific-quality photography and high-resolution photogrammetry of the





**FIGURE 4** Some members of the Laetoli consultative committee: (left to right) Mary Leakey, Desmond Clark, Webber Ndoro, and Mambiran Joof. Photo: Neville Agnew. © The J. Paul Getty Trust



**FIGURE 5** The “dummy” demonstration of the reburial stratigraphy during a press and visitor day at the site. Photo: Frank Long. © The J. Paul Getty Trust

**FIGURE 6** Mary Leakey on the reexcavated trackway during the scientific restudy with the palaeoanthropologist Bruce Latimer and Peter Jones who originally excavated the site with Mary Leakey. Photo: Angelyn Bass. © The J. Paul Getty Trust

trackway was carried out and the condition of individual prints recorded graphically. The intent was that the scientific restudy would complement the documentation by providing interpretation of ambiguous features of the tuff.

The tourism and educational potential lost by reburying the trackway was compensated for by producing an exhibition at the Olduvai Museum, on the tourist circuit from Ngorongoro Crater to the Serengeti. The museum’s three rooms

**FIGURE 7** The Laetoli exhibition at the Olduvai Museum displays a cast of the best-preserved part of the trackway together with artwork depicting hominids walking through the newly fallen volcanic ash. Photo: Neville Agnew. © The J. Paul Getty Trust



offer an orientation to the region and displays on Olduvai Gorge and Laetoli, which include a cast of the trackway and the story of its conservation. Text information is in both Swahili, for local people, and English, for international visitors (fig. 7).

### Technical Considerations

The technical strategy developed for the reexcavation, conservation, and reburial of the trackway is not discussed here. There were numerous requirements that had to be met so that the reburial would best protect the trackway, including the use of specialized materials and stabilization and drainage measures, and these are published elsewhere (Agnew and Demas 1998; Demas et al. 1996).

### Management Considerations

Strategies to ensure the sustainability of protection measures were devised to meet the issues that emerged from the management assessment. Communication and outreach to the Maasai community were among the most elaborated strategies, since their role in the long term was felt to be critical. The traditional religious leader of the Maasai in the region was

consulted about security and disturbance to the site that had occurred between fieldwork and about how to make the site meaningful. At his suggestion, blessing ceremonies were held at the trackway, and its importance was explained to the gathered community (fig. 8). Casts of the trackway were made for local schools, and visits to the site by schoolchildren were organized. Site security was strengthened by creating permanent posts for resident Maasai guards (paid by the DoA).

Maintenance, the lack of which led to the growth of acacia trees after 1979, was crucial. Of particular importance, therefore, was the development of a feasible monitoring and maintenance plan, to be undertaken by Olduvai staff, training in its application, and the development of a means of off-site, long-term monitoring of the condition of the trackway (Agnew and Demas 2004). Efforts were made to establish a liaison with NCA officials through the consultative committee and to involve NCA staff in joint meetings with project and DoA personnel. A long-term management plan for the NCA was in development during the project, and it proved possible through these contacts to emphasize the importance of Laetoli and other sites in it.

But what of the trackway's future? During the management assessment, scenarios of possible long-term threats to the trackway were discussed, for example, a political decision





**FIGURE 8** Maasai gathering at the site during the blessing ceremony conducted by the traditional religious leader of the area. Photo: John C. Lewis. © The J. Paul Getty Trust

to uncover the trackway and develop the site for tourism. Such pressures should not be underestimated. As a site powerfully symbolic of humankind's rise, Laetoli will continue to attract interest from many quarters. Another scenario involves vandalism of the site or its abandonment followed by eventual growth of vegetation. Were staffing and government funding cuts to happen, the site could suffer this fate. A long-term threat apparent during the course of the project is the change in lifestyle of the Maasai. Increasingly they are settling and becoming reliant in part on agriculture, although cattle remain at the core of their culture. Already a dam has been built near the site to store seasonal flow for cattle. With increasing population, erosion and disturbance will likely be a grave threat to the unprotected exposures and ultimately to Site G itself. The regular presence of researchers in the area is one effective antidote to such threats. For this reason, it was advocated that the DoA encourage research and scientific surveys of the area by palaeoscientists. Although these met with conceptual approval, no sustained initiatives have been forthcoming.

## Conclusion

Laetoli was challenging on all fronts. The project encompassed a spectrum of issues that far transcended the technicalities of reburial. As a holistically conceived and executed conservation project, it can stand scrutiny. The conservation strategy for the trackway had to consider all issues that

emerged in the assessments. In particular, the condition and management assessments placed constraints on the options available, yet provided an imperative direction—reburial—for the project. As a lesson in the multiplicity of values and complexities, issues and agendas that attend a high-profile site such as Laetoli, it demonstrates the strength of the assessment and conservation decision-making process. The aim of conservation is to preserve all the values of a site and not to privilege certain values at the expense of others. Without such a methodology to guide the process, the trackway was in danger of being held hostage to exclusive interests and values. This systematic, holistic methodology offers the best possibility of representing and balancing all stakeholder interests and values and achieving a well-conserved site.

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## Notes

- 1 For a fuller explanation and analysis of the decision-making process, see Palumbo and Teutonico 2002; and as applied specifically to reburial, Demas 2004.
- 2 The literature on Laetoli is extensive; we cite only Leakey and Harris 1987 and White and Suwa 1987 to represent the scientific literature and Reader 1988 to represent literature aimed at educated laypersons.
- 3 For published references to the controversies about excavation of the footprints, see Clarke 1985; Tuttle et al. 1990:359–60; Torchia 1985; White and Suwa 1987:491.

- 4 For a range of international and local press coverage in English referring to the controversies, see Ambali 1995; Hotz 1995; Reader 1993; Vablon 1996; Wilford 1995. Much of the Tanzanian press was published in Swahili in Motomoto (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).
- 5 Schmid 2004 is the only publication to date of the work done on the trackway in 1995–96.

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# Conservation qua Archaeology at Tell Mozan/Urkish

Giorgio Buccellati

**Abstract:** *Increasingly, conservation is considered a necessary component of archaeological fieldwork. However, there are considerable differences in the way in which its presence affects the conduct of the work. Typically, it is an intervention that occurs apart from the excavation, whether it pertains to objects or to architecture. In a temporal sense, this often means that conservation takes place after the excavation: one may have, for instance, a “conservation season” following an “excavation season.” But even when the two activities take place concurrently, they are in most cases conceived as parallel activities, where conservation is viewed as a technique that is brought to bear from the outside on results that are obtained quite independently. This paper makes a case, instead, for conservation to be inscribed in the very strategy of archaeology, not so much logistically as conceptually. Archaeologists gain a better “archaeological” understanding of their universe if they act as conservators; conversely, conservators will be even better at their work if they gain a sensitivity for stratigraphy. Conservation at Tell Mozan, ancient Urkish, is presented as a test case of this approach, which has yielded very positive results. In particular, a new approach to the conservation of mud-brick architecture at the site is presented.*

## Conceptual Goals

The theme developed at the 5th World Archaeological Congress—“Of the Past, for the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation”—has a clear programmatic valence. First, a moral imperative: we must save the past so that future generations may draw on it at least as amply as we do. Then, the way this can happen: conservation must be integrated with archaeology, and vice versa.

I would like to underscore here the conceptual underpinnings of our central theme. It seems to me that one has to ask anew the very question, Why conservation? The reason is that even when integrated in an archaeological project, conservation generally remains extrinsic to the archaeological process as such. At best, one generally wants an excavation to entail a clear conservation program, in such a way that the excavation strategy is modified as needed to take fully into account the needs of conservation. But I would go one step further. For even in such an ideal situation, it is my observation that conservation remains an intervention not only *a posteriori* but also *ab exteriori*. This means that conservation is a technique invoked, and the degree of “integration” is correlative to the time frame within which such invoking takes place—coherently as a planned intervention at best, or, at worst, as a salvage operation after the fact, aimed at repairing damage that has occurred. The latter situation was prevalent in the past; today, happily, the pendulum is swinging in the other direction: conservation is more frequently associated with the ongoing process of excavation. Yet even so, it remains extrinsic. Are there ways, and is there merit, in going beyond such “extrinsicism”?

My answer—and this is the answer of an archaeologist, not of a conservator—can be stated in simple terms: conservation is intrinsic to the excavation process because it teaches us about excavation. It is a fact that conservators understand better than anyone else the physical and mechanical properties of the original artifact of which we find the relics. This understanding is as critical in shaping strategy as the identification of emplacement, the attribution to a given typological class, the awareness of historical conditions, or the recognition of function. Hence it follows that the conservator

is not just an expert to be consulted, even before excavation starts, with a view toward maintaining the relic and possibly reconstructing it after the fact. Rather, the conservator is an intrinsic voice in the dialogue that shapes understanding while the excavation takes place. So viewed, conservation *is* archaeology.

If that is so, it follows that conservation must be inscribed, in the most direct way, into the very process of excavation—not just after we realize that a building is important, not just when we are faced with a particularly delicate object. It must be simultaneous with excavation. Apart from considerations of cost and availability of resources, this must always be the goal, at least conceptually. From such general presuppositions that speak not just to the desirability but in fact to the necessity of “integrating archaeology and conservation,” there ensue some practical consequences.

It is not only a matter of decisional and hierarchical structures. It is rather a matter of *forma mentis*: the archaeologist must think as conservator and, conversely, the conservator as archaeologist. Since conservation is not just an appendix but an intrinsic facet of the excavation process, it follows that archaeologists need conservation professionals to improve on their own work as archaeologists. Of course, conservation remains an expertise with its own unique technical competence, but its summons are not just for something additive after the fact. In other words, it is necessary for the archaeologist to not just turn to the conservator for outside input, however well planned and integrated into an operational strategy; the archaeologist should also think as a conservator while doing the archaeologist’s work.

Conversely, it is just as critical that the conservator not be a mere technician providing extrinsic support but rather that he or she think as an archaeologist. Practically speaking: if courses in chemistry are required in conservation training, shouldn’t courses in stratigraphy be of exactly the same importance? The depositional process through which the “relic” has originated is just as important for a conservator’s understanding of the “relic” as the material matrix that defines the components on which the conservator works. The conservator must develop a sensitivity for this through hands-on experience in the field.

In this light, “integrating archaeology and conservation” does not mean so much developing a proper respect between two different individuals operating apart from one another but rather adding an educational component in the professional training of both archaeologists and conservators, so that each can operate with the sensitivity of the other.

To include such training in a conservator’s curriculum means above all that the conservator must develop a special sensitivity for that unique nexus of time and space that is so central to archaeology. In other words, the conservator must understand full well what stratigraphy is, at the very moment that it is being exposed through excavation. This can only be learned in the field, and that is the component that should be an integral part of an archaeological conservator’s schooling. One has to learn to touch time, to appreciate the physical interface that time assumes in the ground. Conversely, the archaeologist who has this sensitivity must develop the conservator’s eye for proposing for preservation critical stratigraphic moments.

We must, then, aim for a concrete and proper conservation of important stratigraphic junctures. Consider the difference vis-à-vis the conservation of objects and even of monuments. Though timely intervention on delicate objects soon after their exposure is important, they can often undergo conservation in a museum-type environment. In this respect, object conservation is static, in the sense that the effort may often be carried out independently of the object’s emplacement in the ground. In the case of architectural monuments, this is already more difficult, but in current practice the end result is the same. Walls and structures are conserved long after their initial exposure, and thus also statically—the only difference being that monuments, unlike objects, are tied to the ground. The goal that I am proposing is that the conservator be involved upstream of all this, at the very moment when exposure takes place, not so much and not only to better understand how to “save” the artifact but in order to help to understand and preserve a given stratigraphic moment.

When so implemented, conservation emerges as an important form of publication. That conservation adds to the documentary value of our work goes without saying. But in the case of architectural monuments and of stratigraphic moments, this documentary dimension is all the more significant and unique. So much so, in fact, that it becomes at times impossible to provide an alternative to visual inspection. To a certain extent, this is of course true of any artifact: no analogical representation can adequately and fully replace visual inspection. But it is especially true in the exposition of complex stratigraphic relationships, where a narrative description, a drawing, a photograph cannot do justice to all the concomitant elements that come into play. A digital three-dimensional model may indeed come one step closer to the ideal analogical rendering of such a situation, but it is still not applicable on a large scale, especially not for situations that,

however important from a scholarly point of view, are not monumental in nature.

Conservation may in such cases yield the best documentation of a key stratigraphic nexus, retaining it for an independent assessment by visiting scholars. Also, the very effort that goes into conservation of such a document serves as a powerful heuristic tool for the ancillary documentation that remains, of course, as necessary as ever. In other words, thinking about conservation directs the mind of the archaeologist in the direction of a fuller set of correlations than may otherwise be perceived when limiting one's attention, myopically, to the stratigraphic argument rather than to the stratigraphic document.

### Virtual and Other Realities

To illustrate how this can work, I want to use as a concrete example our own work at Tell Mozan, ancient Urkesh, with particular reference to architectural preservation. One of the largest third-millennium mounds in Syro-Mesopotamia (almost 150 hectares in size), it is located in northeastern Syria just below the slopes of the Taurus mountain range, which is today in Turkey. It was the most important urban center of early Hurrian civilization, contemporary with the Sumerian Early Dynastic and the Old Akkadian periods in the south. It remained famous in Hurrian mythology as the seat of the ancestral god of the Hurrian pantheon, and it was also known to have been the seat of an important kingdom. Our excavations have brought to light two major structures—the Royal Palace, built around 2250 B.C.E., and an earlier temple that rests on a high artificial terrace dating to at least 2700 B.C.E.

From the beginning of the excavations of what turned out to be the Royal Palace, in 1990, I became concerned with the preservation of the mud-brick walls and developed a simple protective system that has proven quite effective, as shown by our ongoing monitoring, under the supervision of our director of conservation, Sophie Bonetti. The system consists of a metal structure that closely follows the outline but not the top profile of the walls and of a tightly fitting canvas cover, tailor-made by a local tent maker. As of 2003, a total of some 400 linear meters of walls were so covered, corresponding to the entire set of the palace walls excavated so far.

The primary benefit is the protection of the walls. After thirteen years since the start of excavations in the palace, the condition of the walls remains as it was when they were first exposed. Over this relatively long period, the damage has been minimal, and the causes leading to it have been

identified and corrected. This is noteworthy because at other excavations in our area, walls that were not so protected have collapsed entirely, forcing a reconstruction that retains only the layout of the ancient structure and none of the original fabric.

It is important to emphasize the total reversibility of the process. The full protective system (metal and canvas) can be removed without leaving a trace. It is also relatively rapid. In 2003 the entire system was removed in two days by a crew of some fifteen people, and it takes about the same effort to set it back in place.

Obviously, it is not necessary to remove the protective gear on a yearly basis. Inspection of individual walls is effortless since the canvas can be easily lifted for any portion of the wall at any time (figs. 1, 2). This is a special instance when the goal of conservation as publication is achieved: visiting scholars can view such details as consistency of the bricks, faint traces of plaster, or arrangement of the mortar in ways that no photographic documentation can adequately render.

The system is fully modular, each wall being treated as a single unit, subdivided into smaller components as needed (fig. 3). This means that each new wall is covered immediately upon excavation. To wait for an eventual future season to be devoted to conservation has the disadvantage that intensive damage will inevitably occur in the meantime, and conservation can easily become little other than wholesale reconstruction. Another advantage of modularity so conceived is that excavated areas are protected while excavation is taking place in adjacent areas: for instance, the evacuation of dirt from ongoing excavations often follows a route that has an impact on earlier excavated areas, and in such cases our system affords protection from our own traffic.

But another advantage of this approach is that it is modular in a temporal as well as in a spatial sense: by protecting each wall as it is exposed, the interaction between archaeologist and conservator takes place at that critical moment when walls are exposed. The archaeologist is forced to consider more concretely the wall as an architectural unit, and the conservator to consider more sensitively the dynamics of the excavation process and the concerns of stratigraphy. Unexpectedly, modularity is one way in which the integration of archaeology and conservation takes place. Strategy decisions about the extent to which excavation should proceed are guided by considerations of how much opportunity will be available to set in place the protection system for new walls immediately following excavation. In this way, conservation is truly and properly built into the act of excavating.



**FIGURE 1** Palace with walls covered, and with the canvas covering lifted to show one of the walls. Photo: J. Jarmakani

**FIGURE 2** Close-up of two walls when covering is lifted. Photo: G. Buccellati





**FIGURE 3** Sabah Kassem, the local smith who produces and maintains the iron structure. His dynamic participation in our work is emblematic of how conservation aids in developing an ideal collaboration between the stakeholders and the archaeologists. Photo: G. Buccellati



Conservation helps us to see each new wall not just as a fragment that is an end in itself but as the component of a larger whole that is concretely in front of us and perceivable as a real overall structure.

Modularity also means that costs are contained. This is in part due to the fact that they are spread out over a period of years. But actual total costs are also relatively low. The total spent for the portion set in place through 2002 amounted to some U.S. \$5,000, including materials (metal and canvas) and labor.

It is important to note that this collaboration goes well beyond issues of costs. The enthusiasm and intelligence that local people bring to the project enhance our own work and in some important ways even our understanding of the archaeology. The conservation effort is one of the major ways in which the stakeholders are brought to a dynamic confrontation with the past that has unfolded in their own territory: as they share in re-creating its perceptual reality, they provide significant pointers toward an understanding of the monument. The notion of stakeholders' participation in "their" archaeology is a current theme today. At Mozan, we

have been applying this concept in a very concrete way since the inception of our work there.

A major benefit of our protective system has been the sharper definition of architectural spaces and volumes—the goal of all architectural restoration. In our case, this is coupled with a degree of reversibility that is not afforded by other systems. It is as if we had two archaeological sites existing contemporaneously side by side—or rather, one within the other (figs. 4, 5). One is the site that consists of the ruin—the walls as excavated. The other is the site that consists of the architecture—the walls as they once were. The rendering of volumes and spaces corresponds to the ideal of a three-dimensional rendering on the computer. Hence the concept "virtual and other realities": the wrapping provides, as it were, a real virtual reality. Except that the perception on the ground is of course infinitely richer than the one on the screen. A telltale sign of this was the realization, once the protective system was set in place, that we could no longer walk over low walls or foundations. Even though we, the excavators, were so familiar with the floor plan of our building, it was as if suddenly we had discovered, perceptually, a new dimension that until then was

**FIGURE 4** Two sites in one: the palace “as ruin.” The walls are documented as first excavated and preserved in their original state. Kite photo: G. Gallacci



**FIGURE 5** Two sites in one: the palace “as monument.” The walls are shown as volumes in their original layout. Kite photo: G. Gallacci





known to us only through the abstraction of a drawing. This perceptual enrichment of fieldwork is one of the significant results of the integration of conservation and archaeology as we practice it at Mozan: conservation helps the archaeologist to perceive the physical reality of the monument as nothing else can do. No matter how intimately the excavators know every brick of “their” walls, as soon as the protective covering goes up, they invariably see relationships that were wholly unexpected.

Obviously, such a wrapped reconstruction of the walls adds significantly to the goal of presenting and interpreting the site to the outside visitor. We have further enriched our “sightscape” through a variety of other means that help to visualize the architectural and functional elements of the structure. For instance, signs and posters can easily be added in such a way that they are visible also from a distance, where I have built a viewing station with interpretive posters. In 2003 we painted the major wings of the palace in different colors (see fig. 1)—green for the service wing and gold for the formal wing (as yet only partly excavated). This was occasioned by the realization that the modular approach described above resulted in the less desirable effect that the canvas had different shades each year. These were so noticeable that the original pleasant appearance of a light brown color, rather close to that of mud-brick, was dissipated by the motley look of the wrapping (especially in places where patches were added to reinforce older canvas). Painting the canvas over seemed like an obvious solution. And as long as we were doing that, it seemed worth trying to have colors match the functional differentiation that we already have in the floor plans. The jury is out on this approach. Aesthetically, opinions are divided between those who prefer the uniform light brown earth tone over the brilliant colors that identify functional areas. Also, it remains to be seen how the paint will resist the winter rains and the harsh summer sun. But indirectly this underscores the beauty of the system. None of these solutions is irrevocable, and experiments can be carried out without any danger to the original “document” and with low expenditures—hence with altogether limited risk. These experiments also consolidate the close concomitance of the work of archaeologists and conservators because they are both present, as it were, at the time of creation.

### Technical Details

The system’s simplicity is one of its major virtues. It can be applied and maintained whenever there is a smith who can

assemble the metal structure, and a strong sewing machine that allows the fashioning of the tarp covers. The process of mounting the metal trellises is delicate (one must be careful not to affect the walls) but can be managed with normal supervision. Similarly, the tarps have simple geometrical shapes, and they can be sewn together without any special tailoring skills.

Also, the system in no way intrudes on any of the ancient structures: the metal structures simply rest on the floor, or in most cases on our own backfill, and the uprights are kept at a distance of some 10 centimeters from the face of the walls. While the segments of a wall cover are modular, they are all interlocked, and this, given the weight of the metal, provides adequate stability to the entire system.

In our specific context, there are two main factors that have a negative impact on conservation: rain and wind. Wind poses the greatest danger in those portions of the walls that were least well preserved. Here the hollow space contained within the covering can be considerable, and the resulting effect is that the wind has greater play inside the protective structure, rendering it more vulnerable. In such instances the very virtue of the system becomes its worst defect: since the covering is a seamless whole, a small tear can easily extend to a large portion of the structure. We are trying to overcome this problem by adding light and open wire mesh at the critical junctures. During the winter rains of 2003–4, we also removed the covering altogether in those few portions where nothing is left of the wall but only the negative trace left by the stone foundations after the stones were quarried in recent times. The fabric was set in place again once the winter was over.

To minimize the danger of water seeping through the canvas, we at first put a sheet-metal cover on the trellis, or, as a less expensive alternative, a sheet of plastic (fig. 6). But condensation trapped between the canvas and either the plastic or the metal caused the tarp to deteriorate rapidly, that is, within a couple of years. We are now trying two other alternatives. 1) A metal basin suspended from the top. This is more expensive, but it has the added advantage that one can put water in the basin to maintain an even level of humidity during the extremely hot and dry summers. 2) A loose sheet of plastic held in place by sand in plastic bags, placed directly on top of the walls.

To make visual inspection possible at any time, the coverings are not sewn at the corners of the walls. Rather, the two vertical edges overlap slightly, and they are kept tight by a set of laces that can easily be untied, and by Velcro borders that protect the metal eyelets through which the laces pass. At the



**FIGURE 6** Loose plastic cover placed directly on mudbrick, with small sandbags holding it in place, and metal basin at the top to gather water seeping through the tarp (also to hold water in the summer to provide uniform humidity). Photo: G. Buccellati



bottom of each section, there is a metal bar that also keeps the fabric taut, both when it is in place and when it is lifted.

Important structural elements and significant stratigraphic documents are protected with metal boxes or glass panels to differentiate them from the covering that identifies the walls exclusively. A decision as to which of these items is to be so protected is made by archaeologists and conservators in close collaboration, in an effort to assess fully the relative feasibility and costs.

We have also addressed the question of preservation and display of the floor areas. Some of the floors were covered in antiquity with a thin layer of limestone plaster. These we have covered with plastic sheets, which are in turn covered by a thin layer of dirt, in the standard way of backfill. But this layer of dirt favored the growth of grass and thorny weeds. Rather than resort to herbicides, the backfill was covered with tiles made of recycled sherds embedded in cement. The tiles are individually placed, so they can be removed at will. We have used three different arrangements: (1) a single line to mark a path, (2) a spacing between tiles to allow a minimum growth, and (3) a tight arrangement to eliminate growth altogether. In

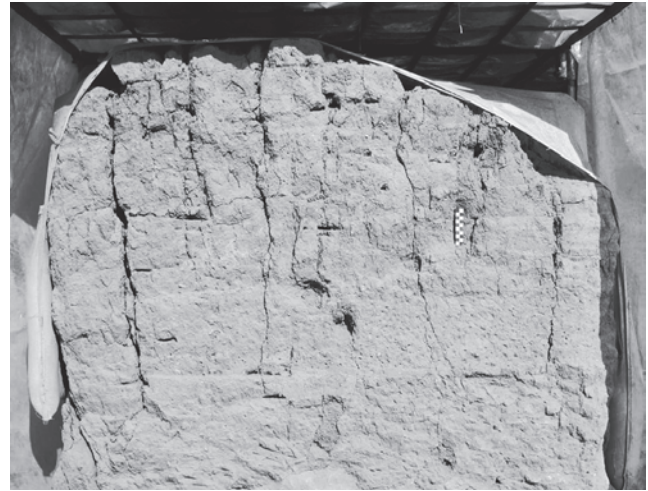
the formal part of the palace the floors are more elaborate; they consist of flagstones in the open areas and, in the roofed areas, of either a thick, cementlike plaster or brick pavers (fig. 7). Here we have added, to the system just described, large metal boxes that are embedded in the backfill and cover a portion of the pavement that is left free of backfill. By opening the box, a visitor can have a clear idea, from the visible detail, of the nature of the whole pavement.

Where vertical fissures have developed in the walls, we use consolidation in those cases that seem to pose the greatest risk. But our primary goal is to reduce physical and chemical intervention to an absolute minimum, and so we prefer, where possible, to apply a light stretched and weighted canvas: this simple system holds the wall in place by exerting a gentle pressure on the two sides (fig. 8).

Many issues remain under consideration, and the continuous interaction at the site between archaeologists and conservators produces a host of new ideas and experiments. The feedback we receive from a variety of sources (colleagues, visitors, staff, and workmen) helps us to fine-tune our approach. And the continuous monitoring will include all of



**FIGURE 7** Modern pavers in loose and tight arrangement on top of backfill.  
Photo: G. Buccellati



**FIGURE 8** Vertical fissures on same wall in 2002, two years after excavations.  
Note the stretched canvas, weighted down by pockets of sand on either side.  
Photo: G. Gallacci

this information in what will continue to be an interesting experiment in professional interaction, in substantive conservation, and in more enlightened archaeology.<sup>1</sup>

## Notes

- 1 For a few references pertinent to conservation at Tell Mozan, see G. Buccellati, "Urkesh: Archeologia, conservazione e restauro," *Kermes* 13 (2000):41–48; S. Bonetti, *Gli Opifici di Urkesh: Papers read at the Round Table in Florence, November 1999*, *Urkesh/Mozan Studies* 4 (Malibu: Undena, 2001) (online at <http://www.urbesh.org>); G. Buccellati and S. Bonetti, "Conservation at the Core of Archaeological Strategy: The Case of Ancient Urkesh at Tell Mozan," *Conservation: The Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter* 18 (2003):18–21 (online at [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/resources/newsletter/18\\_1](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/resources/newsletter/18_1)).

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